THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

An Autohagiography

Subsequently re-Antichristened

THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

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To Three Immortal Memories

RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON
the perfect pioneer of spiritual and physical adventure

OSCAR ECKENSTEIN
who trained me to follow the trail

ALLAN BENNETT
who did what he could

STANZA XXIII

I think it was on the 6th of July that I reached New York. In those days one was not bored by people who had never seen a real skyline boasting of the outrage since perpetrated by the insects. A mountain sky-line is nearly always noble and beautiful, being the result of natural forces acting uniformly and in conformity with law. Thus, though it is not designed, it is the embodiment of the principles which are inherent in Design. New York, on the other hand, has been thrown up by a series of disconnected accidents.

The vanity of the natives led them therefore to concentrate their enthusiasm on a rejected statue of commerce intended for the Suez Canal. This they had purchased at secondhand and grandiloquently labelled “Liberty enlightening the World”. They had been prophetic enough to put it on an island with its back to the mainland.

But, in those days, the spirit of Liberty was still intensely alive in the United States. The least sensitive visitor was bound to become aware of it in a few hours. There was no genteel servility. Nobody interfered with anyone else's business or permitted busybodies to meddle with his. The people seemed prosperous and contented; they had not yet been forbidden to amuse themselves when the day's work was over.

Till this time I had never been in any reputedly hot country. I was appalled to find New York intolerable. I filled a cold bath, and got in and out of it at intervals till eleven at night, when I crawled, panting, through the roasting streets and consumed ice-water, iced watermelon, ice-cream and iced coffee. “Good God,” I said to myself, “and this is merely New York! What must Mexico be like!” I supposed that I was experiencing normal conditions, whereas in point of fact I had landed at the climax of a heat wave which killed about a hundred people a day while it lasted. I should have discovered the truth if I had looked at a newspaper; but I did not read them. I had already learnt that even the finest mind is bound to perish if it suffers the infection of journalism. It is not merely that one defiles the mind by inflicting upon it slipshod and inaccurate English, shallow, commonplace, vulgar, hasty and prejudiced thought, and deliberate dissipation. Apart from these positive pollutions, there is the negative effect. To read a newspaper is to refrain from reading something worth while. The natural laziness of the mind tempts one to eschew authors who demand a continuous effort of intelligence. The first discipline of education must therefore be to refuse resolutely to feed the mind with canned chatter.

People tell me that they must read the papers so as to know what is going on. In the first place, they could hardly find a worse guide. Most of what is printed turns out to be false, sooner or later. Even when there is no deliberate deception, the account must, from the nature of the case, be presented without adequate reflection and must seem to possess an importance which time shows to be absurdly exaggerated; or vice versa. No event can be fairly judged without background and perspective.

I only stayed in New York two or three days and then travelled direct to Mexico City. It was my first experience of a really long journey by train. The psychology is very curious. Journeys of more than half an hour begin to be tedious. Edinburgh to Inverness: I used to feel on the verge of insanity before I had got half way. But after two or three days in the train one becomes acclimatised.

The city of Mexico began by irritating me intensely. The hotel had no organized service; they didn't seem to care whether one got anything to eat or not. In fact, in the whole city, there was only one restaurant where one could get anything outside the regular local dishes. Nobody bothers about eating. The same applies to drinking, as far as the palate is concerned. People ate to satisfy hunger and drank to get drunk. There were no fine vintages; the principal drinks were pulque, which is the fermented sap of the aloe; mescal, tequila and aguardiente; the last being a general term applicable to any distilled spirit. In those days I was practically an abstainer, and as I had a fastidious daintiness which made me dislike trying experiments, I never even sampled any of these drinks.

It is a very curious trait. I used to refuse, sometimes under embarrassing pressure, to taste things whose appearance or whose name displeased me. I would not eat jam, even as a child, because it looked messy. I must have been nearly forty before I would touch salad. It seems absurd. I was very bond of lobster mayonnaise; but lobster salad, never! I dislike the combination of consonants. The word suggests something indefinite. It gives the effect of French poetry, where the absence of accentuation emasculates the rhythm.

I found myself spiritually at home with Mexicans. The despise industry and commerce. They had Diaz to do their political thinking for them and damned well he did it. Their hearts are set on bull fighting, cock fighting, gambling and lechery. Their spirit is brave and buoyant; it had not been poisoned by hypocrisy and the struggle for life.

I hired part of a house overlooking the Alameda, a magnificent park intended for pleasure and protected from the police. I engaged a young Indian

girl to look after me and settled down to steady work at Magick. I had an introduction to an old man named Don Jesus Medina, a descendant of the great duke of Armada fame, and one of the highest chiefs of Scottish Rite Free-Masonry. My Qabbalistic knowledge being already profound by current standards, he thought me worthy of the highest initiation in his power to confer; special powers were obtained in view of my limited sojourn, and I was pushed rapidly through and admitted to the thirty-third and last degree before I left the country.

I had also a certain amount of latitude granted by Mathers to initiate suitable people in *partibus*. I, therefore, established an entirely new Order of my own, called L.I.L.: the “Lamp of the Invisible Light”. Don Jesus became its first High Priest. In the Order L.I.L., the letters L.P.D. are the monograms of the mysteries. An explanation of these letter is given by Dumas in the prologue of his Memoirs of a Physician, and Eliphas Levi discusses them at some length. I, however, remembered them directly from my incarnation as Cagliostro. It would be improper to communicate their significance to the profane, but I may say that the political interpretation given by Dumas is superficial, and the ethical suggestions of Levi puerile and perverse; or, more correctly, intentionally misleading. They conceal a number of magical formulae of minor importance by major practical value, and the curious should conduct such research as they feel impelled to make in the light of the Qabbala. Their numerical values, Yetziratic attributions, and the arcana of the Atus of Tahuti, supply an adequate clue to such intelligences as are enlightened by sympathy and sincerity.

The general idea was to have an ever-burning lamp in a temple furnished with talismans appropriate to the elemental, planetary and zodiacal forces of nature. Daily invocations were to be performed with the object of making the light itself a consecrated centre or focus of spiritual energy. This light would then radiate and automatically enlighten such minds as were ready to receive it.

Even to-day, the experiment seems to me interesting and the conception sublime. I am rather sorry that I lost touch with Don Jesus; I should like very much to know how it turned out.

I devoted practically my whole time to this and other Magical Work. I devised a Ritual of Self-Initiation (see Eqx, I, 3, p.269), the essential feature of which is the working up of spiritual enthusiasm by means of a magical dance. This dance contained the secret gestures of my grade, combined with the corresponding words. I used to set my will against the tendency to giddiness and thus postpone as long as possible the final physical intoxication. In this way I lost consciousness at a moment when I was wholly absorbed in

aspiration. Thus, instead of falling into dull darkness, I emerged into a lucid state, in which I was purged of personality and all sensory or intellectual impressions. I became the vehicle of the Divine Forces invoked and so experienced Godhead. My results were satisfactory so far as they went; but they did not aid my personal progress very much, since I had not formulated an intellectual link between the divine and human consciousness.

I worked also at acquiring the power of invisibility. (See Eq, I, 3, p. 272 for the ritual.) I reached a point when my physical reflection in a mirror became faint and flickering. It gave very much the effect of the interrupted images of the cinematograph in its early days. But the real secret of invisibility is not concerned with the laws of optics at all; the trick is to prevent people noticing you when they would normally do so. In this I was quite successful. For example, I was able to take a walk in the street in a golden crown and a scarlet robe without attracting attention.

Most interesting of all, perhaps, is a Magical practice which I devised, ostensibly to deal with the dilemma propounded by the Sphinx: “The postulant to Magic must be morally perfect.” It may be that I felt instinctively that my pious predecessors were wrong in demanding the suppression of manhood and imposing arbitrary codes of conduct. (I know now, of course, that their instructions have been misunderstood; every element in one's molecule must be developed to the utmost and applied to the service of one's True Will.) I suppose I have to thank Stevenson for the idea, which was this. As a member of the Second Order, I wore a certain jewelled ornament of gold upon my heart. I arranged that when I had it on, I was to permit no thought, word or action, save such as pertained directly to my Magical Aspirations. When I took it off I was, on the contrary, to permit no such things; I was to be utterly uninitiate. It was like Jekyll and Hyde, but with the two personalities balanced and complete in themselves. I found this practice of very great service. It was in fact essentially a beginning of systematic control of thought. The method is now incorporated in the instructions of the A∴ A∴ (See Liber Jugorum.)

Mexico proved a glorious galloping ground for my Pegasus. The magnificent mountain air, the splendour of the sun, the flamboyant beauty of the flowers, the intoxicating intimacy of leaping, fearless love which flamed in every face made my mind a racing rhythm of rapture.

Yet my principal achievement had its roots in Europe. At one of Mathers' semi-public ceremonies, I had met a member of the Order, an American prima donna. She took me by storm and we became engaged. The marriage could not take place immediately, as she had to get rid of some husband that she had left lying about in Texas. But I heard her sing Venus in

“Tannhäuser” at Covent Garden; and she courteously insisted on my sampling the goods with which she proposed to endow me. The romance of an intrigue with so famous an artist excited my imagination. One afternoon, in Mexico, I picked up a woman who attracted me by the insatiable intensity of passion that blazed from her evil inscrutable eyes and tortured her worn face into a whirlpool of seductive sin. I passes some hours with her in her slum; and, walking home, found myself still so unappeased—*lassatus, sed non satiatus*—that my fever developed a delirium whose images assumed the form of Wagner's opera. I went home and sat down at once to write my own poetical and Magical version of the story. I neither slept nor ate till it was finished—sixty-seven hours later. I had not been aware of the flight of time. I could not understand why it was afternoon; I thought that I had merely written all night. This play marks the climax of the first period of my poetry.

It is definitely an allegory of initiation, as I understood it at that time. As in Wagner's plot, Venus represents animal, and Elizabeth so-called pure, love. But my *Tannhäuser* is as dissatisfied with the latter as with the former. He leaves the Horsel at the call of the idea of the divine principle of love, which cannot be satisfied by any person, however noble. His attainment is to discard all earthly ties; he is in love with Isis-Urania.

The play shows more perception of the true character of initiation than I consciously possessed. My conception was analogous to the catastrophic theory of creation. I figured my process as a series of crisis. Of course crisis do occur; but, generally speaking, one advances insensibly. The invoked forces penetrate subtly into every cell, and modify them intimately without one's being aware of the process.

During the summer I wanted to travel in the interior. I went down to Iguala, bought an orange pony,* and rode slowly back to the city, taking things as they came. In all my travels I have hardly ever “seen the sights”. Nothing is so disappointing. My plan is simply to live in any new city the ordinary life of the people. I wander about and presently come unexpectedly upon one of the wonders of the world. In this way one gets the thrill which those who have sold their souls to Baedeker miss. Imagine the delight of discovering the Coliseum or the Taj Mahal for oneself, at a moment, perhaps, when one's mind was preoccupied with commonplace ideas! I may have missed a few masterpieces, but not many; and people who go to see them on purpose miss them all altogether.

The maximum of romance and pleasure is to be found in Mexico, even in the quite small provincial towns. There is always some sort of Alameda, a well-wooded square more or less in the middle of the town with seats in any number, and a bandstand where a band plays every night without any

swank, because people like music. It is never too hot; there is usually a pleasant breeze, enough to stir the leaves and not enough to disturb and annoy. It is full of men and women; all seem young and all are charming, spontaneous and ready to make any desired kind of love.

In fact, they are making it continually in their hearts and only wait opportunity to suit the word and action to the thought. Nor does opportunity lag. There are no practical difficulties. Indoors and out Nature and Art combine to invite Cupid to pay every kind of visit, passionate, permanent, transitory, trivial. The caprice of the moment is the sole arbiter of the event. The idea of worry is unknown. “Take no thought for the morrow” is the first principle of human relations, especially in regard to all such matters. Love is the business of life, but it is all profit and no loss. There is no false shame, no contamination by ideas of commerce and material matters in general. There is no humbug about purity, uplift, idealism, or any such nonsense. I cannot hope to express the exquisite pleasure of freedom. One's spontaneity was not destroyed by anticipations of all sorts of difficulty in finding a friend of any desired type, obstacles in the way of consummating the impulse, and unpleasantness in the aftermath. The problem of sex, which has reduced Anglo-Saxon nations to hysteria and insanity, has been solved in Mexico by the co-operation of climate and cordiality. Even Catholicism has lost most of its malignancy in Mexico. Clergy and laity unite, spiritually and somatically, with gay ardour. The Virgin is here actually the *fille-mère* which the gospels really represent, for all our blustering denial of the obvious facts. Of course, the priest likes a little gratification for his complaisance, but that is a very human trait, and as he is neither greedy, malicious, nor hypocritical, the charity which he enjoys is given freely in the friendliest spirit.

This was because he had Diaz 33° to keep him in order. After Diaz's death, the priest got gay on a bellyful of—(the Host (?) like the world-famous Sparrow and had to be curbed seriously, as history relates.

My first night out of Iguala was a mysterious delight. I had lost my way in a sugar plantation and it was getting dark when I came to a railway in course of construction. I followed this, hoping to find a town, but night fell, sudden and black; so I tethered my horse and lay down to sleep in my poncho by the light of a fire, to make which I borrowed some loose material left by the engineers. Dawn was just breaking when I was awakened from sleep by that subtle sense of danger which protects sleeping wayfarers. In the dim light I saw three heads peering at me over the embankment. I fired my revolver in the air; the heads disappeared; I turned over and went to sleep again instantly for several hours.

My second night was otherwise amusing. I struck a pioneer camp, where a wooden hut had been thrown together. Two Chinamen were running an eating- house. I sat down to dinner with two of the engineers. They spotted the new chum and began to scare me with tales of scorpions and fever. Before serving dinner, one of the Chinese came in with a saucepan of boiling water and went round the room tipping it into the cavities formed by the crossing of the timbers of the hut. As often as not, a scalded scorpion fell out. I went to bet that night with my mind full of a particularly unpleasant trick of my reptilian brothers. They have a habit of dropping from the roof on to one's bed. This is quite without malice, but one stirs in one's sleep at the touch. They are alarmed and strike. This didn't happen; but in the morning I found my legs so swollen from mosquito bites that I could not get my boots one. The result was my first acquaintance with malaria, which attacked me very severely shortly after I got back to the city. My ride was full of very varied adventure. The incident that stands out is this:

Crossing a hillside, I saw a Mexican some thirty yards below the track, apparently asleep in the sun. I thought I would warn him of his danger and rode over. He must have been dead three weeks, for he had been completely mummified. Neither the coyotes nor the turkey-buzzards will touch a dead Mexican. His flesh has been too thoroughly impregnated with chillies and other pungent condiments. The make short work of any other meat. I remember riding out from Zapotlan to lunch with some friends on their ranch. I fell in with a string of mules bound for the Pacific coast. As I passed a mule dropped from exhaustion. The men transferred his pack and left him to die. Returning after lunch, some three hours later, I found the bones of the mule picked clean and dry.

One can always tell a Mexican by his peculiar habit of blowing through his cigarette before lighting it. The reason for this is that the government cigarettes are rolled by convicts, who are allowed what they consider an inadequate amount of tobacco daily for their own use. They therefore increase their supply by mixing dust with the tobacco handed out to them every morning for their work, and one therefore has to blow it out.

It is said, I know not how truly, that a Mexican town, in a corner near the Rio Grande, was, in the course of the revolution and counter-revolution of the contending vultures in 1917, cut off for a time from all communication with the rest of the country. Presumably everyone buried whatever cash he happened to have. At least it vanished rapidly and strangely. The city gasped. What the devil was to be done? Being folk of sense, they soon collected their wits and said: “All right. It's no good crying for the moon. We've got to go on exchanging wealth. We'll simply barter on credit and strike a weekly balance.

"If anyone fancies he's got a soft thing—
If we haven't got pesos we've plenty of string."

The result was surprising. Business went on pretty well as in the past, with this remarkable difference: the motive for cheating and hording and gambling was gone. One could, of course, amass a fortune on the balance sheet of the town council; but it would be hard to cash in. So nobody troubled to outwit his neighbour or plot his ruin. They contented themselves with aiming at comfort and ease. Old enemies became fast friends; the usurers turned their hands to productive purposes; the loafers and spongers and gamblers realized that they must work or starve. The whole town prospered; poverty disappeared; financial anxiety ceased to exist; the moral tone of the community became almost angelic. Everyone had plenty to do, plenty to eat, plenty of leisure and plenty of pleasure. Everyone was happy. Of course it was too good to last. Communications were restored and a month later society had relapsed into a dog-fight for dollars.

***** This remarkable animal had a trick of turning somersaults backwards of which he was inordinately proud. As soon as he raised his head and forefeet, I used to knock him back to the horizontal with a riding-crop. But in Mexico City he became impossible and I raffled him off. The agent found him difficult to ride, and he got a famous jockey to show off his paces. But after being thrown a few times—in a principal street of the city, that jockey had his faith in "El Diablo" restored, and went off muttering prayers and curses. I have never heard of any sequel.

STANZA XXIV

Lying sick in the Hotel Iturbide, I was attended by an American doctor named Parsons, which whom I stuck up a warm friendship. He was certainly a “live wire”. The faculty had just devised as new source of income by inventing appendicitis. Parsons heard of this and wired to the States for a partner who could perform the operation. He then proceeded to advise immediate operation every time one of his many wealthy patients had a stomach-ache. At a thousand Mexican dollars a time, it did not take many months to pile up a fortune.

The English colony in Mexico City was disliked and despised. The Consul was habitually constipated and the Vice-Consul habitually drunk. It is a curious fact that all over the world these qualities never vary. A wide field is open the philosophical speculation.

I came to frequent the American Colony and Club. I remember being introduced to a new but already popular and respected member, “Meet Mr. Tewkesbury,” and, a loud whisper, “*Thorne*, you know, who got away from Chi with a quarter of a million plunks.” At this club I met some really charming ranchers, who invited me to stay with them and convalesce. Their place was near Guanajato, a great centre for silver mines. Guanajato possessed an unique curiosity: some eccentric millionaire had built a theatre, sparing no expense to make it the most gorgeous building of its kind in the world. The stalls, for instance, were upholstered in real velvet, embroidered with real gold thread. For some reason, I think because the President had declined to open it, the owner felt himself insulted and kept it shut up. It was never opened at all except as a show place for visitors like myself, and finally was somehow burnt to the ground.

Mexico City was full of American professional gamblers and confidence men. I saw a good deal of two of these; a lank grey Yankee named McKee and his genial jackal Wilson, or some such name. After a few days' acquaintance Wilson approached me with the following proposal. It appeared that the manager of a mine near St. Luis Potosi had stolen a quantity of gold dust. He had got scared and dared not bolt. Wilson thought that if we offered him a thousand dollars, each putting up half, he would be willing to hand over the compromising sacks, value five thousand or so. Not for nothing had I read the works of “Pitcher of The Pink 'Un”, and other authorities on the gentle art of parting a fool and his money. I joyfully accepted Wilson's proposal. “Bring your five hundred right along,” I said, “and I'll go and put the job through. I know you're too busy to leave the city.” He agreed and returned an hour later, not with the cash, but with his partner. They apolo-

gized profusely for mistaking me for a mug. “Look here,” said McKee, “the innocence of your face is a fortune. I know a rich man here who is crazy on gambling. You shall rook him at Brazilian Poker. (In this game one backs one's hand as in ordinary poker, but the hands are of two cards with the option of taking a third, as in Baccarat.) We'll signal you what he holds. With your face, he'll never get wise to the stunt.”

The psychology of these people really interested me. They had no experience of the kind of man who knows all the tricks but refuses to cheat. Their world was composed entirely of sharps and flats. It is the typical American conception; the use of knowledge is to get ahead of the other fellow, and the question of fairness depends on the chance of detection. We see this even in amateur sport. The one idea is to win. Knowledge for its own sake, pleasure for its own sake, seem to the American mere frivolity, “Life is real, life is earnest.” One of themselves told me recently that the American ideal is attainment, while that of Europe is enjoyment. There is much truth in this, and the reason is that in Europe we have already attained everything, and discovered that nothing is worth while. Unless we live in the present, we do not live at all.

Mexico was foul of gambling houses and I used to play a great deal. The chief game was Monte, in which the dealer exposes two cards; the punter can back which he pleases; bets being placed, the dealer skins the pack, and the first card with duplicates one of the two exposed cards wins for it. The bank's percentage is that if the first card skinned decides (is “in the door”, as they say), it only pays three-quarters of the stake.

The son of one of the prominent members of the old G.D. went to the bad and became a professional crook. Him I once frequented to study the psychology of hawk and pigeon.

First let me insist that the nave is always a fool. Prosperity is a function of biological success and (facts being facts) the habit of lying begets credulity. My friend never profited except now and then for a few lucky weeks, though he scooped in that time enough to keep a man with a grain of good sense for the rest of his life.

The confidence trick is protean, but in all its forms the essence is to get the victim off his guard. Observe how this fact confirms by general theory that surrender of the will to the guidance of the emotions is destructive of judgment. The first act in every trick is what is called the “come on” or the “build up”. Its crudest form is providing to a stranger that you trust him by asking him to go away for five minutes with your watch and money. From this has been developed an amazing structure of subtle strategy. The

shrewdest bankers have been looted for tens of thousands. The general plan is to bring about, in an apparently natural way, a series of incidents in which the chief of the confederates shows to advantage. His victim is induced to admire his keen sense of humour, his generosity, fairness, integrity, and so on in various emergencies. When the swindler fees sure that his victim trusts him implicitly, he proceeds to the next act. A scheme is suggested by which they shall both make a fortune, and in one of a million ways a situation is brought about in which it is hard for the victim to avoid putting up his cash. He could hardly show suspicion, even if he felt it, without giving outrageous offence for which he could produce no excuse. His common decency is concerned and at the same time a strong appeal made to his interests. He produces the goods—and hears no more of the matter.

I could give the details of half a hundred schemes of this sort. Their ingenuity extorts my intellectual admiration, and yet there is always a fundamental flaw that, in the hands of such men, a million melts more quickly than a thousand would with anyone else. In every swell bar and hotel one can see plenty such — all well dressed and well groomed, laughing and joking, and throwing their money about, and all the time ninety per cent feel a sinking in the pit of the stomach as the thought hammers persistently at the back of their brains, “How shall I pay my bill?” at the best; and, overshadowing lesser worries, “What about when my luck turns?” “When will my own confidence in the imbecility of my fellow men be enlightened by their robbing me of the stake I risked, my liberty?”

A delicious ride by electric tram from the city beings one to Tacubaya, a luxurious pleasure resort with a big casino. The play is at long tables stacked with thousands of silver dollars. One night I noticed the electric chandelier beginning to swing. Crashing sounds came from without. Suddenly the lights went out! It was an earthquake. Attendants rushed in with lighted candles. It could hardly have been dark for two minutes; the room was almost empty and most of the cash had vanished.

I had been playing a modified martingale with happier results than my stupidity deserved. But, one night, luck ran against me and my stake had increased to the limit allowed by the house. There was a slight delay—I think someone had called for a fresh pack of cards—I found myself walking nervously up and down. Somewhat as had happened in the Chess Congress at Berlin, I had a vision of myself from somewhere outside. “Look at that young fool,” I seemed to be saying; “that stake he has there is about a month's income.” The cards were dealt. I had won, but “in the door”, so that I only got 75 per cent. I picked up my winnings, walked out and have never gambled again; except once at Monte Carlo for the fun of the thing, some years later. I made it a rule to take £5 to the casino and quit, when it was gone, for the

day. As luck would have it, on the fourth day I kept on winning. I had an appointment for lunch. Remembering this, I suddenly awoke to the fact that I had won over £350. That was good enough for me. After lunch I packed up and escaped to Nice, with a vow never again to set foot in the Principality.

All this time I had not forgotten my project of climbing the mountains of Mexico. Somehow, my Indian girl knew that I was keen on them; and one day she called me up to the roof of the house and pointed out two snow-capped peaks. As I have already said, my judgment of heights and distances was surprisingly accurate. Mexico being about seven thousand feet above the sea, I judged these peaks to be from eleven to twelve thousand, and their distance from the city some eight to ten miles. I proposed to myself to stroll out and climb them one day. “From their summits,” I said to myself, “I may be able to see the big mountains eighty miles away.” The scheme miscarried. I was looking at the big mountains themselves! I had made no allowance for the clearness of the air. People whose experience is confined to Europe have no means of judging correctly. As I found later, the Himalayas are to Mexican peaks as these are to the Alps. In north India one sees a mountain apparently within a day's march, yet four days later that mountain will hardly have changed its apparent size and distance.

I do not know why I made no attempts on the peaks. Perhaps it was from an obscure feeling of comradeship. I preferred to wait till Eckenstein joined me, which he was to do towards the end of the year.

STANZA XXV

Meanwhile my Magical condition was making me curiously uncomfortable. I was succeeding beyond all my expectations. In the dry pure air of Mexico, with its spiritual energy unexhausted and uncontaminated as it is in cities, it was astonishingly easy to produce satisfactory results. But my very success somehow disheartened me. I was getting what I thought I wanted and the attainment itself taught me that I wanted something entirely different. What that might be it did not say. My distress became acute; and, as I had done at the beginning, I sent out an urgent call for help from the Masters. It must have been heard at once, for little over a fortnight later I got a long letter from Fra. V.N.. Though I had not written to him, he gave me the very word that I needed. It restore my courage and my confidence. I continued my work with deeper and truer understanding. I began to perceive the real implications of what I was doing. In particular, I gained an entirely new grip of the Qabbala.

One of my results demands detailed record, because it proved later to be one of the foundations of the Great Work of my life. The word Abracadabra is familiar to everyone. Why should it possess such a reputation? Eliphas Lévi's explanations left me cold. I began to suspect that it must be a corruption of some true "word of power". I investigated it by means of the Qabbala. I restored its true spelling. Analysis showed it to be indeed the essential formula of the Great Work. It showed who to unite the Macrocosm with the Microcosm. I, therefore, adopted this word and its numerical value, 418, as the quintessentialized expression of the proper way to conduct all major Magical Operations.

This discovery was only one of many. Before Allan Bennett left for Ceylon, he gave me most of his Magical notebooks. One of these contained the beginnings of a Qabbalistic dictionary in which various sacred words were entered, not alphabetically, but according to their numerical value. I must explain that the fundamental idea of the Qabbala is that the universe may be regarded as an elaboration of the numbers from 0 to 10, arranged in a certain geometrical design and connected by twenty-two "paths".1) The problem is to acquire perfect comprehension of the essential nature of these numbers. Every phenomenon, every idea, may be referred to one or more numbers. Each is thus, so to say, a particular modification of the pure idea. Sacred words which add up to any number should be eloquent commentaries on one of its aspects. Thus the number 13 proves to be, as it were, an essay on the number 1. The words "unity" and "love"2) both add up to 13. These ideas are therefore qualities of 1. Now, 26 combines the idea of duality, which is the condition of manifestation or consciousness, with this 13; and

we find, accordingly, that 26 is the value of the name Jehovah. From this we see Him as the Demiourgos, the manifestation in form of the primordial *One*.

For many years I worked on these lines continually, adding to Allan's nucleus, and ultimately making a systematic compilation. The resulting book was published in the *Equinox*, Volume I, Number 8. It is the only dictionary of the Qabbala in existence that can claim any degree of completeness. Since its publication, of course, new knowledge has come to light and I hope to issue a revised edition in course of time. As it stands, however, it is the essential book of reference for the student. It can never be complete; for one thing, every student must create his own Qabbala. My conception, for instance, of the number 6 will not be identical to yours. The difference between you and me is, in fact, just this; you are capable of perceiving one set of aspects of absolute reality, I another. The higher our attainment, the more closely will our points of view coalesce, just as a great English and a great French historian will have more ideas in common about Napoleon Bonaparte than a Devonshire and a Provinçal peasant. But there will always be more in any being than any man can know.

My Magical work was pushed into the background by the arrival of Eckenstein. He openly jeered at me for wasting my time on such rubbish. He being brutally outspoken, and I shy and sensitive, I naturally avoided creating opportunities for him to indulge his coarse ribaldry on a subject which to me was supremely sacred. Occasionally, however, I would take advantage of his unintelligence by talking to him in terms which I knew he would not understand. I find that it relieves my mind and helps me to clarify my thoughts if I inflict my jargon on some harmless stranger haphazard. As will be told in due course, Eckenstein and I made a very thorough exploration of the mountains of Mexico. During this time, my Magical distress again increased. I could not relieve it by the narcotic of preparing and performing actual ceremonies, of silencing the voice of the demons by absorption in active work. It was while we were preparing our expedition to Colima that I broke out one evening and told Eckenstein my troubles, as I had done often enough before with no result beyond an insult or a sneer. Balaam could not have been more surprised when his ass began to prophesy that I was when, at the end of my outburst, Eckenstein turned on me and gave me the worst quarter of an hour of my life. He summed up my Magical situation and told me that my troubles were due to my inability to control my thoughts. He said: “Give up your Magick, with all its romantic fascinations and deceitful delights, Promise to do this for a time and I will teach you how to master your mind.” He spoke with the absolute authority which comes from profound and perfect knowledge. And, as I sat and listened, I found my faith fixed by the force of facts. I wondered and worshipped. I thought of Easter '98, when I wandered in Wastdale in despair and cried to the universe for

someone to teach me the truth, when my imagination was impotent to forge the least link with any helper. Yet at that very hour, sitting and smoking by the fire opposite me, or roped to me on a precipice, was the very man I needed, had I but had the intuition to divine his presence!

I agreed at once to his proposals and he taught me the principles of concentration. I was to practise visualizing simple objects; and when I had succeeded in keeping these fairly steady, to try moving objects, such as a pendulum. The first difficulty is to overcome the tendency of an object to change its shape, size, position, colour, and so on. With moving objects, the trouble is that they try to behave in an erratic manner. The pendulum wants to change its rate, the extent of its swing or the plane in which it travels.

There were also practices in which I had to imagine certain sounds, scents, tastes and tactile sensations. Having covered this ground-work to his satisfaction, he allowed me to begin to visualize human figures. He told me that the human figure acts differently from any other object. “No one has ever managed to keep absolutely still.” There is also a definite test of success in this practice. The image should resolve itself into two; a smaller and a larger superimposed. It is said that by this means one can investigate the character of the person of whom one is thinking. The image assumes a symbolic form, significant of its owner's moral and intellectual qualities.

I practised these things with great assiduity; in fact, Eckenstein put the brake on. One must not overstrain the mind. Under his careful tuition, I obtained great success. There is no doubt that these months of steady scientific work, unspoiled by my romantic fancies, laid the basis of a sound Magical and Mystic technique. Eckenstein evidently understood what I was later to learn from the *Book of the Law*: “For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.”

During this time we were busy with expeditions. Eckenstein had already been to the Himalayas (in 1892); he wanted to complete my education by experience of mountains higher than the Alps, and travel in rough country among primitive people. We began by establishing a camp on Iztaccihuatl, at about fourteen thousand feet. We remained there for a matter of three weeks and climbed this, the most beautiful mountain in Mexico, from every possible side. In doing so, we incidentally broke several world's records.

Our difficulties were in some ways severe. The canned food procurable in Mexico City was of inferior quality and many years old at that. Eckenstein was constantly ill with diarrhea and I was not much better. Finally food gave out altogether and our last three days we had literally nothing but champagne and Danish butter. We didn't care much; we had done what we had

set out to do. Besides, I had learnt a great deal about camp life, the fine points of glissading, and the use of Steigeisen. In 1899, at the Montanvers, I had already found that his mechanically perfect “claws” worked miracles. We had shown a young man for Oxford, Dr. T. G. Longstaff, of what they were capable. Eckenstein would walk on a measured slope of over 70° of hard black ice without cutting a step. On slopes up to 50° he could simply stroll about. Nor could Longstaff pull him off by the rope.

On the grand scale, too, I had proved their possibilities. One day, Eckenstein being ill, I had arranged to go with Longstaff and his two guides over the Col du Géant. Not feeling very fit myself, I thought I would start an hour ahead of the others. Having inspected the ice-fall, I found a way straight up. When I was about half way through the seracs, I heard Longstaff's guides yelling blue murder. I had taken the “wrong” way. Their route involved a detour of a mile or more. I took not notice of their friendly anxiety and reached the top a long way in advance. When they arrived, they explained that what I had done was impossible. To carry on the joke, when we got back I offered 150 francs to any party that would repeat the climb by my route. Nobody did so.

It is really astonishing and distressing that (after all these years of proof that men with proper claws are to men without them as a rifleman to an archer) English climbers are still quite ignorant of what claws can do, or how to use them. In Mr. Harold Raeburn's book he argues amiable against them. He admits that one can walk up hard snow at easy angles without steps, but fears to do so lest, returning later in the day, he should find the snow soft, and then where would he be without a staircase? He seems to have no idea that the supreme use of claws is on ice and that the harder the ice the surer the hold. Yet Mr. Raeburn pits himself against Everest, where claws would convert the most perilous passages into promenades, and ice slopes whose length an steepness make step-cutting impracticable into serenely simple staircases. The policy of boycotting Eckenstein and his school, of deliberately ignoring the achievements of Continental climbers, to say nothing of my own expeditions, has preserved the privilege and prestige of the English Alpine Club. Ignorance and incompetence are unassailable. Ridicule does not reach the realms of secure snobbery. The mountains themselves vainly maim and murder the meddlers; they merely clamour all the more conceitedly to be considered heroes. It is one of the most curious characteristics of the English that they set such store by courage as to esteem a man the more highly the more blindly he blunders into disaster. We thought it rather unfair to take cove against Boer marksmanship; we are still proud of being unprepared in the Great War. We doubt whether science is sportsmanlike; and so it is thought rotten bad form to point out how mismanagement smashed Scott's expedition. No gentleman criticizes the conduct of the campaign of Gallipoli.

In March 1922 I heard of the composition and projects of the Everest Expedition. I wrote an article predicting failure and disaster, giving my reasons and showing how to avoid the smash. No one would print it. I was told it was the thing to “crab” these gallant gentlemen. No. But should my prophecies come true, then was the time to explain why. What I had foretold came to pass precisely as I had predicted it. But I was still unable to get a hearing. Why add to the tribulations of these heroes by showing up their stupidity? Besides, England had failed—better not talk about it at all.

On Iztaccihuatl, on off days, we had a lot of practice with rifles and revolvers. At that altitude and in that clear air one's shooting becomes superb. We found we could do at a hundred yards better than we had ever done before at twenty-five. We used to knock the bottoms out of bottles, end-on, without breaking the necks. In Mexico we used to make rather a point of practising with firearms whenever we struck a new district. A reputation for expertness is the best protection against local marauders.

For instance. We once fell in with a party of railway engineers, one short. The absentee had strolled out after dinner to enjoy the cool of the air. He was found in the morning naked, with a *machete* wound in the back. He had been treacherously murdered for the value of a suit worth, at the outside, five shillings.

When we returned to Amecameca, we went at once to pay our respects to the Jefe Politico, to ask him to dinner to celebrate our triumph. He had been very kind and useful in helping us to make various arrangements. When he saw us he assumed an air of sympathetic melancholy. We wondered what it could mean. By degrees he brought himself to break to us gently the terrible news. Queen Victoria was dead! To the amazement of the worthy mayor, we broke into shouts of joy and an impromptu war dance.

I think this incident rather important. In reading Mr. Lytton Strachey's Eminent Victorians, and still more his Queen Victoria, as also in discussing periods with the younger generation, I find total failure to appreciate the attitude of artists and advanced thinkers who remember her jubilee. They cannot realize that to us Victoria was sheer suffocation. While she lived it would be impossible to tale a single step in any direction. She was a huge and heavy fog; we could not see, we could not breathe. Under her, England had advanced automatically to prosperity. Science too had surged up from sporadic spurts into a system. And yet, somehow or other, the spirit of her age had killed everything we cared for. Smug, sleek, superficial, servile, snobbish, sentimental shopkeeping had spread everywhere. Even Darwinism had become respectable. Even Bradlaugh had been accepted. James Thomson had been starved and classed with the classics. Swinburne had been

whacked and washed and brushed and turned into a model boy. The Church of England had collapsed under the combined assault of Rationalism and Rome; yet, deprived of its religious element, and torn from its historical justification, it persisted placidly. The soul of England was stagnant, stupefied! Nothing remained for which a man might be willing either to live or to die. Huxley, Manning, Booth, Blavatsky, Ray Lankester—it mattered nothing what they said and did, all were equally stifled in shapeless sacks, stowed away indistinguishably, their voices mingled in the murmur of polite society.

It is hard to say why Queen Victoria should have seemed the symbol of this extraordinary state of suspended animation. Yet there was something in her physical appearance and her moral character which pointed to her as the perfect image of this inhibiting idea. The new generation, seeing their predecessors in perspective, perceive the individual qualities of each. There is nothing to tell them that in those days each one of us seethed with impotent rage at our doom. We were all damned with faint praise. Sir Richard Burton was toned down into a famous traveller and translator; Gordon sentimentalized into a warrior saint; Hardy was accepted as the Homer of Wessex; Meredith patted on the back as the modern Ovid. It was impossible to dynamite the morass of mediocrity. Progress was impossible. The most revolutionary proposals, the most blasphemous theories, lost their sting. A Sovereign of Suet, a Parliament of Putty, an Aristocracy of Alabaster, an Intelligentsia of India-rubber, a Proletariat of Pulp; it was impossible to shape such material. The strongest impression was blunted by the inertia of the viscous glue which resisted nothing, but resumed its formlessness as soon as the immediate impulse of the impact was spent.

England had become a Hausfrau's idea of heaven, and the empire an eternal Earl's Court Exhibition. This was the real reason why people who loved England, like Tom Broadbent in “John Bull's Other Island,” used to indulge in spasms of glee whenever we happened to have a corporal's file ambushed by some horde of savages.*

Our next expedition was to the Colima District. The mountain is here divided into two very distinct sections; one is snow-clad, the other one of the most frequently active volcanoes in the world. Going over the shoulder of the Nevado, we emerged from a forest to get our first view of the Volcan, some twelve miles away. As we watched, an eruption occurred. The wind was blowing towards us and the next thing we knew was that falling ashes were burning little holes in our clothes. We began to suspect that the ascent might be troublesome. We settled the Nevado straight off. The climbing is of little interest and no difficulty. Then we camped on a spur for a week, and took turns, day and night, to watch the behaviour of the volcano. The inspection was disappointing; we could not discover any periodicity in the ex-

plosions; we could simply take our chance. We started accordingly; but, finding our feet beginning to burn through our boots, decided to retire gracefully.

Our third objective was Toluca. Here we had two delightful days. For some reason or other we had not brought the tent and slept in the crater in our ponchos. In the morning I found myself about three inches thick in hoar-frost. On the first day we climbed what was apparently the highest summit. (The formation is that of the rim of an enormous crater.) When we got there we found that another point a long way off was higher. The next morning Eckenstein was sick and I had to go alone. There was some difficult rock climbing on the wall which led to the ridge. But once there, the summit was easily reached. There are many magnificent teeth, which I climbed conscientiously; a most exhilarating exercise. I traversed some distance till I found a gap on the other ridge from which I could run down to the crater. We went down to the plateau the same day and returned to the city.

On this excursion we met a man who said he had seen with his own eyes the famous Phantom City. This yarn has for me a peculiar fascination. I am not sure that I do not believe that in some sense it is true, thought it would be hard to say in exactly what sense. I heard the story at least a dozen times; twice first-hand from serious informants. The story varies but slightly and only in unimportant details.

It general tenor is this: A man on horseback, sometimes a solitary prospector, sometimes a member of a party temporarily separated from the rest, but always alone, loses his way in hilly wooded country. (The district varies considerably with the narrator, but as a rule is somewhere within a couple of hundred miles of Mexico City, the direction being between north-west and south-west.) The horseman is eager to find a way out of the forest, so that he may take his bearings. It is getting late; he does not want to camp out if he can help it. At last he sees the trees thinning out; he hurries forward and finds himself on the brink of the hillside. At this moment darkness falls suddenly. It is impossible to proceed. Then he sees on the hillside opposite, possibly two or three miles distant, a city gleaming white. It is not a large city by modern standards, but it is an important city. For its size, it is very bravely built. The architecture does not suggest a modern city; I have heard it described as “like an Arabian Nights city”, “like an old Greek city”, “like an Aztec city”. The traveller proposes to himself to visit it in the morning. But when he wakes there is no trace of it. There is not even any distinguishing character about the hillside where he saw it which might have suggested the idea of a city to a tired man. In some cases lights are seen in the city; occasionally there is even the sound of revelry.

Talking of liars! We suddenly discovered that we were regarded in the light ourselves. I suppose it is the abject ignorance and narrow outlook of ordinary people that makes them sceptical about anything out of the common. However, that may be, a paragraph appeared in the Mexican Herald which indirectly threw doubt on our expeditions. It was particularly pointless; we had published noting, made no claims, behaved in fact exactly as we should have done in the Alps. But Eckenstein was annoyed at the impertinence and proposed to take summary vengeance. He accordingly went down to the low bar frequented by the peccant reporter, bought him a few drinks, congratulated him on his literary style, and politely regretted that he should have been led into error by ignorance of his subject.

The reporter was far from sure that the conversation would not suddenly by a bullet being put through him, for Eckenstein always looked a very formidable customer; but he found himself charmingly invited to come with us and climb Popocatapetl, so as to acquire first-hand knowledge of mountains and the men who climbed them. He gaily and gratefully accepted this insidious proposition. We rode merrily up to the sulphur ranch, where intending climbers stay the night. The next morning the fun began. One of the world's records which we had left in tatters was that for pace uphill at great heights. Long before we got to the lowest point of the rim of the crater our sceptical friend found that he couldn't go another yard — he had to turn back. We assured him that the case was common, but could easily be met by use of the rope. So we tied him securely to the middle; Eckenstein set a fierce pace up hill, while I assisted his tugging by prodding the recalcitrant reporter with my axe. He exhausted the gamut of supplication. We replied only by cheerful and encouraging exhortations, and by increased efforts. We never checked our rush till we stood on the summit. It was probably the first time that it had ever been climbed in an unbroken sprint. Our victim was by this time convinced that we could climb mountains. And he was certainly the sorriest sight!

Even on the descent, his troubles were not over. Most of the lower slopes are covered with fine loose ash, abominable to ascend but a joy to glissade. Our friend, between the fear of God, the fear of Death, and the fear of Us, had lost all mastery of his emotions. We had taken the rope off and shot down the slopes to show him how to do it, but he was in mortal terror. The felling that the ground was slipping under his feed drove him almost insane. I hardly know how he got down to us at last, except that on those loose slopes he could hardly help it. Having put our man through the mill, we became seriously friendly. He took his lesson like a good sportsman and made his apologies in the *Mexican Herald*, by writing a long account of his adventure in the style of the then famous Mr. Dooley.

Eckenstein and I lived in an American apartment house, from the roof of which one could see a great distance down a principal thoroughfare.

Eckenstein used to lure people to discuss eyesight and mention that mine was miraculous for distant objects. It would by arrange for me to drop in at this stage, accidentally on purpose, and then Eckenstein would offer to prove his tall stories on the spot. So we would go up to the roof with field glasses and I would describe distant objects in great detail, read names on shops a quarter of a mile off, etc. etc. The victim would check this through the field glasses, confirming my accuracy. No one ever suspected that this stunt had been prepared by my using the field glasses and learning the scenery by heart!

I should have mentioned a short excursion which I took to Vera Cruz. My ostensible object was to see some cases of yellow fever. As a matter of fact, I was horribly afraid of the disease. So I picked an occasion when the port had shown a clean bill of health for the previous three weeks. I had an introduction to a local doctor and told him how sorry I was not to be able to see any cases. “Well, well,” said he, “come round to the hospital tomorrow morning anyhow — some points may be of interest.” And then I found any amount of Yellow Jack, mendaciously diagnosed as malaria, typhoid, etc., in the hope of throwing dust in the eyes of the United States inspectors and getting them to remove the quarantine.

The journey from Vera Cruz back to the city is to my mind the finest in the world from the point of view of spectacular effect; the second best is from the Ganges up to Darjeeling. For the first forty miles one runs through tropical jungle, then the track suddenly begins to mount and wind its way among the sub-alpine gorges, with the whole eighteen thousand feet of Citlaltepetl towering above. The scenery continually changes in character as one ascends, and then quite suddenly one comes out on the plateau, a level vastness almost desert save from cactus and aloe, with the two cones of Istaccihuatl and Popocatapetl sticking out of it.

We had intended to finish our programme by climbing Citlatepetl; but there were difficulties about mules and none about the mountain. We were too bored to trouble to climb it. Somehow or other, the current of our enthusiasm had become exhausted. We had achieved all our real objects and the next thing was to get ready for the Himalayas. Eckenstein returned to England and on the 20th of April I started for San Francisco, westward bound. My objective was a curious one. Since leaving England, I had thought over the question of the authority of Mathers with ever increasing discomfort. He had outraged every principle of probity and probability; but he was justified, provided that his primary postulate held good. I could think of only one way

of putting him to the test. It concerned an episode at which Allan Bennett was present. Allan, and he alone, could confirm the account which Mathers had given me. If he did so, Mathers was vindicated; if not, it was fatal to his claims. It seems absurd to travel eight thousand miles to ask one question—a childish question into the bargain!—but that was what I did. The sequel will be told in the proper place.

* P.S.—And in 1929 I find myself rather regretting those “spacious days”!

STANZA XXVI

I broke the journey at El Paso. Coming straight from the quiet civilisation of Mexico it was a terrible shock to find myself in touch with the coarse and brutal barbarism of Texas. There are many unpleasant sides of life which cannot be avoided without shirking reality altogether; but in the United States they were naked and horrible. The lust of money raged stark without the softening influences of courtesy. Drunkenness was stripped of good-fellowship; the sisterhood of sin presented no deceptive attractions. The most idealistic innocent could not have been under a moment's illusion — they were stalled like cattle in rows of wooden shanties; and they carried on their business with fierce commercial candour. All those little grace of life which make bought kisses tolerable to those sensitive people who are willing to be fooled, were absent.

I strolled across to Juarez to kiss My Girl goodbye. O Mexico, my heart still throbs and burns whenever memory brings you to my mind! For many other countries I have more admiration and respect, but none of them rivals your fascination. Your climate, your customs, your people, your strange landscapes of dreamlike enchantment rekindle my boyhood.

Outside Juarez was a labour camp. Public works of some sort were in progress—at least such progress as we find in Mexico! Hundreds of men were loafing about at their eternal cigarettes and tossing various liquefactions of hell-fire down their chilli-armoured gullets. Most of the groups were squatting round a soiled poncho, on which were scattered coins and greasy cards. I stood and watched one party of three. The swearing, jabbering and quarrelling were incessant here, as all over the camp. Nothing struck me as abnormal. Then, like a flash of forked lightning, one of the men flung himself across the poncho and twisted his fingers in the hair of the man opposite. (Astounding recklessness to let it grow so long!) He thrust his thumbs into the corners of his enemy's eyes, as he writhed and kicked on top of him, the momentum of his spring having bowled the other on to his back. The man's eyes were torn from their sockets in a second and his assailant, disengaging himself by a violent jerk from his victim's clutch, made off like an arrow across country to the frontier. The shrieks of the mutilated man were answered by universal uproar. Some followed on foot, others ran to their bronchos, but the great majority maintained an attitude of philosophical indifference. It was no business of theirs, except so far as it might remind them to visit the barber.

I went on to San Francisco. The city is famous in history for the earthquake of 1906; and for having starved Stevenson, who has described it admirably in “The Wrecker.”

It was a glorified El Paso, a madhouse of frenzied money-making and frenzied pleasure-seeking, with none of the corners chipped off. It is beautifully situated and the air reminds one curiously of Edinburgh. At that time it possessed a real interest and glory — its Chinatown. During the week I was there, I spent most of my time in that quarter. It was the first time that I had come into contact with the Chinese spirit in bulk; and, though thee exiles were naturally the least attractive specimens of the race, I realized instantly their spiritual superiority to the Anglo-Saxon, and my own deep-seated affinity to their point of view. The Chinaman is not obsessed by the delusion that the profits and pleasures of life are really valuable. He gets all the more out of them because he knows their worthlessness, and is consequently immune from the disappointment which inevitably embitters those who seek to lay up treasure on earth. A man must really be a very dull brute if, attaining all his ambitions, he finds satisfaction. The Eastern from Lao-Tze and the Buddha to Zoroaster and Ecclesiastes, feels in his very bones the futility of earthly existence. It is the first postulate of his philosophy.

California got on my nerves. Life in all its forms grew rank and gross, without a touch of subtlety. I embodied this feeling in a sonnet:

> “ . . . gross and great
> Her varied fruits and flowers alike create
> Glories most unimaginable . . .
> . . . yet this is sore,
> A stain; not one of these is delicate.”

For some time, I had been contemplating a lyric poem in which everything in the world should be celebrated in detail. It was a crazy notion—one of those fantastic follies which is impossible in nature—a species of literary “squaring the circle”. I doubt whether it was a genuine impulse. Its motive was the vanity and vulgarity of attempting something big. It was the American passion for tall buildings and record processions in another form. It was the probably my reaction to the spiritual atmosphere of California. In any case, the worst happened. I began it! The best plan will be to describe what happened and get it over.

It was not finished till the middle of 1904. Book I is in form a gigantic Greek ode. It celebrates all the forces of nature and the children of time. Orpheus invokes them in turn; and they reply. Book II describes the winning of Eurydice by Orpheus. It is entirely a monologue by him. My literary insanity

is well indicated by my proposal to insert a five-act play, *The Argonauts*, afterwards published separately, as an incident in his wooing! Book III describes the visit of Orpheus to Hades; and contains the invocations of the necessary deities, with their replies. Book IV relates the death of Orpheus. Unwieldy as the poem is, it contains some of my best lyrics. Further, even conceding that the entire effort was a fiasco, it must be admitted that the task of writing it was an excellent discipline; it taught me a great deal about technique and its very awkwardness warned me what to avoid.

On May 1st I find in my diary the following words: “I solemnly began anew the operations of the Great Work.” I had mapped out for myself a definite programme which was to combine what I had learnt from Eckenstein with the methods of the Order. For instance: I had extracted the Magical Formula of the Ritual of Neophyte and applied it to a Ceremony of Self-Initiation. I now simplified this and got rid of the necessity of the physical temple by expressing it in a series of seven mental operations.

Other practices were the “assumption of God-forms”; by concentrated imagination of oneself in the symbolic shape of any God, one should be able to identify oneself with the idea which He represents. There was meditation on simple symbols with the idea of penetrating to their secret meaning. I was also to keep up my practices of astral visions and “rising on the planes”, in particular the special official method of invoking Adonai-ha-Aretz. I was also to continue the work Eckenstein had taught me, on his lines. As to more Magical matters, I proposed to continue the evocation of elemental forces to visible appearance, to make various talismans and charge them with spiritual energy by means of meditation, and to continue the building up of my (so-called) astral body until it was sufficiently material to be perceptible to the ordinary physical sense of people whom I should visit in this shape. There will be found in my Magical Record numerous accounts of this last experiment.

In the autumn of '98 my friend, J. L. Baker, whom I hastened to see in London on my return from the Alps, took me on my first astral journey. The details of the method are given in full in the Equinox, I, 2 (Liber O). I may here outline them thus:

Imagine an image of yourself, standing in from of you. Transfer your consciousness to it. Rise upward. Invoking forces desired by the prescribed methods. Observe their appearance. Test their authenticity. Enter into conversation with them. Travel under their guidance to the particular part of the universe which you desire to explore. Return to earth. Cause the Body of Light to coincide spatially with the physical. Reconnect them, using the sign

of Harpocrates. Resume normal consciousness. Record the experience. Test its value by the critical methods advocated in the Equinox.

After only a few such journeys I found myself much stronger on the wing that my tutor. He was always getting into trouble. Demoniac forms would threaten the circle. He tired easily. He often placed confidence in lying spirits. In fact, his goodwill exceeded his ability. It all came as natural to me as swimming does to a duck. I picked up all the technical tricks of the trade almost by instinct; such as enable one to detect imposition on the instant, to banish disturbing elements, to penetrate the veils and pacify the warders of the secret sanctuaries; and to assure the accuracy of the information obtained, by methods the precision of which precludes the possibility of coincidence.

I soon found it necessary to develop the Body of Light. I explored such remote, exalted and well-guarded adyta that the necessary invocations and sacraments required more energy than was at the disposal of the Body of Light which normally separates from its physical envelope. The result was that I soon built up a body so powerful that it was clearly visible to the physical vision of all but the grossest types of humanity. It also acquired an independence of my conscious will which enabled it to travel on its own initiative without my knowledge. Strange tales began to circulate, some doubtless true, others probably coloured, and, of course, not a few baseless inventions.

As a type of the first class, let me quote the following: G. H. Frater S.R.M.D. had asked me to visit him in Paris. He expected me in the afternoon. My train was late; I was tired and dirty. I postponed my call till the following day. To my surprise, my host and hostess did not greet me quite as I expected. In the course of our talk they made allusions which were quite unintelligible. At last we became aware that we were talking at cross-purposes. The crash came when Soror Vestigia insisted, “But you said so yourself at tea!” I couldn't remember that I had ever been there to tea. On my one previous visit I had lunched one day and dined the next, but no more. “At tea!” I echoed, bewildered. “Yes, at tea!” she repeated. “Surely you remember. It was only yesterday.” We compared times. I was then dozing in the train from Calais. It then came out that I had called quite normally, though I seemed tired and dazed. I had stayed about an hour. Nothing had let them to suspect that I was not physically present.

Of the third class, I remember chiefly that my sister Fidelis was cursed with a horrible mother, a sixth-rate singer, a first-rate snob, with dewlaps and a paunch; a match-maker, mischief-maker, maudlin and muddle-headed. The ghastly hag put it all round London and New York that I had en-

tered her daughter's room at night in my Body of Light. I don't know whether she went beyond the vile suggestion. Even had the tale been true, which Fidelis disdainfully denied, the woman must have been as witless as she was worthless to splash her own daughter with such ditch-water.

All the same, I feel grateful. Her stupid lie put it into my head to make the experiment in question, though of course with the knowledge and approval of the girl. The result is recorded in a subsequent chapter.

When I began to develop this power consciously, I obtained considerable success. At the time of this journey I had arranged to visit a Sister of the Order who lived in Hong Kong; at prearranged times, so that she might be looking out for me. Several of these visits turned out well. She saw and heard me; and on comparing notes, we found that our reports of the conversation agreed. But I was not able to act on “matter”. I used to try to knock things off the mantelpiece, but in vain. On the other hand, when I reached Hong Kong, I recognized the place perfectly and picked out her house on the hillside, thought I had never seen so much as a photograph.

These numerous practices were assigned to a regular schedule. Five different periods of the day were to be devoted to one or the other.

On May 3rd I left for Honolulu on the Nippon Maru, arriving on the ninth. A strange destiny lay in ambush for me among the palms.

The poetical side of me is annoyed to this day when I think of it. I ought to have followed the ideal of Gauguin. It was absurd to have got so far only to fall in love with a white woman. I know now that white women introduce the idea of impurity into love in one way or another. There is something either vicious or intellectual about them. Love should be a strictly physiological matter, with just that amount of natural emotion that goes with it. But then, such simple happiness is not for me.

Anyhow, I decided to spend a month on Waikiki Beach. I had a vague idea of getting a hut and a native girl, and devoting myself to poetry of the most wholesome kind with corresponding Magick. However, at the hotel was an exquisitely beautiful American woman of Scottish origin. She was ten years older than myself and had a boy with her just entering into his teens. She was married to a lawyer in the States and had come to Hawaii to escape hay fever.

I went on with my magical and other work; in particular, I invented a practice which has proved very useful. Its object is to prevent mosquitoes from biting one. The method is: to love them. One reminds oneself that the

mosquito has as much right to his dinner as a man has. It is difficult to get the exact shade of feeling and more so to feel it. One begins by lying defenceless against the enemy and sternly repressing the impulse to wave, to slap and to scratch. After a little perseverance, one finds that the bites no longer become inflamed; and this preliminary success is soon followed by complete protection. The will not bite one at all.

But my horizon gradually filled with romantic love and other occupations faded little by little. The woman was herself worthless from the points of view of the poet. Only very exceptional characters are capable of producing the positive effect; but it is just such women as Alice who inspire masterpieces, for they do not interfere with one's work. Passionately as I was in love, and crazily as I was behaving in consequence, I was still able to make daily notes of the progress of the affair with the detached cynicism of a third party. I took her with me to Japan,* but there was not enough in her character to count “the world well lost for love”. Exactly fifty days after I had met her she beat it back to her “provider”; and I understood immediately why my subconsciousness had insisted on my scribbling the details of our liaison in my diary.

The departure of Alice inspired me to write the story of our love in a sonnet-sequence. Each day was to immortalize its events in poetry. This again was one of my characteristically crude ideas, yet the result was surprisingly good—much better, perhaps, than I ever thought, or think now. No less a critic than Marcel Schwob called it “a little masterpiece”. And many other people of taste and judgment have professed themselves in love with it. Possibly the simplicity of its realism, its sincere and shame-free expression of every facet of my mind, constitute real merit. It is certainly true that most people find much of my work hard to read. The intensity of my passion, the profundity of my introspection, and my addiction to obscure allusions, demand the reader serious study, that he may grasp my meaning; and subsequent re-reading after my thought has been assimilated; until, no intellectual obstacle interrupting, he may be carried away by the current of my music and swept but it into the ocean of ecstasy which I myself reached when I wrote the poem. I am aware that few modern readers are capable of settling down deliberately to decipher me. And those who are may for that very reason be incapable of the orgiastic frenzy. Scholarship and passion rarely go together. But my muse is the daughter of Hermes and the mistress of Dionysus.

I saw comparatively little of Japan. I did not understand the people at all and therefore did not like them very much. Their aristocracy was somehow at odds with mine. I resented their racial arrogance. I compared them unfa-

vourably with the Chinese. Like the English, they possess the insular qualities and defects. They are not Asiatic, exactly as we are not European.

My most interesting impression was Kamakura. The Daibutsu, colossal amid his gardens of iris, with no canopy but the sky, does really produce a sense of his universality; it does remind one of the grandeur and solidity of his teaching; of the reasonableness of his methods of attainment, the impersonal peace which is their reward; and of the boundless scope of his philosophy, independent as it is of all arbitrary assumptions, parochial points of view, sordid appeals and soul-stupefying superstitions.

Already there had arisen in me the aspiration to attain to states whose very possibility I did not suspect; already I was aware, in the abyss of my heart, secret and silent, that I was Alastor, the wanderer in the wilderness, the Spirit of Solitude. For Kamakura, calmly certain of its soul-searching accents, called to me to abide in the security of its shadow, there to toil even as the Buddha had done, that I might come to the perfect Illumination, and thereby being made free from all the fetters of falsehood, being to mankind the Word of Wisdom and magic that hath might to enlighten their eyes, to heal their hearts, and to bring them to a stage of spiritual evolution such that their poets could not longer lament, as I:

> “Nothing is stranger to men
> Than silence, and wisdom, and kindness.”

I inquired as to the possibility of settling down on one of the neighbouring monasteries; but somehow my instinct opposed my intention. The Inmost knew that my destiny lay elsewhere. The Lords of Initiation cared nothing for my poetic fancies and my romantic ideals. They had ordained that I should pass through every kind of hardship at the hands of Nature, suffer all sorrow and shame that life can inflict. Their messenger must be tested by every ordeal — not by those that he himself might choose. The boy who, asked to discuss some point of doctrine in the Epistles, replied, “Far be it from me to presume to parley with St. Paul: let me rather give a list of the kings of Israel and Judah!” (the only thing he knew), probably became a Cabinet minister; but similar adroitness does not avail the aspirant to adeptship. The Masters test every link in turn, infallibly and inexorably; it is up to you to temper your steel to stand the strain; for one flaw means failure and you have to forge it all afresh in the fires of fate, retrieve in a new incarnation the lost opportunity of the old.

I turned then sadly from Daibutsu, as I had turned from love, ambition and ease, my spirit silently acquiescing in the arcane arbitrament of the mysterious daimon who drove me darkly onward; how I knew not, whither I

knew not, but only this, that he was irresistible as inscrutable, yet no less trustworthy than titanic.

Alas! The failure of Alice to reach the summit of Love! Thence are the valleys of virtue, the rivers of respectability and the sheepfolds of society seen dim and dull in the distance, bestially beneath our sparkling snows, or shoreless sky, our sacred sun and sentinel stars.

Alice had broken my boy's heart; she had taught me what women were worth. For her I had surrendered my single-minded devotion to my spiritual Quest; I had sold my soul to the Devil for sixpence, and the coin was counterfeit.

True, one of me knew all along the augury of the adventure; but then, all the worse! For if Alice had been a real danger, might not I have damned myself for her, as many a knight for Venus of the Hollow Hill, as many a saint for Lilith, Lady of the Lake of Fire? Yet no: the answer came, august and austere, from mine Angel, that I had passed the Ordeal. I had proved that no passion, however pure and powerful, could enslave me. The caresses of no Calypso could chain me in her courts, the cup of Circe corrupt my chastity, the song of no Siren seduce me to suicide, the wiles of no Vivien ensnare my simplicity and bind me in the hollow oak of Broceliande.

I had intoxicated myself utterly with Alice; I had invested her with all the insignia that my imagination could invent. Yet, loving her with all my heart and soul, she had not seduced me from my service. I knew — and They who put her on my Path knew also — that I was immune. I might dally with Delilah as much as I liked and never risk the scissors. Love, who binds other Samsons, blinds them and sets them to serve the Philistines, to be their scorn and sport, would be to me my Light and lead me in the way of Liberty. The secret of my Strength was the, that Love would always stand a shining symbol of my Truth, that I loved spiritually the Soul of Mankind. Therefore each woman, be she chaste or wanton, faithful or false, inspiring me to scale the summits of song or whispering me to wallow in the swamps of Sin, would be to me no more than a symbol in whose particular virtue my love could fins the Bread and Wine of its universal Eucharist.

Time has confirmed this claim: I have loved many women and been loved. But I have never wavered from my Work; and always a moment has come when the woman had to choose between comradeship and catastrophe. For in truth, there was no Aleister Crowley to love; there was only a Word for the utterance of which a human form had been fashioned. So the Foolish Virgins, finding that Love and Vanity could not live together, gave up

a Man for a Mirror; but the Wise, knowing that man is mortal, gave up the World for the Work and thereby cheated satiety, disillusionment and Death.

Yet, so fearful was I at this time that I had failed and shown myself unfit to accomplish the terrific Tasks, to undertake which must be, as I was warned by some secret sense, the only honour I could accept from the High Gods, that I continued my journey to Ceylon in a mood not only contrite but confused. The calm soft loveliness of the Inland Sea brought no peace to my spirit; indeed, it made scarcely any impression upon my aesthetic sense. The sordid scramble of the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai stirred my scorn without rousing me from my stupefaction. In spite of the subtle passion to assimilate China which had taken possession of me in San Francisco, I could not so much as indulge in a saunter through the native city. I wanted to reach Hong Kong and tell my troubles to my Sister Fidelis. She would understand, judge, encourage and advise, none better. In the days of the G∴D∴ *debacle*, her purity, her fearlessness, her loyalty, her scorn of all dishonourable device and deed, her single-heartedness, her eager and ecstatic aspiration: these had made sweet those struggles against the stupid, selfish sectaries with their petty pique, their treacherous trickeries, their slanders and squabbles.

Ah me! the Gods were at their grim game; they had another dagger ready to slip between my ribs. Fidelis was now a married woman. She was still playing at Magick, as another might play at Bridge. But her true life was dresses, dinners and dances; and her thought were taken up by her husband and her lover. (In hot countries, white men being relaxed by the climate, European women, over-stimulated for the same reason, almost inevitably practise polyandry.)

And she had won the first prize at a fancy dress Ball by appearing in her Adept's robes and regalia!

No hope here, then! Nay, nor elsewhere! I saw clearly enough that the Gods meant me to work out my own puzzles without human help. I must stand alone. Well and good, so be it! I had the sense to accept the Ordeal as a compliment. The umbilical cord was cut: I was an independent Being, with his own way to make in the world.

On the boat from Yokohama to Shanghai were two American spinsters of the faded variety, with parchment skin due to dryness of climate and devotion to virtue and cocktails. Hearing that I was interested in literature, hope revived. They told me their favorite poet was Rossetti. I was tactless enough to ask which of his poems they had read and preferred, but it did not runt to that. It was sufficiently daring to have heard of Rossetti. Only absolute

shamelessness would read him. Somewhat abashed, they informed me that a colleague was travelling on this boat, no less than Thomas Hardy. Naturally I jumped and begged an introduction.

Thomas Hardy was a tall, dignified, venerable figure, with a patriarchal beard and manner equally courteous and authoritative. I had not known he was a clergyman—as his costume assured me. After a little conversation, I began to surmise dimly that there was something wrong, and might have said something tactless if he had not volunteered an account of his literary career and been quite unaware of the existence of the Mayor of Casterbridge. He was the *great* Thomas Hardy, the only and original bird, the chaplain to the forces at Hong Kong and author of “How to be happy though married.” I don't know how I kept my face straight.

As a matter of fact, he was perfectly human and even contributed a quite valuable item of information as to the psychology of publishers. He had approached one of these ineffable imbeciles** with his book and been told that while the text was all that could be desired, it was quite impossible to publish a book with that title. The reverend gentleman had the good sense to reply, “You blasted jackass—God damn your soul to Hell! (or words to that effect). Do anything you like with the book, but leave the title alone!” He cowed them and they complied, with the result that the book sold by hundreds of thousands.

* On the America Manu. There were many ladies on board: the wife of a railway magnate, the consul's daughter, and so on. In reality, they were all whores destined for various brothels in Japan or Shanghai, where American ladies fetch absurd prices.

** “Present Company Always Excepted”.

[WE ARE NOT SO SURE.]

STANZA XXVII

I sailed for Ceylon, chiefly because I had said I would go, certainly not in the hope of assistance from Allan. Perhaps because I had found my feet, he was, as will appear, allowed to guide them, in what seemed at first sight a new Path. I had got to learn that all roads lead to Rome. It is proper, more, it is prudent, more yet, it is educative, for the aspirant to pursue all possible Ways to Wisdom. Thus he broadens the base of his Pyramid, thus he diminishes the probability of missing the method which happens to suit him best, thus he insures against the obsession that the goat-track of his own success in the One Highway for all men, and thus he discounts the disappointment of discovering that he is not the Utter, the Unique, when it becomes plain that Magick, mysticism, and the mathematics are triplets, and that the Himalayan Brotherhood is to be found in Brixton.

I say little of Singapore; I say enough when I say that its curries, with their vast partitioned platter of curious condiments to lackey them, speak for themselves. They sting like serpents, stimulate like strychnine; they are subtle and sensual like Chinese courtesans, sublime and sacred, inscrutably inspiring and unintelligibly illumination, like Cambodian carvings.

Of Penang I will observe only that its one perfect product is the “Penang Lawyer”. But I should like to hear of any other city which can say the same!

As to Colombo, I love it and loathe it with nicely balanced enthusiasm. Its climate is chronic; its architecture is an unhappy accident; its natives are nasty, the men with long hair cooped up by a comb, smelling of fish, the women with waists bulging black between coat and skirt, greasy with coconut oil, and both chewing betel and spitting it out till their teeth ooze with red and the streets look like shambles; its English are exhausted and enervated. The Eurasians are anaemic abortions; the burghers—Dutch half-casts—stolid squareheads; the Portuguese piebalds sly sneaks, vicious, venal, vermiform villains. The Tamils are black but not comely. The riff-raff of rascality endemic in all ports is here exceptionally repulsive. The highwater mark of social tone, moral elevation, manners and refinement is attained by the Japanese ladies of pleasure.

In the matter of religion, the Hindus are (as everywhere else) servile, shallow, cowardly and hypocritical; though being mostly Shaivites, adoring frankly the power of Procreation and Destruction, they are less loathsome than Vishnavites, who cringe before a fetish who promises them Preservation and (as Krishna) claims to be the Original of which Christ is a copy.

The Christians are, of course, obscene outcasts from even the traditional tolerance of their clan; they have accepted Jesus with the promise of a job, and gag conscience with assurance of Atonement, or chloroform superstitious terrors by ruminating on Redemption. The Buddhists are sodden with their surfeit of indigestible philosophy and feebly flaunt a fluttering formula of which the meaning is forgotten; the debauchery of devil-dances, the pointless profession of Pansil (the Five Precepts of the Buddha), the ceremonial coddling of shrines as old maids coddle cats, voluble veneration and rigmarole religion: such is the threadbare tinsel which they throw over the nakedness of their idleness, immorality and imbecility.

Indians plausibly maintain that some God got all the worst devils into Ceylon, and then cut it off from the continent by the straits.

But then, how rich, how soft, how peaceful is Colombo! One feels that one needs never do anything any more. It invites one to dream deliciously of deciduous joys—and insists, with velvet hand, light and bright as a butterfly's wing, on the eyelids. The palms, the flowers, the swooning song of the surf, the dim and delicate atmosphere heavy with sensuous scents, the idle irresponsible people, purring with placid pleasure; they seem musicians in an orchestra, playing a Nocturne by some oriental Chopin unconscious of disquieting realities.

But more, Colombo is the “place where four winds meet”, the crossroads of the civilized world. Westward lies Europe, the energetic stripling, who thought to bear the world on his shoulders, but could not co-ordinate his own muscles. Northward lies India, like a woman weary of bearing, a widow holding to her ancient habits without hope. Southward, Australia, topsy-turvy as our childhood's wisdom warned us, sprawls its awkward adolescence and embarrasses its elders by its unconscious absurdity. Lastly, look Eastward! There lies China; there is the only civilization that has looked Time in the face without a blush; an atheism with good manners. There broods the old wise man, he who has conquered life without the aid of death, who may survive these strenuous youths and even the worn barren widow mumbling meaningless memories in her toothless mouth.

In Colombo this world problem solves itself; for the Indian toils, without ambition or object, from sheer habit; the European bosses things, with self-importance and bravado; the Australian lumbers in and out, loutishly, hoping not to be seen; and China, silent and absent, conveys majestically patriarchal reproof by simply ignoring the impertinence. Slightly as I had brushed against the yellow silken robes of China in the press of jostling cultures, its virtue had so entered into me that the positive and aggressive aspects of Colombo, tumultuously troubling through they were, failed to command my

full attention. As you vainly ply an opium smoker who craves his pipe with wine, with woman and with song, so the insolent insistence of the actualities of Colombo merely annoyed me; I was intensely aware of one thing only, the absence of the colossal calm and common sense of China.

Experience has taught me that imponderables are all-important; when science declares that it can concern itself only with that which can be measured, it classes itself with the child that counts on its fingers and brands Shakespeare and Shelley as Charlatans. I am not ashamed of such company; let me say then that the silent stress of my contact with the fringe of Chinese civilization operated in me the cure of my accursed European anxiety about my conduct. It is at least the fact that I met Allan with absolute *sang-froid*. I felt no need of confession. I had no sense of shame or inferiority. I had not favour to ask. I had perfect confidence in myself. We were interested in the same Quest, that was all; it was natural that we should exchange views.

Behold then! Allan, though the pupil of a Shaivite guru, was already at heart a Buddhist; and the miracle about Buddha, from the ethnological standpoint, is that an Aryan, by dint of sheer psychological acumen, should have come so near to understanding the Chinese mind. The fundamental weakness of Buddhism is that it fails to attain the indifference of Lao-Tze. Buddha wails for Nibbana as the sole refuge from sorrow; Lao-Tze despises Sorrow as casually as he despises Happiness and is content to reach equably to every possible impression.

Must I digress to excuse Allan Bennett, the noblest and the gentlest soul that I have ever known? Surely the immanence of physical agony, the continual anguish of the cross on which he has been nailed for more than fifty years, he not complaining, he not submitting, he not demanding release, but working inexorably and inexpugnably at this appointed Task—surely the unremitting stroke of that fell fact must have avenged itself for its foiled malice by fashioning his conception of the universe in the same form as seemed omnivalent to the Buddha, who could not estimate the influence of his vain desolating years of idle luxury and the abortive atonement of his random reaction to angry asceticism.

Allan never knew joy; he disdained and distrusted pleasure from the womb. Is it strange that he should have been unable to conceive life as aught but ineluctable and fatuous evil? For myself, I saw pleasure as puerile, sorrow as senile; I was ready, when mine hour should arrive, to accept either amicably or dismiss both disdainfully.

Meanwhile, I was simply an adept—wandering round the world in the way adepts have—bent on picking up any pearls that proved their pedigrees from honest oysters and were guaranteed rejected by swine.

So, when I saw Allan, I put my question, referred to above, and got my answer.

The official record is subjoined.

D.D.C.F., Mathers, had told me a certain incident which had taken place between himself and Bennett as follows:

“He and I.A. had disagreed upon an obscure point in theology, thereby formulating the accursed Dyad, thereby enabling the Abramelin demons to assume material form: one in his own shape, another in that of I.A. Now, the demon that looked like I.A. had a revolver, and threatened to shoot him (D.D.C.F.), while the demon that resembled himself was equally anxious to shoot I.A. Fortunately, before the demons could fire, V.N.R. (Mrs. Mathers) came into the room, thus formulating the symbol of the Blessed Trinity.

“Frater I.A.'s account was less of a strain upon P.'s faculties of belief. They had had, he said, an argument about the God Shiva, the Destroyer, whom I.A. worshipped because, if one repeated his name often enough, Shiva would one day open his eye and destroy the universe, and whom D.D.C.F. feared and hated because He would one day open His eye and destroy D.D.C.F. I.A. closed the argument by assuming the position Padmasana and repeating the Mantra: “'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.' D.D.C.F., angrier than ever, sought the sideboard, but soon returned, only to find Frater I.A. still muttering: 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.' 'Will you stop blaspheming?' cried D.D.C.F.; but the holy man only said: 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.' 'If you don't stop I will shoot you!” said D.D.C.F., drawing a revolver from his pocket and leveling it at I.A.'s head; but I.A., being concentrated, took no notice and continued to mutter: 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.'

“Whether overawed by the majesty of the saint or interrupted by the entry of a third person, I.A. no longer remembered, but D.D.C.F. never pulled the trigger.”

Mathers thus disposed of, to business!

What of the Great Work? Did it become absurd with Mathers? No more than Everest ceases to attract when the Alpine Club caps incompetence with manslaughter!

We simply dismissed from our minds the whole question of the G∴D∴ and restated the problem on first principles.

In this situation, I had the advantage of wider reading and more varied experience than Allan; he, that of more intensive training, and especially of his recent initiation into Asiatic arcana under the aegis of Shri Parananda, Solicitor-General of Ceylon (as Aramis was a musketeer) per interim, and a Yogi *cap-à-pied*. I had learnt modesty from Eckenstein's engineering epithets and Mexican mountains; so I shut up—as Doris Gomez once immortally observed, at the conclusion of a prolonged and uninterrupted harangue, "If you've got anything more to say, shut up!"—and concentrated on learning the least lemma of his lore instead of inflicting on him my own Intimations of Immortality.

He expressed the Elements of Yoga. I said, "Your health will improve in a climate less addicted to damp and damnability: come to Kandy; we'll get a bungalow and get busy. Damn Shri Parananda! Let him excel his commentary on St. Matthew, where he explains the discrepancy with another Evangelist by suggesting that "Jesus road both an ass and a mule, one foot on each, after the manner of a circus", if you can. You shall get ready to take the Yellow Robe while you train me to triumph over Tanha, and attain Asana, and perform Pranayama, and practise Pratyhara, and do Dharana, and demand Dhyana, and swat Samadhi, all same No. 1 topside Master Patanjali, heap holy pidgin!"

An appeal couched in such chastely correct yet politely passionate phraseology could not fail to bury its barb in the Bull's Eye. Allan "prayed permission to quit the presence" of the pious Prananda, whose arrogance and meanness be equated with his scholarship and sanctity. We sampled Kandy—which has delights (permit the pun for the advertisement!) unsuspected by "Mary Elizabeth". We took a furnished bungalow called "Marlobrough" (God knows why!) on the hills, by a stream, with waterfall complete, overlooking the lake, the temple and an amateur attempt at an hotel. We hired a hopeless headman, who sub-hired sleepy and sinister servants and dismissed all these damnable details from our minds, devoting ourselves with diabolical determination and saintly simplicity to the search for a spiritual solution to the material muddle. Our sojourn, short as it was by worldly reckoning, proved to be pregnant with events of internal import. The tyrant time took his first wound in Kandy.

STANZA XXVIII

Allan's adventures in Ceylon had been varied. His first idea had been to take the Yellow Robe; that is, to become a member of the Buddhist Sangha. These men are not priests or monks, as we understand the words; it is hard for European minds to understand the conditions of their life. They have renounced the world and live as mendicants; but it may be stated roughly that the rules of their Order, which are very complex and often seem irrational or frivolous, are all devised in the interest of a single idea. Each rule meets some probably contingency. But in every case the object is to enable the Bhikkhu to carry out his programme of spiritual development. There are no superstitious terrors, no propitiatory practices; the while object is to enable a man to free himself from the fetters of desire which hamper his actions, and (incidentally) produce the phantasms which we call phenomena. In Buddhism, the Universe is conceived as an illusion, created by ignorant cravings. It is, in fact, a dream as defined by Freud's hypothesis.

Allan was already at heart a Buddhist. The more he studied the Tripitika, “the three baskets of the law”—waste paper baskets I used to call them—the more he was attracted, but he was fearfully disappointed by the degeneracy of the Singalese Bhikkhus. With rare exceptions, they were ignorant, idle, immoral and dishonest. At Anuradhapura, the sacred ruined city, there conduct is so openly scandalous as to have given rise to a proverb: “A Bhikkhu is made, not born — except at Anuradhapura.” Allan had been offered the post of treasurer to a famous monastery outside Colombo, for the avowed reason that they could not trust any one of themselves. Considering that a Bhikkhu is not allowed to touch money at all, this was rather the limit.

The Solicitor-General of Ceylon, the Hon. P. Ramanathan, engaged Allan as private tutor to his younger sons. This gentleman was a man of charming personality, wide culture and profound religious knowledge. He was eminent as a Yogi of the Shaivite sect of Hindus (he was a Tamil of high caste) and had written commentaries on the gospels of Matthew and John, interpreting the sayings of Christ as instructions in Yoga. It is indeed a fact that one of the characters who have been pieced together to compose the figure of “Jesus” was a Yogi. His injunctions to abandon family ties, to make no provision for the future, and so on, are typical.

From this man, Allan learnt a great deal of the Theory and Practice of Yoga. When he was about eighteen, Allan had accidentally stumbled into the trance called Shivadarshana, in which the Universe, having been perceived in its totality as a single phenomenon, independent of space and time, is then annihilated. This experience had determined the whole course of his

life. His one object was to get back into that state. Shri Parananda showed him a rational practical method of achieving his. Yet Allan was not wholly in sympathy with his teacher, who, despite his great spiritual experience, had not succeeded in snapping the shackles of dogma, and whose practice seem in some respects tat variance with his principles. Allan was almost puritanically strict. He had been offered a position as manager of a coconut plantation, but refused it on learning that his duties would involve giving orders for the destruction of vermin. He had not sufficient breadth of view to see that any kind of life implies acquiescence in, and therefore responsibility for, murder; by eating rice one becomes the accomplice of the agriculturist in destroying life.

His health was vastly improved. In the Red Sea his asthma completely disappeared and he had thrown overboard his entire apparatus of drugs. But the enervating climate of Colombo sapped his energies. He had little hesitation in accepting my proposal to go and live at Kandy and devote ourselves to Yoga.

At “Marlborough” we found the conditions for work very favourable. The first step was to get rid of all other preoccupations. I revised *Tannhäuser*, wrote an introduction, typed it all out and sent it to the press. I put aside *Orpheus* and left aside *Alice, an Adultery* to ripen. I did not think much of it; and would not publish it until time had ratified it.

One of my principal inhibitions at this period was due to the apparent antinomy between the normal satisfaction of bodily appetites and the obvious conditions of success. I did not solve this completely until my attainment of the Grade of Master of the Temple in 1909, when at last I realized that every thought, word and act might be pressed into the service of the soul: more, that it must be if the soul were ever to be free. I “mixed up the planes” for many years to some extent, though never as badly as most mystics do.

During this retirement I was fortunate in being under the constant vigilant supervision of Allan Bennett, whose experience enabled him to detect the firs onset of disturbing ideas. For instance, the revising and typing of *Tannhäuser* were quite sufficient to distract my mind from meditation, and would even upset me in such apparently disconnected matters as Prânayâmâ. It is easy to understand that a heavy meal will interfere with one's ability to control one's respiration; but one is inclined to laugh at the Hindu theory that it can be affected by such things as casual conversation. None the less, they are right. Apart from one's normal reactions, these practices make one supersensitive. I was not confining myself to any rigid diet; and I remember that at a certain period the idea of food became utterly revolting. It is doubtless a question of nervous hyperaesthesia; as is well

known, over-indulgence in alcohol and certain other drugs tends to destroy the appetite. Inexperienced practitioners, insufficiently grounded in physiology and philosophy, may perhaps be excused (though of course reproved) for misunderstanding the import of the phenomena. One is inclined to say, "Now that I am becoming holy, I find that I dislike the idea of eating: Argal, eating is unholy; and it will help me to become still holier if I resolutely suppress the squeals of appetite." Such, I believe, is the basis of much of the fantastic morality which has muddled mystical teaching throughout history. I do not think that straightforward *à priori* considerations would have carried unquestioning conviction in the absence of apparent confirmation of their hypotheses.

This "confusion of the planes" is in my opinion the chief cause of failure to attain. It is constantly cropping up in all sorts of connections. The aspirant must be armed with the Magical Sword, dividing asunder the joints of the marrow of every observation that he makes. A single unanalysed idea is liable to obsess him and send him astray: "It may be for years and it may be for ever." He must never weary of assigning its exact limitations to every phenomenon. History, by the way, is full of examples of this error in major matters. Consider only how the idea that epidemics, the failure of the crops and military misfortune were due to the wrath of God, prevented the development of science, agriculture and the art of war. Last spring, 1922, there was a drought in Sicily. The priests made a mighty Poojaha and prayed for rain. The rain came and did more harm than the drought; then the drought took hold again and lasted all the summer either in spite of the intercessions of Cybele, or whatever they call her nowadays, or because she was not to be propitiated by the adulterated sacrifices with which her modern ministers pretend that they can cozen her.

I attribute my own success in Mysticism and Magick, and the much greater success that I have been able to secure for my successors, almost entirely to my scientific training. It enabled me to determine the actual physiological and psychological conditions of attainment. My experience as a teacher enables me to simplify more and more as each fresh case comes under my notice. I can put my finger more quickly and surely on the spot with every waxing moon. I achieved in eleven years what hardly anyone before had done in forty, and it cannot be explained by individual genius, for I have been able to take men with hardly a scrap of talent and teach them what took me eleven years in seven or eight for the firstcomers, in five or six for their successors, and so on till, at the present moment, I feel able to promise any man or woman of average ability who has the germ of genuine aspiration, the essence of attainment within eight sessions. Of course it depends on each postulant to determine the details. Some departments of Occult Science lie outside the scope of particular people; each one must fill in

for himself his personal programme. But the supreme emancipation is the same in essence for all, and for the first time in history it has been possible to present this free from confusion, so that people can concentrate from the very beginning of their training on the one thing that matters.

Our life was delightfully simple. Allan taught me the principles of Yoga; fundamentally, there is only one. The problem is how to stop thinking; for the theory is that the mind is a mechanism for dealing symbolically with impressions; its construction is such that one is tempted to take these symbols for reality. Conscious thought, therefore, is fundamentally false and prevents one from perceiving reality. The numerous practices of yoga are simply dodges to help one to acquire the knack of slowing down the current of thought and ultimately stopping at altogether. This fact has not been realized by the Yogis themselves. Religious doctrines and sentimental or ethical considerations have obscured the truth. I believe I am entitled to the credit of being the first man to understand the true bearings of the question.

I was led to this discovery chiefly through studying Comparative Mysticism. For instance; a Catholic repeats Ave Maria rapidly and continuously; they rhythm inhibits the intellectual process. The result is an ecstatic vision of Mary. The Hindu repeats Aum Hari Aum in the same way and gets a vision of Vishnu. But I noticed that the characteristics of both visions were identical save for the sectarian terminology in which the memory recorded them. I argued that process and result were identical. It was a physiological phenomenon and the apparent divergence was due to the inability of the mind to express the event except by using the language of worship which was familiar.

Extended study and repeated experiment have confirmed this conviction. I have thus been able to simplify the process of spiritual development by eliminating all dogmatic accretions. To get into a trance is of the same order of phenomena as to get drunk. It does not depend on creed. Virtue is only necessary in so far as it favours success; just as certain diets, neither right nor wrong in themselves, are indicated for the athlete or the diabetic. I am proud of having made it possible for my pupils to achieve in months what previously required as many years. Also, of having saved the successful from the devastating delusion that the intellectual image of their experience is an universal truth.

This error has wrought more mischief in the past than any other. Mohammed's conviction that his visions were of imperative importance to “Salvation” made him a fanatic. Almost all religious tyranny springs from intellectual narrowness. The spiritual energy derived from the high trances makes the seer a formidable force; and unless he be aware that his interpre-

tation is due only to the exaggeration of his own tendencies of thought, he will seek to impose it on others, and so delude his disciples, pervert their minds and prevent their development. He can do good only in one way, that is by publishing the methods by which he attained illumination: in other words, by adding his experience to the sum of scientific knowledge. I have myself striven strenuously to do this, always endeavouring to make it clear that my results are of value only to myself, and that even my methods may need modification in every case, just as each poet, golfer and barrister must acquire a style peculiar to his idiosyncrasies.

Yoga, properly understood, is thus a simple scientific system of attaining a definite psychological state. Consider its Eight Branches! Yama and Niyama, “Control” and “Super-control”, give rules for preventing the mind from being disturbed by moral emotions and passions, such as anger, fear, greed, lust and the like.

Asana, “position”, is the art of sitting perfectly still, so that the body can no longer send messages to the mind. Pranayama, “control of breath force”, consists in learning to breathe as slowly, deeply and regularly as possible. The slightest mental irritation or excitement always makes one breathe quickly and unevenly; thus one is able to detect any disturbance of calm by observing this system. Also, by forcibly controlling the breath one can banish such ideas. Also one reduces to a minimum the consciousness that one is breathing.

One may remark at this point that such precaution seems absurd; but until one begins to try to keep the mind from wandering, one has no conception of the way in which the minutest modifications of thought, impressions which are normally transitory or unperceived, form the starting point for Odysseys of distraction. It may be several minutes before one wakes up to the fact that one's wits have gone wool-gathering.

Pratyahara is introspection. One obtains the power of analysing an apparently simple thought or impression into its elements. One can, for example, teach oneself to feel separately the numberless impressions connected with the act of crooking one's fingers. This is a revelation in itself; so simple a muscular movement is found to contain an epic of deliciously exciting ingredients. The idea is, of course, not to enjoy such pleasures, subtle and exquisite as they are; but by analysing thoughts and impressions to detect their prodromal symptoms and nip them in the bud. Also, to understand and estimate them by detailed examination. One important result of this is to appreciate the unimportance and equivalence of all thoughts, very much as modern chemistry has put an end to the medieval nonsense about the sacredness of some compounds and the wickedness of others. Another is to

give one a clear and comprehensive view of the elements of the Universe as a whole.

Dharana, concentration, is now easier to practise. One has learnt what interruptions to expect and how to prevent them. We, therefore, make a definite attack on the multiplicity of thoughts by fixing the mind on one. In my *Book 4*, Part I, I have copied from my diary at this period an attempt at classification of invading ideas. I am very proud of this apparently simple observation and it will aid the reader to understand my work in Kandy if I insert it.

Breaks are classed as follows:

Firstly, physical sensations. These should have been overcome by Asana.

Secondly, breaks that seem to be dictated by events immediately preceding the meditation. Their activity becomes tremendous. Only by this practice does one understand how much is really observed by the senses without the mind becoming conscious of it.

Thirdly, there is a class of breaks partaking of the nature of reverie or “daydreams”. These are very insidious—one may go on for a long time without realizing that one has wandered at all.

Fourthly, we get a very high class of break, which is as sort of aberration of the control itself. You think, “How well I am doing it!” or perhaps that it would be rather a good idea if you were on a desert island, or if you were in a sound-proof house, or if you were sitting by a waterfall. But these are only trifling variations from the vigilance itself.

A fifth class of breaks seems to have no discoverable source in the mind. Such may even take the form of actual hallucination, usually auditory. Of course, such hallucinations are infrequent and are recognized for what they are; otherwise the student had better see his doctor. The usual kind consists of odd sentences or fragments of sentences, which are heard quite distinctly in a recognizable human voice, not the student's own voice or that of any one he knows. A similar phenomenon is observed by wireless operators, who call such messages “atmospherics”.

There is a *further kind of break*, *which is the desired result itself*. It must be dealt with later in detail.

Dhyana is the name of the first trance. By trance I mean a state of consciousness definitely distinct from the normal. Its characteristic is that whereas in normal consciousness two things are always present—the percipient

and the perceived—in Dhyana these two have become one. At first this union usually takes place with explosive violence. There are many other characteristics; in particular, time and space are abolished. This, however, occurs with almost equal completeness in certain states of normal abstract thought.

The attainment of this trance is likely to upset the whole moral balance of the student. He often attributes and exaggerated importance to the imperfect ideas which represent his memory of what happened. He cannot possibly remember the thing itself, because his mind lacks the machinery of translating it into normal thought. These ideas are naturally his pet delusions. They seem to him to have become armed with supreme spiritual sanction, so he may become a fanatic or a megalomaniac. In my system the pupil is taught to analyse all ideas and abolish them by philosophical skepticism before he is allowed to undertake the practices which lead to Dhyana.

Samadhi, “Union with the Lord”, is the general term for the final trance, or rather, series of trances. It differs from Dhyana in this way: Dhyana is partial, Samadhi is universal. In the first Samadhi, the universe is perceived as a unity. In the second that unity is annihilated. There are, however, may other Samadhis, and in any case the quality of the trance will depend upon the extent of the universe which enters into it. One must really be a profound philosopher with a definite intellectual conception of the universe as an organic whole, based on the co-ordination of immense knowledge, before one can expect really satisfactory results. The Samadhi of an ignorant and shallow thinker who has failed to co-ordinate his conceptions of the cosmos will not be worth very much.

STANZA XXIX

The general idea of Eastern religions is that any manifestation of being is necessarily imperfect, since it is not the sum of all truth. (For, if it were, it would not be distinguishable from any other manifestation). Hence, its nature is evil and its effect on the mind to create sorrow. Their idea is to destroy all thought as being false and painful. Their idea is liberation from the illusion of existence. The effect of Samadhi is firstly to produce the bliss which comes from the relief from pain. Later, this bliss disappears and one attains perfect indifference.

But we need not go so far into their philosophy or accept it. Thanks partly to William James' "Varieties of Religious Experience," I got the idea of employing the methods of Yoga to produce genius at will. James points out that various religious teachers attained their power to influence mankind in what is essentially the same way; that is, by getting into Samadhi. The trance gives supreme spiritual energy and absolute self-confidence; it removes the normal inhibitions to action. I propose then that any man should use this power to develop his faculties and inspire his ambitions by directing the effects of the trance into the channel of his career. This idea at once connects mysticism with Magick; for one of the principal operations of Magick is to invoke the god appropriate to the thing you want, identify yourself with Him and flood your work with His immaculate impulse. This is, in fact, to make Samadhi with that God. The two processes are essentially identical; the apparent difference arises merely from the distinction between the European and Asiatic conceptions of the cosmos. Most European religion, including orthodox Judaism, is anthropomorphic, an expansion of the moral ideas connected with the members of a family. Asiatic religions,* even when superficially theistic, always imply an impersonal universe. One idealized human forces; the other, the forces of Nature.

The diary describing my practices had been printed in the *Equinox*, Vol. I, No. 4. It is very fortunate that it should have been kept in such detail, for it is a matter for surprise that such progress should have been made in so short a time. But I started with several great advantages: youth, indomitable determination to devote every energy to the work, a technical training under Eckenstein, and the constant presence of one to whom I could immediately submit any issue that might arise.

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the results of these practices. Some of them, interesting and perhaps important in themselves, do not mean much to the layman. It will be well, nevertheless, to indicate some of the major phenomena.

One soon obtains new conception of one's own mind. Till one has practised, one has no idea of the actual contents. The fact is that the uninitiate is aware only of the solutions of his mental equations; he is not conscious of the rough working. Further, he does not feel the actual impression made by each individual impact upon the mind. He totally mistakes its character, which is, in reality, arbitrary and imperative. The first analysis shows it as out of relation with its predecessors and successors. Later on, one discovers the subconscious links which join the elements. This process of subdivision seems as if it might be continued indefinitely.

I will try and make matters clearer by an illustration. The normal man looking form the top of the Jungfrau sees Monta Rosa, the Matterhorn, the Dent Blanche and other high peaks, all the way to Mont Blanc, sticking up out of the morning mists. They appear to him isolated phenomena. The mists clear and he becomes aware that these peaks are the summits of a range; they are joined by a ridge rising to lesser peaks and falling to passes. But these secondary irregularities are themselves based on smaller ones, and even on a level glacier on finds that the surface is not uniform; each separate crystal of snow may be further examined and we hind even in it an arrangement of elements salient and re-entrant, which is comparable to the original macroscopic view. Acquaintance with this phenomenon leads one to inquire into the ultimate nature of the atoms of thought. Each atom assumes an importance equal to that of the others. One's sense of values is completely destroyed.

There is also the problem: how is it that one's idea of a horse, for example, should be composed of a set of ideas, none of which have any apparent relation with it, exactly as the word horse itself is composed of the letters h-o-r-s-e, none of which, by itself, suggests a horse, or part of one, in any way? Similarly, a lump of sugar is not merely a mass of homogeneous crystals, but each crystal is composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, elements which in themselves possess none of the characteristic qualities of sugar. One perceives that mental and physical phenomena share this irrationality.

It will be seen from the above remarks that a very superficial investigation of thought leads inevitably to the most revolutionary consequences. At this time, however, I was not sufficiently advanced to perceive the full implications of these discoveries. My record contents itself with noting the mere symptoms produced by the practices. Even before leaving Colombo, I had heard the astral bell, to which so much factitious importance has been given. I had also purified what are called the Nadi. My complexion became strangely clear; my voice had lost the harsh *timbre* natural to it; my appearance had become calm; my eyes unusually bright; and I was constantly conscious

of what is called the Nada, which is a sound the character of which varies considerably, but in my case most frequently resembled the twittering of nightingales.

Pranayama produced, firstly, a peculiar kind of perspiration; secondly, an automatic rigidity of the muscles; and thirdly, the very curious phenomenon of causing the body, while still absolutely rigid, to take little hops in various directions. It seems as if one were somehow raised, possibly an inch from the ground, and deposited very gently a short distance away.

I saw a very striking case of this at Kandy. When Allan was mediating, it was my duty to bring his food very quietly (from time to time) into the room adjoining that where he was working. One day he missed two successive meals and I thought I ought to look into his room to see if all was well. I must explain that I have known only two European women and three European men who could sit in the attitude called Padmasana, which is that usually seen in seated images of the Buddha. Of these men, Allan was one. He could knot his legs so well that, putting his hands on the ground, he could swing his body to and fro in the air between them. When I looked into his room I found him, not seated on his meditation mat, which was in the centre of the room at the end farthest from the window, but in a distant corner ten or twelve feet off, still in his knotted position, resting on his head and right shoulder, exactly like an image overturned. I set him right way up and he came out of this trance. He was quite unconscious that anything unusual had happened. But he had evidently been thrown there by the mysterious forces generated by Pranayama.

There is no doubt whatever about this phenomenon; it is quite common. But the Yogis claim that the lateral motion is due to lack of balance and that if one were in perfect equilibrium one would rise directly in the air. I have never seen any case of levitation and hesitate to say that it has happened to me, though I have actually been seen by others on several occasions apparently poised in the air. For the first three phenomena I have found no difficulty in devising quite simple physiological explanations. But I can form no theory as to how the practice could counteract the force of gravitation, and I am unregenerate enough to allow this to make me sceptical about the occurrence of levitation. Yet, after all, the stars are suspended in space. There is no *à priori* reason why the forces which prevent them rushing together should not come into operation in respect of the earth and the body.

Again, you can prevent things from biting you by certain breathing exercises. Hold the breath in such a way that the body becomes spasmodically rigid, and insects cannot pierce the skin. Near my bungalow at Kandy was a waterfall with a pool. Allan Bennett used to feed the leeches every morning.

At any moment he could stop the leech, though already fastened to his wrist, by this breathing trick. We would put our hands together into the water; his would come out free, mine with a dozen leeches on it. At such moments I would bitterly remark that a coyote will not eat a dead Mexican; but it failed to annoy him.

On the shores of the lake stands a charmingly situated hotel. We used occasionally to go down there for a meal. It is some distance by road, so I used to take the short cut through the jungle. One day I had run down the hill at the top of my speed in my mountain boots, followed by a breathless servant. He arrived at the hotel ten minutes later with a dead cobra, 4 feet 8 inches in length. I had come down with my heel right on his neck and never noticed it!

Asana was for a long time extremely painful. It sometimes cost me five minutes' acute agony to straighten my limbs at the end of the practice. But success came at last. Quite suddenly I lost consciousness of my body. The effect was that of relief from long-continued suffering. Until that moment I had thought of my Asana as the one really painful position. This idea was reversed; it became the only position in which I was free from bodily discomfort. To this day, though shamefully out of practice, I am able to obtain the benefit of a long rest by assuming the position for a few minutes.

The Phenomena of concentration are very varied and curious. For instance, the suppression of one's normal thoughts leads to their being replaced, not only by their elements, as explained above, but by long forgotten memories of childhood. There are also what I have called “atmospherics”. For instance, a voice is suddenly heard, “And if you're passing, won't you?” or “And not take the first step on virtue's giddy road.” One of the entries on September 6th is worth quoting verbatim:

10:45-10:55
P.M. P.M.

Dharana on tip of nose. I obtained a clear understanding of the unreality of that nose. This persists. An hour later whilst breathing on my arm as I was asleep, I said to myself, “What is this hot breath from?” I was forced to *think* before I could answer “my nose”. Then I pinched myself and remembered at once; but again breathing, the same thing happened again. Therefore the “Dharanization” of my nose dividualizes Me and My Nose, affects my nose, disproves my nose, abolishes, annihilates and expunges my nose.

I was very alarmed one day to find that I had completely lost the object of concentration. I could not think what I wished to find or where to find it. I naturally thought something was very wrong. Here was an occasion when

Allan's experience proved invaluable. Without it, I might have been frightened into giving up the practice. But he told me the result was good, showing that I was approaching the state of what is called “neighbourhood concentration”.

Another experience was this: I found myself at one and the same moment conscious of external things in the background after the object of my concentration had vanished, and also conscious that I was *not* conscious of these things. To the normal mind this is of course sheer contradiction, but Buddhist psychology mentions this peculiar state. The higher faculties of the intelligence are not subject to the same laws as the lower.

I continually increased the number of hours which I devoted to my work. On October 2nd, to my amazement, I was successful in reaching the state of Dhyana. The experience was repeated on the following day. I quote the record verbatim:

“After some eight hours' discipline by Pranayama arose “the Golden Dawn”.

“While meditating, suddenly I became conscious of a shoreless space of darkness and a glow of crimson athwart it. Deepening and brightening, scarred by dull bars of slate-blue cloud, arose the Dawn of Dawns. In splendour not of earth and its mean sun, blood-red, rayless, adamant, it rose, it rose! Carried out of myself, I asked not “Who is the witness?” absorbed utterly in contemplation of so stupendous and so marvellous a fact. For there was no doubt, no change, no wavering; infinitely more real than aught physical is the Golden Dawn of this Eternal Sun! But ere the Orb of Glory rose clear of its banks of blackness—alas my soul!—that Light Ineffable was withdrawn beneath the falling veil of darkness, and in purples and greys glorious beyond imaging, sad beyond conceiving, faded the superb Herald of the Day. But mine eyes have seen it! And this, then, is Dhyana! Whit it, yet all but unremarked, came a melody as of the sweet-souled Vina.”

Next day:

“Again, by the Grace Ineffable of Bhavani to the meanest of Her devotees, arose the Splendour of the Inner Sun. As bidden by my Guru, I saluted the Dawn with Pranava. This, as I foresaw, retained the Dhyanic consciousness. The Disk grew golden; rose clear of all its clouds, flinging great fleecy cumuli of rose and gold, fiery with light, into the aethyr of space. Hollow it seemed and rayless as the Sun in Sagittarius, yet incomparably brighter: but rising clear of cloud, it began to revolve, to coruscate, to throw off streamers of jetted fire! (This from a hill-top I held, dark as of a dying world. Covered with black decayed wet peaty wood, a few pines stood stricken, unutterably

alone.) (Note. This is a mere thought form induced by misunderstanding the instruction of Mâitrânanda Swami as to observing the phenomenon.) But behind the glory of its coruscations seemed to shape an idea, less solid than a shadow! an Idea of some Human seeming Form! Now grew doubt and thought in P's miserable mind; and the one Wave grew many waves and all was lost! Alas! Alas! for P! And Glory Eternal unto Her, She the twin-Brested that hath encroached even upon the other half of the Destroyer! 'OM Namo Bhâvaniya OM.' ”

The result of this attainment was what I should least have expected. I was not encouraged to proceed; it seemed as if I had used up the accumulated energy of years. I found it impossible to force myself to continue. It was nearly two years before I resumed any regular practice.

The immediate current being thus exhausted, we decided to go on a pilgrimage to the ruined sacred cities of Buddhism. Allan had become more and more convinced that he ought to take the Yellow Robe. The Phenomena of Dhyana and Samadhi had ceased to exercise their first fascination. It seemed to him that they were insidious obstacles to true spiritual progress; that their occurrence, in reality, broke up the control of the mind which he was trying to establish and prevented him from reaching the ultimate truth which he sought. He had the strength of mind to resist the appeal of even these intense spiritual joys. Like physical love, they persuade their dupe to put up with the essential evil of existence.

As for myself, I had become impatient with the whole business. Dhyana had washed my brain completely out. I went on this pilgrimage in a entirely worldly frame of mind. My interests were in aesthetic, historical and ethnological matters, and in incidents of travel amid new scenes. I even took a somewhat demoniac delight in sceptical and scurrilous comment upon current events for the sheer joy of shocking Allan, and even in horrifying him by occasional excursions after big game. I may as well go back a little in time and record my general impressions of Ceylon as a man of the world, in connected sequence.

I was as full of romantic folly about the Wisdom of the East, and the splendours and luxuries of Asia, as I had been about Jacobites. But already I had learnt to use my eyes; prejudices had somehow lost their power to persuade. My experience of the Order probably counted for a good deal in this. At the same time, I did not swing from one extreme to the other. “Blessed are they that expect nothing; for they shall not be disappointed!” I was in no danger of judging the Principles of Buddhism by the practices of Buddhists. I worked out the logical consequences of any philosophy without reference to the criticisms of history. The Buddhism of Ceylon is based on the canon of

their scriptures. But the customs of the people have been for the most part adapted to the new religion; very much as paganism persisted unchanged, except as to terminology, when it was camouflaged by Christianity; just as the Ass of Priapus became the ass of the Nativity; as Jupiter became Jehovah; Isis, Mary; and so on; as the crown of Osiris developed into the Papal Tiara; as the feats of corn and wine were resumed in the Eucharist, so did the old rites of fetish and ancestor worship continue under new names. The old Demonology was adapted to Buddhist theories.

The primitive instincts of people are ineradicable; their passions and fears always find approximately the same expression, despite the efforts of philosophers and religious reformers. So I was neither surprised nor shocked (as was the more ingenuous Allan) at the devil dances and similar superstitious practices which pretended to be a part in the pure rational and straightforward spirituality of Buddhism. The very simplicity and savagery of these practices were pleasing. The enthusiasm was sincere; there was no hypocrisy, no humbug, no sanctimoniousness, no protestations of virtue or assumptions of superiority.

The supreme glory of Kandy is an alleged tooth of the Buddha. It is enclosed in seven concentric caskets, some of which are enormously valuable and beautiful. Gold an jewels are nothing accounted of. Some years before my visit, one of these caskets had been stolen. The King of Siam provided a new one at the cost of an incredible number of lakhs of rupees. He made a journey to Kandy with his retinue in great pomp to make the presentation in person and the priests refused to allow him to see the tooth! It was a magnificent piece of impudence—of policy. My own Unpretentious Holiness met with better fortune. Allan and I were permitted to be present at the annual inspection by the trustees. I believe the tooth to be that of a dog or crocodile, but though I got an excellent view at close quarters, I am not anatomist enough to be positive. I am, however, quite certain that it is not a human tooth.

Homage is paid to this relic every year at a ceremony called the Perahera. I was not impressed by the sanctity of the proceedings; but as a spectacle it is certainly gorgeous. The very wildness and lack of appropriateness add to its charm. The processions to which we are accustomed in Europe and America are all so cleverly though out that the effect is merely to irritate. The Perahera is a gigantic jollification; they bring out all their elephants, dancers, monks, officials, drums, horns, torches—anything that makes a blaze of a noise, and let them all loose at once. The effect is of impromptu excitement. Poor, serious, single-minded Allan, with his whole soul set on alleviating the sufferings of humanity and helping them to reach a higher plane of existence, was saddened and disillusioned.

One incident was somewhat scandalously amusing. He was doing his best to enter into the spirit of the thing and called my attention to the “strains of wild oriental music”. I knew better. I had read Herrick's poem about the young lady who left a glove in the royal presence, and remembered that Lady Clara de Vere de Vere has certain physiological properties in common with the elephant. Poor Allan was absolutely horrified when he realized his mistake.

The scene was wild and somewhat sinister. The darkness, the palms, the mountainous background, the silent lake below, the impenetrable canopy of space, studded with secretive and significant stars, formed a stupendous setting for the savage noise and blaze of the ceremony. One half saw huge shadowy shapes moving mysteriously in the torchlight, and the air vibrated violently with the jubilant rage of riotous religious excitement. It communicated a sort of magnificent madness to the mind. One didn't know what it meant or if it meant anything particular. One was not hampered by knowledge; one could let oneself go. One felt a tense, tremendous impulse to do something demoniac. Yet one had no idea what. It put one's nerves on the rack. It was almost a torture to feel so intensely, and desire so deliriously, such unintelligible irritations. Hours passed in this intoxicating excitement. One can understand perfectly the popular enthusiasm. It was the release of the subconscious desires of the original animal. To a civilized mind, accordingly, the impression was charged with a certain disquietude partaking of the nature of terror without understanding why; one felt the presence of forces which appal because one feels their power, recognizes their existence in oneself. They are the things one has tried to forget and persuaded oneself that they are in fact forgotten. They are the voices of ancestral appetite. It is the roar of the mob in the ears of the educated: but as for any definite religious impression, the Perahera had nothing to say. It was no more Buddhism than the carnival at Nice is Christianity. ΙΩΠΑΝ!

But the matter does not end there. Official science, which can always be relied upon to discover at last what everybody has always known, has just proclaimed the fact that certain states of mind possess the property of performing what used to be called miracles, and that such states may be evoked by the constant repetition of formulae and similar practices. The whole of Eastern ceremonies, from the evolutions of dancing girls to the austerities of ascetics, have all been devised with the intention of inducing the right medium for the right sort of subconsciousness to rise, move and appear.

Zodacare, eca, od zodameranu! Odo kikalé Qaa! Zodoreje, lape Zodiredo Noco Mada, Hoathahe IAIDA!

* Including the oldest Greek religion in its best aspects.

STANZA XXX

We came into contact, on one occasion, with the relations between the people and the government. The British official in Ceylon is a very different person from his Indian colleague. He is not “heaven-born” in the same consecrated and ineluctable way. He has failed to convince himself of his superiority to mere created beings; so his airs of authority do not become him. He feels himself a bit of an upstart. Ceylon is full of half-casts, Dutch, English and Portuguese, and the white man feels himself somehow compromised by their presence. They remind him of his poor relations and make him feel as the inhabitants of Dayton, Tennessee, and some others do in a monkey-house. A similar situation exists in the southern states of America, where the pure whites are outnumbered by the negroes, and where a large population of mixed blood provides the logical link. In south Africa, again, we find the same situation; and the practical result is that the white man, feeling his footing insecure, dares not tolerate the native as he can in India, where the relations between the population and the conquering invader are understood by both parties. The Singalese government is inclined to be snappish.

One evening Allan and I were meditating, as usual. The servants were absent for some reason; some marauder took the opportunity to break in and steal my cash box. I am ashamed to say that I was stupid enough to report the incident to the police. A day or two later an alleged inspector appeared, made various inquiries and went off. He took with him my pocket compass, under the impression that it was my watch! This time, of course, we could identify the thief, who had been playing this game all over the island. He was caught and put in the dock; but escaped conviction on some technicality. But I remember the incident acutely on account of the conversation I had with the Magistrate, who explained that the man might be flogged for this offence. He spoke of the punishment with a shudder — it was terrible to witness; but his tones displayed intense sadistic pleasure at the idea. It was my first glimpse of the bestial instincts of the average respectable and cultured Englishman. I had not really believed what I had read in Kraft-Ebing about perverse pleasures of this sort; I could not understand cruelty.

Is it Gorky who tells us the at the universal characteristic of the Russian is to delight in the infliction of pain for its own sake, in the absence of any comparatively intelligible basis like anger and hatred? He describes how men's mouths are filled with gunpowder and exploded, how women's breasts are pierced, ropes inserted and the victim left to hang from the ceiling. These things are done exactly as English children sometimes torture animals. He says that the whole of this life has been poisoned by realizing the

existence of this instinct, which seemed to him a fatal objection to any possible justification of the universe. I cannot follow him so far. I can understand that every possible combination of qualities may exist somewhere and that I have no right even to assume that my own detestation of such things proves them to be unjustifiable.

I really rather agree with “Greenland's Icy Mountains”, though I object to accepting Ceylon on the penultimate. But certainly every prospect is remarkably pleasing and, as far as I saw, every man is vile. There seems to be something in the climate of the island that stupefies the finer parts of a man if he lives there too long. The flavour of the tea seemed to me somehow symbolic. I remember one day pleading with the local shopkeeper to find me some Chinese tea. It chanced that the owner of a neighbouring plantation was in the shop. He butted in, remarking superciliously that he could put in the China flavour for me. “Yes,” I said, “but can you take out the Ceylon flavour?”

Before leaving Eckenstein, I had agreed to consider the question of an Himalayan expedition, to Chogo Ri, marked “K2” on the Indian Survey, 28,250 feet, the second highest mountain in the world. I decided not to go; wishing to devote myself exclusively to spiritual progress. I wrote to this effect; but when I told Allan that I had done so, I found, to my surprise, that he thought I ought to go for Eckenstein's sake. It was the same problem as that about Abramelin and the Order. And I chose ion the same way. I wired Eckenstein that I would go.

One of the results of this was that I began to grow a beard. Eckenstein had put me up to a lot of the points of conduct that should be observed in travelling among Mohammedans and I practised these conscientiously. For instance, I taught myself never to touch my face with my left hand. I found this practice tends to make my mind constantly vigilant. Later, I developed the idea into Liber Jugorum,“ which is one of the most important elements in the preliminary training for the A∴ A∴. But the Singalese, knowing nothing of our motives, could only conclude that Sahibs with beards must be Boer prisoners. The same ridiculous mistake was made even by the whites at Rawal Pindi, when the expedition arrived, though we were mixing freely with them and half our party talking English slang.

The fact is that the vast majority of people are absolutely impervious to facts. Test the average man by asking him to listen to a simple sentence which contains one word with associations to excite his prejudices, fears or passions — he will fail to understand what you have said and reply by expressing his emotional reaction to the critical word. It was long before I understood this fact of psychology. Even to this day, it surprises me that there

should be minds which are unable to accept any impression equably and critically. I have heard many great orators. The effect has nearly always been to make me wonder how they have the nerve to put forward such flimsy falsehoods.

The excursion to the Buried cities was an education in itself. The first impression was of the shocking callousness with which the coach horses were treated. There was not a single one along the whole route which was even moderately sound. I began to set its right value upon the first precept of Buddha: Not to take life. Ass!

At Dambulla is one of the most extraordinary works of human skill, energy and enthusiasm in the world. The temple is a cave in the rock, of vast extent but with a very small opening. How could the many statues of the Buddha which filled the cave have got there? It was the camel and the needle's eye again. But what had been done was to cut away the rock of the cave itself, leaving the statues. So gigantic a conception and so admirable an execution extort one's whole-hearted praise. Nothing so drives home the fact of modern degeneracy as this: not only are the Singalese of today utterly incapable of creative work, but they are so far fallen that they have piously smeared this superb statuary with thick coats of gamboge so lavishly that the delicacy of the modelling is entirely concealed.

The rock Sigiri is very startling. It sticks up out of the level jungle without apology. It is supposed to by unclimbable save by the artificial gallery which was built of old when a city flourished on the summit. We hung about for some days, as I wanted to walk round the rock and try and find a way up. But the scheme was impracticable. One could not cut one's way through so many miles of thick jungle, and if one did one would have to be a monkey to be sure of getting a view.

The only incident was that I came across my first buffalo. In the course of a ramble, I had come out upon a clearing in the forest where there was a shallow lake. A bull with two cows arrived simultaneously from the other side, in quest of a drink. In those days I carried a Mauser .303. I got within a hundred yards before he took alarm. As he raised his head I aimed and fired. The cartridge failed to explode and the bull thundered past me before I could reload. If he had been charging—good night! I took the lesson to heart and always carried a double-barrelled rifle ever after. Apart from the extra time needed to lower a single-barrelled rifle and manipulate the lever, which might well cause a fatal delay, there is more than a possibility of a cartridge jamming, which would leave one entirely unarmed.

We jogged on wearily to Anuradapura. This discomforts of the coach were great, and the monotony of the view desolating. It was all an endless flat tangle of vegetation. It was delightful to perceive, about sunset, a number of hills in the distance. Their graceful wooded slopes enchanted the eye. And this is the wonder of this journey, for in the morning I found that these were not hills at all, but ruined Dagobas, which time had fledged with forestry!

To me these cities appear incomparably greater as monuments than even those of Egypt. They are not so sympathetic spiritually; they lack the appeal of geometry and aesthetics which makes the land of Khem my spiritual fatherland. But one has to grant the Gargantuan grandeur of the old Singalese civilization. Their idea, even of so pedestrian a project as a tank, was simply colossal. They though in acres where others think in square yards. One of the pagodas has for its lowest terrace—I think it is about a mile in circumference—a ring of stone elephants little short of life size. Most of the ornamentation has perished, but the loss does not really matter. The point of the place is the prodigious piety which erected these useless enormities merely as memorials to the Master.

Frankly, I was fed up with marvels. All subjects bore me alike after a short time; they cease to stimulate. I was thoroughly pleased to find myself at last in India. The psychological change from Ceylon is very sudden, startling and complete. What is there about an island which differentiates it so absolutely from the adjoining mainland? No amount of similarity of race, customs and culture gets rid of insularity. The moment one sets foot in India, one becomes aware of the stability of its civilisation.

I spent some weeks wandering through the southern provinces. I cannot forbear mentioning one charming incident. At some station or other, I was about to take the train. A white man with a long white beard came down the whole length of the train in the blazing sun to my carriage. He had seen that I was strange to the country and asked if he could be of any service. (Unless one knows the ropes, one has to put up with a lot of petty discomforts.) The man was Colonel Olcott. It was the first act of kindly thoughtfulness that I had ever known a Theosophist perform—and the last. For many years.

The rock temples of Madura are probably the finest in India, perhaps in the world. There seems no limit. Corridor after corridor extends its majestic sculptures, carved monoliths, with august austerity. They are the more impressive that the faith which created them is as vital today, as when India was at the height of its political power. My experiences of Yoga stood me in good stead. I knew, of course, that the average European would not be permitted to visit the most interesting parts of the Temple, and I thought I

would see what I could do to take a leaf out of Burton's book. So I disposed of my European belongings and took up my position outside a village near by, with a loincloth and a begging bowl. The villagers knew, of course, that I was an Englishman, and watched me suspiciously for some time from the edge of the jungle. But as soon as they found that I was really expert in Yoga, they lost no time in making friends. One man in particular spoke English well and was himself a great authority on Yoga. He introduced me to the writings of Sabapati Swami, whose instructions are clear and excellent, and his method eminently practical. My friend introduced me to the authorities at the big Temple at Madura, and I was allowed to enter some of the secret shrines, in one of which I sacrificed a goat to Bhavani.

The fact is that Buddhism had got on my nerves. I preferred the egocentric psychology of Hinduism—naturally enough, since the fundamental consciousness of the average European is sympathetic. Our very speech almost compels us to think of the universe in this way. Ethically, too, Hinduism appealed to me; it seemed positive; its injunctions seemed to lead somewhere. Buddhism repelled me by its abhorrence of action, its insistence upon the idea of sorrow as inherent in all things in themselves. Hinduism at least admits the existence of joy; the only trouble is that happiness is unstable. In practice, again, Buddhism suited Allan, whose only idea of pleasure was relief from the perpetual pain which pursued him; whereas I, with the world at my feet, was out to do something definite and even to take delight in the buffetings of fortune. I enjoyed this adventure immensely' I felt myself all kinds of a fine fellow for penetrating these sinister sanctuaries.

To a young wizard waltzing round the world, some of the early impressions of the India whose philosophy and religion he has learnt to reverence so profoundly are a shade disconcerting. I could not help feeling the degradation of the woman who swept out the dak bungalow at Madura. She was a grotesque hag at thirty. I had seen nothing of the kind in Mexico, or, indeed, anywhere else before or since, till I struck the back-blocks of the United States of America. But in her time she had been a woman of great wealth, for I could have put my hand and arm clean through the lobe of her ear. She must at one time have worn enormously heavy ear-rings.

Her attitude gave me a peculiar little shiver. To sweep the floor, which she did with a short-handled brush, she bent entirely from the hips, being straight above and below. It somehow gave me the impression of a broken stick. And then I was reminded of the queen's spaniel in “Zadig.” For in the dust of the floor were two tiny trails made by her sagging breasts as they swung idly out of her cotton cloth.

I had made a point from the beginning of making sure that my life as a Wanderer of the Waste should not cut me off from my family, the great men of the past. I got India-paper editions of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Browning; and, in default of India paper, the best editions of Atalanta in Calydon. Poems and Ballads (First Series), Shelley, Keats and The Qabbalah Unveiled. I caused all these to be bound in vellum, with ties. William Morris had reintroduced this type of binding in the hope of giving a mediaeval flavour to his publications. I adopted it as being the best protection for books against the elements. I carried these volumes everywhere, and even when mu alleged waterproof rucksack was soaked through, my masterpieces remained intact.

Let this explain why I should have been absorbed in Browning's Christmas Eve and Easter Day at Tuticorin. I was criticizing it in the light of my experience in Dhyana, and the result was to give me the idea of answering Browning's apology for Christianity by what was essentially a parody of his title and his style. My poem was to be called “Ascension Day and Pentecost”.

I wrote “Ascension Day” at Madura on November 16th and 'Pentecost” the day after; but my original idea gradually expanded. I elaborated the two poems from time to time, added “Berashith”—of which more anon—and finally “Science and Buddhism”, an essay on these subjects inspired by a comparative study of what I had learnt from Allan Bennett and the writings of Thomas Henry Huxley. These four elements made up the volume finally published under the title “The Sword of Song.”

One of the great sights of south India is the great Temple of the Shivalingam. I spent a good deal of time in its courts meditating on the mystery of phallic worship. Apologists ordinarily base their defence on a denial that the lingam is worshipped as such. They claim correctly enough that it is merely the symbol of the supreme creative spiritual force of the Most High. It is perfectly true, none the less, that barren women circumambulate it in the hope of becoming fruitful. I accepted this sublimation gladly, because I had not yet been healed of the wound of Amfortas: I had not got rid of the shame of sex. My instinct told me that Blake was right in saying “The lust of the goat is the glory of God.” But I lacked the courage to admit it. The result of my training had been to obsess me with the hideously foul idea that inflicts such misery on Western minds and curses life with civil war. Europeans cannot face the facts frankly; they cannot escape from their animal appetite, yet suffer the tortures of fear and shame even while gratifying it. As Freud has now shown, this devastating complex is not merely responsible for most of the social and domestic misery of Europe and America, but exposes the individual to neurosis. It is hardly too much to say that our lives are blasted by conscience. We resort to suppression and the germs created an abscess.

The Hindu is of course a slave to his superstitions about sin even more than most nominal Christians, for the simple reason that he is absolutely serious about the welfare of his soul. I remember coming across a tribe which did not use tobacco. I offered them some and they refused. I supposed it was forbidden by their religion, but they told me no. It was, however, not commanded by their religion; they could therefore see no object in doing it. The Hindu attitude towards sin, absurd as it is, compares favourably with ours; because, though afraid of it, they have not reached our own state of panic which makes us the prey of the most fantastic superstitions and perversions of Truth. I have found it practically impossible to convince middle-class Anglo-Saxons of facts which anyone would think were bound to be known. They take refuge in angry denial. It seems to them that if they once admit the most elementary and obvious propositions, they are bound to fall headlong into a bottomless pit of bestiality. Where, in fact, they always are.

STANZA XXXI

In course of time I arrived at Madras, which is sleepy, sticky and provincial. On one of my steamship journeys I had met a delightful man named Harry Lambe, who had invited me to come and stay with him in Calcutta. It fitted in ideally and I booked my passage by the steamer Dupleix. It would have been more natural to go by train; but part of my plan in wandering about the world was to put myself in unpleasant situations on purpose, provided that they were new. This small French boat offered an adventure.

A storm was raging; the Dupleix was some days late, and when she arrived, it was too rough for her to come into the harbour. I had to row out to her in an open boat. I had dismissed my servant and was the only passenger from shore. I note the fact as showing that I had in a sense broken with the past; the point will appear in a few paragraphs.

The voyage was atrocious; the ship stank of oil, partly from the engines, partly from the cooking and partly from the crew. The storm continued unabated. We passed close to the lightship off the mouth of the Hughli in thick sea fog; the people on the lightship are often five weeks or more without being able to communicate with the rest of the world. But we got a pilot on board somehow and once in the river itself the weather cleared.

The Hughli is reputed the most difficult and dangerous navigation in the world and its pilots are the best paid men afloat. Ours allowed me to spend part of the time with him on the bridge and put me up to the ropes. The sandbanks are constantly shifting; even the shores alter from day to day; the river suddenly chops off a large chunk of corner or throws up a false bank. A large staff of men is therefore constantly engaged in sounding for the channel and putting up new signposts on the banks. The chart of the river has to be revised every day. Even so, the channel is narrow and tortuous. The course of the ship reminded me of the most elaborate Continental figure-skating.

Lambe was at the wharf to meet me and drove me off to his house, a large building in a compound, as gardens surrounded by a wall are called in India. It was a colony of four men, with one of whom, Edward Thornton, I soon struck up an intimacy based on implicit sympathy in the matter of philosophical speculation.

Before I had been in the house three days, a curious incident occurred. I am always absent-minded. A current of thought flows through the back of my brain quite independent of what I am consciously doing. I might even

say that the above statement is incorrect. Most of the time I am more conscious of what I am thinking than of what I am saying and doing. Now there was an animated conversation at dinner about the absurdity of the native mind; the curious ideas that they got into their heads; and I “awoke” to hear someone say, as an illustration of this thesis, that the servants of the house were very excited by my arrival because I had penetrated into the Temple at Madura and sacrificed a goat. I had said nothing to my friends about my interest in Magick and religion, and they were much astonished when I told them that their servants were right. I explained how I had cut communications at Madras and wanted to know how the servants could possibly have found out the facts.

This let to conversation about the “native telegraph”. It is an established fact that the Bazaars get accurate information of events ahead of electricity. Mouth-to-mouth communication does not explain it. For instance, the death of an officer in a frontier skirmish in some place isolated from India by long stretches of uninhabited country has been reported in Bombay before the field telegraph has transmitted the news.

But I was already sufficiently advanced in practical Magick to understand how this could be done. On one occasion I wanted to prepare a ritual which involved the use of certain words which I did not know. I travelled in my astral body to see a brother of the Order whom I knew to be in possession of the required information, eight thousand miles and more away, and obtained it at once.

My first business at Calcutta was to learn Hindustani and Balti, in order to be an efficient interpreter on the Expedition to Chogo Ri. As regards the latter, I had to content myself with the grammar and filed to learn much. Fortunately, we managed without it; but it was easy to get a Munshi to teach me Hindustani and I spent most of my time in acquiring that language.

The “native telegraph” now reappeared in a different form. Somehow or other my Munshi got it into his head that I was a Magician. This was very curious, as I had done practically no Magick since landing in Ceylon and certainly had not talked about it at all. The “Sword of Song” bears witness to the completeness with which I had abandoned Magick. I had not in the least lost my faith in its efficacy: I regarded it very much as I regarded rock climbing. I could not doubt that I was the best rock climber of my generation, but I knew that my abilities in that respect would not help me to climb Chogo Ri any more than my ability at billiards would help me to understand Dostoevsky. Similarly, my magical attainment had no bearing on my Quest. Of course I was wrong. I had simply failed to understand the possibilities of

Magick. I had not realised that it was the practical side of spiritual progress. Ultimately, my Magick proved more far-reaching in importance than my Mysticism, as will appear in due course.

My Munshi must have possessed some secret source of information about me. His attitude towards me expressed not merely the servility of the conquered race; it added the childlike timidity of primitive people in presence of Occult Omnipotence. Having ingratiated himself by all the arts of the courtier, he plucked up courage to request me to kill his aunt. I am ashamed to say that I dissolved in laughter. I no longer remember how I kept my face; how I broke it to him gently that I killed strangers on such considerations as the uninitiated could not possibly comprehend. I still laugh to remember the shamefaced shyness of his request and the pained humiliation with which he received my refusal. He had the courage (a week or so later) to ask me to soften the hearts of the examiners towards his brother, who was entered for the B. A. examination; when I refused, he asked me to prophesy the result. I told him that his brother would fail, which he did. I claim no credit for second sight; I had based my judgment on the reflection that if his brother required Magical assistance in order to pass, he knew that his intellectual attainments were inadequate.

When I wasn't working I went racing. I had never been to a race course in England. I cannot force myself to pretend interest in a game of which I do not know the rules. Like all commercialised amusements, racing is essentially crooked. But in Calcutta it was less trouble to go than to stay away. I took advantage of the circumstances to test my theories. One particular horse had arrived in Calcutta with a great reputation. Everybody backed it and it lost race after race. I waited till it had become so discredited that I could get long odds against it in an important race, and then backed it to win, which it did. It was merely a question of following the psychology of the swindlers. They had pulled it till it was worth while to let it win.

I had little real pleasure in rattling the *rupis* in my pocket. My cynical disgust with the corrupt pettiness of humanity, far from being assuaged by the consciousness of my ability to outmanoeuvre it, saddened me. I loved mankind; I wanted everybody to be an enthusiastic aspirant to the absolute. I expected everybody to be as sensitive about honour as I was myself. My disillusionment drove me more and more to determine that the only thing worth doing was to save humanity from the horror of its own ignorant heartlessness. But I was still innocent to the point of imbecility. I had not analysed human conduct: I did not understand in the least the springs of human action. Its blind bestiality was a puzzle which appalled me, yet I could not even begin to estimate its elements.

Allan Bennett had made up his mind to take the Yellow Robe—not in Ceylon, where the sodden corruption of the Sangha sickened his sincerity, but in Burma, where the bhikkhus could at least boast fidelity to the principles of the Buddha, and whose virtuous lives vindicated their good faith. He had gone to Akyab on the western coast of Burma, and was living in a monastery called Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung. I thought I would drop in on him and pass the time of day; and proposed to combine with this act of fraternity the adventure of crossing the Arakan hills, the range which forms the watershed between the valley of the Irrawaddy and the sea. This journey, very short in measured miles, is reputed so deadly that it has only been accomplished by very few men. These left most of their party to moulder in the mountains and themselves died within a few days of completing the crossing. I have always had this peculiar passion for putting myself in poisonous perils. Its source is presumably my congenital masochism, and the “Travellers' Tales” of Paley Gardner had determined its form of expression.

Edward Thornton decided to join me on this expedition. We sailed for Rangoon on the 21st of January. During the whole of my stay in Calcutta I had been intermittently ill with malaria. I had been reading Deussen's exposition of Vedanta and found it utterly unsatisfactory. Yet Vendata is the fine flower of Hinduism, the sole solution of the problems presented by the crude animism of the Vedas. “And if these things are done in the green tree——?” I was being forced, without knowing it, towards Buddhism; my wish to see Allan again was doubtless due to this dilemma rather than to any instincts of friendship. As significant of the state of my soul, vague yet vehement, I may quote certain entries in my diary thus:

“Jan. 13. Early morning walk—deep meditation. Developed a sort of inverted Manichaeism. Nature as evil and fatal force developing within itself (unwittingly) a suicidal Will called Buddha or Christ.

“Jan. 15. It is a fallacy that the absolute must be the all-good, etc. There is *not* an intelligence directing law—line of least resistance. Its own selfishness has not even the wit to prevent Buddha arising. We cannot call Nature *evil*. 'Fatal' is the exact word. Necessity implies stupidity—this the chief attribute of nature. As to 'Supreme Intelligence,' consider how many billion years were required to develop even so low a thing as emotion.”

The Rangoon River remains one of the deepest impressions of my life. It reminded me of the Neva, though Petrograd is immensely more important. But there is the same terrifying breadth of torrent, much more rapid and turbulent than one expects from the limitless levels through which it rushes; one gets the idea of sterile, heartless passion in the midst of a wilderness, and somehow or other this seems obscenely unnatural. One instinctively as-

sociates vehemence with detailed result; and when one seen such stupendous forces running to waste, one is subconsciously reminded of the essence of human tragedy, the callousness of Nature about our craving to reap the reward of our efforts. One has to be a philosopher to endure the consciousness of waste, and something more than a philosopher to admire the spendthrift splendour of the Universe.

The glory of Rangoon is, of course, the Shwe Dagon pagoda. It is gilded and gigantic, and the effect is curiously annoying, for very much the same reason as the river is appalling. But it enables one to understand the soul of Asia. At the base of the Dagoba is a vast circular platform, ringed with shops, mostly dedicated to commercial piety and cumbered with devotees, beggars and monsters. It is the rendezvous of the ragged, the diseased and the deformed, charity to whom is supposed to confer “merit”. Merit means insurance against reincarnation in undesirable conditions. Among Buddhists, generally speaking, good deeds are always done with some such objects. A rich woman who is childless will plaster an existing Dagoba with gold-leaf, or build a new one, in the hope of becoming fruitful.

The method by which this Magick is supposed to operate is somewhat obscure. There is no question of propitiating an offended Deity in canonical Buddhism; but in point of fact, it is probable that the custom is a survival of pre-Buddhistic fetishism. There are innumerable traces of the old demonology in the practical life of the people. Buddhism did not succeed in supplanting prevailing superstitions any more than did Christianity or Islam. The fact is that the instincts of ignorant people invariably find expression in some form of witchcraft. It matters little what the metaphysician or the moralist may inculcate; the animal sticks to his subconscious ideas.

On a litter in the shadow of the pagoda lay a boy of about fourteen years. He suffered from hydrocephalus. An enormous head, horrifyingly inane, surmounted a shrivelled body, too feeble even to support it. There indeed was a manifest symbol of the Universe as conceived by the Buddha! Senseless suffering proves that nature has no purpose or pity. The existence of a single item of this kind in the inventory demonstrates the theorem. As I gazed on the child, I began to understand that all the syllogisms of Optimism were enthymemes. Every telology depends on the error of generalizing from a few selected phenomena. The boy impressed me more than the pagoda. One was the freak of misfortune; the other the considered climax of colossal care. Yet both were transitory and trivial toys of time. I went back to Rangoon profoundly penetrated by the insight which enabled the Buddha to attain understanding of the import of the cosmos.

Ever since leaving Ceylon I had been almost constantly down with malaria. In Rangoon the fever assumed a remittent form: I lived on quinine and iced champagne. The persistence of the disease brought me to a state in which I no longer struggled to recover my ordinary health. I lived on a low level, without desire even to die. I began to understand the psychology of Allan. My mind was abnormally clear: I was cleansed of the contamination of desire. Nothing was worth wishing for; I did not even complain of suffering. This state of mind is a useful experience. Something very similar can be induced artificially by fasting.

I recovered quite suddenly, though the cachexia continued. I was quite well, but felt extraordinarily weak. The curious thing about malaria is that one seems to lack strength to lift a finger, and yet one can do the day's work with astonishing endurance. One makes up one's mind that one can't be any worse, and one's muscles are freed from the inhibition of fatigue just as they are if one anaesthetizes oneself with cocaine. I have walked thirty-five miles in sweltering heat through the most difficult jungle, carrying a heavy rifle, when I simply had not the strength to swallow my breakfast. One learns to live on a level of invalidism. Most Europeans accustomed to the tropics acquire this aptitude; they go on, year after year, apathetically carrying out their routine. They have got beyond disappointment and ambition.

I remember visiting a forest officer up-country in Ceylon. We dined with him on the eternal monotony of chicken under various disguises and canned meats. Everything tastes alike. He had no conversation; he tried to entertain us by turning on a worn-out gramophone, as he had done to relive his evenings ever since the instrument was invented. He was an old man and could have retired on his pension two years earlier, but he had lost all interest in life. What was the sense of his going to England? He had no friends, no family, no future! He had become part of the jungle. The psychology is common to all but men of rare intelligence and energy. They cling childishly to the skirts of civilisation by drearily dressing for their dreary dinner; but everything becomes formal and meaningless. Unable to force an answer from the Sphinx of their surroundings, they are petrified into its stony silence, which yet does not share its sublimity because it has neither shape nor soul.

In order to cross the Arakans to Akyab, we obtained various credentials from the authorities, especially a letter to the forest commissioner of the district that he might provide us with elephants. We engaged a servant, a man from Madras, whose name was Peter. The first question one asks of a servant in India is: his religion? Peter amused us by replying that he was “a free man, a Roman Catholic”. Outside subscribers to missionary societies, everyone is aware what is implied by the term “native Christians”. Anyone

who is such an absolute scoundrel as to exceed the very wide latitude of his environment, who makes himself intolerable to his family, friends and neighbours, cuts the painter and “finds Jesus”. Conversion is a certificate of incorrigible rascality. We should not have taken a Christian if we could have found anyone else who spoke English and Hindustani. The inconceivable pettiness of the thefts of Peter was to me a revelation of the possibilities of human degradation. It was combined with such cowardice of conscience that one could understand easily why the “native Christian” invariably calls on his death-bed for the minister of his original religion.

STANZA XXXII

On the twenty-fifth of January we left Rangoon for Prome. Arrived at Prome, we immediately went on board the steam ferry *Amherst*. It is a five hours' journey to Thayetmyo, where we arrived in the heat of the day, after a very pleasant journey, thanks partly to the beauty of the scenery, but perhaps more to the geniality of the captain. We got three bullock carts for our transport and started the next morning, stopping at Natha for lunch after a pleasant journey of ten miles. After lunch we went off to Kyoukghyi.

The next day we resumed our journey; I walked most of the way and shot some partridges and pigeons for lunch, which we took at Leh-Joung; this is bungalow, but a not a village. We went on in the afternoon to Yegyanzin, where we had the good fortune to meet Garr, the forest Commissioner of the District, and his assistant Hopwood. Unfortunately he was unable to give me any elephants, as they were all in use; but told me I ought to have no difficulty in getting coolies and probably ponies if I required them. We combines forces and had quite a nice dinner together. One does not realise how nice Englishmen really are until one meets them in out-of-the-way places. Sometimes not even then.

The following day we went off again and arrived in Mindon at 2.30 p.m. The road had become very bad; and, in the springless bullock-cart, travelling was by no means pleasant. In fact, after two or three big jolts we agreed to take turns to look out, and to give warning if a particularly frightful jolt seemed imminent. But for all our precautions, I was badly let in on one occasion. The road had become level, and appeared to be the same for the next 200 yards, so I turned back to light a pipe. Without a word of warning the driver swung round his oxen off the road into an adjoining paddy field, at least three feet below, and we got the nastiest shaking of our lives. The last seven miles were particularly irritating, as there was little or no shade, and it was out of the question to relieve oneself by walking for more than a short distance.

On arrival at Mindon, we summoned the headman and told him to get men for the cross-country journey to Kyaukpyu. He seemed to think it would be rather difficult and was evidently not at all pleased with his orders, but he went off to obey them, and in the meanwhile sent round the village shikari so that I might go out after buffalo the next day. I accordingly started at 6.45 next morning.

It soon began to get hot, and a double .577 is not the kind of toy one wants to carry on a fifteen mile tramp. As a matter of fact, I probably did

nearer twenty miles than fifteen, as I was going eight hours with very little rest. We went up and down hills repeatedly, but the wild buffalo was shy, and, as a matter of fact, I did not the whole day see anything whatever shootable, except some small birds which I took home for dinner. In the afternoon we went off bathing together in a delightful pool directly under the hill on which the bungalow was situated. I took down the shot gun with the intention of killing a big paddy bird which we saw from the bank. These birds are valuable on account of the aigrette. I fired, but my shot did not seem to hurt him, and he flew off. I resigned the gun to the Burmese boy, and had just finished my bath when the impudent beast came back. I hastily signalled for the gun; and putting on a topee and a towel round my waist proceeded to stalk him across the ford. I must have presented the most ridiculous spectacle. Thornton said he had not laughed so much for years, and I daresay that the paddy bird laughed too; but I got the best laugh in the end, for after about ten minutes' infinite pains I got a close shot at him, which put an end to his career. That evening we tried to eat roast parrots, but it was a total failure. I am told, however, that parrot pie is quite a good dish; well, I don't like parrot, so there will be all the more for those who do.

The next day I was naturally feeling very tired; but in the afternoon I summoned enough energy to go for a short stroll. I was very anxious to show Thornton a beautiful view of a hillside and river, which I had come across on my way home. We set out, he being armed with a sketch book and a kukri, which he would always carry about with him, though I could never understand the reason; if I had been anticipating the day's events, I should not have troubled to inquire. At the edge of the hill weariness overtook me; I sat down, pointing to him a tiny path down the hill slope which he was to pursue. He was rather a long time returning, and I was just about to follow in search when I heard his cooee; in a couple of minutes he rejoined me. I was rather surprised to see that his kukri was covered with blood. I said, “I knew you would fall over something one day. Where have you cut yourself?” He explained that he had not cut himself, but that an animal had tried to dispute the path with him and that he had hit it on the head, whereon the animal had rolled down the steep slopes towards the river. I could not make out from his description what kind of an animal it could possibly be, but on examining the tracks I saw them to be those of a nearly full-grown leopard. We did not retrieve the body, though it must have been mortally wounded, otherwise Thornton would hardly have escaped so easily.

The headman now returned and told us that he could not give us coolies to cross the Arakan Hills, nobody had ever been there, and it was very dangerous, and everyone who went there died, and all that sort of thing. But he could give us men to go about twenty miles, and no doubt we should be able to get more coolies there. I thought there was more than a little doubt; and,

taking one thing with another, decided it would be best to give up the idea and go instead back to the Irrawaddy down the Mindon Chong; we consequently hired a boat of the dug-out type, about 35 feet long and just broad enough for two men to pass; over the middle of the boat was the usual awning. The next morning we started down the stream, always through the most delightful country and among charming people.

All the villages in this part of the country are strongly fortified with palisades of sharpened bamboos. The voyage down the river was exceedingly pleasant and the shooting delightful. One could sit on the stern of the boat and pot away all day at everything, from snipe to heron. Our Burmese boys and the kites had great rivalry in retrieving the game. The kites seemed to know that they would not be shot at. I had another slight attack of fever in the afternoon, but nothing to speak of. We tied up at Sakade for the night. There was no dak-bungalow near and one does not sleep in a Burmese village unless necessity compels. And yet—

By palm and pagoda enchaunted o'ershadowed, I lie in the light
Of stars that are bright beyond suns that all poets have vaunted
In the deep-breathing amorous bosom of forests of Amazon might,
By palm and pagoda enchaunted.

By spells that are murmured, and rays of my soul strongly flung, never daunted;
By gesture and tracery traced with a wand dappled white,
I summon the spirits of earth from the gloom they for ages have haunted.

O woman of deep red skin! Carved hair like the teak! O delight
Of my soul in the hollows of earth — how my spirit hath taunted . . .
Away! I am here, I am laid to the breast of the earth in the dusk of the night,
By palm and pagoda enchaunted.

This poem was inspired by an actual experience. The effects of my continued bouts of fever had been to make me spiritually sensitive. The jungle spoke to me of the world which lies behind material manifestation. I perceived directly that every phenomenon, from the ripple of the river to the fragrance of the flowers, is the language by which the subtle souls of nature speak to our senses. That night we were tied up under a teak tree, and as I lay awake with my eyes fixed ecstatically on its grace and vigour, I found myself in the embraces of the Nat or elemental spirit of the tree. It was a woman vigorous and intense, of passion and purity so marvellous that she

abides with me after these many years as few indeed of her human colleagues. I passed a sleepless night in a continuous sublimity of love.

The early hours of the morning, in winter, are bitterly cold, and the river is covered to a height of several feet with a dense white mist which does not disappear till well after sunrise.

I kept very quiet the next day, for repeated attacks of fever had begun to interfere with my digestive apparatus. Just as nightfall two deer came down to drink at the river side. It was rather dark for a shot and the deer could hardly be distinguished from the surrounding foliage, but the men very cleverly and silently held the boat and I let fly. The result was better than I expected. I hit exactly where I had aimed at and the deer dropped like a stone. Needless to say we had a first-class dinner. We slept at Singon that night. There were a great many jungle fires during this day and the next. The next morning we started again early and I resumed my bird shooting. On the first day I had several times missed a Brahman duck and was somewhat anxious to retrieve my reputation. Quite early in the morning I got a very fair shot at one; it shook its wings in derision and flew off, landing again 100 yards or so down stream. We floated down and I had another shot with the same result; for the next shot I went on shore and deliberately stalked the animal from behind the low bank and got a sitting shot at about ten yards. The disgusted bird looked around indignantly and flew solemnly down stream. I, even more disgusted, got back to the boat, but the bird was a little too clever this time; for he made a wide circle and came flying back right overhead. I let fly from below and it fell with a flop into the river. The fact is that these birds are so well protected that it is quite useless to shoot at them when the breast is not exposed, unless a lucky pellet should find its way to the brain. So on the next occasion, having noticed that when disturbed they always went down stream, I went some distance below them and sent two boys to frighten them from above. The result was an excellent right and left, and I consoled myself for my previous fiascos. We stopped the night at Toun Myong.

After a delightful night we went off the next morning and got to Kama on the Irrawaddy, whence we signalled the steamboat which took us back to Prome, where we stopped that night. The next day we spent in visiting the pagoda, Thornton doing some sketching and I writing a couple of Buddhist poems. We went off in the evening for Rangoon. The next day we drove about the town but did little else; and on Monday we paid off Peter. The principle on which I had dealt with this man was to give him money in lump sums as he wanted it, and to call him to give an account of all he had spent. He made out that we owed him 37 rupees by this said account. I made a few trifling corrections; reducing the balance in his favour, and including the

wages due to him (which he had not reckoned), to 2 rupees, 4 annas. He was very indignant and was going to complain to everyone from the Lieutenant-Governor to the hotel-keeper. I think he was rather staggered when I told him that, as he had been a very good servant in other respects, I would give him as backsheesh the bottle of champagne and the three tins which he had already stolen. He appeared very surprised at my having detected this theft. Whereby hangs a tale. On leaving Rangoon I gave him a list of all the provision, with the instructions that when he took anything from the store he was to bring the list to me and have that thing crossed off. On the second day the list was missing; he, of course, swore that I had not given it back to him. I had kept a duplicate list, which I took very good care not to show.

That evening I was again down with fever and found myself unable to take any food whatever. I called in the local medico, who fed me on iced champagne, and the next day I was pretty well again. Thornton in the meanwhile had gone off to Mandalay. I was very sorry not to be able to go on there with him, but my time was too short: I did not know when I might be summoned to join Eckenstein to go off to Kashmir.

On the 12th of February I went on board the *Komilla* for Akyab, where Allan was now living. In the course of the day the sea air completely restored me to health. On the 13th we were off Sandaway, which did not appear fascinating. On the next day we put in a Kyakpyu, which I had so vainly hoped to reach overland. It has a most delightful bay and beach, its general appearance recalling the South Sea Islands; but the place is a den of malaria. We had no time to land, as the captain was anxious to get into Akyab the same night. We raced through the Straits and cast anchor there about 8 o'clock — just in time.

I went ashore with the second officer and proceeded in my usual casual manner to try to find Allan in the dark. The job was easier than I anticipated. The first man I spoke to greeted me as if I had been his long-lost brother, and took me off in his own carriage to the monastery (the name of which is Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung) where I found Allan, whom I now saw for the first time as a Buddhist monk. The effect was to make him appear of gigantic height, as compared to the diminutive Burmese, but otherwise there was very little change. The old gentleness was still there.

I ought to have mentioned (when talking of Ceylon) the delightful story of his adventure with a krait. Going out for a solitary walk one day with no better weapon than an umbrella, be met a krait sunning himself in the middle of the road. Most men would have either killed the krait with the umbrella or avoided its dangerous neighbourhood. Allan did neither; he went up to the deadly little reptile and loaded him with reproaches. He showed him how

selfish it was to sit in the road where someone might pass and accidentally tread on him. “For I am sure,” said Allan, “that were anyone to interfere with you, your temper is not sufficiently under control to prevent you striking him. Let us see now!” he continued, and deliberately stirred the beast up with his umbrella. The krait raised itself and struck several times viciously, but fortunately at the umbrella only. Wounded to the heart by this display of passion and anger, and with tears running down his cheeks, at least metaphorically speaking, he exhorted the snake to avoid anger, as it would the most deadly pestilence, explained the four noble truths, the three characteristics, the five precepts, the ten fetters of the soul; and expatiated on the doctrine of Karma and all the paraphernalia of Buddhism for at least ten minutes by the clock. When he found the snake was sufficiently impressed he nodded pleasantly and went off with a “Good-day, brother krait!”

Some men would take this anecdote as illustrating fearlessness; but the true spring is to be found in compassion. Allan was perfectly serious when he preached to the snake, though he was possibly a better man of science than a good many of the stuck-up young idiots who nowadays lay claim to the title. I have here distinguished between fearlessness and compassion; but in their highest form they are surely identical; even pseudo-Christ hit the mark when he observed, “Prefect love casteth out fear.”

They managed to give me some sort of a shakedown, and I slept very pleasantly at the monastery. The next morning I went off to breakfast on board to say good-bye to the captain, who had shown me great kindness, and afterwards took my luggage and went to Dr. Moung Tjha Nu, the Resident Medical Officer, who welcomed me heartily and offered me hospitality during my stay in Akyab.

He was Allan's chief Dayaka; and very kindly and wisely did he provide for him. I walked back with Allan to the temple and commenced discussion all sorts of things, but continuous conversation was quite impossible, for people of all sorts trooped in incessantly to pay their respects to the European Bhikkhu. They prostrated themselves at his feet and clung to them with reverence and affection. They brought him all sorts of presents. He was more like Pasha Bailey Ben than any other character in history.

> “They brought him onions strung on ropes,
> And cold boiled beef, and telescopes,”

at any rate gifts equally varied and not much more useful. The Doctor looked in in the afternoon and took me back with him to dinner. Allan was inclined to suffer with his old asthma, as it is the Buddhist custom (*non sine causâ*)

to go out of doors at six every morning, and it is very cold till some time after dawn. I wish sanctity was not so incompatible with sanity and sanitation!

The next day after breakfast Allan came to the Doctor's house to avoid worshippers, but a few of them found him out after all and produced buttered eggs, newspapers, marmalade, brazil nuts, bicarbonate of potash and works on Buddhism from their ample robes. We were able, however, to talk of Buddhism and our plans for extending it to Europe, most of the day. The next four days were occupied in the same way.

STANZA XXXIII

While at Akyab I wrote *Ahab*, which, with a few other poems, was published as a companion to *Jezebel*. I had also, at odd times, continued *Orpheus* and *The Argonauts*. The latter play is really five separate plays of the Greek pattern. The effect of my journey is very manifest. I had entirely neglected the obvious astronomical symbolism of the Golden Fleece, and had introduced a number of Hindu ideas, both about Magick and about philosophy. To illustrate the voyage, I included lyrics descriptive of actual observations of Vera Cruz, Waikiki Beach, Hong Kong and other places which had excited me.

The best thing in Book III of *Orpheus*, which occupied this period, is, perhaps, the invocation to Hecate, which I recited at Akyab with full magical intention. The Goddess appeared in the form of Bhavani. The fact made more concrete my perception of the essential identity of all religions. Sinai and Olympus, Mount Kailasha and Mount Meru differed from each other as do the Dent Blanche, Mote Silvio and the Steinbockhorn. It is the same mountain seen from different sides and named by different people. It encouraged me to continue my studies in the Qabbala, which claims to reduce all possible ideas to combinations of comparatively few originals, the ten numbers, in fact; these ten numbers themselves being of course interrelated.

From the beginning I had wanted to use my poetical gift to write magical invocations. Hymns to various gods and goddesses may be found scattered through my works; but in Book III of *Orpheus*, Persephone is invoked directly by commemorating her adventures. I developed this much further in Book IV of *Orpheus*. The idea was put into my mind by Euripides, whose Bacchae I had been reading at odd times, having picked up a copy at a second-hand book store in San Francisco. When I had first read it, for academic purposes, I had entirely failed to realize that the play was an invocation of Dionysus. I now began to see that by commemorating the story of the God one might identify oneself with him, and thus constitute a subtler, stronger and more complete invocation of him that by any direct address. I might even go so far as to say that the form of the latter implies the consciousness of duality and therefore tends to inhibit identification.

My predilection is due to the fact that I am primarily a lyric poet. My deepest natural tendency is to exalt my soul by what I may call straightforward intoxication. Thus Shelly and Swinburne come more natural to me than Aeschylus and Shakespeare, who intoxicate the reader by transporting him to their wonderland.

Sunday the 23rd I went aboard S.S. *Kapurthala* to return to Calcutta. The next day we anchored outside Chittagong, a most uninteresting place. I was too lazy to land. Two days later I got back to Calcutta. Getting my mail, I busied myself in preparing for the great journey. It was now definitely settled that our expedition should meet at Rawal Pindi. I only took one day off, when I went to Sodpur snipe shooting with a friend of Thornton's, with whom I was now staying, Lambe having gone off to Australia.

I have inserted the record of this short excursion somewhat at length. Most of it is taken from an account written up when it was still fresh in my mind. It should give an idea of the daily detail of such journeys and enable the reader to clothe with flesh the skeleton of my subsequent wanderings.

On the 7th of March I left for Benares and saw the usual sights—temples, Yogis and dancing girls. I had become very cynical and *blasé*, about all these things, which only a few months before would have roused me to ecstasies of wonder. But I now made a wry mouth at the sour sub-flavour of everything. My conversation with Allan about Buddhism, and my own meditations, had disenchanted me. Everything was recognized automatically as illusion, calculated to fetter the soul if one allowed it to fool one.

On the 12fth I reached Agra. My entry about the Taj Mahal is interesting.

“Saw Taj. A dream of beauty, with appallingly evil things dwelling therein. I actually had to use. H.P.K. formula! (This means that I assumed the god-form of Harpocrates to prevent the invasion of my aura by objectionable ideas.) The building soon palls, the evil aura is apparent and disgust succeeds. But the central hall is like a magic circle, of strained aura, like after the banishing.”

The aesthetic criticism needs revision. I do not think the building beautiful; the conception is too exquisite for the scale of the execution. The is that of an etching twenty feet by thirty.

This reminds me of a puzzle that perplexed me many years later in Washington, D.C. I could not understand why the obelisk was so atrociously ugly. “How can even the Americans,” I said to myself, “go wrong over so absolutely simple a form?” I asked the sculptor, Paul Bartlett, who cleared up the difficulty, simply and shortly: “An obelisk is a monolith.”

It is one of the fundamental qualities of men who understand a subject perfectly to be able to sweep away the most elaborate illusions by appeal to bed-rock fact. I remember how Frank Harris once enlightened me about imitation pearls. One knows how cleverly the manufacturers of these things

present their case so as to deceive the very elect. But Frank Harris said: “A pearl is a stone.” And the whole fantastic fabric of falsehood crumbled at the touch!

I cannot omit to mention one atrocity at Agra. Some prurient English curator had indulged his foul instincts by whitewashing a magnificent fresco in the palace because it was “improper”. In other words, he was so leprously lascivious that anything which reminded him of reproduction produced a frenzied spasm of sensuality in his soul. However, his vandalism still cried out against him. The beautiful wall which he had made as blank as his intelligence still reminded him of his rottenness. He had no resource but to whitewash all the other walls, in order to secure artistic uniformity!

After all, it is perhaps the best thing to do; having bowdlerized Shakespeare and edited the Bible so as to remove all reference to any kind of sin, it is hardly worth while to preserve the remains. There are only two courses open to logic; one can either accept the Universe as it is, face every fact frankly and fearlessly, and make one's soul immune to the influence of any invasion; or abolish the whole thing by administering soporifics to the spirit. After all, the virtues which are dearest to degenerate Europeans imply the existence of those very things which they are most concerned to deny. The pious pretence that evil does not exist only makes it vague, enormous and menacing. Its overshadowing formlessness obsesses the mind. The way to beat an enemy is to define him clearly, to analyse and measure him. Once an idea is intelligently grasped, it ceases to threaten the mind with the terrors of the Unknown.

I went to Delhi on the 16th. The best thing here is the Turkish bath, where the process of purification is completed by charming ladies. On the 18th I wrote about *Orpheus*, “The accursed Book III utterly finished. Oh Book IV! On the nineteenth I went and saw the fort with “Major Graham, a prize fool from South Africa”. The entry demands emendation. He wasn't a major; his name wasn't Graham; he had never been to South Africa; and he was anything but a fool! His idea was to represent himself as in charge of some Boer prisoners and obtain credit and cash by various misrepresentations.

The 20th and 21st were great days in my life. I wrote an essay which I originally gate the title “Crowleymas Day” and published under the title “Berashith” in Paris by itself, incorporating it subsequently in The Sword of Song. The general idea is to eliminate the idea of infinity from our conception of the cosmos. It also shows the essential identity of Manichaeism (Christianity), Vedantism and Buddhism. Instead of explaining the universe as modifications of a unity, which itself needs explaining, I regard it as

NOTHING, conceived as (illusory) pairs of contradictories. What we call a thought does not really exist at all by itself. It is merely half of nothing. I know that there are practical difficulties in accepting this, though it gets rid so nicely of *à priori* obstacles. However, the essay is packed with ideas, nearly all of which have proved extremely fertile, and it represents fairly enough the criticism of my genius upon the varied ideas which I had gathered since I first came to Asia.

During the whole time, I had been studying the original scriptures of Hinduism and Buddhism very thoroughly. Besides this, I had discussed every aspect of religion and philosophy with immensely varied types of thinkers. From men of such spiritual and scholarly attainment as Allan Bennett, the Hon. P. Ramanathan, Prince Jinawaravansa, Paramaguru Swami, Shri Swami Swayam Prakashanand Maithala, to such excremental exponents of error as theosophists, missionaries and even members of the Salvation Army. Gathering all these shreds together, I had preferred to call the pattern Buddhism. The scientific agnosticism, rational psychology, and freedom from superstitious or emotional appeals, decided me in its favour. There were, of course, two vast gaps in my line. I knew little and understood less of Chinese thought, and was almost equally ignorant of Islam with its Sufi superstructure.

It was dramatically fit that I should have devoted these two days to this essay; for on the second I received a wire from Eckenstein. I had a day to spare before proceeding to Rawal Pindi, which I spent at Oakley shooting magar. Here is the story:—

“Maiden, the proprietor of the hotel, came with me and provided a most admirable tiffin. I lent him my Mauser and relied myself upon the .577. After getting permission from the engineer in charge of the Canal Works, we put off in a small boat and rowed up the stream. Very soon we saw a fine big crocodile on the banks; but as they are very suspicious beasts an slide into the water at anyone's approach, we determined to try a long shot. I crawled into the bow of the boat, and while the natives held the boat steady, loosed off at about 130 yards. The shot was either a very good one or a very lucky one, for the magar was certainly mortally wounded by it. We rowed rapidly up to the beast to find him lashing about in a couple of feet of water and bleeding profusely. I had almost certainly shot him through the heart. Unfortunately, this is of very little use with these reptiles. We got up as close as the natives could be persuaded to go. There certainly was some risk if we had gone quite close in, but we ought to have ventured near enough to drive a boat-hook into the mud between him and the deep water. But they could not be persuaded to do this and there was no time for argument. Maiden sat up in the middle of the boat and fired about fifteen Mauser cartridges into

the struggling crocodile, which I think was a proceeding of doubtful utility. He persuaded me, however, to fire a couple more cartridges myself, which I did, right down the beast's throat. The second shot, however, very nearly led to a catastrophe, as the boat was not at all steady and the recoil of the heavy express sent me an awful cropper backwards on to the gunwale of the boat. Luckily no harm came of it. I was now more anxious than ever to get hold of the beast or to pin him with the boat-hook, thought his struggles were gradually ceasing, but nothing we could do was any good; little by little he slid off the shallow into the deep water and sank. After hunting about for twenty minutes we gave the affair up as a bad job.

Rowing slowly up the stream, we soon caught sight of another fine beast, though not quite so big as the one we lost. I took, however, an extraordinarily careful shot at it and had the good luck to smash its spine. Everyone thought I had missed, but I swore that was impossible. Certainly the beast did not move as we rowed towards it. I sent the natives on to the bank, and after an infinite display of funk they ventured to catch hold of its tail; of course it had been shot stone dead. We got the body on board and rowed back to tiffin.

On Sunday, March 23rd, I took the Mail for Pindi. As luck would have it, the car reserved for the expedition was on the train. So I jumped in and was introduced to my four new comrades.

The Chogo Ri expedition had begun.

STANZA XXXIV

Agreement between Oscar Eckenstein and Aleister Crowley

1. By O.E.'s letter of Sept. 20th and cable of Oct. 3rd he agrees to A.C.'s proposal by cable and letter of August 23rd that they should together climb a mountain higher than any previously ascended by man: both agree to use their utmost endeavours in every respect to achieve this result.

(On August 23rd A.C. placed £500 at the disposal of O.E.; on Oct. 10th he added another five hundred pounds in case of emergency, for this purpose. O.E. is empowered to employ part of this latter sum, or all if absolutely necessary, to arrange by insurance for Dr. Karl Blodig to join us. It is, however, understood that Dr. Blodig's status as an amateur shall be rigidly respected.)

2. This agreement only to be cancelled by death, serious illness or vital affairs of one of the parties.

3. O.E. agrees to take all responsibility of preparing the expedition in England, to have authority to accept a third or fourth member of the party, should such a one be willing to pay his full share of the expenses, and he shall be responsible for the safe arrival of the party and baggage in place and date provided by him.

4. On accomplishment of (3) “the leader” will then assume entire control of, and responsibility for, the expedition, until the return of the party to civilization. “The leader” shall be either O.E. or A.C., as they may subsequently agree, and no other person.

“The leader” must give his orders in writing if requested. (N.B. This should always be done if separation of the party is involved.) “The leader” shall have the right to consult any member of the party, who must consider his difficulty with judicial care, and return a serious answer, in writing if requested. Should any dispute arise, a council may be called to sit under parliamentary usage, “the leader” to be chairman, unless his own conduct be in question. In the latter case, a chairman to be selected. A majority vote to decide. “The leader” to have a casting vote in case of equality. “The leader's” orders shall be otherwise without appeal, and shall be obeyed cheerfully and to the best of ability: except that no member of the party is to be obliged anywhere to risk his life, how own judgment to be the arbiter as to whether such and such an order involves danger, whether from men, starvation, animals or other causes.

5. All members of the party pledge themselves to have nothing whatever to do with women in any way that is possibly avoidable: not to interfere in any way whatever with native prejudices and beliefs.

This clause shall take effect from the accomplishment of (3).

6. Any dispute arising under this agreement shall be subjected to arbitration in the usual way and shall not be subject to appeal at law or otherwise.

7. Should a third, fourth or fifth man join the party, he shall sign this agreement before he is definitely accepted.

Witness our hands.
At Kandy, Oct. 12th, 1901.

The expedition was composed of six members. Thanks to the Alpine Club, there was no Englishman of mountaineering ability and experience available. We had, however, a Trinity man named Knowles, aged 22, which is far too young for work of this kind, which requires endurance. He knew practically nothing of mountains, but he had common sense enough to do what Eckenstein told him; and as it was, he proved invaluable in Srinagar and even on the actual journey. He was a source rather of strength than of weakness. Then there was an Austrian judge named Pfannl, reputed the best rock climber in Austria, and his regular climbing companion Wessely. They had no experience beyond the Alps and proved utterly unable to make allowances for the difference of scale. Pfannl was also obsessed with the idea of getting into athletic condition and had begun to train directly he stepped on the boat at Trieste. Foreseeing trouble, I kept part of my diary in a Magical cipher. I find an entry dated March 31st, 1902:—

"This is called the Misadventure of Pfannl. Mountain Sigma. On the Finsteraarhorn after traversing Schreckhorn directly from R.R. journey, Pfannl had to be carried down from the Concordia but. Again, on the Géant, he collapsed from food, etc. The whole moral of this is: "If Pfannl collapses, it will be complete. He is sure to overtrain."

The Austrians were totally unable to understand the workings of the native mind, as appeared very soon. It was a great mistake to bring them. The sixth member of the party was a Swiss ex-Army doctor named Guillarmod, who looked and behaved like Tartarin de Tarascon. He knew as little of mountains as he did of medicine, and proved a great source of weakness, though his delightful geniality helped both the psychology of the party and our relations with the natives. He was our comic relief and did much to make things more tolerable for all of us. For all that, I think we should have done better to take none of the foreigners.[1] Our numbers made us unwieldy; and

the question of international jealousy contributed indirectly to our failure, as will be explained later.

We left Pindi for Tret on the 29th of March. We had had to repack our baggage, which weighted over three tons, for convenience of transport by Ekkas. These are contraptions which suggest a hansom cab with the back knocked out and the driver on the floor, as it might have been conceived by the man who invented the coracle. Even one European finds it impossible to get a comfortable seat or stretch his legs, and a second constitutes outrageous overcrowding. A party of eight to ten natives, on the other hand, finds itself at ease.

Our adventures began with startling suddenness. I woke up in the dak-bungalow at Tret the next morning to find a dignified young gentleman sitting at my bedside. I wondered if I had been ill without knowing it, for his face expressed the sympathetic concern of Luke Fildes' “doctor”. Not at all; he was a police inspector who had arrived by Tonga, a two-horse rattletrap which is used by people in what passes for a hurry in these parts of the world. All he knew was that we mustn't start — “his not to reason why”. I said he had better talk to the leader of the expedition, Mr. Eckenstein. He assumed an awed expression, as if I had said something not quite nice. Knowles and I, who were sharing the same room, proceeded to dress with elegant leisure and bore our bewilderment to Eckenstein.

At this point a telegram arrived, from which we inferred that the Indian Empire was somewhat imperiled by our conduct. At ten o'clock there arrived no less a person than the Deputy Commissioner of Rawal Pindi; one of those strong silent men, with whom Mr. Henry Seton Merriman has made us familiar. He summoned me to his august presence. I (obviously) referred him once more to Eckenstein, but he jibbed — his orders were that the rest of us could do as we liked; but Eckenstein would not be allowed to enter Kashmir. We asked why. At this time The Book of the Law not having yet been given to mankind, he was unable to reply, “Enough of Because! Be he damned for a dog!”; but we understood him as uttering “words to that effect” in his strong silent way. We finally induced him to face Eckenstein; who, with his usual aplomb, put the poor man into a dilemma at once. He wanted to know whether he was or was not arrested. “Heaven forbid,” said the D.C., “that any such idea should enter my pure mind.” “All right then,” said Eckenstein; “I shall go on.” Oh no — the orders were strict. After interminable passages of verbal fencing, it was agreed that I should assume command of the expedition and carry on, while Eckenstein returned to Pindi with the Deputy Commissioner and took up the matter with the superior authority.

To sum this episode, Eckenstein chased the culprits all around north India and finally cornered George Nathaniel Curzon at the psychological moment when our pathetic cables to Lord George Hamilton at India Office had brought the power of Blighty to bear on the naughty nabobs. The “superior person” saved his face by authorizing Eckenstein to rejoin the party on guarantees for his good conduct subscribed by Knowles and myself!

We never learnt, and I do not know to this day, the *dessous des cartes*. Eckenstein insistently professed himself in utter ignorance of the reasons which had induced the authorities to take their high-handed and futile action. Needless to say, we could not but connect it with Eckenstein's quarrel with Conway in 1892. We pumped the bigwigs of Kashmir, and we sifted the rumours of the bazaar, but beyond learning that Eckenstein was a Prussian spy and a cold-blooded murderer, we obtained little information of importance. Eckenstein was the noblest man that I have ever known. His integrity was absolute and his sympathetic understanding of the native character supreme. I remain unrepentant in my opinion that the incident was the result of the unmanly jealousy and petty intrigue of the insects who envied him, complicated by official muddle.

Temporarily deprived of our leader, we went on wearily to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, which we reached on the 14th of April. Several incidents ion the road demonstrated the extraordinary importance which the government attached to Eckenstein. Though everything had been arranged, there were all sorts of excitement at the frontier, and telegrams and spies were bustling about. It reminded me of the turmoil in an ant-had which had been disturbed.

On the fifth day we had our first and last trouble with native. It is part of the Indian character to put every new Englishman through an examination in force of character. The key of power with all the inhabitants in the Indian Peninsula is justice. And this is about the only thing one can say which really does apply pretty when they came to their infinite diversity. God help the traveller who punishes his servants unjustly! His lack of judgment show them a weak point of which they can take advantage to avenge themselves in a thousand ways. On the other hand, one is even more despised if one fails to visit intentional misbehaviour with the full penalty of the law.

I was far from well. Various symptoms of malaria kept on cropping up and I was in constant pain with pityriasis versicolor, which is a form of the so-called dhobi itch (a dhobi is a laundryman). One puts on clothes which seem spotlessly clean, but they contain the spores of a fungus which grows in the axilla and the groin. This got worse and worse. I was idiot enough to put myself in the hands of the doctor. I had the superstitious belief that his

medical degree meant something. I suffered perpetually from the irritation, increased by walking and riding till I got on the glacier away from the doctor, when I painted it with iodine, a supersubtle device which had never occurred to him, and cured it in twenty-four hours.

On the fourth day the ekka drivers conspired cautiously to delay us. On the fifth they appointed a delegate to give us hell. (The arrangement was that Knowles and I should bring up the rear of the procession to prevent any ekkas from straggling.) This man kept on making unnecessary repairs in his harness, and finally managed to lock his wheel in that of another ekka which happened to meet us. He was delighted to find that I made no complaint and he thought that he was going to get away with it. His ekka and ours arrived in camp more than an hour after the rest of the party. But the moment we were visible I jumped down, fixed my left hand in his beard (itself a blood insult), dragged him from his ekka and lammed into him with my belt in view of the whole camp — apparently without any provocation.

The psychology is instructive. I knew that the man's misbehaviour was a put-up job; in beating him, I was establishing the morale of the whole expedition. Their subtle minds understood perfectly the essential justice of my action and applauded my perspicuity and determination. The result was that I never had the slightest difficulties with natives in India ever afterwards and was able to practise perfect tolerance of genuine accidents. I had forced them to respect us, which, with an Indian, is the first step to acquiring his love. And the men soon showed themselves willing to risk their lives, as they ignorantly thought they were being asked to do, in order to please us. Younghusband's expedition of Yarkand cost seventeen coolies their lives, and our men were convinced that the object of our expedition was to make a new pass to that city. Nothing I could say would persuade them otherwise. They came and told me that they knew they were going to die on the journey and they were quite willing to do it. They were almost disappointed when I sent them back from Camp 10!

Had I failed to understand the psychology of the ekka driver, we should have been nagged to death by pin-pricks. On the way back, crossing the Deosai plateau, we fell in with an English lieutenant who, after a fruitless shikar after ibex, had been worried into illness and was being deliberately worried to death by his servants, who kept on misunderstanding his orders “accidentally on purpose”. They had found out his weak spot and had no mercy. The first business of any traveller in any part of the world is to establish his moral superiority. He has to be uniformly calm, cheerful, just, perspicacious, indulgent and inexorable. He must decline to be swindled out of the fraction of a farthing. If he once gives way, he is done for.

I remember in my journey across China refusing to buy a few eggs when we were actually in sore need of them, because I could not agree with the owner on the price. The sum in dispute was much less than a ha'penny, and it was almost a matter of life and death to me; but if I had given in, I should never have been able to buy an egg for the rest of the journey. The traveller must always remember that his method of striking a match is accurately reported for hundreds of miles in every direction. England conquered India by understanding the minds of the inhabitants, by establishing her own standards of conduct as arbitrary, and contemptuously permitting the native to retain his own wherever they did not conflict with the service of the conqueror. England is losing India by consenting to admit the existence of the conquered races; by consenting to argue; by trying to find a value for incommensurables. Indian civilization is far superior to our own and to enter into open competition is to invoke defeat. We won India by matching our irrational, bigoted, brutal manhood against their etiolated culture.

We cannot even plead that we have lacked a prophet. The genius of Rudyard Kipling, however aesthetically abominable, has divined the secrets of destiny with cloudless clarity. His stories and his sermons are equally informed by the brainless yet unanswerable argument based on intuitive cognition of the critical facts. India can be governed, as history proves, by any alien autocracy with sufficient moral courage to dismiss Hindu subtlety as barbaric and go its own way regardless of reason. But India has always conquered its invaders by initiating them. No sooner does the Sahib suspect that he is not Almighty God than the attributes of Jehovah cease to arm him with unreasonable omnipotence. Our rule in India has perished because we have allowed ourselves to consider the question of Divine Right. The proverb says that the Gods themselves cannot contend with stupidity, and the stupidity of the sahib in the days of Nicholson reduced India to impotence. But we allowed the intellectual Bangali to invade England and caress our housemaids in the precincts of Earl's Court Exhibition. He returned to Calcutta, an outcast indeed from his own social system, but yet a conqueror of English fashions and femininity. We admitted his claim to compete with us, and our prestige perished exactly as did that of the Church when Luther asserted the right of private judgment.

I am not responsible[2] for the fact that the Universe is constructed in defiance of the principles of reason. I see perfectly that the crude conceptions of European culture are intellectually contemptible; but if we are to enter into relations of any kind with the East, we must either behave like little children in the presence of age and wisdom, or we must be brutal bosses. The soldiers who slew Archimedes had only one alternative — to sit at his feet and learn geometry, and thank him when he rapped them over the knuckles. We must therefore choose between shutting up fourteen thousand sipahis in

a compound an blowing them to pieces with grapeshot in cold blood, like Havelock, and sprawling to kiss their slippers like European students of Yoga. Our attempt to compromise between incompatible civilizations can only end in our confessing the impotence of our own.

We see, even in England itself, how the abdication of Norman arrogance has led to the abrogation of all standards of superiority, so that the man who wishes to govern England to-day is obliged to conform with the dishonest devices and servile stratagems of democracy. Government demands virtue; in its etymological sense of manliness. In modern England, courage, truthfulness and determination are at a discount. A leader can only lead by drugging the populace. When Beaconsfield (wasn't it?) said, “We must educate our masters,” he formulated the creed of Communism; for it is impossible to educate the people. I myself, despite my public school and University, despite a life devoted to continual travel and study of social, political, economic and historical facts, am only too well aware of my abject incompetence to provide a remedy for the least of the diseases which have come to actual issue. I only know that one must abdicate one's intelligence and submit to rule-of-thumb government. The best master is a go-as-you-please generous gentleman who settles everything by rude common sense. Our modern pretence at scientific government, based on theories and statistics, possesses all the irremediable inadequacies of purblind pedantry. My wanderings have shown me that individual happiness and prosperity flourished most freely in Mexico under the autocracy of Diaz, Russia under that of the Tsar, India and Egypt under that of England, and China when the Son of Heaven exercised supreme and unquestioned sway.

The last quarter of a century has swamped all these. The world is seething with the dissatisfaction that springs from insecurity. Men can adapt themselves to pretty well any conditions, but when they do not know from one day to another whether some fundamental principle may not be abolished in the interests of progress, they no longer know where they are. They tend to adopt the principles of the man who flits from one place to another, grabbing portable property and dodging creditors and policemen. Civilisation has become a hysterical scramble for momentary material advantage. Thrift is senseless when one is threatened with a levy on capital. Investment is insane when gilt-edged securities may lose two thirds of their value for no assignable reason. Suppose two brothers inherited ten thousand pounds apiece in 1900: one keeps his gold in a bag and spends £400 a year; the other buys Consols and lives on a little over £200 of the income without touching his capital. To-day[3] the spendthrift would be worth more than his prudent brother. Marriage is a detestable institution, but the facilities for divorce (introduced ostensibly in the interests of the woman) have cut away the economic ground from under her feet.

I have little use for Rudyard Kipling, especially in his latter days of senile schoolboyishness, aggravated by his addiction to the Hydroxide of the second of the Paraffin radicles. But his general attitude about India obtains my adhesion. We conquered the Peninsula by sheer moral superiority. Our unity, our self-respect, our courage, honesty and sense of justice awakened the wonder, commanded the admiration and enforced the obedience of those who either lacked those qualities altogether, possessed some of them and felt the lack of the others, or had, actually or traditionally, sufficient of them to make them the criteria of right and ability to govern. As elsewhere observed, our modern acquiescence in the rationally irrefutable argument that the colour of a man's skin does not prevent him from being competent in any given respect, has knocked the foundations from underneath the structure of our authority.

But still more fatal has been our imbecile weakness in allowing India to become aware that we are not wholly divine. When the French saw Joan of Arc bleed from a slight wound, the tradition of her invulnerability and their superstitious reverence for her as supernaturally protected vanished, and her ruin became certain. The heel of Achilles of the Sahib has been the Memsahib. It was atrocious follow to allow Indians to come to England to study, to mix freely with our women, often to marry or seduce them. But we might have survived that scandal. The returned students, having forfeited caste, had forfeited credit. We could have dismissed their accounts of England as the bluster of rascals; and, besides, these students were as insignificant in number as in authority with their own people.

But we did worse. In the name of religion and morality (as usual!) we committed a political blunder, which was also a social crime, by permitting and even encouraging white women to go out to India.

To begin with, they cannot stand the climate, which compels them to live lives whose inevitable tendency is to relax the moral fibre. Thus even high-class memsahibs sometimes have themselves bathed by their beras. The excuse is that any sexual irregularity with such inferior animals is unthinkable. But “a man's a man for a' that.” Incidentally, the heat increases the female lasciviousness as it decreases the male. White women are thus subject to continual nervous irritation of which they often fail to suspect the character. Besides, the healthiest of them is usually more or less ailing in various minor respects. They are usually short-tempered from this and other causes, and any species of lack of self-control has a fatal effect on the attitude of the native.

Apart from this, it seems to him incredibly shameless on our part that our women should appear in public at all; that they should do so unguarded

and unveiled appears the climax of immodesty. Some Englishmen are fatuous enough to suppose that they have explained quite nicely to the satisfaction of Indians — whose point of view in these matters is practically identical from Tuticorin to Peshawar, and Chittagong to Karachi; it being an imperative necessity imposed by the climate, irrespective of creeds and social conditions — that our customs are compatible with correct conduct and even common decency. Such self-delusion marks the utmost limit of bad psychology. India could be kept in order, even now, to its own salvation and our great credit and profit, if we would eliminate the European women and tradesmen, the competition wallah, and the haw-haw officer, and entrust the government of the country to a body of sworn "samurai" vowed like the Jesuits to chastity and obedience, together with either poverty or a type of splendour in which there should be no element of personal pride or indulgence, but only prestige. Like the Jesuits, too, these men should be sworn never to return to Europe as long as they lived. The capacity of such men to govern would be guaranteed by the fact of their having volunteered to accept such conditions. They would enjoy universal respect and absolute trust. They would require no army to enforce their authority. All the best elements of India would spontaneously unite to support it. One further condition. They would have to be guaranteed against the interference of any ignorant and indifferent House of Commons. The stupid callousness of the India Office is as much to be dreaded as the silly sentimentalism of sympathizers with "national aspirations", "the brotherhood of man" and all such bunkum.

In India the rules of Caste assured the poorest peasant a livelihood of sorts, bar famine and plague, and the future of his children was as certain as sunrise. In Anglo-Saxon civilization no one has any guarantee against economic earthquakes and the future of his family is pure gambling. Such is the price of what we call progress. We cannot even assign a meaning to the word; because no one has any idea of where we are going. The most stupid and tyrannical system ever devised is better than our present position, provided it be stable. We are in a nightmare in which we cannot calculate the result of any action.

It was an affectation of poetry and romance in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to let itself go about the vale of "Cashmere": "Whom, not having seen, we adore." The descriptions are as vague as they are voluptuous. In reality Kashmir has very positive and definite qualities, and they have certainly never been suggested by the polite dithyrambs of its distant devotees. Technically, of course, it is principally the valley of the Jhelum. But the country does not impress one as being a valley at all: it is a well-watered plateau, ringed by mountains, with a narrow gap through which the river empties itself. Its height is from six thousand to eight thousand feet above the sea. The climate in spring and summer resembles that of Mexico com-

bined with that of Switzerland. The air is clear and exhilarating, yet an atmosphere of peace tempts the wayfarer to pass away the time in the delights of Love-in-Idleness. In winter the snows transform it to a fascinating fairyland, rather like northern Europe with the addition of sunlight.

Srinagar is an ancient and admirable city. Many of the buildings are of wood. It is interesting to notice that the bridges are built on the principle of the cantilever, which most people believe to be a miracle of modern science; but the idea of the Forth Bridge antedates Alexander the Great.

The flowers and trees in Kashmir are very varied. Their rich splendour is superb. There are many lakes with floating gardens and on the river are houseboats in which many Europeans spend the summer. It is a life of *dolce far niete* of which the Thames could only offer a feeble imitation and Venice itself but a hectic parody.

There is plenty of shooting in the valley, from bears, deer, wild sheep and wild goats to pigeons. I went out occasionally after the bigger game, though I prefer low country shooting. I hate climbing hills unless they are really difficult, as I hate everything which only goes half way. There is not much fun, either, in pigeon shooting. One does it less for pleasure than for profit, and the pigeon is certainly welcome up country as an alternative to athletic mutton and chicken.

1 — This was done in stark violation of Clause 3. Knowles and I paid the whole expenses of these undesirable aliens.
2 — P.S. — Well, I am not so sure.
3 — Condensed from an article written in 1917 in New York. Luckily my own paper refused to publish it!

STANZA XXXV

Knowles and I were kept very busy from the 5th to the 22nd of April. Everything had to be repacked in kiltas. These are baskets shaped either like wide-mouthed vases or like cabin trunks, and covered with raw hide to protect them from rough usage and bad weather. Our limit weight was 53 pounds. As a beast of burden, a mule is less efficient than a man, and a man that an woman. In Kashmir, however, one does not use women as coolies. The people are Mohammedans governed by a ruling caste of Hindus. This leads to complications; for one thing, though the river is full of mahsir, one is not allowed to fish for them, because one of them had swallowed the soul of the maharajah in his youth! Another inconvenience is that one cannot bet beef to eat, for Kashmir is theoretically an independent state. The Mohammedan has, of course, no objection to beef; it is the Hindu who prohibits it.

A curious misfortune overtook a native in this connection. His little farm was on the banks of the Indus. During the winter two landslides cut him off completely from his neighbours. The mountain path could not be repaired until the spring. He saved himself from starvation by killing his cow. For this offence he barely escaped the penalty of death.[1]

We added to our stores by buying a large quantity of local products which it would have been more trouble to bring from England. In some cases this was a mistake. The matches procurable in Kashmir compare only too unfavourably with the worst products of France at its worst period. It was a champion box if it contained half a dozen matches which lit without argument. When we got to the glacier, we sued to spend much of our time on sunny days trying to dry them on convenient rocks.

The general bandobast of the expedition was open to a good deal of criticism. One of Eckenstein's few failings was his faith in professorial science. Because the German soldier thrives on Erb-suppe and the British on “Bovril-bacon-rations”, he expected us to do the same, with the result that much of our provisions was quite uneatable. The general plan was to pack biltas with supplies for one day for twelve men. We had thirty-six of these. In other kiltas were packed additional supplies to supplement what we could procure from the villages which we passed. Eckenstein was curiously obstinate about some details. I was certain that our supply of sugar was very inadequate, but he opposed bitterly my proposal to add to it. I insisted on laying in an extra eighty pounds. Most of this was stolen by the Pathan contingent of servants and sold to the villagers on the journey. The result was that in the latter part of the expedition we suffered from sugar starvation, one of the most dreadful tortures that I have ever undergone.

Eckenstein rejoined us on April 22nd and we started six days later. We had met with extreme kindness on the part of everybody in the valley and the assistance given but the government was invaluable. From start to finish there was not a single unpleasant incident and I shall always remember with the warmest gratitude and affection the hospitality of the English residents.

We had a small Staff Major of Pathans, very handsome and fierce. The idea of taking them seems to have been to use their prestige with the Kashmiri who, while extraordinarily brave in face of inanimate dangers, are hopelessly timid in presence of a fighting race. I do not think these men were of much assistance at any time, and they ultimately had to be sacked and sent back, not only for their thieving but for their overbearing manner towards the people of the district.

Next came our staff of personal servants, headed by Salama Tantra, who was in all respects an admirable servant, so much so that I brought him from Kashmir in 1905 and took him with me across China. His subordinates were all good men in their way and we had no trouble with them.

Our transport as far as Askole, the last village, depended on local coolies or ponies, 150 of one or fifty of the other. Occasionally the same set would make two or three marches with us, but as a rule they were changed every day. Except on one or two occasions when the ignorance and bad manners of the Austrians let to misunderstanding, everything went smoothly.

The *naïvety* of the natives was sometimes very amusing. The regular rate of pay was fourpence a day, and this princely profusion induced the inhabitants of distant side valleys to make sometimes as much as six days' march in each direction from their homes to some point on our route. They would then disseminate themselves among the crowd of coolies and present themselves to the paymaster. Their injured bewilderment on discovering that we only paid wages on presentation of a slip of paper with the coolie's name and number, and the safe arrival of the corresponding kilta, was really pitiful. But even more impressive is the original fact of their willingness to make so many days' journey in the hope of acquiring fourpence without working for it.

Another incident has peculiar value as throwing light on the genesis of stories of miraculous healings. Our custom was to have the doctor establish a temporary clinic at every halting place, where he would attend to tooth-drawing, tapping for dropsy and such simple matters. I remember one man with a fang which stuck out completely through his cheek, leaving a jagged ulcer all round it. It was obviously impossible to undertake any cases of illness other than those requiring simple operations. Invariably, therefore, the

cure was effected by the use of instruments, which were spread out on a blanket, while everybody looked on. Nevertheless, on our return, the sick from distant valleys having congregated to meet us, the first patient protested when the doctor produced his forceps. “Oh no,” said he. “I want to be cured like the others; put your hand on my head and make me well!”

The journey to the foot of Chogo Ri divides itself naturally into three main sections; six marches bring one to the foot of the Zoji La, the pass which divides Kashmir from Baltistan; twenty-one marches brings one to the foot of the Baltoro glacier; the rest is on the ice. As long as one is in Kashmir the travelling is comparatively easy, the marches reasonably short and the halting places comfortable. The scenery is exhilaratingly grand and beautiful, and the climate perfect. The whole thing may best be described as an exaggeration of all that is best and loveliest in the Alps, plus the enchantment of Asiatic atmosphere.

Travellers to Chogo Ri are limited as to season by the fact that the Zoji La is impassable for coolies before a certain date, which varies little from year to year. We thought ourselves lucky to manage to cross so early in May as the 4th. In the autumn (again) it closes early, so that if one fails to get back to Kashmir before the snow blocks the pass, one is practically compelled to winter in Baltistan.

A great fuss has been made about the actual difficulties and dangers of crossing the pass, but it is merely a long snow trudge. Pfannl and Wessely, who were always boiling over to exhibit their prowess, went up to the col to prospect. They reported on returning (a) that they could not see anything, (b) that the pass was very steep on the other side, and (c) that the other side was free from snow. On the following day we learnt that the first of these statements may have been correct; the other two enlarged my horizon as to the possibilities of inaccuracy.

The slopes leading to the pass are uniformly easy and the reputed danger from avalanches exists only for people without any knowledge of snow. The doctor, however, gave us an idea of what we might expect from him. To this day I cannot understand how this misadventure failed to warn me. Just before reaching the top of the pass, he started to walk across a frozen lake. As he says, “Confidant dans la solidité de la glace, je m'aventure un peu trop, lorsque, tout à coup, je fais un plongeon, intempestif à cette heure matinale . . .”! !

My duty was to see that the caravans crossed the comparatively short section of the pass which the men dreaded. So I spent most of the morning rushing backwards and forwards, encouraging one, exhorting another and

giving a hand to a third. I had no reason to suppose that the reconnaissance of the Austrians was radically wrong. By the time the last man had come safely through the critical section, I was already tired; and when I started to follow, I found to my dismay that the Matayun side of the pass, instead of being steep, was at a very low gradient indeed; and, so far from being free from snow, was covered deeply. The day being well advanced, the going was softer and more slushy all the time. Even the tracks made by the coolies had not made the way decently walkable. Faint with exhaustion, I dragged myself into camp at five o'clock at night, after a thirteen hours' trudge during which I had hardly sat down.

My eyes, too, were inflamed. In the Alps, I had found myself able to go all day in bright sunshine without dark goggles and be none the worse. In Mexico I became uncomfortable after an hour or two and had to put on my glasses. But in the Himalayas, even at low altitudes (the Zoji La is about 5,000 metres), snow blindness is a real menace. When I got to the upper glacier, I found that ten minutes without goggles even under a clouded sky determined an attack.

I was too exhausted even to eat until I had drunk half a bottle of champagne, after which I slept like a log. The next morning, I started late — eight o'clock. The march, like that of the previous day, was fifteen miles, but only took six hours instead of thirteen, and would have been much less save for the soft snow of the earlier stages. There was no anxiety about the coolies, so that I had ample leisure to meditate on the extraordinary change of scenery on the far side of the Zoji. Nowhere else in the world have I found any similarly sudden and complete antithesis. Right up to Baltal, trees and flowers abound. On the other side of the pass is an astonishing abomination of desolation. Thence all the way to Skardu there is literally no scrap of vegetation, scarce even sparse rough grass; except where mountain torrents join the Indus. At such places, the natives have carried out an elaborate scheme of irrigation. The land is fashioned into terraces fertilized by a system of channels; and in these artificial fields they cultivate their crops, including apricots. In some places there are as many as five harvests a year. From a distance these oases appear very striking. The first impression is of a crisscross formed by the line of trees and the terraces. These villages glow with ineffable gladness. The marches, though often quite short in actual mileage on the map, are (generally speaking) quite severe. Eckenstein had observed humorously that from the top of the Zoji La it would be down hill all the way to Skardu, bar local irregularities. The piquancy of the remark lies in the fact that the total descent is less than ten thousand feet and that the average daily “local irregularity” approximates to double that amount. It is sometimes infuriating. One day, at the end (as I thought) of a long march, I caught sight of the goal not half a mile away, both it and I being close to the

river. But a rocky buttress gratuitously juts into the stream and the track makes a little detour of some three thousand feet in height to pass it.

Apart from the mere fatigue of these marches, they are made detestable by the utter monotony and ugliness of the landscape. The mountains are huge hideous heaps of shapeless drab. There is hardly one noble contour; there is not rest for the eye; there is no aspiration and no interest — nothing but a gnawing desire to be done with the day's dreary dragging. In addition to this there is a good deal of actual discomfort. The glare of the sun in very distressing and either it, or its reflection from the hot arid rocks, is scorching. At the same time it often happens that a bitterly biting wind is blowing. It seems to eat into one's very bones with harsh cold. One does not know what to do about clothes. On one side one is roasted; one the other frozen. It is easy to understand how the heart leaps whenever the eye falls upon the distant green lattice of a grove, and even how eagerly the eye looks for geological indication of the probability of one appearing. It is an additional annoyance that the mere distance one has travelled tells one so little as to what remains to be done, for the reasons given above.

On some of these marches we were able to get ponies, though the Austrians disdained such effeminacy. The Indian hill pony compares very unfavourably with the Mexican. He is neither so swift, so strong, nor so surefooted. More often than not, too, he is in bad condition and sometimes actually lame. The best of them stumble at almost every other step, though it is said that they never lose their footing completely. I could never rid my self altogether of nervousness. The road is officially the highway to Skardu and Yarkand, but it rarely amounts to more than a rough and narrow mountain track, scarce better than the paths to Alpine Club huts, at their worst. Some stages, indeed, are altogether impracticable for ponies, either because the track crosses a ravine by a rope bridge or because actually too steep for them to climb. The road is never dangerous from the point-of-view of the pedestrian, but it looks so to a man on horseback; for in a great many places its loose stones lie on the edge of what is a precipice for all practical purposes.

At Hardas we were entertained by a magnificent but dirty rajah, who took me for a native. One noticed with amusement that a great many of the people whom public opinion at home classes as niggers were very much lighter in colour than any of our party.

At Tolti we found another Rajah equally urbane. Travel in the East is essential to any sort of understanding of the Bible. The equivalent of the word King is constantly used to describe men who may be anything from absolute

monarchs over hundreds of thousands of people, to country squires or even headmen of a tribe of gypsies.

We reached Skardu on the 14th of May, and put in four days making arrangements for the next stage of the journey. We could no longer depend on finding enough coolies, the villages beyond Shigar being poorly populated.

We took much credit to ourselves, and gave more to the efficiency of government officials, that we had come through from Srinagar without a day's halt, we the largest party of Europeans to have made the journey.

Central Asia, by the way, is the home of polo, which is played to this day with the utmost enthusiasm. Needless to say, the game is free from the swanking exclusiveness of the European variety. I was never able to discover any particular rules. One simply rides into the *melée* with any kind of a stick one happens to have and smites the ball with more vigour than intention. If one feels that one's side is too strong for the other, one simply changes over. The local rajah and the poorest farmer of the district meet in the game with the noble equality of “chivalry” in the true sense, the *esprit de corps* of horsemen.

The exhilaration of the game is extraordinary. Played as it is, it is free from the lust of result which has spoilt practically all sorts and games in Europe. Strange that in my old age I should suddenly find myself acquiescing in the absurdity which angered me so when a boy, Champney's plan of playing cricket without scoring runs. After all, the madman was right. It would be far finer to play the game for the sake of enjoying the free exercise of one's enthusiasm. True it is, scoring does lead to post-mortem controversies which are not in the spirit of sport. Climbing itself is being very much spoilt by the attitude of the Alpine Club in insisting that the achievement, not the enjoyment, is the important thing. It has let to their virulent, dishonest, envious intrigues against guideless climbing and climbers. This is the American spirit, to count and compare instead of being content with spiritual satisfaction. This is what is meant by the Scripture, “The love of money is the root of all evil.”

This spirit is at the root of all modern attempts at standardization of attainment and it leads directly to every kind of foul play, falsehood, cheating and controversy. Consider merely American football and baseball; the drilling of the teams to carry out a series of evolutions designated by a string of ciphers. Again, what of the intrigues to attain the transfer of professional players, to say nothing of the possible selling of matches to syndicates of gamblers? Sport of all kinds has tended to become spectacular and gladiatorial even in games like lawn tennis, which was originally the very incarna-

tion of social amenity. It is the same story everywhere; see boxing, in which a man may get more for half an hour's battery than any dozen University Professors receive for a lifetime of devoted labour on behalf of the race. The root of the mischief is the spirit of taking life too seriously. It is really almost expected of the man who happens to run over to Philadelphia from New York for a day, that he should forthwith write an encyclopaedic history of the Quakers.

It is hard to prophesy the issue of this tendency, but one can see already that the chivalry of sport is following that of arms into oblivion.

1 — Later. Poor Sri Hari Singh paid dearly in 1923 for eating sirloin of beef! As bad as Jonathan and the honey!

STANZA XXXVI

Skardu, 2,228 metres above sea-level, is the capital of Baltistan, and contains some 20,000 inhabitants. The mountains here seem to have conspired to stop suddenly so as to allow a large level plateau. The Indus spreads out almost as if to form a lake. The town is large and scattered; it is in fact less a town than a conglomeration of small farms. After our long and tedious march, we could enjoy to the full the sensation of the peace and beatitude which fill this smiling isolated valley.

We stayed at the Dak-baghla, which stood some thirty yards back from a delicious stream of clear water. One evening, just after sunset, a young man appeared carrying on his shoulders his brother, who had been working in a quarry. A falling rock had struck the inside of the leg just below the knee and laid it open to the bone as far as the ankle. The doctor needed plenty of running water. So we took the patient down to the stream and held Alpine lanterns while the doctor operated. The leg was in a shocking mess and we suggested chloroform. The doctor said “No — the boy will faint with the pain in a few seconds,” and he went on washing out the dirt and snipping away loose pieces of flesh, and ultimately stitching up the whole fourteen inches of wound. The game went on for an hour and a half. But the boy never lost consciousness, and never moaned or so much as murmured. We heard nothing from him except a perfectly calm request, about half way through the job, for a drink of water.

I did not content myself with admiring the lad's stoicism. His conduct made me suspect that the Mongolian (the Baltis are Mongols) as a very different nervous system from our own. I understood Chinese ideas of torture form this and similar facts, and began to correlate these physiological reactions with the psychology and philosophy of the race. It helped me to see that what we call ultimate truth is in reality no more than a statement of the internal relations of the Universe which we perceive. One may say, indeed, that a unicellular organism would be absolutely justified in explaining the universe in terms of his own experience; that he could indeed by no possibility do anything else, and that the sole valid criticism which could be applied to his cosmology would be based on facts neither known nor knowable to him. Apply this argument to our actual ideas: any religion must rest of revelation and cannot be proved by reason or experience. It is at once necessary and impudent to claim the exercise of faith. From this it follows that religion must always be repugnant to reason and its upholders must be prepared to be called charlatans.

There is, however, one issue from this dilemma. It is possible to base a religion, not on theory and results, but on practice and methods. It is honest and hopeful to progress on admitted principles towards the development of each individual mind, and thus to advance towards the Absolute by means of the consciously willed evolution of the faculty of apprehension. Such is in fact the idea underlying initiation. It constitutes the absolute justification of the Path of the Wise as indicated by the adepts, whether of the Magical or Mystical schools. For Yoga offers humanity an organ of intelligence superior to intellect, yet co-ordinate with it, and Magick serves to arose spiritual energies which while confirming those of the mind, bring them to their culmination.

One afternoon was made notable by a storm of wind. Fine sand was blown up from the bed of the Indus to a height of over three thousand feet, completely obscuring the mountains. (I have seen something similar in Cumberland. One night a terrific storm broke over the west coast; of sufficient velocity to push a number of trucks from a siding into a London & North Western train, wrecking it. The bough, as thick as my thigh, of a tree forty yards from the hotel was blown through my window on to the bed where I lay asleep, without waking me. In the morning the rain had stopped; but the wind continued with increased violence. Every stone wall in the neighbourhood had been thrown to the ground. The waterfalls exposed to the wind had been blown back so that the pitches over which they normally fell were practically dry. The water of the lake was swept up in vast clouds across the face of Scafell, completely hiding the mountain.)

While making our new arrangements we lounged about, fished and climbed odd rocks which tempted us. On May 19th we crossed the Indus by ferry and followed a delightful road, for the most part level and wooded, to Shigar. The Shigar valley is strangely unlike that of the Indus and is out of keeping with one's natural ideas of mountain streams. The river winds through a broad flat wilderness of stones.

The village of Shigar resembles and oasis in the Sahara, as I discovered some years later when I made my bow to the latter. There is indescribable fascination about these clusters of quiet houses in their groves of green; but there is a serpent in every Eden, and there was a missionary in Shigar. We asked to fool to dinner. He had been there seven years, as had also his predecessor, and between them they had not made a single convert. Christianity can never make any impression on a Mohammedan. The anthropomorphic and antropotheistic ideas connected with the *Incarnation* shock people whose conception of God, irrational though it be, is at least sublime. “God hath neither equal, son, nor companion. Nothing shall stand before His face.” The ethical implications of the *Atonement* are equally repulsive to the

Moslem. As Ibsen said, “Your God is an old man whom you cheat.” Mohammedanism teaches a man to respect himself; his relation with his supposed creator is direct; he cannot escape the penalty of his sins by paying the priest, or by persuading himself that everything has been arranged for him by a transaction of the most stupid injustice. Buddhism, in a totally different way, shares this conformity with common decency, and it is only the lowest caste of Hindu which really convinces itself that sacrifices and servility suffice for salvation. Where Islam and Christianity meet in open competition, as in some parts of Africa, it is found that only the lowest type of Negro, such as is accustomed to arrange matters with conscience by hanging a rag on a piece of stick, accepts Christianity. Anyone with a trace of self-respect disdains the lavish superstitions which we compel the Archbishop of Canterbury to subscribe, but can readily accept the simplicity of Islam as a stage beyond Fetishism.

The march from Shigar to Askole is extremely varied and beautiful. For three marches one ascends the Shigar valley. The river was extraordinarily low, and could be crossed. In August 1892, Eckenstein, to cross one of the tributary streams — of which though furnished with a rope, had been unable there must be more than one hundred. The explanation is (of course) that the snows had not begun to melt.

On one march we had to walk along the smooth round stones of the river bed for several miles. The track became impossible for horses. We crossed a pari (a buttress which juts into the stream and has to be climbed in consequence) over twelve hundred feet high. The next day we came to Ghomboro. The character of the country had completely changed once more. We had got back to the conditions of the valley of the Upper Indus. Ghomboro is a delightful village of apricot orchards. Below the terraces roars the water of the Bralduh Nala, a terrific torrent pent between narrow cliffs. The most striking impression of the entire journey is the variety of the physical geography. It is as if nature had conspired to afford one the maximum of new sensations. Nowhere else in the world have I observed such apparent discontinuity, such wealth of unexpected phenomena tumbling over each other to claim astonishment and admiration.

There are no Dak-baghlas in these remote districts; so we were living in our tents. We dined in the open air under the apricots, while by our side one of the local elders exuded over five litres of serum. He had been carried down by his adherents in the last stages of dropsy; but after contributing his quota to the volume of the Bralduh, he walked cheerfully to his house without assistance, as he had not done for many months.

Goitre is very common in this valley and I hoped to learn something about its etiology. As in the case of cancer, many attempt have been made to generalize from insufficient facts. One of the great arguments about goitre involves the Lötschenthal, where the people at the bottom of the valley could marry strangers from the Rhone valley, and those at the top go over the Petersgrat and do their courting in Lauterbrunnen. Those in the middle were more inbred. It was accordingly observed that that goitre was more common among them. The Bralduh Nala completely upset any such theory, for while there was the same narrowness and isolation, the same limestone water and similar conditions all along, the goitre varies from village to village in an absolutely irregular way.

The whole Nala is full of interest. It is a regular showplace for the weirdest phenomena. About an hour and a half above Ghomboro is a tributary Nala, with only a trickle of water but swept by intermittent flushes of mud. Its crossing presented a certain problem. I had to post a man to give warning when a torrent was on the way. I myself went down into the bed of the torrent, which was very steep and slimy, and hacked good steps for the coolies. If one had slipped, or been caught by a gush of mud, there would have been no saving him. It took about an hour and a half for the caravan to cross. Half an hour later, we came to a second obstacle of this sort, but it was very different in character. It was a level expanse of mud, very broad. The torrent had caked to a reasonable consistency under the banks, but there was a central section forty to fifty yards wide of very lively-moving stuff. The Tehsildar of Skardu had sent up a gang of men to throw great stones into the stream for several days, for the mud moves very slowly. By this means, they had managed to make a sort of temporary bridge, the most quickly moving part of the stream in the centre being negotiated by the laying of a plank between stones. Our own men, of course, supplemented the efforts of their colleagues, each man bringing a stone as large as he could carry and dropping it into the most suitable place he could see. Having helped the men over the first torrent, I had automatically become rearguarded, and the bulk of the men had gone gaily over the second and more formidable obstacle when I arrived. They had got it into excellent condition and I strolled over as if it had been stepping stones across the Wharfe or the Lynn, and I was going to meet my girl!

The next entertainment is a rope bridge. The “ropes” in question are composed of twigs. There are three main ropes, one to walk on and two to hold. The relations between the three are secured by a trellis of smaller twigs. They are a little terrifying at first sight, it is only fair to admit; but one cannot help thinking that Sir Martin Conway was almost too considerate of the nervousness of others when he insisted on roping Zurbriggen on one side of him an Bruce on the other before pirouetting lightly across.

The day following, another rope bridge brought us back to the right bank of the Bralduh, where another phenomenon of astonishing beauty lay in wait. The extremely narrow gorge through which the Bralduh rushes for so many miles had suddenly broadened out. We were in a wide smiling valley ringed with mountains which, gigantic as they were, seemed to confess by the comparative mediocrity of their structure that they were second rate. The valley is wholly bare of verdure except for plantations, as throughout Baltistan. The first thing to meet our eyes was what, suppose we had landed in the country of Brobdignag, only more, so, might have been the lace handkerchief of a Super-Glumdalclitch left out to dry. It was a glittering veil of brilliance of the hillside; but closer inspection, instead of destroying the illusion, made one exclaim with increased enthusiasm.

The curtain had been formed by crystalline deposits from a hot spring (38.3 degrees centigrade). The incrustation is exquisitely white and exquisitely geometrical in every detail. The incrustation is exquisitely white and exquisitely geometrical in every detail. The burden of the cynicism of my six and twenty years fell from me like a dream. I trod the shining slopes; they rustled under my feet rather as snow does in certain conditions. (The sound is strangely exhilarating.) It is a voluptuous flattery like the murmurous applause of a refined multitude, with the instinctive ecstatic reverence of a man conscious of his unworthiness entering Paradise. At the top of the curtain is the basin from which it proceeds, the largest of several similar formations. It is some 31 feet in diameter, an almost perfect circle. The depth in the middle is little over 2 feet. It is a bath for Venus herself.

I had to summon my consciousness of Godhead before venturing to invade it. The water streams delicately with sulphurous emanations, yet the odour is subtly delicious. Knowles, the doctor and I spent more than an hour and a half reposing in its velvet warmth, in the intoxicating dry mountain air, caressed by the splendour of the sun. I experienced all the ecstasy of the pilgrim who has come to the end of his hardships. I felt as if I had been washed clean of all the fatigues of the journey. In point of fact, I had arrived, despite myself, at perfect physical condition. I had realized from the first that the proper preparation for a journey of this sort is to get as fat as possible before starting, and stay as fat as possible as long as possible. I was now in the condition in which Pfannl had been at Srinagar. I could have gone forty-eight hours without turning a hair.

Pfannl himself was still in excellent form, but he had used up a lot of his reserve force, though he showed no signs of having done so. He was thirty-one and should have possessed much more endurance than I. People in general have very erroneous ideas about age. For rock climbing or lyric poetry one is doubtless best in one's twenties. For a Himalayan expedition or

dramatic composition, it is better to be forty than thirty. Eckenstein at forty-three, despite his congenital tendency to respiratory troubles, was by no means too old; and Knowles, twenty years younger, was emphatically too young. Guillarmod, at thirty-three, and Wessley, at thirty-one suffered less than any of us.

In Wessely's case this was mostly because he had no imagination enough to be ill. None of us had ever seen such a perfect pig. He was very greedy and very myopic. In order to eat, he would bend his head over his plate and, using his knife and fork like the blades of a paddle wheel, would churn the food into his mouth with a rapid rotatory motion. There was always some going up, and always some going down, until he deposited his well-sucked instruments of nutrition on a perfectly clean plate and asked for more. It was the most disgusting sight that I have ever seen. Explorers are not squeamish; but we had to turn our heads away when Wessely started to eat. I admit and deplore my human weakness. All forms of genius should be admired and studied, and Wessely was a world's champion.

My first experience of gluttony was at Tonbridge. One of my best friends was the fat boy of the house. (He was a nephew of the Adams who discovered Neptune.) One day he was sent £2 and proceeded to the tuck-shop, where one could buy a very generously estimated ice-cream for sixpence. We thought to share in the bounty; but Adams said no with truly Roman fortitude and tortured us by consuming the whole four-score ice-creams himself.

At Cambridge one of my most intimate friends was a man named Parez of Emmanuel, and in him I recognized a supreme trencherman. One Saturday I had been held up at Hitchin, my racing roadster having sprung a leak. I got back to Cambridge too late to order brunch from the kitchens, so on Sunday morning there was nothing for it but to go round to Parez and see if he could feed me. To my joy, I found him reading and smoking by the side of a table spread with a brunch for six, conceived in a spirit of gargantuan hospitality. I invited myself, of course; but to my surprise Parez declined, saying that there was hardly enough for the party as it was. “Hang it,” said I, “for God's sake let me stay; perhaps one of them won't turn up.” My host agreed, remarking that the born-out-of-wedlock offenders against the Criminal Law Amendment Act were late. After a couple of games of chess, something reminded him that he had forgotten to send out any invitations! We finished that brunch and I swear to God I didn't eat more than one and a half or one and three quarters myself.

Later I asked him to dinner in London. He began with two large fried soles to his own cheek, and went on with a porterhouse steak. I forget the

rest. But, compared with Wessely, he was Succi! When Wessely reached Rodokass on the return journey, the servants asked permission to celebrate by killing two sheep of the flock which we had taken there; they would, or course, cook the best parts of the meat for the sahibs. Pfannl could eat nothing, and Guillarmod very little, but in a short time the servants repeated their request. Wessely had devoured practically the whole two sheep. Of course the mountain variety is not a Southdown. It probably does not weigh more than the average four months lamb in Sussex. But even so Wessely's exploit is pretty good.

On my own arrival at Rodkass, I made rather a beast of myself. I had been starving on canned food for nearly two months, and that half-warm, half-cooked fresh mutton made me practically insane. I was suffering the agonies of sugar-starvation plus the effects of a recurrence of malaria, so that vomiting and diarrhoea were continuous. But never in my whole life have I tasted anything like that mutton. I gorged myself to the gullet, was violently sick and ordered a fresh dinner.

"I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
There's yet some mutton left."

I may mention in this place that experience has convinced me of the truth of the Hindu theories about Prana. Apart from the chemical and physiological transactions involved in eating, one is nourished directly, but what one must call, however one may hate to do so, the vital principle in food. We had already found on Iztaccihuatl that canned food ten years old failed to nourish anything like as well as stuff recently tinned. We derived much more energy from fresh-killed mutton, cooked before rigor mortis had set in, than from ordinary butcher's meat. I ultimately learnt that I could make myself actually drunk on half a dozen oysters chewed in the manner of the Yogis.

One of the practices of Hatha Yoga consists in learning to reverse the peristaltic action of the alimentary canal at will, so that one can make oneself sick quietly without spasmodic action. What they do is to swallow a number of yards of tarband and eject it again by training the necessary muscles. They then apply these principles to their rice and, after allowing it to remain in the stomach for a short time, quietly reject it. This rice, though unchanged in appearance, contains no nourishment, so that a dog who ate it would starve. The object of the Yogi is to relieve his body of the responsibility of dealing with the elements of the food which do not contribute to sustenance. One is forced to suspect the existence of some subtle principle attached to organic substances which gradually disappears after death, rapidly at first, and then with increasing slowness, so that the process is not complete perhaps for years. It is like the elimination of impurities from alcohol,

the first distillation gets rid of most of them, but there is a residuum carried over which requires repeated fractionation.

STANZA XXXVII

From the hot spring one goes gently along the valley to Askole. The whole march is short, easy and delightful. It only occupied five hours, of which at least three were spent at the rope bridge and in the pool.

The entire journey had been extraordinarily favourable. We had had very little bad weather, the coolies had behaved admirably, there had been no accidents and no sickness, except for my own dermatological trouble. At Askole, however, several of the servants were slightly indisposed for a couple of days.

We spent ten days in this village. Beyond this point there are no supplies of any sort. It was therefore necessary to establish a depot of food for the men higher up. The difficulty in travelling in uninhabited countries is that a man who eats (say) two pounds a day and carries sixty pounds can carry nothing except his own food on a journey of thirty marches. Our problem was how to get about one hundred and ten loads deposited at a distance representing (there and back) not less than twenty marches. We bought every pound of everything eatable in the valley and employed every man available. This meant (roughly) three men to carry one load, one for the load itself, the other two for the food of the three. Even with the advance depots, the task strained the resources of the valley.

There was one trifling conflict of opinion between myself and Eckenstein at Askole. It was arranged that our valises should not exceed forty pounds on the glacier, though many of the loads exceeded fifty. I could not get my belongings within the limit. Eckenstein wanted me to leave behind my library. His theory of travelling in wild countries was that one should temporarily become an absolute savage; but my experience had already shown me that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. I attributed the almost universal mental and moral instability of Europeans engaged in exploring to their lack of proper intellectual relaxation far more than to any irritations and hardships inseparable from physical conditions. Conrad's “An Outpost of Progress” and Kipling's story of the lighthouse keeper who went mad are outstanding examples of the psychological processes which are likely to occur. Perfectly good friends become ready to kill each other over a lump of sugar. I won't say that I couldn't have stood the Baltoro glacier in the absence of Milton and the rest; but it is at least the case that Pfannl went actually mad, that Wessely brooded on food to the point of stealing it, and that Eckenstein and Knowles[1] both lost their heads over the cholera scare! Thus the only man beside myself to retain perfect mental balance was the doctor, who kept his mind con-

stantly occupied by observations in natural history, photography, writing articles for the Swiss newspapers, keeping an elaborate journal for the purposes of his book on the expedition, and spending the rest of his spare time in playing chess with me.

Eckenstein made himself quite unpleasant to me, which was utterly out of his character; and, by itself, evidence of the strain on his temper caused by the Austrian idiocies and vanities. I wasted no words. I merely shrugged my shoulders and said: either I took my books with me or I left the expedition. Needless to say, I carried my point. It may strike some people that I was a little *outre-cuidant* about it; but I take matters like this very seriously. I would rather bear physical starvation than intellectual starvation, any day of the week. It is one of the most frightful consequences of increasing age that one finds fewer and fewer of one's contemporaries worth talking to. One is forced more and more to seek society either with the great masters of the past or with discarnate intelligences.

Pfannl and Wessely had become rather a nuisance. They complained of Eckenstein's discipline and made themselves notably unpleasant. We rather encouraged them to go off all day and make heroic ascents. But their proposal to take three days' provisions in their rucksacks and go off and climb K2 was negatived. It is really astonishing that so many days of travel had taught them nothing about the scale of the mountains. One cannot measure them by feet and miles. I myself cannot quite see how it is that the difference comes in. But there is no doubt of the fact. It is quite useless to talk of climbing a mountain whose summit is 5,000 feet above the starting point, as one could do if one were in the Alps. For one thing, however perfect may be one's physical condition, the effect of marching day after day is to make it somehow impossible to make an extra effort. I suppose it is the difference between the 100 yards and the 3 miles at Queens. But apart from this, there seems to be some subtle factor which determines the limit of the day's work. But if I could not explain, at least I thoroughly appreciated, the conditions.

Another difficulty made it clear that the foreigners in the Expedition were simply dead weight. Knowles himself, docile, cheerful and phlegmatic, could not give much active assistance. In view of the character of the glacier, the party could no longer travel as a unit after leaving *terra firma*. Only Eckenstein and I spoke Hindustani; only Eckenstein or I could be trusted to lead. The Austrians were always making heroic gestures, and Guillarmod finally demonstrated his incapacity by wandering out one day and getting crag-fast in a perfectly easy place. His misadventure would have been a blow to our prestige had not the natives already accepted him as Tartarin. Our arrangements were therefore settled for us by circumstances. Eckenstein's power of organization was unique. There was no choice but to leave him at Paiyu to

dispatch relays of food. I was thus the only possible leader, and I had to go alone because the Austrians were inseparable, and it was better for Knowles and the doctor to be as near Eckenstein as possible. We accordingly started in four sections; I, with a picked body of coolies, the Austrians a day later, Knowles, and the doctor twenty-four hours behind him, and Eckenstein as soon as I had carried our my objective of reconnoitring the mountain and establishing a Main Camp at its foot. I could not but feel that Eckenstein had shown bad judgment in collecting so unwieldy a party. I believe to this day that if he, I and Knowles had been alone, we should have diminished our difficulties by 60 per cent, and perhaps walked up the mountain before the weather broke.

Thanks to our rapid march from Srinagar, we were a fortnight ahead of our programme. We were afraid of getting to the mountain too early in the season; but from what I now know of the climate, we should have done much better to rush through and tackle the mountain before the breaking of the monsoon in India.

Another ill effect of including the foreign element was this. Eckenstein, somewhat forgetful of the principles of selfless concentration which are essential to the performance of any Great Work, made a point of admitting the existence of the possibility on international jealousy. He therefore forbade me to cross the Bergschrund before the whole party had arrived at the Main Camp, which it was my business to establish at the foot of the mountain proper. I wish I had remembered about Nelson's blind eye. When I arrived at Camp 10 on the level glacier above the ice fall underneath the south-eastern slopes of Chogo Ri, I could have gone on without any difficulty up those slopes to the well-marked shoulder immediately beneath the final pyramid, and had I done so, I have no doubt whatever that we could have made a successful dash for the summit.

I started on June 5th for Korophon, going as slowly as I could. The march occupied over forty-eight hours. The march crosses the Biafo Glacier; and there I had my first real taste of certain conditions peculiar to the Himalayas. There is a violent alternation of heat and cold between night and day. The maximum shade temperature, rarely less than 25° centigrade, often touched 30° and sometimes climbed close to 40°, whereas the minimum was hardly ever above zero, even at Askole, and on the glacier reached anything from -10° to -30°. The result is that a few minutes of sunshine produces revolutionary results. A thick hard crust of snow disappears almost instantaneously and leaves one floundering in a mass of seething crystals. Rocks perched on ice become very hot in an incredibly short time and break loose from the ice on which they are poised in a way which takes men of merely Alpine experience by surprise. My Mexican expedition proved invalu-

able in enabling me to foresee these phenomena. But the first warning was given on this march when two enormous stones which, anywhere else, would have stayed where they were for years, fell about twenty yards in front of me and the advance guard!

When I say Korophon, it must not be imagined that it means anything more than a mark on the map. It is distinguishable only by a cubical block of granite about 20 feet high, under the two overhanging sides of which a little wall has been built by the shepherds who occasionally lead their flocks so far afield. One wonders why; for even at Korophon itself the vegetation is extremely sparse and scrubby.

The next day I went on to Bardumal at the foot of the spur. There are actually a few trees at this place. On this march one has to cross the Punmah, a broad and shallow stream which I found easy enough to ford. The alternative — to which we were reduced on our return — is to trudge about six miles up stream to a rope bridge and down the other bank. It may be that the low barometric pressure affects the velocity of running water, for streams seem much swifter than one would expect for the slope. The current carries down round stones in the most dangerous way. When Knowles tried to ford this river on the way back, though the water was barely kneedeep, he was swept away at once, and would have been drowned or battered to death in a few seconds if he had not been promptly pulled back by the rope which he had prudently put on. As it was, he received two violent blows from stones, one of which nearly snapped his thigh and the other his spine. On looking at the photographs of this stream, it seems positively ridiculous to associate the slightest danger with crossing them.

The following day we went on to Paiyu, a dreary march of some five hours, enlivened only by the feelings that we were getting somewhere. The narrowness of the valleys and the steepness of the spurs of the great range prevent one getting any view of the high peaks. On this day's march we had our first glimpse of a giant, the Mustagh Tower, and the sublimity of the sight made up for the monotony of the march.

There are many phenomena of extraordinary interest, had we not been surfeited with things stupendous and strange. At one part of this journey, we were literally walking for hours on garnets. Another marvel is a range of stratified eruptive rocks which stand out brilliantly black against the greys and browns of the background. Near Paiyu there is a regular range of mountains composed of consolidated glacial mud. Again, there is a row of pinnacles capped by enormous boulders on the principle of glacier tables. They have been weathered into slender tapering cones; the stone at the top has protected them from being washed down evenly.

Paiyu is an open plateau boasting at least three trees. We were to remain a day here to build a stone house to protect our supplies and to do the repacking necessary for my advance guard.

In the course of this work, the trouble with our Pathan servants came to a head. We had had several complaints of their arrogance and overbearing behaviour towards the natives, and now we found that they had stolen some fowls from our travelling farmyard, which included, by the way, fifteen sheep and thirty goats. We also discovered that they had stolen and sold practically the whole of our reserve sugar. There was nothing to do but to sack them, which we did.

Out of this arise an incident which I shall always remember with peculiar delight. I was able to play Haroun Al-Rashid and administer poetic oriental justice. We had furnished the malefactors with magnificent new coats for the journey. One of the men, not content with this, had bullied and cheated one of the Kashmiri servants out of his torn rags, and insisted on disrobing his victim that he might bear away the spoils on his departure. To all intents and purposes, the man was left with nothing to wear. He complained to me. I heard the case with grave attention; I had to admit that by native justice the clothes belonged to the marauder, who grinned and triumphed and redoubled his insults to his discomfited dupe. “But wait,” said I. “Hassan's coat certainly belongs to you, but the coat *yo*u are wearing belongs to *m*e! So I made him take it off and clothed the unfortunate Hassan in its splendours, while the villain of the piece had to go off down the valley (where a nice prison was waiting for him) clad in the wretched rags, much too small for him, amid the joy of the entire caravan at seeing the biter bit.

This episode is very instructive. One of the best ways of endearing oneself to the Eastern mind is to show ingenuity in doing essential justice in accordance with legal formality. The instinct which makes us sympathize with Arsène Lupin, Raffles and Co. is universal. Unfortunately, in the West, we have lost the idea of the just despot. Our judges seem to derive cynical amusement from contemplating the absurdities and abominations which result from formal fidelity to the law. We have lost sight of the fact that law is essentially no more than a generalized statement of prevailing customs. This is so true that it is fair to say that abstract ideas of justice have little to do with primitive legislation; the idea is only to enforce compliance with current conventions.

But nowadays, legislation has broken its banks. It has become a thing in itself and has arrogated to itself the right of revolutionizing the habits of the people in utter indifference to their wishes, but in accordance with abstract ideals which take no account of existing conditions. “Prohibition” is of course

the most outrageous example of this inhuman tyranny. But all such aberrations from common sense defeat themselves in the long run. The Law of Moses was entirely intelligible to the least of the Children of Israel; but today not even the greatest judges can pretend to know what the law is until the case at issue has been thrashed out and the decision established as a precedent.

The most honest man cannot always be sure that he is not violating some statute. This is even more appallingly and Gilbertainly true in the United States, where federal laws, state laws, municipal laws and police regulations clash their contradictory complexities at every turn. “Ignorance of the law excuses no man.” But it leads him to take his chance of peril which he cannot but ignore, and thus the law falls into disrespect and ultimately into desuetude. In the meantime, small gangs take advantage of their special knowledge to blackmail certain sections of the community by technical persecution. We see the censorship, the licensing laws, the inland revenue laws, and even certain commercial and criminal laws arbitrarily invoked against people who have no idea that they are doing wrong in doing exactly as their neighbours do.

1 — The latter under the powerful influence of the Chief — otherwise he would not have turned a hair.

STANZA XXXVIII

I left Paiyu with about twenty coolies on the 9th of June. A very short distance brings one to the snout of the glacier, black, greasy and nearly 500 feet high at the lowest point. The Bralduh rushes from a cavern very repulsively. A great many phenomena observed on this expedition impress one with a kind of horror. I used to think it utterly absurd in books of travel to see moral qualities associated with nature. At this period of my life, above all, I should have scouted any such idea; but, through the classes of memory, one can analyse oneself beyond one's protestations. This muddy torrent issuing from its vast black source certainly created an ugly impression. The reason maybe that stopping, as I naturally did, to have a good look at it, the presence of that vast body of ice produced a slight physical chill which I promptly translated into emotional terms and attribute wrongly to what I saw instead of to what I felt. There is also probably a strong Freudian element; to cold, black muddiness of the water and its relentless turmoil, its unstaunchability, so to speak, may suggest the flowing of blood from a wound, or some such disease as nephritis. The general tone of the blackness of the debris is peculiarly unsympathetic.

There was no difficulty in finding a way up the snout. I knew that the first camp, Liligo, was on the left bank, so moved over in that direction. (German professors two hundred years hence are requested not to confuse the name of this *parau* with the “little-go” at Cambridge, though both are alike first stages on a lonely climb leading to nowhere.)

The glacier was a complete revelation to me. The difference in scale had merely multiplied one's difficulty accordingly in previous matters; but there they become more formidable in a geometrical progression with a big *f*. In Switzerland one does not seem any moraines over 100 feet high. Here they run to 1,000 or 1,500 feet. There are something like twenty tributary glaciers feeding the Baltoro. Each of these contributes at least three moraines. The glacier being about thirty miles long, and rarely more than two wide, it is distinctly a congested district! The competing moraines jostle each other unscrupulously. One would hardly know that one was on ice at all for the first ten miles; there is hardly a bare patch. But the close competition tends to form many steep slopes; and this means that the sides of most of the moraines are covered with rocks which, even when they are of enormous size, are in extremely unstable equilibrium. Again, the pressure and temperature combine to loosen the bands of rock and ice. The general result is that the passage of a party rearranges that section of the glacier much more radically than would be the case in the Alps. The task of picking one's way is very arduous; and there is a good deal of luck about it, for there is no

means of telling whether one may not at any moment be cut off by an obstacle. For example — the rivulets which flow openly through small channels on Swiss glaciers may here be torrents rushing through cuttings in the ice anything up to a hundred feet broad and deep. In the Alps, I remember few such places where I could not step across easily, and those few were always within a bit of a jump.

One's eyesight does not help one much to find the way. The view is always cut off; even by climbing to the top of a moraine one gets little practical information. The muddle is essentially meaningless to the mountaineer. It is quite rare to be able to mark down a comparatively level passage of a couple of hundred yards which might be worth while making for. Each line of moraine has to be crossed in the serious spirit of a pioneer looking for a pass across a range. The instability of the surface means a constant tendency to slip, so that the journey is morally tedious and physically wearisome beyond belief. The compensation is the majesty of the surrounding mountains. Nowhere else in the world does there exist anything like the same diversity of form. The effect is enhanced by the recognition that practically every peak is unclimbable by our present standards. Men accustomed to mountains instinctively reconnoitre everything they see, and in this district one is constantly being astonished at the completeness of the defences of even quite insignificant peaks.

Above the camp at Liligo are most formidable precipices of rotten rock. In some places they actually overhang; and one wonders how they manage to stay there at all, especially in view of the rapidly disintegrating action of the weather.

The next day I went on to Rhobutse; a very short march, but I did not want to tire the men, and this was the only good camping place for some distance. There was a great deal of snow and rain in the early part of the day, though it cleared up in the afternoon. Just after sunset, however, a very violent wind sprang up. On the 11th, I went on to Rdokass, a much longer march in distance. But the going on the glacier had become much easier. I found some comparatively level stretches.

The natives were extremely good in every way; their character compares favourably with that of any race I have ever seen. We never heard of them coming to blows or even to really high words. Imagine the difference with European peasants! Some of their customs are worth mentioning. For one thing, they never take off their clothes all their lives. A baby is wrapped in a rag; presently a second round the first, and so on. But they never remove the innermost layer; it is allowed to disintegrate by itself. The richer a man

becomes, the more clothes he is able to buy, so that the headmen of a village are like rolls of cloth.

Their method of preparing their food on the glacier is ingenious. Having made a fire, they get a stone as nearly round as possible and heat it thoroughly through. Round this they smear their paste of flour and water, twisting the while into their shawls. By the time they have arrived in camp the paste is baked through and still hot.

One cannot wash on the glacier — nay, not so much as one's hands. The extreme dryness of the atmosphere removes all the natural grease of the skin, which becomes so brittle that the touch of water causes it to peel off, leaving a horribly painful, and practically unhealable, wound. It let my hands get as greasy and as dirty as I could to protect them. When thus coated, it is safe to leave them in contact with water, provided it is not for too long and there is no rubbing. One can indeed put one's hands into boiling water, for at these low barometric pressures water boils easily. At Rodkass, for example, water boils at 87.4°, corresponding to 13,904 feet; higher up, it is of course less.

In spite of not washing, one does not get at all dirty. After my bath on May 25th, I abstained until August 19th — eighty-five days — but I found myself absolutely clean except my hands and face. The only inconvenience was lice. These insects live inexpugnably in the seams of one's clothes. It is useless to try to dislodge them, because every time one gets near a Balti, the supply is renewed.

Rdokass remains to this day in my memory as a veritable Geulah. It is a broad grassy ledge on the rocks 200 or 300 feet above the glacier. There are superb views in every direction. But there is “something about the place” beyond that; the atmosphere of restfulness is paramount. There was here quite a lot of grass; even some flowers. I accordingly sent word to bring our flocks along. It was the last oasis of any account and in fact the only place of its kind that we found on the whole glacier. The day after, I crossed the glacier to Lhungka. It was a very nervous business picking one's way across the moraines, especially as I had to build stone men to guide the other parties, and I had only the vaguest ideas as to what point on the other bank of the glacier to make for. I climbed a high point in the middle and took compass observations, as I could now see Masherbrum (25,660 feet) and Gusherbrum (26,630 feet). These peaks are the most spectacular of the whole range; the one as stupendous wedge of brilliantly lighted rock and ice; the other a dim luminous cone. It had this appearance because of its orientation. We never saw it in full light; because at sunset, when it would have been illuminated, it happened always to be cloudy.

My compass observations distressed me extremely. I was trying to reconcile nature with Conway's map; and my difficulties were scarcely less than those which disturbed the peace of Victorian Theologians. The natives made it worse; for Conway had named the glaciers on their information, and what they told me was in some respects quite different.

At Lhungka I built a shelter for the coolies, a low stone wall behind which they could lie in case of violent wind. It would of course have been impossible to take tents for them; but as a matter of fact they did not complain of cold at any time. The thermometer did not register more than five° centigrade of frost till after June 18th.

The next day I want on to Ghore, where I found a delightful camping ground of fine level sand. (On our return, by the way, this was completely flooded.)

From Ghore to Biange is another long march, but less monotonous. The views are increasingly superb and the solitude was producing its beneficent results. The utterly disproportionate minuteness of man purges him of his smug belief in himself as the final cause of Nature. The effect is to produce not humiliation but humility, and this feeling is only the threshold of a selfishness which restores the balance by identifying one with the universe of which one's physical basis is so imperceptibly insignificant a fraction.

From Biange one can see Mitre Peak across the glacier. Although a relatively minor summit (7,500 metres), its architecture is incomparable. The name is inevitable. From this point of view the double horn could not fail to suggest the title (I had myself indulged in a little nomenclature, calling a mountain crowned by three square-cut towers of rock “Three Castles”.)

The next day a short march took me to Doksam. I was now almost at the head of the Baltoro glacier (15,518 feet). In nearly thirty miles of march I had only made four hundred feet of ascent. But here I was on the floor of a glacier at a height close to that of Mont Blanc. In front of me the glacier widened out; three major and several minor glaciers coalesced. I was irresistibly reminded of the Concordia Platz in the Oberland and named the plateau in affectionate remembrance.

Once again the astounding variety of nature in this district impressed itself upon my mind. One would have said that it was theoretically impossible to combine so many types of mountain. The obvious exception to the otherwise invariable rule of practical inaccessibility was the Golden Throne, a minor point of which Conway claims to have climbed. I was very disgusted at the bad taste of some of the coolies who had been with him in saying that he

had never been on the mountain at all, but turned back at the foot of the ice fall. How could such common creatures presume to decide a delicate scientific question of this sort?

My camp at Doksam was pitched on the borders of a good-sized lake between the mountains and the glacier, which at this point presents a wall of ice well over a thousand feet high. The position is consequently comparatively sheltered and in its way very agreeable. The presence of still water lends it the charm of utter peace, and the absence of the vermin which desecrate the crust of the earth so objectionably in other places is rendered even more agreeable by the holly courageous children who were my comrades and my friends. I went out reconnoitering for three hours in the middle of the day and got a very clear idea of the situation. A sudden snowstorm of a rather severe type swept the camp for an hour; but at four o'clock the weather again cleared. “To-morrow to fresh woods an pastures new” — except that there were neither woods nor pastures! “We were the first that ever burst into that silent sea” — except that there wasn't any sea! The poets are really very thoughtless to leave their heir without an appropriate quotation!

On the 16th of June I marched for a little over four hours where man had never yet trodden. It proved to be the easiest going yet. The eternal moraine was less in evidence; we were able to walk over admirable snow most of the way. Once more, though, I have to record a unique phenomenon totally out of keeping with the rest. At the corner of the Baltoro glacier and its northern affluent, the Chogo Lungma, as I named it, one has to cross a scree of pure white marble. Eckenstein, who arrived at this point in a snowstorm, found it very distressing. He told me that it was impossible to pick footholds; the entire surface was a blinding glare. Camp 8 (16,592 feet) is situated at the foot of a subsidiary spur descending from the ridge of which Chogo Ri is the climax. I was now in full view of the mountain itself, bar clouds; and, my first duty being to reconnoitre the mountain, I spent all day and all night watching it through my glasses, sketch-book in hand. The clouds shifted sufficiently to enable me to make a piecemeal picture, and I came to conclusion that while the south face, perhaps possible theoretically, meant a complicated climb with no half-way house, there should be no difficulty in walking up the snow slopes on the east-south-east to the snowy shoulder below the final rock pyramid. I sent back word accordingly and went on much encouraged. There was still not difficulty of any kind; the snow was excellent; but after three and a half hours, I decided to stop at Camp 9 (17,332 feet) directly under the south face of the mountain. Above this camp the glacier becomes comparatively steep and I did not wish to take a change of getting my coolies into trouble. They had amused me very much, by the way, at Camp 8 before starting, by coming and telling me that

of course they didn't believe me when I said I would send them back as soon as they got to the eastern foot of Chogo Ri. They knew quite well that I only said it to lure them on; they knew that I meant to make them cross to Yarkand; they knew that they would die to a man; but they didn't mind, it was Kismet, and they wanted me to know that they would gladly die because I had been so nice to them. When I sent them home from Camp 10 they could hardly believe their ears, and their delight at being reprieved was pathetically charming.

Modern writers have made a great deal of fun of the Golden Age; they have been at great pains to prove that primitive man is a bloodthirsty savage. The Balti gives them the lie. These men were all innocence, all honesty, all good faith, all loyalty, all human kindness. They were absolutely courageous and cheerful, even in face of that they supposed to be certain death of a most uncomfortable kind. They had no disquietude about death and no distaste for life. They were simple-minded and merry. It was impossible not to love them, and not to contrast them with the dirty despicable insects whose squabbles and crimes make civilization itself the greatest of all crimes, and whose ignorance (for all their boasting) is actually darker and deeper and more deadly than that of these children.

From Camp 9 there is a rapid rise of fourteen hundred feet to Camp 10 (18,733 feet). I was a little doubtful as to how the pabu of the men would behave. Pabu are a kind of footgear which reminds one of a gouty man. Straw or rags are wrapped round the feet by thongs of raw hide. Their softness enables the wearer to get excellent hold on moraine, and they protect the feet from cold very effectively. The question was whether they would not slip on the hard snow. I was consequently very careful to pick the easiest way and to scrape large steps when necessary. I took the first few men up on a rope, explaining the use of it, and told them how to keep their eyes skinned for concealed crevasses. They were highly intelligent; picked up the trick of everything without argument or complaint, and made no mistakes.

I ought to mention their ingenious defence against snow blindness. They wear their hair rather long, and them make a plaited fringe to hand gown over their eyes like a curtain. The device does not sound very effective; but it seems to work. It is at least a fact that we did not have a single case. On Kangchenjunga, where this plan is not known, a number of the men were seriously affected.

I was blamed subsequently for my selection of Camp 10 as Main Camp. Eckenstein thought that I might have chosen a more sheltered position. But there were no such positions in the neighbourhood and it was quite useless to go further away from the foot of the slopes which it was my intention to

climb. Furthermore, during my ten days on the glacier, I had experienced all sorts of weather, and none of it had given the slightest ground for supposing that we were likely to meet any conditions which would make camp 10 other than a desirable country residence for a gentleman in failing health. My principal preoccupation, moreover, was to keep out of the way of avalanches and falling stones. I had already seen enough of the apparently arbitrary conduct which one might expect from them; I thought it best therefore to choose a level spot in the middle of the glacier.

Even as it was, there was an avalanche on the tenth of July which snowed both on Camp 10 and Camp 11. Avalanches at this altitude — and in this latitude — differ (nevertheless) from those on lower peaks. Snow does not melt at all unless subjected to pressure. It evaporates without melting. It never forms a compact mass with a hard crust as it does in the Alps. I have seen ten feet of freshly fallen snow disappear completely in the course of an hour's sunshine. Extraordinary as it sounds, despite the perpetual bad weather which we experienced, the snow on the lower glacier (between Camps 9 and 7) had completely disappeared in August, while that on the upper glacier had very much increased.

As a result of these conditions, a first-rate avalanche may never reach the foot of the slope down which it starts; it may evaporate almost entirely en route. One of our photographs shows an avalanche actually in the process of falling. It would have overwhelmed the photographer under Alpine conditions.

I must admit to a certain heaviness of heart in obeying my instructions and sending back the men. It was so obviously right to take them up the slopes to the shoulder and establish the camp at a point whence Chogo Ri could have been reached without question, given one fine day. But my orders were formal and I never thought of disobedience. Of course, if I had foreseen the volte-face of the weather, I might have decided otherwise.

I was a little worried by the failure of Pfannl and Wessely to maintain the communications for which arrangements had been made. I could not see their party on the glacier below and wondered whether they had not broken loose. It was just the sort of thing that one might expect; to find that they had bolted up the south end of the mountain and spoilt the whole plan. They arrived, however, on the next day, the 19th, and on the 20th Knowles and the doctor joined us. They arrived in a snowstorm which continued the whole day. It was the first of uninterruptedly bad weather. On the 21st the wind dropped, though the snow continued. It tried to clear up on the 22nd; and the 23rd was fine. But of course, nothing could be done in the absence of Eckenstein. On the 24th a blizzard begin. It was the most furious wind that I

have ever known. A corner of my tent broke loose; and the only remedy was to sit on it the whole morning! The violence of the wind was indeed amazing. I had secured the side ropes of my tent by tying them round square kiltas and putting others on top. There was thus over 100 pounds to hold down each rope; but the wind made no bones about shifting them. The 25th was a dull doubtful day; and on the 26th the weather was rather worse. On the 27th it cleared up in the afternoon and Eckenstein arrived with fresh meat and bread.

STANZA XXXIX

The 28hth was fine and we held a durbar. It was decided that, Eckenstein being ill, Pfannl, Guillarmod and I should start up the mountain. Eckenstein voted for the doctor, *qua* doctor, in case of one of us being ill. It shows how easy he thought the slopes.

Wessely was very offensive in his resentment at not being included in the party. It was an intolerably bad piece of sportsmanship. Pfannl tended to take his side, and the pair made so much unpleasantness that we were soon reduced to the expedient of getting them out of the way as much as possible.

We got everything ready; but next morning the wind was so high that we could not start. Even while drinking our chocolate in the cooking tent, we nearly got frostbitten. After sunrise, the wind dropped; but it was too late to start. Eckenstein and Knowles were both ill, but the rest of us went on ski nearly to the pass at the top of the glacier. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the wind started again and once again loosened my tent. This time snow came driving up the valley.

We had a spare tent for the use of the few natives whom we kept with us. I had gone out to try to refix my tabernacle at sunset — and there was a Balti out in the snow praying with his face towards Mecca! The religion of the Mohammedan, unlike that of the Christian, is positive. It is not based on fear, but on the actual sense of the relations of man and God. I laugh to think of the well-fed, idle and ignorant missionary at Shigar trying to convert men of this stamp. Their simplicity sees through Christian sophistication at a glance; and, their sense of ethics being outraged as well as their sense of reverence, it is easy to understand that the only converts from Mohammedanism are absolutely conscienceless scoundrels who wish to live on the scarcely camouflaged subsidies of missions.

The next day found me completely snow-blind. The pain is not so much severe as irritating. The feeling is as of having red hot sand at the back of one's eyes. One keeps on blinking with the idea of removing it, and of course it won't be removed. During my “ski-läufing” I had religiously worn goggles. My condition was due entirely to pottering about the camp for a few minutes in the snowstorm, fixing my tent. I got all right again in a couple of days. The weather was moderate on June 30th and July 1st. But from July 2nd to 6th was a continuous snowstorm. There was no remittance day or night. It was this which made Camp 10 unpopular.

We got rid of the Austrians on July 1st by sending them to Camp 11 at the corner of the north-east ridge of Chogo Ri. At this point the glacier divides into two large snow basins. One leads to the pass which I have named Windy Gap (21,500) on whose north-west is the mountain at the head of the valley, which I called Staircase Peak, from the well-marked and regular indentations of its eastern ridge. The other is apparently a kind of blind alley, its circus of rocks seems to have no definite break. It is difficult to be sure of this, for when I saw it was always a cauldron of whirling mists of snow.

Pfannl and Wessely had reported that the north-east ridge of K2 was climbable, and on Monday the 7th, which was fine, it was decided to try to ascend the mountain by that route. So Main Camp was to be moved to Camp 11. I was rather ill, but protested. The proposed route was in fact absurd. Camp 11 was much farther from the summit than Camp 10, and the proposal was to reach the shoulder by following a along and deeply indented ridge the wall of which is on the Chogo Lungma side, a sheer precipice of avalanche-swept slopes, except at the point which I had originally picked out.

However, I was overruled. The doctor and I prepared to leave on the 8th. It was on this occasion that we discovered the incapacity of the natives to pull a sledge. It is about three hours' march to Camp 11. The going was not bad, though I was still rather sick. The weather was again very bad. The 9th found me much better, and the weather was good enough to go out. I went a considerable distance up the slopes of the mountain. There is some conflict in opinion as to the height reached by various members of the party. Eckenstein was fanatically determined never to exaggerate any exploit. We made a very great number of boiling-point- determinations of the heights of our camps; but even these are subject to various sources of error. Camp 11 is roughly 20,000 feet; but I suspect it to be a little higher. I estimated my climbing at 21,500 feet at the time; but this was mostly out of respect for Eckenstein. I was his most devoted disciple; I would not have given him any chance to reproach me by making a statement which might afterwards prove an exaggeration. But my real opinion is that I reached something over 22,0000 feet. I could see clearly over Windy Gap; I must have been well above it. I would not depend on the reading of aneroids in any circumstances. We had taken three instruments specially constructed; they only began to register at 15,000 feet and went to 30,000. But comparisons of the three showed — usually — that no two were alike.

In the evening I was very ill indeed; indigestion, fever, shivering. In order to breathe I had to use my whole muscular strength. I was also on the point of vomiting and remained in this condition nearly all the night. In the morning I was a little better; my breathing had become normal; but I had a

great deal of pain and felt very ill and weak. The weather was splendid. Wessely and Guillarmod were encouraged to repeat my climb of the previous day; but from their report it is not clear whether or not they got farther than I did. I lay in the sunlight and rested. I noticed strange sights; a fly, a butterfly, some crows and an insect which I thought was a bee, but I could not be sure. All visited the camp. Later the camp was covered with the snow from a big avalanche from Chogo Ri. It stripped the whole wall of the north-east ridge; that is, it was about four miles broad.

Eckenstein and Knowles came up on the 11th. Another fine day. I was still very ill; my temperature 39.4° Centigrade. I did not at all realize the cause at first, simple as it was. The true explanation was very far-fetched in the actual sense of the word. My symptoms became unmistakable before long and I had to admit that I was suffering from malaria. The hardships of the journey had removed my physiological protection and the bug stated to buzz about. I was thus the proud possessor of another world's record; the only man who had had malaria at over 20,000 feet! Incidentally, I was also the only poet at that altitude. I have always been very amused at Shelley's boast that he had “trodden the glaciers of the Alps” — the Mer de Glace and the Glacier des Boissons! But I was actually writing poetry in these camps. *Better* poetry.

Like the man who committed suicide when he learnt that the was unable to move his upper jaw, I had been annoyed by reading somewhere that it was impossible to find a rime to “silver”. I spent my spare time in thinking up all the most impossible words in the language, finding rimes for them — good rimes, not mere assonances — and introducing them into *Ascension Day* and *Pentecost*. In that poem will therefore be found rimes for refuge, reverence, country, virgin, courtesan, Euripides, Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Aischulos, Sophocles, Aristobulos, Alcibiades, fortress, unfashionable, sandwich, perorate, silver, bishop (eight rimes for this word), Sidney (three rimes for this), maniac, Leviticus, Cornelius, Abra-Melin, Brahmacharya, Kismet, Winchester, Christ Church, worship, Chesterton, Srotápatti (two rimes to this), Balliol, and so on.

I have mentioned hardships. It may be interesting to mention the nature of these. The first and greatest was malaise, which was mostly due to lack of food and exercise. The latter complaint seems rather ridiculous; but it is an absolute fact. One must not bring damp things into the tent; if one does, it practically destroys the efficacy of one's protection against cold. One must therefore stay cooped up in one's tent as long as the weather is bad. I was in charge of the kitchen and had to go out in all sorts of weather; but that was hardly exercise. I often found that by the time I had filled and lighted the stoves and got the snow melted, I could not stand the cold any longer. I

had to rush back to my sleeping-bag and warm up while someone else prepared the food.

We kept warm with kangri, of a sort, when things got too bad. We had brought up a number of Japanese instras, but they would not burn; there was not enough oxygen. The cartridges could however be used if left loose in empty biscuit tins. For a similar reason pipe-smoking was impossible; the only way to do it was to relight the pipe from the flame of the candle at each puff. We had a few cigars and we could smoke these quite comfortably. (It appears that the altitude is not wholly responsible for this. At greater heights on Kangchenjunga I smoked my pipe as comfortably as at sealevel.)

This same is true about food. We found it difficult to eat anything but what may be called delicacies from the standpoint of people in our position. I felt a certain distaste for food. I had to be “tempted” like an invalid or a fastidious child. It became obvious that Eckenstein's German army theories were inapplicable to Himalayan exploration.

We suffered little from cold in the acute way, but rather from a chronic effect. The problem of cold has not been scientifically stated by any explorer so far as I know. It is thus: The normal temperature of the body is 37° centigrade. If therefore the temperature of the air is 30° one has to make up the difference by the heat disengaged by the combustion of food. If the temperature is 23° one requires theoretically twice as much food, if 15° three times as much, if 8° our times as much, if 1° five times as much, if -6° six times as much, if -13° seven times as much, if -30° eight times as much. There temperatures are very much less hot and less cold than those actually experienced. The maximum and minimum thermometers proved altogether unreliable; and the observations on the chart refer to more or less arbitrary times. Other thermometers showed temperatures of over 40° and under 30° Centigrade. Unfortunately, simple arithmetic is not the only consideration. The digestive apparatus is calculated for dealing with an amount of food corresponding to, I don't know what temperature, but we might say at a guess 1°. If the average temperature is less than this, it means that you have to eat more than you can digest; and that means a gradual accumulation of troubles.

One can, of course, economise one's heat to some extent by diminishing the radiation; that is by wearing non-conducting clothes, also by supplying artificial heat from kangris and so on. (The kangri, by the way, is a Kashmiri device. It is a pot of copper or iron in which charcoal is burnt. The natives put it under their blankets and squat on it. It is alleged that this habit explains the great frequency of cancer of the testicles or scrotum in the country. The analogy is with “chimney-sweep's cancer”.)

After cancelling out all the excrescences of the equation, the situation amounts to this; that you cannot live permanently in conditions unsuited to your organism. It is pitiful to have to make statements of this kind, seeing that it is no more than a recapitulation of the main proposition of Darwin and Spencer. But the average explorer (for some inexplicable reason) seems absolutely incapable of applying common sense, experience or the teaching of science to the vital problems with which he is posed. Here in 1922, after all our experience, we have the members of the Everest expedition drivelling about acclimatization, as if science did not exist. Norman Collie told me plainly in 1896 on his return from the Mummery expedition to Nanga Parbat, that the only chance of getting up a big mountain was to rush it. I knew Collie for a man of science and for a man of sense and experience. I trusted his information absolutely and I governed myself accordingly.

The only thing to do is to lay in a stock of energy, get rid of all your fat at the exact moment when you have a change to climb a mountain, and jump back out of its reach, so to speak, before it can take its revenge. To talk of acclimatization is to adopt the psychology of the man who trained his horse gradually to live on a single straw a day, and would have revolutionised our system of nutrition, if the balky brute had not been aggravating enough to die on his hands. If you want to acclimatize yourself to mountain conditions, you can go and live a bit higher than the hillmen of Tibet. If you do this for fifteen generations or so, your descendants will acquire a thorax like a beer barrel and a heart capable of doing three times the work that it can at present. If you then get incarnated in your clan, you can lay siege to Chogo Ri with a reasonable prospect of success. As the hymn says,

> “Patience and perseverance
> Made a Bishop of His Reverence."

This programme is however hardly acceptable to Western minds, so little penetrated with Einstein's ideas that everything has to be done in a hurry. We may therefore leave “acclimatization” to the mentally defective heroes of the Everest expedition of 1921 and 1922. Collie was right in saying that one is living on one's capital on prolonged mountain expeditions. My experience enables me to add that it is not only a question of mountains. Any kind of prolonged hardship gradually wears one down. Again I repeat, it is pitiful to have to insist on such obvious truths. The low vitality of the working classes, the national deterioration caused by the privations of wartime, scream their warning. Anyone on earth except a member of the English Alpine Club would take it to heart.

When I went to Kanchenjunga three years later I had got everything down to a fine point. I trained at Darjeeling by feeding up as much as possi-

ble (the diet at the Drum Druid Hotel was slow starvation), by having myself massaged by an “educated” Bengali who was a Seventh Day Adventist and stole £10. I arrived at 21,000 feet in absolute perfect condition only three weeks out from the base and suffered absolutely none of the conditions which were pulling us slowly to pieces on Chogo Ri, except Wessely who, like the brute beast that he was, seemed insensible to the influence of hardship and was keeping himself in comfort by stealing the supplies of the expedition surreptitiously.

We were all suffering more or less. Knowles had lost 33 of his 186 pounds; the doctor some 20 of his 167 since leaving Askole. A man with galloping consumption could hardly do better. Our haemoglobin had diminished by twenty per cent. Eckenstein was suffering from various complicated pulmonary troubles; Knowles and the doctor were repeatedly down with influenza; as for myself, the recrudescence of my malaria, which began with a violent liver chill on the twenty-seventy of July and lasted till the end of the month, kept my temperature at 39.3° or thereabouts. Pfannl, the great athlete, had a story of his own. (Coming soon.)

Owing to the fact that snow at these altitudes evaporates without melting, it disappears from the neighbourhood of a tent, leaving a pinnacle where it is protected by the canvas. Thus, at the end of five days' snowstorm one would find oneself perched on a plateau some feet above the rest of the glacier. (This illustrates the formation of glacier tables.) It was necessary, whatever the weather might be, to shift the tent, as otherwise the weight of the snow on the sloping sides, and the general strain, would tear the canvas. We have a photograph of the plateau from which our tents had been removed after five days of snowstorm. In the middle of the square patch of hard snow relegated by pressure are two deep depressions like rude graves. These represent the ice melted by the warmth of our bodies through a double groundsheet of Willesden Canvas, the canvas of the Roberts valise and the thick cork mattress.

Pfannl and Wessely had become completely intolerable and we encouraged them to go off to Camp 12 (estimated at about 21,000 feet) on the 13th. The weather showed its usual readiness to cook up a storm. On the 14th I describe it as $(x.o.p.)^{n+1}$. A chit (note) arrived saying that Pfannl was ill. On the fifteenth the weather cleared in the afternoon; but I could see that it meant further mischief. My diary notes that I ate a meal this day. I must have been pretty bad previously to make such an entry; for my diary, whatever its other defects, is a supreme model of the laconic style.

Another chit told us that Pfannl was worse. The doctor went up to Camp 12 to look after him. Nemesis had come to town. Athletic training, as un-

derstood by athletes, is a violation of the first principles of nature. Wilkie Collins, in *Man and Wife*, had told me about it. A little old woman is provoked to personal conflict by the Pride of England and it ends by his collapsing. The same thing had happened to Pfannl. They had the utmost difficulty to get him down to Camp 11. This misadventure lost us our last chance of making a dash for K2. There was one series of two fine days, the second of which could have been used by Knowles and myself if we had not been obliged to superintend the caravan of invalids. From the 16th to the 19th was an almost continuous snowstorm. Pfannl was suffering from œdema of both lungs and his mind was gone.

A pathetic incident sticks in my mind. He sent for me to come to his tent and told me that these dull brutes could not understand him, but that I, as a poet, would be able to enter into his feelings. He then said that there were three of him; two of them were all right; but the third was a mountain with a dagger and he was afraid that it would stab him. I did not at that time realize the significance of the delusion. Today it is obvious that the fear and fascination of the hills had got mixed up with that of the phallus, thus determining the character of the symbol. As things were, I could merely report that he was insane, and the doctor continued the treatment of keeping him continuously under morphia.

STANZA XL

The 20th was fine; and we constructed a sledge on which Pfannl could be taken down to Rodkass. Wessely was to stay with him permanently and the doctor to return as soon as he had settled him on that alp. He left on the 21st, which was fine; but Eckenstein and I were both ill again towards evening. On the 22nd it once more commenced to graupen and threatened worse. The 23rd was equally bad. Towards evening we perceived a strange phenomenon. We wondered at first if it could be a bear. Certainly some animal was approaching the camp on all fours. In the gathering dusk even our field glasses left us uncertain, especially as the irregularities of the glacier hid it at frequent intervals.

But where it came close, we realized that it was the doctor. His face was steaming with sweat and expressed an agony of fear. Eckenstein was not sympathetic. He merely said, “Where's your coolie?” Guillarmod explained that he had left hat specimen of the Creator's handiwork in a crevasse. Eckenstein uttered a single violent objurgation which opened new vistas on the depth of his feelings. I did not waste even one word — I was putting my boots on. Before Guillarmod had fairly crawled into his tent, Eckenstein and I were skimming over the snow on our ski with a coiled rope. (In my haste I forgot to take my goggles, which cost me another two days of snow blindness.)

I got down to the crevasse ahead of Eckenstein, but he shouted to me to wait. Here was a chance to show me in practice what he had always claimed in theory; how easily a man could be pulled out, using only one hand. The man was quite calm; but had given up hope and was committing his soul to Allah. I expect he was mostly worried about the direction of Mecca. We had no need of the coiled rope; the doctor had untied himself from his own rope and left it lying on the snow! The cowardice, incompetence and imbecility of his proceedings remain to-day as incomprehensible as they were then.

(I accuse myself of having minimised these things. I should never have agreed to take him on my next expedition, but I liked the man personally so much that I instinctively made every allowance for him, and unquestionably he was suffering no less than the rest of us. I have a fatal weakness for believing the best about everybody. In the face of the plainest evidence, I cannot believe in the existence of dishonesty and malice, and I always try to build with rotten material. I always imagine that I have merely to point out an error for it to be energetically eliminated, and I am constantly lost in mild surprise when the inevitable occurs. Here is a description by himself on one of his bad days.

“Pour moi, je reste couché, atteint d'une attaque d'influenza plus forte que je n'en ai jamais eu: la fièvre n'est pas très intense, mais mes amygdales sont si tuméfiées et douloureuses gue j'ai beaucop de peine à respirer; le moindre mouvement produit un accès de suffocation; impossible de dormir; des douleurs lancinantes et des frissons me torturent horriblement.)”

Eckenstein, punctiliously putting his left hand behind his back, pulled the coolie out with his right, though entirely unaided by the man himself. He had made up his mind to die and rather resented our interference!

On the 26th my eyes were better and I felt quite well on the morning of the 27th. I had discovered that Wessely, before he left the camp, had stolen the bulk of our emergency rations, which consisted mostly of selbst-kocher which contained delicacies dear to the Czech palate. We decided to court-martial him at Rodkass and I wrote the speech of the prosecution[1] on the morning of the 27th. In the afternoon I got a violent liver chill and was utterly prostrated for the rest of the day. There was much vomiting.

The storm, after a short break, became more violent than ever. On the 28th my fever and the storm continued unabated. On the 29th the storm continued without abatement and so did my fever. Vomiting again complicated things. On the 30th it cleared in the afternoon and my fever broke in sleep and perspiration. The night was very cold and the morrow fine until the evening, when snow began to fall, gently indeed, but with inexorable cruelty. I was well on the first of August, but the snowstorm had developed extraordinary violence. A man came up from the valley with khabar (news) that cholera had closed the right bank of the Bralduh Nala. It looked as though our retreat had been cut off.

On the 2nd the storm raged without letting up for a moment. I had really made up my mind, ever since it had been decided to give up the idea of climbing the mountain direct from Camp 10, and from my instinctive judgment of weather, that the expedition had failed in its main objective, and I was not in the least interested in killing myself gradually against my judgment. I was absolutely satisfied with the results of my original reconnaissance of Chogo Ri, and the Archangel Gabriel could not have convinced me that we were likely to succeed in forcing a ridge over three miles long of the most desperate character.

I have also an instinct about weather. I know when it breaks for good. I cannot explain it; but there is an absolutely definite difference in what one feels in two apparently similar storms. One will blow itself out in preparation for a cloudless fortnight and the other will be the prelude to more Wagner. I was also perfectly convinced that Collie's ideas were correct. We had ex-

hausted our vital capital; we were none of us fit to climb anything. In particular, we lacked the fine flower of vitality: the spiritual energy and enthusiasm. I doubt whether even a fortnight's fine weather would have restored us to the proper condition for an attempt on a mountain.

On August 3rd the storm was still going strong; but we packed and went down on the 4th to Camp 9, stopping at Camp 10, where many of our kiltas were still stored, to pick out anything that was worth taking home (which we calculated as anything worth over half a crown a pound) and anything which we immediately wanted, especially sugar, of which we were already in sore need. On the 5th we lay idle in medium weather, while the coolies brought down from Camp 10 the goods which we had selected, and on the 6th we went to Camp 7.

The condition of the lower glacier was astonishing. Despite all these weeks of snowstorm, it had been stripped of every vestige of snow, whereas on coming up we had walked on smooth slopes. We found dry glacier, most of which was baby séracs up to 15 feet high, sharp, slim needles of ice which were of course impossible to negotiate. We simply had to dodge them. I was constantly ill with fever, diarrhoea and vomiting, and only recovered when I got to Ghomboro. The symptoms were literally continuous. Every few hundred yards I had to stop, go through it and go on.

On the 7th we rested at Camp 7. It was fine and the temperature in my tent was 37°; but the high peaks were “smoking their pipes” so that a violent wind must have been blowing up there; and as the morning advanced, the clouds gathered. However, I took a chance; and washed. It is a curiously refreshing sensation. I sometimes wonder why people do not indulge in it more often. On the 8th we went to Camp 6. My indiscreet debauch with water had added a cold in the head to my other miseries. Again a fine morning degenerated into thick weather. We rested on the 9th and went to Camp 5 on the 10th. It was cloudy all day and in the afternoon we had a violent storm of rain. On the 11th we went to Rdokass direct by short cut, passing over a very beautiful scree whose stones were iridescent; every colour of the spectrum glistened on their rain-washed surfaces.

On the 12th we held a durbar and expelled Wessely from the Expedition. Pfannl decided to go with him. Pfannl was now more or less well again, but he would never be able to climb mountains in the future. It poured with rain all day and the following, which I spent in bed. On the 14nth we went to Camp 1. It took me ten hours; the last part of the march was very bad, the enormous increase of water having made some sections of the march impossible by the route previously taken. I was well enough to eat. The weather was fairly fine, bar one or two snowstorms; but it snowed all night.

On the 15th I went to Payu. Before leaving the glacier I had another attack of fever and was obliged to lie down for three hours. The weather had become quite chronic. There were glimpses of sun; but for the most part we had clouds and rain. I should remark (by the way) that people who live in cities have quite different standards of bad weather from open-air folk. When one is living in a tent, on discovers that it is very rare indeed to experience twenty hours of continuous bad weather. There is nearly always a period of the day when one can get at least an hour or two which is fairly decent. The townsman's observations are confined to a small section of the day. The weather on the Baltoro glacier may therefore be judged as quite exceptionally abominable.

I have had very bad luck (on the whole) with my weather on mountains. Even in Mexico, we had a fortnight of cold and wet which had no parallel in the memory of man, and caused the stoves in the city to be sold out in the first forty-eight hours. Then I was once at Wastdale Head for forty-three days when it rained quite continuously except on one morning and one afternoon. On the other hand, during the nine days I was at Akyab it once stopped raining for nearly twenty minutes. I ought to have taken the exact time: but I thought the end of the world had come, so that it never occurred to me to look at my watch till it began again.

I had been altogether sixty-eight days on the glacier, two days longer than any other member of the party. It was another world's record; and, as far as I know, stands to this hour. I hope I may be allowed to die in peace with it. It would be a sorry ambition in anyone to grasp my laurels and I can assure him that to refrain will bring its own reward. Of these sixty-eight days, eight only were fine, and of these no three were consecutive. Of course some days were of mixed character. But in no case have I classed as bad weather any days which would be considered in the Alps fine enough to go out on an average second-rate peak.

An almost unbelievable impression insisted on stamping itself on my reluctant mind. Eckenstein and Knowles were really upset by the reports of the cholera in the Bralduh Nala. It is true that by all accounts it was pretty bad. One report said that a hundred men had died. For some reason I treated the whole thing with scepticism; and when I passed through Askole I certainly saw no signs of agitation or mourning. The only precaution I took was to prevent my men coming in contact with the villagers.

But Eckenstein and Knowles would not pass through the village at all. They decided to return to Shigar by the Skoro La, which is a pass avoiding the big bend formed by the Bralduh Nalan and the Shigar Rivers. It is just about as many days' march and is decidedly harder on the men. So the doc-

tor and I went round by the valley. At Ghomboro we hound fresh apricots, and after a final go of indigestion caused by surfeit of fresh mulberries and melons at Shigar my health cleared up with astonishing rapidity. Within a week I was in perfectly good form again and convinced more than ever that mountains as such have precious little to do with mountain sickness.

I noticed later that Sir Richard Burton, from even his small experience, remarked that he did not believe that the symptoms were due to altitude but to indigestion. Burton was always my hero and the best thing about him is his amazing common sense. In one place, for instance, he refers to influenza as “that dreadful low fever called influenza”: which is exactly the truth. When one compares with this description the buckets full of pseudo-scientific bilge of modern medicine, one's disgust makes one long for the level heads and clear eyes of such men as Burton.

The descent to the valley offered little new to the eye. The broad Mud Nala had cakeddry; but before doing so it had overflowed to an extra hundred yards or so in breadth in one place. The Narrow Nala was still wet, but not so deep in mud. At Dasso we found fresh apples; and at our next camp, just beyond Yuno, fresh peaches. This last march was very severe, over nine hours across blazing sand without a square foot of shelter anywhere. On the following day a new experience was in store. We were able to travel by Zak.

The Zak is a local variety of raft; to a framework of crossed bamboos are bound a number of goat skins. Our raft had twenty-four: six one way and four the other. As these goat skins all leak, one has to find a landing place every twenty minutes or so, and this is not always easy. The great danger is that one may stick on a submerged rock. It would be quite impossible to get off and quite impossible to get ashore, though one might be only six feet from the bank. At each corner is a man with a long bamboo pole to fend off rocks. But otherwise little can be done to direct one's course or even to steer sufficiently to prevent the Zak turning round and round. I was reminded of Ben Gunn's coracle in Treasure Island. The behaviour of a zak on a sea confirms the analogy, for at one place the river was traversed by rows of waves 5 or 6 feet high.

It seemed inconceivable that we should not be swamped. We kept our places by wedging our feet between the bamboos and holding on to them with out hands. The current is appallingly swift. We had begun our “adventure by water” in crossing the Yuno, for we were on the wrong side of the river, and a man had had to be sent down from far above to arrange for the raft to take us over. (Until one actually goes travelling in a country of this sort, one can form no idea whatever of the frequency of utterly insuperable

obstacles. It was not our fault, for instance, that we were on the wrong side of the river, for the other bank involved a detour of some three days.)

It required more than one voyage to cross the river. It could not have been crossed at all but for the fact that it is divided into seven streams, only one of which could not be forded. Naturally, a passage was chosen where the current was least formidable. But for all that we were swept down about three-quarters of a mile in order to cross less than 200 yards. In order to regain its starting point for the next journey the Zak had to be carried up stream a couple of miles. So much for mere crossing. But the next day we were only three hours and ten minutes actual going to Shigar, which in the ordinary way is three long marches.

The pace of the current varies enormously. Sometimes we were kept half an hour at a time spinning about amid contending eddies; sometimes we were flung violently down the stream at over twenty miles an hour. The sensation is extraordinarily exhilarating — the motion, the imminent peril, the intoxication of the air, the majesty of the background, but above all, the beatific realization that, as the doctor said, “the roads are doing our walking for us,” combined to make me delirious with delight. Great too was the joy of rejoining Knowles and Eckenstein, who had now recovered their equanimity. We all went down to Skardu in two hours on a big Zak. There we found fresh ripe grapes, potatoes and green corn. Our joy was unconfined; youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm!

1 — It began, after Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis: “C.O.N. — Fi done! — saved by T. R. A. Contra Herr Doctor Victor Wessely.”

STANZA XLI

There are two ways of returning from Skardu to Srinagar; one the way we had come, the other across the Deosai Plateau. This is a high table land from 14,000 to 17,000 feet, crossed by four principal rivers. It has a devilish reputation for inhospitality. The rivers, in particular, play the prank of inducing you to cross one or two of them, and then coming down in spate, holding you up indefinitely and starving you out. I wanted to go back by that way; but Eckenstein's memories were too painful. We decided to travel separately — he with Knowles, and I with the doctor. (After we had started, he changed his mind and followed us.) On the 26th of August I had a final go of fever and lay in bed till the afternoon, after which I got up and saw to the bandobast for the journey. The next day we started for Pinderbal, about five hours on horseback — a very pleasant ride up a steep Nala. The only incident was that my pony had been reading the Old Testament and proceeded to vary his pleasures by bolting under a tree so that I was caught in its branches like Absalom, while he went on his cheerful way, neighing merrily. We camped under a huge boulder; and as I sat by the fire after dinner reposing delightfully with a pipe, a very characteristic incident occurred.

A shapeless mass was moving down the slopes. It resolved itself into a man who must have been nearer 70 than 60 years old, carrying a sack, much bigger than himself, of what proved to be dried apricots. I greeted him affectionately and offered him some tobacco. He squatted opposite me and began to chat. When he said “dried apricots” I had to summon all my philosophy to prevent raising my eyebrows slightly, for this was indeed carrying coals to Newcastle. Baltistan consists exclusively of rocks, streams and dried apricots. The last named are its principal export.

A moment — and I understood! The poor old man had been unable to cross the plateau and was returning home to die! I expressed my sympathy and offered help. Oh, no, not at all! He had carried his sack all the way to Srinagar; but finding on arrival that the price of his produce had gone down by a fraction of a penny a pound, he refused to sell and was bringing the stuff back. The sack itself looked fabulous, so I got out the “butcher's terror” and found that it weighed 410 pounds. The whole business struck me as extraordinarily sublime. I dashed to old boy five rupees. This made him wild with happiness and restored his debilitated conviction in the existence of a Supreme Being who put in most of His time in caring for His faithful.

The next day, about four hours' ride took us to the top of the Pass, from which we had a magnificent view of the plain of Skardu and the Indus backed by the great mountains, while in front of us lay the Deosai, and ab-

solutely treeless wilderness of comparatively level country framed by minor peaks. It gives a unique impression of desolation. I have never seen its equal in this respect elsewhere. Yet the march was very pleasant with many lovely flowers and streams. The weather was delightful and the going good.

The next day we went to Kranub (Kalapani is another name for it) in less than six hours in a cold wind under a threatening sky. After camping, the rain poured down in torrents. On the 30th we came down from the plateau in eight hours to Burzil, where there was a Dak Baghla. It rained continually till the last hour, so that we missed the distant view, but the foreground told us of the complete change of the character of the country.

Burzil is on the Gilget road. This “road” (which is a good mule path) was absolutely crowded with every beast of burden available: men, mules, bullocks, asses, horses, camels — all desperately bent on supplying the small garrison for the winter before the snow closed the passes. Gilgit being on the Indian side of the Pamirs and the country to the north very much more difficult than to the south, I was highly amused by the chronic anxiety of the government that Russia would invade India by this route. I doubt whether the combined resources of both governments would suffice to bring over half a dozen regiments. We are always hearing about the invasion of Alexander the Great; but his expedition is not to the point. Since his time climatic conditions all over the world have changed very considerably. I shall have more to say on this point when I come to deal with the Sahara. For the present I content myself with observing that in the time of the Macedonian empire the country was probably much more fertile. This is sufficiently proved by the traces of past civilizations, quite apart from the general evidence as to the physical phenomena which are in progress on our planet.

We descended the Burzil Valley, a gorge of amazing beauty and colouring, with gorgeous trees to “fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep”. At Pashwari it had already begun to open, and at Gurais a broad calm stream winds slowly through a broad level valley. As I rode slowly down the track to this camp I heard a sudden shout behind me. “Hat Jao!” (get out of the way!); a moment later a gigantic English major brushed past me muttering curses. I laughed into my beard. It was amusing to be taken for a native!

At Gurais I found Ernest Radcliffe, assistant Forest Commissioner of Kashmir, in camp. I already knew him well; he received me with open arms and gave me that hot bath of my life, with lunch and dinner to follow. At dinner I met the galloping major, who did not recognise me when he found me sitting, clothed and in my right mind, and was extremely embarrassed when he realized his unintentional rudeness of the morning.

At Gurais are a big suspension bridge and the remains of a very large old fortress. On the 2nd we went to Gurai and on the 3rd to Tragobal. The road here crosses a pass some 10,000 feet high. It is a magnificent ride through the wildest yet richest forest and mountain scenery. Some of the trees are enormous and one obtains intoxicating views of the valley framed by their dark splendour. Few men know what a view can be. The European idea is to go, preferably by train, to some high place and obtain a panorama. To me, even the noblest panoramas are somewhat monotonous. Their boundlessness diminishes their aesthetic value. To see distant prospects to the best advantage one needs a foreground. In rock climbing and travelling through mountain forests one sees nature in perfection. At every turn, the foreground picks out special bits of the background for attention, so that there is a constant succession of varying pictures. The eye is no longer bewildered by being asked to take in too much at once; and the effect of the distance is immensely heightened by contrasts with the foreground.

Soon after crossing the Pass, the Vale of Kashmir with the Wular Lake bursts upon the view. Once again, the character of the scenery had undergone a complete transformation. We rode down joyously to Bandipura in four hours. The mosquitoes on this part of the lake should have been repeatedly exposed in *Truth*. Their reputation stinks in the country. So we chartered a Dunga (which is a variety of houseboat employed when any considerable distance has to be covered) and crossed the lake to Baramula. The crossing should have taken five hours; it took twelve.

We lazed a day among the delights of comparative comfort, marred only by the return of my malaria. But on the sixth I drove in a tonga to Srinagar, 132 days after leaving it. The expedition to Chogo Ri was over.

STANZA XLII

After about a week in Srinagar, I accepted an invitation to stay with Radcliffe at his headquarters in Baramula, to go shooting. I travelled by Dunga in order to see a little more of native life and character, which I was able to do more freely now that my responsibility of the expedition was at an end. I passed two wonderful days of perfect joy on river and lake. I realized the whole of Kubla Khan, including the parts that Coleridge forgot. I understood the exclamation of the Persian poet:

> "If on earth is a heaven of bliss,
> It is this, it is this, it is this."

Radcliffe and I went shooting bears occasionally, but I could not get up much enthusiasm. I was still suffering from occasional bouts of fever; and besides, was oppressed with a certain lassitude. I felt admirably well, but disinclined for necessary exertion. The strain of the journey was making itself felt. I wanted to lounge about and indulge in short strolls in the shade, to eat and drink at my ease, and to sleep "lazily, lazily, drowsily, drowsily, in the noonday sun". I had arranged to go on a more serious expedition with Radcliffe; but he was called away by a telegram, and I decided to wander slowly back to Blighty.

I left Baramula on September 21st, reached Pindi on the 24th, and after a day or two in Delhi and Ajmer reached Bombay on the last day of the month. I had meant to investigate Jaipur and the abandoned city which was deserted in the heyday of its splendour at an hour's notice on the advice of an astrologer. (He prophesied, observe, that it would become like "the courts where Jamshyd glorified and drank deep", and so it did!) But my power to feel had been definitely dulled by the expedition. Hardship and sickness had temporarily exhausted my vitality.

A queer token of this and the only one. My beard was at this time a mixture of red and black in almost equal proportions. I shaved to go to Europe; and when I let it grow again, all the red hairs had become perfectly white.

I left Bombay on the 4th of October, by the poor old *Egypt* wrecked off Ushant in 1922. On the boat was a young officer returning to England on leave, to get married. It was a romantic story, and for the satisfactory accomplishment of his plan a plain gold ring which he wore on the fourth finger of his left hand was of the last importance. He removed it from his finger to read the inscription on the inside. Just as he put it back, a passing steward touched his elbow and the ring fell to the deck. It would have gone quite

safely into the scuppers, but the owner and the steward, stooping excitedly to retrieve it collided. One of them snatched the ring; it slipped from his fingers and went overboard. The young man's distress was pitiful to see. “I daren't face her without it,” he kept on moaning, with the tears streaming down his face. We did the best we could by drawing up a signed statement explaining how the accident occurred.

We forgot all about the matter in the course of the voyage, and when we arrived at Aden even the youth himself had recovered his spirits. To pass the time, we proposed fishing for sharks in the harbour and after about an hour we got a fine fish aboard. It was immediately cut up; but search as we would we could find no trace of the ring.

I reached Aden on the 9th. It must be a perfectly ghastly place to live in. As I was to land in Egypt, I had to be quarantined for a day at Moses' Wells, regulation being that one must be eleven days out from Bombay, in case of plague. Moses' Wells is the most hateful place I have ever been in, with the possible exception of Gibraltar. I note in my diary that the food was “beastly, and abominable, and absurdly dear”. If I remember correctly, it was cooked by a Greek and served by an Armenian. Volumes could not say more.

I arrived in Cairo on the 14th and was transported to the seventh heaven. I lived at Shepherd's Hotel till Guy Fawkes's Day, wallowing in the flesh pots. I would not even go out to see the Pyramids. I wasn't going to have forty centuries look down on me. Confound their impudence! I could not even bother to study Islam from the religious point of view, but I undertook a course in Ethnology which remains in my mind as the one study where the roses have no thorns. I got a typist and dictated an account of my various wanderings in my better moments, but most of the time I was earnestly pursuing my researches in the Fish Market.

My mind began, moreover, to flow back into its accustomed channels. For one thing, I came to the conclusion that “the most permanent poetry is perhaps love songs for real country folk — about trout and love.” And I began to write a set of lyrics to be called “The Lover's Alphabet”. This was to consist of twenty-six poems, associating a girl's name with a flower with the same initial from A to Z. One of my regular pedantic absurdities! Needless to say, it broke down. The debris is printed in my *Collected Works*, Vol. III, pp. 58 seq. I was also vaguely revising *Orpheus* and the other literary lumber of the past year and a half.

I had been doing a certain amount of practical Magick off and on, even during the expedition; but this too had dropped off since my return to civilization. As to Yoga, I was still completely dead. I had become dull to the

trance of Sorrow itself. I had no doubts as to the efficacy of Magick or the advantages of Mysticism. I simply couldn't be bothered with them. I was not under any illusions about the value of worldly pleasures; it was simply that I did not possess the energy to live any other kind of life.

I cannot understand why people imagine that those who retire from the world are lazy. It is far easier to swim with the stream, to refresh one's mind continually by letting it move from one distraction to another. This is so true that one might almost assert that the idlest monks are in reality more energetic than the busiest business man. This does not apply so much to Catholic monks, for their routine exercises dull the edge of whatever minds they possess; and not at all to missionaries, who live bourgeois lives diversified by pleasurable outbursts of vanity. But it applies to the Orientals, from Japan to Morocco.

One might go further and say that, apart from religion altogether, the oriental lives a much more intense mental life than Europeans or Americans; that is, provided it has been aroused from brutish stupor by education. For the Western uses his education to take the edge off his mind. He allows it to wander among business and family details, and putrefies it by reading newspapers. In the East, an active mind cannot go sprawling over the shallows. It is compelled by its relatively limited intellectual furniture to cut itself a constantly deepening course. Thus it occurs that very few people indeed, outside Asia and Africa, are aware of the existence of any of the higher states of mind. The imagine that consciousness connotes a single level of sanity; that is, that is consists in the mechanical movement of its elements in repose to the varied stimuli of the senses. There is a tendency to regard even such comparatively slight variation as the reflective habit of the man of science and the philosopher as being abnormal and in a sense unhealthy. They are the subjects of vulgar ridicule.

In sheer spiritual lassitude, I left Egypt homeward bound. During my absence from England I had kept up a sort of irregular correspondence with Gerald Kelly, who had by this time started to try to learn to paint, and who had a studio in the rue Campagne Première in the Montparnasse quarter of Paris. I gladly accepted his invitation to stay with him there. It had already been branded on my forehead that I was the Spirit of solitude, the Wanderer of the Waste, Alastor; for while I entered with absolutely spontaneous enthusiasm into the artistic atmosphere of Paris, I was always subconsciously aware that here I had no continuing city.

I (began to pick out the old threads of my life. Despite the evidence of Allan Bennett as to the integrity of Mathers, the premisses of my original syllogism as to his authority were not impaired. His original achievements

proved beyond doubt that he had been at one time the representative of the Secret Chiefs; that he had either been temporarily obsessed or had permanently fallen.

On leaving for Mexico, I had asked him to take care of a dressing-case, a bag and a few valuable books which I did not want to be bothered with. I called on him and asked for their return. I was received as in good standing, yet a certain constraint and embarrassment were apparent. He handed over my books, but explained that as he was just moving into a new house on the Butte Montmartre (where I found him in the appropriate turmoil), he could not lay his hands on my bags for a few days. I have never seen them since. One of them was an almost new 50 guinea dressing-case.

I drew my own conclusions. What had happened to me was so much like what had happened to so many other people. But I still saw no reason for throwing over my allegiance. The best policy was to remain inactive; such as Mathers was, he was the only authority in the Order until definitely superseded by the Secret Chiefs.

I had, however, little doubt that he had fallen through rashly invoking the forces of *The book of the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage*. I thought I would try the testimony of an independent observer. Among the English colony of Montparnasse was a youth named Haweis, son of the once celebrated H. R. Haweis of Music and Morals. He had been to Peterhouse and was now studying art, in which he has since achieved a certain delicate eminence. He went to see Mathers and came back very bored with a pompous disquisition on the Ancient Gods of Mexico. The charlatan was apparent; Mathers had got his information from the very people who had induced me to go out to Mexico. He was exploiting omne ignotum pro magnifico like the veriest quack. At this moment I came into magical contact with his forces. The story has been told admirably, if somewhat floridly, by Captain (now Major-General) J.F.C. Fuller. I can hardly do better than quote his account.

“Gerald Kelly showed considerable perturbation of mind, and on being asked by Frater P. what was exercising him, Gerald Kelly replied, “Come and free Miss Q. from the wiles of Mrs. M.” Being asked who Mrs. M. was, Gerald Kelly answered that she was a vampire and a sorceress who was modelling a sphinx with the intention of one day endowing it with life so that it might carry out her evil wishes; and that her victim was Miss Q. P. Wishing to ease his friend's mind asked Gerald Kelly to take him to Miss Q.'s address, at which Mrs. M. was then living. This Gerald Kelly did.

“Miss Q., after an interview, asked P. to tea to meet Mrs. M. After introduction, she left the room to make tea — the White Magick and the Black were left face to face.

“On the mantelpiece stood a bronze head of Balzac, and P., taking it down, seated himself in a chair by the fire and looked at it.

“Presently a strange dreamy feeling seemed to come over him, and something velvet-soft and soothing and withal lecherous moved across his hand. Suddenly looking up he saw that Mrs. M. had noiselessly quitted her seat and was bending over him; her hair was scattered in a mass of curls over her shoulders and the tips of her fingers were touching the back of his hand.

“No longer was she the middle-aged woman, worn with strange lusts; but a young woman of bewitching beauty.

“At once recognizing the power of her sorcery, and knowing that if he even so much as contemplated her Gorgon head, all the power of his Magick would be petrified, and that he would become but a puppet in her hands, but a toy to be played with and when broken cast aside, he quietly rose as if nothing unusual had occurred; and placing the bust on the mantelpiece turned towards her and commenced with her a magical conversation; that is to say a conversation which outwardly had but the appearance of the politest small talk, but which inwardly lacerated her evil heart, and burnt into her black bowels as if each word had been a drop of some corrosive acid.

“She writhed back from him, and then again approached him even more beautiful than she had been before. She was battling for her life now, and no longer for the blood of another victim. If she lost, hell yawned before her, the hell that every once-beautiful woman who is approaching middle age, sees before her; the hell of lost beauty, of decrepitude, of wrinkles and fat. The odour of man seemed to fill her whole subtle form with a feline agility, with a beauty irresistible. One step nearer and then she sprang at Frater P. and with an obscene word sought to press her scarlet lips to his.

“As she did so Frater P. caught her and holding her at arm's length smote the sorceress with her own current of evil, just as a would-be murderer is sometimes killed with the very weapon with which he has attacked his victim.

“A blue-greenish light seemed to play round the head of the vampire, and then the flaxen hair turned the colour of muddy snow, and the fir skin wrinkled, and those eyes, that had turned so many happy lives to stone, dulled and became as pewter dappled with the dregs of wine. The girl of twenty had gone; before him stood a hag of sixty, bent, decrept, debauched. With dribbling curses she hobbled from the room.

“As Frater P. left the house, for some time he turned over in his mind these strange happenings and was not long in coming to the opinion that Mrs. M. was not working alone, and that behind her probably were forces far greater than she. She was but the puppet of others, the slave that would catch the kids and the lambs that were to be served upon her master's table. Could P. prove this? Could he discover who her masters were? The task was a difficult one; it either meant months of work, which P. could not afford to give, or the mere chance of a lucky stroke which P. set aside as unworthy the attempt.

“That evening, whilst relating the story to his friend Gerald Kelly, he asked him if he knew any reliable clairvoyant. Gerald Kelly replied that he did, and that there was such a person at that very time in Paris known as The Sibyl, his own “belle amie”. That night they called on her; and from her P. discovered, for he led her in the spirit, the following remarkable facts.

“The vision at first was of little importance, then by degrees the seer was led to a house which P. recognized as that in which D.D.C.F. lived. He entered one of the rooms, which he also at once recognized; but curious to say, instead of finding D.D.C.F. and V.N.R. there, he found Theo and Mrs. Horos. Mr. Horos (M.S.R.) incarnated in the body of V.N.R. and Mrs. Horos (S.V.S.) in that of D.D.C.F. Their bodies were in orison; but their spirits were in the house of the fallen chief of the Golden Dawn.

“At first Frater P. was seized with horror at the sight, he knew not whether to direct a hostile current of will against D.D.C.F. and V.N.R., supposing them to be guilty of cherishing within their bodies the spirits of two disincarnated vampires, or perhaps Abramelin demons under the assumed forms of S.V.A. and M.S.R., or to warn D.D.C.F.; supposing him to be innocent, as he perhaps was, of so black and evil an offence. But, as he hesitated, a voice entered the body of the Sibyl and bade him leave matters alone, which he did. Not yet was the cup full.”

This story is typical of my magical state of the time. I was behaving like a Master of Magick, but had no interest in my further progress. I had returned to Europe with a sort of feeling at the back of my mind that I might as well resume the Abramelin operation, and yet the *débâcle* of Mathers somehow put me off; besides which, I was a pretty thorough-going Buddhist. My essay “Science and Buddhism” makes this clear. I published a small private edition of “Berashith” in Paris; but my spiritual state was in reality very enfeebled. I am beginning to suspect myself of swelled head with all its cohort of ills. I'm afraid I thought myself rather a little lion on the strength of my journey, and the big people in the artistic world in France accepted me quite naturally as a colleague.

In England there is no such social atmosphere. Artists and writers are either isolated or members of petty cliques. It is impossible to do so much as give a dinner to a distinguished man without upsetting the ant-heap, and arousing the most insanely violent and personal jealousy. A writer who respects himself in England is bound to become a solitary like Hardy and Conrad; the greatness of his art debars him utterly from taking the smallest part in the artistic affairs of the moment. In a way, this is not to his disadvantage, for the supreme genius does not need specialized human society; he is a home in the slums or on the countryside. The *salon* stifles him. The social intercourse between artists in France tends to civilize them, to bring them to a common level; and thus, though the average of good writers is far higher than in England, we can show more men of supreme attainment; we can even make a pretty shrewd guess who the masters are even during their lifetime, for we instinctively persecute them.

Any spark of individuality is in England an outrage on decency. We pick out Sir Richard Burton, James Thomson, John Davidson, Ernst Dowson, and heaven knows how many others, for abuse, slander, ostracism, starvation or imprisonment. In our anxiety to do justice, we even annoy perfectly harmless people. At one time Alfred Tennyson was scoffed at as “incomprehensible”. Holman Hunt was denounced by Charles Dickens as an obscene painter, and his prosecution and imprisonment demanded. *Jude the Obscure* was nicknamed *Jude the Obscene*. Swinburne was denounced as “the poet of the trough and the sty”, and his publisher withdrew the first series of Poems and Ballads in panic. Rossetti and Morris came in for an equal share of abuse, and we all remember the denunciation of Ibsen, Meredity, Nietzsche, Maeterlinck, Tolstoy, in fact, of every man — also Bernard Shaw — without exception whose name is still in our memories.

In France one attains eminence by a less gratuitous Golgotha. Men of art and letters are respected and honoured by each other and by the public. Their final position in history is quietly assigned by time. It is only in very exceptional circumstances that a great man is awarded the distinction of a Calvary. Of course, Zola went through the mill; but only because he had butted into politics by his *J'accuse*; he was only denounced as obscene because any stick is good enough to beat a god with.

But, as luck would have it, I had arrived in Paris on an occasion which history in France can hardly duplicate; Rodin was being attacked for his statue of Balzac. I was introduced to Rodin and at once fell in love with the superb old man and his colossal work. I still think his Balzac the most interesting and important thing he did. It was a new idea in sculpture. Before Rodin there had been certain attempts to convey spiritual truth by plastic methods; but they were always limited by the supposed necessity of

“representing” what people call “nature”. The soul was to be the servant of the eye. One could only suggest the relations of a great man with the universe by surrounding a more or less photographic portrait of him with the apparatus of his life work. Nelson was painted with a background of three-deckers and a telescope under his arm; Wren with a pair of compasses in front of St. Paul's.

Rodin told me how he had conceived his Balzac. He had armed himself with all the documents; and they had reduced him to despair. (Let me say at once that Rodin was not a man, but a god. He had no intellect in the true sense of the word; his was a virility so superabundant that it constantly overflowed into the creation of vibrating visions. Naively enough, I haunted him in order to extract first-hand information about art from the fountain head. I have never met anyone — white, black, brown, yellow, pink or spot-blue — who was so completely ignorant of art as Auguste Rodin! At his best he would stammer out that nature was the great teacher or some equally puerile platitude. The books on art attributed to him are of course the compilation of journalists.)

He was seized with a sort of rage of destruction, abandoned his pathetically pedantic programme. Filled with the sublime synthesis of the data which had failed to convey a concrete impression to his mind, he set to work and produced the existing Balzac. This consequently bore no relation to the incidents of Balzac's personal appearance at any given period. These things are only veils. Shakespeare would still have been Shakespeare if someone had thrown sulphuric acid in his face. The real Balzac is the writer of the *Comédie Humaine*; and what Rodin has done is to suggest this spiritual abstraction through the medium of form.

Most people do not realize the power which genius possesses of comprehending the essence of a subject without the need of learning it laborously. A master in one art is at home in any other, without having necessarily practised it or studied its technicalities. I am reminded of the scene in Rodin's studio which I described in a sonnet. Some bright spirit had brought his fiddle and we were all bewitched. Rodin suddenly smiled and waved his hand towards “Pan et Syrinx”. I followed the gesture: the bars just played were identical with the curve of the jaw of the girl. The power to perceive such identities of essence beneath a difference of material manifestation is the inevitable token of mastery. Anyone who understands (not merely knows) one subject will also understand any other, whether he also knows it or not. Thus: suppose there had also been present a great gardener, a great geologist and a great mathematician. If they did not understand and approve that signal of Rodin's, I should refuse to admit that they were real masters, even of their own subjects. For I regard it as an infallible test of a master of any

art or science that he should recognize intuitively (Neschamically) the silent truth, one and indivisible, behind all diversities of expression.

I find by experience that any man well learned in a subject, but whose understanding of it falls short of the mastery I have described, will profoundly resent this doctrine. It minimizes the dignity of his laborious studies and in the end accuses him of inferior attainment. The more sophisticated victim can usually put up an apparently non-emotional defence in the form of a scepticism as to the facts, a scepticism those obstinate irrationality is plain to an outside observer, but seems to the victim himself a simple defence of what he feels to be truth. This type of Freudian self-protection is often entirely passion-proof even against direct accusation of intellectual pride and jealousy. It relies on the ability of the mind to confuse, when hard-pressed, the essence of a subject with its accidents. Nothing but a very pure aspiration to truth — and experience (often humiliating) of such reactions — is of much use against this particular kind of bondage.

While other defenders of Rodin were apologizing for him in detail I brushed aside the nonsense — “a plague o' both your houses!” — and wrote a sonnet, which is, in its way, to conventional criticism exactly what the Balzac was. It was translated into French by Marcel Schwob and made considerable stir in Paris. Even at this length of time, I attach a certain importance to it. For one thing, it marks a new stage in my own art.

BALZAC

Giant, with iron secrecies ennighted,
Cloaked, Balzac stands and sees. Immense disdain,
Egyptian silence, mastery of pain,
Gargantuan laughter, shake or still the ignited
Stature of the Master, vivid. Far, affrighted,
The stunned air shudders on the skin. In vain
The Master of La Comédie Humaine
Shadows the deep-set eyes, genius-lighted.

Epithalamia, birth songs, epitaphs,
Are written in the mystery of his lips.
Sad wisdom, scornful shame, grand agony
In the coffin folds of the cloak, scarred mountains, lie,
And pity hides i' th' heart. Grim knowledge grips
The essential manhood. Balzac stands, and laughs.

The upshot was that Rodin invited me to come and stay with him at Meudon. The idea was that I should give a poetic interpretation of all his

masterpieces. I produced a number of poems, many of which I published at the time in the *Weekly Critical Review*, an attempt to establish an artistic entente cordiale. The entire series constitutes my *Rodin in Rime*. This book is illustrated by seven often lithographs of sketches which Rodin gave me for the purpose.

STANZA XLIII

Any other man but myself would have made a ladder to fame out of the success of this winter. I had no such idea. I had been thoroughly disillusioned, not only by the original trance of sorrow which had struck me between wind and water in 1897, but by the experience of my travels. The natives of Hawaii were not worrying about Sophocles; Chogo Ri would be there when the last echo of Napoleon's glory had died away. I was more than ever convinced that to take an interest in the affairs of this world, one must turn one's back on truth. Buddhism might be right or wrong in saying that nothing is worth while; but anyhow there could be no doubt that the conventional standards of value were simply comic. If anything were worth while, it could only be discovered by turning one's back resolutely on temporal things.

In accordance with Eckenstein's puritanical ideas of propriety, no communications about the expedition had been made to the newspapers. Ultimately, in the sheer interests of Science, a paragraph had been permitted to appear in *The Times*. It contained thirty-two lines and seventeen misstatements of fact! I myself had been interviewed by a French journalist and the report of my remarks bore no discoverable relation with them. I am perhaps unduly sensitive about such stupidities. I ought perhaps to rely on time to sweep away the rubbish into the dustbin of oblivion and set the Truth upon Her throne; but yet, the evidence of History smiles grimly. What do we really know of the rights and wrongs of the struggle between Rome and Carthage! What do we know even of Buddhism and Christianity but that the most authentic accounts of their origins are intrinsically absurd! “What is truth?” said jesting Pilate. But, personally, I fail to see the joke.

I went through life at this time with a kind of cynical bonhomie; nothing was really any particular good, so I might as well do what was expected of me. I wrote even of Buddhism with a certain detached disenchantment, as may be seen by reference to my *Summa Spes*, which I published separately (twelve copies contain the portrait of me by Haweis and Coles, subsequently reproduced in volume II of the vellum edition of my *Collected Works*) and sent to some of my friends in Paris on my departure for England.

After Rodin, the most important of these friends was Marcel Schwob. Eugène Carrière I met only once. He had just recovered from an operation for cancer of the throat, and I remember principally his remark, calm to the point of casual indifference, “if it comes back, I shall kill myself.” Fritz Thäulow I saw several times. He was rather a new type to me; a jolly, bearded senior on whom life had left no scars. He believed in his art and in his fami-

ly; enjoyed everything, worried about nothing — it was not at all one's idea of a great artist. I had already got it into my mind that the life of the artist must be a sequence of pungent pangs either of pleasure or pain; that his nature obliged him to regard commonplace circumstances rather as the average man regards deep sleep. But Thäulow lived every line of his life; he had somehow attained that supreme philosophy which contemplates all things alike with cheerful calm.

Marcel Schwob excited my unbounded admiration. He was admittedly the finest French scholar of English. His style glittered with the superb simplicity and silken satire which compels me to regard Anatole France as his pupil. He had translated Hamlet and Macbeth for Sara Bernhardt with astonishing spiritual fidelity to the soul of Shakespeare. His *Vies Imaginaires* might have served as the model for *Le Puits de Sante Claire*, and his *Île des Diurnales* is as brilliantly bitter as anything that Swift ever wrote. He lived on the Ile St. Louis in a delightful flat, rich with the suggestion of the East (emphasized by a Chinese servant he had picked up after the Exhibition of 1900), yet he suffered as few men suffer.

Part of his crucifixion was rather ridiculous. It was suspected that he was more or less a Jew, and he was constantly aware that he did not enjoy the position in French literature to which his genius entitled him. His wife was one of the most beautiful women on whom I had ever laid eyes; an exquisite siren with a smile hat left La Gioconda standing, and a voice which would have burst the ropes that bound Ulysses to his mast. But she had been an actress, and this Duchess and that Countess did not call. It galled. The real tragedy of the man was that he was tortured by chronic constipation. It killed him soon after. Even after all these years I glow with boyish pleasure to recall his gracious, unassuming acquiescence in my impertinent existence and his acknowledgement of my *Alice, an Adultery* as a “little masterpiece”.

My sonnet on Rodin begins “Here is a man”, which Marcel Schwob very properly translated, “Un homme”. I took the draft to Rodin's studio. One of the men present was highly indignant. “Who is this Marcel Schwob,” He exclaimed, “to pretend to translate from this English? The veriest schoolboy would know that 'here is a man' should be turned into 'Voici un homme'.”

This is the sort of thing one meets at every turn. The man was perfectly friendly, well educated and familiar with literature; yet he was capable of such supreme stupidity. The moral is that when an acknowledge master does something that seems at first sight peculiar, the proper attitude is one of reverent eagerness to understand the meaning of his action. This critic made as ass of himself by lack of imagination. He should have know that “Voci un homme” would have sprung instantly into Schwob's mind as the

obvious and adequate rendering. His rejection of it argues deep consideration; and the man might have learnt a valuable lesson by putting himself in Schwob's place, trying to follow the workings of his mind, and finally discovering the considerations which determine his judgment. I quote this case rather than grosser examples which I recall, because it is so simple and non-controversial, yet involves such important principles. Schwob's version stands before a background of the history of literature. It would be easy to write a long and interesting essay on the factors of the problem.

Occasionally he came to see Kelly in his studio. His conversation was full of the most intensely interesting, because impersonally intimate, details about men of letters. He told us at first hand the tragedy of Meredith's life, the mystery of his birth, and his father's attempts to establish a marriage with would have entitled him to a place in the peerage; the romance of *Vittoria*; and the intrigue of *Diana of the Crossways*. He traced the influence of the master's locomotor ataxia upon his life, his character and his creatures. He explained how the long years of suffering had deformed Meredith's disposition and led him to disgrace himself by refusing to head the petition for Oscar Wilde's release.

He told us the true story of *Salome*. The character of Wilde was simple. He was a perfectly normal man; but, like so many Irish, suffered from being a snob. In Dublin, Sir William Wilde was somebody in society; but when Oscar reached Oxford, he discovered that a medical knighthood, so far from being a distinction, was little better than a badge of servility. A Family even of commoners could afford to sneer at his acceptance of a trumpery honour at the hands of a Hanoverian hausfrau. Wilde could not bear to be despised by brainless dukes, so he had sought hegemony in the Hierarchy by the only means available, as a socially sensitive swineherd might aspire to the papacy. He determined to become the High Priest of the cult which already conferred a kind of aristocracy upon the undergraduate, though it had not yet been organized and boosted. That was the result of his “martyrdom”, which accounts for most of the loathsome creatures that jostle one too frequently in 1929. “The Law is a Hass”!

Wilde had denied his nature in the interests of social ambition, and the success of his scheme drove him to adopt every affectation as a sign of superiority. Outside the English system of caste, he might have been a contented cornchandler. Within it, he found himself obliged to affect to be sexually stirred by Maeterlinck, Flaubert, Gustave Moreau, and even the most sacred character of Scripture. He degraded the Sphinx by representing her as a sexual monster. He interpreted the relations between Christ and John, between Paul and Timothy, in the light of his own perverse imagination.

When I say perverse, I do not mean to use the word in the psychopathic sense. Wilde's only perversity was that he was not true to himself. Without knowing it, he had adopted the standards of the English middle class, and thought to become distinguished by the simple process of outraging them. As one is said to be able to invoke the devil by reciting the Lord's Prayer backwards, so Wilde thought to set up a new morality by reciting George R. Sims backwards. He naïvely accepted the cockney idea that Paris is a very wicked place, and proposed to petrify the puritans by writing a play in French. His difficulty was that his French was that of a schoolboy turned tourist; so he struggled to write *Salome* on the pretence that he was sexually excited by *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, Moreau's pictures in the Luxembourg and the style of *Pelléas and Mélisande*. But the performance was pitiful; and it was Marcel Schwob who re-wrote his puerile dialogue in French.

At one of Marcel Schwob's afternoons I met Arnold Bennett, very ill at ease to find himself in Paris in polite society. He must have had a perfectly lovely time; everything was alike a source of innocent wonder. He was very much pleased by the generous measure of respect which he received on all hands simply for being a novelist. His speech and his appearance attracted no insult from literary circles in Paris.

At the time I had only read one of his books — *The Grand Babylon Hotel*; Which I thought, and still think, somewhere near his high-water mark. I told him how much I admired it and was surprised to find that I had apparently said the wrong thing. But Kelly explained that he took himself seriously as a serious novelist, on the strength of having complied some books of reference on life in Shropshire or Straffordshire or some such place. I don't know which is which, thank God; I do not understand the system of classification of indexing, so I cannot turn up the symptoms of a dying Doultonware-artist if I want to. But then I don't.

Marcel Schwob gave me an introduction to William Ernest Henley, who invited me to lunch with him in his house near Woking. My sonnet on Rodin's bust of Henley describes the man and the interview rather than the sculpture.

> “Cloistered seclusion of the galleried pines
> Is mine today; these groves are fit for Pan —
> O rich with Bacchus frenzy and his wine's
> Atonement for the infinite woes of man!
>
> And here his mighty and reverend high priest
> Bade me good cheer, an eager acolyte,
> Poured the high wine, unveiled the mystic feast;

Roast lamb and an excellent Chablis which had been sent to him by Lord Northcliffe — thus does the poet transfigure conceptions apparently commonplace.

I was much touched by Henley's kindness in inviting me. I have never lost the child-like humility which characterized all truly great men. Modesty is its parody. I had to wait some little while before he came down. When he did so, he was obviously suffering severe physical distress. Like Marcel Schwob himself, he was a martyr to constipation. He told me that the first half of every day was a long and painful struggle to overcome the devastating agony of his body. Only three weeks later he died. He was engaged in various tremendous literary tasks and yet he could give up a day to welcome a young and unknown writer!

I could not pretend to myself that so great a man could feel any real interest in me. It never occurred to me that he might have read anything of mine and thought it promising. I took, and take, his action for sheer human kindness. I probably behaved with my usual *gaucherie*. The presence of anyone whom I really respect always awakes my congenital shyness, always overawes me. Henley's famous poem (which Frank Harris regards as “the bombast of Antient Pistol”) appealed intensely to my deepest feeling about man's place in the universe; that he is a Titan overwhelmed by the gods but not surrendering. And the form or the poem is superb. It is in line with all the great English expressions of the essential English spirit, a certain blindness, brutality and arrogance, no doubt, as in “Rule Britannia”, “Boadicea”, “The Garb of Old Gaul”, “The British Grenadiers”, “Hearts of Oak”, “Toll for the Brave”, “Ye Mariners of England”, *et hoc genus omne*; but with all that, indomitable courage to be, to do and to suffer as fate may demand.

I never thought much of the rest of Henley's verse, distinguished as it is for vigour and depth of observation. It simply does not come within my definition of poetry, which is this: A poem is a series of words so arranged that the combination of meaning, rhythm and rime produces the definitely magical effect of exalting the soul to divine ecstasy. Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Machen share this view. Henley's poem conforms with this criterion.

I told him what I was doing about Rodin. His view was that the sonnet had been worked out and he advised me to try the Shakespearian sonnet or quatorzain. I immediately attempted the form in the train that evening and produced the quatorzain on himself from which I have quoted above. I recognized at once that the quatorzain was in fact much better suited to my rugged sincerity than the suavity of the Italian form, so I composed a number of poems in the new mode. In fact, I fell in love with it. I invented improvements by the introduction of anapaests wherever the storm of the metre might be maddened to typhoon by so doing, and it may be that history will yet say that *Clouds without Water*, a story told in quatorzains, as *Alice* in sonnets, is my supreme lyrical masterpiece.

At least I have not died without the joy of knowing that no less a lover of literature than the world-famous Shakespearian Lecturer, Dr. Louis Umfraville Wilkinson, has dared to confess publicly that *Clouds without Water* is “the most tremendous and the most real love-poem since Shakespeare's sonnets” in the famous essay “A Plea for Better Morals”. But I anticipate. *Clouds without Water* came four years later. I am still sitting sleepily in the twilight in Europe; after my day's labour three years long in the blazing sun of the great world.

I spent many of my evenings at a little restaurant called the *Chat Blanc* in the rue d'Odessa, where was “an upper room furnished” and consecrated informally to a sort of international clique of writer, painters, sculptors, students and their friends. It has been described with accurate vigour in the introduction to *Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden*. I quote the passage.

“His evenings were spent in that witty and high-thinking informal club that met nightly at the restaurant Au Chien Rouge, whose members are so honoured in the world of art. There he met C—— the brilliant but debauched sculptor, caustic of wit, though genial to his friends; N——, the great painter, whose royal sense of light made his canvases into a harmonious dream: he also the sweet friend of Bacchus, who filled him with a glow and melody of colour and thought. There too, were D—— and L—, the one poet and philosopher, the other painter and — I fear — pederast. Twins in thought, the two were invincible in argument as they were supreme in their respective arts. Often have I sat, a privileged listener, while D—'s cold acumen and L——'s superb indignation, expressed in fiery swords of speech, would drive some luckless driveller from the room. Or at times they would hold down their victim, a bird fascinated by a snake, while they pitilessly exposed his follies to the delighted crowd. Again, a third, pompous and self-confident, would be led on by them, seemingly in full sympathy, to make an exhibition of himself, visible and hideous to all eyes but his own. L——, his eager face like a silver moon starting from a thundercloud, his hair, would pierce the very soul of the debate and kindle it with magick joy or freeze it with scorn implacable. D——, his expression noble and commanding, yet sly, as if ever ready to laugh at the intricacies of his own intellect, sat next him, his deep and wondrous eyes lit with strange light, while with words like burning flames of steel he shore asunder the sophistries of one and the complacencies of another. They were feared, these two! There also did he meet the well-known ethicist, I——, fair as a boy, with boy's gold locks curling about his Grecian head; I——, the pure and subtle-minded student, whose lively humour and sparkling sarcasm were as froth upon the deep and terrible waters of his polished irony. It was a pity that he drank. There the great surgeon and true gentleman, in spite of his exaggerated respect for the memory of Queen Victoria, J——, would join in with his ripe and generous wit. Handsome as a god, with yet a spice of devil's laughter lurking there, he would sit

and enjoy the treasures of the conversation, adding at the proper interval his own rich quota of scholarly jest.

“Needless to say, so brilliant a galaxy attracted all the false lights of the time. T——, the braggart, the mediocre painter, the lusty soi-disant maquereau of marchionesses, would seek admission (which was in theory denied to none). But the cutting wit of C—— drove him headlong, as if by the cherubin, from the gates of the garden of Eden. G——, the famous society painter, came one night and was literally hounded out of the room by a swift and pitiless attack on the part of D—— and the young ethicist. A bullet-headed Yankee, rashly supporting him, shared the same fate and ever after sat in solitary disgrace downstairs, like a shipped hound outside its master's door. A fool reveals himself, though he talk but of greasing gimlets, in such a fierce light as beat upon the Chien Rouge. Nor could any fool live long in that light. It turned him inside out; it revealed him even to himself as a leper and an outcast; and he could not stand it.

“In such a circle humbug could not live. Men of high intellectual distinction, passing through Paris, were constant visitors at the Chien Rouge. As guests they were treated with high honour; but woe to the best of them if some chance word let fall led D—— or L—— to suspect that he had a weak spot somewhere. When this happened, nothing could save him: he was rent and cast to the carrion beasts for a prey.

“How often have I seen some literary or pictorial Pentheus, impious and self-sufficient as he, disguise himself (with a tremor of fear) in his noblest artistic attire, as the foolish king in the *Bassara* of the Mænads!

“How often have I seen Dionysus — or some god — discover the cheat and give him over to those high priests of dialectic, D—— and L——, to be ravaged and stripped amid the gleeful shrieks of the wit- intoxicated crowd! But once the victim was upon the altar, once he rose from his chair, then what a silence fell! Frozen with the icy contempt of the assembly, the wretch would slink down the room with a sacred grin on his face, and not until he had faced that cruel ordeal, more terrible (even to a callous fool) than an actual whipping would have been, not until the door had closed behind him would the silence break as someone exclaimed “My God, what a worm!” and led the conversation to some more savoury subject.

“On the other hand there was B——, a popular painter, upon whom the whole Dog pounced as one man, to destroy him.

“But when they saw that his popular painting was not he, that he had a true heart and an honest ambition, how quickly were the swords beaten into absinthes and the spears into *tournedos*!

“S——, again, with a face like a portrait by Rembrandt, a man of no great intellect, but making no pretence thereto, how he was loved for his jolly humour, his broad smile, his inimitable stories!

“Yet it must not be suppose that the average man, however sincere, had much of a welcome there. Without intention to wound, he was yet hurt — the arrows of wit shot over his head and he could never feel at home.

“I am perhaps the one exception. Without a ghost of talent, even in my own profession — medicine — I had no claim whatever to the hospitality of the Dog. But being perfectly unobtrusive, I dare say I was easy to tolerate, perhaps even of the same value as a background is to a picture, a mere patch of neutral colour, yet serving to harmonize the whole. Certainly nothing but my silence saved me. The remark a few pages back about Hall Caine and Meredith would have caused my instant execution, by the most painful, if the least prolonged, of deaths.

“Ay! no society, since men gathered together, was ever so easy to approach, to seat oneself among, to slip away from or to be hurled in derision from their midst!

“Dreaded as they were by the charlatan, no set of men could have been more genial, more fraternal. United by a bond of mutual respect, even where they differed — of mutual respect, I say, by no means of mutual admiration, for it was the sincere artistry that they adored, not the technical skill of achievement — they formed a noble and harmonious group, the like of which has perhaps never yet been seen.”[1]

Another description may be found in the opening chapters of W. S. Maugham's *The Magician*. The reader will wonder how this gentleman could have got there, but here my tale is tangled. Gerald Kelly's elder sister, Rose, had been for some years the widow of a Major Skerrett, and one of her best friends was a woman as beautiful and fascinating as herself, who was the wife of an English solicitor connected with the British Embassy, named Maugham. W. S. was this man's younger brother. Maugham claimed to have ambitions to become a man of letters and his incapacity was so obvious that I am afraid we were cruel enough to make him the butt of our wit when he visited the Chat Blanc.

There is this excuse for us, that his earliest work was vamped over, his plagiarisms were beyond belief for impudence. When — to parody the out-

burst of the heavy mother in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* — he "contracted an alliance with a Tabloid and married into a Pill-Box", we thought that all was over. But no! he went around the world, and set to work with his powers of observation to help an imagination which had by no become original and vigorous. He turned out some first-class work; and, what is in some ways better, work on the right side. He castigates the herd of many swine feeding which we call society — as it is now late to drive their devils back into the Jews, where they are terrible congested.

But in 1902 we were right to chivy him!

It had leaked out that our luckless victim had taken a medical degree and J. W. Morrice[2] used to torment the poor fellow, whose distress was accentuated by his being a confirmed stammerer, by ringing the changes on this disgraceful episode of his career. Morrice was invariably mellow drunk all day and all night. He would look up from his crème de menthe and œufs sur le plat, clear his throat and tell Maugham with grave importance that he would like to consult him on a matter concerning the welfare of art and artists. "What would you do if —" and after repeating himself in a hundred ways so as to prolong the rigmarole to the utmost, he would wind up by confessing to the premonitory symptoms of some comic an repulsive malady. It was really needlessly cruel, for, bar his pretensions to literature, there is not an ounce of harm in Maugham, any more than there is in a packet of sterilized cotton wool. Even the pretence is after all a perfectly harmless affectation.

But Maugham suffered terribly under the lash of universal contempt and did his best to revenge himself by drawing portraits, as unpleasant as petty spite could make them, of some of his tormentors. His literary method, when it transcends plain scissors and paste, is the shirt-cuff method of Arnold Bennett. I must thank him for recording some of my actual repartees. The man he most hated was Roderic O'Conor. This man was intimate with Gauguin, Van Gogh and Cézanne. In my opinion history will class him near them as a painter. I do not think he has many superiors in art alive today. But very few people have seen his pictures. His contempt for the world goes beyond that of Balzac and Baudelaire. He cannot be bothered to give a show. He will turn rudely from his door a friendly journalist bent on making him famous and rich. Also, he is a cad.

To O'Conor, Maugham was not even funny. He was like a bed-bug, on which a sensitive man refuses to stamp because of the smell and the squashiness. I have never felt thus. To me the least of human beings, nay, less than they, have a place in my heart. "Everything that lives is holy." I can hardly bring myself to resent even the vilest and most offensive creatures. I have never been able to bear malice; I have never been able to understand

how other people can do so. When I have been attacked, I have always looked at the matter impersonally. When I am publicly accused of stealing the towers of Notre Dame, I enjoy the joke thoroughly. I can't believe that anything can hurt me. It would hurt my pride to admit it, I suppose. When a newspaper prints three columns, identifying me with Jack the Ripper, it never occurs to me that anyone in his senses would believe such rubbish. I imagine that my integrity is universally patient as sunrise; I can't realize that I shall suffer in the estimation of anyone, or that (say) it will interfere with the sale of my books.

I have never been able to analyse this mental attitude at all adequately, but part of it certainly derives from the fact that I have never lost my innocence. I sometimes wonder whether it may not prove a defect in my philosophical system that I am unable to believe in the existence of evil. There is of course the appearance of evil due to ignorance, bad judgment and so on; but my major premiss is “Every man and every woman is a star.”; and I always conceive the problem of progress as depending merely on enlightenment. I do not believe in original sin except in this sense that “The word of Sin is Restriction.”; and our normal conscious selves are inevitably restricted by the categories of space, time and causality, which are essential conditions of the manifestation of separate individualities. But I cannot get it into my head that any single human being can be really hostile to another. I regard all such passions as the symptoms of a definite deformity of nature produced by its inadequacy to deal with its environment. Just as a stick appears bent when thrust partly under water, so does a man's will apparently deviate when the refractive index of his environment deceives his vision.

I do not know whether it is fair to say that I am callous, whether the long torture of my patient silent struggle against the tyrants of my boyhood case-hardened me against the world. I do not know how far the habit of concentration and the peculiar selective action of my memory has deadened my sensibilities, for I am as indifferent to most impressions as the holiest hermit could desire. I have become almost incapable of registering conscious impressions unless they pass the censor as having legitimate business with me. Of course a not dissimilar state of abstractedness is common enough in men whose lives are devoted to study, by the time they are fifty; but in me these tendencies were already bearing fruit long before I was thirty.

The Montparnesse quarter was of course full of people who took their trumpery love affairs very seriously. But the English colony was riddled with English hypocrisy. I remember giving the manuscript of *Alice* to Kelly and a girl named Sybil Muggins[3] to read, and they agreed that no really nice woman would have kissed a man so early as the thirteenth day of his wooing. I must confess to having been taken a little aback, especially as Sybil Muggins

was Haweis's mistress. A few days back, moreover, Haweis having gone to Brussels for a week, she switched over to Kelly. What dreadful days those were! They worked themselves up into such a state that Kelly actually proposed to marry Sybil, and his sister bustled over post haste to prevent it by threatening that his allowance would be stopped if he did anything so foolish.

I had of course no sympathy whatever for the fatuity of the young people, but I have always felt with Shelley that parental tyranny is the most indefensible kind.

"I was brought up in the other service; but I knew from the first that the Devil was my natural master and captain and friend. I saw that he was in the right, and that the world cringed to his conqueror only through fear. I prayed secretly to him; and he comforted me, and saved me from having my spirit broken in this house of children's tears. I promised him my soul, and swore an oath that I would stand up for him in this world and stand by him in the next. (*Solemnly*) That promise and that oath made a man of me. From this day this house is his home; and no child shall cry in it; this hearth is his altar; and no soul shall ever cower over it in the dark evenings and be afraid. (G. B. Shaw, *The Devil's Disciple*.)"

I offered to make Kelly an allowance equal to what he was receiving, which rather took the wind out of the sails of the old wooden three-deckers in Camberwell vicarage. The gesture was sufficient. The threat was withdrawn; Gerald on his side had cooled off sufficiently to see the folly of throwing himself away on a half-caste.

To me the joke as obvious. I could already love without attachment so far as physical desire was concerned. There are one or two small errors in my subsequent life and they are due to my failure to extend this principle to other types of attachment. I have tried to set myself up against fate and save those who were predestined to be lost, to keep on trusting people after I knew perfectly well that they were false; and I have paid heavily for my chivalry and generosity. I still think these defects in some way preferable to sterner sense and virtue, and yet I know that I am wrong from every point of view. It does not do ultimate good to anyone concerned to shut one's eyes to the facts or to try to dodge one's creditors.

1 — C. Paul Bartlett, N.J.W. Morrice, D. Crowley, L. Kelly, I. Heward Bell, J. Ivor Back, I. One Kite, G?, B. Penrhyn Stanlaws, S. One Root.

2 — This amiable and worthy colonist occupied a studio on the Quai des Grands Augustins (now, I suppose, called Quai Maréchal Fous-le-Camp), most conveniently situated over the apartment of an excellent midwife: though I never heard that he had occasion to avail himself of her services.

3 — Query "Meugins".

STANZA XLIV

I must give an instance or two of the astounding character of my memory. It is absolutely first rate wherever my true interests are concerned, and also first rate in a very different sense, in elimination other things so as not to overload the mind. But ———

I think it was on returning to Boleskine from Paris after taking the Grade of **5°=6□** that I asked Eckenstein to join me for the ski-läufing and salmon. We left London together in a sleeper. I had £150 in bank notes in my pocket book, which I put under my pillow. In the morning I dressed hurriedly, still half asleep, and left the book behind. I discovered the loss a few minutes later and shrugged my shoulders. I have always had a conviction that it is utterly useless to look for anything that has once been lost. I made up my mind immediately to forget about it; I take it as a matter of fact that anyone who has found anything would steal it; yet equally as a matter of course that it would be returned to me by the finder as simply as one would hand a lady the fan she had dropped, with no question of honesty or reward. But Eckenstein insisted on my going back to the station immediately. We saw the station master and got permission to walk up the tracks — quite a long distance, hardly less than a quarter of a mile — to the siding where the sleeper had been shunted. The pocket book was found intact under my pillow.

Some time in 1913 or '14 Eckenstein referred to this incident and immediately noticed that I did not catch on. He tackled me pointedly; and I denied all knowledge of the affair with the emphasis of St. Peter! Eckenstein repeated the facts given in the above paragraph and as he did so the whole thing came back to me. But I would certainly have gone into the witness-box and sworn point blank that no such thing had ever happened. Every detail was and is perfect in my memory. At this moment I can see the car, the siding, the general appearance of the maze of lines, the lowering grey weather, the tumbled bed, the cleaner who had just begun his work. I remember thrusting my hand under the pillow and the exact state of emotion at finding the book, relief mingled with mild surprise and a strong sense of shame at having made such a fool of myself in the presence of Eckenstein.

But the entire packet had been sealed up and stowed away at the back of the safe, in accordance with the routine of the office never to allow the mind to feed upon thoughts connected with money. I know that this seems farfetched and many people will find it entirely unintelligible; but it is the fact. The ultimate secret of my life is that I really live up to my principles. I decide that it is disgraceful to allow financial considerations to dictate my

conduct; but instead of allowing this to remain a pious opinion, I am at pains to invent a regular technique for dismissing them.

Another incident. In returning to Zapotlan we had ridden 120 miles in the broiling sun. I had outridden O.E., who was amazed and irritated at my power to endure heat and thirst. I became alarmed when I found he was nowhere to be seen and rode back a good many miles, managing (as luck would have it) to miss him in one small patch of woodland which diversified the desert. When I reached Zapotlan I had to be lifted off my horse. We were to start the next morning, as we were in rather a hurry to get back to Mexico City.

I woke before six o'clock and found the whole place in darkness. I opened the big gateway, fed the horses, saddled them and then, finding that nobody was stirring, thought I would lie down on my bed for a minute or so till breakfast was ready. I went to sleep. Eckenstein had some difficulty in arousing me.

The point of the story is this: that I had done nothing of the sort. Eckenstein proved to me (and a difficult task he had) that I had never wakened at all and that the whole of my early morning's activities were a mere wish-phantasm; being too sleepy to do my duty, I dreamt that I had done so.

This last incident is very typical. Not once nor twice in my fair island story have I hound myself in honest doubt which, believe me, is worth half the creeds, as to whether any given incident took place in sleep or waking. It may be thought that my accounts of various magical incidents are under suspicion; but being aware of my peculiarities, I have naturally been at great pains to eliminate any such source of error. Eckenstein's proof that I was dreaming depended on the physical evidence of the closed doorway and the unsaddled horses. It is of course easy to reply that I may have been asleep the second time as well as the first! And of course there is no answer to that any more than there is to the argument that we are all part of the Red King's Dram, as Lewis Carroll puts the fable of Kwang-Tze. (Kwang-Tze once said to his disciples on awakening: “Just now I was dreaming that I was a butterfly: but is it so, or am I a butterfly dreaming that it is Kwang-Tze?”)

To return to the wicked city of Paris. J.W. Morrice, as a painter, does not possess the sternly intense passion of O'Conor. His vision lacks the blazing brilliance of beauties which imposes itself on the beholder in O'Conor's best work. Morrice is a *homo unius tabulae*. He has only seen one thing in his life — it is the rosy dream which Venus and Bacchus bestow upon their favourites. His pictures swim in a mist of rich soft delicate colour which heightens

the effect of the character of his draughtsmanship; and that suggests the same qualities by means of a different system of hieroglyphics.

The most prominent member of the Chat Blanc symposia, after these, was Paul Bartlett. I found him brilliant and good natured; and his caustic speech gave a spice to his geniality. I thought very highly of his work; but he might have gone much further had it not been for the social and artistic success which acts as a soporific on all artists whose vigilance is unequal to the strain. It is hard indeed for the strongest of us to be ungracious to our admirers. Neglect and poverty, moreover, injure a man's art if they continue for more than a certain number of years. It is best for a man if he begins to taste success in the early forties; but he must have begun with “the thwackings”, as Meredith so profoundly sets forth in that superb magical apologue, *The Shaving of Shagpat*; and he should have learnt their lesson that the applause of mankind is as contemptible as its abuse. “Just so many asinine hee-haws”, as Browning said. The artist must live continually in such intense intimacy with the God-head that he is not to be disturbed either by starvation or success.

There were of course a number of fleas on the Chat Blanc; men whose association with art was a sort of superstition, men who bored us and yet were as difficult to get rid of as the lumber that accumulates in a house. But sometimes a stranger would introduce a new note of genuine amusement.

One day one of the Americans introduced the “great American artist, Penrhyn Stanlaws”. His name was Stanley Adamson and his birthplace Dundee. He had begun his life in the traditional manner of the great by holding horses' heads and earning dimes. Somehow or other, while quite a youth, he had sprung into popular favour and was already earning £2,000 a year or more by dashing off a succession of spidery scrawls representing fluffy American flappers in various attitudes. He had come to Paris to study art seriously.

I was delighted with him. He was Pinkerton of *The Wrecker*, with every *t* crossed and every *i* dotted. His innocent earnestness, without any root to it, his infatuation for “uplift”, his total ignorance of the morality of the artist, his crude prejudices based upon Sunday School, his attitude to everything assumed in blissful unconsciousness of a background: this was all perfectly charming. He had all the fascination of a new penny toy.

Now, at this time, Gerald Kelly was in his Whistler-Velasquez period. Kelly's mind is in no way creative or even critical in the true sense of the word. He was a scholar. He would convince himself by elaborate argument that So-and-so was the greatest of all artists; and he would then endeavour

to discover the secrets of the master in the spirit of the analytical chemist, and proceed to paint with the most pitiful perseverance in the style of his latest hero. I possess sketches by Kelly which I defy the world to distinguish from Beardsley, Rossetti, Morris, G. F. Watts, etc. Robbie Ross once told me of a man who collected fans by Charles Conder. He had twenty-three when he died; four of them Conders, five doubtful, but the remaining fourteen genuine Kellys.

At this particular moment he was aiming at the “low tone” of Whistler and Velasquez and his method was to keep on darkening his palette. Ultimately he would use paint the colour of Thames mud for the highlight on the cheek of a blonde. He once picked out an old canvas to paint over and had gone some distance before he discovered that it was his favourite portrait of the Hon. Eileen Grey. His knowledge of art was encyclopædic; and he laid down the law and more unction and emphasis than anyone else I have ever heard. He took Stanlaws under his wing and started to teach him to paint.

Stanlaws possessed the characteristic American faculty of doing anything and everything easily; of scoring superficial success. One day I called on him and found a large easel in his studio on which stood a vast canvas — evidently by Kelly. I congratulated him on his acquisition. He replied, rather huffily, that he had painted it himself. And the cream of the jest is that this hasty imitation of Kelly's imitations of Velasquez was accepted in the Salon on the strength of Stanlaws' American reputation!

I gradually sickened of the atmosphere of Paris. It was all too easy. I flitted restlessly to London and back, and found no rest for the sole of my foot. I had even got engaged to be married, but returning after a week in London I was partly too shy to resume relations with my fiancée, and partly awake to the fact that we had drifted under the lee shore of matrimony out of sheer lack of moral energy. This lady claims notice principally as the model for several poems, notably (in *Rosa Mundi*, and other Love Songs) “The Kiss”, “Eileen” and the poems numbered 14, 15, 16, 18, 21 to 28. She was also the “Star” in *The Star and the Garter*, Which I wrote at this time; and the three women connected with the “Garter” were an English lady with a passion for either, an acrobat and model [] whom I called my boot-button girl because her face was “round and hard and small and pretty”, and thirdly Nina Olivier. Nina is described in the poem itself and also in several lyrics, notably “The Rondel” — “You laughing little light of wickedness”. My adoration of Nina made her the most famous girl in the quarter for a dozen years and more. She figures, by the way, in my “Ordeal of Ida Pendragon”.

The Star and the Garter contains some of my best lyrics and is also important as marking a new step in my poetic path. I had mastered form bet-

ter than I had ever done before; I had welded lyrics into a continuous opus with an integral purpose, without artificiality, such as to some extent mars *Orpheus* and even *Alice*. I spent two days writing the poem; but I do not consider it a waste of time.

Some time later I added an appendix of a very obscure kind. The people of our circle, from Kathleen Bruce (since Lady Scott and Mrs. Hilton Young) to Sybil Muggins and Hener-Skene (later, accompanist to Isadora Duncan) are satirized. Their names are introduced by means of puns or allusions and every line is loaded with cryptic criticism. Gerald and I, as educated men, were frightfully fed up with the presumption and poses of the average ass — male or female — of the quarter.

One incident became immortal. One incident became immortal. I wrote in *The Sword of Song* that I "read Lévi and the Cryptic Coptic", and lent the manuscript to my fiancé, who was sitting for Gerald Kelly. During the pose she asked him what Coptic meant. "The language spoken by the ancient Copts," replied Kelly and redoubled his æsthetic ardours. A long pause — then she asked, "What does cryptic mean?" "The language spoken by the ancient Crypts," roared the *rapin* and abandoned hope of humanity.

Another affectation of the women art students was to claim to be treated exactly as if they were men in every respect. Gerald, always eager to oblige, addressed one of his models as Old Fellow, to her great satisfaction. Then he excused himself for a momentary absence in the terms which he would have used to another man. On his return, the lady had recovered her "sex and character", and had bolted. Woman can only mix with men on equal terms when adopts his morality lock, stock and barrel, and ceases to set an extravagant artificial value on her animal functions. The most high-principled woman (alleged) insists on the supreme value of an asset which is notoriously of no value whatever in itself.

*The Star and the Garte*r deals frankly with this problem, among others. As far as sexual charm is concerned, it is only reasonable to expect the expert to be more satisfactory than the new chum; and even, class for class, the professional than the amateur. The desire for exclusive possession is one of the most idiotic and bestial pieces of vanity in human psychology. But love can exist between man and woman entirely independent of any sexual relations between them. The condition of this love is that both parties should have completely mastered their sexual natures; for otherwise their mutual relations are not free to love decently until they have analysed themselves completely and swept away ever\ trace of mystery from sex; and this means the acquisition of a profound philosophical theory based on wide reading of anthropology and enlightened practice.

My travels had doubtless done much to open my eyes. I had already studied the characteristics of fifty-seven separate races, a number which I subsequently increased to eighty or ninety, when it became difficult to define the word “race”. My ethnological results are not particularly striking; but the course of the research certainly helped to make it clear that no proposition could be judged as right or wrong, or even as true or false. It is always possible to derive a point of view from the circumstances of its holder.

“The wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Khatmandu,
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban.”

Every conceivable moral principle is held somewhere by somebody; and it is the ineluctable conclusion from that somebody's premisses. His circumstances are unique; and so are his hereditary tendencies, his environment, his training and the character of his mental processes. Whether we hold free will or determinism, we equally ratify every type of opinion and conduct.

I had not at this time consciously reached this freedom. I was still a romantic, still seeking true love. Observe a curious analogy to the time when I invoked the adepts, and one actually by my side; so now, invoking true love, there lurked unsuspected in my circle the woman destined to satisfy my aspirations; and just as in aspiring to the Path of the Wise I had not realized the nature of that Path, so also I did not understand what the words true love might mean.

“True love with black inchauntments filled,
Its hellish rout of shrieks and groans,
Its vials of poison death-distilled,
Its rattling chains and skeletons.

I made comparatively few notes of this period — November 1902 to April 1903. It seems rather strange that I should have been able to get such an epitome of life into so short a period; at least I reached old age. I went back to Boleskine almost as a ghost might retire to his tomb at cock-crow. In May I wrote a very clear résumé of my progress. It will be as well to quote it.

“In the year 1899 I came to Boleskine House and put everything in order with the object of carrying out the Operation of Abramelin the Mage.

“I had studied Ceremonial Magick and had obtained remarkable success.

“My gods were those of Egypt, interpreted on lines closely akin to those of Greece.

“In philosophy I was a realist of the Qabbalistic school.

“In 1900 I left England for Mexico, and later the Far East, Ceylon, India, Burma, Baltistan, Egypt and France. It is idle there to detail the corresponding progress of my thought; and passing through a stage of Hinduism, I had discarded all deities as unimportant, and in philosophy was an uncompromising nominalist. I had arrived at what I may describe as the position of an orthodox Buddhist; but with the following reservations.

“1. I cannot deny that certain phenomena do accompany the use of certain rituals; I only deny the usefulness of such methods to the White Adept.

“2. I consider Hindu methods of meditation as possibly useful to the beginner and should not therefore recommend them to be discarded at once.

“With regard to my advancement, the redemption of the cosmos, etc. etc. I leave for ever the “Blossom and Fruit” theory and appear in the character of an inquirer on strictly scientific lines.

“This is unhappily calculated to damp the enthusiasm; but as I so carefully of old, for the magical path, excluded from my life all other interests, that life has now no particular meaning; and the Path of Research, on the only lines I can now approve of, remains the one Path possible for me to tread.

(By the Blossom and Fruit theory, I mean the existence of a body of initiates pledged to devote themselves to the redemption of mankind.)

It sounds as if I had become a bit of a prig. I expect a good deal of my attitude was due to exhausted vitality. Chogo Ri was perhaps still taking his revenge.

I had picked out Boleskine for its loneliness. Lord Lovat and Mrs. Fraser-Tyler, my nearest neighbours, were eight miles away, while Grant of Glenmoriston was on the other side of Loch Ness. Besides, Boleskine was already the centre of a thousand legends.

Even before I came there was a fine crop of the regular Highland superstitions.

“The howl of a bulldog, exactly like the crying of a child, is heard far off.

George. All right. It's only that damned dog of M'Alister's. He does it every night.

Fenella. He sees the ghost of old Lord Lovat.

George. Old Lord Lovat?

Fenella. Yes; they beheaded him after the '45. He rolls his head up and down the corridors.

George. Pleasant pastime!

Fenella. What else is a man to do?

George. What's that tapping?

(He stops to listen.)

Fenella. Go on! It's only the old woman.

George. What old woman?

Fenella. Her son was a lunatic. They let him out cured, as they thought. His mother came up here with him to lay flowers on his father's grave; and he caught her legs and smashed her brains against the wall.

George. Oh damn it! *Fenella*. You baby! So, ever since, she comes from time to time to try and pick her brains off the wall.

I certainly used to hear the “rolling of the head”, but when I put in a billiard table, the old gentleman preferred it to the corridor and confined his amusements to the gunroom. Even before that, he had always stopped at the Pylon of the corridor which marked off from the rest of the house the wing which was consecrated to Abra-Melin. I have never discovered any explanation of these noises. We used to listen at the door of the gun room, and the bead would roll merrily up and down the table with untiring energy. The moment we opened the door the noise would stop; but there would be no visible cause.

During my absence, the reputation of the house had become more formidable than ever before. I have little doubt that the Abramelin devils, whatever they are, use the place as convenient headquarters and put in some of their spare time in terrifying the natives. No one would pass the house after dark. Folk got into the habit of going round through Strath Er-

rick, a detour of several miles. There were a great many definite legends; but I made rather a point of refraining from making a collection. I was completely committed to rationalism and the occurrence of miracles was a nuisance. I should have like to deny the reality of the whole Abramelin business, but the phenomena were just as patent as the stones of the house.

I lived the life of the ordinary Scottish laird in a dull mechanical way and drifted into beginning meditation on Buddhist lines; rather because I had nothing better to do than for any more positive reason. The record of the period from June 16th to July 13th is curiously dull. One notices chiefly the lack of driving force and the complete disappearance of any enthusiasm.

I had completed *The Sword of Song* before I left Paris and left it to be printed with Philippe Renouard, one of the best men in Paris. I intended to issue it privately. I had no longer any ideas about the “best publisher”. I felt in a dull way that it was a sort of duty to make my work accessible to humanity; but I had no idea of reaping profit or fame thereby.

STANZA XLV

On the thirteenth of July I went to Edinburgh, partly to renew my stock of wines and partly to pick up some kind of companion-housekeeper, but ostensibly to meet Gerald Kelly who was due to spend the summer at Strathpeffer. His sister Rose was engaged to a man named Howell, who was coming from America to marry her in a few weeks.

I engaged a companion-housekeeper easily enough. What a man wants is a woman whom he can take down from the shelves when required and who can be trusted to stay on them when not. It is true that a woman is much more amusing when she possesses individuality and initiative, but it is the basest kind of sensuality to wish to be amused. The ideal woman should prevent a man from being amused or disturbed in any way, whether by his won passions or the incidents of everyday life. I forget the surname of the lady whom I chose to fill this important position. Let her stand in history by the unassuming title of “Red-headed Arabella”. It was arranged that she should come and take up her duties towards the middle of August. I only stayed two or three days in Edinburgh and, having attended to the matter of wine and woman, completed the triad by writing *The God Eater*.

This sort play is singularly unsatisfactory as a work of art, but extremely significant as a piece of Autohagiography. The explanatory note in my *Collected Works* is itself obscure.

“The idea of this obscure and fantastic play is a follows: By a glorious act human misery is secured (history of Christianity).

“Hence, appreciation of the personality of Jesus is no excuse for being a Christian.

“Inversely, by a vile and irrational series of acts human happiness is secured (story of the play).

“Hence, attacks on the mystics of history need not cause us to condemn mysticism.

“Also, the knowledge of good and evil is a tree whose fruit man has not yet tasted: so that the devil cheated Eve indeed; or (more probably) Eve cheated Adam. Unless (most probable of all) God cheated the devil and the fruit was a common apple after all. (*Cf*. H. Maudsley, Life in Mind and Conduct.)”

The influence of *The Golden Bough* and the Spencerian philosophers whom I was reading is apparent. In the last paragraphs, too, is evidence

that I still clung to Shelley's dream of a regenerated humanity. There is a touch of the influence of a man named L. C. R. Duncombe Jewell, the eldest son of a Plymouth Brother at Streatham, who had “gone to the bad” by becoming a Roman Catholic. I had asked him to spend a week at Boleskine and he had managed somehow or other to settle down there as my factor. I suppose he saved me trouble in one way or another, and was some sort of companion. He called himself Ludovic Cameron, being a passionate Jacobite and having a Cameron somewhere in his family tree. He was very keen on the Celtic revival and wanted to unite the five Celtic nations in an empire. In this political project he had not wholly succeeded: but he had got as far as designing a flag. And, oh so ugly!

All this seemed childish to me, but no more so than imperialism, and it had the advantage of being rather charming and entirely harmless. It is strange to look back on myself at 27, completely persuaded of the truth of the most extravagant claims of Mysticism and Magick yet completely disillusioned with regard to the universe. I was inclined to minimize my activity in every respect. The importation of Red-headed Arabella had only one motive — to arrange my life so as to reduce the elements of disturbance to the lowest possible point.

It may seem a little strange that I did not follow the example of Allan Bennett and take the Yellow Robe. But I had not been favourably impressed by the conditions of Buddhist monasteries. It was no doubt true that the regulations laid down by the Buddha for the conduct of Bhikkhus were intended to help them to free their minds from disturbance; but they were no longer interpreted in that light by the Bhikkhus themselves, except by an infinitesimal minority, who, like Allan, really understood the machinery of the business.

Nor did I agree that the Buddha was altogether right. I thought it a great mistake to interfere with physiological processes. I was perfectly aware that greed, lust and hatred were the enemies of peace; but I was also aware that forcing oneself to abstain from food, love and society could only result in diverting the natural appetites into abnormal channels. St. Anthony attributed an exaggerated importance to sex. I was convinced that the repression of natural instincts was an insult to nature and a short cut to moral deformity. I already saw that the only proper course of action was to order one's life in accordance with its conditions.

The plan to pursue was to comply with physiological propriety, but to keep each appetite in its place, to prevent it from invading the sphere of the whole consciousness. In practice, I proposed to live an absolutely normal life, but without attaching undue importance to any element of it. I intended

to enjoy my dinner, whether it was salmon and Chateau Yquem '78, or cold mutton and a glass of milk. I had found by experience that the minimum of disturbance was secured in this way. The agony of sugar-starvation on the Baltoro Glacier had showed met that to try to repress a natural appetite is merely to invite it to obsess one.

I expected then to settle down slowly into a routine of scientific research on the lines philosophically indicated by Spencer, Huxley and the Buddha, while morally I followed the Rosicrucian principle of complying with the customs of the country through which I was travelling.

The condition of my soul is clearly indicated by my output. The fount of lyric poetry had run completely dry. I had not touched the unfinished *Orpheus*; wrote nothing new. I no longer aspired to become the redeemer of humanity. I doubt whether I should have been able to attach any meaning to any such words. After returning from Edinburgh, I do not seem even to have kept a record and I remember nothing about my doings. July is however the date of an essay *The Goetia*. I had employed Mathers to translate the text of *The Lesser Key of Solomon the King* of which *The Goetia* is the first section. He got no further; after the events of 1900, he had simply collapsed morally. I added a translation of the conjurations into the Enochian or Angelic language; edited and annotated the text, prefixed a “Preliminary Invocation”, added a prefatory note (? printed date) a Magical Square intended to prevent improper use of the book, and ultimately an Invocation of Typhon when the First Magical War of the Æon of Horus was declared.

This essay throws a very clear light upon my position. I could not deny the facts of Ceremonial Magick. It is impossible to explain why a dog squeals when you hit him with a stick; but we do not therefore deny that this happens, or at least that there is some impression of some such kind somewhere. I was in precisely the position of those philosophers who were driven to the theory of causality and said that there was no cause why an apple should fall; it was simply a matter of coincidence that God should happen to will that it should touch the ground after willing it should be detached from the bough. The facts of Magick appear quite natural if one accepts the explanation officially put forward without inquiring too closely.

This theory, roughly speaking, is that of Milton or Dante. There is even some excuse for saying it is the Catholic tradition *à rebours*; that tradition is of course the development and degradation of various animistic cults. Magical facts were explained by the intervention of spiritual beings. One spiritual being, myself, throws a stone. That is how it happens that the stone has changed its position. Another spiritual being, Zeus, is annoyed; that explains

how such and such a house is struck by lightning. All facts are of the same order and their interpretation must be uniform.

Now, I had dismissed the whole theory of spiritual Hierarchies as repugnant to reason; thus I was left with a set of phenomena on my hands which cried aloud for explanation, exactly like the man who noticed that rubbed amber attracted certain light objects. In this essay, I endeavoured to show how it was the Magical Operations were effective. My collection of facts was at that time comparatively small and I had not yet analysed and classified them properly. But the essay shows that I was on the right track. My interpretation conformed with the mechanical theory of Victorian physics.

The sequel shows my development on the same lines as the rest of modern science. The materialists had to include the connotation of “spirit” in their definition of “matter”. One of my difficulties was that my senses told me that the archangel Gabriel exactly as they told me that Ernst Haeckel existed; in fact, rather more so. I had accepted Haeckel on mere hearsay. Why should I doubt Isis, whom I had seen, heard, touched; yet admit Ray Lankester, whom I hadn't? already I was compelled to resolve all phenomena equally into unknowable impressions. I did not realize how arbitrary it was to explain Taphtatharath as a set of impressions somehow imagined by my mind as the result of a particular process of intoxication. It was long before I understood that all explanations of the universe are ultimately interchangeable like the geometries of Euclid, Riemann and Lobatchewsky.

So much for July. But early in August, Gerald Kelly wrote suggesting that I should join his party at Strathpeffer. I had nothing better to do. Redheaded Arabella was still in Edinburgh; I was being bored to death, either by my meditation or by my inability to rouse myself to the point of doing any. So I packed a bag and went over.

The party consisted principally of Kelly's mother, who worthily preserved the conditions of Tennysonian dignity; Rose, who was in a curious state of excitement, which I either failed to observe at all, or attribute to the high spirits of unthinking youth; and one or two more or less chance acquaintances, including an elderly solicitor named Hill, who was in love with Rose and struck me as perhaps the tamest and dullest specimen of humanity that I had ever met. Gerald was playing golf, which at that time was rather daring; not quite the thing you would confess to your friends in London. I had no clubs and he played mostly with Hill. Thus it happened that at lunch on the 11th of August Rose and I got into conversation. There is something in my character which makes people confide in me. I think the bottom of it is my chastity. They instinctively understand that I have no personal axe to

grind; that I shall display a wise benevolence and incorruptible justice, being detached from every form of desire.

So Rose confessed to me that she was in great trouble, as we wandered out over the links to walk the last few holes with Kelly and Hill.

She told me that she was being forced into the marriage with Howell by her family. She had been carrying on an intrigue with a married man named Frank Summers. This had got to the ears of her family because, being hard up for money, she had told her mother that she was pregnant and got £40 from her for the purpose of having an illegal operation. Naturally, this led to inquiries; and though the pregnancy was merely an ingenious pretext, and the operation consisted of dinners and dresses, the Kellys were determined to prevent further raids on their purse and there prestige by insisting on her remarriage.

The story awakened my Shelleyan indignation. We sat down on the links in silence while I thought out the situation. The solution was perfectly simple. “Don't upset yourself about such a trifle,” said I, and told her something of my spiritual state and my plans for the future. “All you have to do,” I said, “is marry me. I will go back to Boleskine and you need never hear of me again — unless,” I added with romantic grandiloquence, “I can be of any further assistance to you. That will knock your marriage with Howell on the head; you will be responsible for your conduct, not to your family, but to me (as in the case of an Indian dancing girl married to a dagger or a pipal-tree); and you can go and live in the flat which Mr. Summers proposes to take for you, without interference.”

It really seems absurd that I should have been so ignorant of the elements of psychology; but I genuinely imagined that this fantastic programme was possible. It certainly satisfied all theoretical requirements! But like other Utopian dreamers from Sir Thomas Browne to Karl Marx, I omitted to take into consideration one insignificant element in the problem — the existence of the mysterious force called human nature.

Rose jumped at my suggestion. We agreed to tell Gerald as soon as he appeared, which was thoughtless, as it might easily have put him off his game, and to get married at the earliest possible moment. Gerald finished the course in 4, 3, 4, 4, bogey being 17 for that part of the course. He took our announcement as a harmless joke.

I went to the local authorities about the practical programme; but they were like Baal on a celebrated occasion. The only available Deity was the Parish Sexton; and, after all, could anything have been more appropriate? He

told me that I could have the banns published and get married in three weeks. That wouldn't do at all; it would give Howell time to arrive from America and put pressure on the Kellys. I asked him if there was not some less drawn-out form of execution. “Well,” he said, after scratching his head, “you can be exposed on a bnoorrrd along o' yer young 'ooman for a week.” Not in vain had I been studying *The Golden Bough*, but I had no idea that these obscene forms of torture still lingered — even in the Scottish Highlands. “Come, come,” I said, “There must be a simpler and quicker way to get married than that.” Surely, I said to myself, all that stuff about Gretna Green must have some basis in fact. He shook his head sorrowfully, a discomfortable which I checked by slipping him a half-crown. He then admitted that it was only necessary to go to the Sheriff of the County and declare the intention to get married, in which case the marriage would take place there and then. “There and then?” I echoed in a hollow voice, for I had the instinctive feeling natural to a young man, that he is somehow or other putting his foot in it, that he is invoking unknown Gods. “Then and there,” he answered heavily and the syllables fell as if he had been throwing the sods upon my coffin.

Armed with this satisfactory information, I returned to the hotel and had a short conference with my betrothed. We were to get up in time to catch the first train to Dingwall, call on the Sheriff and get it over before breakfast. We carried out this design. We had to go quietly for fear of awakening Gerald. The idea was that he might interfere, though I had no reason for supposing that he would do so. But apparently she had.

STANZA XLVI

So we stole out in the dim grey of the morning. I remember her furtive passage under his window, and how I murmured

> “Wake Duncan with thy knocking?
> I would thou could'st.”

recalling — too late! — the theatrical superstition that it is very unlucky to quote Macbeth at the beginning of an enterprise.

We jogged along in the little train in a state of curious constraint. Of course our relations *were* rather peculiar, when all was said and done. Anyhow, there was nothing to say. Rose was a charming woman, but far from an intellectual companion. Her brother's friends being for the most part addicted to art or literature, it was her custom to carry a volume of Browning in her dressing-case, and she would ask people to fetch it for her, which impressed them. She didn't have to read it. Again, whenever a conversation flagged, she would remark thoughtfully:

> “Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!”

'Twas all she knew. However, I wasn't going to have to live with her. All I had to do was to emancipate her. So there was no reason for trying to talk to her.

We reached Dingwall in the clod damp dawn; we disinterred the Sheriff's address from a sleepy policeman and arrived at his house only to be told by a dishevelled maid that we couldn't get at him till 8 or 9 or 10 o'clock. I was piqued. The hint of obstacles roused me. I wasn't going to elope, whatever my reasons might be, and make a mess of it. I demanded the address of a lawyer and excavated him. He promised to be at his office at 8 o'clock. With that we had to be content. There was no reason for apprehension. It wasn't likely that our disappearance would be discovered until breakfast time. We repaired to the hotel and ate and drank something in a state of suppressed nervous excitement. I confess to having been ashamed of myself. There I was, accoutered cap-à-pie from my bonnet to my claymore, and I had nothing at stake; and yet I was nervous! We were at the lawyer's on the stroke of 8, where we discovered that the Sheriff was a mere flourish and that all we had to do was to consent to being married, and declare that we regarded ourselves as man and wife. A faint disgust at the prose of the proceedings induced me to elaborate them by taking out my dirk and kissing it, as a pledge of my faith. I never thought of kissing *her*!

It then transpired that the Sheriff had to have his little whack, after all, no less than an Armenian pimp. The marriage had to be registered in his office. We were completely at a loose end. I was to go back to Boleskine, of course, but there were some hours before the train started. She was to go back to Strathpeffer: but — at this moment, Gerald Kelly burst into the room, his pale face drawn with insane passion. He was probably annoyed at his stupidity in not having realized that the announcement of our engagement, nineteen hours earlier, had been serious. On learning that we were already married, he aimed a violent blow at me. It missed me by about a yard. I am ashamed to say that I could not repress a quiet smile. If he had not been out of his mind, his action would have been truly courageous, for compared with me he was a shrimp; and while I was one of the most athletic men in the country, his strength had been impaired by his sedentary stupor and loose living in Paris.

When he felt better, we decided to carry out the original programme. I went off to Boleskine and she went back to Strathpeffer. I have frequently noticed that interference with my plans ensures their being carried out with exactitude.

In the meantime, however, Mr. Hill had arrived, panting like a parsnip robbed of its prey. He bleated out, after a brief invocation to the Woolsack, that the marriage was illegal and must be broken. Also may, might, would, could, should, and other auxiliary verbs. I yawned gracefully and left them to fight it out.

Rose stuck to her guns like the game little bitch she was. Mr. Hill made the discovery that he had not made the law, and Mrs. Kelly and Gerald that they had not make mankind. So the next move in the game was that I dispatched Ludovic Cameron as ambassador. It was the supreme moment in his life! I was rather annoyed at being dragged into such crazy controversy and heartily wished to hear no more of the matter, but I had to dree my weird.

It was arranged that Rose and I should go to the Sheriff and register our marriage, as we risked fine and imprisonment if we omitted to do so. We were then to drive together to a wayside station, where we could take our own decision as to our future proceedings. Dingwall and Strathpeffer were of course seething with scandal. There were probably as many separate stories as there were inhabitants; and the appearance of the Laird and his Bride on the platform of Dingwall might have been the signal for a demonstration to eclipse the diamond jubilee and the relief of Mafeking.

So I returned to Strathpeffer, annoyed but amiable, had an interview with Mrs. Kelly, who played the part of the Agèd Queen Bent Down By Sorrow to admiration, while I said all the necessary nonsense. We then repaired to the sheriff's and were induced to swear the most formidable oaths; about nothing in particular, but they apparently gratified the official instinct and filled the official coffer. Duncombe Jewell excelled himself. The ordinary oath was not for him. He produced a formula the majesty of which literally inhibited the normal functions of our minds. It was the finest piece of ritualistic rigmarole that I have ever heard in my life.

At the Sheriff's door we found the vehicle which was to take us to the wayside station. Rose and I got in, feeling as if we had been through a mangle; but the sense of humour came most opportunely to our rescue. The vehicle chanced to resemble a prison van, and the circumstance tickled our imagination and helped to break down our embarrassment. But it was a frightfully long drive to the wayside station and a frightfully long wait when we got there. I don't know whether it was part of the arrangement or not that we should take tickets to the end of the line, some place on the west coast of Scotland, the name of which I have entirely forgotten. But we did. We sat opposite to each other in an empty first-class carriage.

I only remember on scrap of conversation, and I do not remember what it was except that it was a sort of little joke. We were enjoying a species of triumph at having “got away with it”, but we were in exquisite embarrassment as to what to do — at least, I was. I have reasoned to suspect that Rose did not share my pathetic puerility. It never occurred to me that the programme I had planned had been in any way altered. Had we not carried it out with the most punctilious precision?

We arrived at our destination a little before dinner time. My embarrassment reached an acute point. It was simply impossible for me to register at the hotel. I confess to the most abject cowardice. I made some excuse and left Rose to confront a clerk, while I went to look at the sea and wish it weren't too cold to drown myself. I returned to find that she had booked a double room. I thought it was hardly playing the game; but I couldn't be rude to a lady and, at the worst, it was only a matter of a day or so. I could decently dispatch her from Boleskine to the embraces of Mr. Summers and proceed to

> “Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff.”

It possibly crossed my mind that all these alarums and excursions were alien to arahatship, that marriage was a nuisance to a man whose mind was set on success in Mahasatipatthana, and that the problems raised by Rose would be sent to sleep by Red-headed Arabella.

In any case, there was nothing for it but to behave like a gentleman. So we drank a lot of champagne for dinner. We had been married on August 12th and could give God glory for his good gift of grouse, and then — What's champagne for, anyhow? Rose retired immediately after dinner; I sat in the smoking-room and pole-axed a stranger by making mysterious remarks until he thought I was mad, and fled. I had some more champagne and remembered that I was a poet. I got some paper and wrote the following rondel. Damn it, I had to play up to my partner!

"Rose on the breast of the world of spring,
I press my breast against thy bloom;
My subtle life drawn out to thee; to thee
its moods and meaning cling.
I pass from change and thought to peace,
woven on love's incredible loom,
Rose on the breast of the world of spring!

How shall the heart dissolved in joy take
form and harmony and sing?
How shall the ecstasy of light fall back to
music's magic gloom?
O China rose without a thorn, O honey-bee
without a sting!

The scent of all thy beauty burns upon the
wind. The deep perfume
Of our own love is hidden in our hearts,
the invulnerable ring.
No man shall know. I bear thee down unto
the tomb, beyond the tomb,
Rose on the breast of the world of spring!"

I went upstairs.

I began to suspect the truth, that my absolute indifference to Rose, combined with my perfectly casual willingness to marry her in order to do her a service, as one might offer a stranger one's place in an omnibus, had purged her heart of its passion for the fat sensuality of Frank Summers, and hurled her head over heels in love with me.

We arrived at Boleskine, where I learnt that Red-headed Arabella was due to arrive at Inverness the following day. I blush to say that I didn't know quite what to do about it, and confided in Duncombe-Jewell. He rose to the occasion and went to Inverness to head her off. It may seem incredible; but my reaction was one of sheer annoyance. I had no feeling for Red-headed Arabella; in point of fact, I had picked her for that very reason, and I was perfectly ready to relive Rose from the tyranny of her family. But it was really asking rather too much when I had to upset my arrangements. I had not even yet suspected the truth that the fine flight of Rose's rapture was carrying me away on its wings. Her love for me was evoking my live for her, and I had rather made a point of contracting out of any such complications. I was prepared to propitiate physiology, but only on condition that the domain of psychology suffered no interference.

However, there I was, married to one of the most beautiful and fascinating women in the world. The love between us grew to the utmost possibilities of passion without my suspecting it. The Kellys had acquiesced in the *fait accompli*. The last little splutter was a letter from the Rev. Frederick Festus demanding that I should settle £10,000 on Rose. I might have done so had it not been for his pompous statement that the daughters of his house never married without a settlement. Considering that the very one whom I married myself had had no settlement at her first marriage, the lie was a little blatant, even for a clergyman. I replied with appropriate decision; they abandoned the idea that I could be bullied, as they were accustomed to bully timid and servile people who could be bounced. I have never understood the quality of bluster with which some people seem to get right through the world. It must be so humiliating to be “called”. I much prefer to put forward my weakness to induce the attack of the malicious, while I am lying in ambush with an overwhelming reinforcement.

The honeymoon was uninterrupted beatitude. Once, in the first three weeks or so, Rose took some trifling liberty; I recognized the symptoms, and turned her up and spanked her. She henceforth added the qualities of perfect wife to those of perfect mistress. Women, like all moral inferiors, behave well only when treated with firmness, kindness and justice. They are always on the look-out to detect wavering or irritation in the master; and their one hope is to have a genuine grievance to hug.

When trouble is not suppressed permanently by a little friendly punishment, it is a sign that the virtue has gone out of the master. When the suffragette went from worse to worse and made severity itself inhuman and useless, it did not prove in the least that women had altered from the days of the jungle, but that industrialism and piety had sapped the virtue of the male. Rome did not fall because the Germans and the Gauls had in any way

improved; they were just the same and could be beaten by the same tactics and weapons as in the earliest centuries. But Christianity had eaten the heart out of Rome. The manly virtues and the corresponding womanly virtues, one of which is recognition of the relation between the sexes, had been corrupted by slave-morality. The England of Victoria, by bringing up the best stock in the country in the most favourable physical conditions, and teaching the boys from the start that they were brought into the world in order to rule it, produced a class of men who were like Old Testament heroes. (Under George III we had a rehearsal. Can it be that long prosperous reigns favour the production of such men? We had another crop under Elizabeth, when the restoration of the abbeys to the people of England gave a chance to the development of a daring and dominant breed.) But the influences which are commonly called civilising attenuate the aristocratic spirit.

The existence of a common scold is a definite system of imminent death in any community. The Indian renegades, from Lajpat Rai to Gandhi, are merely evidence that the sahib has given place to the competition-wallah. India has not progressed in the last thousand years and will not in the next thousand. The biological impulse is expended. India was nature's attempt to construct a nation of diverse elements by welding them in a religious and moral system. It might have succeeded had it been secure against invasion. But while India has always conquered her conquerors (imposing, for example, the cast system on the English), the invaders interfered with the process of growth and diverted the national trend from unity.

A nation lives by its architecture; when it comes to consciousness of its soul, it feels that it has to build a house for that soul to life in. Such buildings must be utterly useless; the soul will not live in a Woolworth Building — that is inhabited by the unclean spirit whose name is Legion, and that is the evidence that America, with all its material prosperity, has no soul. Nor is a man rich while he confines his purchases to things which are useful.

The love of my wife had made me the richest man on earth and developed my human soul to its full stature. I could afford to build a temple to love, and that of course had to be stupendous, useless and immortal. I made one disconcerting discovery, though not till long afterwards; this: that the erotic poetry does not spring from supreme satisfaction. Indeed, my life was a perfect lyric and left no surplus energy to overflow into words. I wrote nothing. The temple had to be, as I have said, and I could only think of constructing a long beautiful objectless journey. As soon as the summer showed signs of waning, we started on a hypertrophied honeymoon. We pretended to ourselves that we were going big-game shooting in Ceylon and to pay a visit to Allan at Rangoon (where he had now removed from Akyab), but the real object was to adorn the celebration of our love by setting it in a thou-

sand suave and sparkling backgrounds. As my poetry had petered out, so had my Magick and my meditation. I let them go without a pang. I was supremely happy; love filled the universe; there was no room for anything else.

I had not kept a diary. Day followed day, each a fresh facet of the Diamond of Delight. All I remember is that we made our preparations in London, trying and buying guns, giving dinners, and so on. We dazzled Paris for a day or two, but not without one severe shock.

Rose and I were walking towards the Pont Alexandre III when it met Vestigia, as we always called Mrs. Mathers. I had not seen her for a long time and we started an animated conversation. I noticed nothing peculiar. I do not live in the world of phenomena: I only visit it at rare intervals. I had forgotten Rose's existence. When Vistigia had gone, I realized that I had not introduced her to my wife. She did not ask me who it was. I told her. “Oh,” said she, “I thought it was some model that you knew in the old days.”

The words came as a terrific shock. Vestigia had been our ideal of refinement, purity, spirituality and the rest. And then my mind informed me of what my eyes had seen, that Vestigia was painted thickly to the eyes — did I say painted? I mean plastered. Where the camouflages stopped, there was a neck which could not have been washed for months. I learnt later that Mathers, falling upon evil times, had forced his wife to pose naked in one of the Montmartre shows which are put on for the benefit of ignorant and prurient people, especially provincials and English, and that even that was not the worst of it.

Then we swooped down on Marseilles, perched on the terrace of Bertolini's at Naples and picked up a few crumbs. Our first breathing place was Cairo. It was one of the extravagances of our passion that suggested our spending a night together in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid. It was the gesture of the male showing off his plumage. I wanted my wife to see what a great Magician I was. We went, accordingly, after dinner, with candles. More from habit than anything else, as I imagine, I had with me a small notebook of Japanese Vellum in which were written my principal invocations, etc. Among these was a copy of the “Preliminary Invocation” of *The Goetia*.

We reached the King's Chamber after dismissing the servants at the foot of the Grand Gallery. By the light of a single candle placed on the edge of the coffer I began to read the invocation. But as I went on I noticed that I was no longer stooping to hold the page near the light. I was standing erect. Yet the manuscript was not less but more legible. Looking about me, I saw

that the King's Chamber was glowing with a soft light which I immediately recognized as the astral light. I have been accustomed to describe the colour as ultra-violet, from its resemblance to those rays in the spectrum — which I happen to be able to distinguish. The range varies, but it is quite noticeably beyond that visible to the normal human eye. The colour is not unlike that of an arc lamp; it is definitely less coloured than the light of a mercury lamp. If I had to affix a conventional label, I should probably say pale lilac. But the quality of the light is much more striking than the colour. Here the word phosphorescence occurs to the mind. It is one of the mysteries of physics that the total light of the sky is very much greater than can be accounted for by the luminous bodies in the heavens. There are various theories, but I personally believe that the force now called radio-activity which we know to be possessed in some degree by every particle of matter, is responsible. Our eyes are affected with the impression of light by forces which are not in themselves recognized as luminous.

However, back to the facts. The King's Chamber was aglow as if with the brightest tropical moonlight. The pitiful dirty yellow flame of the candle was like a blasphemy, and I put it out. The astral light remained during the whole of the invocation and for some time afterwards, though it lessened in intensity as we composed ourselves to sleep. For the rest, the floor of the King's Chamber is particularly uncompromising. In sleeping out on rocks, one can always accommodate oneself more or less to the local irregularities, but the King's Chamber reminded me of *Brand*; and I must confess to having passed a very uncomfortable night. I fear me dalliance had corrupted my Roman virtue. In the morning the astral light had completely disappeared and the only sound was the flitting of the bats.

In a sort of way, I suppose I did consider myself rather a fine fellow to have been able to produce so striking a phenomenon with so little trouble. But it did not encourage me to go on with Magick. My wife was all in all.

STANZA XLVII

We must have had some vague idea of exploring the little known parts of China, for we had certainly intended to visit Allan in Rangoon. It was probably at Colombo that Rose made up her mind that she was pregnant; for I remember that our shooting expedition in Hambantota, in the south-eastern province of Ceylon, was *faute de mieux*. We thought we had better get back to Boleskine for the event; and yet we had to justify our journey by some definite accomplishment. So we left Colombo for Galle and thence up country. It is strange that I fail entirely to remember how we got to the jungle. But rough notes tell me that it was by coach, and that we left the base village in four bullock carts on Monday the fourteenth of December. I quote my entry of January 1st, 1904 (some lines are carefully erased. I cannot tell why or imagine what I had written).

"Jan. 1st.

"Began badly: missed dear and hare. So annoyed. Yet the omen is that the year is well for works of love & union; ill for those of hate. Be mine of love!"

This entry does not sound as if I were still wholly lunatic in the rays of the honeymoon. The explanation is that the mere fact of getting back to camp life reawakened in me the old ambitions and interests. It may be part of my feeling for ritual that to put on certain types of clothes is to transform my state of mind. However lazy I may be, I have merely to change trousers for knickerbockers to feel athletic at once. There is also the point that I make a profession of virtue when reminded of certain dates, just as a totally irreligious man might go to church at Christmas. The subsequent entries give no hint that my mind was really turning to its ancient Masters. The sole entries concern sport and camp life; and they are very meagre.

I have never been able to enjoy reading chronicles of slaughter, and I do not propose to inflict any such on the world. They are as monotonous and conventional as those of mountaineering. Sportsmen and climbers follow the fashion with frightful fidelity. Norman Collie wrote the only book on mountains which possesses any literary merit. Mummery's is good because he really had something to say, but his style shows the influence of Collie. Owen Glynne Jones produced a patent plagiarism of Mummery's style; and when it came to the brothers Abraham, the bottom was reached. And what a bottom! In fact, two.

Of the older writers, Leslie Stephen is the only one worth mentioning, and to him mountaineering was of secondary interest. Tales of hunting, shooting and fishing are equally tedious. They are only tolerable in fiction such as *Mr. Jorrocks* and *The Pickwick Papers*. Travelers having wider interests are more readable. Sir Richard Burton is a supreme master; the greatest that ever took pen. He has not one dull paragraph. Cameron and Mary Kingsley must not be forgotten for a *proxime assessit*.

Certain incidents of this shoot are worth passing notice. Rose had an attack of fever on the 7th of January. For the first time since my marriage I had a moment to spare from celebrations of Hymen. I sat at my camp table in my Colonel Elliot's chair and wrote the poem *Rosa Mundi*, the first for many months. I sing to her, recall the incidents of the birth of our love, hint at the prospect of its harvest, and weave the whole of the facts into a glowing tapestry of rapture. It was a new rhythm, a new rime. It marks a notable advance on any previous work for sustained sublimity.

Physically and morally, Rose exercised on every man she met a fascination which I have never seen anywhere else, not a fraction of it. She was like a character in a romantic novel, a Helen of Troy or a Cleopatra; yet, while more passionate, unhurtful. She was essentially a good woman. Her love sounded every abyss of lust, soared to every splendour of the Empyræan. Eckenstein adored her. When I published this poem, which I did privately under the pseudonym of D. H. Carr, from the feelings of delicacy, Eckenstein was actually shocked. He did not care much for my poetry as a rule; but he thought *Rosa Mundi* the greatest love lyric in the language. (As a cold fact, its only rival is Epipsychidion.) But he held it too sacred to issue. “It ought,” he said, “to have been found among his papers after his death.”

I can understand the sentiment of this view, but cannot share it. I wanted to make humanity holier and happier by putting into their hands the key of my own success.

And in my diary there is no allusion to the poem. (It may in fact have been written during an earlier illness of rose — on December 15th — but I don't think so, because I connect the inspiration with eating buffalo steak, and on the earlier date I was only eating snipe.) I have only noted, “Rose ill, one bloody birdling, bread arrived in P.M.”

I am not by any means a mighty hunter before the Lord, but I am certainly very fond of big game shooting. I thoroughly enjoy the life which goes with it and I like the high moments of excitement and danger; they atone for the tedium of the stalk. I have no use whatever for the battue, even if it is a matter of bears and tigers. As for grouse and pheasants, my pleasure in the

exercise of my skill is marred by the subconscious feeling that I am dependent on others for my sport. Moreover, the element of combat is missing. I can get a great deal of amusement out of rough shooting for the pot; but artificiality of any kind is the very devil in sport. I do not even care for shooting from a *machan*. I like to be just one of the jungle folk and challenge any fellow animal I meet. I suppose that, logically, I should disdain the use of weapons. I never did.

My most amusing adventures have been always when I strolled alone into the jungle without trackers or bearers, met a boar, a bear or a buffalo by chance or the exercise of native wit, and conquered him in single fight. My native servants used to be horrified at my proceedings, very much as orthodox mountaineers have been at my solitary climbs. They did not doubt my prowess with the rifle; they respected it because they understood it. But they had been accustomed to white men relying on them for light and leading, and they made sure that I should be hopelessly lost without them in the jungle. Perhaps the chief part of my pleasure consisted in the problems presented by having to find my way home, very likely in the dark, after having pursued some quarry by a devious route, by virtue of my sense of direction, especially as impenetrable undergrowth, uncrossable patches of water, or marshes, may complicate matters very seriously.

The most dangerous animal in Ceylon (there are no tigers, and if there were, the statement would stand) is the buffalo. One can distinguish a wild from a tame buffalo by his psychology. If he is wild, he runs away; if he is tame, he charges you. Yet these fanatical partisans of “Asia for the Asiatics” permit themselves to be ridden, cursed and bullied by brats not six years old. The buffalo is always savage and always intelligent enough to know who has wounded him. He is also infinitely courageous and vindictive. Many tigers will turn tail even when slightly but painfully wounded. But the buffalo never gives in morally or physically, and shows almost human powers of strategy and tactics in his vendetta. His vitality is incredible; the gaur (a not dissimilar species) which killed Captain Sayers in Burma had seventeen bullets from heavy rifles in him while he was goring and trampling the aggressor. The other Englishmen present could no nothing to save him.

One evening I shot a sambhur; the great stag (miscalled elk) of Ceylon. He was standing some 300 yards away, across a small lagoon. He went off like a streak of lightning. It was impossible to follow him and I thought I had missed him. But two days later I came on him by accident, twenty-five miles from where I had shot him. My bullet had penetrated the lungs and grazed the heart. I cannot help thinking that there is something in the apparently absurd contention of certain Mystics that life does not depend wholly on the integrity of the physiological apparatus, but on the will to live. I have

dropped the most powerful animals stone dead with a single shot in the right place; but if that first shot happens not to kill him outright, he is so inflamed with fury that you can riddle him with bullets in the most vital spots without further disabling him. I know it sounds like utter nonsense, but I have seen it again and again. The sambhur above mentioned is only one case.

One day I was told of an exceptionally fine wild buffalo bull who was so lost to all principles of propriety that he used to come down every evening to enjoy a heard of tame cows. I felt that I could never face Exeter Hall[1] in the future if I allowed this sort of thing to go on. The only sign of grace in this bull was that he had a guilty conscience and departed for the Ewigkeit at the first hint of human proximity. The cows were accustomed to feed in a wide flat country. It was impossible to approach them in the open. I crawled out to the edge of the jungle and law low, hoping that they would come near enough for a shot. They did. But I misjudged the range; and my bullet, by the most curious luck, pierced the near fore hoof of the bull. He made off indignantly for the jungle at a point some three or four hundred yards from my ambush.

Ten minutes later “I stood tip-toe upon a little hill” and looked around me “with a wild surmise”. I knew where I had hit him by the way he limped, and that he was no more put out of action than Battling Siki, if I had trod on his pet corn. I knew that a buffalo bull can conceal himself in the Ceylon jungle as effectively as a bug in a barracks, and I knew that he was perfectly informed of my character and intention. I knew that I was nervous by the way I gripped my rifle (my principal battery, by the way, was a 10-bore Paradox with lead and also steel core bullets, and a .577 Express, both double barrelled). As I stood, I realized for the first time the responsibility of the white man. I had to exhibit perfect *aplomb*. No sign of the bull!

Presently, the trackers found the trail. My bullet having pierced his hoof, there was no blood. The only signs of his passage were bruised and broken twigs, and occasional footprints. We came up with him pretty soon. He was standing stock still, listening for his life, with his back turned to us. I was not thirty yards away and I aimed at the bull's eye —pardon the introduction of a euphemism from ancient Egypt. It is the most effective shot possible. If your bullet rises, it will smash the spine; otherwise it must pass through the soft vital parts. But the bull merely bolted. I could not even fire my second barrel. Again and again we came up with him. The track was easy to follow. He was bleeding profusely and going slowly. Again and again I fired, but he always got away. Nothing seemed to cripple him, though one would have thought that he must have been more hole than bull by this time.

At last he turned at a small clearing. As I came out from the thick jungle, I saw him not ten yards away. He lowered his head to charge. My bullet struck him again in the Ajna Cakkra, if a bull has such a thing; anyway, in the middle of the forehead just above the eyes. This time he dropped. It was my nineteenth bullet and only the first had failed to strike him in a vital spot.

Talking of being charged: the one beast I really fear is the leopard. The tiger gives one a chance, but the *Chita* is like an arrow; he is practically invisible as a mark, and one feels that it is impossible either to stop him or get out of his way. He is hard enough to see at any time; but end on in dim thick undergrowth, he is the limit. I feel, too, that his anger is mean and ignoble, and I have never been able to oppose this type of attack. I can respect the rage of the tiger, but the hatred of the leopard is somehow servile and venomous. The bear is a deadly enemy if he gets to grips and he is nearly as hard to kill as the buffalo. One feels, too, rather sorry to kill a bear; one can never forget that he is at heart a friendly fluffy comfortable brute.

The wild boar, which one may shoot in Ceylon, as pig-sticking is impossible owing to the nature of the country, is a furious and dangerous quarry, but it gives one a peculiar satisfaction to out him, to stand

> “Right in the wild way of the coming curse
> Rock-rooted fair with fierce and fastened lips,
> Clear eyes, and springing muscle and shortening limb —
> With chin aslant indrawn to a tightening throat,
> Grave, and with gathered sinews like a God,”

and biff him

> “Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide
> Under the last rib, sheer through bulk and bone
> Deep in —

and see”

> “The blind bulk of the immeasurable beast
> . . . bristling with intolerable hair”

lying in front of one, and feel that one has done a good turn to Venus.

One of my boars, by the way, gave me a lesson in literature. I came across his body two days after the battle and it hit me in the eye — to say nothing of the nose — with Baudelaire's “Charogne”.

“Beside the path, an infamous foul carrion,
Stones for its couch a fitting sheet.”

Its legs stretched in the air, like wanton whores
Burning with lust, and reeking venom sweated,
Laid open, carelessly and cynically, the doors
Of belly rank with exhalations fetid.

Upon this rottenness the sun shone deadly straight
As if to cook it to a turn,
And gave back to great Nature hundred-fold the debt
That, joining it together, she did earn.

The sky beheld this carcass most superb outspread
As spreads a flower, itself, whose taint
Stank so supremely strong, that on the grass your head
You thought to lay, in sudden faint.

The flies swarmed numberless on this putrescent belly,
Whence issued a battalion
Of larvae, black, that flowed, a sluggish liquid jelly,
Along this living carrion.

All this was falling, rising as the eager seas,
Or heaving with strange crepitation —”

There was an utterly unspeakable fascination in watching the waves of maggots. The surface undulated with the peculiar rhythm of the ocean.

To Baudelaire, as we know, a similar sight suggested his “Inamorata”. I was presumably too blindly in love with Rose to see the resemblance; the main impression on my mind was more impersonally philosophical. I thought of the 13th Key of the Tarot, of the sign of Scorpio, the invincible persistence of life perpetuating itself by means of that very putrefaction which seems to shallow minds the star witness against it. Here were vermin feeding on corruption, yet the effect was of lambent vibrations of white brilliance, disporting themselves in the sunlight — here, quit! Am I a sportsman describing his heroic feats, or am I not?

The elephant, “the half reasoner with the hand”, is in an entirely different category from any other animal. I felt much more like a murderer when potting a hathi than when it is a monkey, though I perfectly understood the emotion of the average Englishman in this conjuncture. Nor is the elephant easy to shoot. The odds against hitting him in the vital spot are very great;

and strange as it may sound, in country like Hambantota, he is very difficult to see at all. In the whole province there are really very few trees of notable stature, yet the undergrowth (including smaller trees) is so think and so high that it is rarely possible to see an animal even when one is close to him. I remember once being so near to an elephant that I could have prodded him with a salmon rod; but I could not see one inch of all his acres. He was feeding on small twigs; I could hear every gentle snap; I could hear his breathing; I could smell him. If he had taken it into his head to turn or if the wind had shifted, my number would have been up. He could have trampled his way to and over me without an effort, while I could not have forced my way to him in five minutes. He went off quietly and I never had a chance for a shot.

One elephant whose track I followed took the camp of a Frenchman in his morning stroll. The man's wife had taken him out to Ceylon to keep him way for alcohol, but Prohibition forgot the proverb, “Out of the frying-pan into the fire”. The elephant got him before I got the elephant.

One of our most beautiful camps was a sort of dak baghla near the shores of a superb lake. Open on its principal arc, the further shore merged into marshes. In the shallow waters at the edge grew magnificent trees whose branches were festooned with legions of flying foxes, as they call the species of bat whose breast is furred with marvellous red and white. I thought I would kill a few dozen and make my wife a toque and myself a waistcoat. We went out in a boat not unlike a clumsy variety of punt to catch them in their sleep. They keep no guard; but at the firs gunshot they awake and the air literally becomes dark with their multitude. One has merely to fire into the mass. One of the bats, wounded, fell right on my wife and frightened her. It may have been 30 seconds before I could detach her from his claws. I thought nothing of the matter; but it is possible that her condition aggravated the impression. Our beds in the baghla were furnished with four stout uprights and a frame for mosquito curtains. I suppose in so remote a district they had been made of unusually strong poles. I was awakened in the dead of night by the squeal of a dying bat.

I remember debating whether I was in fact awake or not, whether the noise, which was horribly persistent, might not be part of a dream evoked by the events of the day. I even called to Rose to resolve my doubts. She did not answer. I lighted the candle. She was not there. My alarm completed my awakening. The bat squealed hideously. I looked up. I could not see any bat. But there was Rose, stark naked, hanging to the frame with arms and legs, insanely yawling. It was quite a job to pull her down. She clung to the frame desperately, still squealing. She refused utterly to respond to the accents of the human voice. When I got her down at last, she clawed and scratched

and bit and spat and squealed, exactly as the dying bat had done to her. It was quite a long time before I got her back to her human consciousness.

It was the finest case of obsession that I had ever had the good fortune to observe. Of course it is easy to explain that in her hypersensitive condition the incident of the day had reproduced itself in a dream. She had identified herself with her assailant and mimicked his behaviour. But surely, if there be anything in Sir William Hamilton's Law of Parsimony, it is much simpler to say that the spirit of the bat had entered into her.

(As I revise these pages for the press, I find myself constantly annoyed by having to try to find long roundabout “rational” explanations for all the wonders I have seen and heard. It is silly, too, now that we are getting clear at last of the obsession of Victorian cocksure materialism — science disguised as a fat hausfrau!)

1 — At that time headquarters of Evangelicalism.

STANZA XLVIII

Life in the jungle has many incidents of a more frequent and less amusing type. One night, also in a baghla, I got up to get Rose her medicine. I had left the candle on the table some distance from the beds, which was foolish. On lighting it, I discovered without enthusiasm that between me and the bed was a krait some 18 inches long — and I had walked barefoot over him! A krait can kill you in a very few minutes, though not without producing symptoms of the utmost interest to any serious student of nature. I was entirely helpless; I was reduced to the ingnominous expedient of getting on the table and calling to the servants outside to bring a lamp, precaution and *force majeure*.

Animals are not the only danger of this district. There are many dangerous diseases, especially tetanus. While I was in Calcutta, an acquaintance of mine, walking home from the theatre, slipped and saved himself by putting his hands to the ground. He scratched himself slightly and died within three days.

There are also terrible thorns. My head tracker came to me one day with one in his foot. The end was protruding and I imagined that I should have no difficulty in pulling it out with forceps. But the thorn was soft as pith. I had to cut open the man's sole along the whole length of the thorn, 7 3/4 inches. His skin was a tough as rawhide, the epidermis a quarter of an inch thick. The thorn had not reached the dermis. It seemed miraculous that it should have penetrated a hide that came near to turn the edge of my surgical knife.

The heaviest weapon and the truest eye and hand may sometimes fail to account for the smallest of God's creatures. I could not understand why my 10-bore Paradox seemed so ineffective against small birds. One day I came across a rat-snake, 19 feet long, and said, “This time I will bruise your head and I bet you don't bruise my heel.” I was within a few yards of him and fired several times. He moved off with leisurely disgust; he could not imagine what my game could be. Why had I disturbed his sleep? I followed, protesting with further drum-fire. He moved lazily beyond the barrage. I am a patient man; but the conduct of this snake insulted and humiliated me. One of the me, his sensitive oriental spirit doubtless observing my distress, went forward and knocked him on the head with a stick. Theoretically, he should have been as full of holes as a lace fichu; but there wasn't a mark on him. It dawned slowly upon my mind that there must be something wrong with my cartridges. When we got to camp, I put up the lid of an old box and fired at it from ten yards, in order to test the penetration of the shot. The

pellets did not mark the board; they bounced back and hit me in the face. I reserved my remarks from my return to Colombo.

This event took place on the 16th of January. My headman had swindled me outrageously; but there was no remedy. There is no remedy for anything in Ceylon. The whole island is an infamy. It is impossible to get twelve Singalese to agree on any subject whatever, so a majority decision determines the verdict of a jury of seven! Justice is usually done, because it really is the case that the man with the more money is less often wrong than his opponent.

A very curious episode sticks in my memory. General Sit Hector MacDonald was born in a croft on the hillside facing Boleskine across Loch Ness. I consequently took, unasked, an almost paternal interest in his career.

I dropped into the Hotel Regina in Paris one day to lunch. At the next table, also alone, was Sir Hector MacDonald. He recognized me and invited me to join him. He seemed unnaturally relieved; but his conversation showed that he was suffering acute mental distress. He told me that he was on his way to the East. Of course I avoided admitting that I knew his object, which was to defend himself against charges of sexual irregularity brought against him in Ceylon.

The next morning I was amazed to read, in the *New York Herald*, an outrageously outspoken account of the affair.[1] On the heels of this came the news that MacDonald had shot himself in the Regina. He was a great simple lion-hearted man with the spirit of a child; with all his experience in the Army, he still took the word honour seriously, and the open scandal of the accusation had struck down his standard.

One incredible detail must be told. The hotel communicated at once with the British Embassy, and the attaché, who went down to see the body told Gerald Kelly that MacDonald's pockets were stuffed with obscene photographs! Inquiry showed that he had gone out and bought them that very morning, apparently with no other purpose. The psychology is appallingly obscure. Was his motive to convey some subtly offensive insult to the puritans whose prurience had destroyed him?

So much is in part hearsay and conjecture. What follows is wholly fact. I was sitting at lunch in the Grand Oriental Hotel at Colombo when a procession filled into the room. I have never seen anything quite like it. It was utterly out of the picture. It was composed of genuine antiques with shaking heads, stooping shoulders, slobbering jaws from which hung long white goa-

tish beards, and bleared red eyes that blinked even in the twilight of the luncheon as if the very idea of sunlight was an infernal terror.

I called on the khansamah to tell me if I was suffering from delirium tremens. He told me no; what I saw was really there, and it was some kind of committee from Scotland, and that was all he knew. After lunch I discovered that the Great Heart of Scotland refused to admit that any member of the Kirk could have acquiesced in the amenities of the Anglican clergy. The elders had therefore sent out a committee to vindicate the innocence of MacDonald. I could no less in courtesy than make them feel more at home in Ceylon by revealing myself as an Inverness laird. They opened their hearts to me; they were already discouraged. They told me that the prosecution had the affidavits of no less than seventy-seven native witnesses. “Ah well,” I said. “You don't know much of Ceylon. If there were seven times seventy-seven, I wouldn't swing a cat on their dying oaths. The more unanimous they are, the more it is certain that they have been bribed to lie.” I am really glad to think I cheered to old boys up; and I hope that the succeeded in fixing their hero with a halo, though I never heard what happened.

I always hated Colombo. My diary reads “Weariness. Dentist.” “More weariness and more dentist.” “Throat XOP.” “Doctor.” “Oh sabbé, pi dukkham.” “Colombo more and more loathsome. Went up to Kandy.”

Kandy cured my symptoms instantly. The most dreadful thing about Colombo was that two English ladies had descended upon the Galle Face Hotel. They would have seemed extravagant at Monte Carlo; in Ceylon the heavily painted faces, the over-tended dyed false hair, the garish flashy dresses, the loud harsh foolish gabble, the insolent ogling were an outrage. The daughter wore a brooch of what may have been diamonds. It was about five inches across, and the design was a coronet and the name Mabel. I have never seen anything in such abominable taste, and anyhow I wouldn't call a trained flea Mabel, if I respected it.

The intensity of my repulsion makes me suspect that I wanted to make love to her and was annoyed that I was already in love. The gospels do not tell us whether the man who possessed the pearl of great price ever had moments of regret at having given up imitation jewellery. One always subconsciously connects notoriously vile women who flaunt their heartless and sexless seduction with the possibility of some supremely perverse pleasure in nastiness. However, my surface reaction was to shake the dust of Colombo from my feet and to spend my two days in Kandy in writing *Why Jesus Wept*.

The title is a direct allusion to the ladies in question. I prefaced the play with five dedications to (1) Christ, (2) Lady Scott, (3) my friends (Jinawaravasa, whom I had met once more in Galle, and myself), (4) my unborn child, and (5) Mr. G. K. Chesterton. (He had written a long congratulatory criticism of my *The Soul of Osiris*.) The idea of the play is to show a romantic boy and girl ambushed and ruined by male and female vampires. It is an allegory of the corrupting influence of society, and the moral is given in the final passage:

> "I much prefer — that is, mere I —
> Solitude to society.
> And that is why I sit and spoil
> So much clean paper with such toil
> By Kandy Lake in far Ceylon.
> I have my old pyjamas on:
> I shake my soles from Britain's dust;
> I shall not go there till I must;
> And when I must! — I hold my nose.
> Farewell, you filthy-minded people!
> I know a stable from a steeple.
> Farewell, my decent-minded friends!
> I know arc lights from candle-ends.
> Farewell-a poet begs your alms,
> Will walk awhile among the palms,
> An honest love, a loyal kiss,
> Can show him better worlds than this;
> Nor will he come again to yours
> While he knows champak-stars from sewers."

(This play has been analysed in such detail by Captain J. F. C. Fuller in *The Star in the West* that it would be impertinent of me to discuss it further.)

Rose now felt fairly certain that she was pregnant. But it was not this alone that decided us to turn our faces to the West. We still intended to go to Rangoon and apparently there was absolutely nothing to stop us. But we couldn't go, any more than if it had been the moon. Throughout my life I have repeatedly found that destiny is an absolutely definite and inexorable ruler. Physical ability and moral determination count for nothing. It is impossible to perform the simplest act when the Gods say "No". I have no idea how they bring pressure to bear on such occasions; I only know that it is irresistible. One may be wholeheartedly eager to do something which is as easy as falling off a log; and yet it is impossible.

We left Colombo for Aden, Suez and Port Said on January 28th, intending to see a little of the season in Cairo, of which we had the most delightful memories, and then to sail for England, Home and Beauty. I had not the slightest idea that I was on the brink of the only event of my life which has made it worth living.

The voyage was as uneventful as most similar voyages are. The one item of interest is that one of our fellow passengers was Dr. Henry Maudsley. This man, besides being one of the three greatest alienists in England, was a profound philosopher of the school which went rather further than Spencer in the direction of mechanical automatism. He fitted in exactly. He was the very man I wanted. We talked about Dhyana. I was quite sure that the attainment of this state, and *à fortiori* of Samadhi, meant that they remove the inhibitions which repress the manifestations of genius, or (practically the same thing in other words) enable one to tap the energy of the Universe.

Now, Samadhi, whatever it is, is at least a state of mind exactly as are deep through, anger, sleep, intoxication and melancholia. Very good. Any state of mind is accompanied by corresponding states of the body. Lesions of the substance of the brain, disturbances of the blood supply, and so on, are observed in apparently necessary relation to these spiritual states. Furthermore, we already know that certain spiritual or mental conditions may be induced by acting on physico- and chemico-physiological conditions. For instance, we can make a man hilarious, angry or what no by giving him whisky. We can induce sleep by administering such drugs as Veronal. We can even give him the courage of anaesthesia (if we want him to go over the top) by means of either, cocaine and so on. We can produce fantastic dreams by hashish, hallucinations of colour by Anhalonium Lewinii; we can even make him “see stars” by the use of a sandbag. Why then should we not be able to devise some pharmaceutical, electrical or surgical method of inducing Samadhi; create genius as imply as we do other kinds of specific excitement? Morphine makes men holy and happy in a negative way; why should there not be some drug which will produce the positive equivalent?

The Mystic gasps with horror, but we really can't worry about him. It is he that is blaspheming nature by postulating discontinuity in her processes. Admit that Samadhi is *sui generis* and back come the whole discarded humbug of the supernatural. I was back at the old bench exploring the pharmacopoeia for the means of grace, as I had done with Allan long ago; but I had come back to the problem armed in the panopy of the positive natural philosophy of modern science. Huxley had vindicated the alchemists. There was nothing impossible or immoral about the Stone of the Wise and the Elixir of Life. Maudsley — rather to my surprise — agreed with all these propositions, but could not suggest any plausible line of research.

I have made rather a point of mentioning these conversations, because they show that in February 1904, I was an absolutely sceptical rationalistic thinker. The point is that the events of March and April were not in the normal course of the life of a consistent mystic and magician. There was no tendency on my part to accept “divine” interference in my affairs. There was, on the contrary, the bitterest opposition from me. I even went so far as to make unintelligible and false additions to my diary, with the deliberate intention of confusing the record, and perhaps even of making people think me untrustworthy in this stupendous circumstance.

But the Gods beat me all round. They took care that the event should not depend on my goodwill; should be beyond the power of my ill-will to thwart. More yet; they have made it evident that they purposely smashed my career as mystic and Magician in the very hour of my success, when the world was at my feet, in order that they might the more utterly demonstrate their power to use me for their own purposes.

We landed at Port Said on Monday, February the eighth, and went to Cairo on the following day. It was part of the plan of the Gods that my romantic passion and pride, the intoxicated infatuation of my hymeneal happiness, should have induced me to play a puerile part on the world's stage. I had called myself Count Svareff and Aleister MacGregor for quite definite and legitimate reasons; but I had never made a deliberate fool of myself by assuming an absurd alias. I was not for a moment deceived by my own pretext that I wanted to study Mohammedism, and in particular the mysticism of the Fakir, the Darwesh and the Sufi, from within, when I proposed to pass myself off in Egypt for a Persian prince with a beautiful English wife. I wanted to swagger about in a turban with a diamond aigrette and sweeping silken robes or a coat of cloth of gold, with a jewelled talwar by my side ant two gorgeous runners to clear the way for my carriage through the streets of Cairo.

There was no doubt a certain brooding of the Holy Spirit of Magick upon the still waters of my soul; but there is little evidence of its operation. I have never lost sight of the fact that I was in some sense or other The Beast 666. There is a mocking reference to it in “Ascension Day”, lines 98 to 111. *The Sword of Song* bears the sub-title “called by Christians the Book of the Beast”. The wrapper of the original edition has on the front a square of nine sixes and the back another square of sixteen Hebrew letters, being a (very clumsy) transliteration of my name so that its numerical value should be 666. When I went to Russia to learn the language for the Diplomatic Service, my mother half believed that I had “gone to see Gog and Magog” (who were supposed to be Russian giants) in order to arrange the date of the Battle of Armageddon.

In a way, my mother was insane, in the sense that all people are who have water-tight compartments to the brain, and hold with equal passion incompatible ideas, and hold them apart lest their meeting should destroy both. One might say that we are all insane in this sense; for, ultimately, any tow ideas are incompatible. Nay, more, any one idea is incompatible with itself, for it contains in itself its own contradiction. (The proof of this thesis will be given in the proper place.)

But my mother believed that I was actually Anti-christ of the Apocalypse and also her poor lost erring son who might yet repent and be redeemed by the Precious Blood.

I conclude my allusion to 666:

> "Ho! I adopt the number. Look
> At the quaint wrapper of this book!
> I will deserve it if I can:
> It is the number of a Man."

I had thus dismissed my mystical fancies about the number; I accepted it for purely moral reasons and on purely rationalistic grounds. I wanted to be a man in the sense in which the word is used by Swinburne in his *Hymn of Man*.

Having to choose a Persian name, I made it Chioa Khan (pronounced Hiwa Khan) being the Hebrew for The Beast. (Khan is one of the numerous honorifics common in Asia.) I had no conscious magical intention in doing so. (Let me here mention that I usually called my wife Ouarda, one of the many Arabic words for Rose.)

As to my study of Islam, I got a Sheikh to teach me Arabic and the practices of ablution, prayer and so on, so that at some future time I might pass for a Moslem among themselves. I had it in my mind to repeat Burton's journey to Mecca sooner or later. I learnt a number of chapters of the Qu'ran by heart. I never went to Mecca, it seemed rather *vieux jeu*, but my ability to fraternize fully with Mohammedans has proved of infinite use in many ways.

My Sheikh was profoundly versed in the mysticism and magic of Islam, and discovering that I was an initiate, had no hesitation in providing me with books and manuscripts on the Arabic Qabbala. These formed the basis of my comparative studies. I was able to fit them in with similar doctrines and other religions; the correlation is given in my *777*.

From this man I learnt also many of the secrets of the Sidi Aissawa; how to run a stiletto through one's cheek without drawing blood, lick red-hot swords, eat live scorpions, etc. (Some of these feats are common conjurers' tricks, some depend on scientific curiosities, but some are genuine Magick; that is, the scientific explanation is not generally known. More of this later.)

I was quite fixed in scepticism, as I have always been, but also in so-called rationalism, and I prosecuted these studies in a strictly scholarly spirit. I worked very hard at them and made great progress accordingly; but my true life was still the honeymoon, slightly diluted by the ordinary pleasures of sport and society. I relapsed into golf after some fourteen years' total abstinence; took a few lessons from the Pro at the Turf Club, and found that my St. Andrews swing and the canniness inculcated by Andrew Kirkaldy made a fine basis for playing a fairly decent game. We went to Helwan on February 19th; and I played nearly every day, filled with a passionate ambition to become amateur champion. I had picked up my old form so rapidly that I imagined myself a heaven-born golfer. But the game haled its own. I never even got to Scratch.

I did a certain amount of pigeon-shooting at odd times. I had practised a good deal with clay pigeons at Boleskine and become a really first-class shot. I was also quite good at wild pigeons; but for some reason, trapped pigeons were quite beyond me. I dare not boast that I am even second-rate.

One day I joined a party of three to shoot quail, which I recall on account of a singular accident. I was in the middle of the line. A bird got up and flew between me and the man on my right; but I withheld my fire for fear of hitting him. We swung round again; another bird came in the same direction and suddenly dodged and passed on the right. The end man fired. There was a howl. I, having turned to watch the bird, saw the accident clearly. A native had risen from the ground at the moment of the shot. My friend swore that he had not seen him, and I had not seen him myself until I heard him. There was no cover. It seems incredible that my friend at least should not have seen him, for he must have only just missed walking over him, the man being slightly behind our line when the shot was fired. And he was so close to the gun that the shot had not begun to scatter when it stuck him. It had cut a clean narrow groove in the man's shaved scalp, not even laying bare the bone.

I mention this incident, not only on account of its extraordinary features, but to compare it with the “horrors of Denshawai”. The spirit of the natives was entirely friendly. Our administration of Egypt was characterized by paternal firmness; everyone was in the right, everyone respected himself and others; no one complained. Yet, within three years, our prestige had been

completely destroyed by the intelligentsia of England — everyone was in the wrong, no one respected himself or anyone else, and every one complained.

I have dwelt on the character of my life at this time in order to emphasize that the event to be recorded in the next section was an absolute bolt from the blue.

1 — People said: the revenge of a Ceylon Big Bug, whom MacDonald had ordered off the field at some Jamboree when he had turned up in mufti.

END OF VOLUME II