THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

VOLUMES IV - VI

[PART I]

CANTO VII

THE SACRED MAGICK OF ABRAMELIN THE MAGE

Chapter One

November 18th, 1905 was my seventh birthday in the Order, I wrote:

"About now I may count my Speculative Criticism of the Reason as not only proved and understood, but realized."
And on the 19th: "The misery of this is simply sickening — I can write no more."

I must explain. All these seven years, especially when in the East, I had discussed religion and philosophy with all sorts and conditions of men. Further, I had studied the Sacred Books of all religions of antiquity. My experiences all tended to the uniform conclusion that one could go all round the circle in any argument. I actually wrote: "All arguments are arguments in a circle." Certain philosophers, notable Hume, Kant, and Spencer, have shown the essential self-contradiction of the mind. As I wrote myself "Analysed, reason is raving." Christian philosophers have seized on this fact to urge that our only hope of arriving at Truth is through faith; but it is the bankruptcy of faith that originally drove us to test it by reason. I saw that the true solution was, on the contrary, that of the Mystic. In Qabalistic and scientific language, we possess a faculty of apprehension independent of reason, which informs us directly of the Truth.

I am aware of the extreme difficulty of defining the word "Truth." Joachim's puerile criticism of Aristotle, no less than the criteria of Henri Poincarè and Bertrand Russell, are as familiar to me as the earliest speculations. (I wrote an essay "Eleusis" expounding the dilemma and offering my solution, with a dedication to Frater *Volo Noscere* (G. C. Jones)) dated November 18,

1906. Also an essay on the nature of Truth, entitled 'Amath,' which I read to him on December 25, 1906. I reproduced in dialogue from the essence of the conversation induced by the perusal. The former is published as the Epilogue to Vol. III of my *Collected Works*; the latter in *Konx om pax*. At this time I was not so completely armed intellectually as I am to-day, but I wrote in my Magical Diary on November 19th, 1905:

"I realize in myself the perfect impossibility of reason; suffering great misery. I am as one who should have plumed himself for years upon the speed and strength of a favourite horse, only to find not only that its speed and strength were illusory, but that it was not a real horse at all, but a clothes-horse. There being no way — no conceivable way — out of this awful trouble gives that hideous despair which is only tolerable because in the past it has ever been the Darkness of the Threshold. But this is far worse than ever before; I wish to go from A to B; and I am not only a cripple, but there is no such thing as space. I have to keep an appointment at midnight; and not only is my watch stopped, but there is no such thing as time. I wish to make a cannon; and not only have I no cue, but there is no such thing as casuality. "This I explained to my wife," (!!! — Ed.) "and she, apparently inspired, says, 'Shoot it!' (I suppose she means the reason, but, of course, she did not understand a word of what I had been saying. I only told her for the sake of formulating my thought clearly in words.) I reply, "If I only had a gun." This makes me think of Siegfield and the Forging of the Sword. Can I heat my broken Meditation-Sword in the furnace of this despair? Is Discipline the Hammer? At present I am more like Mime than Siegfried; a gibbering ape-like creature, though without his cunning and his purpose."

> "Only, no water's left to feed its play."
> "Up with it on the tripod! It's extinct."

But surely I am not a dead man at thirty!

From this date till the first week in February, I was intellectually insane. The actual ordeal is described with intense simplicity and passion in "Aha!" I call it "the Order of the Veil, the Second Veil" and the "Veil of the Abyss". The complete destruction of reason left me without other means of apprehension than Neschamah.

I have already explained briefly what are meant by Neschamah, Ruach and Nephesch. I must now go a little more deeply into the doctrines of the Qabbala. The human consciousness is represented as the centre of a hexagon whose points are the various faculties of the mind; but the upper-most point, which should link the human consciousness with the divine, is missing. Its name is Daäth: Knowledge. The Babylonian legend of the "fall" is a parable of the shutting out of man from Paradise by the destruction of this Daäth

and the establishment of this Abyss. Regeneration, redemption, atonement and similar terms mean alike the reunion of the human with the divine consciousness. Arrived at the highest possible point of human attainment by regular steps, one finds oneself on the brink of the Abyss, and to cross this one must abandon utterly and for ever all that one has and is. (In unscientific Mysticism the act is represented sentimentally as the complete surrender of the self to God.) In unsectarian English, the act implies first of all the silencing of the human intellect so that one may hear the voice of the Neschamah.

We may now consider further what is meant by Neschamah. It is the human faculty corresponding to the idea Binah. Understanding; which is that aspect of the divine consciousness which corresponds to the Female Idea. It receives, formulates and transmits the pure divine consciousness, which is represented by a Triangle (for the Trinity) whose apex is the essence of the true self (corresponding to Brahman, Atman, Allah etc., — not to Jehovah, who is the Demiurge;) and whose other angle is Chiah, the Masculine aspect of the self, which creates. (Chiah corresponds to Chokmah: Wisdom, the Word.) This divine consciousness is triune. In its essence it is absolute and therefore contains all things in itself, but has no means of discriminating between them. It apprehends itself by formulating itself through the postulation of itself as male and female, active and passive, positive and negative, etc.

Every idea may be expressed as one term of an equation: $X + Y = 0$, where Y is everything except X. This is not mere metaphysics. We habitually distinguish one object from another by excluding them in different ways from the rest of the universe. A thing is itself, because it is not that from which it is separate. The existence of anything as such therefore implies its imperfection. Moreover, its abstraction from the rest of the universe leaves that universe equally imperfect. Now the pure divine consciousness is aware of all this. The idea of separateness, of imperfection, of sorrow, is realized by it as an illusion created by itself for the purpose of self-expression. The method is precisely that of the painter who plays off one colour against another in order to represent some particular idea of himself which pleases him. He knows perfectly well that each colour is in itself imperfect, a partial presentation of the general idea of light.

The “Attainment of Unity” would be, theoretically, to mix up all the paints and produce a surface without colour, form or meaning; yet those philosophers who insist on symbolizing God by Unity reduce Him to a nonentity. The more logical of these, indeed, carry their thesis a little further and describe the Deity as “without quantity or quality.” Even the Prayer Book describes Him as “without body, parts or passion,” though it continues

cheerfully by describing His parts and His passions in detail. The Hindus actually realize that their Parabrahman thus defined, by negating all propositions soever about him, is not a being at all in any intelligible sense of the word. Their aspiration to be absorbed in his essence depends on the thesis that “Everything is Sorrow.”

The Buddha took the last logical step, rejected Brahman as a mere metaphysical figment and replaced the idea of union with him by that of absorption in Nibbana, a state of cessation pure and simple. This is certainly a step forward; but it still throws no light on the subject of how things came to be such that only cessation can relieve their intolerable sorrow; though it is clear enough that the nature of any separate existence must be imperfection. The Buddha impudently postulates “Mara” as the maker of the whole illusion, without attempting to assign a motive for his malice or a means by which he could gratify it. Incidentally, his “existence in itself” is the whole of the evil Mara, which is just as impertinent a postulate as any of the uncreated creators and uncaused causes of other religions. Buddhism does not destroy the philosophical dilemma. Buddha's statement that the fundamental error is ignorance is as arbitrary, after all, as Milton's that it was pride. Either quality implies a host of others, all equally inconceivable as arising in a homogeneous state either of bliss or nonentity.

In eighty days I went round the world of Thought and, like Phineas Fogg and Omar Khayyam, came out by the same door as in I went. The solution must be practical, not theoretical; real not rational. Tyndall says somewhere that it is evidently possible for men to acquire at any moment the use of a new faculty which would reveal a new universe, as completely as the development of sight has done, or differentiated our ideas of Nature from those of the oyster, or as the invention of the spectroscope, the electroscope, etc., has done, and shown us unsuspected material universes. It is to be carefully observed that we unhesitatingly class as “material” all sorts of ideas which are not directly appreciable by any of our senses. I was in no way apostasizing from my agnosticism in looking for a universe of beings endowed with such qualities that earlier observers, with few facts and fewer methods of investigation and criticism at their disposal, called “gods”, “archangels”, “spirits” and he like.

I began to remember that I was myself an initiate, that the Great Order had given me the Qabbala as my working hypothesis. I now found that this doctrine satisfied perfectly my science, my scepticism and my soul. It made no pretence to lay down the law about the Universe. On the contrary, it declared positively the agnostic conclusion of Huxley. It declared reason incompetent to create a science from nothing and restricted it to its evident function of criticizing facts, so far as those facts were comprehensible by it.

(There is an equal and opposite thesis, to the effect that the fundamental laws of reason are themselves the only truth. This apparent antimony I found finally to be like all the rest — a merely formal transposition of terms.)

But the Qabbala did not leave me in despair; it asserted the existence of a faculty such as that suggested by Tyndall, by the use of which I could appreciate Truth directly. I may here refer to the historic claim of mystics that their truth is incomprehensible to human reason and inexpressible in human language. The arrogance of the proposition was less repugnant to me than its confession of incompetence and its denial of the continuity of nature. I have devoted countless days and nights to forcing myself to formulate the intuitions of trance in intelligible ideas, and conveying those ideas by means of well defined symbols and terms. At the period I am describing, such an effort would have been bricks without straw. My truly mystical experiences were extremely few. I have subsequently developed a complete system, based on the Qabbala, by which any expression may be rendered cognizable through the language of intellect, exactly as mathematicians have done: exactly, too, as they have been obliged to recognize the existence of a new logic. I found it necessary to create a new code of the laws of thought.

One example pertinent to this period will illustrate the strangeness of the world revealed by the development of Neschamah. The human consciousness is primarily distinguishable from the divine by the fact of its dependence on duality. The divine consciousness distinguishes a peach from a pear, but is aware all the time that the difference is being made for its own convenience. The human accepts the difference as real. It also fails to accept the fact that it knows nothing of the object as it is in itself. It is confined to an awareness that its consciousness has been modified by its tendency to perceive its sensations, which it refers to its existence. One must be expert in Pratyahara to apprehend intuitively the data of Berkeleyian idealism. In other words, the condition of human consciousness is the sense of separateness; that is, of imperfection; that is, of sorrow.

Now then for our illustration. I aspire to the Good, the Beautiful and the True. I define my Holy Guardian Angel as a being possessing these qualities in perfection and aspire to His Knowledge and Conversation. I propose therefore to perform the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage. But what is my first postulate? That there exists a real difference between those qualities and their opposites, between Him and myself. It is true that I aim at the identification of myself with Him, but I have already defined Him as imperfect, maugre my gaudy phraseology, by admitting that He is separate from me. I define Truth as imperfect by distinguishing it from untruth. (When one has crossed the Abyss, these considerations — fantastic to the point of comicality as they appear on the surface — become the most formidable foes in

practical life. For example, one has to resolve the antithesis between action and inaction, and one removes one's motive with deft surgery by destroying the dividuality of joy and sorrow.) My aspiration in itself affirms the very idea which it is its sole object to deny.

Thus, then, all Magick is based on the illusion inherent in the Reason itself. Since all things soever are separate; since their separateness is the essential element of their existence; and since all are equally illusions, why aspire to the Holy Guardian Angel? — why not to the Dweller on the Threshold? To the man who has not passed entirely through the Abyss, thoughts of this kind are positively frightful. There is no rational answer possible, from the nature of the case; and I was tormented indescribably by these thoughts, thousands after thousands, each a terrific thunderbolt blasting its way through my brain during these frightful months. Of course *The Book of the Law* makes mincemeat of all such dragons, but I am convinced that the Gods deliberately kept me away from seeking the solution in its pages, though I was their chosen confidant. They were determined that I should drain the last dregs of the Vitriol. (*Visita Interiora Terrae, Rectificado Invenies Occultum Lapidem*.)

It was essential that I should learn the technique of crossing the Abyss with absolute thoroughness for They had it in mind to entrust me with the task of teaching others exactly how to do it. Thus, though I crossed the Abyss at this period, underwent one particular phase of the ordeal, I was restricted to that particular experience which sufficed for Their immediate purpose in regard to me. I had to work out its problems in many other ways on many other occasions, as will appear from the sequel. *The Book of the Law* was to my hand, but the Gods themselves had hardened my heart against it. I had hardened my own heart; I had tried to go round the Boyg. They answered, “Thou hast said.”

I know now from the experience of others that *The Book of the Law* is veritably a Golden Bough. It is the only thing that one is allowed to take with one through Hades, and it is an absolute passport. In fact, one cannot go through Hades at all; there is no “one” to go. But the Law itself bridges the Abyss, for “Love is the law, love under will.” One's will-to-cross is to disintegrate all things soever into soulless dust, love is the one force which can bind them together into a coherent causeway. There, where torn thoughts sank through the starless space, aching and impotent, into what was not even nothingness, each alive for ever because reduced to its ultimate atoms so that there was no possibility of change, no hope of any alleviation of its anguish, each exquisitely mindful that its captain had slain himself in despair; there may men pass to-day in peace. What with *The Book of the Law* to guide them, and my experience to warn them, they can prepare them-

selves for the passage; and it is their own fault if the process of self-annihilation involves suffering.

I cannot even say that I crossed the Abyss deliberately. I was hurled into it by the momentum of the forces which I had called up. For three years, save for spasmodic and half-hearted incidents, and the great moment in Cairo which took place in direct opposition to the united efforts of my scepticism, my cynicism, my disgust with everything, my idleness and my prejudices, I had been fighting against my destiny. I had been building up a great dam. My occasional return to Magick had been more in the nature of occasional sprees than anything else, as a man consumed by an over-mastering passion for a woman and determined to trample her under foot, might seek relief in occasional flirtations.

A magical oath is the most irresistible of all moral forces. It is an affirmation of the true Will; that is to say, it is a link between the conscious human and the unconscious divine nature of the man who takes it. A magical oath which does not express the true Will sets these forces in opposition and therefore weakens the man the more gravely as the oath is more seriously meant and taken. But given that the oath is a true expression of the True Will, its effect is to affirm that very union between the insignificant force of the conscious being and the irresistible might of that which is “one, eternal, and individual,” that which is inexpugnably immune to all forces soever; which when accomplished constitutes it supreme.

When as a school-boy I joined the first Worcestershire Artillery Volunteers, my oath of allegiance to the Crown put the might and majesty of England at my disposal. Had I naturalized myself as a foreigner for business reasons, as so many self-styled men do, I should have been false not only to my King, but to myself. The renegade simply cuts himself off from all the deeper and nobler roots of his own being. I may find it very difficult to identify myself wholly with the Spirit of England; I may find myself in continual conflict with the false ideas, the misunderstandings that beset the man who sets himself as I have done, to become the Voice of England in my generation, as Shakespeare and Milton, Shelley and James Thomson did in theirs; but every time that I perform an act in support of my original oath, I strengthen the link. And that oath being — though I scarcely knew it at the time — a true expression of my true Will in that respect, I am irresistibly drawn into an identification of myself with the Spirit of England, and shall stand before posterity as Milton and Shelley stand before us.

Were I persecuted, proscribed, exiled, or slain by false Englishmen in the name of England, it would make no difference. John Bunyan's imprisonment has not prevented his book from being the most read of any book by any

English author. The tinker in Bedford jail has spoken for England more simply and more strongly than even Shakespeare. It chanced that his ignorant and fanatical faith was that of the rising political power, even more than Shelley's two hundred years later. It was a well-known law of psychology, long before Freud brought it into renewed public prominence, that all attempts to restrain the inmost instincts of the soul merely increase the pressure on the gauges. My position was this. In 1897 I had unconsciously discovered my True Will and devoted myself to find the means of carrying it out. In 1898 I had found the means, and had concentrated all my resources of any kind on making the most of it. I had swept aside every obstacle, internal and external. The reaction of 1902 had lasted just three years; the dam, my carnal mind, had begun to leak; a moment later, it was swept away by the avenging tides; they swept away the last remnant of my reason.

There is a feeble rattle of the rifles of the rearguard, some ineffectual foppishness about discipline between November 19th and 25th, then absolute silence till the 8th of February, when I write, “About this full moon began getting in consciousness through Ruach into Neschamah. Intend to stick to Augoeides.”

I found myself in a truly surprising state.

> As I trod the trackless way
> Through sunless gorges of Cathay,
> I became a little child,
> By nameless rivers, swirling through
> Chasms, a fantastic blue,
> Month by month, on barren hills,
> In burning heat, in bitter chills,
> Tropic forest, Tartar snow,
> Smaragdine archipelago,
> See me — led by some wise hand
> That I did not understand.
> Morn and noon and eve and night
> I, the forlorn eremite,
> Called on Him with mild devotion,
> As the dewdrop woos the ocean.

I had all the innocence and helplessness of a child at the period when it gropes instinctively for some one to love it, some one whom it knows and trusts, who is infinitely strong, infinitely wise, and infinitely kind.

I am not quite sure why I chose the word “Augoeides” to represent my thought. It may well be because it was not spoilt for me by any personal association with the past.

CHAPTER 75

I have been carried away by the necessity of simplifying (to the utmost of my ability) the story of my passage through the Abyss. I must now explain why I issued from it with this particular idea of Augoeides rather than another, for every idea in my mind had been shattered in fragments and brayed in a mortar, reduced to impalpable dust and scattered to the four winds of heaven. Sir Isaac Newton to the rescue! His first law of motion is sufficient to make the point clear.

> “A body either keeps its course (or else remains at rest)
> Unless by some external force its motion is impressed.”

The effect of my ordeal had been to remove all forces soever which had impinged on my normal direction. My star had been diverted from its proper orbit by, had been held back by, the attraction of other heavenly bodies. Their influence had been removed. For the first time in my life I was really free. I had no personality left. To take a concrete case: I found myself in the middle of China with a wife and child. I was no longer influenced by love for them, no longer interested in protecting them as I had been; but there was a man, Aleister Crowley, husband and father, of a certain caste, of certain experience, of travel in remote parts of the world; and it was *his* business to give them his undivided love, care and protection. He could do this very much more efficiently than before when I was aware of what he was doing, and consequently inclined to overplay the part.

But with regard to my magical future — why did I “intend to stick to Augoeides?” The reason becomes clear if we consider the nature of the meditation — Sammasati — which had constituted the essence of my success in passing through the ordeal.

I determined on this at Allan's suggestion and one of my main objects in going to stay with him at the Choung was to do it. I thought it could be done in three days! There must be a lot of silly young asses knocking about the world, but I think I can give most of them a couple of strokes a hole.

The method of the meditation is described (1911) in Liber Thisharb, and I have outlined it in an earlier chapter. I quote from *The Temple of Solomon the King*, *Equinox*, I -VIII.

". . . he found his old comrade, I.A, now a member of the Buddhist Sangha, under the name of Bhikku Ananda Metteya.

"It was from him that he received the instructions which were to help him to reach the great and terrible pinnacle of the mind whence the adept must plunge into the Abyss, to emerge naked, a babe — the Babe of the Abyss.

" 'Explore the River of the Soul,' said Ananda Metteya, 'whence and in what order you have come.'

"For three days — the longest period allowed by the Buddhist law — he remained in the Choung, meditating on this matter; but nothing seems to have come of it. He set his teeth and settled down doggedly to this consideration of the eternal why. Here is a being in Rangoon. Why? Because he wanted to see Bhikku A. M. Why? Because . . . and so on to the half-forgotten past, dark seas that phosphoresced as the clean keel of his thought divided them.

I had eliminated a vast number of possible replies to the question of Zoroaster above quoted by Allan. I might even have discovered my true Will, as indeed the meditation should enable me to do, had it not been interfered with by the larger question with its smashing academic scepticism. The question posed by the meditation assumes a casual connection between events, and even to some extent a purposeful connection. Now in the Abyss these are the very two ideas which are torn from under the bridge of continuity which they should support.

The practical point was that I had no proof whatever that there was any purpose in my past life or could be in my future. I again quote from the Temple of Solomon the King:

"Baffled again and again, the fall with his horse supplied the one factor missing in his calculations. He had repeatedly escaped death in matters almost miraculous. 'Then I am some use after all!' was his conclusion. 'I am indeed SENT to do something.' For whom? For the universe; no partial good could possibly satisfy his equation. I am, then, the 'Chosen Priest and Apostle of Infinite Space.' Very good: and what is the message? What shall I teach men? And like lightning from heaven fell upon him these words: "THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONVERSATION OF THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL."

“Just that. No metaphysical stuff about the 'higher self'; a thing that the very villagers of Pu Peng could understand. Avoid refinements; leave dialectic to the slaves of reason.

“His work must, then, be to preach that one method and result. And first must he achieve that for himself; for if the blind lead the blind . . .”

So again we read (in the diary, this time) on February 11th:

“Made many resolutions of a G. R. (Great Retirement.) In dream flew to me an angel, bearing an Ankh, to comfort me.”

We may now transcribe the Diary. We find the great mind, the complex man, purged through and through of thought, stripped of all things human and divine, centered upon one single Aspiration, as simple as the love of a child for its father.

Like lightning from heaven? Not lest swift flashed back the obvious question of the practical man, How? The answer was immediate: “INVOKING OFTEN.” I need not have asked. They were the words of Zoroaster indeed, but they were also my own. I had used them in my paraphrase of Zoroaster in Tannhäuser's song. And after all, there is nothing specially magical about them except that they are in the plain common sense of psychology. Huxley said that science was organized common sense, and Frazer that science was successful Magick. The syllogism presents no difficulties.

Only one point remained for consideration. I had said how almost insanely anxious I had always been about economizing time. My mind is, perhaps, the most infernally active on the Globe. I cannot bear to eat a meal except as a deliberate debauch. I like to play a game of chess and read a book “while fortifying my body thereby” and engaging in conversation with the other guests. I remember in Mexico Eckenstein telling me that I should not pull on my stockings straight, but turn the foot into the reversed stocking. His reason was that it saved the stocking. I replied that it wasted time. He argued at some length that it saved time in the long run. I was perfectly serious about this. I was constantly devising dodges for making the most of every moment. For example; I hate to shut a door behind me, on the ground that I might have to open it again. I detest changing my clothes. I keep my head shaved if there is any risk of being called upon to brush my hair. On the other hand, I like shaving myself because, as many men know, the operation tends to produce fertility of ideas.

Having decided to invoke the Augoeides, how was I to do it without unnecessary delay? I had everything ready at Boleskine, but Chen Nan Chan is sixty li from Pa Shih Pai, and it was as many days from England, home and

beauty, going L for leather. The Operation should begin at Easter. It could not be done that year by ordinary means. But my Sammasati came to the rescue. I knew that every event in my life had been arranged by the Gods to be of use to me in the accomplishment of the Great Work. I did not need an aeroplane: I had a Magical Carpet. I could travel in my astral body to my temple and perform the Operation, perhaps even more conveniently than in the flesh. *Per Contra*, I could construct my own temple about me and perform the Operation in my physical body. For various reasons, I preferred the latter method.

I was still entirely “off” *The Book of the Law*. I had with me my unique vellum copy of the Goetia, and I proposed to use the Preliminary Invocation. I was to begin by performing this twice daily to work up a current, to acquire concentration, to invoke often.

On February 11th I had spent the fifty li of the journey, P'u P'eng to Ying Wa Kuan, in making resolutions to undertake the Great Magical Retirement. That night I had a dream, in which an angel flew to me “to comfort me”. He was bearing an ankh in his hand. If I had known then, as I do now, that the ankh is not fundamentally a crux ansata but a sandal strap, the symbol of the power to go, I should have understood that I ought to make the Retirement on the journey. It is obviously weakness to rely upon one's material surroundings, and I was already sufficiently in the habit of performing meditations in the most unsatisfactory conditions, to have had no hesitation. I had chosen to set up my first temple at one of the busiest corners of London, with the deliberate object of training myself not to be put off by noise.

The plan was not a bad one. I am quite inaccessible to disturbance except of one kind. The neighbourhood of anyone on whom I have bestowed the right to speak to me is a cause of distraction. In practice I train such people carefully not to address me when I am working — aye! at any time — without special justification. I made a further experiment in October 1908 (see “John St. John”) of carrying out a complete Magical Operation of the most important kind while leading the life of the normal man-about-town in the Montparnasse quarter. I did this to demonstrate to the people who complained that they had not the time or convenience for Magick, that they could do it without giving up their ordinary business or social life.

Though I did not fully understand the implication of the dream, I managed to act as if I had done so. I must have had some suspicions that my old friends the Abramelin demons would go on the war path; at least I acted accordingly from the 14th. Finding myself with the glands of my throat badly swollen, and my mind distracted by worrying about them, I asked the Augoeides to remove my fear. This is dangerously like prayer, on the surface;

but at least I did not ask to be cured. The request was immediately granted. I was ill for several days, but able to continue my invocations.

My plan was to transport the astral form of my temple at Boleskine to where I was, so as to perform the invocation in it. It was not necessary for me to stay in one place during the ceremony; I frequently carried it out while riding or walking. As the work became familiar to me it became easier. I was able to withdraw my attention from the actual words and gestures, and concentrate on the intention. On the theory of Sammasati, every faculty must be used in the Great Work. On the surface, there seems little relation between Magick and chess, but my ability to play three games simultaneously blindfold was now very useful. I had no difficulty in visualizing the astral temple by an effort of will, and of course I was perfectly able to watch the results of the invocations with my astral eyes. During these weeks I developed the technique though not to the full extent described in Liber Samekh. A description of the method, as far as I had taken it at this time, is given in Equinox I-VIII.

"The preamble: he makes a general concentration of all his magical forces and a declaration of his will.

The Ar Thiao section. He travels to the infinite East among the hosts of angels summoned by the words. A sort of "Rising on the Planes", but in a horizontal direction.

The same remarks apply to the next three sections in the other quarters.

At the great invocation following he extends the Shivalingam to infinite height, each letter of each word representing an exaltation of it by geometrical progression. Having seen this satisfactorily, he prostrates himself in adoration.

When consciousness begins to return, he uses the final formula to raise that consciousness in the Shivalingam, springing to his feet at the moment of uniting himself with it, and lastly uttering that supreme song of the Initiate beginning: "I am He, the Bornless Spirit, having sight in the feet; strong and the Immortal Fire!"

(Thus performed, the invocation means about half an hour of the most intense magical work imaginable — a minute of it would represent the equivalent of about twelve hours of Asana.)"

Despite the distracting influence of the varied adventures described in the last chapter, I stuck steadily to my practice. On leaving Hong Kong, however, being once again a lonely Wanderer of the Waste, I did feel freer

to analyze myself. I thought the necessity of defining the words that I used more closely. There is an indication of this in my entry of April 4th:

"I foolishly and wickedly put off A∴; work all day; now it is one a.m. of the fifth. By foolish, I mean contrary to my interest and hope in A∴ work all day; now it is 1 a.m. of the fifth. By foolish, I mean contrary to my interest and hope in A∴

By wicked I mean contrary to my will.

A∴ goodish; lengthy and reverie-like. Yet my heart is well. I spake it audibly."

Before this time I had been haunted by the first of the two terrible doubts which I subsequently described in sections 36 and 38 of *Sir Palamedes*, but during the abominable "wind draught" of the first week of March I had made a partial image of this doubt in the *King-Ghost*. I did not understand the essence of the doubt and it is hard to explain it in prose, even now. It seems at first sight to be a reflection of the all-embracing doubt of the Abyss. It concentrated itself into the entirely practical question: is there an Augoeides after all? Is there a Path of the Wise? Am I simply fooling myself? And in the *King-Ghost* my only answer is to appeal to the very power whose existence is in dispute. The extreme beauty of the lines, their magick melancholy, and their appropriateness to the circumstances of my journey encourage me to quote the poem, which I do:

The King-Ghost is abroad. His spectre legions
Sweep from their icy lakes and bleak ravines
Unto these weary and untrodden regions
Where man lies penned among his Might-have-beens.
Keep us in safety, Lord,
What time the King-Ghost is abroad!

The King-Ghost from his grey malefic slumbers
Awakes the malice of his bloodless brain.
He marshals the innumerable numbers
Of shrieking shapes on the sepulchral plain.
Keep us, for Jesu's sake,
What time the King-Ghost is awake!

The King-Ghost wears a crown of hopes forgotten:
Dead loves are woven in his ghastly robe;
Bewildered wills and faiths grown old and rotten
And deeds undared his sceptre, sword, and globe.

Keep us, O Mary maid,
What time the King-Ghost goes arrayed!

The Hell-Wind whistles through his plumeless pinions;
Clanks all that melancholy host of bones;
Fate's principalities and Death's dominions
Echo the drear discord, the tuneless tones.
Keep us, dear God, from ill,
What time the Hell-Wind whistles shrill.

The King-Ghost hath no music but their rattling;
No scent but death's grown faint and fugitive;
No fight but this their leprous pallor battling
Weakly with night. Lord, shall these dry bones live?
O keep us in the hour
Wherein the King-Ghost hath his power!

The King-Ghost girds me with his gibbering creatures,
My dreams of old that never saw the sun.
He shows me, in a mocking glass, their features,
The twin fiends “Might-have-been” and “Should-have-done”.
Keep us, by Jesu's ruth,
What time the King-Ghost grins the truth!

The King-Ghost boasts eternal usurpature;
For in this pool of tears his fingers fret
I had imagined, by enduring nature,
The twin gods “Thus-will-I” and “May-be-yet”.
God, keep us most from ill,
What time the King-Ghost grips the will!

Silver and rose and gold what flame resurges?
What living light pours forth in emerald waves?
What inmost Music drowns the clamorous dirges?
— Shrieking they fly, the King-Ghost and his slaves.
Lord, let Thy Ghost indwell,
And keep us from the power of Hell!

Amen.

The triumphant answer is simply the Mystic's affirmation of interior certainty. No doubt this expresses my attitude at the time: I was still a little child. But as I grew, so did the doubt. I saw that the answer given in the King-Ghost was insufficient. I realized subconsciously what is the hardest

thing of all for any of us to realize; that we are each “one, eternal and individual”, that there is no one on whom we should rely, that such doubts should be destroyed, neither by the rational method of refuting them nor by taking refuge with external power — one must perform an arbitrary act of manhood.

> “Nay! I deliberate deep and long,
> Yet find no answer fit to make
> To thee. The weak beats down the strong.”

I had been in fairly regular astral communication with Soror F., but I wanted to see her in the flesh and therefore called on her in Shanghai. On the 6th and 7th of April I explained the position to her, and went to stay with her on the 9th. The next twelve days we were constantly working together. The results of this work are so important that I must enter into them rather fully. It is significant of my eternal subconscious reaction against *The Book of the Law* that even when editing my diaries for Captain J.F.C. Fuller for *The Temple of Solomon the King*, I deliberately omitted to pay any attention to them. The reference is meagre and vainglorious, and the promise to deal with them elsewhere has never been kept. It is evidently a dodge for avoiding the responsibility.

A∴ in the presence of my Soror F.

(The results of this and the next invocation were most brilliant and important. They revealed the Brother of A∴A∴ who communicated in Egypt as the Controller of all this work. Their importance belongs therefore to the history of those relations than of this simple invocation-method, and will be dealt with in another place. P. was entirely skeptical of these results at the time.)

The first result of my work with Soror F. was that immediately I told her of the work in Cairo, she said boldly and finally that she believed in the genuineness of the communication. I was infuriated. I believe my main object in going to see her had been to get encouragement in my revolt. I had carefully avoided telling her anything about it in the whole course of our astral interviews; but she insisted that we should study Liber Legis together. I had my copy with me. (It is very remarkable that the Gods managed to look after me so that I am never in lack of anything that I need for the performance of any particular work. My deliberate carelessness, my attempts to destroy things, are always quite useless. The Gods always perform the necessary miracle to enable me to have at hand anything that may be necessary at the moment.)

So my diary reads on April 18th:

"Studying Liber Legis. Decide to ask F. to invoke Aiwass and converse with Him when invoked, and thereby to decide on the quality of that magick."

On the 20th, therefore, we went into her temple:

"Aiwass invoked appears, of brilliant blue as when she saw him as guardian of my sleep. He has followed me ever, wishing me to follow his cult. When P. took wand, he grows brilliant and breaks up into a formless light; yet she feels him as an enemy. He seems entangled in a mesh of light and to be trying to escape. I warn him that if he goes away, he cannot return. (F. in herself is hostile) "Return to Egypt, with different surroundings. (This misheard: he said *same*.) There I will give thee signs. Go with the S.W. (Quarda), this is essential: thus you shall get real power, that of God, the only one worth having. Illumination shall come by means of power, *pari passu*. (Evidently my own transcript of her words.) Live in Egypt as you did before. Do not do a G. R. Go at once to Egypt; money troubles will be settled more easily than you think now. I will give you no guarantee of my truth." He then turned blue-black. "I am loath to part from you. Do not take F. I do not like the relations between you; break them off! If not you must follow other Gods. Yet I would wish you to love physically, to make perfect the circle of your union. F. will not do so, therefore, she is useless. If she did, she would become useful. You have erred in showing her the true relation between you on spiritual planes. Having burst that, she will remain by her sense of power over you. (This might mean that her enjoyment of her power over me would induce her to continue working.) (Now she knows that A)***** She is spiritually stronger than you. You should have dominated her by your superior strength on other planes. She will give you much trouble, though eventually she may become a great aid. But your shorter path lies by Egypt and S.W. (Quarda) though she is not spiritually your equal. S. W. has been your enemy; but you have conquered, she is bound to aid you as your will. She has been your enemy and that of F. but you returned her hatred, hence her seeming power over you in the present. (Qy. this hearing.) (Qy. was F. hearing correctly) I will give you a sign when alone and away from present medium. You must recognise the sign by your own intuition. Do not part from S. W. Use her! (Here S.W. appears, with an evil look. She glitters, like a jewelled serpent.) Strange bands of light scintillate between her and Aiwass. A. now takes wand again; still feels enmity on spiritual planes. Aiwass banished; S.W. has disappeared.

"A. now tries to speak to A∴ He wants G.R.; does not mind whether S.W. is with me or not; but I should use Brahmacharya (? if with her, or anyhow),

I shall be guided as things turn up, as to the truth or falsehood of Aiwass, who is not to be altogether distrusted. (I think the opposition is Aiwass's limitation as a servant.) A∴ will give us a sign: F's freedom. (I reply that if this comes about in a miraculous manner, well and good.) (Note: Her husband died quite unexpectedly not long after this time.)"

***** Query — text?

April 21st. Sol enters Taurus.

"Open T∴ with A∴ I∴ (Possibly . . . ***** spoilt it all) asking for special aid in — what follows. F. finds the Nuit ring good; hence probably her hostility yesterday was due to lower self.

"I∴ of R.H.K. gives glorious material flashes of light, akasic (i.e. ultraviolet) and lilac. The God, beheld, will not speak. Asked for a messenger, Aiwass appears. F., suspecting him, puts a pentagram on him; he blurs and becomes dirty and discrowned. F. takes wand; but this dissipates him. His real name she says is 270 = INRI. F. uses Pentagram and shrivels him up to a black charred mass. I ask her to invoke something genuine; a white figure without face and with little shape mounts throne. It has a glittering rayed corona. Says: (to here F. uses normal tone; hence tone of oracle) "I am the God of Vengeance. I am thy Guardian Angel. I would have thee seek thine own soul in silence and alone. Take no aid with thee; take no mortal soul but retire and depart from mankind." Pentagram makes him brighter: he grows firmer. Repeated, form vanishes and only brightness remains. Asked for a sign or his name, ... is written on throne. "I will give no other sign: you must learn to trust your own intuition."

"F's intuition tells her that he is genuine. As to our relations, he wishes us to work together (A contradiction v. supra:) "I do not wish you to go too far in work with S.W. She will dazzle you and be apt to lead you astray. You must always remain as armed when you work with her, as a man in full armour. I would wish you to strengthen the link between you and F. on all planes. You are very needful to each other and can only accomplish G.W. together." (This clearly utter rubbish.) I take wand and curse him by Him who he hath blasphemed. Invoking, however A∴ the light becomes more brilliant. Voice continues: "You must go and do a G.R. after which you will get a sign." (Clearly due to F. knowing my wish; but he is clumsy. Will anything now convince F.? I was trying, as my custom is, to "bowl out" my clairvoyant.) I take serious measures to banish all but A∴ Voice silenced: and she doubts whether voice is from brilliance. F. feels me absolutely necessary for her. I not. (Voice is *from her* so cannot be banished and it goes on:) "There shall be a short period of work (?*not*?) done in actual unison; after which your

powers join irrevocably together. There is no escape from that; you are bound to work together; and the fitting time and hour for this shall come simultaneously to you both. There will then be no doubt in either of your minds: there will then be no obstacle to this union. . . . You must look towards this time and towards a beacon light. Never lose sight of that! You Elaine (F's earth-name) will meet with subtle temptation from this object — promises of great power and illumination; but heed them not. Aleister is your true helper from whom you have right to look and demand help. You must never cease to demand this aid and by your demand strengthen and aid your comrade. I, your Guardian Angel, tell you this." (The falsity of all this patent more at the time than now — I foresaw what follows.) I ask proof that he *is* G.A. It is clear that Voice and Brilliance are distinct (i.e. from two separate sources.) F. however feels that this rigmarole is true. Hence we discuss our relations and the Great Invocation degenerates. We began to make love to each other. This, however, is checked by my will and her own feeling that we have done enough for honour. I am not exhausted after all this, as I was yesterday. Is this a proof that all is Right Magic, or that little force was expended? Where am I, in fact? O Holy Exalted One, do Thou illuminate my mind!

***** I omit reference to a certain private matter.

CHAPTER 76

I left Shanghai on the 21st of April. On the 22nd I was sick and stayed in bed all day. I did no regular invocation, but thought over the recent crisis. I dismissed the Shanghai experience as a morbid dream. Reading through the above record at this distance of time, after deliberately avoiding doing so for so long, I feel very uncertain about it; I feel that there was a great deal of genuine communication with the right people and that the Oracle is confused, contradictory and uneven, because of the interference of our personalities.

There was the question of our love affair. I was absolutely in love with Rose in the ordinary sense of the term. My love for Fidelis excluded the material almost entirely. I was very proud of my love for Rose, and very happy in it. The one thing I feel sure of is this: that we had a superb opportunity to take up the Great Work together and that we missed it on account of our determination to see things with our own eyes. We were, no doubt, quite ready to put the Great Work first, last and all the time; but we were hampered in

doing so by our settled conviction as to what the Great Work might imply. For my part, at least, I know that I was always arguing that such and such a course couldn't be right on general principles, as I had done when Rose herself had told me how to invoke Horus; and I had not learned the lesson that my idea of “general Principles” was not reliable.

The entry of April 24th shows how admirably the gods arrange one's affairs. One may have a perfectly right idea, but as long as one holds to it they will take pains to upset the apple cart: abandon the idea, and they immediately hand it back with a charming compliment. This is the lesson of the Book of Job. Job was a righteous man, and his attitude to Marduk, or whoever his god was, was not far from wrong; but Marduk kept on laying on the lashes until Job admitted that he was entirely in the wrong in every point. The moment he did so, Marduk justified him and restored him to health and prosperity.

I quote the entry in full, concealing only the name of the Order.

“At Kobe. A∴ fair only; though I invoked all these powers of mine. Yet after, by a strong effort of will, I banished my sore throat and my surroundings, and went up in my Body of Light. Reached a room in which a cruciform table was spread, a naked man being nailed thereto. Many venerable men sat around, feasting on his living flesh and quaffing his hot blood. These (I was told) were the Adepts, whom I might one day join. This I understood to mean that I should get the power of taking only spiritual nourishment — but probably it means much more than this.

“Next I came into an apparently empty hall, of white ivory worked in filigree. A square slim altar was in the midst, I was questioned as to what I would sacrifice on that altar. I offered all save my will to know A∴ which I would only change for its own realization. I now became conscious of godforms of Egypt sitting, so vast that I could only see to their knees. “Would not knowledge of the gods suffice?” “No!” said I. It was then pointed out to me that I was being critical, even rationalistic, and made to see that A∴ was not necessarily fashioned in my image. I asked pardon for my blindness, and knelt at the altar, placing my hands upon it, right over left. Then, one, human, white, self-shining (my idea after all!) came forth and put his hands over mine, saying: “I receive thee into the Order of ————————.”

I came back to earth in a cradle of flame.

I was thus formally received among the Secret Chiefs of the Third Order on the astral plane. It was the natural sequel to the passage of the Abyss. I was careful not to presume on a mere vision. Superb as the experience was,

I would not allow it to turn my head. I am almost morbidly sensitive about my responsibility in such matters. No more fatal mistake can be made than to grasp after a Grade. Attainment is an appalling danger if one is not perfectly fitted for it at every point. One must search oneself unsparingly for weak spots; the smallest scratch suffices to admit a germ of disease and one may perish altogether through a moment's carelessness. It is unpardonably foolhardy to take a chance in matters of such serious import.

I took the vision to heart as a lesson.

Next day's entry makes this clear.

“Yesterday's vision a real illumination, since it showed me an obvious mistake which I had utterly failed to see. The word in my Kamma-work (in Burma) was *Augoeides*, (a subsequent entry implies that the word was “given” me directly from the unseen world,) and the method *Invoking Often*. Therefore a self-glittering One, whether my conscience approves or not, whether my desires fit or not, is to be my guide. I am to *invoke often*, not to criticize. Am I to lose my grade of Babe of the Abyss? I cannot go wrong, for I am the chosen one; that is the very postulate of the whole work. This boat carries Caesar and his fortunes.”

There is here an implication, perhaps, that I had been compelled to accept the Cairo Working. This is confirmed by the entry of April 30th:

(It has struck me — in connection with reading Blake — that Aiwass, etc., “Force and Fire” is the very thing I lack. My “conscience” is really an obstacle and a delusion, being a survival of heredity and education. Certainly to rely on it as an abiding principle in itself is wrong. The one really important thing is the fundamental hypothesis: I am the Chosen one. All methods will do, if I only *invoke often* and stick to it.)

I resented intensely being told that I was “the Chosen One”. It is such an obvious man-trap; it is the commonest delusion of the maniac and, in one form or another, the essence of all delusions. Luckily, there is an answer to this. What can be more really arrogant than assuming that one has been singled out for “strong delusion?” I had received some very remarkable evidence in quite unexpected quarters that I was singled out to accomplish the Great Work of emancipating mankind.

One of these is so intensely interesting on its own accord that I must not omit it, quite apart from its bearing on the question of my destiny. One morning I had sat down to rest and smoke a pipe on the top of a little pass in warm misty weather. Salama came and sat down by my side. I looked at

him in amazement. It was an astounding breach of etiquette. I have often wondered if he did it deliberately, as if to say, “I am not your headman: I am a messenger of the Gods.” He began, however, in a very shame-faced, sheepish way, obviously embarrassed. It was as if he had been thrust by surprise into the position of an ambassador. “Sahib,” he said, “last night I had a *tamasha*.” I reproached him laughingly. *Tamasha* means an entertainment of any kind, and, in the East, frequently implies a certain amount of liveliness, possibly an indulgence in forbidden liquor and flirtation; but he merely meant a dream. The usual words for dream are *Khwab*, *Roya*, *Wahm*. Evidently he wished to imply that his dream was not an ordinary one, that it was a genuine vision. (I forgot to ask him whether he was awake or asleep.)

He proceeded as follows:

“I was on the shore of a small lake. It was a wild country and the lake was surrounded by tall reeds, some of them growing in the water. The full moon was high in the sky, but there were clouds and mist. You were standing in front of me, Sahib; quite motionless, lost in thought, as you always are, but you seemed to be waiting for some one. Now there was a rustling in the reeds, and out of them came a boat rowed by two beautiful women with long fair hair, and in the front of the boat stood another woman, taller and fairer even than her sisters. The boat came slowly across to you; and then I saw that the woman held in her hands a great sword, long and straight, with a straight cross-hilt which was heavy with rubies, emeralds and sapphires. She put this sword into your hands and you took it, but nothing was said. They went away as they had come, into the fringe of reeds across the lake. And that was all I saw.”

I remained unable to reply. At this time I was the last man in the world to take anything of the sort seriously; more I was resolved not to do so even at the cost of restraining the theory of sensory hallucination. What struck me dumb was hearing an old Shikari tell the story of *Excalibur* in language so near to that of Malory as to make no odds. Could one of his Sahibs have told him the tale long ago, so that it popped up in this strange fashion with me as the hearer? I had no doubt whatever of the man's sincerity and truthfulness and he had no motive for inventing anything of the sort.

I cannot believe it a coincidence; I really wondered whether the most reasonable hypothesis is not that Aiwass, wanting to remind me that I was chosen to do the Great Work, picked out, on the one hand, Salama as the most unlikely prophet imaginable; on the other, the tale as one which I could not possibly dismiss as trivial. In fact, though I cannot remember making a record of the incident, and indeed probably took pains to avoid doing so as a rebuke to self-importance, it remains as vivid and distinct as

almost anything else in my life. I can see the pass, I can almost taste the tobacco: I can see his shy honest weather-beaten old face and hear his timid loyal accents. In the background the coolies, singing and talking, pass over the misty slopes; yet I cannot remember where the place was or even whether it happened on the first or second Himalayan expedition. (I am almost sure, on reflection, that it was on the return from Kang Chen Junga.)

I continued the Invocation of the Augoeides, with occasional additions and progressive intensification, week after week. I rather avoided any other magical work, on the principle of concentrating every particle of my energy on the daily routine. I even refrained, as a rule, from using my astral eyes during the Invocation itself. I might easily have been lured from the Path by getting interested in some of the hosts of Angelic forms that habitually appeared.

On May the 4th there is an entry which indicates my attitude to the work itself. It sounds very simple to make an invocation; but when one gets to work, behold! a multitude of points, each of which has to be settled with extreme care. This entry deals with one such:

"A∴ very energetic on my part, intensely so, better perhaps than ever before.

"However (or perhaps because) there was little vision.

"Indeed, this work of A∴ requires the Adept to assume the woman's part; too long for the bridegroom, maybe, and to be ever ready to receive his kiss; but not to pursue openly and to use force.

"Yet "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." May it not be, though, that such violence should be used against oneself in order to attain that passive state? And, of course, to shut out all rivals? Help me, thou Holy One, even in this; for all my strength is weak as water, and I am but a dog. Help me. O self-glittering one! draw nigh to me in sleep and in waking, and let me ever be as a wise virgin and expect thy coming with a lamp of oil of holiness and beauty! Hail, beautiful and strong one! I desire thy kisses more than life or death.

From this it appears that I was still as spiritually adolescent as St. Augustine or St. Teresa. It seems necessary for juvenile souls to represent mystical experience by means of anthropomorphic symbols. The practice naturally follows the lines laid down by the theory. For this reason one's early adventures are accompanied by romantic phenomena and stigmata. Buddhist psychology recognizes this. For instance, the first Jhana is accompanied

by Ananda, bliss; but in the second this quality disappears. I think it deplorable that mystic advancement should be expressed by means of such hieroglyphs as “the Bride's Reception;” that is, at least, if any peculiar attribution of a sexual character is implied.

Of course, even above the Abyss, Chokmah and Binah, Chiah and Neschamah are customarily called Father and Mother; considering how lamentably prone humanity is to anthropomorphism, it seems unfortunate. But we cannot deny the justice of the symbolism, and the way to eliminate the disadvantages and dangers of the situation is to extend the connection of the word “love” to include all phenomena of the uniting of opposites, as is done in *The Book of the Law*. Hardly anything is more important for the aspirant than to get rid of the tendency to make God in his Own image. One should learn to regard the formula of Yod, Hé, Vau as universal, not as generalized from the reproductive process of mammals, but *vice versa*. That process should be regarded as one particular case of the Law, and that case by no means an important one.

We must be constantly on our guard against ego-centric implications; they do not even exalt the Ego as they pretend to do, they limit it. We become great just so far as we are able to liberate ourselves from the constriction of our normal conception that we are men. When one has crossed the Abyss, especially, one should be altogether free from the prepossession that one's body and mind are more than inconvenient instruments through which we perceive the universe. To increase our understanding of the Cosmos, we must constantly endeavour to counteract the limitations which the fact that our instrument is a human being seeks to impose upon us.

I do not, however, wish to represent the Operation of Abramelin which I was now performing as a retrogression; but I had to undertake it in order to fulfil completely the formulae of Adeptship. It was necessary to complete the work of the Second Order before I could adequately take up my work in the Third. Again, the mission, in order to carry out which I had incarnated, was a mission to mankind; and this must explain why, *pari passu* with my personal progress, I walked continually in the way of the world. My spiritual life itself was now therefore definitely duplex, and this fact must be kept in mind if my subsequent actions are to be properly understood.

Arriving in England on the 2nd of June, I was stunned by the news of my bereavement. I made a point of detaching my mind. In the train from Liverpool to London I continued to chat with my companions on the boat as if nothing had happened. Having got to bed I released the prisoner. There was only one thing to be done: “I solemnly reaffirmed the oath of my obligation

to perform the Operation, offering under these terrible circumstances all that yet remained."

I am convinced, by the way, that the unremitting blows of misfortune, of which this bereavement was the first, were caused by the malice of the Abramelin demons, but that none of them would have reached me if I had understood and obeyed the Secret Chiefs and the forces behind them in the Shanghai working.

It was really curious the way one form of slight illness after another attacked me. My wife happened to make some remark to this effect to the housekeeper, a real old Sussex product. She nodded her head wisely. "He'll never be better," she said in an oracular tone, "until that baby is born." I found on inquiry that it is a widespread superstition in Sussex that sometimes especially when the husband is unusually devoted to his wife, she escapes the usual inconvenience of pregnancy, while he is constantly ill. The idea is of sympathetic transference.

I am reminded by this of a still stranger superstition exceedingly prevalent in theatrical circles. I heard of it in this way. There was a certain man addicted to stage beauties, with an income of some £80,000 a year. He had married twice, and the wife had died rather mysteriously soon after in both cases. The story was that she drooped and died without any obvious cause. Despite his vast wealth, he had been refused repeatedly by various girls in musical comedy circles. I went into the matter and was told in a hushed whisper that the man had a "white liver." They could not say exactly what they meant by this. All they knew was that to marry him meant death. I regret to have to spoil the story, but one of the best known Queens of musical comedy decided to take the risk, and is alive and well to-day. Of course, the stage is notoriously superstitious in a thousand grotesque ways, but this particular idiocy struck me as strangely fascinating. It has a flavour of the Grimoires.

I became seriously ill. Through everything, surgery and all, I continued the daily work. On July 26 I went to stay with Cecil Jones, who was now an Exempt Adept. (The initials of his motto are D.D.S.) I conferred with him about my operation. The main points are as follows: (I quote Captain J.F.C. Fuller's account.)

July 27. Here we have a most extraordinary entry, which needs explanation and illustration.

Fra. P. was crucified by Fra. D.D.S. and on that cross made to repeat this oath: "I, P——, a member of the Body of Christ, do hereby solemnly obligate

myself, etc., to lead a pure and unselfish life, and will entirely devote myself so to raise, etc., myself to the Knowledge of my higher and Divine Genius that I shall be He.

"In witness of which I invoke the great Angel Hua to give me a proof of his existence."

P. transcribes this, and continues: "Complete and perfect visualization of . . ." here are hieroglyphics which may mean "Christ as P—— on cross." He goes on: "The low dark hill, the storm, the star." But the Pylon of the Camel (i.e. the path of Gimel) open, and a ray therein: withal a certain vision of A∴ remembered only as a glory now attainable.

28. Twenty-fifth week of A∴ begins.

29. (A∴ continued evidently, for P. writes:)
Perfect the lightning conductor and the flash will come.

Aug 4. About to try the experiment of daily Aspiration in the Sign of Osiris Slain.

Did this twenty-two minutes, with Invocation as of old.

Cut cross on breast and circle on head.

(Scire) The vow of Poverty is to esteem nothing save A∴

(Audere) The vow of Chastity is to use the Magical Force only to invoke A∴

(Velle) The vow of Obedience is to concentrate the will on A∴ alone.

(Tacere) The vow of Silence: so to regulate the whole organism that so vast a miracle as the completion of the Great Work excites therein no commotion.

N.B. To look expectantly always, as if He would instantly appear.

I renewed the Obligation, cutting the cross and circle on my body every week. On August 9th I wrote the Invocation of the Ring; that is, of the symbolical Episcopal ring of amethyst, which I wore as an Exempt Adept.

ADONAI! Thou inmost Fire,
Self-glittering image of my soul,

Strong lover to thy Bride's desire,
    Call me and claim me and control!
I pray thee keep the holy tryst.
Within this ring of Amethyst.

For on mine eyes the golden Sun
    Hath dawned; my vigil slew the Night.
I saw the image of the One:
    I came from darkness into Light.
I pray Thee keep the holy tryst
Within this ring of Amethyst.

I.N.R.I. — me crucified,
    Me slain, interred, arisen, inspire!
T.A.R.O. — me glorified,
    Anointed, fill with frenzied Fire!
I pray Thee keep the holy tryst
Within this ring of Amethyst.

I eat my flesh: I drink my blood:
    I gird my loins: I journey far:
For Thou hast shown the Rose, the Rood,
    The Eye, the Sword, the Silver Star.
I pray thee keep the holy tryst
Within this ring of Amethyst.

Prostrate I wait upon thy will,
    Mine Angel, for this grace of union.
O let this Sacrament distil
    Thy conversation and communion.
I pray Thee keep the holy tryst
Within this ring of Amethyst.

I intended to use this Invocation in practice. The amethyst was to be, so to speak, the lens through which the Holy Guardian Angel should manifest. On September 17th I went to Ashdown Park Hotel, Coulsdon, Surrey and recovered my health suddenly and completely. On the 21st I had completed thirty-two weeks of the Operation and thirty-one weeks of actual daily invocation. The next day D.D.S. came to see me: we celebrated the Autumnal Equinox and reconstructed the old Neophyte Ritual of the G∴ D∴, eliminating all unnecessary features and quintessentializing the magical formulae.

On the 9th, having prepared a full invocation and ritual, I performed it. I had no expectation, I think, of attaining any special success; but it came. I had performed the Operation of the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage.

It is unlawful to speak of the supreme sacrament. It was such, as the following entry shows, that I found it hard to believe that I had been permitted to partake of it. I will confine myself to the description of some of the ancillary phenomena.

Oct. 9. Tested new ritual and behold it was very good! Thanked gods and sacrificed for ——. In the "thanksgiving and sacrifices for . . ." I *did* get rid of everything but the Holy Exalted One, and must have held Him for a minute or two. I did. I am sure I did.

Such is the fragmentary account [Captain Fuller's] of what was then the greatest event of Fra. P.'s career. Yet this is an account of the highest trances — of Shivadarshana itself, as we know from other sources. The "vision" (to use still the name became totally inadequate) appears to have had three main points in its Atmadarshana stage —

1. The Universal Peacock.

2. The Universe as Ego. "I who am all and made it all, abide its separate Lord," i.e. the Universe becomes a single and simple being, without quantity, quality or conditions. In this the "I" is immanent, yet the "I" made it, and the "I" is entirely apart from it. (This is the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, or something very like it.)

3. This Trinity is transcended by an impersonal Unity. This is then annihilated by the Opening of the Eye of Shiva. It is absolutely futile to discuss this: it has been tried and failed again and again. Even those with experience of the earlier part of the "vision" in its fullness must find it totally impossible to imagine anything so subversive of the whole base, not only of the Ego, but of the absolute behind the Ego.

The very next day the enemy struck home below the belt, as described in the previous chapter. The blow could not shake my soul. For over three weeks I bore the stigmata of my Operation physically. I visibly radiated light. People used to turn in the street to look at me; they did not know what it was, but the impression must have been irresistible.

No sooner had this worn off than the enemy struck again at my health. I was obliged to put myself once more in the doctor's hands and go to Bour-

nemouth. I was now thoroughly prepared to take up my Work of initiating mankind, but I was still determined to do it on the old lines.

I had no books of reference at Bournemouth, and it struck me that it would be very convenient if I possessed a volume giving all the correspondences of the Qabbala in a compact form. I spent a week in writing this down from memory and the result is the volume *777*. (It is to be noticed that there is no reference to the Cairo working — any way in this book.)

In the month of December the Secret Chiefs formally invited me, thorough G.R. Frater D.D.S., to take my place officially in the Third Order. I still felt that I was not worthy. Not till three years later did I accept the Grade, and then only after having passed ceremonially through the Abyss in the fullest possible measure.

CHAPTER 77

The years 1907 and 1908 may be described as years of fulfilment. No new current came to stir my life; but the seeds which had been sown in the past came many of them to harvest. I had come to my full stature as a poet. My technique was perfect; it had shaken off from its sandals the last dust which they had acquired by walking in the ways of earlier masters. I produced lyric and dramatic poetry which shows an astounding mastery of rhythm and rime, a varied power of expression which has no equal in the history of the language, and an intensity of idea which eats into the soul of the reader like vitriol.

I should have been assigned publicly my proper place among my peers of the past without difficulty had it not been of one fatal fact. My point of view is so original, my thought so profound, and my allusions so recondite, that superficial readers, carried away by the sheer music of the words, found themselves, so to speak, intoxicated and unable to penetrate to the pith. People did not realize that my sonorous similes possessed a subtle sense intelligible only to those whose minds were familiar with the subject. It is, in fact, necessary to study almost any poem of mine like a palimpsest. The slightest phrase is essential; each one must be interpreted individually, and the poem read again and again until its personality presents itself. People

who like my poetry, bar those who are simply tickled by the sound or what they imagine to be the sense, agree that it spoils them for any other poetry.

For instance, if I mention a beetle I expect the reader to understand an allusion to the sun at midnight in its moral sense of Light-in-Darkness; if a pelican, to the legend that she pierces her own breast to feed her young on her heart's bleed; if a goat, to the entire symbolism of Capricornus, the god Pan, Satan or Jesus (Jesus being born at the Winter Solstice, when the sun enters Capricorn); if a pearl, to the correspondences of that stone as a precious and glittering secretion of the oyster, by which I mean that invertebrate animal life of man, the Nephesch.

It must not be supposed that I am obscure on purpose. I have thought in the language of correspondences continuously, and it never occurs to me that other people have not at their fingers' ends the whole rosary of symbols. There is therefore no laboured learning in my poetry; its fluency persuades people that it must be meaningless. It is true that if asked to paraphrase it, I am sometimes unable to do so, even roughly; but there is a reason for this. I adopt the poetic form because it is in itself a method of expression. The music has a meaning independent of the words. Furthermore, a poem is a thing in itself. It possesses an atomic individuality which is incapable of analysis or interpretation. It is impossible to represent any god by any graven image. Every man produces his own peculiar impression on another, and he is ultimately inscrutable. Any poem of mine is an individual in this sense, and the reader must get to know the poem exactly as he gets to know a friend. However much he learns about it or him, the essence is not to be appreciated intellectually. This applies, in reality, to everything which exists. An atom of carbon is not to be understood by describing its physical and chemical properties.

During these two years my domestic tragedy was becoming constantly more acute. Rose told me that she was keeping her word, but it had become impossible to do any work where she was. She was in a state of continual irritation. I was obliged to take rooms in Jermyn Street in order to have a moment to myself. In the autumn of 1907 on returning from Tangiers, I found that she had obtained 150 bottles of whisky from one grocer alone in five months. Confronted with the fact, she broke down and agreed to take a cure for two months, in an establishment at Leicester. At the end of that time I took her climbing for a fortnight and she came back to London in excellent health; but ten days later the disease broke out with redoubled violence. I did everything that was humanly possible; but it was fighting a losing game.

Finally, early in 1909, the doctor threw up the sponge. He told her that she must agree to be sequestrated for two years. She refused: I insisted upon a divorce. I loved her as passionately as ever — more so than ever, perhaps, since it was the passion of uttermost despair. I insisted on a divorce. I would not be responsible for her. I would not stand by and see her commit suicide. It was agreed that I should be defendant as a matter of chivalry, and the necessary evidence was manufactured. I continued, however, to look after her as before; we even stayed together as much as we dared, and I saw her almost every day, either in our house or at my rooms. Directly the divorce was pronounced I returned from Algeria, whither I had gone to be out of the way during the trial, and we were photographed together, with the baby, at the Dover Street studios.

I had written the agony of my soul in *Rosa Decidua*, which I dedicated to Lord Salvesen (not Salvarsan), the Judge who presided at the trial. This poem was printed privately and a copy with the best of the photographs was sent to the Judge, with a polite letter of thanks. (It is reprinted in *The Winged Beetle*, pp. 130-149.) This poem is, perhaps, my high-water mark in realism. It reveals my human self as I had never even attempted to do. I trace my agony through every writhe. I feel compelled to quote a few passages:—

> This is no tragedy of little tears.
> My brain is hard and cold; there is no beat
> Of its blood; there is no heat
> Of sacred fire upon my lips to sing.
> My heart is dead; I say that name thrice over;
> Rose! — Rose! — Rose! —
> Even as lover should call to lover;
> There is no quickening,
> No flood, no fount that flows;
> No water wells from the dead spring.
> My thoughts come singly, dry, contemptuous,
> Too cold for hate; all I can say is that they come
> From some dead sphere without me;
> Singly they come, beats of a senseless drum
> Jarred by a fool, harsh, unharmonious.
>
> This leaden skin
> With ochre staining its amorphous grey;
> All that elastic brilliance passed away;
> Minute invading wrinkles where the flesh
> Is soaked away by the foul thing within
> Her soul; the bloom so faint and fresh

Smudged to a smoky glow as one may see
At sunset at the Factory lands; the lips
Thinned and their colour sickened into slate;
The eyes like common glass; the hair's gloss dull;
The muscles gone, all pendulous with fat;
The breath that was more sweet than Lebanon
And all the flowers and honey and spice therefore
Ripe for my soul's kiss, eagerly to cull,
Now like a corpse three weeks drowned, swollen by sun
And water and vermin. There she sways and stares,
And with the jaw dropped all awry — first swears,
Then lurches; then she slobbers unctuously:
“I am not old: I am quite beautiful;
How have I lost your love?”
Pitiful! Pitiful! Pitiful!

All power of love is burny bright through to ash.
Bray it in a mortar, mix with gall and ink,
and give it to the children for a drink!

I'll wait till she is dead, to bring those tears.

I know this tune
Should swell to a strong note, a triumph note
Blared through a trumpet's throat
To tell the world I am no coward, or else
Sob in sweet minor, soft as Asmodel's
Chant to the nightingale; I am so wrecked, so rent
That one seems brag, the other sentiment.
I cannot leave the present; I will not pose.
There lies the rotten rose
And stinks. That is the truth; the rest is gloss.
My loss was total loss.

Had I loved her less
I could have prated in some honeyed strain,
Taking a subtle pleasure in my pain.
It is my bulk, the mass of my intent,
That makes the ruin abject.

And after all the roar, there steals a strain
At last of tuneless, infinite pain;
And all my being is one throb
Of anguish, and one inarticulate sob

Catches my throat. All these vain voices die,
And all these thunders venomously hurled
Stop. My head strikes the floor; one cry, the old cry,
Strikes at the sky its exquisite agony;
Rose! Rose o' the' World!

But even my utmost realism dared not face the supreme horror. Allan Bennett had written to me to beg me to break off sexual relations with Rose. He knew as I did not, that any child of hers must be under the curse; for, while the baby lay dying in the hospital, its mother was trying to drown her anguish in drink, and it was slowly borne in upon me that the fever was due to the fact that the moment my back was turned Rose had broken out, had neglected to cleanse the nipple of the feeding bottle, and thereby exposed the child to the germs of Typhoid. The catastrophe which had stricken the father to the heart was the sister of that which was to perform the same office to the husband.

This poem has everywhere been recognized as overwhelming. E. S. P. Haynes told me that it was the most powerful that he had ever read, and Frank Harris wrote from what he thought was his death bed, “In Rosa Decidua there is more” (scil. than in some other poem of which he has been writing) “a despairing view of life — 'beats of a senseless drum — all's filth'. To 'My tongue is palsied … exquisite agony.' Astounding realism raised to art by perfect artistry.”

We went on living together, more or less; but her condition became rapidly worse and in the autumn of 1911 she had to be put in an asylum, suffering from alcoholic dementia.

Another seed of the past began to bear fruit at this time. I had never attempted to transmit my occult knowledge as such. I had never attempted to write prose, as such, apart from short accounts of my climbs, with the exception of the preface to *White Stains,* Vol. II Collected Works, pp. 195-8). *Berashith* was my first serious attempt at an essay. That and “Science and Buddhism” were followed by a *jeu d'esprit* on Shakespeare, Collected Works, Vol. II, pp. 185-90); “Pansil” (Vol. II, pp. 192-4); “After Agnosticism” (Vol. II, pp. 206-8); “Ambrosii Magi Hortus Rosarum” (Vol II, pp. 212-24); “The Three Characteristics” (Vol. II, pp. 225-32; “The Excluded Middle” (Vol. II, pp. 262-6); “Time” (Vol. II, pp. 267-82); “The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic” (Vol. II, pp. 203-4); “Qabalistic Dogma” (Vol. I, pp. 265-6); the introduction to *Alice, an Adultery* (Vol. II, pp. 58-61). Some of the ghazals of the *Bagh-i-Muattar* are in prose, as well as the preliminary matter; and there is Eleusis (Vol. III, pp. 219-30).

Most of these were written from a very curious point of view. It was not exactly that I had my tongue in my cheek, but I took a curious pleasure in expressing serious opinions in a fantastic form. I had an instinctive feeling against prose; I had not appreciated its possibilities. Its apparent lack of form seemed to me to stamp it as an essentially inferior means of expression. I wrote it, therefore, in a rather shame-faced spirit. I deliberately introduced bad jokes to show that I did not take myself seriously; whereas the truth was I was simply nervous about my achievement, just as a man afraid to disgrace himself as a boxer might pretend that the bout was not in earnest. My prose is consequently marred by absolutely stupid blasphemies against itself.

> "I see it, too and the way out to life.
> But the labyrinth, if you please, before the
> clue; the Minotaur before the maiden!
> Thank you, madam, would you care to look at our
> new line in Minotaurs at 2s. 3d.? This way please."

I then proceed with profound philosophical argument.

I now began to see that this was schoolboyish bashfulness, and to feel my responsibility as an exponent of the hidden knowledge, to treat my prose as reverently as my verse, and (consequently) to produce masterpieces of learning and wit. The "Dedication and Counter-Dedication" of *Konx Om Pax* is wholly admirable and it rises to a delightful satirical climax of four stanzas on the "empty-headed Athenians". "The Wake World" is a sublime description of the Path of the Wise, rendered picturesque by the use of the symbols of the Taro, and charming by its personification of the Soul as a maiden.

"My name is Lola, because I am the Key of Delights, and the other children in my dream call me Lola Daydream."

"Ali Sloper; or the Forty Liars" shows traces of my old vulgarity. The *dramatis personae* contain a lot of bad puns and personal gibes, but the dialogue shows decided improvement; and the "Essay on Truth" is both acute and witty, with few blemishes. "Thien Tao" gives my solution of the main ethical and philosophical problems of humanity with a description of the general method of emancipating oneself from the obsession of one's own ideas, in an amusing setting; the humour is, on the whole, spontaneous and lively, while there are passages of remarkable eloquence.

The last essay in *Konx Om Pax*, "The Stone of the Philosophers which is hidden in Abiegnus, the Rosicrucian Mountain of Initiation", is really beyond praise. Its genesis is interesting. I had written at odd times, but mostly dur-

ing my travels with the Earl of Tankerville, a number of odd lyrics. The idea came to me that I might enhance their value by setting them in prose. I therefore wrote a symposium of a poet, a traveller, a philosophical globe-trotter, an adept, a classical scholar and a doctor. They are made to converse about the chronic calamity of society, and the poems (ostensibly written by one or other of the men) carry on the thought. The result is, in reality, a new form of art; and I certainly assisted the lyrics by giving them appropriate springboards.

In 1903, too, I wrote *The Soldier and the Hunchback, ! and ?* and *The Psychology of Hashish*. The one goes to the roots of scepticism and mysticism, and represents them as alternative moods, neither valued in itself yet each a complete answer to its predecessor. I show that by perseverance in transcending each in turn, the original crude distinction between affirmation and negation tends to disappear; the supreme doubt is more positive than the more limited assertion.

“So then we retire up the path, fighting rearguard actions; at every moment a soldier is slain by a hunchback; but as we retire there is always a soldier just by us.

Until the end. The end? Buddha thought the supply of hunchbacks infinite; but why should not the soldiers themselves be infinite in number?

However that may be, here is the point; it takes a moment for a hunchback to kill his man; and the farther we get from our base the longer it takes. You may crumble to ashes the dream-world of a boy, as it were, between your fingers; but before you can bring the physical universe tumbling about a man's ears he requires to drill his hunchbacks themselves. And a question capable of shaking the consciousness of Samadhi could, I imagine, give long odds to one of Frederick's grenadiers.”

This essay bears few marks of the old error; there is plenty of humour and wit, but it is dignified.

The Psychology of Hashish pleases me more every time I read it. It contains such a wealth of knowledge, it shows such profundity of thought, that I find myself today still wondering how I ever wrote it. I find in it ideas which I am hardly aware that I possess to-day; how I could have thought thus at this elementary stage of my career, and written it all down in a single day, is bewildering. It is completely free from any blemishes of the old type. The sublimity of my subject possessed me.

From this time I found myself writing almost as much in prose as in verse, and I had no further trouble with my gaucherie. When a poet takes to prose it implies that he is passing out of the stage of spiritual adolescence. Lyrics are expansions of the Ego; even dramatic poetry is to some extent subjective. One does not report the conversation of other people in the language of Shelley. Prose is naturally objective. Even when one is speaking *in propria persona* one allows a reality to the subjects of one's remarks; whereas in lyrics the universe is instinctively understood as a mere projection of the Ego. That is why it is legitimate in poetry to speak of the moon as favouring one's romances, personifying the trees or the clouds, and the like. In prose it would be simply ridiculous.

That is to say, prose and poetry deal with different kinds of reality, and that is one of the reasons why paraphrase is impossible. It also explains why a man has no business to confuse the forms, why narrative poetry is inevitable fantastic. We realise instinctively that Marmion and Manfred are not on earth — they are imaginary people in every sense of the word. Even in Shakespeare, the characters who talk poetry, Hamlet, Romeo, even Othello, are subjective; the true portraits, Falstaff, Coriolanus, Juliet's Nurse, talk prose.

One other seed had fallen upon fertile ground. “The chance of the geologic period” had been seized by Captain John Charles Frederick Fuller, of the First Oxfordshire Light Infantry. It had come his way through the *Rationalist Press Association*, to whose publications he subscribed. He had not done any serious writing before; his utmost had been a few insignificant articles and poems, which he contributed to the *Agnostic Journal*. He was fighting valiantly against Christianity by the side of “Saladin”, William Ross Stewart, who was the leader of one of the main branches of militant agnosticism. The army of Satan had, unfortunately, failed to keep discipline in the face of the enemy. The Anti-Christians were in fact as prone to split up into sects as the Non-Conformists themselves. Bradlaugh's personality was big enough to enable him to keep any differences that he may have had with Huxley in the background, but the successors of these paladins were degenerate. Mrs. Besant had broken away from atheism altogether; her hysteria handed her over from one strong influence to another as it appealed to her imagination. G. W. Foote, with the medal of his martyrdom glittering on his manly breast, marched monotonously against the mob of Christianity. He had suffered for the cause and was consumed by personal pride on that account. Ross Stewart had more literary leanings and was accordingly exclusive. Bernard Shaw was engaged in public exhibitions of rapier play; his subtlety made his colleagues doubt his sincerity; and without question his attacks on Christianity had lost their sting by reason of the very bitterness of his contempt for convention.

The *Rationalist Press Association*, with Grant Allen, Charles Watts, Edward Clodd, Joseph McCabe, Bertrand Russell, E. S. P. Haynes (the lawyer, by the way, who had so elegantly and adroitly arranged the details of my divorce) and numerous other prominent people, was, above all, anxious to be respectable. It felt it to be the most important point of policy not to give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. Shelley's domestic diversions shocked them; they wanted to prove that conventional morality would not suffer by the abolition of Christianity. One of the Association's own lecturers, Harry Boulter, was prosecuted for the blasphemy of saying in Hyde Park what a thousand others, from Voltaire to Tyndall, had said for centuries, and they refused to defend him because his remarks had shocked policemen. The attitude seemed to me utterly ignoble. I have no particular sympathy with Boulter, but I recognized that in destroying the delusions of the vulgar one must use the kind of dynamite which they understand.

At the same time, I think the *Rationalist Press Association* ought to have accepted battle and fought the Blasphemy-Laws to a finish. They lost prestige by deserting a comrade. People said, as they said of Shaw, that they were “too proud to fight.” There were still other sects of Satanists, down to the Reverend Guy A. Alfred, who mixed up religious and political revolt like the Bolsheviks. In one sense the attitude is logical and it is certainly courageous.

Fuller knew the animal and arranged with him to issue a cheap edition of *The Star in the West* with a preface of his “Alfred's” own, through the Bakunin Press. He thought we should begin reconstruction of civilization at the very bottom. Alfred was certainly our man! When I read Conrad's *Secret Agent* I instantly recognized him in Comrade Ossipon. I had never met so repulsive a type. Yet the creature had scholarship of a sort, keen courage and intellectual integrity. I say “intellectual integrity” because I would not have trusted him with a three-penny bit. He did, in fact, cheat us out of a considerable amount, though we went into the business with our eyes open. With regard to the logic of his view, that Christianity and the social system stood or fell together, I object. That is emphatically the Christian view. The elder Cato was not an anarchist, nor Julius Caesar a disciple of Karl Marx. I entirely agree with Nietzsche that Christianity is the formula of the servile state; true aristocracy and true democracy are equally its enemies. In my ideal state everyone is respected for what he is. There will always be slaves, and the slave is to be defined as he who acquiesces in being a slave.

Such was the situation when Fuller, home on leave from India, came to see me and told me that he was competing for the prize essay on my work. He was entirely at one with me on the point of my attitude to Christianity. We regard it as historically false, morally infamous, politically contemptible

and socially pestilential. We agree with Shelley, Keats, Byron, Swinburne, and James Thomson as far as *they* went. But we were absolutely opposed to any ideas of social revolution. We deplored the fact that our militant atheists were not aristocrats like Bolingbroke. We had no use for the sordid slum writers and Hyde Park ranters who had replace the aristocratic infidel of the past. We felt ourselves to be leaders; but the only troops at our disposal were either mercenaries or mobs. Like the Prince of the Fronde, we found ourselves fighting by the side of a venal and ignorant Parliament, disorderly banditti, a mob of bourgeois, and a horde of beggars.

The position was all the more annoying because we knew perfectly well that the vast majority of the aristocracy, both of blood and of brains, were heartily on our side or profoundly indifferent and aloof. But they were all afraid to come out into the open and sweep religion away; or else felt themselves personally secure from any annoyance and therefore inclined to let sleeping dogs lie. For example, it was known that two thirds of the Dons of Trinity College, Cambridge, were openly atheistic, and, according to all the principles of the university, should have been *ipso facto* deprived of their fellowships, yet they were perfectly safe in the saddle so long as they abstained from any overt act which the authorities could not overlook. We thought that this hypocrisy was not the harmless practical joke which it seems to be at first sight. We could not ourselves have acquiesced consciously in any such evasion, and we did not understand how people of such intellectual superiority could agree to hold their positions on such humiliating terms.

It is (incidentally) hardly less humiliating for Christianity itself that that it should be so powerless, despite its ostensible impregnability. It could not furnish the necessary complement of men of intellect from its own ranks, and the College was compelled to endure the contempt of its own Fellows. It could not do without them; it dared not prescribe them; it dared not prescribe them; it had to be careful to avoid so much as questioning them on the essential points on which their tenure of office was supposed to depend. It dared not even make any overt endeavour to alter the situation. It dared not even lament the evil days on which it had fallen. It had to pretend that all was well: to deny boisterously a fact which was notorious.

As a matter of fact, Christianity is everywhere in more or less the same position, though the most liberal estimate of the proportion of population that attends any place of worship scarcely reaches one and a half per cent. The Church claims — when not wailing to the opposite effect — that the entire population is actively Christian. The press cannot believe its ears when it transpires that some professor of geology does not believe in Genesis. There is indeed something pitifully heroic about the enormity of the belief. It were

not that this infinitesimal minority is able to exercise such an asphyxiating effect on popular thought, and such a murderous grip upon popular morals, to torture and deform the minds of children, to make hypocrisy the price of happiness, one might even sympathize with this frog in its attempts to persuade itself and its neighbours that it is an ox.

CHAPTER 78

On one point only were Fuller and I at odds. His hatred for Christianity extended to the idea of religion in general. He had, of course, a sympathy in his heart for Islam; the manliness of the Mohammedan makes it impossible to despise his belief in Allah. Islam is free from the degrading doctrine of Atonement and the glorification of the slave virtues. The Moslem's attitude to Allah only errs in so far as it involves the childish idea of personifying the powers of the Universe. It is right that we should reverence the majesty of Nature and obey her laws; but he fought with me, hand to hand, week after week, about the question of Magick. He had originally intended his essay to conclude with the sixth chapter, and he had scrupulously avoided any reference to the Magical and Mystical side of my work; nay, even to the philosophical side so far as that was concerned with Transcendentalism. But I showed him that the study must be incomplete unless he added a chapter expounding my views on these subjects. Thus Chapter Seven came to be written.

It is a very complete and just exposition of my views, and it is especially to be noticed that within the one hundred and thirty-three pages there is no reference to *The Book of the Law*. (At the time of publication, therefore, I was still keeping the hem of my garment scrupulously away from the Cairo working.) By the time he had written this chapter, I had brought him to see that Materialism, in any ordinary sense of the word, was thoroughly unsatisfactory as an explanation of the Universe; but he was not in the least inclined to accept any theories which might involve belief of any kind in a spiritual hierarchy. In the course of our argument I had myself been made uneasy by a subconscious feeling that, water-tight as my system was in itself, certain legitimate inferences might be drawn from it which I was not drawing.

The Book of the Law annoyed me; I was still obsessed by the idea that secrecy was necessary to a magical document, that publication would destroy its importance. I determined, in a mood which I can only describe as a fit of ill temper, to publish *The Book of the Law*, and then get rid of it for ever.

I was also annoyed by the way in which Fuller stuck to his guns about the magical hierarchy in general. In a spirit of mischief I sent him a typescript of *The Book of the Law* and asked him to tell me what he thought of it. I wanted to disgust him with myself; I wanted him to class me finally as a hopeless crank. His answer came in the course of two or three days: I could not believe my eyes. This, he wrote, is the utterance of a Master. What did he know about Masters, confound him! It was as if I had sent a copy of *Tit-Bits* to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he had reverently pronounced it to be the authentic Logia of “our Lord”.

But there was no getting over the fact. Here was the book which I hated and feared, the book from which I was desperately trying to escape, and here was a man who hated anything of the sort without fearing it in the least, a man who had nothing to escape from; and it was instantly accepted by him at its face value. It's no good arguing whether a thing is a hammer or not, when all you know about it is that it has a habit of knocking you down.

It was useless to struggle further. So late as October 1908, I was carrying out a Retirement (see “John St. John”), and invoking my Holy Guardian Angel, without any reference to *The Book of the Law*. Fuller and I had gone to work to edit my Magical diaries and present to the world the story of my Magical career in “The Temple of Solomon the King”, as if the Cairo Working were a mere episode of that career. We were carrying out the orders of the Secret Chiefs by exposing the G∴ D∴ and publishing its Ritual, but I was sheltering myself from *The Book of the L*aw by taking advantage of a phrase in the text which insists: “All this and a book to say how thou didst come hither and a reproduction of this ink and paper for ever — for in it is the word secret & not only in the English.” And the manuscript had been lost!

As the sequel will show, the Gods knew when to lay their hands on it. I surrendered at discretion, re-obligated myself and in September 1909 wrote my greatest magical poem “Aha!” in which the Cairo Working is restored to its proper place in my life. I have made many insurrections since then; but they have always been quelled in very short order and punished as they deserved.

This lengthy preamble will enable the reader to fit into their proper places the ostensibly incoherent events of 1907 and 1908. My own continuous illness, the birth of Lola Zaza and the tragedy of Rose had combined to complicate my ordinary business, making it impossible for me to think of making any new plans for exploration. My affairs in Scotland had fallen into great confusion through the extravagance and dishonesty of my factor. While the cat was away the mice had been extremely busy.

Fuller and I had clearly understood the imminence of the World catastrophe. We did not exactly know where Civilization would begin to crack, or when; we were content to leave such speculations to the Prophet Baxter, the Rev. Booth Clibborn and such small deer. But we saw the New Zealander sitting on the ruined arch of London Bridge quite clearly.

We could also see the Professor of Archaeology in the University of Lhasa excavating the ruins of the British Museum. He discovered a vast number of volumes of our period purporting to deal with the Occult sciences, but there were few indeed of these which had not crumbled into dust. Of those that remained, the vast majority were evidently frivolous. He rejoiced exceedingly to discover one series of volumes, the dignity of whose appearance, the permanence of whose paper, the excellence of whose printing, and the evident care which had been bestowed on their production, showed him at first sight that the people responsible for their production had been at infinite pains to make these volumes testify against the Tyranny of Time. He had them taken to his camp with the greatest care. Although he could not read a word of the letter-press, the illustrations were in the universal language, which he could read at sight. The first glance confirmed his impression that he had found the standard work of reference — the key to the wisdom of the buried past.

With this vision before us, we determined on making our record of the highest attainments of human spirits of our generation as worthy as possible of its subject. It annoyed us that we could not engrave our knowledge on ten thousand slabs like those at Mandalay, but we determined to do our best. We decided on a fount of type, a size of page and a quality of paper which could not fail to impress the Professors of Posterity, and we determined that our prose should be so simple, so dignified and so sublime that it would stand out from the slipshod journalism of the period as the Alhambra above the hovels of the vermin that surround it. The scheme required capital, and though I was already somewhat embarrassed by the habit of buying a black egg without haggling, I did not hesitate to put my hand in my pocket.

Fuller was at this time in grave difficulties, *à la D'Artagnan*, but he gave his time and his toil with magnificent generosity. His draughtmanship, within certain limits, was miraculously fine. Certain subjects were altogether beyond him; he could not portray the human figure. His “Adonai-Ha-Aretz” is lamentable, but his symbolic drawing shows the highest qualities of imagination and execution, and his geometrical work is almost inconceivably perfect. His four Watch Towers (Equinox, , I-VII) and similar illustrations are superb, and his ornamental alphabet is altogether beyond me to appreciate. Unfortunately, his prose was florid and confused, and he suffered acutely from what I call the “comma bacillus”. He loved a sentence so much that he could not persuade himself to finish it, but his images are more vivid and virile than those of any writer I have ever known.

The style of *The Star in the West* is trenchant and picturesque. Its only fault is a tendency to over-loading. I could have wished a more critical and less adoring study of my work; but his enthusiasm was genuine, and guaranteed our personal relations in such sort that my friendship with him is one of the dearest memories of my life. I dedicated *The Winged Beetle* to him, in a poem of which I quote the last two stanzas.

“Yea, with one song of starry flame
In brilliance of immortal youth
Didst thous stand steadfast and proclaim
Freedom and Ecstasy and Truth,
Erect amid the wreck of Things
Poised on inexorable wings!

So much the universe may see
When its bat's eyes may endure the sun;
This secret rests my prize to me,
That I knew thee, surpassed of none.
Fighting and faithful to the end,
A perfect knight, a perfect friend.

Alas, I did not take into account the corrupting influence of women. He held out a long while against the insidious pressure of his wife. It was perhaps only through the treachery of another man that mischief was finally made between us. But nothing can destroy the past, and the long years of our intimate friendship were indeed fertile. We saw each other nearly every day and worked together in perfect harmony.

In “The Temple of Solomon the King” Fuller's style was already much improved, though the story of my life might have been set forth more simply. Though his tendency to burst out into ecstatic rhapsodies resulted in dis-

ordering the proportions of its events, in the main his task was admirably accomplished, and there are passages of astonishing sublimity, not only in the matter of language but in that of thought. His point-of-view was indeed more subtle and profound than he himself realized. I am sure that many passages of this book will stand among the greatest monuments of English prose extant.

He also invented what was really an original style of reviewing books, a style from which I myself learnt many new ways of annoying my contemporaries. Quite a lot of people who had no use for Magick or poetry such as form the greatest portion of the contents of the Equinox, subscribed to it for the sake of the reviews alone. Here is a part of a delightful review of Franz Hartmann's *With the Adepts*.

“The lady adepts are bashful and shy, but always very proper. The Monastery might be in Lower Tooting. The hero asks silly questions so as to give the Adept the requisite opportunities of making sillier answers 'I was rather reluctant to leave the presence of the ladies . . . . the ladies permitted me to retire.' Outside bottles full of this sort of occult Potassium Bromide, this novelette is eminently suitable as a monal sedatative for young girls when they reach sixteen or thereabouts and are beginning to wonder how they got into this funny world.

“The Devil: 'Let us giggle.'

“Theodorus: 'Hush, you have committed a horrible black magical act, you have slept with . . .'

“Leila (*a creamy girl*): 'Good heavens, Sir, I faint; call a policeman.'

“Theodorus: 'Become acquainted with the Queen of the nymphs'

“Sister Helen (*Nursing expert*): 'A douch, smelling salts, eau de Cologne, quinine . . .'

“Theodorus: 'From the abode of . . . . . Brotherhood you are expelled (*sobs*) to the British Museum you must go (*snuffles*) and read (pause) T*he Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*!'

The Devil: 'Tut, tut . . . Dear Sisters, the train has stopped, we are at Streatham Hill — let us get out.'

But he reached his high-water mark with “The Treasure House of Images” (Equinox I-III, Special Supplement.) Formally, this is the most re-

markable prose that has ever been written. Each chapter of the main part of the book contains thirty sections, and each section has the same number of syllables. Each of these chapters hymns the sign of the Zodiac and in each section that sign is modified by another sign. It is the most astonishing achievement in symbolism.

But this is not all. There is a chapter containing one hundred and sixty-nine cries of Adoration, which is, as it were, a multiplication of the previous chapters and a quintesentialization of them. To this day we chant these Adorations to the sound of the tom-tom and dance to the music, and the effect is to carry away the performer into the sublimest ecstasy. It possesses all the magick of oriental religious rites, such as those of the Sidi Aissawa, but the rapture is purely religious. It is not confused with eroticism, and that although many of the symbols are of themselves violently erotic.

O Thou dew-lit nymph of the Dawn, that swoonest in
the satyr arms of the Sun! I adore Thee
Evoe! I adore Thee, IAO!

O Thou mad abode of kisses, that art lit by the fat
of murdered fiends! I adore Thee, Evoe!
I adore Thee, IAO!

Unfortunately, when our friendship was interrupted so was his literary career. I had taught him to write prose, but he has been able to employ his talents to no better purpose than to win prizes in competitions organized by the Army Council.

The Star in the West was published in 1907 and was widely reviewed; for the most part, favourably. In particular, Soror S. S. D. D. (Mrs. Emery or “Florence Farr” as she was variously known) wrote a very full criticism of it in the *New Age*. Some of it is so prophetic that it must be quoted here:

“It is a hydra-headed monster, this London Opinion, but we should not be at all surprised to see an almost unparalleled event, namely, everyone of those hydra-heads moving with a single purpose, and that the denunciation of Mr. Aleister Crowley and all his works.

Now this would be a remarkable achievement for a young gentleman who only left Cambridge quite a few years ago. It requires a certain amount of serious purpose to stir Public Opinion into active opposition, and the only question is, has Mr. Crowley a serious purpose?

Such are some of the sensations described by Aleister Crowley in his quest for the discovery of his Relation with the Absolute. His power of expression is extraordinary; his kite flies, but he never fails to jerk it back to earth with some touch of ridicule or pathos which makes it still an open question whether he will excite that life-giving animosity on the part of Public Opinion which, as we have hinted, is only accorded to the most dangerous thinkers.

I was enormously encouraged by this article. I knew how serious my purpose was. She had reassured me on the point where my faith wavered. I had become so accustomed to columns of eloquent praise from the most important people in the world of letters, which had not sold a dozen copies; to long controversial criticism from such men as G. K. Chesterton, which had fallen absolutely flat. People acquiesced in me as the only living poet of any magnitude. (There were many better known and more highly reputed poets — Francis Thompson, W. B. Yeats, Rudyard Kipling, and later John Masefield, Rupert Brooke and other small fry, whose achievement at the best was limited by the narrowness of their ambitions. I at least was aiming at the highest.)

Yet hardly anyone had read any of my work and the intrigues of my enemies had made it impossible for me to make myself heard. I never cease to wonder at the persistence of malignant hostility on the part of people who have never met me or read a line of my writing. I cannot see why people should pursue me with secret slander, often of a kind which carries its own refutation with it. To give one instance: It was said it was my practice to lure men into the Himalayas for *week-ends* . . . I always returned alone!

There seemed no limit to the lies that were circulated about me. As to motive, I can only imagine that it was partly the revenge of the G∴ D∴ rebels whom I had smashed, and, subsequently, Mathers and his gang when it became my duty to put a stop to their swindling and blackmail; partly to my *intransigence* about other forms of quackery. I had not spared the English Alpine Club or the pretenders to literary eminence. I kept myself aloof from cliques and simply refused to admit the existence of the people who were playing at being poets, novelists and philosophers. I had a happy knack of hitting such people where they lived. My personalities were indeed in the worst of taste.

But I had learnt intolerance of all pretence and humbug from Eckenstein who had on me somewhat the influence that Athos had on D'Artagnan. Whenever I was tempted to derogate in any way from the highest standards of honour, the thought always came to me that I could not face Eckenstein if I failed. My family, my college and my friend have always been my mentors;

but, above all, my friend! His severity was fortified by his clear sight; no subterfuge was possible with him. He taught me to judge my conduct by the most austere standards of rectitude and nobility. It is not too much to say that he created my moral character. I had a fatal tendency to find excuses for myself. He forced me always to face the facts and keep ceaseless vigil over the jewel of honour.

CHAPTER 79

My favourite rendezvous was a little chemist's shop in Stafford Street, managed by a man named E. P. Whineray, one of the most remarkable and fascinating men that I have ever met. He was a Lancashire lad all over and not ashamed of it. His personal appearance was in itself arresting. Of medium size and well proportioned, his body seemed intentionally inconspicuous. It was the perfect servant of his head. He was almost completely bald, with bushy iron-grey eyebrows. The dome of his skull was perfectly spherical and suggested the most profound capacity for reflection. His eyes were intensely lively and piercing; they shone with eternal laughter, no less good humoured because supremely cynical. He understood human frailty in every detail and not only forgave it, but loved men for their weaknesses. He reminded one of an owl; the resemblance was very striking indeed.

He knew all the secrets of London. People of all ranks, from the courtier and the Cabinet Minister, to the coachman and the courtesan, made him their father confessor. While he never betrayed a confidence, he had a fund of stories which never failed. His lightest remarks vibrated with wisdom. When one spoke to him, it was like blowing the bellows of a blacksmith's forge; a shower of scintillating sparks came crackling from the sombre heart of the fire of his soul. Like Eckenstein, he saw through everybody at a glance. I used to haunt his shop and learned from him about London. He had already appeared in literature. Robert Hichens has set one of the most subtle incidents of *Felix* in his little shop. Another reason for my frequenting him was that he understood me, and one of my weaknesses is my bitter need of such people.

He was (incidentally) one of the most learned men in his line. He had supplied me with ingredients for some of my magical preparations, such as kyfi, the mysterious incense of the ancient Egyptians; the perfume and oil of

Abramelin, the unguentum Sabbati, and the like. In particular, he was at one time able to supply onycha.

There is an incense sacred to Tetragrammaton. After the cakes of light and the incense of Abramelin, it is the most powerful of all known perfumes. In fact, it is in a sense more powerful than they are, for they are definitely consecrated to particular purposes, whereas it is entirely without conscience. It consists of galbanum for air, onycha for water, storax of earth and olibanum for fire. It represents the blind force of the four elements and by its use one can bring them to manifestation. Being in itself neither good nor evil, it is extraordinarily dangerous.

I may regard, by the way, that what we call “good” and “bad” are both extremely limited. The greatest disasters arise from what we call indifference. I once examined the horoscopes of a number of murderers in order to find out what planetary dispositions were responsible for the temperament. To my amazement, it was not the secret and explosive energy of Heschel, not the sinister and malignant selfishness of Saturn, not the ungoverned fury of Mars, which formed the background for the crime, but the callous intellectualism of Mercury.

Then comes a most extraordinary discovery. The horoscopes of the murdered are almost identical with those of the assassins. They asked for it!

Incidentally, history bears out this view. The greatest horrors in the history of mankind are not due to the ambition of the Napoleons or the vengeance of the Agamemnons, but to the doctrinaire philosophers. The theories of the sentimentalist Rousseau inspired the integrity of the passionless Robespierre. The cold-blooded calculations of Karl Marx led to the judicial and businesslike operations of the Tcheka. Human passion at its worst has generous possibilities, and mercy with the Red Cross — theoretically, at least — is just behind fury in the trenches; but reason is inexorable and inhuman. It is not the heart of man which is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,” but his brain.

One evening Whineray told me that a gentleman, whom I will call the Earl of Coke and Crankum, wished to meet me, having need of my magical help. I agreed. At that moment the man himself walked in. He took me round to his rooms; and, to my stupefaction, blurted out the most extraordinary story. I could hardly believe my ears. The man told me his inmost family secrets, and those of the most atrocious kind, as if I had known him twenty years. He said that he was bewitched by his mother and a woman friend. On the surface these people were pious Evangelicals. The idea that they were trying to murder him by witchcraft was a little startling, no less so the

alleged motive. Lord Coke had been the second son. He claimed that his elder brother had really been the son of some Baronet or other; that his mother hated her husband and had become desperate when the heir-apparent had been killed in battle. His mother had determined to kill her remaining son.

Coke himself had married an American woman of the meanest character. She would ring the bell to have the pleasure of hearing the servants call her "my lady," Coke saw witchcraft in every trifle. When the countess happened to sneeze he would deduce that his mother was on the job. He had told his troubles to many people, and trusted them at first quite blindly, and then without a word of warning concluded from some harmless word or act that they had joined the conspiracy against him.

Of course, it was a perfectly plain case of persecution mania, accentuated by his old habit of brandy tippling and his newly acquired one of sniffing a solution of cocaine. Apart from his obsession there was nothing wrong with the man. He enjoyed magnificent health; he was one of the best preserved men of fifty to fifty-five that I have ever seen. He was deeply religious, with more than a touch of mysticism, and a really deep insight into the Qabala, which he understood although he knew little or nothing about it. I thought I could cure him and undertook the task.

My plan in such cases is not to undeceive the patient. I proposed to treat his story as literally true in every way and to fight fire with fire. I said to him:

"What you must do is to develop your own magical powers so as to beat your mother at her own game."

He had considerable capacity for Magick and understood the object of the measures which I proposed. We began by chartering a yacht, which we anchored in an unfrequented river on the South coast. I obligated him and proceeded to teach him how to develop his astral body. He rapidly acquired the technique and gained much confidence when he found that by my methods he could check the results of his clairvoyance.

I would, for example, give him a talisman which he had never seen before, and ask him to discover its nature. We would then compare the result of his investigation with the book from which I had taken the talisman, and he would find that he had judged correctly. (For instance, I would give him a square containing thirty-six characters in Enochian, which he could not read. He would pass in his astral body through an imaginary door on which this square was inscribed, and tell me that he had come out upon a balcony

overlooking the sea, where a violent storm was raging. I would then refer to The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin identify the square, and note that its virtue was to arouse a tempest. There was thus no room for self-deception as there is when one gets a message from one's Uncle Ferdinand that he is very happy picking violets, and tell Eliza not to worry.)

I soon found, however, that the presence of the Countess, though she was entirely sympathetic and charming, was a hindrance; she took up too much of his time and thought. One of the troubles with the man was that he was shockingly sentimental; it was the worst kind of Dickens. For that and other reasons, we decided to make a Great Retirement in a distant country; our whereabouts was to be concealed; that in itself would tend to confuse and alarm his mother and her fellow witch. We crossed to Paris and wandered down by Marseilles and Gibraltar to Tangiers.

I was of course in paradise to be once more among Mohammedans, with their manliness, straightforwardness, subtlety and self-respect! There was another point in favour of our journey. I wanted to get my pupil into the habit of the open-air life, so as to break him more easily of the cocaine habit. The pull of cocaine is almost entirely moral, except in unusually bad cases. There is little or no physical suffering involved in sudden stoppage as there is in the case of opium and its derivatives. I wanted to wean him from the drug by taking his mind off his mother and her machinations, his wife and her wondrousness, his children and their charm; I wanted to fill his consciousness with unfamiliar sights and sounds, with actual adventures and with the physical pre-occupation of the day's march.

Unfortunately, we arrived in Tangiers at a moment of political crisis. The Sultan had just come to smash and even the journey to Fez was unsafe. Not that we should have cared: Coke was as brave as a lion about everything outside his dam and her devices; but the authorities would not hear of our leaving the city — even the environs were beset by banditti. It was a great nuisance, especially as I had got ready for the desert by shaving my head and getting into my Eastern clothes. However, I consoled myself by making excursions after dark into the suburbs and courting all adventures that might come my way. I had in fact a perfectly gorgeous time.

But poor Coke would not enter into the spirit of the East — in which we humorously include a country whose name (Morocco, Al 'Maghrabi) means west and whose most easterly point is in the longitude of Oxford. He was homesick for the dull uniformity of family life. That is, I believe, the heart of England's horror. Frank Harris has described English vices as “Adultery with home comforts”. The average Englishman likes to drink tea in a pair of previously warmed soft slippers, with a smiling piece of meat presiding over the

soggy toast, and unintelligent brats playing halma in the background. “The East” only means to him sunstroke, fever and other diseases, each more dreadful than the rest; people whose views do not interest him — they are unintelligible and immoral; discomfort and boredom. He has no idea of abstract beauty and he is terribly afraid of meeting an idea which might stir his stagnant stupidity.

To me every new scene, every new point of view, is welcome. I want to be taught. I want to enlarge my mind. *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*. Even so, *humani* is one word too many. As I wrote in The Book of Lies.

“The Chinese cannot help thinking that the octave has five notes.

The more necessary anything appears to my mind the more certain it is that I only assert a limitation.

It is natural that my attitude should be utterly abhorrent to my fellow countrymen. But they are quite wrong to think that my ideas are anti-Anglo-Saxon. They are anti-anything which imagines itself to have a monopoly of truth or propriety.

I could not get Coke to take any interest in the people, their customs, their ideas and their art. The sunshine on the sparkling sea, the infinite variety of colour and form, the tingling mixture of races and religions meant nothing to him. Beauty was literally splashed over life like a bucket of cold water over an athlete. Instead of exhilarating him, he shivered and moaned. He kept on groaning like a wounded animal: I want my wife! I want my children! Of course, what he really wanted was cocaine, and that was just the thing I did not want him to have.

I had managed to get rid of his persecution mania for the time being. Whenever he noticed his mother flying past the moon on her broomstick, he would perform a banishing ritual, and sail out in his astral body on to the word and chop the broomstick like Siegfried with the lance of Wotan, and down she would fall into the Straits of Gibraltar, plop, plop. Nor did he suffer seriously from the suppression of cocaine. His only trouble was that his mind was so sodden with sentimentality that no amount of sunshine could restore its lightness and elasticity. If I had been able to take him into the desert for a couple of months he would have had to live through the purgatory involved in the absence of sour-faced snobbery and sneaking servility.

Thanks to Muly Hafid, there was nothing for it but let him relapse into the Slough of Despond and stifle in the stinking slime of civilized society. I begged him to walk home from Gibraltar, but it merely gave the old delu-

sions an excuse to renew their grip. He classed me as having joined the conspiracy against him of black magicians, from his mother and his neighbours to his son's schoolmaster (who had been persuaded by the devil to inflict one hundred lines of the Georgics upon the luckless lad!) and his family lawyer — who had been persuaded by Belial to fail to lend him £10,000 without security.

I have never been so sorry for any man in my life. I have never met anyone more genuinely noble, generous and kind-hearted. He was the most amusing companion, witty and well read. And all these magnificent qualities were completely marred by a single puerile weakness. Once again I had to admit that the superstition and sexual huperaesthesia, which go in England by the names of religion and love, had emasculated a man. Anglo-Saxonism is psychological phthsis.

At the accession of the new Sultan, his subjects took the opportunity of enjoying themselves, rejoicing in countries where the *spirochaetas pallida* of civilization does not make love luetic, liberty ataxic and life choreic. The people are spontaneous about amusements. To me nothing is more dreary than the policed processions of noble nonentities, famous puppets and beauties whose diet is skin food, whose athletics are face massage and whose fresh air is cocaine. In England enjoyment has been reduced to formality. The studied solemnity of golf is typical. Every few holes one's partner gives a little lecture on the healthfulness of the game, its virtue to bring out the finest qualities of the player, and so on *ad nauseam*. The Anglo-Saxon consciousness of sin make him feel that he needs an excuse for indulging in the most innocent pleasures. The result is that they cease to be pleasures at all.

Gaiety has become entirely unknown; the nearest approach to it is tipsy vulgarity.

The joyous men of Morocco were giving themselves over wholeheartedly to glee. Their exercises and sports have been described so often that it would be absurd to go over the ground once more. But one amusement is less well known. Europeans are not encouraged to assist.

On one of my lonely adventure walks, I came upon a crowd of about two hundred people in a secluded spot. They were protected from intrusion by unofficial sentinels, strolling (apparently without aim) among the trees in a circle a couple of hundred yards in diameter. I knew more or less what to expect, and before being observed looked myself over to see that every article of my costume was correct. I then began to recite what I had learnt from my sheikh in Egypt — the “Great Word to become mad and go about naked”.

Subhana Allahu walhamdu lilahi walailaha illa allahu wallahu akbar wala baala wala quata illa billahi alaliu ala'zhim.

Glory to God and thanks to God, and there is only one God, and God is most great, and there is no strength but in Him, the Exalted, the Great.

It does not take me long to work myself up by means of a mantra, even of this lengthy type, into a state of ecstasy, and to proceed, if desired, from that state to actual Dhyana, by concentrating upon any appropriate cakra. By ecstasy I do not mean anything characterized by extravagant action. It is merely that I seem to myself to be floating in the air or at least to weigh about one quarter of what I actually do; that I become completely abstracted from my surroundings and from all internal interference. I should thus be either invisible to the sentinels, or, if observed by them, recognized as a holy man whose religious exercises it would be an outrage to disturb. I need hardly say that the thing must be done properly. To attempt to fake anything of the sort would be a fatal error. The psychic sensitiveness of the Arab would detect it at once; he would suspect a bad motive, put one down as a blasphemer and cut one down with unhesitating cheerfulness. And serve one right!

In this way I passed the sentinels and mingled with the crowd. It was a wild tribe from the Soul. The women were present, thought they took no active part, and merely helped to keep the ring. The circle was some thirty feet across. Squatting on its edge were the usual musicians, playing as usual for dear life, while dancing and yelling were a number of men, armed with very small light axes of peculiar workmanship. They were evidently not the ordinary tools used in daily life, but manufactured for the purpose of the ceremony. With these weapons the men cut themselves on the head (very rarely elsewhere) until the blood was streaming from their scalps on every side. They were, of course, quite unconscious of any pain, and those of them who were actually blinded by the blood were yet able to see.

The excitement of the crowd was as great as that of the celebrants themselves, but it was rigorously suppressed. I cannot say that the ring kept absolute silence; I doubt whether I was sufficiently cool to make any reliable observations, and I certainly was beyond the stage of intellectual curiosity. But the impression was that the onlookers were deliberately abstaining from either speech or gesture. I governed myself accordingly. But I was hard put to it to refrain from dashing down my turban, leaping into the ring with a howl of “Allahu akbar!”, getting hold of an axe and joining in the general festivity.

It literally took away one's breath. The only way I can express it is that one breathed with one's heart instead of with one's lungs. I had got into not dissimilar states while doing Pranayama, but those had been passive, and this was a — no, active is a pitifully inadequate word — I felt myself vibrating with the energy of the universe. It was as if I had become conscious of atomic energy or of the force of gravitation, understood positively and not merely as the inhibition to rising from the ground. I do not know how long I stood there holding myself in, but judging from subsequent calculations it must have been over an hour: the sense of time had entirely disappeared. But I became suddenly aware of a terrific reaction; I felt that I had missed my chance by not letting myself go and perhaps been killed for my pains. At the same time I was seized with a sudden sense of alarm. I felt myself to be outside the spiritual circle. I was sure that some one would discover me and a swift shudder passed through me as I apprehended my danger. Fortunately, I had sufficient presence of mind to resume my mantra and melt away from the multitude as silently as I had descended upon it.

This little adventure always stood out as one of the most exciting (in a small way) of my life, that is, of merely material adventures; and it has given me furiously to think about the general formulae of “Energized Enthusiasm”. The practices of the Sidi Aissawa, the dervishes, some Asiatic devotees, and many Russian peasants whom I have seen conscientiously and scientifically exalting their consciousness by bringing physiological methods to the aid of spiritual aspiration, have been too individual to compare with these Moors. In this ceremony the entire body of assistants were consciously and collectively inducing a spiritual state which I recognized as entirely different to individual ecstasy. The Soul which they invoked was neither the sublimation (or simplification) of each man's personal self, nor was it the universal and immanent Spirit. It was a collective consciousness.

The psychology is similar to that of any mob which works itself up into enthusiasm over some ill-defined religious or political idea; but these Moors were invoking what I must call their Tribal God, for want of a better term. They were creating Him by pouring their personal enthusiasm into the pot, so to speak. I had no doubt that the individual deity thus invented (I can find no better term) could exist organically, so to speak, and I began to understand how the prophets of old had succeeded in inventing their gods, neither personal nor universal, but representing the Platonic idea, corresponding to the sum of the tribal attributes, and, once invented, enjoying an independent life, exercising initiative, and so on, just like a human being, sustained by the united wills of his devotees, and thus turning the tables on them and compelling them who had made him in their image to conform with the likeness of him.

I had quite a number of other small adventures during my short stay in Morocco. The character of the people corresponds very closely with my own in its more salient aspects. I liked them very much better than the Egyptians, who seem to me to suffer from too much history, too much civilization, too much commerce, too much admixture of blood; and above all, too much cosmopolitanism. The Egyptian has little national character, he had been pauperized by the influx of Europeans, and corrupted by the “evil communications” of Greeks, Armenians and the objectionable type of Jew. The Jew in Morocco is, on the whole, a very fine fellow. He has a religion and a point of honour, to say nothing of his pride of race. It has been said that every nation has the government which it deserves. I would add, the type of Jew which it deserves. His imagination and sensitiveness make him the touchstone of his surroundings.

There is a saying in North Africa that the Moor is a lion, the Algerian a deer and the Tunisian a hare. When subsequent journeys to North Africa enabled me to make the comparison, I found it strikingly true. The Moors have been called the Irish of Islam, as the Burmese the Irish of Asia. The former metaphor is admirable. There is an independence, a pride, a devil-may-careishness and a bonhomie which reminds one strongly of the more boisterous type of Irish. The Burmese rather resemble the quiet, religious type. The moor is always on the look out for a lark. I found myself engaged in all sorts of school-boy escapades where hard knocks and Rabelaisian practical jokes gave birth to huge and hearty laughter. Mortal enmities and murderous assaults did not in the least interfere with the jolly friendship of the antagonist.

CHAPTER 80

I was very sorry when we had to return to England. We took Granada on our way. I found the Alhambra entirely familiar, although I had never been there before. It was not a case of the *sens du déjà vu*, which is a passing perception. I went from one court to another as if I had lived there before; I knew what I was coming to so accurately that I could hardly doubt that I had really lived there at one time or another. I remembered nothing of the circumstances; except that it must have been my habit to go to the western tower and look over the valley, the town somnolent at the foot of the hill,

and the distant Sierra, while the sun sank superbly sad among clouds which seemed to have borrowed their softness and brilliance from swansdown.

Coke and I arranged to see the dancing of the Gypsies who lived in the caves outside the city, and I made a somewhat elaborate study of the subject. The principal dances are the Tango, which is quite different to that with which we have become familiar; the Fandango, the Civilla Gitana; the Soleario Gitana, the Cachusa Gitana, the Morongo, the Sirrillas, the Baile de la Flor, the Baile de la Bosca and the Baile de la Bona.

It is a mistake to say, brutally, as Science is inclined to do, that all dancing symbolizes passion. I am always annoyed with research that stops halfway. That is the great error of Freud. When he says, quite correctly, that dreams are phantasms of suppressed sexual desire, the question remains, of what is sexual desire the phantasm? To me it seems no more than one of the ways of expressing the formula of creation. I regard chemical action as identical. A man and a woman unite; and the result is a child, which is totally different from them though formed of their elements. Just so the combination of hydrogen and chlorine produces hydrochloric acid. They are gases; at ordinary temperature it is a liquid. None of its chemical and physical reactions is identical with those of its elements. The phenomena are analogous in very many ways, but the essence of their similarity is in the Qabalistic formula Yod, Hé, Vau.

I have successfully eliminated the danger of obsession by sexual ideas in this way: I refuse to admit that it is the fundamental truth. Science in failing to follow me so far has destroyed the idea of religion and the claim of mankind to be essentially different from other mammalia. The demonstration of anthropologists that all religious rites are celebrations of the reproductive energy of nature is irrefutable; but I, accepting this, can still maintain that these rites are wholly spiritual. Their form is only sexual because the phenomena of reproduction are the most universally understood and pungently appreciated of all. I believe that when this position is generally accepted, mankind will be able to go back with a good conscience to ceremonial worship. I have myself constructed numerous ceremonies where it is frankly admitted that religious enthusiasm is primarily sexual in character.

I have merely refused to stop there. I have insisted that sexual excitement is merely a degraded form of divine ecstasy. I have thus harnessed the wild horses of human passion to the chariot of the Spiritual Sun. I have given these horses wings that mankind may no longer travel painfully upon the earth, shaken by every irregularity of the surface, but course at large through the boundless ether. This is not merely a matter of actual ceremonies; I insist that in private life men should not admit their passions to be an

end, indulging them and so degrading themselves to the level of the other animals, or suppressing them and creating neuroses. I insist that every thought, word and deed should be consciously devoted to the service of the Great Work. “Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.”

One night in Granada I met one of these Gypsies. The setting was supremely romantic. The burden of his life fell from the shoulders of the poet. I experienced that spontaneous and irresistible stroke of love which only exists when the beauty of the human form and the beauty of the rest of nature are harmonized automatically. It was one of those experiences which come even to the most romantic poets, and to them only too few times in a decade. Fuller always maintained that the lyric in which I celebrated that night was the greatest that had ever been written of its kind. I can do no less than ask public opinion to examine his judgment.

Your hair was full of roses in the dewfall as we danced,
The sorceress enchanting and the paladin entranced,
In the starlight as we wove us in a web of silk and steel
Immemorial as the marble in the halls of Boabdil,
In the pleasaunce of the roses with the fountains and the yews
Where the snowy Sierra soothed us with the breezes and the dews!
In the starlight as we trembled from a laugh to a caress,
And the God came warm upon us in our pagan allegresse.
Was the Baile del la Bona too seductive? Did you feel
Through the silence and the softness all the tension of the steel?
For your hair was full of roses, and my flesh was full of thorns
And the midnight came upon us worth a million crazy morns
Ah! my Gypsy, my Gitana, my Saliya! were you fain
For the dance to turn to earnest? — O the sunny land of Spain!
My Gaitana, my Saliya! more delicious than a dove!
With your hair aflame with roses and your lips alight with love!
Shall I see you, shall I kiss you once again? I wander far
From the sunny land of summer to the icy Polar Star.
I shall find you, I shall have you! I am coming back again
From the filth and fog to seek you in the sunny land of Spain.
I shall find you my Gitana, my Saliya! as of old
With your hair aflame with roses and your body gay with gold.
I shall find you, I shall have you, in the summer and the south
With our passion in your body and our love upon your mouth —
With our wonder and our worship be the world aflame anew!
My Gitana, my Saliya! I am coming back to you!

This year was indeed my *annus mirabilis* in poetry. It began with *Clouds Without Water*, to which I have already called attention in the matter of its technique. The question of its inspiration is not less interesting. At Coulsdon, at the very moment when my conjugal cloud-burst was impending, I had met one of the most exquisitely beautiful young girls, by English standards, that ever breathed and blushed. She did not appeal to me only as a man; she was the very incarnation of my dreams as a poet. Her name was Vera; but she called herself “Lola.” To her I dedicated *Gargoyles* with a little prose poem, and the quatrain (in the spirit of Catullus) “Kneel down, dear maiden o' mine.” It was after her that my wife called the new baby!

Lola was the inspiration of the first four sections of *Clouds Without Water*. Somehow I lost sight of her, and in the fifth section she gets mixed up with another girl who inspired entirely sections six and seven. But the poem was still incomplete. I wanted a dramatic climax, and for this I had to go to get a third model. Number two was an old friend. I had known her in Paris in 1902. She was one of the intimates of my fiancée. She was studying sculpture under Rodin and was unquestionably his best woman pupil. She was strangely seductive. Her brilliant beauty and wholesome Highland flamboyance were complicated with a sinister perversity. She took delight in getting married men away from their wives, and the like. Love had no savour for her unless she was causing ruin or unhappiness to others. I was quite ignorant of her intentions when she asked me to sit for her, but once in her studio she lost no time, and “The Black Mass,” “The Adept,” and “The Vampire” describe with ruthless accuracy our relations. She initiated me into the torturing pleasures of algolagny on the spiritual plane. She showed me how to intensify passion by self-restraint. The formula is entirely analogous to the physical formula of the Arabs. She made me wonder, in fact, if the secret of Puritanism was not to heighten the intensity of love by putting obstacles in its way.

I regard the idea as entirely morbid and objectionable. Artificial impediments to nature are necessarily as disastrous as natural ones. The essence of my objection to English ideas of morality is just this: that sexual relations are over emphasised and assume an entirely disproportionate value. The formula of the average novel is to keep the reader in suspense about the love affairs of the characters. I confess frankly that I cannot read such stuff with patience. The goal to be attained is so petty. What do I care whether John and Mary get married on page 400 or not? I am utterly bored by the sentimental parts of *La Vicomte de Bragelonne* and *Louise de la Valliere*. I adore Dumas, but I have to skip amorous intrigues. I like open air adventure and great political coups, where the event determines the destinies of thousands of lives. I cannot stand Stevenson when he tries to write about love.

(And to think that the Cinema people introduced a love interest into Treasure Island — and even Dr. Jekyll! — Faugh!)

I do not mind a background of love properly subordinated to the true interests of life; but I do not know any single book of which it is the main theme which does not disgust me. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* are only tolerable because the adventures are in themselves amusing, and Shakespeare does not take the love itself too seriously.

Am I reproaching myself, then, for having written as I have on the subject? My defence is duplex. In the first place, I have no objection to lyrical love. “I arise from dreams of thee” and “O lover, I am lonely here” are legitimate. It is the sacrament by which man enters into communion with God.

There remain my narrative and dramatic books on love. *The Tale of Archais* is simply *jejune*; I apologize and pass on. *The Mother's Tragedy*, “The Fatal Force”, *Jezebel*, *Tannhäuser*, all treat love not as an object in itself, but on the contrary, as a dragon ready to devour any one less than St. George. *Alice* is partly excusable, because it is really a lyric, when all is said and done. In any case, I do not value the book very highly. It is ridiculous to make anything important depend on the appetites of an American matron. The same may be said of *The Star and the Garter. Why Jesus Wept* exhibits love as the road to ruin. It is the sentimental point-of-view about it which is the catastrophe of Sir Percy's career, as it was in that of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*. In *Orpheus*, love, it is true, inspires the poet to great deeds of a sort; but it ends in disappointment and leads him to death.

The long and the short of the matter is, that love is a good servant but a bad master. It ought to be understood in every detail on every plane, and then employed as a weapon to carve one's way to fortune. I think it is degrading to make one's way by women like *Aramis* and *Porthos*, or to allow the vagaries of women to wreck one's like, as in the case of *Athos*. I am, in short, more puritan than the Puritans. Parsifal summarizes my philosophy. It must not be forgotten that the Knight was quite happy playing with the girls in Kundry's garden; he merely refused to let his attention be distracted; and it is the energy of love which heals the wound of Amfortas. The lance is to be dipped into the cup for one purpose only; the attainment of Spiritual Kingship and the regeneration of humanity.

But back to my sculptress! To her I dedicated *Rodin in Rime* and *Clouds Without Water* itself — not openly; our love affair being no business of other people, and in any case being too much ginger for the *hoi polloi*, but in such ways as would have recommended themselves to Edgar Allan Poe.

There remains a tragic and abominable story to be told. She suddenly decided that she had better get married; not being able to marry me, she did the next best thing, found another explorer and dragged him to the altar. This man left shortly afterwards on an expedition which involved his being very many months beyond reach of communication. He had a rival brother officer, who somehow discovered one of the cryptograms. (As a matter of fact, it was a simple one; he had merely to take a rule and draw a straight line to make the name and the surname of the girl stand out *en toutes lettres*.) It might seem that such a man would not know how to draw a line anywhere, but he drew this line — and arranged that a copy of the book thus marked should be handed to the husband by another member of his party after he had cut his communication with the world, perhaps for years. In point of fact, it proved to be for ever.

Now as to section eight of *Clouds Without Water*, “The Initiation.” I hardly know why I should have felt it necessary to conclude on such an appalling chord. The powers of life and death combine in their most frightful forms to compel the lovers to seek refuge in suicide, which they, however, regard as victory. “The poison takes us: *Chi alpha iota rho epsilon tau epsilon nu iota chi omega mu epsilon nu*.” The answer is that the happy ending would have been banal. The tragedy of Eros is that he is dogged by Anteros. It is the most terrible of all anti-climaxes to have to return to the petty life which is bound by space and time. I had the option of coming down to earth or enlisting death in my service. I chose the latter course.

My model was a woman very distinguished and very well known in London society. She had already figured as the heroine of *Felix*. She had been one of the best and most loyal friends of Oscar Wilde. She was herself a writer of subtlety and distinction, but she filled me with fascination and horror. She gave me the idea of a devourer of human corpses, being herself already dead. Fierce and grotesque passion sprang up for the few days necessary to give me the required inspiration for my climax. I could only heighten the intoxication of love by spurring it to insanity.

This, in fact, is a final criticism of love itself as such, and justifies all that has been said about it by the Buddha — and even by the Church. It justifies my own attitude that love must be resolutely torn from the throne in the human heart which it has usurped. One must not set one's affections on things below; one must find an answer to old age and death. “Only those are happy who have desired the unattainable.” Love being the sublimation of the human ego, it follows that the ego itself must be surrendered. The limitations of life on earth are intolerable. The consciousness is unendurable for all those who have begun to understand the universe. Man is so infinitesimally inane, yet he feels himself capable of such colossal attainment.

There are only two courses open to intelligent men; either they must set themselves to overcome mortality, with all that implies, attachment to the things of earth, including their human personalities; or they must dull the edge of the anguish which they can no longer bamboozle by the fairy stories of religion and the fatuities of optimism. It is for this reason that all truly great men either succeed in annihilating themselves completely in their work, so that there is no room in their consciousness even for the consideration as to whether that work is not in fact a toy; or, finally, take to drink or drugs. Sensitiveness is the passive half of genius, and the more sensitive a man is, *ceteris parious*, the greater his potentiality.

Certain very inferior intellects persuade themselves to accept the conventional consolations, and some of these people, like Lord Kelvin, sometimes manage to build watertight compartments in their brains; by an act of will they refuse to throw the light of their knowledge upon the dark chambers of their souls. Some, like Schopenhauer, support the realization of their incurable ill with steely stoicism. Some, like Blake, force an issue for themselves in mysticism; and, their progress which constantly encourages them will avail them to the end. Others, like myself (thanks to the advantage afforded by the accessibility of the wisdom of antiquity in modern translations) see almost from the first that the progressive solution is unsatisfactory, and determine to grasp the nettle. But there are many, who, like Poe, Coleridge, de Quincy, Baudelaire, De Maupassant, and so many others, have neither the means of giving open battle nor of avoiding it; they seek refuge in stupefying the senses.

My twelve months of creative spurt reached a climax in February 1908, when I wrote the five books of *The World's Tragedy* in five consecutive days at Eastbourne. This is beyond all question the high-water mark of my imagination, my metrical fluency, my wealth of expression, and my power of bringing together the most incongruous ideas so as to enrich my matter to the utmost. At the same time, I succeeded in reaching the greatest height of spiritual enthusiasm, human indignation, and demoniac satire. I sound the gamut of every possibility of emotion from innocent faith and enthusiasm to experienced cynicism. It would be impossible to give any idea of this book by quotations within a reasonable space. I must content myself by quoting the criticism of Frank Harris with regard to one speech which I sent him:

“I accept your poem at once, and

Oh well then! Here it is:

“Hear then! By Abrasax! the bar
Of the unshifting star

Is broken — Io! Asar!
My spirit is wrapt in the wind of light;
It is whirled away on the wings of night,
Sable-plumed are the wonderful wings,
But the silver of moonlight subtly springs
Into the feathers that flash with the pace
Of our flight to the violate bounds of space.
Time is dropt like a stone from the stars:
Space is a chaos of broken bars:
Being is merged in a furious flood
That rages and hisses and foams in the blood.
See! I am dead! I am passed, I am passed
Out of the sensible world at-last.
I am not. Yet I am, as I never was,
A drop in the sphere of molten glass
Whose radiance changes and shifts and drapes
The infinite soul in finite shapes.
There is light, there is life, there is love, there is sense
Beyond speech, beyond song, beyond evidence.
There is wonder intense, a miraculous sun,
As the many are molten and mixed into one
With the heat of its passion ; the one hath invaded
The heights of its soul, and its laughter is braided
With comets whose plumes are the galaxies
Like winds on the night's inaccessible seas.
Oh master! my master! nay, bid me not ride
To the heaven beyond heaven ; for I may not abide.
I faint: I am frail: not a mortal may bear
The invisible light, the abundance of air.
I fail: I am sinking: O Thou, be my friend!
Bear me up! Bear me up! Bear me up to the end!
Now! Now! In the heart of the bliss beyond being
The None is involved in the One that, unseeing,
Dashes its infinite splendour to death
Beyond light, beyond love, beyond thought, beyond breath.
Ah! but my master! the death of the sun —
Break, break, the last veil ! It is done — It is done.

CHAPTER 81

Beside all these activities of my own, I came into a new world. My Operation of the Sacred Magick was not sterile. After returning from Morocco, the spirit came upon me and I wrote a number of books in a way which I hardly know how to describe. They were not taken from dictation like the *Book of the Law* nor were they my own composition. I cannot even call them automatic writing. I can only say that I was not wholly conscious at the time of what I was writing, and I felt that I had no right to "change" so much as the style of a letter. They were written with the utmost rapidity without pausing for thought for a single moment, and I have not presumed to revise them. Perhaps "plenary inspiration" is the only adequate phrase, and this has become so discredited that people are lothe to admit the possibility of such a thing.

The prose of these books, the chief of which are *Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente, The Book of the Heart girt with the Serpent*, and *Libri vel Lapidis Lazuli*, is wholly different from anything that I have written myself. It is characterized by a sustained sublimity of which I am totally incapable and it over-rides all the intellectual objections which I should myself have raised. It does not admit the need to explain itself to any one, even to me. I cannot doubt that these books are the work of an intelligence independent of my own. The former describes the relation of the Adept with his Holy Guardian Angel; the latter is "the voluntary emancipation of a certain adept from his adeptship. . . . the birth words of a Master of the Temple." And, like *The World's Tragedy*, it is difficult to give a very good idea of them by brief quotations:

21. I, and Me, and Mine were sitting with lutes in the market place of the great city, the city of the violets and the roses.

22. The night fell, and the music of the lutes was stilled.

23. The tempest arose, and the music of the lutes was stilled.

24. The hour passed, and the music of the lutes was stilled.

25. But thou art Eternity and Space; Thou art Matter and Motion; and Thou art the negation of all these things.

26. For there is no Symbol of Thee. (Liber LXV, Cap. III)

48. Excellent is Thy love, Oh Lord! Thou art revealed by the darkness, and he who gropeth in the horror of the groves shall haply catch Thee, even as a snake that seizeth on a little singing-bird.

49. I have caught Thee, O my soft brush; I am like a hawk of mother-of-emerald; I catch Thee by instinct, though my eyes fail from Thy glory. (Liber VII, Cap. IV.)

Even this did not exhaust my creative energy. As in Cairo in 1902 I had started the *Lover's Alphabet*, on the ground that the most primitive kind of lyrics or odes was in some way the most appealing and immortal, so I decided to write a series of hymns to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the simplest possible style. I must not be thought exactly insincere, though I had certainly no shadow of belief in any of the Christian dogmas, least of all in this adaptation and conglomeration of Isis, Semele, Astarte, Cybele, Freya, and so many others; I simply tried to see the world through the eyes of a devout Catholic, very much as I had done with the decadent poet of *White Stains*, the Persian mystic of the *Bagh-i-Muattar*, and so on. I was, in fact, adopting another alias — in the widest sense of the word.

I did not see why I should be confined to one life. How can one hope to understand the world if one persists in regarding it from the conning-tower of one's own personality? One can increase one's knowledge and nature by travelling and reading; but that does not tell one how things look to other people. It is all very well to visit St. Peter's and the Vatican, but what would be really interesting would be to know how they look to the Pope. The greatness of a poet consists, to a considerable extent, in his ability to see the world through another man's eyes; and my training in science is always suggesting to me that I should invent a technique for doing anything that I want to do.

My technique for borrowing other people's spectacles was to put myself in the place altogether, either by actually adopting a suitable alias or by writing a book in their names. It is a common and legitimate literary device. All that I did was to carry it out a little more conscientiously than does the average writer. So, in this case, I was trying to discover what Catholics felt by call-me to my Muse to give me the language suitable to the occasion. No, I was not insincere in any proper sense of the word, though I certainly had my tongue in cheek to a certain extent, as appears from the following.

When in Holland in '97, I had written a Christmas hymn in which the Nativity was treated realistically. I now found that Christian piety had taken away the entire poetic beauty of Bethlehem by declaring that the Virgin suffered no pain. (It is really astonishing how these idiots managed to remove

any touch of sublimity from this stupid story!) I therefore had to change “Her bitter anguish hath sufficed” into “Her joyful ardour hath sufficed”, and otherwise degrade my poem to a blasphemous imbecility, in order to comply with the conventions of the Church. Apart from that, what I had written in a spirit not far removed from ribaldry was found wholly satisfactory.

I had written, in 1899, while staying with Mathers in Paris, a hymn to Isis to be used in the ceremonies of Isis-worship which he was at that time proposing to revive in Paris. I changed the word “Sistron” to “cymbal” and the word “Isis” to “Mary”. The hymn required no further alteration. I think that rather significant.

Once more, I made a translation of the Fatihah, the most sacred chapter of the Koran, I replaced the name of God by that of Mary, and once again found favour with the Vatican.

I quote a few isolated stanzas:

The red sun scorches up our veins;
The white moon makes us mad;
Pitiless stars insult our pains
With clamour glad.

At the foot of the Cross is the Mother of God,
And Her tears are like rain to enliven the sod,
While the Blood of the Lord from his Body that runs
Is the heat of the summer, the fire of its suns.

See where the cherubim pallid and plumed
Swing with their thuribles praises perfumed!
Jesus is risen and Mary assumed:—
Ave Maria!

O sorrow of pure eyes beneath
The heavy-fringed estatic lids,
Seeing for maiden song and wreath
Sphinxes and pagan pyramids!

O Mary, like a pure perfume
Do thou receive this failing breath,
And with Thy starry lamp illume
The darkling corridors of death!

Having thus composed fifty-two classics, some of which, by the way, are very fine technically and none of which are marred by the atrocities of grammar and rime which we naturally associate with all but a few hymns, the question of publication arose. I thought I would present them as the work of a famous actress (there was some truth in this!) who wished to remain anonymous. I took them to Mr. Wilfred Meynell, of Burns and Oates. In talking them over with him, I found it a little awkward to speak of the author. I did not wish to say 'he' and I would not say 'she'. Meynell noticed this, and said in his loftiest manner, which is very lofty indeed:

"My de-ah young friend, you need not hesitate for the choice of a pronoun. It is quite evident to any one with any sense of literatu-ah that these chawming hymns were written by a woman!"

I was hard put to it not to exclaim:

"Turn the animile round, Bill, and let the lidy see 'is. . . . ." I forget how that particular 'story of the showman' runs.

However, I kept my face straight, and he published them under the title of *Amphora*. The *Daily Mail* gave me a beautiful long review. I especially appreciated:

"These poems indicate a mind full of earnest aspiration towards his spiritual Queen, a mind of an engaging näivete, untroubled by the religious and philosophical problems which weary more complex intelligences."

Father Kent wrote a very laudatory criticism in *The Tablet* and (to my joy!) selected for quotation some stanzas from the mangled masterpiece of 1897. The rest of the Press followed suit. The *Scotsman* spoke of:

"An engaging simplicity and fervour of feeling, and a graceful, refined literary art."

The *Daily Telegraph* said:

"Though many have a touch of mysticism, most have a simplicity of expression and earnestness of devotion that will commend them to the author's co-religionists."

The *Catholic Herald* praised my:

"Very high level of poetic imagery."

The *Catholic Times* touched high-water mark; and subsequently, when I re-issued the volume under the title of *Hail Mary* and my own name, it stood to its guns, and said:

“Needless to say they breathe a spirit of deep piety and filial love towards our Heavenly Mother. Many beautiful and touching thoughts are embodied in the various verses, which cannot but do good to the pious soul.”

There was besides such creative work and the editorial work which Fuller and I had undertaken on behalf of the Order, the task of reconstituting it in its original purity. Under Mathers, the Grades had become meaningless; to be an adept had meant no more than to be a peer of the realm does in modern times. It was for me to sweep away all this nonsense, to re-establish the ordeals, in spirit and in truth. I was at first ignorant enough of Magick to imagine that this could be done by the simple process of replacing sham formalities by real ones. I proposed, for example, to test people's courage by putting them in actual contact with the four elements, and so on, as was apparently done in ancient Egypt; but experience soon taught me that an ordeal, however severe, is not much use in genuine initiation. A man can always more or less brace himself up to meet a situation when he knows that he is on his trial. A man might have a certificate of ability to swim half a mile; and yet be utterly unable, for a dozen different reasons, to save a friend from drowning when the need arose.

Of course it sounds totally impossible to administer ordeals of the real kind required, but I found by experience that I did not even have to give the matter a moment's thought. My Magical Self took complete charge of the business without wasting a moment or disturbing me. It may be through some act of my own, it may be entirely without my intention, that aspirants to the Order find themselves in circumstances where they are tested in the qualities necessary to their stage of initiation. There is thus no possibility of evading the intentions of the Order. It is not conducted consciously by any men soever, but by mysterious forces automatically set in motion by the force of the obligations themselves.

For example: the oath of a Probationer apparently involves no difficulties of any sort; no penalties are stated or implied; the aspirant merely pledges himself “to perform the Great Work, which is to obtain the knowledge of the nature and powers of my own being”. He is not required to reach any particular stage of knowledge by the end of his probation; he is free to choose such practices as appeal to him; and, provided that his record shows that he has devoted a reasonable proportion of his spare time to the Work, he is unhesitatingly passed to the degree of Neophyte. It sounds as if it were impossible for anyone to fail. Yet, actually, only eight percent. manage to get

through the year of probation. The reason is that no sooner does a man make up his mind to enter the Path of the Wise than he rouses automatically the supreme hostility of every force, internal or external, in his sphere.

I further restored the original rule of the Order that its members should not know each other officially and have as little to do with each other as possible. Theoretically, a member should know only his introducer and those whom he himself introduces. In the present conditions of society it is practically impossible to maintain this rule with absolute strictness, but I keep as near to the ideal as possible. I did relax the rule, to a certain extent, in 1910 — it was the greatest mistake I had ever made, and the mischief done at that time has never been wholly repaired. Every month I live I am the more amazed at the praeterhuman wisdom and foresight of the Order. I have never known a mistake to be made; whereas my conscious posers are constantly at fault. If I had no other evidence of the authority of the people to whom I am pledged, it would be supplied by Their wisdom.

It happened that at the funeral of Saladin, Fuller had met a youth named Neuburg, Victor Benjamin of that ilk, who was at Trinity College, Cambridge, and knew my work. Having to go to Cambridge one day on some business or other, I thought I would look the lad up. I was not sure of the name, and there were several similar “burgs” in the University register, but having drawn my bow at a venture, the first arrow struck the King of Israel between the harness at the very first shot. I use the words “King of Israel” advisedly, for Neuburg was certainly a most distinguished specimen of that race. He was a mass of nervous excitement, having reached the age of twenty-five without learning how to manage his affairs. He had been prevented from doing so, in fact, but all sorts of superstitions about the terrible danger of leading a normal wholesome life. The neuroses thus created had expressed themselves in a very feeble trickle of poetry and a very vehement gust of fads.

He was an agnostic, a vegetarian, a mystic, a Tolstoian, and several other things all at once. He endeavoured to express his spiritual state by wearing the green star of Esperanto, though he could not speak the language; by refusing to wear a hat, even in London, to wash, and to wear trousers. Whenever addressed, he wriggled convulsively, and his lips, which were three times too large for him, and had been put on hastily as an afterthought, emitted the most extraordinary laugh that had ever come my way; to these advantages he united those of being extraordinarily well read, over flowing with exquisitely subtle humour, and being one of the best natured people that ever trod this planet.

But from the first moment I saw him, I saw far more than this; I read an altogether extraordinary capacity for Magick. We soon drifted into talking about the subject and I found that he already practised a good deal of spiritualism and clairvoyance. The former was his bane. The habit of making himself spiritually passive and inviting the entire spirit world to obsess him proved finally fatal to him. Despite all we could do to protect his aura, we found it impossible to stop the leak altogether, so that at any moment he was liable to become possessed of the devil. He soon learnt how to protect himself as soon as he recognized that he was being attacked; but the spirits became very cunning and were at pains to persuade him not to take the proper measures of protection. I believe, despite all this, that he would have succeeded eventually in mending his aura, but in the principal ordeal of the Neophyte he was so seriously damaged that he was never the same man again. During the next few years I saw a great deal of him and his spiritual adventures will serve both as a diversion and warning on many a page to come.

Recognizing the possibilities of Neuburg, I decided to utilize them for the benefit of the Order, and of himself. The first task was to get rid, as far as possible, of his physical defects, which turned out to be very serious. One day during our walk through Spain, we came upon a waterfall, and, the weather being oppressively hot, we decided to take a dip. In this way I discovered that he was suffering from varicocele very badly indeed and as soon as we got to England I sent him to my doctor, who advised an operation, which was duly performed. He had also pyorrhea so badly that my dentist said that if he had delayed the visit three weeks he would not have had a tooth left in his head. Attention to these points, and to the physical cause of his neurosis, made a healthy man of him. One defect remained; and that was incurable, being a slight spinal curvature. The change in him was extraordinary. He lost all his nervousness; he became capable of enduring great physical fatigue, of concentrating mentally, and of dismissing the old fads which had obsessed him. Incidentally, by removing his inhibitions, I released the spring of his genius, and in the next few years he produced some of the finest poetry of which the English language can boast. He had an extraordinary delicacy of rhythm, an unrivalled sense of perception, a purity and intensity of passion second to none, and a remarkable command of the English language.

> “But the other voice was silent, and the noise of waters swept me
> Back into the world, and I lay asleep on a hillside
> Bearing for evermore the heart of a goddess,
> And the brain of a man, and the wings of the morning
> Clipped by the shears of the silence; so must I wander lonely,
> Nor know of the light till I enter into the darkness.”

He possessed the magical gift of conveying an idea of tremendous vividness and importance by means of words that are unintelligible to the intellect.

"I go as Thunder that come but as a bird."

(And then the girl came as a bird, and he went as a worm — but I anticipate.)

CHAPTER 82

Neuburg was the moving spirit of one of those societies which are always springing up in universities. They never take root; because death comes to all alike at the end of three years, so to speak. People who stay up for a fourth year are Ancient Mariners, but lack the power to hold the wedding guest. Of course people over-lap; but the generations follow each other so quickly and the spirit of youth is so impotent to stamp itself upon history, that it is a rare piece of luck when any of these clubs or societies live beyond seven years at the outside. Neuburg's society, the Pan Society, did make its mark on the University; but that was not its fault. It was simply that he found people idiotic enough to make it invulnerable against the arrows of oblivion by dipping it into the Styx of persecution. Nothing could have been more helpful than the attitude of the Dean of Trinity, an idiot and inept. I have noticed that people who dislike me are invariable rendered so blind by malice that they give themselves away and make themselves ridiculous.

There is an institution at Cambridge called "Ciccu," Cambridge Intercollegiate Christian Union. It is a bestial thing, compact of hypocrisy and secret vice. Now my connection with the Pan Society was of the slightest. I have merely been invited to read papers, I think altogether three times, on mysticism or kindred subjects. Nothing more harmless can be imagined, but the Ciccu went out of its mind. I am compelled to remark at this point that one of the most disgraceful features of controversy in England is that the upholders of religion and morality, which are frequently not at all in question, instead of disputing with their opponents, assail them with the weapons of secret slander. "This man," they say, "wants to take a penny off the income tax. It is certain that he habitually breaks the Seventh Commandment." In this instance the Ciccu did not know or care what it was that I had

read to the Pan Society. They merely stated that I hypnotized the entire assembly and took a mean advantage of them. It did not matter to them that what I was supposed to have done is impossible in nature, at least to one of my very mediocre powers.

However, the Senior Dean of Trinity, the Rev. R. St. J. Parry, started to make trouble. I went to see him and asked him what accusations he had to make against me. He merely became confused, tried to bluster, would not commit himself, and finally said that he had given orders that I was not to be admitted to the precincts of the College. On the following morning I waited in the Great Court for him to come out of Chapel and called him a liar to his face in front of everybody. It then began to dawn upon him that he had no power to exclude me from Trinity, I being a life member of the College. He summoned the president, secretary and treasurer of the Society, and threatened to send them down. But as it happened they none of them belonged to Trinity and he had no more power over them than he had over the Queen of Madagascar. He must have been a really exceptional fool, even for a Don, not to have found out such essential facts before entering upon his campaign. He ultimately resorted to the meanest possible course of action. He did not dare to attack Neuburg, whose relations were wealthy Jews and might be relied upon to make every kind of trouble if he interfered with the hope of Israel; but he threatened a man named Norman Mudd, whose parents were poor and without influence, with the loss of his mathematical scholarship. Unfortunately again, Mudd was the mainstay of the hope of the College for the forthcoming Tripos, and Mudd himself had the heart of a lion. He dared the Dean to do his damndest in the most uncompromising language. Once again the wretched creature had to draw in his horns. Only after I had left the battle-field to seek other victories did he succeed in bullying Mudd into resignation from the Society by frightening his father. Mudd gave his promise to have no more to do with it — and promptly broke it. The Pan Society won all along the line.

The victory was all the more signal in that an imitation society called the Heretics, who had been trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds like the *Rationalist Press Association*, had melted away into the thinnest kind of mist at the first intimation from the authorities that their exceedingly mild programme of half-baked infidelity was displeasing to the powers that were. The whole incident was trivial in its way, but it taught me an important lesson of policy. The more upright and uncompromising one is, the safer one is from attack. One's enemies will resort to the most despicable subterfuges, but they will not have the courage to come into the open and they will in one way or another fall into the pit which they dig. It is true that one can apparently be damaged by secret slander, when the enemy become foolhardy by open misrepresentation, but if one is working in the eternal one may be sure

that they harm no one but themselves. Suppose, for example, that I attack Lloyd George by saying that he had undergone seven years' penal servitude for burglary, and suppose Lloyd George treats me with the contempt I deserve. Well, at the moment there may be a few people silly enough to believe such nonsense, and to think that his allowing the statement to go unchallenged makes it probable that there is some truth in it. But consider what the biographers will say? They will discover that Lloyd George's time was fully accounted for without the penal servitude, and they will simply wonder what spirit of insanity possessed me to make so ridiculous a misstatement. They will have no difficulty in understanding that he, preoccupied with affairs of state, could not be bothered to leave his work to chastise me.

Another consideration arises in this connection. It is always difficult to discover who has really said what about one, and even if one succeeds it is not always the best policy to refute the falsehoods. If people were attacking one by merely falsifying or exaggerating actual incidents, defense would be possible; but when people are bound merely by the limits of their vile imaginations, it is not easy to keep pace with them. What is the use of Lloyd George proving that he did not undergo penal servitude for burglary if I can retort, “Perhaps not, but you were hanged for sheep stealing!” To defend oneself against the accusations of a knave is to seek justice from the verdict of fools. If one's work and one's reputation depends on the opinion of people at the moment, it is, of course, necessary to meet them on their own ground. At every election the most ridiculous falsehoods about the candidates are sedulously circulated at the last moment; if possible, too late to allow time for refutation. The election may doubtless depend on such infected activities.

But when one is working in the eye of God, when one cares nothing for the opinion of men, either at the moment or at any other time; when one has surrendered for ever one's personal interests and become lost in one's work, it is merely waste of time and derogatory to one's dignity to pay attention to irrelevant interruptions about one's individual affairs. One keeps one's powder and shot for people who attack one's work itself. And even this is often useless. The Buddha told his disciples not to combat error. If it had only seven heads like the Lennean hydra it might be possible to sterilize the necks after each operation sufficiently long to finish the job before they grow again. But modern hydras have not this pitiful paucity of talking machines. Hardly a month passes but I hear some new and perfectly fantastic yarn about myself, sometimes flattering, sometimes the reverse, but nearly always entirely baseless, and, as often as not, bearing internal evidence of its absurdity. I have been sufficiently amused to wish to make a collection of these legends, but I find that my memory refuses to record rubbish of this kind. It insists on having some peg whereon to hang its old clothes.

I am not sure whether it was Henry Maudsley who shows that the mind develops not by accretion but by co-ordination. It seems that there is a certain number of pigeon-holes, if I may use the metaphor, in which isolated facts may be stored, and that this number is strictly limited. The efficiency of the arrangement may doubtless be increased by practice and the use of mnemonics, but sooner or later one comes to the end. A man of forty who has devoted every moment of his time to acquiring knowledge finds almost certainly that he has no more pigeon-holes available, and that therefore he cannot acquire any new knowledge except by forgetting some of the old.

This, by the way, shows the tremendous importance of selective study. One of the few gleams of intelligence shown in the works of Conan Doyle is where Sherlock Holmes is ignorant that the earth goes round the sun and, on being told, says that he will at once try to forget it. The case chosen exhibits the chooser as imbecile, for elementary astronomy is certainly important to the detective. But the general idea is sound.

But there is fortunately another means of acquiring knowledge than simply assimilating facts. In Arabic there are triliteral verbal roots which represent fundamental ideas. Any such root may be modified in about ninety different ways, and the idea is modified accordingly. Thus by inserting a long a between the second and third letters, we obtain the idea of the agent, and so on. Thus by learning, say, one hundred roots and fifty methods of modification, one has not one hundred and fifty words but five thousand.

Similarly, the mind is able to retain simple impressions by referring them to a second stage of thought. One does not have to remember the formulae of the paraffins; one can apply one's rule and recover the forgotten fact, or even deduce the existence of a fact unknown. This second stage of thought can be supplemented by a third, and so on. The idea is co-ordination, exactly as the diversity of the unity of the Ego. It is to be noticed, moreover, that a great deal of this control has been gradually reduced by practice, in many cases extending over generations, to purely sub-conscious action. The measure of the excellence of a mind is that of its achievement in emulating this physical disposition . (On the other hand, the best minds perfect an instrument by which they can bring up any subconscious action into light. This is the object of many of the practices of Yoga. The student endeavours to regain control of his reflexes. It has already been described how he reverses his peristaltic action of the alimentary canal.)

Maudsley's idea (I develop a similar thesis in *Eleusis*) is roughly speaking, to organise humanity as if they were cells in the body. Science is in the greatest danger of disintegration, because the accumulation of facts is so overwhelming that no man can hope to assimilate even one-tenth per cent

of what is known. Each specialist is going gaily ahead with his particular stunt, and the further he goes the farther he gets from the main body of knowledge; hence the more likely he is to develop disproportionately — and also to aim at the hegemony of his own pet subject. In other words, even our best cells are tending to act like the cells of cancer.

The effect of the progress of science in the last hundred years is already visible. The old sanctions have already disappeared. The terms which appeared to the Victorian so simple and intelligible, such as Matter, Space, Truth, have completely failed to resist analysis. Henri Poincaré, in many ways the greatest mind of our time, has brought us back to the academic scepticism of Pyrrho. He does not even content himself with knocking Truth on the head with a single weapon. Not only is Truth a matter of convenience; but it can never be absolute Truth, can never be more than probable in the mathematical sense of the word; and even so, the calculation depends upon conventions and definitions so entirely that it becomes clear that the argument is circular. But worse still, there is every reason to suppose that the idea of Truth itself is little more than a disease of language.*****

One the other hand, a few enlightened intelligences, seeing clearly the absolute debacle in which this icy expanse of frozen thought was bound to break up, have determined vigorously to find a *modus vivendi* for Athena. They deliberately abandoned materialism for Mysticism, even in those departments of thought where there seemed the least need for any such accommodation, and they thus came to create a new mathematics and a new logic where infinite (or rather transinfinite) ideas might be commensurable with those of ordinary thought. I refer (needless to say, I hope) to the recent work of such thinkers as the Hon. Bertrand Russell. The necessity of some such intervention was emphasized in the most surprising way by the result of the experiment of Michelson and Morley. Physics itself cocked a snook at its professors by calmly offering a contradiction in terms.

It was not enough to replace the geometry of Euclid by those of Rieman and Lobatshewsky, and the mechanics of Newton by those of Einstein. The substitution was evidently meaningless so long as any of the axioms of thought and the definitions of its terms survived. It was not the metaphysicians and physicists this time who were picking holes in a vacuum; it was the mathematicians and physicists, to say nothing of the chemists, who found the ground completely cut away from under their feet. Simultaneously from all sides Necessity charged at the head of its cavalry with irresistible élan.

There could only be one result. It is to-day implicitly admitted by all advanced thinkers in every science that the reason is no more than an excee-

dingly imperfect instrument whose methods are entirely empirical, whose terms lack precision, and whose theses cancel each other out. I might claim a good deal of credit for having written out, as far back as 1902, a reasonably complete demonstration** of this conclusion whose premisses were not stated by the official leaders of thought till long afterwards. Yet the theory of initiation on which European Adepts base their systems (derived, possibly, from the Egyptians and Chaldeans by way of the gnostics, Pythagoras and the Neoplatonists), that of Lao-Tze in China, and that of the Vedantists in India, alike imply something of the sort. My claim to originality is confined to the nature of my proof, which I drew from facts of a similar order to those which have finally driven modern science and mathematics to their present position; whereas the Ancients, as far as we know, based their thesis on an intuitive perception of the incompetence of reason and on their experience of the results of illumination.

But the moderns must still take one step to bring themselves into line with myself and my masters; they must “leave the poor old stranded wreck” of intellect, and “pull for the shore” of a satisfactory conception of the cosmos in the lifeboat of Magick. The process of mental development sketched a few paragraphs earlier has been carried as far as it is possible to do. The data supplied by the senses are now sufficiently complete to make it evident that their implications are re-entrant. It was bad enough when they seemed to lead into blind alleys, when the utmost analysis of any phenomenon brought us up against a blank wall of utter unintelligibility. It is far worse now that it has become apparent that all our terms are interchangeable.

I was once challenged in a lecture to give a definition of the word 'Will'. I offered to do so on condition that the questioner should in his turn supply a definition of each word that was used in mine. He collapsed. It is obvious that to define the unknown *a* can only be done by saying either a = b or a = cd. In the first case one simply defines one unknown as another: nothing is gained. In the second case, c and d themselves require definition as *ef* and *gh*, respectively. The process may be extended; but it is bound to end by the exhaustion of the alphabet, y = za. The relativity of the whole series of equations then becomes apparent. The conclusion is that each and every term is a thing in itself, unknown and unknowable, and though to some extent apprehensible by intuition, only to the extent in which it is directly and indefinably cognizable by oneself.

Such is only one of the innumerable ways in which it may be demonstrated that conscious thought is confused on the one hand, and arbitrary on the other. There is, therefore, no possible escape save by the development of a faculty of mind which shall not be manifestly imbecile in any of these

ways. This brings us back to the traditional task of the initiate — the development of the Neschamah.

I devoted a great deal of time to various essays demonstrative of the general truth above set forth*** and to this practical problem. I took all the mystical and magical practices of all religions all over the world, and those of the secret teachers and associations to which I had access. I have little hesitation in saying that I have not omitted any practice of importance. I stripped these methods of all their dogmatic top-hamper, all their racial and climatic limitations, and all the complications which had been introduced in the course of time or through the idiosyncrasies of their inventors. I further freed them from the weight of the promised rewards which were supposed to follow on their performance. I wrote down the result in the simplest and most dignified prose at my command, clarifying the instructions by separating them into sections.

I guided myself by the principle that the object of any useful practice soever must necessarily be to get rid of some limitation. Thus the real object of Asana is evidently to release the body from the pain which is its normal characteristic; that of Mantra-Yoga to smooth the choppy sea of thought by inducing its movement to take the form of rhythmical billows. In this way I set forth the initiated teaching of all ages and all arts in a uniform and consistent body of writing, being careful nowhere to imply any theory soever.

In this book it is spoken of the Sephiroth and the Paths; of Spirits and Conjurations; of gods, Spheres, Planes, and many other things which may or may not exist. (*Liber 0*)

May be.

It has not been possible to construct this book on a basis of pure Scepticism. This matters less, as the practice leads to Scepticism, and it may be through it. (*Liber Thisharb*)

This work extended over a number of years, but the fundamental principles were laid down at this time. It is just to say that the publication of these instructions completely revolutionized occult training. It may not seem so very important on the surface to have adhered to the point of view without altering the practice, but in reality the difference is vital. For instance, there is a book, *Liber Jugorum*, in which the student takes an oath to exclude a certain thought, word or act, for a given period, and on every occasion of forgetfulness to cut himself on the wrist with a razor.

It is obviously easy to mistake such a practice for one of an aescetic nature,**** but no greater error could be made. There is no implication of wrong-doing and punishment; the only idea of the practice is to enable the performer to establish control over his mind. For this reason he does not swear to refrain from some evil thing — there is, in fact, no such thing as evil except — relatively but he is not expected to choose anything of the sort. Indeed, he would not be encouraged to do so. His intention to obtain control should not be reinforced by the desire to free himself from some particular habit. Such an emancipation would not imply perfect mastery. It is necessary to acquire the power to abstain from anything in a perfectly arbitrary way.

Few of these practices have in fact any direct bearing on the question of attainment; they stand to it as the soldier's drill does to fighting. Attainment means something different for every man, and it would be presumptuous on the part of the teacher to point the way. The A∴A∴ differs from all organizations in many respects, but most of all in this: that it makes no attempt to set up a standard. There are, as a matter of fact, one or two points which all men who tread the Path of the Wise must face; but even so these points might appear to any two men in a totally different light.

* Cf. Anatole France, *Le Jardin D'Epicure*, p. 276: “L'ame possede Dieu dans la mesure ou elle participe de l'absolu.” Otherwise: “Le souffle est assis sur celiu qui brille au soisseau du don qu'il recoit en ce qui est tout, delie.” Or: “Celui dont de souffle est un signe de vie, l. homme, prenda place dans le feu divin, source et foyer de la vie, et cette place lui sera mesuree sur la vertue qui lui a ete donnée d'étendre ce souffle chaud, cette petite âme invisible, à travers l'espace libre.”

** Pertinen is a note made by me in Granada during the dances of the Gypsies. “The proof that the reason is always contradictory is in itself a contradiction. This is no objection . . . indeed one expects it. The question is one for the practical man not the theorists.” The fact that a flaw is essential in every argument, even in one directed against the validity of argument, proves the very point which would at first sight seem to be disproved. Epaminondas and the Oretans. Bertrand Russell deserves great credit for analyzing this and similar paradoxes. His theory of “zig-zagginess” is profoundly stimulating, and he is not far from the kingdom of heaven.

*** *The Soldier and the Hunchback, ? and* ! states it most clearly.

**** It is *truly* 'ascetic': i.e. proper to the training of an athlete. His diet and exercises are 'good' only in relation to the one object on which he is concentrating.

CHAPTER 83

In 1908 I began to be a little restless. The Himalayas had cured me of the habit of going to the Alps. I could not play any longer with dolls after wooing such grown-up girls as Chogo Ri and Kangchenjunga. I tried to settle down in the Latin Quarter, finding a real home at 50 rue Vavin with M. and Madame Bourcier, people in whom the spirit of the early days of D'Artagnan was still alive. There is a peculiar relation between the best bourgeois of this type and the wandering *gentilhomme*, who is seeking his fortune in one way or another and requires a *pied à terre*. It is one which implies great mutual respect and affection, and, alas, the qualities which make such relations possible are becoming very rare in the world. Despite all its draw-backs, there was never a better social system than the feudal, so far as it derived from the patriarchal. In getting rid of its abuses, we have also got rid of the noblest springs of action and the most congenial code of manners. The war destroyed this relation altogether. The Bourciers ended by being as disgusting as any other French people.

Rationalism in any form is the most fatal enemy of the human race. Consider the mere question of duelling. It is quite undeniable that one proves nothing by running some-one through with a sword. The practice was therefore entirely illogical. At the same time, its existence made people careful how they behaved. It was a barrier against vulgarity and cowardice, which are the chief qualities observable in human relations to-day. It is true that duelling produced a type of bully, but he was not worse, and was far less objectionable, than his successor.

Duelling moreover offers redress for personal wrongs. The theory that God defends the right was not so absurd as it sounds, for it requires an exceptionally callous man to risk his life in a bad quarrel, however sure he may be of his mastery of the rapier. But to-day a man has no redress but the law courts, where there is no question at all of God defending the right. The worst case a man has the more likely he is to win it, provided that he has stolen enough money to fee the best lawyers. The modern bully, so far from risking his life, is careful to arrange that he should risk nothing. He so disposes his affairs that damages cannot be obtained from him, and, in any case, the penalty falls not on the responsible people but on a nameless man of straw. The most outrageous and insolent villainy can go unpunished for decades.

Consider the notorious case of Bottomley, whom everybody in London knew to be a thief and a blackmailer, yet he had to be tried four times before he was convicted, and in the mean time he was within an ace of becom-

ing Prime Minister of England. He could not have raised a five-pound note in the whole of the City of London, yet he was able to swindle the public to the tune of many hundreds of thousands of pounds. He blackmailed one prominent man after another week after week; but no one could sue him for libel because he was bankrupt twenty times over. (I remember, incidentally, being introduced to him at Romano's at lunch one day. He wanted to consult a letter, and took a mass of papers from his inside pocket. Among them were no less than sixteen bankrupt notices.) I remember my father-in-law dismissing a curate for some perfectly disgraceful conduct. The man went to Bottomley and next week was a page in *John Bull* describing how the Rev. F. F. Kelly swindled his servant girls out of their savings.

Fortunately for Bottomley, Gerald Kelly was in England. Otherwise I should have gone to Romano's and broken a wine bottle on the scoundrels' head. It may be said that the Law of Criminal Libel offers a redress, but it is notoriously hard to secure a conviction. Almost the only man that has been sentenced in recent times is Cecil Chesterson, who was absolutely honest and believed himself to be acting in the real interests of the public. Besides, in the case of newspaper libels, one can never get at the man really responsible. One finds in the dark some poor devil who never heard of the article for which he is being prosecuted.

Things became so bad in France that a law had to be passed compelling any newspaper which attacked a man to allot double the amount of space to his reply. It is an admirable law; it secures fair play to the victims without demanding, as in England, that he should ruin himself in legal expenses on a wild goose chase. But the spirit of fair play seems completely to have deserted England. During the war the law was strained and violated in every way to prosecute the Quakers, though they had been promised special protection. There is no consistency in public opinion, no conscience in the public press. One year Michael Collins was being denounced as a traitor in the pay of Germany, as a common gunman and assassin, and so on. Twelve months later he was the saviour of Ireland, the darling of England, the young romantic poet appointed by Providence in the crisis. If he had not been shot, he would probably be a gunman and all the rest of it by now.

Nor is there any generosity towards brave enemies, as there was even a quarter of a century ago. There were few Englishmen who had not a soft place in their hearts for De Wet. But to-day, not content with the judicial assassination of Sir Roger Casement, we try to destroy his good name by circulating, secretly, so that his friends have no opportunity of answering the charges, an alleged diary of his in which he reveals himself as indulging in the pet vice of the English upper classes. The result is that Casement's memory is treasured as that of a martyr. Besides being more honest, it

would have been better policy to admit the obvious fact that Casement was a dangerous fanatic whose brain had been thrown into disorder by disease and hardship. It never pays to ill treat a man who represents, however unworthily, a cause. We used to recognize this. We did all in our power to prevent Wilde from getting himself into prison but his _____ was too strong for us. At the same time we should not have yielded. His imprisonment popularized and justified his offence, perpetuated his memory, and pushed artificially into the first class an unoriginal and unwholesome writer who is hardly worthy to be included in the third.

I was indeed restless. In April I wandered from Paris to Deal and played golf enthusiastically. Rose was going from bad to worse. I had begun to learn to detect the smell of alcohol, but her cunning was so extraordinary that I was never able to catch her in the act of drinking. During the whole period, in fact, I only did so twice. The second occasion makes an interesting story. It shows the extent to which the obsessing demon can conceal his presence.

It was one evening in our house at 21 Warwick Road. Rose and I were sitting in my library on the ground floor in the front of the house. The dining-room and kitchen were in the basement, the whiskey being kept in the sideboard. Rose said that she would go and lock up the house, and went downstairs. I put off my slippers and followed stealthily. The stair case was partly illuminated, a shadow being cast diagonally across it. I heard the dining-room door open and began to descend. Rose came quickly back and looked up the stairs; but luckily I was in the shadow and she did not see me. She then went very quickly back into the dining-room, leaving the door open, and I went down the stairs as quickly as possible, hoping to catch her in the act. As I reached the foot, whence I could see into the dining-room, I heard the noise of a door being closed. Rose was standing by the sideboard; but there was no evidence of her act except an empty wet glass. During the few seconds it had taken me to descend the stairs, she had opened the sideboard, uncorked the bottle, poured out and drunk the whiskey, and restored everything to its normal condition. It was an act of prestidigitation and nothing else.

I was at my wits' end. She was no better than before she went to Leicester. I thought I would try moral pressure and took counsel of Fuller, Eckenstein and Gerald Kelly, as well as her doctor. They were none of them very hopeful, but they agreed that it might do some good to leave her and refuse to return until guarantees were given that she had stopped drinking. There did really seem some hope; the power of love might work the miracle, and certainly my love for Rose was stronger than ever, although cut away completely from its physical support. I have always been peculiarly sensitive

about trifles in my rapports with women; the most trivial thing can put me off completely. (Alexander Harvey has a superb story, “The Mustache” in which this psychology is admirably set forth.) I could have borne her death more philosophically. I was constantly tortured by the “memory of the Rose-red hours”. I was not allowed to forget. There was the possibility of paradise at my elbow and there was nothing there but the reek of hell.

I reel back beneath the blow of her breath
As she comes smiling to me, that disgust
Changes her drunken lust
Into a shriek of hate — half conscious still
(Beneath the obsession of her will)
Of all she was — before her death, her death!

I hated to go away; in my diary, April 26th I find:

“Gerald at twenty-one. Wonders I didn't put my foot down a year ago. But Rose's tenderness is such, and I love her so dearly.”

However, I left on the 28th for Paris.

Late in 1908 I picked up a book. The title attracted me strongly, *The Magician*. The author, bless my soul! No other than my old and valued friend. William Somerset Maugham, my nice young doctor whom I remembered so well from the dear old days of the Chat Blanc. So he had really written a book — who would have believed it! I carried it off to Scott's. In my excitement, I actually paid for it.

I think I ate two dozen oysters and a pheasant, and drank a bottle of No. III, one of the happiest champagnes in the famous — can you say “caterer's”? Yes: — I mean caterer's cellar. Yes, I did myself proud, for the Magician, Oliver Haddo, was Aleister Crowley; his house “Skene” was Boleskine. The hero's witty remarks were, many of them, my own. He had, like Arnold Bennett, not spared his shirt cuff.

But I had jumped too hastily to conclusions when I said, “Maugham has written a book.” I found phrase after phrase, paragraph after paragraph, page after page, bewilderingly familiar; and then I remembered that in my early days of the G∴ D∴ I had introduced Gerald Kelly to the Order and recommended him a selection of books. I reflected that Maugham had become a great friend of Kelly's, and stayed with him at Camberwell Vicarage. Maugham had taken some of the most private and personal incidents of my life, my marriage, my explorations, my adventures with big game, my Magical opinions, ambitions and exploits, and so on. He had added a number of

the many absurd legends of which I was the central figure. He had patched all these together by innumerable strips of paper clipped from the books which I had told Gerald to buy. I had never supposed that plagiarism could have been so varied, extensive and shameless. *The Memoirs of a Physician*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Blossom and the Fruit*, and numerous other more or less occult works of fiction had supplied the plot, and many of them the incidents. *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, *The Life of Paracelsus*, *The Ritual and Dogma of Transcendental Magic* and others had been transcribed, whole pages at a time, with such slight changes as “failed” for “resulted in failure”, and occasional additions or omissions.

I like Maugham well enough personally, though many people resent a curious trick which he has of saying spiteful things about everybody. I always feel that he, like myself, makes such remarks without malice, for the sake of their cleverness. I was not in the least offended by the attempts of the book to represent me as, in many ways, the most atrocious scoundrel, for he had done more than justice to the qualities of which I was proud; and despite himself he had been compelled, like Balaam, to prophesy concerning me. He attributed to me certain characteristics which he meant to represent as abominable, but were actually superb.

He represented me as having treated my wife as Dumas makes Cagliostro treat his, with the object of producing homunculi, artificial living human beings — “Was it for these vile monstrosities that Margot was sacrificed in all her loveliness?” — Well, comeliness is a cheap after all. To discover the secret of life, who would not pitch two thirds of our “maudite race” into the bottomless pit of oblivion, for which, in any case, they are bound?

The Magician was, in fact, an appreciation of my genius such as I had never dreamed of inspiring. It showed me how sublime were my ambitions and reassured me on a point which sometimes worried me — whether my work was worth while in a worldly sense. I had at times feared lest, superbly as my science had satisfied my own soul, it might yet miss the mark of making mankind master of its destiny.

Well, Maugham had had his fun with me; I would have mine with him. I wrote an article for *Vanity Fair* (December 30th, 1908) in which I disclosed the method by which the book had been manufactured and gave parallel passages. Frank Harris would not believe that I was serious. He swore I must be making it up. He could not believe that any man would have the impudence to publish such strings of plagiarism. I had to bring a little library round to the office to prove my proposition, and Harris sat and stared, and gasped like a fish at each fresh outrage. He cut down the article to two and a half pages, but even so it was the most damning exposure of a literary

crime that had ever been known. No author of even mediocre repute had ever risked his reputation by such flagrant *stupra*.

Maugham took my *riposte* in good part. We met by chance a few weeks later, and he merely remarked that there were many thefts besides those which I had pointed out. I told him that Harris had cut down my article by two-thirds for lack of space. “I almost wish”, I said, “that you were an important writer.”

I had begun, I do not in the least remember how, to try my hand at short stories. Even today having written more than seventy such, I do not quite understand why this form of art should appeal to me. I take fits of it. I go for a month without thinking of the subject at all, and then all of a sudden I find myself with ideas and writing them down. I entirely agree that the short story is one of the most delicate and powerful forms of expression. It forms a link with poetry because one can work up to ecstasy of one kind or another in a more lyric manner than is possible in a novel; the emotion evoked is doubtless more limited, but it can be made for this very reason better defined. The ecstasy of *Wuthering Heights*, *The House with the Green Shutters* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is altogether on a larger scale. It is built up of more and more varied material and it is evidently possible to obtain a great general effect. On the other hand, the novel loses in poignancy. Such incidents as the hand at the window in *Wuthering Heights* and Mrs. Gourlay's exclamation in Douglas's masterpiece are almost out of keeping with the general plan.

In Paris I wrote “The Soul Hunter”, the diary of an insane doctor who has drugged his enemy, certified his death, got possession of the corpse, embedded it in plaster of Paris, and vivisects the brain in order to discover the seat of the soul — a nice Christmassy idea.

Paris disgusted me. I tried to find peace at Morêt, but found only boredom, and went off to Venice with a bad throat which gave me the idea of the story “Cancer?” In this a distinguished painter imagines himself to have cancer of the throat — and anywhere else of which he is reminded by some trifling irritation. (Eugène Carrière is doubtless responsible in part for the theme.) He works himself into all kinds of mental fever, but luckily goes to a doctor — drawn from my own doctor, Edmund L. Gros, the famous American physician of Paris — who pronounces him neurasthenic but otherwise healthy and prescribes a motoring tour, sending his own brother to take charge of the patient. They reach the Pyrenees. He is so exhilarated that he can think of nothing better to do than cut his throat. Another Christmassy idea.

Venice bored me as badly as Morêt. That was, in fact, the essence of my stories: that I was incurably sad about Rose. So I got back to Paris and forgot my sorrows in the kindness of Nina Olivier and various friends. I wrote “The Dream Circean.” This is a bigger and better story than either of the others. A young man full of romantic ideas of honour and purity has an adventure in which he rescues a girl from the malice of her mother. This involves a fight with the servant. But after he has won he cannot find the house. He searches vainly and becomes a monomaniac. Then he meets Eliphas Levi, who promises to cure him, provided that he swears never to enter the street where he imagined the house to be as long as he should live. He is, in fact, cured; but one day after Lévi's death he finds himself in the neighbourhood of the street, and decides to walk through it merely to celebrate the fact that he is cured, and that it means no more to him than any other street. Instantly the old obsession seizes him, and for the rest of his life he searches through Paris for the girl with golden hair, though he knows quite well that even if he found her she would be an old woman.

Rose's family and my friends had put pressure on her, and her father wrote to me that I could come back, which I did; but I found that she had simply become more cunning than ever.

It was really beyond belief. It had been hard to convince myself that she was in the grip of this disease. I had been told about it in more or less plain terms by quite a number of people, and had merely been angry with them. Now, when I knew it myself, I found other people equally incredulous. Haynes told me that he simply could not believe the facts, though he knew all about her two months in Leicester, and the rest. Her doctor told me that she would come to him and beg him, with tears in her eyes and tones of desperate sincerity, to cure her; and all the while she would be drinking under cover of her handkerchief. I took her down to Sandwich for a fortnight in June and July, but there was nothing to be done. One could not even watch her. She would go out in the early hours of the morning and appear at the breakfast table hardly able to speak.

I went back to Paris on July 8th. I worked on *Clouds Without Water*, *Sir Palamedes*, *The World's Tragedy and* “Mr. Todd”. In particular, I wrote the autobiographical preface to *The World's Tragedy*, some ten thousand words, at a stretch; and certain lyrics, mostly about Dorothy, of whom more in a moment. “Mr. Todd”, as the name implies, is a personification of Death and the idea of the play is to introduce him as Deus Ex Machina, helping the characters one by one out of their various troubles. The idea sounds a good one, but apart from availing myself of my opportunities for *double entendre* (“I was told the other day that he held a lot of land in London and has more tenants than the Duke of Westminister!”), I could not make much of it. The

repetition of the idea was bound to be rather ridiculous. It is my one failure in this period.

The truth doubtless is that I had used up the energy accumulated in my wanderings, and written myself out: i.e., as far as anything big was concerned. I was in excellent form with lyrics and wrote several as good as anything I had ever done. In particular “After Judgment”, to the honour and glory of Dorothy, will stand in English literature as one of the most passionate poems in the language.

It was certainly time that I went for a walk in the country. Paris is not a stimulant to a poet of my calibre; I need to be face to face with God and see Him, and live. For when it is said that no man shall look upon His face and live, the emphasis must be on the word “man”. It is the privilege of the poet that his life is fed by direct communication with Nature, as a child in the womb of its mother. The man who is separate from Nature, and is nourished by the gross food of his conscious impressions, produces only second-rate stuff. I feel the necessity of being absolutely shut off from the external universe — “My life is hid with Christ in God”, to borrow the phraseology of the Christian mystic. I received my inspiration directly, without even needing an intellectual peg on which to hang it. My consciously conceived work is always inferior; it only exists because when I come to the point of actual writing, my pen runs away with me.

So I wanted to get back to the tall timber, but I did not know where to go. My course was determined by the necessities of Neuburg's initiation. He had joined me in Paris, and I proceeded to instruct him without losing a moment. He had taken an Honours degree in medieval and modern languages, and he could not order his dinner. I remember his asking for red cabbage by the name of ‟rouge kō-bāzhe″ — which is the nearest I can get to it phonetically.

He had been warned against drinking absinthe and we told him that was quite right, but (we added) many other drinks in Paris are terribly dangerous, especially to a nice young man like you; there is only one really safe, mild, harmless beverage and you can drink as much of that as you like without running the slightest risk, and what you say when you want it is, “Garçon! Un Pernod.” I forbear to remark on the result, beyond mentioning that I took Nina and a lady whom I will call Dorothy, as she figures under that name in numerous lyrics, to the Bal Bullier. He had had two double absinthes and they made him bold. (One of my wittiest remarks was made one Boat Race Night at the Empire when accosted by two charming ladies. I exclaimed to my friend, “That which hath made them bold hath made me drunk.”)

Neuburg wished to acquire the affections of one of my two girls, but he could not tell them apart, and he wooed them alternately in the most extravagantly *je june* fashion. Thanks to his various phobias, he had never made love satisfactorily to any woman in his life. He did not know what to say or do. He made all sorts of clumsy advances, which the girls cruelly repressed. Dorothy reproached him sadly:

"Surely, Mr. Neuburg, you would not say such things to your Dons' wives at Cambridge!"

Baffled in this direction, he made a supreme appeal to Nina by offering her two francs and twenty-five centimes.

We then went to our respective hotels to bed and the reaction began. He was in bed the whole of the next day, and when I called on him the morning of the day after that I found nothing had been done to cast a veil over the natural results of his indiscretion. But that was Neuburg all over. He was physically the filthiest animal that I have ever known. His gifts were supernatural. I remember giving him a saucer to clean: it had a very small quantity of yellow oil paint in it, left over from painting some talisman. He was a long while away and we went into the bedroom to see how he was getting on. The saucer seemed as full of paint as before, like the widow's curse: nay, more he had repeated the miracle of the loaves and fishes, for he had covered the whole of his dress and his person with this paint. It was all over the washstand, all over the walls and floor, and even to some extent on the ceiling. This is not a joke. I do not offer any explanation; I doubt if there is one. I simply state the facts and leave the world to admire.

Dorothy would have been a *grande passion* had it not been that my instinct warned me that she was incapable of true love. She was incomparably beautiful. Augustus John has painted her again and again, and no more exquisite loveliness has ever adorned any canvas. She was capable of stimulating the greatest extravagances of passion. Indeed, the transports were genuine enough; but they were carefully isolated from the rest of life, so that she was in no way compromised by them. At the time I rather resented this; I was inclined to call her shallow and even to feel somewhat insulted; but now I see that she was in reality acting like an adept, keeping the planes well apart. She was an extremely good friend, though she never allowed her friendship to interfere with her interests. In other words, she was a thoroughly sensible and extremely charming girl.

She was, in addition, one of the best companions that a man can possibly have. Without pretence of being a blue-stocking, she could hold her own in any conversation about art, literature or music. She was the very soul of

gaiety, and an incomparable comedienne. One of my most delightful memories is the matching of our wits. It was rapture to compete with her in what we called “leg-pulling”, which may be defined as inducing someone to make a fool of himself. We carried this out with all due regard for honour and good feeling; we never did any one any harm, and we often did people a great deal of good.

Neuburg was, so to speak, born for our benefit, and this is what we did. We began thus; I told Neuburg with the utmost delicacy that Dorothy had been wounded to the heart by his gross manner of wooing, not only because of her almost morbid modesty, but because she had fallen in love with him at first sight. I urged him to make amends by paying respectful court to her, which he proceeded to do, she playing up to it with sublime fantasy, but pretending the greatest reluctance to admit that she was in love with him. Little by little she yielded and they became engaged. (She had a husband round the corner, but one ignores such flim-flam in Montparnasse.)

In the meanwhile I went on the other tack and urged Neuburg to take the obvious measures to get rid of the cause of his neurosis, and ultimately persuaded him to go down to the *Rue des Quatre Vents* and ask an old friend of mine named Marcelle to undertake his cure. No sooner had he done this than I pretended to discover his engagement to Dorothy and brought to him a sense of the grievous wrong which he had done her by his infidelity. I persuaded him that the only manly and honourable course was to tell her frankly what he had done. So we arranged a dinner party at which he should do so. She insisted on his going into every possible detail of his misdemeanour. Considering that he was the shyest man alive with women and that, furthermore, he supposed her to be even more delicate in repression, the dinner was excruciatingly funny. I admitted with sombre remorse my share in persuading him to disgrace himself and Dorothy took the severest view of my conduct. I as the older man, I in charge of his conscience, I responsible to his parents, etc. etc. She said she would never speak to me again and walked home up the Boulevard with Neuburg, with me hanging on the outskirts, pleading and gesticulating to be forgiven, and always receiving the most austere rebuffs. At the same time she could not forgive Neuburg either. He took it absolutely to heart; he would never be able to get over having insulted the fairest and dearest and purest of God's creatures. Of course he would never speak to me again either.

I let him suffer for two or three days, then one afternoon I went across to his hotel and told him that this nonsense had gone on long enough; and it was time for him to learn something of life; I told him the facts. He regarded them as outrageous lies. I pointed out a hundred indications that they were

true, but he was absolutely convinced of her purity and my infamy. I realized that I was wasting my breath.

“Come across the road”, I said wearily, “and see with your own eyes.”

I was almost obliged to use actual force, but he came; and there was Dorothy, unadorned, smoking a cigarette on my bed. The boy was absolutely stunned. Even with the evidence in front of his eyes, he was loth to admit the truth. His ideal woman was shattered thoroughly and for ever.

The boy had suffered frightfully, but that was not my fault. It was the fault of his own romantic idealism; and had I not destroyed it in this drastic way, he would have been the prey of one vampire after another as long as he lived. As it was, his physical health became superb, his nerves stopped playing him tricks, he got rid of all his fads about food, dress and conduct, his genius soared free of all its silly inhibitions, his magical powers developed unhindered by the delusions bred of insisting that nature is what one thinks it ought to be, and his relations with humanity became reasonable.

I have told this story at length not merely because it is amusing in itself, thought that were sufficient excuse, but because it affords an excellent example of the way I go to work to bring my pupils in touch with reality. I saw to it that he came to no actual harm; at the same time I put him through the mill with unsparing severity. It is no good making two bites at a cherry, and partial initiation is sometimes worse than no initiation at all. One must not leave a loophole for the Lord of Lies.

CHAPTER 84

Peace being made, and Neuburg trained, so far as Paris offered a suitable theatre, I determined to put him up against reality of another kind. He had always been accustomed to have everything come to him; he had been allowed to assume that the world was constituted for his convenience and comfort. He had never met any real people at all. He admitted, so to speak, the existence of a baker, but he did not really understand that bread was made with flour and that flour was made from corn by a miller (whom he had hitherto regarded merely as the father of a miller's daughter in a poem),

and that corn was grown by actual human beings. So I proposed to him to walk through the wildest parts of Spain. We agreed to start from Bayonne with less than five pounds between us, and managed to make our way to Madrid on foot, avoiding as far as possible the line of the railway.

We left Paris for Bordeaux on the last day of July, went on to Bayonne the next morning, and started the same afternoon for the frontier, reaching Ustaritz that night. Three days' walk took us across the Pyrenees to Pamplona. The people of the mountain villages seemed to have no experience of strangers, especially of strangers on foot. Of course we were not very beautiful objects to the uninitiated eye. I was in my climbing clothes, save that I replaced tweed by buckskin breeches, the same pair as I am wearing to-day. As for Neuburg, I cannot say what he looked like, because when God made him he broke the mould.

So the people almost everywhere outside the larger towns supposed us to be beggars. It took me some time to discover why my requests for food and shelter were received with such disfavour. I spoke Spanish fairly well as soon as I picked up my Mexican memories; but naturally the people didn't tell me to my face what was the matter; and having been accustomed to be treated everywhere as a great lord, it never entered my head for a moment that they could suppose anything else. When I found out, I said to myself: Well, that is easy enough: I will show them some money. However, they still regarded us with great suspicion. They gave us what we wanted, but did not seem in the least happy about it. Further investigation, however, finally revealed that having money, they thought we must be brigands. We let it go at that.

However, misunderstandings were not yet over. Three times on the road we were arrested as anarchists. The soldiers could not understand why anyone should want to go to Madrid except to kill Alphonso, and I suppose there is something really to be said for this point of view. They gave us no real annoyance, our passports being as impressive as they were unintelligible. Of course they didn't really think we were anarchists, and they would not have cared if we had been; but most of these unhappy men were marooned for indefinite periods in ghastly districts where there was absolutely no amusement of any kind. To arrest us was a good excuse to have someone to talk to. That, incidentally, is more or less the case with idle officials everywhere, but in countries like England and America they have to pretend to take their silly formalities seriously, and so what was originally no more than *désoeuvrement* becomes deliberate annoyance. The pettier minds get to enjoy the exercise of this tuppenny-ha'penny authority, and the regulations which were perhaps instituted in an emergency survive their usefulness, like

the vermiform appendix, and become the most tedious and irritating tyranny.

The Pyrenean Frontiers of Spain at this point are delightfully picturesque, though the mountains are anything but imposing. (Damn those Himalayas; they have spoilt me for scenery.) Some of the mountain villages are filthier and more savage than anything even in German Switzerland. The people are neither polite nor picturesque — they snarl and stink.

We had a longish day into Pamplona, forty-two kilometres, and got the first decent meal since leaving Bayonne. The poverty of the country is really pitiful. As George Borrow recounts, the Church sucks the life-blood of the people. One can quite understand the moralizing of Protestant travellers. Prosperity varies inversely with piety. Italy is only flourishing to-day in those districts where the alimentary canal of industry has been cleared of the taeniae of Christianity. The only city of Spain which holds its own with the rest of the world today is Barcelona, a notorious hotbed of infidelity and Freemasonry. It is to the last degree unfortunate that these things should be connected in the minds of the unthinking with anarchy and other cults implying social disorder. Lord Morley was an atheist, Huxley an agnostic, and Edward the Seventh a Freemason; but it would be hard to pick three men more genuinely enlightened or more truly conservative.

It is Rome herself who is always trying to prove that servile bigotry is the only guarantee of national credit and personal good faith. Having been thoroughly beaten in the nineteenth century by the geologists, physicists, biologists, anthropologists, chemists and astronomers, Christianity has endeavoured to make the people forget that science has not left dogma a leg to stand on, and to persuade the world that the alternative to submission to Rome, or at least to the practically anonymous and amorphous aggregation of nonconformist nonentities, is Judaism (conceived as a bullion-bloated bogy) and Bolshevism. Christianity is trying to rally the forces of decency and order to the soiled standard, black with the blood of the innocents, the infants of science and freedom which have trampled back into the stinking slime of superstition and slavery of which it is the symbol.

The supreme danger of our century is this dilemma. We are being compelled to have to choose between militarism and commercialism. The first duty of thinkers is to demonstrate that the antithesis is not exclusive. There is no reason why we should not have an aristocracy of birth and brain, independent of the struggle for life, and a democracy of labour and love, independent of formal adhesion to creeds. The solution is given by “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.” The object of education should be

to enable a child to discover his True Will, to find out what he is fit for, and develop his faculties with strict reference to the execution of that True Will.

The attempt to standardize the ambition of humanity has naturally produced universal discontent. It should be recognized that there are an infinite number of ways of attainment, and that the world is big enough and diverse enough to give every one his fair share of happiness. The one proviso is that happiness should not be defined for us by dogmatism and measured in terms of motor cars. The most dangerous delusion of the devil is that the soul can be satisfied by the fulfilment of formulae, that one's neighbour's goods are desirable. “Thou shalt not covet” is something more than a law of God: it is a piece of common sense advice. We have all of us the means of satisfaction ready to our hands if we only had the sense to avail ourselves of it, but we stupidly grab at the things which we do not want in the least, for no better reason than that other people tell us that we cannot do without them.

An analagous absurdity, and one enormously costly, in conventionality. The city clerk invokes debts and discomfort in order to comply with the code which demands that he should wear a hideous and humiliating costume of cheap and nasty cloth made artificially costly by the affectation of elegance. He ruins himself in order to look like a second rate waiter when he wants to affect smartness. In a hundred ways, so-called civilized people pawn their possibilities of happiness, convenience, and even economic security, for the sake of something for which we cannot even find a name which is not on the face of it a cynical jest.

In pursuance of this policy, the Jesuits are fomenting discord in every part of the world where Catholicism is not a permanent obsession. They are behind the perennial perturbations of Ireland, pointing the moral of the Russian revolution, attacking the fundamental principles of justice in France from the Dreyfus case to the *affaire Caillaux* creating a *Partito populare* in Italy, to counteract the loyal, orderly, and tolerant programme of Fascismo, and finding themselves beaten, they acquiesced, and captured the movement. Mussolini soon became a fire-breathing dragon, with strings in their hands. They are trying to identify Ferrer with the anarchists in Spain, persuading the employers of labour in the United States that the best workmen are those who have betrayed their comrades, and even in England contrasting their methods of education with that of the un-sectarian government schools to the disadvantage of the latter. As soon as English hardihood and common sense are informed of this latest intrigue the invariable result will follow.

There is a curious fatality attached to the schemes of Rome. Their strategy is empeccable, and their tactics are carried out with super-Napoleonic mastery of circumstance. Yet somehow or other, it always happens that the result is the exact opposite of that on which they calculated. The most recent and glaring example is the attempt to smash Protestanism and irreligion in the Great War. The strongholds of Rome shared the fate of the masterpieces of Brialmont: Austria was completely disintegrated. Russia, whose general political principles were in harmony with Papal pretensions, was reduced to a bleeding pulp on which the maggots of murderous Marxians grew fat. Rebellious Italy recovered its lost ground and became a victorious anti-Papal power whose youth were actually proposing at one time to expatriate the Pope to Canada. Germany, which had just re-admitted the Jesuits, was starved into revolution and chaos. England has, to a great extent, got rid of the Popish plots in Ireland which galled her, and Ulster has become permanently predominant. Only in the United States has Rome not received the rebuff, and even there Freemasonry has awaked to the danger of ultramontanism, and developed from a social and business society into an anti-clerical political association which combines all the subtle strength of a secret society with the weight of wealth and prestige of power.

In Spain there is certainly less stupidity of this kind, but the people hand over their hearts' blood to Herod. They sacrifice their happiness and their humanity at the shrine of superstition. Hell swallows up their hopes. The motive of their lives is fear. The Spaniard wraps himself in his pride, and holds himself aloof from actual affairs as much as he can. The social and economic power is in the hands of the women, and the women, are under the dominion of the priests.

There is no hope for Spain; because her men live either in the past, as Pizarro, or in the present with their favourite matador. The future means nothing to them; they have no motive for wrenching themselves away from the strangle-hold of St. Peter. The women, on the other hand, are entirely absorbed in the petty affairs of the parish as far as the present is concerned, and for the future are pre-occupied with purgatory. The priests, with their praeterhuman patience, go steadily ahead, year after year, enjoying the first fruits of the country. Remorselessly and relentlessly they drain the people of their substance. No matter how steadily the tide of fortune might flow towards the Peninsula, they would always be equal to the task of keeping it in a condition of pernicious anaemia. I wrote an article descriptive of the unhappy state of the people of Frank Harris, but he refused to publish it. Here is his letter.

“I cannot do all Spain as grumble; you spit on it and hiss at it. After all it is only the beautiful or great or extraordinary that endures, and we all forget the petty miseries of life as soon as we can.

Yours sincerely,

Frank Harris

Why not do your best for me w'h is pure Beauty.

Yours F. H.”

From Pamplona it is three days' easy walking to Logrono. We left our hotel after dinner and walked in the cool of the night about ten kilometres to a place which we christened “Bats' Culvert” in honour of our shelter. It was big enough almost to be called a tunnel. Delightfully warm and dry, I do not blame the bats for their choice of habitation.

The road to Logrono is very varied and picturesque. In particular there is one fine rock peak which reminded me of Tryfan. We found the days terribly hot and dusty. In order to test our endurance to the highest point, we talked to each other about the ices of Trinity College Kitchen, which are the best in the world, with those of Rumpelmayer in Paris for a poor second, and the rest absolutely nowhere. The walk did me all the good imaginable, but the diet was a little too much for my young friend, who developed chronic indigestion.

The people live in the most poverty-stricken circumstances; they cannot even understand that there may be others differently situated. In one place they told us at the hotel that they could give us nothing whatever to eat. The courtyard was running wild with poultry, and I told the woman to slay a couple of birds and roast them. It must have taken me a good quarter of an hour to get it into her head that this was a serious order, and by the time the meal was served the entire village had collected to see the eccentric millionaires who spent one and fourpence on food at a stroke.

Logrono will always live in my memory. The situation of the town is very impressive, with its large lazy river, almost dry at that season of the year, affording a measure of the landscape. The people were, if anything, lazier still. The entire population seemed to be sprawling on the terraces of the cafés drinking the wine of the country, a type of Burgundy which has more than a little merit. It is a strong, rough, harsh wine; but the flavour of the soil is as apparent as that of peat in Irish whiskey, and it has the advantage of being absolutely genuine.

I am barbarian enough to prefer the local Spanish and Italian wines to all but the fine vintages of the French. Civilization has produced its usual result on its initiates. The French winemakers employ too much chemistry for my liking. I require vitality in food and drink, and I believe that this quality is a spiritual thing. I believe that the reverence with which all fine wine is treated has a magical effect in ripening. I believe that the gaiety of the peasant who trod the grapes transmits itself magically to the product. I believe that the brilliance of the “old masters” partially depends upon the loving care and reverence with which they have been treated for centuries. I believe that an idol becomes a receptacle of power by virtue of the worship paid and offerings made to it. When people have finished laughing loudly and rudely at remarks of this sort, I remind them of the virtues of favourite guns, fishing rods, cricket bats and golf clubs. A stranger can distinguish at the first glance the treasured weapon from the newcomer, on the one hand, and the despised and neglected abject on the other.

The spirit of Logrono was so broad and idle that it was very hard to drag ourselves away from it, but we managed it somehow and walked in the cool of the evening of August 9th to a place that we called “Jack Straw's Castle”, at the opening of a magnificent ravine through mighty cliffs of earth.

The following day the road led over a high pass, a barren wilderness of bizarre beauty. It was nearly nightfall when we reached a wretched hamlet, so poor that there was really no food to be had. There was not even any pretence of an inn, and it was only by long negotiation and the display of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, in the shape of a silver dollar, that we persuaded the inhabitants to let us have a cup of goat's milk apiece, a small scrap of dry bread, and a bed in the straw in a horribly dirty barn. It was a glorious meal and a very heaven of repose. On the third day we completed the 150 kilometres on the road from Logrono to Soria. The last few hours of the walk were made splendid by the thunderstorm which I have already described.

I should have liked to stay in Soria for an unlimited time. The town is a stupendous relic of the rugged grandeur of the past. The people were, beyond all praise, sympathetic, and I cannot even begin to describe my appreciation of the cook in our hotel. It may have been that he was benefited by the proverb, “Hunger is the best sauce”, but I cannot help that.

We now found ourselves in danger of striking the main road, so we turned aside from the direct line to Madrid and struck out for Burgo de Osma. Our first night was spent at a place which we called “Witches' Kitchen Village”. We got lodgings in a house whose sinister aspect was only surpassed by that of its inhabitants. We were so doubtful about their intentions

that we barricaded ourselves for the night in the main room. There were considerable alarums and excursions; but when they found we meant business they decided to leave us alone and in the morning everyone was all smiles. We had forty-four kilometres to walk, most of the way over scrub desert without a drop of water or a hint of shelter. It was extraordinarily dreary and wearisome.

Burgo de Osma is a lovely little town tucked away in a fold of the cloak of nowhere. We had arrived at the psychological moment. It was about to celebrate its annual two days of festival.

When civic life is still integral it never lacks interest. It is when the provinces begin to aid the capital that decay sets in. The philosophy of the *Book of the Law* is necessary to preserve states from the disintegration which inevitable follows upon over-centralization. An association of sovereign independent units, each absolutely respecting itself and others, the whole linked by their common interests, forms a cosmos comparable to that of the stars and the atoms. It is self-sustaining because it does not imagine that its elements should be subordinated to and merged in any one of them. Human affairs are analogous. The stable state is composed of a strong aristocracy, where the King is *primus inter pares*. When he becomes *Le Roi Soleil* the scaffold is not far away.

Similarly, as soon as a city like London begins to increase beyond the point where it obtains adequate nourishment from the country without straining its resources, it soon finds itself having to live by means of desperate shifts, and as soon as these begin to break down the end comes very suddenly. The strength of the United States was in the doctrine of State sovereignty. The gradual usurpation of this power by the Federal authority, especially under the megalomaniac Wilson, is bound to result in a tyranny which will neglect the very diverse interests which it governs, and the lower station of each unit will lead to the collapse of the whole unwieldy monster. The worst tendency of the human mind is expressed in religion by monotheism, which is ideal centralization. Nature affords a better example of a stable economy. It is true that the planets are subordinate to one sun; but even so each planet has its separate character and orbit. The stars are independent individuals related to each other by certain bonds which serve to sustain them in independence. As soon as a system becomes centripetal it is on the highway to dissolution.

CHAPTER 85

The smaller towns of Spain have preserved their distinct characteristics, their *amour propre*. They are not entirely servile suburbs of Madrid. They do not drain themselves of their best blood to supply the court with sycophants. It is for this reason that, although Spain has been torn by civil and dynastic wars, it maintains a certain rugged resistance to the forces of autocracy on the one hand, and to revolution on the other.

Burgo de Osma was an excellent example of the cell on whose welfare and whose differentiation from sister cells, the integrity of the organism depends. The pride of the Spanish character is the most valuable factor in its preservation. Spain, almost alone of European countries, does not exude a horde of emigrants upon America. The pride of the individual is personal, family and local as well as national. He prefers haughty poverty to servile prosperity, and this quality may yet restore him to his former greatness, when the tide of economics flows once more in his direction, after Europe has been ruined by the expedients which at present buttress her artificial system of centralization and standardization.

At the moment, Spain was deeply exercised with the matter of base coinage. It appears that a certain Cabinet Minister had a brother in Mexico who eked out a precarious livelihood by exporting brass bedsteads. The calibre of the uprights was such that silver pesos could be neatly packed therein, and the influence of the Minister prevented the Custom House being surprised at the weight. These silver pesos were of the same quality as those from the Government mint; and at the then price of silver, there was over 100% profit on each coin put into circulation. It was quite impossible to distinguish the good money from the bad, except that the coiners had thoughtlessly struck one dollar of Amadeo II, who lived so long ago that his coins should have been more worn than these were.

As we approached Madrid we found the people increasingly suspicious and unwilling to accept our pesos, and in the last hundred kilometres of so it was extremely difficult to get them to take our money at all and, therefore, to get food or shelter. But when we came to the city itself, instead of the nuisance reaching a climax, we found that it disappeared altogether. The Madrilenes were not going to worry their heads as to whether money was good or bad. It doesn't matter, they argued, so long as we agree to take it, and all the desperate efforts of the Government to call in the bad coinage fell flat.

This incident gave me a great deal to think over. It enlightened me more than a little as to the nature of money. I do not know why it is that one of the commonest things in the world, which goes through the hands of literally everyone except Buddhist monks, should be so difficult to understand. I may say that the events of the War in subsequent years have convinced me more than ever that there are very few people alive who understand the nature of wealth, money, or any of the subjects connected therewith, who realize what are the true factors in national prosperity. The subject is full of paradoxes, and I heard more nonsense talked about reparations than I had heard even about the war itself.

For instance, all the more intelligent people assume it as a general principle that Work in itself means Wealth. They cannot distinguish between work and the wealth produced by it. This was at the bottom of most of the arguments that Germany could not pay. Of course there is only one way in which victory can be made to pay, and that is by settling on the land of the vanquished and making them serfs. We should have got rid of our surplus of unemployed by expatriating the Germans from their western provinces and settling them with our own people, to form a province of mixed French and English such as might form a barrier for generations against the East of Europe. I do not say that this programme is enlightened humanitarianism, but it is certainly practical patriotism in the ordinary sense of the word.

Forgive the digression! We were at Burgo de Osma and the fiesta was in full swing. I enjoyed every minute heartily. For the first time I was able to see a bull-fight without the accretions of snobbishness when the famous matador steps forth to exhibit his skill in the presence of Royalty, and the game is not a game but an excuse for servility and intrigue. It was all the difference between house football at a public school and a Cup Final. I was able to understand the direct appeal which the sport makes to the primitive passions.

There was no excitement and no disgust for me. I had reached a spiritual stage in which Sanna — pure perception — had ousted Vedana — sensation — I had learnt to look on the world without being affected by events. I was able to observe what went on as few people can, for the average man's senses are deceived by his emotions. He gets things out of proportion and he exaggerates them even when he is able to appreciate them at all. I made up my mind that it should be an essential part of my system of initiation to force my pupils to be familiar with just those things which excite or upset them, until they have acquired the power of perceiving them accurately without interference from the emotions. It is all a branch of the art of concentration, no doubt; but it is one which has been very much neglected, and it is of supreme importance when the aspirant arrives at the higher levels,

where it is a question of “making no difference between any one thing and any other thing”, and uniting oneself with each and every possible idea. For as long as anything soever escapes assimilation there remains separateness and duality, or the potentiality of such. Evil can only be destroyed by “love under will”; and so long as it is feared and hated, so long as we insist on attributing a real and irreconcilable existence to it, so long will it remain evil for us. The same of course applies to what we call “good”. Good is itself evil in so far as it is separate from other ideas.

Through this course of initiation I was brought into great happiness. I was able to perceive a fact which I had never guessed: that blood on the shoulder of a bull in the Spanish summer sunlight is the most beautiful colour that exists. In the whole of my memories I had only one fact to set against it; the green of a certain lizard which ran across my path on a hillside in Mexico. It is, in fact, very rare to see pure colours in Nature; they are nearly always mixed or toned down. But when they do appear they are overwhelming.

This is probably why precious stones have such an influence on most people. Personally, I regard them with mediocre interest. I prefer a colour to be vital; that is, not so much inherent in the material of an object as produced by its movement and (*a fortiori*) of its life. Thus no jewel has ever given me the joy that I find in pools of clear sea water under the rocks, in crimson jellyfish, in scarlet anemones, in shoals of violet fish — in the sunsets which perform two hours of oratorio every night at Cefalu, especially during the autumn; but most of all in these pure colours of life.

It is, by the way, interesting to observe that pure colour is comparatively common in the microscopic world, and it seems to me more than possible that the smallest insects and even animalculae may possess a complete language of iridescence. It is said by some philosophers that the sense of colour becomes less important as we advance in the scale of evolution. It is at least certain that in so-called civilized countries the tendency is for the world to become drab and grey, and it is also considered a mark of good taste to like quiet harmonies and to be shocked by gorgeous splashes of colour. It is argued that Whistler's quarter-tones of grey demand finer perceptions than Gauguin's blazing splotches.

I am doubtful whether this argument is not that of the fox who lost his tail. The delight of the savage in barbaric glitter accords naturally with his fierce passions, and our own acquiescence in shadowy hues may testify to our disillusionment with the joys of life — which, incidentally, comes less from our philosophical superiority than from our inability to enjoy them. Are we really satisfied to have abandoned — or lost! our manhood? Are there not

moments when we would give all our telephones, our hygienic sanitation, our policed politeness, for one red hour of baresark madness? Does not the popularity of novels of adventure, of jungle life, even of crime, indicate the regret of modern society for the days when life still seemed to be worth living? Do not the bravest souls still cling to the blood-stained superstitions which science has disproved and ethics condemned? Is not the “corybantic Christianity”, as Huxley called it, of the Salvation Army, nearer to the heart of the people than the etiolated cult of the mealy-mouther Master affected by humanitarians, vegetarians, and anti-vivisectionists?

And may it not be that humanity will have to choose between a reversion to savagery and extinction at the hands of more truculent types? We have replaced the courage of chivalry cunning. We scatter indiscriminate death over women and children from a safe distance; but instead of keeping our murderous cunning as a mystery in the hands od a privileged priesthood, we have democratized destruction. A few far-seeing writers have already hinted that the negro, utterly incapable of ethical development but perfectly competent to understand the elementary science necessary to prepare the apparatus of devastation, may one day take it into his head to avenge his age-long wrongs upon us “po' white trash”. In such a day our moral superiority — if superiority it be — will count for nothing. We shall be only the weaker for having lost the animal love and tenacity of life.

For my part, my disposition is almost comically gentle. I have always found it impossible to support the contemplation of the sufferings of others. This characteristic was at the root of my revolt against Christianity, with its callous and even joyful acquiescence in the eternal damnation of the vast majority of mankind. It has, without doubt, determined the whole course of my life; nothing has seemed to me worth doing except to relieve the sufferings of mankind. I thought to do this by joining a community pledged, like the Knights of Monsalvat, to the preservation of a sacrament which should fortify us in knight-errantry. I was rewarded by being made the medium of the communication of a universal formula “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law!” which every man may apply to every problem of his life, and solve it.

But at the same time I felt from the beginning that my sensitiveness implied grave moral weakness, and I set myself to correct it. This is at the bottom of my persistent search for dangerous adventures, of my matching myself against mountains, pestilence, wild beasts, and wilder men. Also women! I have succeeded in acquiring a certain power of doing the manly thing in any conjecture of circumstance while retaining innate sensitiveness and sympathy. I learnt the lesson of chivalry; to strike, and strike home, without malice.

My reward has been not only in feeling myself master of my environment, but in regaining the attitude toward life which civilization has eaten away. I have known the primitive pleasures of the Paladin. I have exulted in pitting my own strength and skill against nature, in daring every kind of danger, enduring every kind of hardship, and, even more, in forcing myself to face ideas which I most feared and loathed, and making them quail before my glance and serve my purpose. I have thus done violence to my nature in a thousand ways, for I am congenitally timid, slothful, fastidious, and adroit in evasion; but it was necessary for me in order that I might attain complete initiation. I was chosen as a symbolic sacrifice to create a type of humanity fit to conquer its environment during the Aeon of Horus, which began in 1904 with its formula of force and fire, its secular Deity, the Crowned and Conquering Child. I have tried to make myself a model for mankind to emulate. I have tried to show in my own life that the utmost refinement of thought, the most exalted aspirations to holiness, are not incompatible with the strongest and most primitive passions: that the most enlightened and sympathetic idealism does not demand the suppression of moral and physical firmness, and that philosophical scepticism may co-exist with practical action so decisive and so appropriate to the needs of the moment as to seem shortsighted, callous and brutal.

The bull-fight at Burgo de Osma turned my mind to thoughts of this kind. I saw that the spirit which begins by suppressing brutal sports ends by emasculating man altogether. His moral independence and even his instinct of self-preservation must atrophy unless nourished by delight in his animal life. As long as he is a mammal, he must keep intact the instincts proper to his type. He must not nourish his spirituality or his idealism at the expense of his instrument of perception. In other words, he must draw a very hard and fast line between the part of him which is God and the part of him which is brute. We want the highest spiritual type to endure, to flourish, to dominate the baser types — very good. The condition of success is that the most spiritual man should be the most vigorous, virile and intelligent, with the keenest possible delight in his biological efficiency.

The error of almost universal opinion on this point comes from mixing up the planes. People fail to see that the solidity of an instrument has nothing to do with the subtlety of its purpose; yet the analogy from scientific instruments should make the point clear. When we want to verify the most immaterial intuitions of the imagination, for instance, the almost metaphysical theories of Einstein's, we make our telescopes as materially perfect as possible; we make them gigantic; we insist on the utmost degree of rigidity; we emphasize their material properties in every possible way. We do not argue that the subtlety of our speculations demands that the instruments by which we test them should be made of gossamer, even when we require the finest

and most attenuated instruments, such as cross wires or delicate measures, we chose their material of the most resistant substances. The more delicately ethereal our determinations, the more we demand the perfection of physical properties.

The analogy applies to man. Nietzsche well said that the best thoughts are those that come with walking. I myself wrote in *The Book of Lies*, “I distrust any thoughts uttered by any man whose health is not robust”. Yet, as I say later in the chapter:

“Do we not know that the most robust of men express no thoughts at all? They eat, drink, sleep and copulate in silence. What better proof of the fact that all thought is dis-sease?”

The dilemma (as thus stated) is disquieting. It does in fact condemn conscious thought as evidently a symptom of discontent. It can only be justified on the ground that even the perfect animal should be developing to a higher type, and that his thoughts help him to formulate this problem, and to solve it. Hence it is said that every idle thought is sinful, and that “for every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof on the Day of Judgment.” But when the Psalmist says “I hate thoughts” he is speaking like a Yogi, whose task is to stop thinking so that he may hear the voice of his Soul. It may be in fact that man is already perfect in his way relatively to this planet, as constituted at present; he is certainly capable of solving every spiritual riddle that the Sphinx propounds.

The gods have made a point of proving this in my person. They have led me to complete comprehension of the Cosmos so far as I am capable of perceiving it, and they have done this while leaving me as capable of enjoying wine, women, and athletics as the beefiest Blue that ever stroked a boat. In fact, more so, since my spiritual apprehension enables me to extract the quintessence of joy from the most trivial incidents of daily life. But this would have been impossible had I not been taught to make the analysis which destroys Buddha's proposition. “Everything is sorrow.” Before accomplishing this, my pleasures were always spoilt by the reflection that they depended on suffering. The beauty of a woman always reminded me of the long agony to which she was doomed as soon as it began to fade. *Foie gras* cried aloud the sufferings of the geese of Strasbourg. Even wine whispered of the hard lives of the peasants who produced it. But initiated wisdom has taught me that every phenomenon must be perceived *per se*, without fettering it with a chain of argument. The women whom I pitied had her own compensations; the patient peasants had pleasures beyond my comprehension; even the goose with its diseased liver might be less afflicted with mor-

bid thoughts than those which were possible due to the sluggishness of mine!

This was one of the lessons which I learnt in the Abyss; that I had no right to connect phenomena. The existence of each was its own complete justification, and the best service I could do to my conscious being was to help him to concentrate on his own completeness by teaching him to cut himself clear of the cords of causality. Our environment oppresses us chiefly because of our exaggerated egoism. We imagine that the universe has nothing to do but make impressions on our consciousness. If these seem painful to us, we pity ourselves; if to them we shed tears of sympathy. In this way we weave the web of universal woe. It is all moonshine. The real cause of our pain is that by allowing our Ego to expand, we press against the rest of the universe, which otherwise would leave us in peace.

There is another way to look at this matter.

"And Adonai said: The strong brown reaper swept his swathe and rejoiced. The wise man counted his muscles, and pondered, and understood not, and was sad.
Reap thou, and rejoice!"
(Liber LXV, I, 56)

And again, the value of any phenomenon depends upon the point of view.

"Then was the Adept glad, and lifted his arm. Lo! an earthquake, and plague, and terror on the earth.
A casting down of them that sate in high places; a famine upon the multitude.
And the grape fell ripe and rich into his mouth."
(Liber LXV, I, 57, 58)

Every time one breathes, one causes the death of countless corpuscles. The life of the individual is a continual holocaust of the substance of his body, just as the existence of an empire demands the immolation of its citizens. Yet each cell, like each citizen, may be conscious and acquiesce in the purpose of the whole of which it forms part, proudly and gladly. We have no right to assume that others suffer merely because we see them in circumstances such as would cause us suffering.

Again, we transcend our own suffering by reaching the realization of our True Selves. We discover that our sorrow, like the ideas of time and space, is but one of the conditions of our becoming conscious of ourselves. It is therefore an illusion created by ourselves for our own convenience. We can

get rid of it by returning (in Samadhi) to our eternal essence; and so soon as we are aware of this it seems no longer worth while to waste a thought on the subject. It is too much trouble to get rid of suffering, and indeed it is no longer painful when we have appreciated its true nature. The same kind of thought leads us to acquiesce in the universal anguish. Each individual can get rid of his own illusions as we have done for ourselves. It becomes senseless to labour to alleviate their distress; the true remedy is to teach them the truth about themselves, and the technique of realizing it.

CHAPTER 86

I began to understand some of the passages in the *Book of the Law* which had revolted me.

These are dead, these fellows; they feel not. We are not for the poor and sad: the Lords of the earth are our kinfolk.

We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched and the weak: that is the way of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world.

Mercy let be off: damn them who pity! Kill and torture; be upon them!

Throughout the Book pity and compassion, the master virtues of Buddhism, are condemned in the most scathing language. I began to understand that to pity any one was to refuse to recognize his sovereignty and perfection, to affirm his inferiority, to be deceived by appearances. The truly noble attitude to others is to respect them absolutely as one's equals; to fight them if occasion arose. “As brothers fight ye!” But let us fight without malice, without pretending that there was an absolute right and wrong in the quarrel; but only a relative right and wrong, an appearance due to our looking at some section of the universal illusion from two different points of view.

When the war broke out in 1914 I tried my utmost to get the world to look at the matter in this light. I have always disliked Germany and the Germans, their social system, their methods of thought, their personal habits, and pretty well everything else about them. As an Englishman I was as keen as mustard to knock them into the middle of next week. But I wanted

it done in the spirit of the Boat Race. We don't start every spring to say that Oxford men are blackguards and scoundrels, and cads and cheats. If they beat us we don't accuse them of foul play, and if we win we don't boast that God has vindicated Justice. We don't mob a stranger who is reading a book bound in dark blue. We don't rag our own men who happen not to be keen on rowing, and compel them under pain of social ostracism and physical violence to give up their lives to trying for a place in the Eight.

In the war I didn't see a penny to chose between the moral attitudes of the various nations. It was at least possible for the noblest men of both nations to believe their own cause just, and for the most cynical to see its rottenness. But I wanted the war to be fought in a soldierly spirit. I saw no use in the campaign of lies and abuse, or in the sophistry of the diplomatists. I thought we should fight with cool heads without pretense, for the one thing that was really at stake, the ultimate issue concealed behind all the protestations; that is, the preservation of the national Soul and the hegemony of Europe. As Austin Harrison said: “We are fighting for our golf and our weekends.” That is, for an attitude towards life. I was ready to fight over the right to spend Thursday to Tuesday at Deal. I cared nothing for the pompous political Pecksniffery about the 'sanctity of treaties' which every one knew to be swindles; the 'right of little nations', which both sides were using as cat's paws; and the machine-made morality which really meant the success of one's shoal of sharks and the control of markets for our manufactures.

The curse of my life, from a practical point of view has been my persistent optimism about humanity, both as individuals and in the mass. I always trust people; I always expect them to be actuated by the highest motives; to be devoted to truth and jealous of honour. I have been deceived, betrayed, and robbed again and again, but there is still something in me which refuses to believe that even those whom I know from actual experience to be conscientious cads, are not high-minded gentlemen, inexplicably led to act as they have done by some delusion. I go on trusting people after detecting them in the vilest baseless.

I am equally unpractical about the herd. I sincerely believed in 1914 that every one would understand that England was in deadly danger, and would instantly drop all private interests and rally as one man, wholeheartedly to the Standard. And by the 'Standard' I meant the ideal England of the poets, the England which Shakespeare showed us in John of Gaunt's speech in matchless eloquence, yet no less in the rough language of the soldiers of Agincourt. The England which I loved was the land which Milton had consecrated to liberty, which Byron and Shelley had left because they loved it so passionately that they could not bear to see it trampled under the hoof of the German usurper and his servile, corrupt and tyrannical tools. I loved the

England of Dibdin, Campbell, Thomson, and their brother bards; the England which had stood up to Napoleon and broken him, which had won Canada by the spade and India by the sword. I loved the England which I irrationally associated with the freedom of the individual, religious and political tolerance, security of life and property, hearty good will between all classes, so that a Duke and a plowman might play cricket every Saturday afternoon as equals.

I believed in the existence of this country and this spirit. I did not believe in the reality of the ranting, blustering England of Rudyard Kipling with its blatant patriotism; in the callous, avaricious England of commerce, or the currish, envious England of the demagogues. The facts nailed me to the cross. There was no voice but that of unctuous hypocrisy, asinine brag, slanderous stupidity, venomous malice, party prejudice, treasonable intrigue, ignoble pacifism, maniacal patriotism, or conscienceless cunning. The England that I loved might exist, and doubtless did, in the breasts of many of the simple-minded sheep that were driven to the shambles to be butchered by the incompetence of their officers and the confusion caused by the squabbles at headquarters. But like the sheep in the Bible, they were dumb. The only animals that spoke were of the only species that speak in the Bible — snakes and asses! They produced a picture of England which no true Englishman could see without hoping that oblivion might follow destruction. The shame of being a son of the soil which bred the politician, the pressman, and the profiteer was almost unbearable.

My wanderings about the world have fixed my love for England even more firmly in my heart. In Spain, I became acutely aware of the fact, since I had spent so many months at home, more than ever before since I became an adult. In my loneliness I was able to analyze my love somewhat as I have done above, and I burned in spirit to cleanse my country of her corruption. The respectability of the self-righteous, from the *Rationalist Press* Association to the Primitive Methodists, must be ravaged by reality. It was based on ignorance and fear. The snobbishness and servility of every class, except the folk who lived in fresh air and respected themselves without refusing respect to their social superiors, must be swept away and dumped in the dust bin of contempt.

It is all based on failure to realize that “Every man and every woman is a star.” Brixton need not envy Bayswater, or Bayswater Belgravia, if it would only be itself. Limehouse ought to glory in being Limehouse, a unique item, sovereign in its splendour. Middle-class manners and morals, superstitious reverence for symbols of superiority like the cut of a coat, the selectness of a street, the precedence at a party, the prestige of a pedigree, a title or a bank account, must all perish. I am myself every kind of a snob. I value eve-

rything I am and have, part megalomaniac, part collector of curios. I am proud of my nationality, my family, my breeding, my education, my attainments, my manners; I even quarter my shield with my vices and follies. I find them tokens of some kingship as a Hapsburg might boast of his lip.

But this kind of snobbishness is all right; I never want to be somebody else. I would not cross the street for a peerage, or leave my dinner to become as rich as Rothschild; and all I ask of other people is that they should realize their own unique and individual supremacy. I know that I am one of the eternal gods, and it annoys me to have to meet other gods who either fail to honour me, and therefore hate or despise me, or else fail to know themselves and therefore treat me with adoration instead of respect, servility instead of friendship; who offer me obedience when I need comradeship, the stone of service when I hunger for the bread of love.

The man who is truly great does not want to be surrounded by inferiors. Adulation, or even honest admiration, will not serve his turn, though the latter helps to sustain in those moments of dire doubt which assail all men in the very measure of their nobility. The greater a man is, the less can he find satisfaction in his performance, for the clearer his perception of perfection the more severe he sees his shortcomings. How can a man who has read a shilling handbook on astronomy retain one ort of ambition, or one who understands what is implied by the existence of a piece of chalk think anything in the world worth doing? Yet a man may reasonably love his children and his country with the animal part of him, dust cleaving to dust; and he may make such emotions, symbols of a spiritual reality, as a mathematician makes a mark on a piece of paper, serve to remind him of infinite and even unimaginable truths. The danger is in mistaking the sign for the substance. Here once more we return to the original problem propounded by the bullfight: we must live our silly lives aright.

> “This thing is God: to be man with thy might
> To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit,
> and live out thy life as the Light.”

The inadequacy of language and the arbitrariness of its symbolism are no excuse for careless calligraphy and slip-shod prose. For my part, I have always aimed at the loftiest poetry and toiled at the technique. *The Book of the Law* offers this solution of the age-old dilemma. By doing one's true Will, each element, fulfilling its own function, on its own plane, without arguing about the purpose of the whole, satisfies its own equations, constitutes its quota to the total. And who shall say that the end may not justify the obscure beginning?

This error of confusing planes is the most common source of trouble and danger to the initiate. It is absurd for the body to decline food, on the ground that it must die sooner or later and what's the use; or for the mind to refrain from thought because it knows that "*summa scientia nihil scire*". It is equally absurd for the soul to allow itself to be disturbed in its sovereign splendour and serenity by taking the phantasm of the phenomenal world at their face value. It must understand that, while all separate existence is in a sense evil, one spectre is no worse than another. Cruelty and moral depravity of all kinds depend for their unpleasantness on the point of view of the observer and a host of other circumstances. A man slashing at his brother's bowels with a knife may merely be removing his appendix; and some apparently weak and cowardly action may really have for its motive the noblest obligations of honour, and for its driving force the determination to conquer and control the natural instincts of the lower self. Consider the meekness of Ferrovius in *Androcles and the Lion*, the behaviours of the Devil's Disciple, the heartless of Brand.

So I sat in the shade and saw the gallant men facing the gallant bulls, saw the gay ladies with flaming faces and fluttering fans, heard the applause or anger of the people, felt their excitement thrill my own flesh with billows, salt and stinging, of a sea whose every pulse was purple with slaughter. And yet I sat aloof; the bull-fight was no more and no less an event in the order of nature than the calm peace of the moon, the gentle gaiety of the stream, the moveless majesty of the mountains, or the superb and sacred solitude of the stars. I reflected that the stars themselves were dreadful orbs of flame; that the moon's mildness witnessed its weariness. I saw that life was change, and change was life; that every violence was the measure of some energy, and that the value of self-control depends upon the spirit of the stallions which it has broken to the rein.

The boasted virtue of the modern bourgeois is of the same kind as that of the impotent man who prides himself on having mastered his passions. If a man is to be worth anything he must possess the strength of Hercules, and refrain from abusing it. The craft of Ulysses can never stoop to deceit. We must possess all possible passions, develop them to the utmost of which we are capable, yet never let them loose except to serve the primary purpose of our existence. So I understood the merit of the matador as he slipped the espada swiftly and smoothly in that straight channel between the bones of the great bull which is the only way to strike him to the heart. He had quintessentialized the strength and skill of years, speeding their soul in one effortless stroke. And I understood the strength of the Spanish character: how honour means so much because it implies the control of such fierce force.

In England the virility of love, hate, sport, adventure, has been deprecated as brutal, therefore has honour come to mean no more than good repute in the eyes of one's neighbour. No Englishman ever commits suicide because he has been betrayed into an act unworthy of his standard of conduct; he can always find excuses for himself or shift the responsibility upon the shoulders of his circumstances, his hereditary traits, his health, or his saviours; and as for the opinion of others, none would be so deadly that it resists the balm of the verdict of twelve stupid shop-keepers and a few dollars of damage. Our wife elopes with the butler, our daughter pilfers pocket-handkerchiefs, our son cheats at cards, we ourselves become fraudulent bankrupts. We do not worry; everything is soon smoothed over. We do not keep souls — we keep shops. We leave our love affairs in the hands of our lawyers, and our honour to be assessed in pounds, shillings and pence by a dozen dullards, too stupid even to scorn our shame after a lawyer has played his G on the fiddle he has strung with our bowels. Good government, well-policed citizens, Tennysonian emasculation of love, pacifist anaemia, humanitarian horror of animal food and rough sport, religious lukewarmness — all these things are evidence, not of evolution, but of etiolation.

The war showed us how far our degeneration had gone. The strong man does not abuse his enemy or justify wrath by taking a high moral ground; he fights coolly, silently, and sternly. The very violence of his passions demands the strictest self-control. Our weakness made us curse and complain and vilify. We were compelled to take the strongest measures, to force men to do what decent men would have done without being asked. We vented our impotent rage upon the Quaker, and sent a man like Bertrand Russell to jail for trying to tell a truth which would have served our cause. When I protested against the hysterical headlines and flamboyant falsehoods, libels which carried their own contradictions in every line and agonized appeals to the most depraved emotions of the most degraded elements of the mob, I was told by our leaders that the campaign *must* be run on those lines. People would not fight unless they were first maddened by hate so that they lived in a nightmare of frenzied fear.

I am afraid they were right. We were only saved by the fact that the Germans were equally insane. Their Hymn of Hate, their shooting of Edith Cavell, their attack on the Lusitania, and finally their *spurlos versenkt* campaign, showed that their nerves were even shakier than ours. The Kaiser said at the very outbreak of the war that the nation with the steadiest nerves would win. He should have said, the nation with the rottonest nerves will lose — for that is what happened. We all became mad dogs, and we only won because we were more stupid than the enemy. Their system of education was so much better than ours that they understood what was happening, and they could not stand it. They were within an ace of victory. Luden-

dorff told the Kaiser that the next push would smash us for good and all. Three days later he went back with his tail between his legs and said: “We are beaten: the men won't attack.” That being so, they could not even resist. The savage Senegalese and Scots, the mean vindictive French, and the enthusiastic English, encouraged by the idea of American assistance, swept irresistibly eastward, with the insensate spirit of a battered boxer, too exhausted to feel pain and fatigue any more, who suddenly realizes that his opponent is an even worse case and only needs to be brainlessly battered.

Yes, I prefer the desperate gambling of the Spaniard, with his hand on his knife, to the genteel clerk playing halma with his washed-out wife, and the savage reality of the bull-ring to the serene sedateness of the Oval. I don't think Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, but behind the chapel where two pugnacious little peers pummelled each other as viciously as fighting cocks, and shook hands when it was over, became fast friends, drank, drabbed, and diced for sheer devilry, and fought the French not for lofty moral reasons, but because he was a rotten frog-eater, and because, whatever he was, a scrap was a scrap. But now that we are so civilized and Christian, we feel that it is wrong to fight, and can only be induced to do so when doped with the hashish of hypocritical hysterics, fortified by extravagant promises of reward and frenzied fears of fantastic calamities, the whole consolidated and brought to a point by drastic laws which not only deprive us of every fragment of liberty and independence, but herd us, brand us, corral us, and finally butcher us like the cattle we have become since we exchanged the England of Shakespeare, Marryat and Burton for the England of Kipling, Hooley, Northcliffe and Bottomley; forgot the passion of Ford and Webster for the sentimentalism of Tennyson and Dickens, the rugged religion of Cromwell and Nicholson for the satin consolations of Sir William Barrett and the Rev. R. J. Campbell, and instead of hunting boars and wolves chase the golf ball to its lair; or, at best, the leather to its place between the posts.

The essence of the fear and hatred with which I am regarded by the majority of my compatriots is based on the fact that I have stepped naked into the arena of actuality, that I have dared and done the deeds of which they fear even to dream, and told them truths which remind them of the reality which they spend their lives in trying to cheat, and written in unquenchable words of fire the blazing letters on the wall which announce the doom of dastards and degenerates, by exulting in the enjoyment of the passions which have perished, of cringing compliance with the conventions which they hope will conceal them, protect them from the facts of life.

Even the little while I have been in London had shown me that I was envied, feared, and loathed. The mere name of Magick scared the majority,

none more than the rationalists and sceptics who boasted that they were free from all such superstitions. My poetry has shocked by its sincerity and thoroughness. People felt instinctively that I might be as dangerous as Shelley. My eccentricities, which were mostly matters of convenience, such as wearing a white silk shirt with a soft collar, a dread of darkness unknown in those days, convinced people that I must be addicted to all sorts of unusual vices, and they extended the connotation of the word 'unusual' to include 'unspeakably horrible', just as a woman who exposed her face in the streets of a Mohammedan city would be classed as an utterly shameless wanton. Even my climbing was considered rather discreditable because I did it myself instead of paying peasants to pull me up peaks, in the orthodox fashion.

I found in fact that whatever I did, however conventional, was somehow infused with my personality and excited derisive or hostile remarks. If I didn't dress for dinner I was aping Bohemianism; if I did, my hidden motive was to satirize the fashion. Naturally, finding that my sincerest endeavours failed to please anybody, I left off bothering about it. It has certainly saved me a lot of trouble. My shyness is, of course, incurable; but I have suffered from it much less since I made up my mind that I should attract attention in a perfectly fitting frock coat just as much as if I appeared ion cloth of gold with a turban and a diamond aigrette. I found it less embarrassing to make myself conspicuous; for I could console myself that people were looking at my clothes, not at me, and it was only myself that resented attention.

During this walk across Spain, I had much leisure for meditation on such subjects as I have been discussing in the last few pages. I was pledged to do my work in the world, and that meant my becoming a public character and one sure to arouse controversy. I thought out my plan of campaign during this walk. I decided first of all, that the most important point was never to forget that I was a gentleman and keep my honour the more spotless that I was assuming a position whose professors were rarely well born, more rarely well bred, hardly ever sincere, and still less frequently honest even in the most ordinary sense of the word.

It seemed to me that my first duty was to prove to the world that I was not teaching Magick for money. I promised myself always to publish my books on an actual loss on the cost of production — never to accept a farthing for any form of instruction, giving advice, or any other service whose performance depended on my magical attainments. I regarded myself as having sacrificed my career and my fortune for initiation, and that the reward was so stupendous that it made the price pitifully mean, save that, like the widow's mite, it was all I had. I was therefore the wealthiest man in the world, and the least I could do was to bestow the inestimable treasure upon my poverty-stricken fellow men.

I made it also a point of absolute honour never to commit myself to any statement that I could not prove in the same sense as a chemist can prove the law of Combining Weights. Not only would I be careful to avoid deceiving people, but I would do all in my power to prevent them deceiving themselves. This meant my declaring war on the Spiritualists and even the Theosophists, though I agreed with much of Blavatsky's teachings, as uncompromisingly as I had done on Christianity.

I further resolved to uphold the dignity of Magick by pressing into its service science and philosophy, as well as the noblest English that I could command, and to present it in such a form as would of itself command respect and attention. I would do nothing cheap: I would be content with nothing second rate.

I thought it also a point of honesty not to pretend to be “better” than I was. I would avoid concealing my faults and foibles. I would have no one accept me on false pretences. I would not compromise with conventionality; even in cases where as an ordinary man of the world, it would have been natural to do so. In this connection there was also the point that I was anxious to prove that spiritual progress did not depend on religious or moral codes, but was like any other science. Magick would yield its secrets to the infidel and the libertine, just as one does not have to be a churchwarden in order to discover a new kind of orchid. There are, of course, certain virtues necessary to the Magician; but they are of the same order as those which make a successful chemist. Idleness, carelessness, drunkenness; the like interfere with success in any serious business, but sound theology and adherence to the code of Hampstead as against that of Hyderabad are only important if the man's body may suffer if his views are erroneous or his conscience reliable.

CHAPTER 87

The conclusion of my meditations was that I ought to make a Magical Retirement as soon as the walk was over. I owed it to myself and to mankind to prove formally that the formulae of initiation would work at will. I could not ask people to experiment with my methods until I had assured myself that they were sufficient. When I looked back on my career, I found it hard to estimate the importance of the part played by such circumstances as solitude and constant communication with nature. I resolved to see whether

by application of my methods, purged from all inessentials and understood in the light of common-sense physiology, psychology and anthropology, I could achieve in a place like Paris, within the period of the average man's annual holiday, what ad come as the climax of so many years of adventure. I also felt it proper to fit myself for the task which I had undertaken in publishing the Equinox, by fortifying myself with as much magical force as I might be able to invoke. The result of this resolve will appear in its proper place.

Our short spell of rest at Burgo de Osma sufficed me to collect in my mind the numberless conclusions of the very varied trains of thought which had occupied my mind during our fortnight's tramp. They shaped themselves into a conscious purpose. I knew myself to be on the brink of resuming my creative work in a way that I had never yet done. Till now I had written what was given me by the Holy Ghost. Everything I did was *sui generis* and had no conscious connection with any other outburst of my genius; but I understood that from this time on I should find myself writing with a sense of responsibility, that my work would be coherent, each item (however complete in itself) an essential part of a pyramid, a monument whose orientation and proportions should proclaim my purpose. I should do nothing in future that was not as definitely directed to the execution of my True Will as every step through Spain was taken with the object of reaching Madrid; and I reflected that many such steps must seem wasted, many leading away from the bee-line, that I did not know the road and had no idea what Madrid would be like when I reached it. All I could do was to take each step steadily, fearlessly, firmly and determinedly, trusting to the scanty information to be gathered from signposts and strangers, to keep more or less on the right road, and to take my chance of being satisfied with the unknown city which I had chosen as my goal with no reason beyond my personal whim.

Thus I made our march symbolize life. There were other analogies: We had to endure every kind of hardship heartily and to take our fun where we found it without being dainty. We learnt to enjoy every incident, to find something to love in every strange face, to admire even the dreariest wilderness of sunburnt scrub. We knew that nothing really mattered so long as we got to Madrid. The world went on very well without us and its fortunes were none of our business. The only thing that could annoy us was interference with out intention to get to Madrid, though we didn't want to go there except insofar as we had taken it into our heads to set our faces towards it.

All these lessons would be of value when I got to London. I meant to tell mankind to aspire to a new state about which I could tell them little or nothing, to teach them to tread a long and lonely path which might or might not lead thither, to bid them dare to encounter all possible perils of nature un-

known, to abandon all their settled manners of living and cut themselves off from their past and their environment, and to attempt a Quixotic adventure with no resources beyond their native strength and sagacity. I had done it myself and found not only that the pearl of great price was worth far more than I possessed, but that the very perils and privations of the Quest were themselves my dearest memories. I was certain of this at least: that nothing in the world except this was worth doing. We turned our steps from Burgo de Osma. It would have been pleasant to halt, but there was nothing to keep us. We were glad to rest and glad to go on. The march to Madrid was the only thing that mattered. So should it be with my life. Success should not stay my footsteps. Whatever I attained should restore my energies and spur me to more strenuous strides.

We marched steadily to Aranda de Duero, Milagros, and many another village which (to itself the centre of the world) was to me, even then, but a milestone, and is now no more than a forgotten name which I exhume from my diary. The only impressions of this part of the march to Madrid are “Big Stone Bivouac” where we tried to shelter from a bitter wind, sleeping till the cold awoke us, and then trying to warm ourselves by exercise until fatigue sent us once more to sleep. An alternation of discomforts, which was repeated half a dozen times during the night. The memory is delightful. All the unpleasant incidents of the period have passed into oblivion.

About fifty kilometres from Madrid we passed a magnificent range of rocks. The smiling fertile valley does not count; it is the naked rugged aspiration of the grim granite that leaves its marks in the mind. It was for the peasants to think of their fields and see nothing of the universe but their crops and the coins which they hoarded at harvest, only to pass into the pouch of the priest and pay for a parcel of earth in which they might conceal their carcasses from the eye of the vulture.

On August the 2nd, we found ourselves in Madrid and turned wearily into the first hotel we came to in Puerto del Sol. Neuburg was by this time a pretty sick man. He could not stand the rough food and the fatigue and the exposure, though he stuck to it with the utmost gameness. He had the passive patient courage of the Jew in its fullest development. However, there was no need for any further display of this virtue, and I put him to bed and told him to stay there and repair his ravaged intestines on delicate food until they were strong enough to support him through the next ordeal. As for myself, I was as fit as I had ever been in my life, and appreciating the extreme barbarism of the wilderness was the best possible preparation for swinging over to the other extreme and feeding my soul on the refinements of art.

As a critic of art I have curious qualifications. My early life left me ignorant of the existence of anything of the sort beyond Landseer's *Dignity and Impudence*. I suppose I ought to have deduced the existence of art from this alone had I been an ideal logician. Such horrors imply their opposites. However, even in my emancipation I never discovered art as I did literature. It never occurred to me that there might be a plastic language as well as a spoken and written one. I had no conception that ideas could be conveyed through this medium. To me, as to the multitude, art meant nothing more than literature.

The first picture that awakened me was Manet's wonder *Olympe*, enthusiastically demonstrated by Gerald Kelly to be the greatest picture ever painted. I could see nothing but bad drawing and bad taste; and yet something told me that I was making a mistake. When I reached Rodin shortly afterwards I understood him at once, because the sculpture and architecture of the East had prepared me. I knew that they were the expression of certain religious enthusiasms, and it was easy for me to make the connection and say, “Rodin's sculpture gives the impression of elemental energy.” Yet this was subconscious. In my poems I have treated Rodin from a purely literary standpoint.

As time passed my interest in the arts increased. I was still careful to avoid contemporary literature lest it should influence my thought or style. But I saw no harm in making friends with painters and learning to see the world through their eyes. Having already seen it through my own in the course of my wanderings, I was the better able to observe clearly and judge impartially. Perhaps this circumstance itself had biased me. It is at least the case that I have no use for artists who have lost touch with tradition and see Nature secondhand. I think I have kept my head pretty square on my shoulders in the turmoil of the recent revolutions. I find myself able to distinguish between the artist whose eccentricities and heresies interpret his individual peculiarities and the self-advertising quack who tries to be original by outdoing the most outrageous heresiarch of the moment.

In the galleries of the Prado there is no occasion to trouble about such matters. The place fills one with uttermost peace; one goes there to worship Velasquez and Goya, not to argue. Perhaps I was still to ingenuous to appreciate Goya to the full. On the other hand, there may be something in my impression that he is badly represented at Madrid. Much of his work struck me as the mechanical masterpieces of the clever court painter. Possibly, moreover, there was no room for him in my spirit, seduced, as it was, by the vivid variety of Velasquez. *Las Meninas* is worshipped in a room consecrated solely to itself, and I spent more of my mornings in that room and let it soak in. I decided then, and might concur still had I not learnt the absurdity of trying

to ascribe an order to things which are each unique and absolute, that *Las Meninas* is the greatest picture in the world. It certainly taught me to know the one thing that I care to learn about painting: that the subject of a picture is merely an excuse for arranging forms and colours in such a way as to express the inmost self of the artist.

I had made several experiments with hashish since my return from China, always with excessive precaution. Some of these had been somewhat unexpectedly successful. I found that my habit of analysing and controlling my mind enabled me to turn the effect of the drug to the best account. Instead of getting intoxicated, I became quite abnormally able to push introspection to the limit. The result of these experiments had been slowly sorted out and interpreted in the course of months. I found a striking analogy between this toxic excitement and the more legitimate methods of mental development, but each threw light on the other. I sat up all one night embodying the essence of my knowledge in an essay, *The Psychology of Hashish*, of which I have already given some account.

Neuburg was well enough to get about after two or three days in bed, but it was clear that he was in no state to encounter new hardships. We gave up the idea of walking to Gibraltar and on August 28th left Madrid for Granada. I had kept the promise of *La Gitana* and the city kept its promise to me. But it is not safe to stay too long on the summit of Happiness. Two days later we went on to Ronda, almost the only interesting thing about which is its physical geography, which twenty-four hours allows one to absorb easily. We went on the next day to Gibraltar. It did not take us long to find out that we had left freedom behind us. It was hot; the Levanter was blowing and taking all the marrow out of one's bones. I was utterly tired: I sat down. I was perceived by a rock scorpion (as they call the natives of the fortress, a detestable and despicable breed, which reminds one quite unreasonably of the Eurasian) who saw a chance to sting somebody. He began by hectoring me and ended by arresting me. When we got to the police station, and the sergeant found that we were staying at the best hotel in the town, and inspected our papers, we received the proper apologies; but I didn't forget that if I hadn't been a privileged person I might have been sent to prison for sitting down when I was tired and ill. This is part of the price we pay for the privilege of paying exorbitant taxes to support a swarm of useless jacks in office.

Of course I may be looking at this incident in a totally wrong light. The policeman may have mistaken my act as symbolic of a wish to linger in Gibraltar and deduced that I must be dangerously insane. Next to Avon, it is probably the most ghastly place on the globe. In a previous incarnation I either insulted a Buddha, or wounded a universal Holy King, or killed my fa-

ther and mother — at least I can suggest no better an hypothesis to explain my having been held up sometimes as much a four days at a time waiting for a steamer. The only way to keep from acute delirious melancholia is to indulge furiously in the only two articles purchasable in the place which even promise to palliate one's pangs. One can buy cheap editions of fearful and wonderful fiction and packets of the best butterscotch. By exhibiting these two drugs continuously, one can produce in oneself a kind of coma which takes one through the tedium.

We crossed to Tangiers without delay and I revelled once more and rejoiced to feel myself back among the only people on earth with whom I have ever felt any human affinity. My spiritual self is at home in China, but my heart and my hand are pledged to the Arab.