

THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

VOLUMES IV - VI

[PART II]

CHAPTER 88

I had begun to train Neuburg seriously in Magick and Mysticism. The first point was, of course, to get rid of any prejudices and superstitions. This was not too difficult, he being a professed agnostic. But the second point was to train him in the technique. This was well enough as far as Magick was concerned, for he naturally possessed the poetic and dramatic instincts, the sense of the fitness of gesture, and so on: and, more important than all, it came natural to him to arouse in himself the right kind of enthusiastic energy in the right way.

In addition, he possessed a peculiar faculty which I have only found in anything like the same degree in one other man in my life. He was a materializing medium in the strictest sense; that is, he could condense ideas into sensible forms. He could not do it at all by himself, because he lacked the power to collect at one point all the available material of the required kind, as may be done by concentrated will, and thereby to create such a state of strain in the atmosphere that the evoked forces must relieve it, if they possibly can, by a change of state. Just so carbon dioxide, if forced into a closed cylinder below the critical temperature, relieves the intolerable pressure by liquefying. Here the carbon dioxide corresponds to the invisible forces in the magical atmosphere, separated from its other components, collected in one place, confined and directed by the Magician. The critical temperature corresponds to such magical conditions as quiet and inviolability; the cylinder to the constraint imposed by the Magician to prevent the dissipation of his invoked ideas.

Such indeed is an outline of the theory of calling forth spirits to visible appearance (by "visible" we always intend audible — too dangerously often tangible, and too unpleasantly often capable of producing impressions of the olfactory nerves). In practice, however, there is something lacking to success. Just as if you dry benzine continuously for a decade, it no longer boils at 65°, or whatever it is, but at 200° or more; and just as you can supersaturate a solution of Glauber's salts, and it will not crystallize out unless it

is shaken or a glass rod introduced, so one may do one's utmost to call forth the forces of a planet and there maintain their immunity from sensory perceptions until they are supplied with some basis which they can use as the skeleton of sensible shape.

Neuburg supplied the missing link, as I might have expedited from his personal resemblance to that Darwinian desideratum. There was some substance in him which was on the borderland between the manifest world of matter and the astral world of sensation. In his presence I found it quite easy to produce phenomenal phantasms of almost any idea, from gods to demons, which I happened to need at the moment. I had of course a very wide experience of so-called material manifestations; but for the most part these had been independent of my will and often contrary to it. I have already mentioned a number of such phenomena in connection with the Abramelin Operation. I had succeeded in suppressing them by preventing my magical force from leaking away. A miracle annoyed me as it annoys an electrician to find that his current is escaping, perhaps giving shocks to people who have strayed in its path. His first thought is to detect and correct the imperfection of his insulation. Years had passed without my magical energy breaking loose: I had persuaded it to work through the proper channels.

Carelessness showed itself once more in Shanghai. I was invoking certain forces with Soror F. in her circle. After I had constrained them to come, I proceeded to make a circumambulation with the object of giving them the desired direction, and when I came to the West of the circle, I noticed that Soror F. had profanely left her slippers inside it. These, not being consecrated objects, had no business there; so I pushed them gently over the frontier with my foot. They were seized and flung furiously to the ceiling with such force that they broke off some of the plaster. There was no possibility that my foot had supplied the motive power, even had I kicked them away in a rage instead of pushing them as quietly as I could — which I naturally did, to diminish the disturbance. There had been several other minor incidents of the same sort on subsequent occasions; but I took measures, as before, to suppress them.

The manifestations which Neuburg helped to produce were of an entirely different character; they occurred in conformity with my will. I was able to work more by sight and less by faith than I had ever done before. Even the use of the proper material bases for manifestation, such as the incense of Abramelin, Dittany of Crete, and blood, had rarely resulted in more than "half formed faces", partial and hesitating presentations of the desired phantom whose substance seemed to hover on the frontier of the worlds (rather like the Cheshire cat!). The clouds of incense used to grow denser in such

wise as rather to suggest a shape than to show one. I could never be sure, even when my physical eyes told me that a form was present, whether my imagination and my desire were not playing tricks with my optical apparatus. Such shapes almost always vanished when I fixed my gaze upon them, and there was no means of saying whether this act, by releasing them from the constraint of my will, had enabled them to escape, or whether intelligent inspection had not simply dissipated an illusion.

With Neuburg, on the contrary, there would be no doubt whatever as to the physical character of the beings which we evoked. On one occasion the god came to us in human form (we were working in a locked temple) and remained with us, perfectly perceptible to all our senses, for the best part of an hour, only vanishing when we were physically exhausted by the ecstasy of intimate contact with His divine person. We sank into a sort of sublime stupor; when we came to ourselves, he was gone.

Again, at Victoria Street, a number of us were dancing round the altar with linked hands and faces turned outwards. The temple was dimly lighted and thick with incense. Somehow the circle broke and we kept on dancing, each for himself. Then we became aware of the presence of a stranger. Some of us counted the men present and found there was one too many. One of the weaker brethren got scared, or one of the stronger brethren remembered his duty to science — I don't know which — and switched on the light. No stranger was to be seen. We asked Brother Lucifer — as I may call him! — why he had broken the spell and each of us independently confirmed his story. We all agreed about the appearance of the visitor. We had all been impressed with the same feeling that he did not belong to the human species.

I have mentioned two only of a very many experiences of the same kind, choosing those which seem the most convincing and complete. More often we kept the manifestation at a decorous distance. There is, of course, extreme danger in coming into contact with a demon of a malignant or unintelligent nature. It should, however, be said that such demons only exist for imperfectly initiated Magicians. The adept ought to be able to identify himself absolutely with all beings alike. Invocations should always insist on identification. If this be dully done no harm can ensue, just as lightning cannot hurt lightning.

I must confess to pride and pleasure in these performances. I had practically abandoned the attempt to obtain material manifestations. It was difficult to do, dangerous in the doing, and dubious when done. I had learnt to compel a spirit to carry out my commands or instruct me on any matter of which I was ignorant, without being at the pains to demonstrate his pres-

ence to my senses, just as I telegraph instructions to my solicitor or write to some scholar for information, in full faith that the results will be as reliable as if I had taken the trouble to arrange a personal interview. I am inclined to think that my work with Neuburg was rather a retrogression. It made me hanker after phenomena, tempted me to distrust the subtler modes of realization.

After he had left me, I felt myself rather lost for a little while, and I had to learn the lesson all over again that the finer forms of manifestation are not less but more actual than the grosser; that the intangible ideas and ineffable intelligences of the most ethereal empires of the empyrean are stronger and more solid the less palpable they are to the lower modes of apprehension. It is hard to explain, and harder to learn, that Truth abides in the inmost sanctuary of the soul and may not be told, either by speech or by silence; yet all attempts to interpret it distort it progressively as they adapt themselves to the perceptions of the mind, and become sheer caricatures by the time they are translated into terms of bodily sensation. Now the reality of things depends on their truth, and thus it is that it is not a philosophical paradox but a matter of experience that the search for Truth teaches us to distrust appearances exactly in proportion as they are positive. Physical facts betray their hallucinatory nature by their consistent refusal to comply with the requirements of reason, and thought admits its transparent falsity by violating its own laws at every turn.

Materialists claim that the senses are the sole source of knowledge. Good! Then the most absurd and impossible idea of a madman or a metaphysician must be derived from sensory impressions no less than a brick. We habitually use our mental faculties to criticize and correct our sensory impressions. At what point, then, does our judgment cease to be reliable! Which is more real; the brick, the facts indirectly learnt from the brick, such as its chemical and electrical properties, the laws of nature which I deduce from the sum of such facts, or the mystical moonshine which meditation on all these evokes?

I feel that I should demonstrate these theses with the utmost emphasis. Consider, first, the material world. A thing is never true to itself. A flower changes all its attributes with every changing condition of circumstances totally independent of it; with every variation of light its colour is altered. Its shape depends on the lens through which we observe it. Its scent cannot be described intelligibly in any language, and we have no warrant whatever that any two men would agree on the subject. It means one thing to us, another totally different to the bee; the more one observes it, the more we are bound to admit that we do not know and cannot know, what it is in itself; and the only possible conclusion is that it is in reality nothing at all beyond

an unknowable focus for our attention which inexplicably affects divers sensoria in various unintelligible ways. Besides our incompetence to define it, its existence presents problems which lead to propositions so absurd in themselves and so irreconcilable with each other, that the course most consistent with common sense is to conjecture that it is an hallucination created by a kink in our consciousness.

Thought has this advantage over sensation in the matter of reality, that it asserts its own existence implicitly. To doubt or deny that it exists is itself thought. (The paradox is my own). I thought it the simplest and deepest instance of the fundamental self-contradiction inherent in intellect. Bertrand Russell proves the same point by examples which I do not doubt are more formally perfect and logically impeccable. (It led him to construct his remarkable theory of zig-zagginess.) The upshot is that every proposition involved depends on postulates, by assuming the truth of which we can prove the proposition to be false. Most men dismiss such demonstrations as intellectual conjuring tricks. But they are nothing of the sort. The irritable refusal to discuss them shows how the conclusion wounds man's pride of intellect. It drives better men to despair, and the best to discover an instrument of apprehension which is not thus self-condemned as incompetent and insane.

In my great initiation in the Sahara, I was told in one vision, "Above the Abyss" (that is, to that Intelligible Intuition between which and the intellect there is a great gulf fixed), "a thing is only true in so far as it contains its own contradiction in itself." The initiate must learn to use this faculty. Its first advantage is to deliver one from the dilemma set forth above. We need no longer doubt that white is white, because that proposition implicitly asserts what white is black. Our new instrument assures us that the whiteness of white depends on the fact of its blackness. This statement sounds more than absurd; it is a meaningless assertion. But we have already seen that the axioms of the intellect involve absurdity. They only impose upon us at first because they happen to be our personal property. The intuitions of the Neschamah are guaranteed by interior certainty, and they cannot be criticized for the simple reason that they have themselves completed the work of criticism of the most destructive kind before presenting themselves at all. Buddhist psychology has analysed many of these characteristics of super-consciousness and even arranged them in an order corresponding with spiritual development.

I may say that I have toiled for many years to express ideas of this order in terms intelligible to the normal consciousness and susceptible of apprehension by the normal intellect. Success has scarcely been complete; only on rare occasions has the flash fixed itself on the film when the lens was in focus and the exposure correct. I am acutely aware that many of my most

arduous and ardent attempts to interpret mystical experience have resulted in blurred images, sometimes perhaps grandiose and suggestive — but that is no compensation for obscurity and vagueness. May I present one effort which I myself am able to hold more or less clearly in my ordinary consciousness?

The Buddhists describe the closest approximation to true observation of anything by saying that it is seen in the four-fold formless state, which they define in the following terms: Any proposition about an object is simultaneously perceived as being both true and false, but also neither true nor false. To perceive an object in this manner implies that the observer has attained the last possible degree of spiritual development which permits any positive point of view soever. Such a man is but one step from the threshold of Arahathship. He has only to destroy this conception of things, as is done in this four-fold formless state, to attain the trance Nerodha-Sammāpatti, in which all being and form is absolutely annihilated, so much so that the trance is only distinguishable from Nibbana by the fact that one comes out of it.

It was on October 2nd, 1919 that I first attained to this Pisgah-sight of the Promised Land, Pari-Nibbana. I was spending the night in Fleischmann's Turkish Baths in New York. It was my custom in all such places to practise the tenth clause of my vow as a Master of the Temple, "To interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with my Soul," by forcing advertisements and other public announcements to yield some spiritual significance. I would either apply the Qabbala to the words and manipulate the numbers so as to reach a state of mind in which some truth might suddenly spring in the silence, or I would play upon the words as if they were oracles, or else force the filthy falsehoods of fraudulent dollar-dervishes to transfigure themselves at the touch of my talisman into mysterious messages from the Masters.

I had awakened at dawn and meditated a while upon this four-fold formless state. I was merely trying to make out what could possibly be meant by piling contradiction on contradiction as the definition did. I did not understand it in the least, and I had not the slightest intention of trying to reach realization of it. At that time all such meditation was entirely out of my line, but accidents will happen even in the best regulated magical circles and the following extraordinary experience knocked me sideways.

I quote verbatim my Magical Record:

"I was putting on my bath-robe after weighing, and turning a sleeve inside out, when my masseur, an holy man positively trembling on the brink of

Arahatship, cried to me that both sides of it were inside, and both outside. I replied humbly that I was seeking for a side that neither inside nor outside — and then like a flash I saw that I had it! Oh Glory Ineffable of Realization! (Oh Right Thinking!) For either side is both inside and outside because I can use it as such, and it is neither inside nor outside with regard to the discrimination which might be made by an uninitiate between any one thing and any other thing.

Now this quality is not in the robe, which has two sides easily distinguishable by hemmings, machining, etc., to say nothing of orientation in space, but in me, and arises from my positive determination not to notice whether my back reads "Stolen from the Fleischmann Baths" or no. Now I am not indifferent to comfort. I notice whether the robe is thick or thin; its observed qualities depend upon a weakness in me. All qualities soever in the robe must therefore disappear as soon as I am strong enough to ignore them; and thus any self-sufficiency or "attainment" destroys my consciousness of any separate existence. Q.E.F."

I sincerely believe that I have adequately described a state of mind, in itself utterly incompatible with ordinary intellectual apprehension, in the above account, and correctly observed and intelligibly expressed its characteristics in such a way as to give at least some rudimentary idea of one type of intuition with whose laws those of the reason have nothing whatever in common.

I do not wish to press the point. In these "lonesome latter days" there are people in the world who can scarcely define the difference between Dedekindian and Cantorian cuts, and whose nights are not disturbed by anxiety about the truth of Fermat's last theorem. *A fortiori*, we had better swoop on the Straits of Gibraltar and tell a tale of Tangiers. (I will confine myself to mentioning that I got a charming letter from my exquisite Dorothy, to which I replied by the poem "Telepathy" in *The Winged Beetle*.)

In point of fact, we may not be much better off even here. Most true tales worth telling are either incredible, improper or both. One of the reforms which I introduced into the A:A: was the abolition of all obligations of secrecy. They were never useful except as temptations to people to break them. The secret knowledge has quite adequate warders. I have learnt that I have only to tell the truth about almost anything to be set down at once as a liar. It is far better to throw dust in the eyes of the animals whose faces are turned to the ground, by casual frankness. If you have a secret, it is always dangerous to let people suspect that you have something to hide.

So much for Neuburg's capacities in Magick. In Mysticism he was fatally handicapped by his congenital dislike of discipline, order, punctuality and

every moral quality that goes with science. I started him on Yoga about this time. One incident is instructive. His daily hour for practising Asana arrived one day when we were crossing to Europe on the steamer. He refused to do his work; he could not bear to attract the attention of the other people on board and appear ridiculous. (Neuburg! Ridiculous!! O all ye gods and little fishes!) I, being responsible for him as his Holy Guru, performed the practice in his stead. He experienced remorse and shame, which did him good; but several other incidents determined me to impose on him a Vow of Holy Obedience.

I must point out the virtue of this practice. Technically it is identical with that in vogue in the Society of Jesus. The pupil must obey his teacher, *perinde ac cadaver*. But the moral implication is wholly antagonistic. The Jesuit is taught that obedience to his superior and humility before him are virtues in themselves pleasing to God. In the A. A. the superior is, so to speak, the sparring partner of the pupil. His function is to discover the prejudices, fears and other manifestations of tendency which limit the pupil, by observing the instinctive reactions which may follow any order. The pupil discovers his own weaknesses, which he then proceeds to destroy by analysing them, somewhat as Freud has recently suggested — science is always discovering odd scraps of magical wisdom and making a tremendous fuss about its cleverness! — as well as to master them by habitually ignoring their inhibition. If the superior is anything of a psychologist, he should be able to teach the average weakling fairly perfect self-control in three months at the outside. Neuburg improved enormously in consequence of the practice, and his final breakdown was due to a strain of racial congenital cowardice too deeply seated for eradication. He at least gained this: that he was brought face to face with this fundamental moral deficiency in his character. For the rest of his life he must expiate his infirmity, that his suffering may teach him the necessity of tackling it from the beginning in his next incarnation.

It was time for me to get back to England. Neuburg was to join his relations at St. Sebastian, and as soon as he was gone, I wrote *The Soldier and the Hunchback, ! and ?* on the thirteenth of December. Two days later I left Plymouth by the Marlborough.

CHAPTER 89

In London I put my foot down at once by taking away my daughter until Rose agreed to follow the doctor's instructions and get rid of her dipsomania once and for all. She capitulated and the necessary measures were taken. This left me free for my proposed Retirement, which I decided to undertake in Paris rather than London. The details of every single minute of my life for the next fortnight are accurately recorded in *John St. John*. Here I need only say that the work was successful beyond all expectations. I not only achieved my stated object, but obtained access to a reserve of energy which carried me on for years, performing Herculean labours without conscious effort. My time was in fact very fully taken up with the preparation of the *Equinox*. I had to be constantly seeing Fuller, who was editing my Magical Records and the vast mass of material connected with the G.: D.:, besides which I had my own work to do preparing the books of instruction on a special and scientific basis.

Besides this, I was writing a good deal of poetry. Some of my most important work belongs to this period. "The Wizard Way", "the Garden of Janus", "After Judgment" and "Bathyllus" are especially notable. I was seeing a good deal of Frank Harris, who was publishing much of my best work in *Vanity Fair*. It was the first encouragement I had ever had, and in a way it came too late, since I was already entirely disillusioned with regard to fame. The approval of Frank Harris was another matter; it was something, and something very great, to know that my work gained me the respect of the very few men on the planet who knew the difference between Keats and Lewis Morris. I had been recognized as a poet of the first class by my peers and the applause of the mob would leave me as cold as its neglect or hostility does at present.

I kept hard at work in London until after the publication of the first number of the *Equinox*. There was, besides, much work to be done in reorganizing the order, to which many people were anxious to obtain admission. My domestic tragedy was coming to a crisis. The disease seemed incurable. The doctor said that the only hope was for Rose to sign away her liberty for two years, and as she refused to do this there was nothing for it but for me to obtain a divorce. There was no sense in my being plaintiff, though I had plenty of ground. To me it seemed a breach of the pledge to protect one's wife, which is the first point of a husband's honour. It was consequently agreed that Rose should be plaintiff and the necessary evidence was manufactured in the usual way.

My year was very much broken into by the vicissitudes of this wretched business. Rose was always begging to be taken back and it was very hard for me to be firm. I made things as easy as possible for her by spending as much time with her as I could. The marriage having been in Scotland, there was no King's Proctor to cause one's knees to tremble, and it was unlikely that any spies would discover that we were living together, to all intents and purposes, the whole time the divorce was pending.

Apart from short trips to Paris, I was in England till autumn, when I thought it best to keep well out of the way during the actual time of the trial. I took Neuburg to be my chela and we left London on November 10th. In the meanwhile I was doing comparatively little personal magical work and my lyrics were all of lesser importance. The fact of the matter was that I had got to the end of my tether. The Gods had put their foot down — thus far and no farther! I felt myself my life had become broken up into a succession of insignificant adventures. But I did not know why. The reason was that one cannot work beyond a certain point in a New Aeon on a formula of the Old, and I had sealed my stubborn refusal to make *The Book of the Law* the basis of my work by taking advantage of the technical excuse that I could do nothing in the absence of the manuscript. And that had been lost for years.

It was part of my plan for the *Equinox* to prepare a final edition of the work of Dr. Dee and Sir Edward Kelly. I had a good many of the data and promised myself to complete them by studying the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford — which, incidentally, I did in the autumn — but it struck me that it would be useful to get my large paintings of the four Elemental Watch Towers which I had made in Mexico. I thought these were probably in Boleskine. I decided to go up there for a fortnight or so. Incidentally, I had the conveniences for conferring upon Neuburg the degree of Neophyte, he having passed brilliantly through his year as a probationer.

I consequently asked him, and an Emmanuel man named Kenneth Ward, to come and stay with me. I had met Ward at Wastdale Head shortly before, having gone there to renew my ancient loves with the creeds of the gullies. It happened that Ward was very keen on skiing. I had several spare pairs and offered to give him some. This casual circumstance proved an essential part of the chain by which I was ultimately dragged behind the chariot of the Secret Chiefs. At least I thought it was a chain., I did not realize that steel of such exquisite temper might be beaten into a sword fit for the hand of a free man.

To my annoyance I could not find the *Elemental Watch Towers* anywhere in the house. I daresay I gave up looking rather easily. I had got into a state of disgusted indifference about such things. Rose might have destroyed

them in a drunken fit, just as she might have pawned them if they had possessed any commercial value. I shrugged my shoulders accordingly and gave up the search. The skis that I had promised Ward were not to be found any more than the *Watch Towers*. After putting Neuburg through this initiation,* we repaired to London. I had let the house and my tenant was coming in on the first of July. We had four days in which to amuse ourselves; and we let ourselves go for a thorough good time. Thus like a thunderbolt comes the incident of June 28th, thus described in my diary:

“Glory be to Nuit, Hadit, Ra-Hoor-Khuit in the Highest! A little before midday I was impelled mysteriously (though exhausted by playing fives, billiards, etc. till nearly six this morning) to make a final search for the Elemental Tablets. And lo! when I had at last abandoned the search, I cast mine eyes upon a hole in the loft where were ski, etc., and there, O Holy, Holy, Holy! were not only all that I sought, but the manuscript of *Liber Legis!*”

The ground was completely cut away from under my feet. I remained for two whole days meditating on the situation — in performing, in fact, a sort of supplementary Sammasati to that of 1905. Having the knack of it, I reached a very clear conclusion without too much difficulty. The essence of the situation was that the Secret Chiefs meant to hold me to my obligation. I understood that the disaster and misery of the last three years were due to my attempt to evade my duty. I surrendered unconditionally, as appears from the entry of July 1st.

“I once more solemnly renounced all that I have or am. On departing (at midnight from the topmost point of the hill which crowns my estate) instantly shone the moon, two days before her fullness, over the hills among the clouds.”

This record is couched in very general terms, but it was intended to cover the practical point of my resuming the task laid upon me in Cairo exactly as I might be directed to do by my superiors.

Instantly my burden fell from my back. The long crucifixion of home life came to a crisis immediately on my return to London. At the same time every other inhibition was automatically removed. For the first time since the spring of 1904 I felt myself free to do my will. That, of course, was because I had at last understood what my will was. My aspiration to be the means of emancipating humanity was perfectly fulfilled. I had merely to establish in the world the Law which had been given me to proclaim: “Thou hast no right but to do thy will.” Had I bent my energies from the first to proclaiming the Law of Thelema I should doubtless have found no obstacle in

my path. Those which naturally arise in the course of any work soever would have been quietly removed by the Secret Chiefs. But I had chosen to fight against myself for five years and "If Satan shall be divided against Satan, how shall his kingdom stand?" The more I strove, the more I encouraged an internal conflict and stultified myself. I had been permitted to complete my initiation, for the reason that by doing so I was fitting myself for the fight; but all my other efforts had met with derisory disaster. More, one does not wipe out a lustre of lunacy by a moment of sanity. I am suffering to this day from the effects of having wasted some of the best years of my life in the stupid and stubborn struggle to set up my conscious self against its silent sovereign, my true soul. "Had Zimri peace who slew his master?"

The superficial reader may smile at my superstition. Why should I be so sure that the accident of finding an old portfolio in a loft was no accident, but a *coup de maître* struck by people, for all anyone can prove, who have no existence except in my diseased imagination? I could answer the criticism by massing the evidence, but I prefer to leave that to be studied in another place when the facts have been marshalled so formidably that it is impossible for any reasonable being not to conclude that a praeterhuman agency was at work on my life. I will merely point out that in modern science the test of truth is less the degree of the probability of any fact, than that which is implied by the text "Wisdom is justified of her children". Facts are judged by their fertility. When a discovery remains sterile, the evidence of its truth is weakened. The indication is that it is not a stone in the temple of truth; it does not fit in with the entire fabric of knowledge. A new fact proves itself by its fitness; isolated, it is repugnant to the continuity of nature. When it is seen to explain cognate difficulties, to complete imperfect conceptions; when it leads to lives of research which bear fruit, some sixty-fold, some eighty-fold and some an hundredfold, then it becomes impregnable. My conviction in the reality of my magical experiences does not depend on any single event. It is because so many incidents, each one more or less incredible and inexplicable when considered by itself, become inevitable when considered in their totality and, instead of themselves requiring to be explained, are the means of throwing light upon every obscure corner of the cosmos.

The mere potency of the incident of June 28th proves that its implications were enormously beyond itself. I was inured to miracles of every kind and I no more allowed them to influence my action than Professor Ray Lankester is guided in his researches by Napoleon's Dream Book.** The finding of the manuscript was not even a miracle; it happened in the ordinary course of nature. There was nothing so wonderfully remarkable about its character. It is this very fact that makes us ask how it is that so ordinary a circumstance should have been the power to break down the resolute re-

sistance of a Magician whose will had been developed to the utmost by every type of training from evocation to exploration?

The answer can only be that, exactly as Coriolanus, insensible to all other appeals, was touched by the tears of his mother, so I, whose determination had defied every form of pressure, direct and indirect, was only waiting to hear the unmistakable voice of my Master, and that this insignificant incident supplied the intuitive certainty: that none other than he was behind it. The finer minds among men can oppose intellectual criticism to intellectual demonstration; to the subtle assurances of intuitions which are perhaps imperceptible of articulate expression they can find no answer.

The point is so important as bearing upon the question "What is the criterion of knowledge?" that I am fain to make it abundantly clear. I have already shown that all ideas are ultimately undefinable, since by continuing the process far enough, the argument is seen to be circular. If I define *a* as *bc*, the definitions of *b* and *c* finally involve the assumption that we already know the meaning of *a*. It is therefore intellectually impossible to say what we mean by anything from a cat to a cissoid. We can explain them only by reference to other ideas which we assume to be known directly. All thought depends, therefore, on the assumption that there are at least some ideas which are simple and intelligible, not to the intellectual apparatus but to an irrational and inscrutable faculty of apprehension independent of it. One of the most important tasks of the philosopher is to inquire into the nature of this faculty. To give it a name (as the Qabalists do: Neschmah) is not the answer to the question, and it may be doubted indeed whether any answer is possible.

The present point however, is that there is nothing superstitious or occult in asserting the existence of this faculty. All men possess it, and exercise it in every thought, whether they like it or not. There is consequently nothing worthy of reproach in using this faculty consciously and relying on its assurances rather than on the plausible but fallacious proofs offered by the mechanism of the mind. To take familiar instances from every day life. A man knows instinctively when a woman loves him. The evidence of facts is far less reliable, and most disasters in life may be attributed to the stupidity of silencing instinct and trusting intellect and emotion. A savage can smell water much more reliably than a man of science can detect its presence. Most golfers know whether they will hole a putt or not long before they strike the ball. The cleverest diagnosticians depend less on their observation than on their intuitions. Most such phenomenon have been clumsily explained in various far-fetched ways by the materialists; but their anxiety to prove their case makes them forget the demonstration given above, that even the most commonplace theories are built on inscrutable intuitions.

* The preparation for this was in some ways trying to the candidate. For instance, he had to sleep naked for seven nights on a litter of gorse.

** Such, at least, is a tenable hypothesis. I have no direct evidence that he does not do so!

CHAPTER 90

I knew in myself from the first that the revelation in Cairo was the real thing. I have proved with infinite pains that this was the case; yet the proof has not strengthened my faith, and disproof would do nothing to shake it. I knew in myself that the Secret Chiefs had arranged that the manuscript of *The Book of the Law* should have been hidden under the Watch Towers and the Watch Towers under the skis; that they had driven me to make the key to my position the absence of the manuscript; that they had directed Kenneth Ward's actions for years that he might be the means of the discovery, and arranged every detail of the incident in such a way that I should understand it as I did.

Yes; this involves a theory of the powers of the Secret Chiefs so romantic and unreasonable that it seems hardly worth a smile of contempt. As it happens, an almost parallel phenomenon came to pass ten years later. I propose to quote it here in order to show that the most ordinary events, apparently disconnected, are in fact only intelligible by postulating some such people as the Secret Chiefs of the A∴ A∴ in possession of some such prevision and power as I ascribe to them. When I returned to England at Christmas 1919, all my plans had gone to pieces owing to the dishonesty and treachery of a gang which was bullying into insanity my publisher in Detroit. I was pledged in honour to look after a certain person; but I was practically penniless. I could not see any possible way of carrying on my work. (It will be related in due course how this condition of things came about and why it was necessary for me to undergo it.)

I found myself at Morêt, on the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, with nothing to do but wait. I did not throw up the sponge in passionate despair as I had done once before, to my shame — I had been rapped sufficiently hard on the knuckles to cure me of that — but I said to the Gods: "Observe, I have done my damndest and here I am at a dead centre. I am not going on muddling through: I demand a definite sign from you that I am still your chosen prophet." I therefore note in my diary, on January 12th 1920, as follows:

"I am inclined to make my Silence include all forms of personal work, and this is very hard to give up, if only because I am still afraid of "failure", which is absurd. I ought evidently to be non-attached even to avoiding the Woes-Attendant-Upon-Refusing-The-Curse-Of-My-Grade, if I may be pardoned the expression.

And why should I leave my Efficacious Tortoise and look at people till my lower jaw hangs down? Shall I see what the Yi says? Ay. Question: Shall I abandon all magical work soever until the appearance of a manifest sign?

Answer: [Yi King Hexagram LII] No symbol could be more definite and unambiguous.

I have invoked Aiwaz to manipulate the Sticks; and, wishing to ask, "What shall be the Sign?" got instantly the reference in CCXX to Our Lady Babalon: "The omnipresence of my body." But this is not quite clear; I took it mentally as referring to the expected arrival of Our Lady, but it might mean a trance, or almost anything. So I will ask Yi, as my last magical act for the time being.

[Yi King Hexagram XXXVI] I think this means the arrival of our Lady. I have serious doubts whether the hexagram should not have been:

[Yi King Hexagram XI] which would have certainly meant that. That I should doubt anything is absurd: I shall know the Sign, without fail. And herewith I close the Record and await that Sign."

The next entry is dated Sunday, February 1st.

"Kindly read over the entry of Jan. 12th with care exceeding. Now then: On Friday, Jan. 30th, I went to Paris to buy pencils, Mandarin, a Palette, Napoleon Brandy, canvases and other appurtenances of the artist's dismal trade. I took occasion to call upon an old mistress of mine, Jane Chéron, concerning whom see *The Equinox*, Vol. I, No. VI, "Three Poems". She has never had the slightest interest in occult matters and she has never done any work in her life, even of the needlework order. I had seen her once before since my escape from America, and she said she had something to show me, but I took no particular notice and she did not insist. My object in calling on this second occasion was multiple. I wanted to see the man with whom she was living, who had not yet returned from Russia; I wanted to make love to her, and I wanted to smoke a few pipes of opium with her, she being a devotee of that great and terrible god.

Consider now: The Work whereby I am a Magus began in Cairo (1904) with the discovery of the stele of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, in which the principal object is the body of our Lady Nuith. It is reproduced in colours in *The Equinox*, Vol. I, No. VII. Jane Chéron has a copy of this book. On Friday afternoon, then, I was in her apartment. I had attained none of my objectives in calling on her and was about to depart. She detained me to show me this "some-

thing". She went and took a folded cloth from a drawer. "Shut your eyes," she said.

When I opened them, they saw a cloth four feet or more in length, on which was a magnificent copy, mostly in appliqué, silk, of the stele. She then told me that in February 1979, she and her young man had gone to the south of France to get cured of the opium habit. In such cases insomnia is frequent. One night, however, he had gone to sleep and on waking in the morning found that she, wakeful, had drawn a copy of the Stele on a great sheet of paper.

It is very remarkable that so large a sheet of paper should have been at hand; also that they should have taken that special book on such a journey; but still more that she should have chosen that picture, nay, that she, who had never done anything of the sort before, should have done it at all. More yet, that she should have spent three months in making a permanent thing of it. Most of all, that she should have shown it to me at the very moment when I was awaiting an 'unmistakable' sign."

For observe, how closely the words of my entry of January 12th describe the Sign, "The omnipresence of my body." And there She was — in the last place in the world where one would have sought Her.

Note too, the accuracy of the "Yi King" symbol [Yi King Hexagram XXXVI] for [Yi King Hexagram XXXVI] is, of course the symbol of our Lady, and the God below Her in the stele is [Yi King Hexagram XXXVI] the sun.

All this is clear proof of the unspeakable power and wisdom of those who have sent me to proclaim the Law.

I observe, after a talk with M. Jules Courtier yesterday, that all their S.P.R. work is proof of extra-human forces. We knew about them all along; the universe is full of obscure and subtle manifestations of energy; we are constantly advancing in our knowledge and control of them. Telekinesis is of the same order of nature as the Hertz rays or the radium emanations. But what nobody before me has done is to prove the existence of extra-human intelligence, and my Magical Record does this. I err in the interpretation, of course; but it is impossible to doubt that there is a Somebody there, a Somebody capable of combining events as a Napoleon forms his plans of campaign, and possessed of powers unthinkably vast.

If these events be indeed the result of calculation and control on the part of the Secret Chiefs, it seems at first sight as if the people involved had been prepared to play their parts from the beginning. Our previous relations, the girl's addiction to opium, my friendship with her lover, and his interest in my

work; omit any item and the whole plan fails. But this assumption is unnecessary. The actual preparation need not go back further than three years, when the stele was embroidered. We may allow the Secret Chiefs considerable option, just as a chess player is not confined to one special combination for his attack. We may suppose that had these people not been available, the sign which I demanded might have been given me in some other equally striking way. We are not obliged to make extravagant assumptions in order to maintain that the evidence of purpose is irresistibly strong.

To dismiss this intricate concatenation of circumstances, culminating as they do in the showing forth of the exact sign which I had demanded, is simply to strain the theory of probabilities beyond the breaking point. Here then are two complicated episodes which go to prove that I am walking, not by faith but by sight, in my relations with the Secret Chiefs; and these are but two links in a very long chain. This account of my career will describe many others equally striking. I might, perhaps, deny my inmost instinct the right to testify were any one case of this kind in question; but when, year after year, the same sort of thing keeps on happening and when, furthermore, I find myself able to predict, as experience has taught me to do in the last three years, that they will happen, and even how the pieces will fit into the puzzle, I am justified in assuming a causal connection.

As any billiard player knows, while a ten-shot might be fluked by a novice, or even that he might run up a break of twenty or thirty now and again, a consistent sequence of breaks averaging twenty-five over a series of months cannot possibly happen by chance; this proves impugnably both that certain management of the cue combined with judgment must result in certain movements of the balls, and that skill and not luck determines the success of the player. Again, at roulette a run of 100 on red might happen once in a thousand years by pure chance; but if it occurred a dozen times a night for a week it would prove that the table is furnished with a mechanical device by which the croupier could control the fall of the ball.

From this time I accepted the Law in its entirety; that is, I admitted its absolute authority. I was not, however, at the end of my difficulties. Much of the book was unintelligible, and many passages, especially in Chapter III, entirely repugnant. I was content to leave these points to be cleared up by the gods themselves in their own good time. They had proved that I could trust them to manage what was after all their own affair and not mine. I refrained from pushing my criticism. I took the general sense of the Book, so far as I understood it, as at once the starting point and the summit of my Magick.

This change of attitude was tremendous. I had always been tongue-tied in the matter of expressing my spiritual self in poetry and my lyrics had been comparatively unimportant. The dealt only with certain aspects of the matter. I could point to nothing which really represented my personality as a whole or brought the events of my career into intelligible relation. The more I learned to study and love *The Book of the Law*, the better I was able to integrate myself.

Sir Palamedes was the most ambitious attempt to describe the Path of the Wise as I knew it. It is in its way almost complete, but there is no attempt to show the necessary sequence of the ordeals described in each section. The last section, in which Sir Palamedes, after achieving every possible task and finding that all his attainments did not bring him to the end of his Quest, abandons the following of the Questing Beast; he returns, discomfited, to the Round Table, only to find that, having surrendered, the Questing Beast comes to him of its own accord.

I could not pretend that this was more than a *tour de force*, an evasion of the issue. I know now that the true solution is this: there is no goal to be attained, as I had reached Madrid; the reward is in the march itself. As soon as I got to Madrid my adventures were at an end. If I had had to stay there I should have been bored to death, even if it had been the city of God itself. The joy of life consists in the exercise of one's energies, continual growth, constant change, the enjoyment of every new experience. To stop means simply to die.

The eternal mistake of mankind is to set up an attainable ideal. Sir Palamedes expressed himself fully in following the Questing Beast. His success (as described in the poem) would in reality have left him with nothing to live for. My own life has been indescribably ecstatic, because even when I thought that there was a reward and a rest at the end, my imagination pictured them as so remote that I was in no danger of getting what I wanted. I am now wise enough to understand that every beat of my pulse marks a moment of exquisite rapture in the consciousness that the curve of my career is infinite, that with every breath I climb closer and closer to the limit, yet can never reach it. I am always aspiring, always attaining; nothing can stop me, not even success. I had some perception of this in these years of my life in London, for I wrote in *The Book of Lies*: "Only those are happy who have desired the unattainable."

The *Equinox* should have been, on its merits, a very successful venture. Frank Harris had generously given me one of the best stories he ever wrote, "The Magic Glasses". Fuller had contributed a gargantuan preface to *The Temple of Solomon the King* (the title of the story of my Magical career), a

series of sublimely eloquent rhapsodies descriptive of the various possible attitudes towards existence. There were three important instructions in Magick; the best poem of its kind that I had so far written, "The Wizard Way"; "At the Fork of the Roads", a true and fascinating story of one of my early magical experiences; *The Soldier and the Hunchback ! and ?* which I still think one of the subtlest analyses that has ever been written on ontology, with its conclusion: that ecstatic affirmation and sceptical negation are neither of them valid in themselves but are alternate terms in an infinite series, a progression which is in itself a sublime and delightful path to pursue. Disappointment arises from the fear that every joy is transient. If we accept it as such and delight to destroy our own ideals in the faith that the very act of destruction will encourage us to rebuild a nobler and loftier temple from the debris of the old, each phase of our progress will be increasingly pleasant. "*pi alpha mu phi alpha gamma epsilon pi alpha gamma gamma epsilon nu epsilon tau omega rho*", "All devourer, all begetter", is the praise of Pan.

In us the Will-to-Live and the Will-to-Die should be equally strong and free, should be recognized as complements of each other, neither complete in itself; and the antithesis between them a device invented for our own amusement. All energy implies vibration. Man is miserable in the last analysis because he fancies that when what gives him pleasure is destroyed, as he knows it must be sooner or later, the loss is irreparable; so he shores up his crumbling walls instead of building himself a better house. We all cling to outworn customs of every kind and lie to ourselves about love when we know in our hearts that there is no more oil in the lamp, and that the best thing we can do is to look for a new one. We are afraid to lose whatever we have. We have not the sense to see that whatever it may be, it is bound to go sooner or later, that when it does its place will be filled by something just as good, and nothing is more stupid than to try to set back the sun upon the dial of Ahaz.

As soon as we learn that everything is only half, that it implies its opposite, we can let ourselves go with a light heart, finding just as much fun in the red leaves of autumn as in the green leaves of Spring. What is interesting is the complete cycle. Life itself would be deplorably petty were it not consecrated by the fact of its incomprehensibility and dignified by the certainty that however petty, futile, baroque and contemptible its career may be, it must close in the sublime sacrament of Death. As it is written in the *Book of the Law*, "Death is the crown of all."

The meanest of mankind is co-heir with the noblest. He has an indefeasible right to play the star part in the mysterious and awful tragedy whose meaning is utterly beyond conjecture, and is only the more stupendous because the author has not even given any guarantee as to whether he has not

assembled the most solemn and inscrutable forces for some unfathomable sequel, or to insult the intelligence of the audience by making their august and appalling acts compose a climax which is an obscene and imbecile farce, a meaningless and disgusting practical joke, in which the mysterious and majestic persons of the drama are made to mock themselves, their intelligence and their infinite might set to serve the imbecile caprice of a crazy Cretin, puppets of a pointless pantomime, which proves its author himself to be more witless and wicked than the vilest of his own creatures.

It is this frightful suspicion that the cosmos is not only cruel and callous, but utterly senseless, as even its least intelligent elements are not, that makes the sacrament of Death so fascinatingly fearful and so sublimely sacred. The possibility that man is no more than the beasts that perish is itself sufficient to make the adventure of life the most ghastly gamble that it is possible to imagine. The idea that the universe itself may have neither meaning nor purpose; and for all its inconceivably majestic elements, all its intricate ingenuities and its show of intelligence and intention, inconceivably beyond our imagination to assess —still less to interpret — so obscene an outrage, makes the existence of man so terrifically tragic that the vilest of our race has a right to feel the utmost exaltation that pride can confer.

The supplement to the first number of the *Equinox* is a plain re-print of my Magical Record in Paris, mentioned above. I have omitted no detail of my doings. My dinners, my dalliance and my other diversions are described as minutely as my Magick, my mantras and my meditations. Nothing of the sort had ever been published before. It is a complete demonstration of the possibility of achieving the most colossal results in conditions which had hitherto been considered an absolute bar to carrying on even elementary work. It proves my proposition that the efficacy of traditional practices is independent of dogmatic and ethical considerations; and, moreover, that my sceptical formulae based on a purely agnostic viewpoint, and on the facts of physiology and psychology, as understood by modern materialists, were entirely efficacious.

In summary, let me add that *The Equinox* was the first serious attempt to put before the public the facts of Occult Science, so-called, since Blavatsky's unscholarly hotch-potch of fact and fable, *Isis Unveiled*. It was the first attempt in history to treat the subject with scholarship and from the standpoint of Science. No previous book of its kind can compare with it for the perfection of its poetry and prose; the dignity and sublimity of its style, and the rigidity of its rule never to make any statement which could not be proved as precisely as the mathematician exacts. I confess to being entirely proud of having inaugurated an epoch. From the moment of its appearance, it imposed its standards of sincerity, scholarship, scientific seriousness and

aristocracy of all kinds, from the excellence of its English to the perfection of its printing, upon everyone with ambition to enter this field of literature.

It did not command a large public, but its influence has been enormous. It is recognized as the standard publication of its kind, as encyclopedia without "equal, son, or companion." It has been quoted, copied and imitated everywhere. Innumerable cults have been founded by charlatans on its information. Its influence has changed the whole current of thought of students all over the world. Its inveterate enemies are not only unable to ignore it, but submit themselves to its sovereignty. It was thus entirely successful from my personal point of view. I had put a pearl of great price in a shop window, whose other exhibits were pasted diamonds and bits of coloured glass for the most part, and at best, precious stones of the cheaper and commoner kind. From the moment of its appearance, everyone had to admit — for the most part with hatred and envy in their hearts — that the sun had appeared in the slum and put to shame the dips and kerosene lamps which had lighted it till then. It was no longer possible to carry on hole-in-the-corner charlatanism as heretofore.

Serious students turned to the first serious attempt to study the subject. Honest men welcomed the first honest exposition of those matters whose subtlety and obscurity had made it the happy hunting ground of every humbug. Educated men could no longer sneer that Magick was inevitably connected with bad grammar, vague emotionalism and social squalor. Men of science could no longer identify Magick with unsupported assertions, haphazard hypothesis and lack of logic, or deny that its professors might understand the importance of experiment, accuracy, precaution and precision as they did themselves. Religious people could for the first time in history prove their first postulate that praeter-human intelligences exist and may be induced to communicate with mankind. There was, in short, no decent section of society whose objections to the study of Magick were not removed by *The Equinox*; no section of the underworld of occultism that failed to understand that the glory had departed from the first-floor-back of the swindling soothsayer and fusty parlour where the mealy-mouthed medium exploited human weakness and ignorance, or the blatant and blackmailing palmist practised on the passions and vices of the idle and immoral.

I printed only one thousand and fifty copies, the odd fifty being bound subscription copies at a guinea, and the rest in boards at five shillings. Had I sold a complete edition straight out without any discounts my return would thus have been three hundred pounds. The cost of production was nearer four hundred. Similar figures apply to the other nine numbers. In this way I satisfied myself that no one could reproach me with trying to make money out of Magick. As a matter of fact, it went utterly against the grain to take

money at all. When anyone showed interest in my poetry or my magical writings, the attitude so delighted me that I felt it utterly shameful to have any kind of commercial transaction with so noble an individual, and I used, as often as not, to beg him to accept the book as a present.

My feeling about accepting money is even more general than this; it rasps every delicate nerve. I feel that the world owes me a handsome income and I have no shame whatever in taking it, provided it is a sort of tribute. The fortune I had inherited was perfectly all right and it never occurred to me to inquire into its sources. "Widowers' Houses" shocked without convincing me. Thinking it over, I suppose fraud and robbery *are* the only two sources of wealth, bar exceptional cases; and I suppose that after all the most honest and most honourable way of getting money is to sell one's writings.

Yet I still feel there is something very wrong about it. Good work is priceless and bad work is worthless. Besides, even the best writers are tempted to do their worst work by the fact that publishers, as a class, are persuaded that the public prefer rubbish. The fact is that there are hardly half a dozen writers in England to-day who have not sold out to the enemy. Even when their good work has been a success, Mammon grips them and whispers, "More money for more work." One ought to have an independent income or another profession. There is hardly one first-rate writer in the last century — even less eminent authors — who has not been starved, persecuted, slandered, bullied, exiled, imprisoned or driven to drink or drowning.

Run over the list of names: Keats, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Chatterton, Blake, Swinburne, Browning, Rossetti, Morris, Beardsley, Wilde, Dowson, Davidson, Thomson, Frank Harris, Cunningham Grahame, Francis Thomson, Middleton, John Masefield, Burton, Conrad, Wilkie Collins, William Godwin, Symons, Shaw, Butler, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Bradlaugh, Foote, Stewart Ross, Norman Douglas, Edward Carpenter, Granville Barker, George Moore, and plenty more. Tennyson had no success till he found his way to favour through flunkeyism. Wells, after producing masterpieces like *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The Time Machine* took to pursuing prosperity by producing pretentious piffle surcharged with priggishness and snobbery, and he is perhaps the best of an atrociously bad lot of workers in the factory of Canned Cant Kings.

Yet the very people who know these facts best seem unable to apply them to each new case that comes up. They bleat as brainlessly as the rest of the sheep when a contemporary is crowned with thorns. As long as they do, the persecution of the saints will proceed as merrily as ever. Intelligent men ought to make up their minds that whenever the world starts to worry a

really good writer, the charges against him, whatever they are, are simply subterfuges, and fight for him to the last gasp. But, as Bernard Shaw has observed, "Every man over forty is a scoundrel". As soon as people are old enough to "Take life seriously", which means losing faith in themselves, they become afraid to say what they think, even on apparently harmless subjects. They forget that friendship means nothing unless it become firmer the more fiercely it is tested.

The one thing that makes me suspect that some of the Gospel story is based on historical fact is the psychology of the disciples. "Could ye not watch one hour?" "They all forsook him, and fled." We know little of their personalities beyond what we learn from the fact that one was a thief and a traitor, one an adulterer, and the rest of them all a coward at the crisis. That sounds like actual observation. Charlemagne's paladins and Arthur's knights are much less credible. My father used to say that the great test of the Bible was that there wasn't a single decent character from cover to cover, except Christ and Daniel. I reply to his ghost that these two characters are precisely the least probable.

To return to the *Equinox*, there was no question of selling even that small edition even at that pitiful price. I have never had any idea of how to do business. I can make plans, both sound and brilliant; but I cannot force myself to take the necessary steps to put them into practice. My greatest weakness is that as soon as I am sure that I can attain any given object, from climbing a mountain to exploiting a beauty spot, I lose interest. The only things I complete are those of which (as for instance, poetry and Magick) I am not the real author but an instrument impelled by a mysterious power which sweeps me away in effortless enthusiasm which leaves no room for my laziness, cynicism and similar inhibiting qualities to interfere.

I did try to get a few booksellers to stock the *Equinox* but found myself immediately up against a blank wall of what I must call Chinese conventionality. I remember hearing of an engineer in the East who wanted to built himself a house and employed a Chinese contractor. He pointed out that the work would be much easier by using bricks of a different size to that which the man was making. He obeyed, but a day later went back to the old kind. The engineer protested, but the man explained that his bricks were of a "heaven-sent" size.

So I found that the format of the *Equinox* shocked the bookseller; worse still, it was not a book, being issued periodically, nor a magazine, being too big and well produced! I said, "What does it matter? All I ask you to do is to show it and sell it." Quite useless.

CHAPTER 91

I spent my spare time in the summer, for the most part, with frivolous friends in the Thames valley. I sorely needed just that sort of relaxation. My soul was badly bruised by the ruin of my romance, but I had a good time of a sort. At least, one of my friends was the most amusing person in his peculiar way that ever met. I must tell one incident, very instructive, as showing the ravages which can be wrought by strong sexuality in an unbalanced mind which, on the one hand, cannot control it and, on the other, fears it and thinks it should be suppressed.

My friend, "Gnaggs" we will call him, had just been divorced from a trained nurse, the woman in the case being a plump, pretty piece of pink of the barmaid type, whom he then married. "Gnaggs" thought his first duty was to safeguard the morals of the woman who had just divorced him! She was living in a block of flats near Hyde Park. Someone was sending him anonymous letters about her. One evening he joined our party — his wife and a few others — when we came in from the river to dine at the Ray Mead Hotel. He had just received another letter, which said plainly that some man was going to be at his first wife's flat that night. He rushed up to London.

When not clamouring for chastity in language which would have seemed to Savonarola violent and extreme, Gnaggs exhorted his wife to enjoy herself with any man she fancied. Neuburg was engaged in a furious flirtation with her, and he and I went back to Gnaggs's house with Mrs. G. and my own inamorata. Neuburg wanted to stay the night; and his hostess, who was very drunk, was as greedy as he was. But I was warned by a heavenly vision. I felt it in the marrow of my bones that a storm was brewing. I put my foot down; and though I almost had to use main force to get Neuburg to go home, I had my way. I was still talking to my own friend at half-past two, when I heard the click of the garden gate and steps on the path. The house door opened and shut with sinister softness. There was absolute silence.

A few minutes later there was a frightened scream from Mrs. Gnaggs. I threw on a dressing gown and went out. She was standing in a kimono on the landing with a candle, in hysterics, leaning over the balustrade and calling to know who was there. I said, "It is only some beastly burglar," took the candle and went down. No one in the hall. In the dining-room, in pitch darkness, Gnaggs was standing, trembling, as white as a fish's belly. I lit up, called upstairs that all was well, and told him he had no business to frighten his wife. He seemed incapable of speech. I got him a drink and he gradually pulled himself together. We started to smoke and he told me his story.

He had left his bicycle on the kerb some fifty yards from the entrance to the house where his first wife lived and waited in the shadow for her lover to come out. The man appeared about one o'clock. Gnaggs instantly fell on him, left him for dead on the pavement, sprinted to his machine and raced home. I congratulated him on his resourcefulness in making life interesting and got him to go to bed. He was a good deal scared about the police, in case he had killed the man. We watched the papers anxiously.

The next day a paragraph appeared.

"Mysterious midnight assault near Hyde Part. Dr. Herpes-Zoster, a prominent physician of Clyster Street, was assaulted brutally, and battered by a thug at the door of 606 Mercury Mansions, Iodine Street, Hyde Park, about one o'clock this morning. He was discovered unconscious by the policemen on the beat and taken to Knocks Hospital, where he was found to be suffering from numerous contusions and serious internal injuries. He had not been robbed and can assign no motive for the attack, as he is not aware that he has any enemies. He had been spending a quiet evening with some old friends. Professor and Mrs. Phthisis."

Once more I congratulated Gnaggs and this time quite sincerely. It was certainly quite improbable that the police would get on his trail, as his victim was an utter stranger, as much to his first wife as to himself!

I found this sort of thing added a spice to life. Gnaggs could be relied upon to take one out of the rut every few minutes. Some weeks later I went to spend the weekend with him. I was worn out with worry and work and had caught a bad chill. He was out when I got to the house. Mrs. Gnaggs saw that I was really ill and made me lie down on the sofa in the combination smoking-room and conservatory, and went to get shawls to cover me up. As she bent over me to arrange them, the door opened and Gangs walked in with his eternal bicycle. He jumped to the false conclusion that she was kissing me – (God forbid!) — and started a row. I was really too ill to do more than look on lazily, with amused contempt; but after half an hour of recriminations, Gnaggs went out to telegraph to her father, his lawyer and several possible allies. She followed him out.

Two minutes later I heard her scream for help. I ran out and found that he had got her by the throat. On seeing me he let her go; she ran screaming into the house. He followed, swearing to kill her. I made a bee-line for the drawing-room poker, but the room was so full of trumpery ornaments that there was no room to swing it. So we clinched. We fought our way to the hall. I finally got him down on the staircase. He kicked the balustrade to splinters; but I held on. Luckily, his hair was very long, so that I could knock

his head on the edge of a stair whenever he tried to break away. I begged Mrs. Gnaggs and the servants to send for help, but they were much too interested in watching the scrap. I had to hold him down for an hour and a half when another guest turned up and restored peace.

We sat down to dinner perfectly good friends. On second thoughts he realized that his suspicions had been absurd. But his wife got hot as he got cool. During the meal she tried to kill him, first by throwing the soup tureen and a few dishes at him across the table, and secondly with the carving knife. It was one of the most delightful dinners I ever ate.

The story has no sequel.

They squabbled and scrapped and scratched for some years, and then went, first to Canada, then to California, and squabbled and scratched some more. They are back in England now, separated most of the time, and only meeting when they feel they would like to squabble and scrap and scratch some more. He is madder than ever, and she has developed into a large lump of dough. She has caught his complaint, and divides her time between drunken orgies with any loose fish she can find, and passionate protestations that she is utterly pure.

I really believe she persuades herself that the other half of her life does not exist. To me both extremes seem equally the debauches of an unbalanced and uncontrolled emotionalism. This view is confirmed by the fact that as she advanced in flabbiness, fat and the forties, she found it harder to attract men, and took to spasms of spiritualism. She raves about her "Guides" and explains the most natural events of life as parts of various portentous plans prepared by people "from the other side".

The case is common. It would be easy to draw analogies between this extremity of brainless and unbridled buckings of a degenerate donkey, with my own experiences and the interpretation which I assigned them; yet it is my familiarity with this sort of folly that has warned me never to relax my self-control, my critical accuracy, and my logic. Such disastrous delusions may spring from such slight initial errors that one dare not rely on the results of even the most rigidly controlled calculations, that the salvation of a Magician is to keep constantly in mind that at his best he may make a mistake, and to check every conclusion, not only by the most severe standards but by the rough and ready touchstone of human commonsense. The inarticulate wisdom of the most pagan peasant, the intuitions of incongruity which only supreme self-satisfaction succeeds in suppressing, are the best sentinels of the sanctuary.

On August 22nd the spirit suddenly sprang up in my soul like a serpent and bade me testify to the truth that was in me in poetry. I knew London would stifle me and rushed down to Maidenhead. I spent three days in a canoe, chiefly in the reach under the wier by Boulter's Lock.

Choose tenderly

A place for thine Academy.
Let there be an holy wood
Of embowered solitude
By the still, the rainless river, Underneath the tangled roots
Of majestic tress that quiver
In the quiet airs; where shoots
Of kindly grass are green,
Moss and ferns asleep between,
Lilies in the water lapped,
Sunbeams in the branches trapped
— Windless and eternal even!
Silenced all the birds of heaven
By the low insistent call
Of the constant waterfall.
There, to such a setting be
The carven gem of deity,
A central flawless fire, enthralled
Like Truth within an emerald!
Thou shalt have a birchen bark
On the river in the dark;
And at the midnight thou shalt go
To the mid-stream's smoothest flow,
And strike upon a golden bell
The spirit's call; then say the spell:
"Angel, mine angel, draw thee nigh!"
Making the Sign of Magistracy
With the wand of lapis lazuli
Then, it may be, through the blind dumb
Night thou shalt see thine angel come,
Hear the faint whisper of his wings,
Behold the starry breast begemmed
With twelve stones of the twelve Kings!
His forehead shall be diademmed
With the faint light of stars, wherein
The Eye gleams dominant and keen,
Thereat thou swoonest; and thy love
Shall catch the subtle voice thereof . . .

It was given me during these days to experience fully once more every incident in my initiation, so that I might describe them while still white-hot with their wonder. It is this that assures me that this poem is unique of its kind. Its only rival is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which, despite its prolixity, confines its ardour to Vishvarupa-darshana. Apart from this, it treats of Hindu dogma and ethics. At its best, it is a sectarian work. "Aha!" covers all religious experience, asserts no axioms, advocates no cut-and-dried codes. In some eleven hundred lines I have described all the principal trances, from the three types of Dhyana (Sun, Moon, Agni) and the four elements (for instance, the Disc "like a black boundless diamond whirring with millions of wings"), to the spiritual beings that inhabit the invisible universe, and the Samadhic Trances, Atmadarshana and Shivadarshana.

I have also described the moral and intellectual phenomena of initiation and indicated the main principles on which the aspirant should base his working. The Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel comes as the climax to these triumphs. It is significant that I proceed from this point instantly to declare the Law of Thelema, and give a dithyrambic epitome of the three Chapters of the Book. I say distinctly that this message to mankind is to be identified with the Word of my Holy Guardian Angel. It is only as I write this that I realize that the poet in me perceived that Aiwaz and mine Angel were one. Till this moment I believed that I had reached this conclusion after many months of meditation in the last three years and accepted it provisionally with the greatest hesitation.

This psychological paradox, by the way, is very frequent. Again and again I have made important discoveries with tedious toil only to remember, in the hour of triumph, that I had written them down years earlier. It seems that I do not know what I am writing, or even understand what I have written.

The poem ends with "Blessing and worship to the Beast, the prophet of the Lovely Star". Henceforth I must be no more an aspirant, no more an adept, no more aught that I could think of as myself. I was the chosen prophet of the Masters, the instrument fit to interpret their idea and work their will. I cannot say whether I realized this identification of myself with the messenger of the Masters, this resolution of my complex equation into a simple expression, in which the x of my individuality was eliminated, made it possible for the Secret Chiefs to initiate me fully as a Master of the Temple, three years since my prudent refusal to accept it.

CHAPTER 92

BOOK VIII CHAPTER ONE

I had no special magical object in going to Algiers, which I reached on November 17th. As my chela, I took Frater Omnia Vincam, a Neophyte of the A.: A.: disguised as Victor Neuburg. We merely wanted to rough it a bit in a new and interesting corner of the planet of which we were parasites. We hastily bought a few provisions, took the tram to Arba and after lunch started south, with no particular objective beyond filling our lungs with pure air and renewing the austere rapture of sleeping on the ground and watching the stars, serenely silent above us, till the face of Sleep, kissing our eyes, hid them from us in her heavy and holy hair. On the 21st we reached Aumale, after two nights in the open and one at a hovel that may have looked so tired on account of its Sisyphean struggle to pretend to be an hotel.

I cannot imagine why or how the idea came to me. Perhaps I happened to have in my rucksack one of my earliest magical notebooks, where I had copied with infinite patience the Nineteen Calls or Keys obtained by Sir Edward Kelly from certain angels and written from his dictation by Queen Elizabeth's astrologer with whom he was working. The sixth book of their magical workings was translated by Casaubon and is one of the very few genuine and interesting works of Magick of any period. Much of their work still defies explanation, though I and Frater Semper Paratus, an Adeptus Major of A.: A.:, have spent much time and research upon it and cleared up many obscure points.

The fact which stamps this working as sincere is this: over one hundred squares filled with letters were obtained — in a manner which no one has quite understood. Dee would have one or more of these tables (as a rule 49×49), some full, others lettered only on alternate squares, before him on a writing table. Kelly would sit at what they called the Holy Table and gaze into a "Shew-stone" which, with some of the talismans on the table, may be seen in the British museum. Kelly would see an angel in the Shew-stone, who would point with a rod to letters on one of these charts in succession. Kelly would report — "He points to column 6, rank 31" and so on, apparently not mentioning the letter, which Dee found and wrote down from the "table" before him. This seems to imply that Kelly did not know what words would be formed. If he did, we must assume that he knew the position of each of the 2,401 letters in each of the tables, which seems a somewhat surprising accomplishment. When the angel had finished, the message was re-written

backwards. (It had been dictated backwards as being too dangerous to communicate forwards — each word being in its nature so powerful that its direct communication would have evoked forces which were not wanted at that time.)

These Keys or Calls being re-written backwards, there appeared conjurations in a language which they called “Enochian” or Angelic. It is not a jargon; it has a grammar and syntax of its own. It is very much more sonorous, stately and impressive than even Greek or Sanskrit, and the English translation, though in places difficult to understand, contains passages of a sustained sublimity that Shakespeare, Milton and the Bible do not surpass. To condemn Kelly as a cheating charlatan — the accepted view — is simply stupid. If he invented Enochian and composed this superb prose, he was at worst a Chatterton with fifty times that poet's ingenuity and five hundred times his poetical genius.

“Can the Wings of the Wind understand your voices of Wonder? O Ye! the second of the First! whom the burning flames have framed in the depth of my Jaws! Whom I have prepared as cups for a wedding, or as flowers in their beauty for the chamber of Righteousness! Stronger are your feet than the barren stone; and mightier are your voices than the manifold winds! For you are become a building such as is not, save in the Mind of the All-Powerful.”

(Second Key)

I prefer to judge Kelly from this rather than from stale scandal of people to whom any Magician, as such, smelt of sulphur. If, on the other hand, Kelly did not write this, he may of course have been a common ignorant scoundrel, one of whose abnormalities was a faculty for seeing and hearing sublimities, just as a burglar or business man might be able to describe St. Paul's Cathedral far better than the Dean.

There are nineteen of these Keys: the first two conjuring the element called Spirit; the next sixteen invoke the four Elements, each subdivided into four; the nineteenth, by changing two names, may be used to invoke any one of what are called the thirty “Aethyrs” or “Aires”. What these are is difficult to say. In one place we are told that they are “Dominion extending in ever widening circles without and beyond the Watch-Towers of the Universe”, these Watch-Towers composing a cube of infinite magnitude. Elsewhere, we find that the names of the angels which govern them are contained in the Watch Towers themselves; but (most disconcerting disenchantment!) they are identified with various countries of the earth, Styria, Illyria, etc., as if *aire* simply meant *clime*. I have always maintained the first definition. I suspect Kelly of finding Dee unsupportable at times, with his

pity, pedantry, credulity, respectability and lack of humour. I could understand that he broke out and made fun of the old man by spouting nonsense.

The genuineness of these Keys, altogether apart from any critical observation, is guaranteed by the fact that anyone with the smallest capacity for Magick finds that they work. Prove *The Cenci* to have been forged by Hogg and conclude that Hogg was therefore a knave, well; but do not try to argue that, Hogg not being a poet, *The Cenci* must be drivel. I had used these Keys a great deal and always with excellent effect. In Mexico I thought I would discover for myself what the Aethyrs really were, by invoking them in turn by means of the nineteenth Key and, skrying in the spirit vision, judge their nature by what I saw and heard. I investigated the first two Keys on November 14th and 17th, 1900. *The Vision and the Voice* was mysterious and terrific in character. What I saw was not beyond my previous experience, but what I heard was as unintelligible to me as Blake to a Baptist. I was encouraged by the evident importance of these results, but I found that I could no more force myself to go on to the twenty-eighth Aethyr than I could have thrown myself from a cliff. I accepted the rebuff; but, while dismissing the matter from my mind, managed to preserve the record throughout my wanderings. I had not thought of continuing this work for nearly nine years; but at Aumale a hand suddenly smote its lightning into my heart, and I knew that now, that very day, I must take up *The Vision and the Voice* from the point where I had laid it down.

We accordingly bought a number of notebooks and after dinner I invoked the twenty-eighth Aethyr by means of the nineteenth Key. When we came to compare it with those of the twenty-ninth and thirtieth Aethyrs, we found that it exhibited the same peculiarities of subject and style. This is true also of the twenty-seventh Aethyr, and so to the twenty-fourth, yet there is a continuous advance towards coherence, both in each Aethyr itself and as regards its neighbour. The subject shows progressive solemnity and sublimity, as well as tendency to fit in with those conceptions of the cosmos, those mystic laws of nature, and those ideas of transcendental truth which had been already foreshadowed in *The Book of the Law* and the more exalted of my trances.

The deduction is not that my individuality was influencing the character of the Vision more and more as I got, so to speak, into my stride, for the interpretation of my Algerian Work made clear the meaning of the utterly obscure oracles obtained in Mexico. It became evident indeed that what stopped me in 1900 was simply that my Grade did not entitle me to go further than the twenty-ninth. I was, in fact, told that only a Master of the Temple can penetrate beyond a certain point. Of course anyone might use the Key for any Aethyr he chose, but he would either get no vision at all or

expose himself to deception, and that probably of the deadly dangerous kind.

"God is never so turned away from man, and never so much sendeth him new paths, as when he maketh ascent to divine speculations or works in a confused or disordered manner, and as it adds, with unhallowed lips, or unwashed feet. For of those who are thus negligent, the progress is imperfect, the impulses are vain, and the paths are dark."

(Zoroaster)

I solemnly warn the world that, while courage is the first virtue of the Magician, presumptuous and reckless rashness has no more connection with it than a caricature of the ex-Kaiser with Julius Caesar. It is composed partly of sham pride prompted by self-love and self-doubt; partly by the insane impulse which the extremity of fear excites. There are plenty of V.C.'s who won the cross, not "for valour", but for lack of self-control over their crisis of cowardice. Discipline automatically made running away impossible; the only way out was to rush forward and do whatever their innate instinct suggested. I know two V.C.'s myself who have no memory whatever of the act that won them the cross.

Similar psychology often makes young Magicians forget that *to dare* must be backed by *to will* and *to know*, all three being ruled by *to keep silence*. Which last means many things, but most of all so to control oneself that every act is done noiselessly; all disturbance means clumsiness or blundering. The soldier may happen not to be hit as he carries his wounded comrade through the barrage, but there is no luck in Magick. We work in a fluid world, where every moment is compensated at once. Light, sound and electricity may be shut out, and so the effects of human thought, speech and action may divert or delay their action, but Magick, like gravitation, knows no obstacle. It is true that one can lift a fallen flower from the floor and keep it on a table; but the forces are at work all the time, and the action has been completely compensated by the redistribution of the stresses on every material object in the whole universe, by the shifting of the centre of gravity of the cosmos, as my muscles sway from one state of equilibrium to another, and the flower exerts its energies from the mahogany instead of the carpet.

Presumption in Magick is, therefore, sure to be punished — swiftly and justly. The error is one of the worst because it attracts all these forces which, being themselves weak, are made malignant by pain and find their principal solace in taking it out of anyone they feel they can bully. Worse still, the hysterical expansion of the Ego means the deepest possible treason to Truth. It invites obsession by every deceitful demon. They puff up the pride of the fool still further; they flatter every foible, exhort him to acts of

the most ridiculous kind, induce him to talk the most raving rubbish and teach him to think himself the greatest man in the world — nay, not a man, but a god. He scores every fiasco as a success, takes every trifle as a token either of his sacrosanct sovereignty or of the malice of hell whose hounds have been mustered to martyr him. His megalomania swings from maniacal exaltation to melancholia, with delusions of persecution.

I have seen several cases of exactly this kind caused by so seemingly trivial a mistake as carelessness in consecrating the Circle for an evocation of an inferior spirit; claiming a Grade in the Order without having made sure of having passed every test perfectly at every point; presuming to instruct a Probationer in his work before becoming a Neophyte; omitting essential points of ritual as troublesome formalities; or even making excuses for error of the kind by which a man persuades himself that his faults are really due to the excess of his merits.

I remember one man who attributed his failure to perform Asana properly to his exceptional physical energy. His body, said he, was endowed with such force that he must be meant to move it — it was all very well for ordinary men to try to sit still, but for him it was clearly an unnatural notion. Five years later, he told me he had become the strongest man on the planet and begged me to empty my revolver at his chest if I didn't mind the bullets rebounding and breaking my windows. I spared my windows; besides, I hate to clean my revolver. He then offered to take me downstairs and watch him shoulder a motor car and run down the road with it. I told him that I knew he could do it and wouldn't insult him by asking for proof. He went away, prancing and purring. Next day I had a postcard from him and guessed from his shaky upstrokes what was the matter. It chimed in with his talk. A month passed, then I heard that he had been diagnosed as suffering from general paralysis of the insane. The man who had been singled out from the herd for splendour of strength could not move a muscle; he rolled from side to side with regular rhythm. The man who boasted could no longer speak; he uttered a long monotonous howl, hardly varying by a note, hour after hour.

It is such cases that keep me constantly on my guard against being “too proud to fight” — or to sweep the floor, if it comes to that. My Grade as a Magus of A.: A., my office as the Logos of the Aeon, the Prophet chosen to proclaim the Law which will determine the destinies of this planet for an epoch, singles me out in a sense, puts me in a class which contains only seven other names in the whole of human history. No possible personal attainment could have done this. There are countless initiates, especially in Asia, who have scaled very summit in the range of Spiritual success. I should unquestionably have become insane from satisfaction at the fulfilment of my utmost aspirations having been granted to me so superlatively

beyond imagination conceived, but for (as I said before) "my sense of humour and my common sense".

I never let myself forget the rocks which have baffled me: the Coolin Crack on Beachy Head (curse it!), the direct way up the Deep Ghyll Pillar (damn it!), the east face of the Dent Blanche (blast it!). I hardly ever plume myself even on my poetry unless I am very depressed. I prefer to dwell on my ignorance of various subjects — a quite inexhaustible list; and the superficiality of my knowledge of the few of which I know what little I do. I meditate on my mistakes in dealing with mankind, my innocence of their most obvious characteristics. My simplicity is such that I often wonder if I am not half-witted. On practically every matter which men who can hardly read, and have certainly never read a book worth reading, understand with every part of their minds better than I understand with any part of mine, even in what I have studied with sweat, at the cost of eyesight, sleep and digestion.

I seem to those who know me at all a rather exceptional type of genius, with more education, intelligence, insight, experience of every world but that of commerce, out of the common beyond all whooping. One of the most distinguished writers on science and mathematics told me last year that I had more courage than any other man he had met. (He was himself one of seven survivors of fifty odd men who went to Serbia to fight typhus.) He said that my mind possessed more analytical power and acumen than any one he had ever known. (He was intimately associated with Einstein, and had spent many hours in talking over and working out his equations with him.) I could only look down and wonder if I was not wearing yellow stockings, and cross garters!

I consider myself worth a place in the Museum of at least most provincial towns as a coward. What courage I have comes partly from shame at being so timid and sensitive. There are times when I cannot force myself to face a commonplace commercial person on perfectly routine business. I have fumbled keeping an appointment with a girl, both when I wanted her badly and when I didn't care the toss of a coin, either for fear that she might snub or insult me, or else that I might hurt her feelings or insult her by failure to persuade her that I was the ideal man. I have turned back from a climb that I know I could do with one hand tied behind me. I have backed away with apologetic amiability from a fat, bullying blackguard that I could have (and should have,) admonished with a hook to the jaw. I have stood hungry in front of a restaurant for fear that I might somehow make the other guests laugh. In fact, I am afraid to do practically anything which is done as a matter of course by the most bashful, sensitive, obsequious slave that ever let himself be chained by a stiff collar, handcuffed by linen wrist-bands, straight-waistcoated by a frock coat, jailed in an office, and turned the men-

tal treadmill of adding up accounts till his worthless, worn out, wasted carcass is thrown, at the best, to rot idly in a semi-detached 'villa,' or to serve the rest of its sentence in the workhouse.

Against this: I seem able to do, without a moment's hesitation or fear, exactly those things which even the bravest and most powerful and free regard as unimaginably dreadful; things which they do not dare to dream of doing; and if they did, would daunt them more than death. Plenty of men who smoke and chat under drum-fire turn pale when I mention casually as a commonplace and natural act something that seems to be no more remarkable than eating my dinner. When at last, they believe, they stammer something in their incredulity, that such courage as mine is impossible. They either pretend to be shocked, or look upon me ever after as a mixture of maniac and God. I never feared to tell the truth, to face a man when there was really danger, to act on my convictions with absolute candour in every kind of circumstance, to take my life in my hand in the matter of mountains, oceans, rapids, wild beasts, or murderous men, and so on — without thinking twice about it.

It may be that I was congenitally a coward all round, and in training myself not to turn tail I paid attention only to the points which seemed to be the most serious. It should really aid diagnosis that I funk calling on a friendly publisher with a proposition which he will probably accept — to our mutual profit — but I walk straight into the lair of a creditor to tell him that I can't pay him, or to Scotland Yard when someone warns me that a warrant has been issued for my arrest. These are both cases of talking business. The point may be either that suggested above, or else that I do not fear my foes, knowing that they are powerless to hurt me, while my heart faints to meet a friend, because love is my heel of Achilles. Terror! the thought that they may prove unkind or untrue, or that myself may somehow fail to command their respect and affection. That is my vulnerable point, and there a barbless arrow, shot by a child in careless ardour, can pierce me to the quick.

As to my mind, the present volume should offer some evidence as to how it is accustomed to deal with commonplace subjects. The sole result of its operations has been to assure me that it is totally useless for its presumptive purpose. There is evidently little danger of my feeling puffed up about it.

CHAPTER 93

This digression has been permissible because of its pertinence to my Algerian initiation. I may now resume the narrative.

My method of obtaining *The Vision and the Voice* was as follows: I had with me a great golden topaz (set in a Calvary cross of six squares, made of wood, painted vermilion), engraved with a Greek cross of five squares charged with the Rose of Forty-nine petals. I held this as a rule in my hand. After choosing a spot where I was not likely to be disturbed, I would take this stone and recite the Enochian Key, and, after satisfying myself that the invoked forces were actually present, made the topaz play a part not unlike that of the looking-glass in the case of *Alice*.

I had learned not to trouble myself to travel to any desired place in the astral body. I realized that Space was not a thing in itself, merely a convenient category (one of many such) by reference to which we can distinguish objects from each other. When I say I was in any Aethyr, I simply mean in the state characteristic of, and peculiar to, its nature. My senses would thus receive the subtle impressions which I had trained them to record, so becoming cognizant of the phenomena of those worlds as ordinary men are of this. I would describe what I saw and repeat what I heard and Frater O.V. would write down my words and incidentally observe any phenomena which struck him as peculiar. (For instance: I would at times pass into a deep trance so that many minutes might elapse between two successive sentences.)

Such observations may be contemptuously dismissed as imaginary; but having already shown that all knowledge is equally an illusion, the thought is no inhibition. Yet there are different degrees of falsity and critical methods which are valid within their capacity. Thus we trust our experience of perspective to correct the crude statement of our eyesight that the furthest house in a suburban street is smaller in various ways. They may also verify our visions in various ways. They must be coherent and consistent with themselves; they must not contradict the conclusions of other experiences whose warrants are identical; and before we admit that they possess any value, they must increase our knowledge in such ways as would convince us in ordinary life that our interlocutor was an individual other than ourselves, and his information verifiably such as we could not have gained otherwise. It may seem as if such conditions could never be fulfilled, but it is quite easy to formulate them, and such visions as these under discussion are full of internal evidence of their authenticity.

Let me give one example. The Angel of the twenty-seventh Aethyr said: "The word of the Aeon is MAKHASHANAH." I immediately discredited him; because I knew that the word of the Aeon was, on the contrary, ABRAHADABRA. Inquiry by the Holy Qabbala then showed me that the two words had the same numerical value, 418. The apparent blunder was thus an absolute proof that the Angel was right. Had he told me that the word was ABRAHADABRA, I should have thought nothing of it, arguing that my imagination might have put the words in his mouth.

Let me illustrate the strength of such proof by material analogy. Suppose I receive a telegram, signed Jobson (my lawyer), "Your house has been burnt down." If I already know this from the caretaker, Jobson is merely confirming a known fact of which he and many others may be aware. The telegram might have been forged. Equally, if I have not heard from other sources, or if I have heard, on the contrary, that all is well, the telegram carries no conviction; it establishes a *prima facie* case for inquiry: no more. But if such inquiry confirms the telegram, it becomes probable that Jobson really dispatched it, though not with complete certainty; short of seeing him personally, the genuineness of the message is only a presumption.

Suppose, however, that I read "London is burnt down. Jobson." The statement is incredible as it stands. Jobson and I, however, have a secret understanding known to nobody else that any proper name in our communications shall stand for something else, discoverable by taking a = 1, b = 2, and so on, thus giving a number whose meaning is to be bound in a code, in which each item of my estate represents a number. He has never used the word "London" before. I add it up, refer to the code and learn that London must mean my house. Now, whether I have already heard the news or no, and even if investigation proves the information to be false, I may at least feel sure that Jobson himself, and nobody else, was the author. If, in addition, it proves true, I may be sure that on this point his knowledge exceeds my own. Suppose, then, that the telegram proceeds to inform me of a number of other matters which I have no immediate means of verifying. I shall nevertheless be justified in assuming their authenticity and acting on the advice in just the measure of my confidence in Jobson's integrity and ability.

Such is one of the simplest methods of criticizing the data afforded by visions. An isolated case need not convince one completely, and it would be ridiculous to argue from a single test, however striking, that all communications purporting to come from the same source must be genuine and authoritative. It is the cumulative effect of repeated tests over a period of years that gives confidence. Incidentally, one acquires by experience the faculty of knowing by instinct whether any given sight or sound is genuine; just as one learns to recognize the style of a writer or painter so that the most plausible

imitations fail to deceive, hard as it may be to say in so many words what strikes one as suspicious.

Now, *The Book of the Law* guarantees itself by so closely woven a web of internal evidence of every kind, from Qabbalistic and mathematical proofs, and those depending on future events and similar facts, undeniably beyond human power to predict or to produce, that it is unique. The thirty Aethyrs being, however, only second in importance, though very far away, to that Book, the Lords of Vision were at pains to supply internal evidence, more than amply sufficient that the revelations therein contained may be regarded as reliable. No doubt the proof appears stronger to me than to anyone else, because I alone know exactly what happened; also because many passages refer to matters personal to myself, so that only I can fully appreciate the dovetailings. Just so a man can never prove to another the greatness of Shelley as fully as he feels it himself, since his certainty partly depends on the secret and incommunicable relations of the poet with his own individual idiosyncrasies.

I admit that my visions can never mean to other men as much as they do to me. I do not regret this. All I ask is that my results should convince seekers after truth that there is beyond doubt something worth while seeking, attainable by methods more or less like mine. I do not want to father a flock, to be the fetish of fools and fanatics, or the founder of a faith whose followers are content to echo my opinions. I want each man to cut his own way through the jungle.

We walked steadily to Bou-Saâda, invoking the Aethyrs one by one, at convenient times and places, or when the spirit moved me. As a rule, we did one Aethyr every day. We reached Bou-Saâda on November 30th; on December 8th we started through the desert for Biskra, which we reached on December 16th, completing the work on the nineteenth. Our adventures will be told later on.

By the time I reached Bou-Saâda and came to the twentieth Aethyr, I began to understand that these visions were, so to speak, cosmopolitan. They brought all systems of magical doctrine into harmonious relation. The symbolism of Asiatic cults; the ideas of the qabbalists, Jewish and Greek; the arcana of the gnostics; the pagan pantheon, from Mithras to Mars; the mysteries of ancient Egypt; the initiations of Eleusis; Scandinavian Saga; Celtic and Druidical ritual; Mexican and Polynesian traditions; the mysticism of Molinos no less than that of Islam, fell into their proper places without the slightest tendency to quarrel. The whole of the past Aeon appeared in perspective and each element thereof surrendered its sovereignty to Horus, the

Crowned and Conquering Child, the Lord of the Aeon announced in the *Book of the Law*.

These visions thus crystallized in dramatic form the theoretical conclusion which my studies of comparative religion had led me to adumbrate. The complexity of the whole vast subject resolved itself into shining simplicity, I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears the truth in terms of Time. I understood directly that the formula of Osiris necessarily assumed all sorts of apparently incompatible forms as it was applied to different conditions of race, climate and similar conditions. I saw also that Horus might reconcile all religions, it being possible now to bring all countries to agree on a few fundamental principles. Science had practically driven prejudice into the dark. Faith was little more than a shibboleth which no longer influenced opinion or action. I saw my way to combine a few simple incontrovertible scientific principles into a Law which would allow the loftiest aspirations to seek satisfaction in spiritual spheres, the religious instincts to realize their sublimity through ritual, and to assist the scientific mind to see that even the most materialistic concept of the cosmos was ultimately mystical, that though mind might be merely a function of matter, yet that matter might equally well be represented as a manifestation of mind. The sequel will show how I fared in this ambitious adventure.

Besides this, I became subtly aware that this Work was more than the impersonal exploration which I had meant to make, I felt that a hand was holding my heart, that a breath was whispering words in a strange tongue whose accents were yet both awful in themselves and like enchantments encompassing my essence with an energy mighty to work on my will in some inscrutable way. I began to feel — well, not exactly frightened; it was the subtle trembling of a maiden before the bridegroom. My ardour increased with every vision and every vision became intenser and more intimate. I fortified myself by magical practices. Two or three times I had found it difficult to get into the Aethyr; there were bars which I understood as not to be passed by the profane. The progressive sublimity and solemnity made me tremble lest I should not be worthy to behold the mysteries that lay in the future.

So I consecrated myself by reciting this chapter of the Qu'ran:

Qol: hua allahu achad: alahu assmad: lam yalid:
walam yulad: ya lam yakun lahu kufwan achad

a thousand and one times a day during the march, prostrating myself after each repetition. The physical effort of this exercise beneath the blazing sun as I marched, mile after mile, across the dusty, stony, glaring stretches of

sterile solitude was very severe; but the exhaustion of my body and the pain of my mutinous mind as I thrashed it into submission with the lash of the mantra, prepared me for the moment of invoking the Aethyr. My spiritual part had nothing to fear from the garrulence of the mind which I had flogged into dumb duty.

In the nineteenth Aethyr appeared an Angel who revealed herself as appointed to lead me personally through the initiation appointed. At the time I hardly understood this. I could not imagine that my personal progress could have any connection with what I still supposed to be purely objective phenomena; but in the eighteenth Aethyr the Angel thereof prepared me ceremonially for the ceremony. In the seventeenth, the full magical meaning of equilibrium was made clear to me. "Motion about a point is iniquity", "Breath is iniquity" and "Torsion is iniquity". I understood that every disturbance (which makes manifestation possible) implies deviation from perfection. It is for this reason that my individuality (which distinguishes me from all other beings) involves the idea of injustice. Therefore, to penetrate beyond the Abyss, where iniquity cannot exist, my personal self-hood must be annihilated. The sixteenth Aethyr showed me how this might be done. My being must be dissolved in that of the infinite. This was symbolized by the destruction of the Demiurgus, he being the creator of diversity. He being destroyed, I was shown an image of my true self; and that self vanished, absorbed in a virgin. This told me that the climax of my love of the infinite was identification therewith.

In the fifteenth Aethyr, the vision definitely took form as a ceremony of initiation. I was examined by an assembly of adepts and my right to the Grades of the Second Order admitted. I was then allowed to be entitled to the Grade of a Babe of the Abyss and a Master of the Temple. They continued the examination and refused to accept me as a Magus. They then instructed me in various matters and made me make certain preparations for the vision following.

On the afternoon of December 3rd I invoked the fourteenth Aethyr. Here was a veil so black and thick that I could not pass through. I tore off layer after layer with desperate effort, while in my ears there pealed a solemn voice. It spoke of me as dead.

"And I still go on, struggling with the blackness. Now there is an earthquake. The veil is torn into thousands of pieces that go flying away in a whirling wind. And there is an all-glorious Angel before me, standing in the sign of Apophis and Typhon. On his forehead is a star, but all about him is darkness, and the crying of beasts. And there are lamps moving in the darkness.

And the Angel says: Depart! For thou must evoke me only in the darkness. Therein will I appear, and reveal unto thee the mystery of UTI. For the Mystery thereof is great and terrible. And it shall not be spoken in sight of the sun."

I must explain that we had climbed Da'leh Addin, a mountain in the desert, as enjoined by the Angel during the previous night. I now withdrew from the Aethyr and prepared to return to the city. Suddenly came the command to perform a magical ceremony on the summit. We accordingly took loose rocks and built a great circle, inscribed with the words of power; and in the midst we erected an altar and there I sacrificed myself. The fire of the all seeing sun smote down upon the altar, consuming utterly every particle of my personality. I am obliged to write in hieroglyph of this matter, because it concerns things of which it is unlawful to speak openly under penalty of the most dreadful punishment; but I may say that the essence of the matter was that I had hitherto clung to certain conceptions of conduct which, while perfectly proper from the standpoint of my human nature, were impertinent to initiation. I could not cross the Abyss till I had torn them out of my heart.

To explain what I mean, take this analogy. A man has every right to please himself about his dress, his diet, his daily doings; be he cannot bring them into barracks when he has taken the King's shilling. If he lets himself so much as think of them, he is a bad soldier. The Master of the Temple must rid himself of every trace of impurity, for above the Abyss all opposites are included in a single idea. I knew, of course, that my point-of-view was mere personal prejudice, and had trained myself to snub it by acting against the impulse; but there still were some things which I could not use in Magick, methods of working that seemed incompatible with my aspirations. At last, at this crisis, I obeyed mine Angel. I made the act, which I most feared and abhorred as detestable to my Holy Guardian Angel the very means of invoking Him. I made the most bestial blasphemy my holiest hymn. I forced the most infamous idea that I could imagine to interpret my most infinitely exalted intuition of Truth.

I remember nothing of my return to Bou-Saâda. There was an animal in the wilderness, but it was not I. All things had become alike; all impressions were indistinguishable. I only remember finding myself on my bed, as if coming out of some catastrophe which had blotted out in utter blackness every trace of memory. As I came to myself, I found myself changed. I knew who I was and all the events of my life; but I no longer made myself the centre of their sphere, or their sphere the standard by which I measured the universe. It was a repetition of my experience of 1905, but far more actual. I did not merely admit that I did not exist, and that all my ideas were illu-

sions, inane and insane. I felt these facts as facts. It was the difference between book knowledge and experience. It seemed incredible that I should ever have fancied that I or anything else had any bearing on each other. All things were alike as shadows sweeping across the still surface of a lake — their images had no meaning for the water, no power to stir its silence.

At ten minutes to ten I returned to the Aethyr. I was instantly blotted in blackness. Mine Angel whispered the secret words whereby one partakes of the Mysteries of the Masters of the Temple. Presently my eyes beheld (what first seemed shapes of rocks) the Masters, veiled in motionless majesty, shrouded in silence. Each one was exactly like the other. Then the Angel bade me understand whereto my aspiration led: all powers, all ecstasies, ended in this — I understood. He then told me that now my name was Nemo, seated among the other silent shapes in the City of the Pyramids under the Night of Pan; those other parts of me that I had left for ever below the Abyss must serve as a vehicle for the energies which had been created by my act. My mind and body, deprived of the ego which they had hitherto obeyed, were now free to manifest according to their nature in the world, to devote themselves to aid mankind in its evolution. In my case I was to be cast out into the Sphere of Jupiter. My mortal part was to help humanity by Jupiterian work, such a governing, teaching, creating, exhorting men to aspire to become nobler, holier, worthier, kinglier, kindlier and more generous.

Finally, "Fifty are the gates of understanding and one hundred and six are the seasons thereof, and the name of every one of them is Death." I took this to mean that Aleister Crowley would die at the end of this time. The event has shown that it referred to my attainment of the Grade of Magus, for this took place at the exact moment here predicted.

The thirteenth Aethyr explains the work which a Master of the Temple must do. He is hidden under the earth and tends his garden. These gardens are of many kinds, but in every case he treats the roots of the flowers in various ways. Each flower gives birth to a maiden, save one, of which cometh a man child who shall be Nemo after him. Nemo must not seek to know which flower this is. He must tend his garden with absolute impartiality.

The twelfth Aethyr describes the City of the Pyramids, whose queen is called BABALON, the Scarlet Woman, in whose hand is a cup filled with the blood of the saints. Her ecstasy is nourished by the desires which the Masters of the Temple have poured from their hearts for her sake. In this symbolism are many mysteries concealed. One is that if a single drop of blood be withheld from her cup it putrefies the being below the Abyss and vitiates the whole course of the adept's career.

In the eleventh Aethyr is shown the fortress on the frontier of the Abyss, with its warrior wardens. I had thought that my ordeal was over. But no! I was suddenly faced with the fact that I had to cross the Abyss consciously, understanding its nature; for when I had passed through it there was in me no power to perceive. I knew no more than this — a negative idea — that its power was to dissipate me into dead dust. Now being bidden to cross it consciously, I asked the Angel, "Is there not one appointed as a warden?" I meant my Holy Guardian Angel, for whose Knowledge and Conversation I had abandoned all. The answer: "*Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani*". I knew that even my holiest, mine inmost self, might not protect me from the grim abominations of the Abyss.

We therefore changed our Magical procedure. We went far out from the city into a hollow among the dunes. There we made a circle to protect the scribe and a triangle wherein the Abyss might manifest sensibly. We killed three pigeons, one at each Angle, that their blood might be a basis whereon the forces of evil might build themselves bodies.

The name of the Dweller in the Abyss is Choronzon, but he is not really an individual. The Abyss is empty of being; it is filled with all possible forms, each equally inane, each therefore evil in the only true sense of the word — that is, meaningless but malignant, in so far as it craves to become real. These forms swirl senselessly into haphazard heaps like dust devils, and each such chance aggregation asserts itself to be an individual and shrieks, "I am I!" though aware all the time that its elements have no true bond; so that the slightest disturbance dissipates the delusion just as a horseman, meeting a dust devil, brings it in showers of sand to the earth.

Choronzon appeared in many physical forms to Omnia Vincam, while I abode apart in my Magical robe with its hood drawn over my face. He took the form of myself, of a woman whom Neuburg loved, of a serpent with a human head, etc. He could not utter the word of the Abyss, because there is no word; its voice is the insane babble of a multitude of senseless ejaculations; yet each form spake and acted as if aping its model. His main object was to induce O.V. to leave the circle, or to break into it; so as to obsess him, to live in his life. O.V. had many narrow escapes, and once Choronzon made a long speech at a great pace to keep O.V. so busy writing it down that he would not notice that sand was being thrown from the Triangle so as to obliterate the Circle. The torrent of obscene blasphemy was beyond his power to keep up, concentration being impossible. It became an incoherent series of cries; then suddenly, perhaps catching the idea from O.V.'s mind, the demon began to recite Tom o'Bedlam.

There was now a gap in the Circle; and Choronzon, in the form of a naked savage, dashed through and attacked O.V. He flung him to the earth and tried to tear out his throat with froth-covered fangs. O.V. invoked the names of God and struck at Choronzon with the Magical Dagger. The demon was cowed by this courageous conduct and writhed back into the Triangle. O.V. then repaired the Circle; Choronzon resumed his ravings, but could not continue. He changed once more into the form of the woman whom O.V. loved, and exercised every seduction. O.V. stuck to his guns and the dialogue took other forms. He tried to shake O.V.'s faith in himself, his respect for me, his belief in the reality of Magick, and so on. At last all the energy latent in the blood of the pigeons was exhausted by the successive phantoms, so that it was no longer able to give form to the forces evoked. The Triangle was empty.

During all this time I had astrally identified myself with Choronzon, so that I experienced each anguish, each rage, each despair, each insane outburst. My ordeal ended as the last form faded; so, knowing that all was over, I wrote the holy name of BABALON in the sand with my magical ring and arose from my trance. We lit a great fire to purify the place and destroyed the Circle and Triangle. The work had lasted over two hours and we were both utterly exhausted, physically and in every other way. I hardly know how we ever got back to Bou-Saâda.

Not till the evening of the following day did I feel strong enough to invoke the ninth Aethyr. A surprise was waiting for me. The nineteenth Key contains the text of the original curse on creation. Each phrase formulates some calamity. I had always shuddered at its horror as I recited it. But now, the Abyss being crossed, and all its horror faced and mastered, the words of the Key suddenly thrilled with a meaning that I had never suspected. Each curse concealed a blessing. I understood that sorrow had no substance; that only my ignorance and lack of intelligence had made me imagine the existence of evil. As soon as I had destroyed my personality, as soon as I had expelled my ego, the universe which to it was indeed a frightful and fatal force, fraught with every form of fear, was so only in relation to this idea "I"; so long as "I am I", all else must seem hostile. Now that there was no longer any "I" to suffer, all these ideas which had inflicted suffering became innocent. I could praise the perfection of every part; I could wonder and worship the whole. This attainment absolutely altered my outlook. Of course, I did not at once enter into full enjoyment. The habit of misunderstanding everything had to be broken, bit by bit. I had to explore every possibility and transmute each base metal in turn into gold. It was years before I got into the habit of falling in love at first sight with everything that came my way.

The ninth Aethyr shows this transformation symbolically. The universe is represented as a maiden, all innocence, adorned with all perfection.

The remaining Aethyrs partly complete the experience proper to the Grade which I had attained, and partly shadow forth, in strangely obscure and formidable forms, the mysteries of the higher Grades, or rather the guards to them. As I advance, it became more and more difficult to obtain the vision. In the second Aethyr, for example, begun on the morning of December 18th, the work had to be broken off and the invocation repeated. Yet again I found the strain unsupportable, had to break off, and go to the hot baths of Hamman Salahin; and I continued, immersed to the neck in the hot sulphur spring. The water somehow soothed my nerves, enabling me to experience the Aethyr without physical collapse. Even so, I could not get to the end and only did so after over more than two days' concentrated consecration of myself.

CHAPTER 94

We may now turn to this journey without the transcendental telescope. It was nothing to shout about as original, difficult or dangerous, but it certainly was one of the most delightful marches I ever made. Very few Europeans have any idea of foreign parts. They always wear thick veils of prejudice, and even prevent the possibility of enjoying really new experiences by their mere habit of life. They stick to the railway and see mere scraps of the country or travel in motors which blur the details of the day. They live in hotels whose one ambition is to have as little individuality as possible; they copy the Carlton or the Continental in everything. The tourists' clothes, manners, habits, all combine to keep reality at a distance. The people of the desert, and those of the Swiss Lakes, treat him exactly alike. Naturally he can not see much difference between them. I have not travelled very extensively, but every day of real travel has been a revelation. I have learnt hardly anything from voyages on the highways. The *Cunard*, the *P. & O.*, the *Nippon Yusen Kaisha* pass different ports, so that one learns physical geography in a very imperfect measure, and recognizes various superficial differences between various places. All these, however, resemble each other to some extent as being seaports, and one's standpoint is always that of a mere spectator. The rail of the promenade deck is an insuperable spiritual barrier.

When one walks, one is brought into touch first of all with the essential relations between one's physical powers and the character of the country; one is compelled to see it as its natives do. Then every man one meets is an individual. One is no longer regarded by the whole population as an unapproachable and uninteresting animal to be cheated and robbed. One makes contact at every point with every stranger. One excites curiosity as being a new kind of man, accessible and equal. Every one opens up, and a sort of intimacy springs up without embarrassment or selfish motive on either side.

Of course, the more civilized classes, even in Algeria, are artificial. We learnt nothing from the French Commandants and other officials whom we met, because their chief anxiety was to show what perfect gentlemen they were. We fraternized with them as when one goes to a new golf course. The attitude is cordiality at arm's length. And these people were all so ignorant of the country in which they lived that they unanimously warned us that we certainly should be murdered by brigands. To us this was a gigantic joke. We lay down on a patch of grass in the open, or a slope of soft sand, and slept feeling just as secure as we should have at the Savoy.

The Arabs also had their own fears for our safety. They have an ineradicable superstition that one is liable to be drowned in the desert. This sounds supremely absurd, water being the scantiest element of the Sahara. The root of the belief is that sometimes cloudbursts occur and sweep away camps which happen to have been pitched in ravines or depressions; but the most ordinary common sense tells one how to guard against any such accident. They are in terror of brigands and also of numerous varieties of devils.

I thought it polite to impress them with my majesty as a Magician. With this object I took Burton's hint that a star sapphire was universally venerated by Moslems, and having bought a very large and fine specimen of this stone in Ceylon and made it into a ring with a gold band of two interlaced serpents, I found that Burton was right. I had merely to exhibit this ring to command the greatest possible respect. On one occasion, in fact, a quarrel in a coffee shop having developed into a sort of small riot, and knives being drawn, I walked into the scrimmage and drew sigils in the air with the ring while intoning a chapter of the Qu'ran. The fuss stopped instantly, and a few minutes later the original parties to the dispute came to me and begged me to decide between them, for they saw that I was a saint.

I habitually observed the prescribed five prayers of the orthodox Mohammedan, and increased my reputation for piety by constantly reciting the Qu'ran as I walked and performing various other practices proper to the highest class of Dervish.

I soon saw the Neuburg with his shambling gait and erratic gestures, his hang-dog look and his lunatic laugh, would damage me in the estimation of the natives. So I turned the liability into an asset by shaving his head except for two tufts on the temples, which I twisted up into horns. I was thus able to pass him off as a demon that I had tamed and trained to serve me as a familiar spirit. This greatly enhanced my eminence. The more eccentric and horrible Neuburg appeared, the more insanely and grotesquely he behaved, the more he inspired the inhabitants with respect for the Magician who had mastered so fantastic and fearful a genie.

Few tourists know even the most elementary facts about such simple matters as climate. I myself was amazed to find how many of the ideas which I had derived from my reading were utterly incorrect. Once, for instance we arrived at an inn late at night. It was shut. We had heard that when the coach arrived they would open, so we decided to wait for the half hour or so, as we needed food and sleep. It was a cold, drear night. To pass the time we took a stroll across the sand, intending to climb a small hill and get a moonlight panorama from the top. As we walked I awoke to the fact that my feet were freezing cold. I could not understand this at all — the rest

of my body was comfortably warm. I was wearing thick woollen stockings with puttees and the Alpine boots which have proved adequate in the Himalayas. Like Keats —

“I stood in my shoes and I wondered; I wondered;
I stood in my shoes and I wondered.”

Wondering made them no warmer. At last I thought of putting my hand on the sand. I snatched it back as if I had touched a red hot plate. The surface was colder than any ice I had ever known. At that moment we heard the coach and ran back. I dashed in, tore off my boots and spent the next quarter of an hour rubbing life back into my toes. So much for the superstition that the Sahara is a sweltering furnace. On clear nights the radiation is so rapid in that dry air, that the temperature of the ground falls below freezing point, even when the air six feet above does not strike one as specially cold.

Many other preconceptions proved false. My travels have taught me that the characteristics which depend on the conscious reaction of people to their environment are invariably superficial and artificial; they have no real root in nature. The conventions and customs of the Chinese coolie differ in a thousand ways from these of the Arab camel driver or the Mexican peon, but put three such men in one spot and see how they act in a series of situations. You will find that though each man's method shows superficial differences, yet the essence of his reaction as to motive, comprehension, strategy, and tactics, will be identical. I attribute my ability to deal with every type of man without unpleasantness to understanding this fact. I ignore his protestations. I estimate his attitude by calculating how the circumstances act on him as an animal, for all his creeds, his codes, his customs, his characteristics are in reality merely invented by his imagination to give intelligible form to his instinct. The Chinese explain by custom, the Arab by religious duty, the German by philosophical propriety, why he acts as he does in any particular crisis. But the act itself will always be the same.

Bou-Saada is one of the most beautiful spots in the world. It is frequented by French painters more than any other place in Africa. Its isolation in the desert, which it beholds from the crest of a wave of the wilderness, gives an almost sacred character to its galaxy of white-walled houses. Below, a river rambles through a ravine, shaded by palms and bordered by gardens and orchards whose flowers and fruits are guarded by hedges of cactus. Between these gay green gladnesses, glowing with flowers that flame beneath the languid leaves of the fruit trees, bright with blossom or burdened with bounty, a labyrinth of paths invite the idle to wander as their whim may whisper, from one delicious prospect to another, assured that

wherever one goes there is always some new beauty to delight the eye, some new token of truth for the ear; at every winding of the way some new perfume makes one's nostril twitch with pleasure. And yet the variations are so subtle that one soon comes to understand that the infinite diversity of one's impressions depends less on external objects than on the modulations of one's moods.

The solitude and silence of these shadowy groves soothe sense and thought so that the soul becomes aware of every modulation of its melody.

A few miles beyond Bou-Saada there is no road. The last link with civilization is broken. It is no longer possible to pretend that the world is a mere stage where we may strut and scream without facing the facts. Each man must match himself, alone as at the hour of death, with each inexorable fact that nature flings in his face — brigands, sunstroke, hunger, thirst, sickness, accident: no one of these to be evaded or explained away, and no one to be propitiated, or from which we may shelter by appealing to others.

The traveller must train his senses to the finest possible point. His life may depend on his seeing a shadow flit across some far off slope of a sand dune, and thereby divining an ambush. The circles of the vulture must enable him to calculate his course. Nothing too trivial to be his teacher, too insignificant to be of infinite import! As one becomes familiar with the wilderness, Nature herself reveals reality in a sense which one had never suspected. The complexity of experience in civilized countries prevents one from examining anything exhaustively. Impressions crowd each other out of the mind. One never gets more than a glimpse of the nature of anything in itself, but only of its relation to the rest.

In the desert each impression is beaten into one's brain with what at first seems maddening monotony. One feels starved; there are so few facts to feed on. One has to pass through an abyss of boredom. At last there comes a crisis. Suddenly the shroud is snatched away from one's soul and one enters upon an entirely new kind of life, in which one no longer regrets the titillation of the thoughts which tumble over each other in civilized surroundings, each preventing one undergoing the ordeal involved when it becomes necessary to penetrate beneath the shadow-show to the secret sanctuary of the soul. I have explained these things in some detail in two essays, "The Soul of the Desert" and "The Camel", which my wanderings in the Sahara inspired.

The worst about this sort of development is that one cannot very well communicate one's result to one's fellows. One can explain the method more or less intelligible, and hint at the sort of thing that may be expected to hap-

pen; but it is as hard to describe one's experiences as it would be to get a Lord Chancellor, say, to understand *Prometheus Unbound*. The very incidents of one's life, though perfectly easy to narrate, would for the most part, leave a singularly false impression. The matter had better be left at this: Forget everything you ever knew, and take everything as it comes as your teacher.

Part of the effect of crossing the Abyss is that it takes a long time to connect the Master with what is left below the Abyss. Deprived of their Ego, the mind and body of the man are somewhat at sea until, as one may say, the "wireless control" has been established. In the year 1910 Aleister Crowley was as a sheep not having a shepherd; the motives and controlling element had been removed and he was more or less cut off from the past. One thing seemed as good as another. He acted irresponsibly. He went on with his work more by force of habit than anything else, and the events of his life were, so to say, more chemical reactions between his character and his circumstances.

This unsteered course carried him in many curious channels. He did not resist; he let each impulse expand itself entirely. He knew that the issue did not matter. These events were consequently disconnected and dubious. In the spring, a few days before the publication of number three of the *Equinox*, which contained the Ritual of the 5° = 6° degree of the old Order, Mathers served him with an injunction restraining publication. It did not interest him particularly. He instructed his lawyers and did not even trouble to go to court. Mr. Justice Bucknill, who heard the argument, happened to be an eminent Freemason and though he had no idea what the fuss was about, it seemed to him, on general principles, that nobody ought to be allowed to publish anything which anyone else might wish to keep dark. He therefore confirmed the injunction. I appealed.

This time we went into court armed with the facts of the case. The judges were Vaughan, Williams, Fletcher, Moulton and Farwell. They admitted the difficulty of keeping a straight face and reversed Bucknill's decisions, with costs. The argument had been farcically funny and all the dailies had anything up to three columns on the case. On the very day of publication, for the first time, I found myself famous and my work in demand.

As a side issue, Mathers having claimed in court to be the Chief of the Rosicrucian Order, I was invaded by an innumerable concourse of the queerest imaginable people, each of whom independently asserted that he himself, and he alone, was that Chief. Having my own information on the subject, though communicating it to nobody else, I got rid of these pests as quickly as possible. One of my callers, however, did show some method in

his madness; a man named Theodor Reuss — of whom more anon. Here I must simply mention that he was Grand Master of Germany of the combined Scottish, Memphis and Mizraim Rites of Freemasonry. I remembered that I had been made a Sovereign Grand Inspector General of the 33° and last degree of the Scottish Rite in Mexico ten years before, but I had never bothered my head about it, it being evident that all freemasonry was either vain pretence, tomfoolery, an excuse for drunken rowdiness, or a sinister association for political intrigues and commercial pirates. Reuss told me a good deal of the history of the various rites, which is just as confused and criminal as any other branch of history; but he did persuade me that there were a few men who took the matter seriously and believed that the foolish formalism concealed really important magical secrets.

This view was confirmed when *The Arcane Schools* of John Yarker came to me for review. I wrote to the author, who recognized my title to the 33° and conferred on me the grades of 95° Memphis and 90° Mizraim. It seemed as if I had somehow turned a tap. From this time on I lived in a perfect shower of diplomas, from Bucharest to Salt Lake City. I possess more exalted titles than I have ever been able to count. I am supposed to know more secret signs, tokens, passwords, grand-words, grips, and so on, than I could actually learn in a dozen lives. An elephant would break down under the insignia I am entitled to wear. The natural consequence of this was that, like Alice when she found the Kings and Queens and the rest showering upon her as a pack of cards, I woke up.

I went to Venice in May, breaking the homeward journey at Pallanza, where I wrote *Household Gods*, a poetical dramatic sketch. It is a sort of magical allegory, full of subtle ironies and mystifications; almost the only thing of its kind I have ever done — which perhaps accounts for my having a sneaking affection for it.

I had made a great many friends in London and the reconstructed Order was attracting aspirants from all classes of people, some silly loafers looking for a new sensation, but many most sincere and sensible. My inexperience led me into laxity in dealing with these people. I failed to enforce the strict rule of the Order: that probationers should be kept apart. I allowed them to meet in my studio and even to practise forms of Magick congregationally.

In the spring, on May 9th, an evocation of Bartzabel, the spirit of Mars, was made, so successfully as to demand description. My assistants were Commander Marston, R.N., one of the highest officials of the Admiralty, and Leila Waddell, an Australian violinist whom I had just met and who appealed to my imagination.

I began at once to use her as a principal figure in my work. In the first week of our intimacy I wrote two stories about her: "The Vixen" and "The Violinist". "The Vixen" is about a girl, an heiress in a fox-hunting shire, who tortures and uses for black magic a girl friend. She has a lover, Lord Eyre, whom she despises. She has some intimate relations with a phantom fox, who (to put it briefly) obsesses her. She yields to Eyre, who climbs into her room at night and finds that she is not a woman but a vixen. The effect is to turn him to a hound and he fastens his teeth in her throat. Hound and fox are found dead and nothing is ever heard again of Eyre or his mistress. "The Violinist" is about a girl who invokes, by means of her music, a demon belonging to one of the Elemental Watch Towers. She become his mistress. One day her husband returns to the house. He kisses her and falls dead. The demon has conferred this power upon her lips.

Excuse the digression: back to Bartzabel! In the Triangle was Frater Omnia Vincam, to serve as a material basis through which the spirit might manifest. Here was a startling innovation in tradition. I wrote, moreover, a ritual on entirely new principles. I retained the Qabbalistic names and formulae, but wrote most of the invocation in poetry. The idea was to work up the magical enthusiasm through the exhilaration induced by music.

I obtained a great deal of valuable knowledge from the spirit, but the most interesting item is this: Marston, remembering his official duty, asked "Will nation rise up against nation?", followed by more detailed inquiries on receiving an affirmative answer. We thus learnt that within five years from that date there would be two wars; the storm centre of the first would be Turkey, and that of the second would be Germany, and the result would be the destruction of these two nations. I only remembered this after reaching New York at the end of 1914. Luckily I had the ritual with question and answer written down at the time, and an account of these predictions, precisely fulfilled, appeared in the *New York World*.

CHAPTER 95

I may here remark that I have always been able to foretell the future by various methods of divination. Some give more satisfactory results than others, some are better suited to one class of inquiry, some to another. In all cases, constant practice, constant checking up of one's results, critical study of the conditions, elimination of one's personal bias, and so on, increase one's accuracy. I am always experimenting and have taught myself to get absolutely reliable results from several methods, especially the Yi King. Incidentally, I have interpreted and corrected the traditional methods themselves, thereby excluding sources of error which in the past have disheartened students; but there is some sort of curse on me as there was on Cassandra. I can foretell the issue of any given situation, and feel the utmost confidence in the correctness of my conclusion, but though I can and do act on these indications, when they concern my own conduct I cannot use my power to benefit myself in any of the obvious ways. That is, I cannot leave my work even for a couple of days in order to make a fortune in stocks. To give an idea of the detailed accuracy of my divinations, let me quote one recent case.

I asked the Yi King in May of 1922 what would happen to me in England, whither I was bound. I got the 21st Hexagram, which means the open manifestation of one's purpose. I was, in fact, able to re-enter public life after years of seclusion. It means "union by gnawing", which I understood as bidding me to expect to spend my time in persevering efforts to establish relations with various people who could be useful to me, but not to expect to drop into success or to find the obstacles insuperable. This, too, came true. The comment in the Yi King promises successful progress and advises recourse to law. My progress was beyond my utmost hopes and I found myself forced to begin several lawsuits. The further comment describes the successive phases of the affair. The first phase shows its subject fettered and without resource. During my first month in England I was penniless, without proper clothes to wear, and obliged to walk miles to save the cost of a telephone call or an omnibus. In the second phase one suddenly finds everything easy. All one's plans succeed. This, too, occurred. The third phase shows a man getting to grips with the real problems; he meets some rebuffs, has some disappointments, but makes no mistakes. The third stage of my campaign could not be better described. In phase four one gets down to work at one's task, aided by financial advances and contracts to do work of the kind one wants. This was fulfilled by my being commissioned to write *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* and the present book, as well as several things for the *English Review*. The fifth phase shows the man getting on with his work and obtaining renown and profit thereby, but it warns the inquirer that his

position is perilous and bids him to be on his guard while not swerving from his course. From this I understood that the publication of my novel would arouse a rumpus, as it did. The sixth and last phase shows the subject reduced to impotence and cut off from his communications. This was fulfilled by the attacks on me in the press which followed the publication of the novel.

I could not foresee the exact form which these various forces would manifest, but I understood the sort of thing I might expect. I decided to take the journey rather than wait for a time when a more encouraging symbol might be given. I felt that in the circumstances I had no right to expect anything better. The symbol promised success. I ought not to complain at paying its price.

So much for what I can do. Now for what I can't. I used to test my methods by predicting the course of political and economic events. They confirmed my calculations. Theoretically, I should have been able to back my opinion and make a fortune in a few days on the rate of exchange and similar speculations; but though I did not doubt for a second that success was certain, I found myself constitutionally incapable of fixing my attention on subjects which my instincts tell me to be none of my business, no matter how emphatically my conscious mind urges the necessity and propriety of so doing. This apparent impotence is really, I doubt not, the result of years of ruthless repression of every impulse that is not integrated absolutely with my true will. Judged by obvious standards, this austere Puritanism hampers me; but, considered more deeply, I feel that my concentration is intensified, my potential increased, by such methods, and that when the course of time allows me to see my career in perspective it will become evident that my temporary failures were stones in the pyramid of my eternal success.

I now see the events of 1910 in this light. I do not regret my futility or even my errors. The attainment of the Grade of Magister Templi had to be paid for, and I might congratulate myself that the cashier accepted such worthless paper money as the mistakes and misfortunes of a man.

My new methods of Magick were so successful that we became more ambitious every day. I wrote a ritual for invoking the moon. The climax of the ceremony was this: Leila Waddell was to be enthroned as a representative of the goddess and the lunar influence invoked into her by the appropriate lyrics. (I wrote "The Interpreter" and "Pan to Artemis".) The violinist was to reply by expressing the divine nature through her art. She was a rough, ill-trained executant, and her playing coarse, crude, with no touch of subtlety to interpret or passion to exalt the sequence of sound. The most cynical critics present were simply stunned at hearing this fifth-rate fiddler play with

a genius whose strength and sublimity was equal to anything in their experience. I quote from a half-article in *The Sketch* of August 24th. The writer is a financial journalist who thinks Magick a more brittle bubble than the most preposterous wild-cat scheme ever floated.

"Crowley then made supplication to the goddess in a beautiful and unpublished poem. A dead silence ensued. After a long pause, the figure enthroned took a violin and played — played with passion and feeling, like a master. We were thrilled to our very bones. Once again the figure took the violin and played an *Abend Lied* so beautifully, so gracefully and with such intense feeling that in very deed most of us experienced that ecstasy which Crowley so earnestly seeks. Then came a prolonged and intense silence, after which the Master of the Ceremonies dismissed us in these words: 'By the power in me vested, I declare the Temple closed.'

So ended a really beautiful ceremony — beautifully conceived and beautifully carried out. If there is any higher form of artistic expression than great verse and great music I have yet to learn it. I do not pretend to understand the ritual that runs like a thread of magic through these meetings of the A∴ A∴. I do not even know what the A∴ A∴ is. But I do know that the whole ceremony was impressive, artistic and produced in those present such a feeling as Crowley must have had when he wrote —

So Shalt thou conquer space, and lastly climb,
The walls of time:
And by the golden path the great have trod
Reach up to God!"

I call special attention to this as evidence that Magick, properly understood, performed and applied, is capable of producing results of quite practical kinds. More yet, these results involve no improbable theories. We can explain them in terms of well-known laws of nature. I have always been able to loose the genius which dwells in the Inmost Self of even the most imperfect artist, by taking the proper measures to prevent the interference of his conscious characteristics.

Neuburg himself furnishes a striking instance of this. When I met him he was writing feeble verses of hardly more than undergraduate merit. Under my training he produced some of the most passionate, intense, musical and lofty lyrics in the language. He left me; the dog hath returned to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. His latest work is as lifeless and limp as it was before I took hold.

The success of this form of invocation led me to develop the method. A large number of Masonic rituals were at my disposal, and their study showed that the ancients were accustomed to invoke the gods by a dramatic presentation or commemoration of their legends. I decided to bring this method up to date, while incidentally introducing into such rituals, passages whose sublimity would help to arouse the necessary enthusiasm by virtue of its own excellence. With these ideas in mind, I constructed seven rituals to the planets.

In two of these I was assisted by a man named George Raffalovich, whose father was a Jewish banker of Odessa, and whose mother a countess descended from one of the ministers of finance under Napoleon. Born in Cannes, he had been taken for the army very much against his will. The result was a notorious lawsuit to determine his status.

Coming of age, he had squandered his millions. No extravagance was too imbecile. At one time he bought a travelling circus with a menagerie and a collection of freaks. He should certainly have been the principal attraction. He had come almost to his last franc when he was pulled up by a *conseil de famille*. They saved a few thousand for the fool and kept him on short commons to teach him sense. He had snarled and become a socialist. I met him at the Gargotte off Holborn, being the only man there who looked at all like a gentleman. I paid him special attention. This suited him down to the ground. He saw a chance to cadge.

He agreed with me about socialism. It appeared that his motive in frequenting that milieu was identical with my own. He averred deep interest in Magick of which he had some slight dilettante knowledge. He won my sympathy in his controversy with his family. I promised to help him. I introduced him to influential people in high official positions who could help him to become naturalized. (As an Englishman he stood a better chance of getting free from the control of the *conseil de famille*.)

I also undertook the publication of some of his books. His talent was considerable. His imperfect acquaintance with English resulted in his inventing curiously fascinating terms of phraseology. He had remarkable imagination and a brilliant ability to use the bizarre. He made me the hero of several short stories under the name of Elphenor Pistouillat de la Ratis-boisière and introduced several of my disciples. These stories describe in fantastic, exaggerated and distorted images the circle of which I was the centre. The curious may consult the Equinox, vol. I, Nos. II, III and IV, also his own book *The Deuce and All*.

I furthermore lent him considerable sums of money (of course without interest) at various times extending over three years by which time he had obtained possession of the salvage of his estate. He had also learnt the value of money. He repaid what I had lent him and then proposed to invest a portion of his capital in a joint stock company which I was at that time contemplating to run the Equinox on proper business lines. Negotiations were still in progress when I left London towards the end of 1909 for Algeria.

What was my amazement on my return to find that he had persuaded the people in charge that he had authority to act for me. They explained that he had come round and argued that he was going to be a director of the proposed company and therefore had power to conduct the business. The youth indubitably possessed the virtue of doing nothing by halves. He forged my name to endorse cheques payable to me, cashed them and enjoyed the proceeds. I gasped. I liked the man and had no quarrel with him, but I could not exactly pretend not to notice incidents of this kind. I tackled him about it. He played the innocent and really he was fundamentally such a half-witted creature that I could not be angry. Unfortunately, there was something worse — a matter that touched my honour. He had advertised 777 and stated as an inducement to purchasers that less than one hundred copies remained for sale. That was a lie and I could not brook the association of my name with the shadow of a false pretence. But the mischief was done. The only way out was to make the statement true, which was done by his purchasing the number of copies necessary to reduce my stock to ninety.

He refused to understand my objections to his pastime of testing the intelligence of bank clerks in the matter of judging whether his imitation of my endorsement would pass muster. He indignantly withdrew from the proposed company and I saw him no more.

Not till long after did I discover that all this time while he was living on my bounty he had indefatigably intrigued against me. For insidious cunning he was unrivalled. He had insinuated a thousand malignant falsehoods about me, to the ears of my closest friends without their even suspecting his intention to injure me. In this way he had alienated several of my nearest and dearest colleagues and his culminating triumph was that he succeeded in leading Fuller by the nose through a tortuous channel of dark devices to the gulf of a complete rupture.

Fuller had begun to behave in a totally unintelligible way. It was all so subtle that I could not put my finger on a single incident. It was a mere instinct that something was wrong. The climax came after Jones vs. *The Looking Glass*. Fuller had urged me to take action myself. When the verdict justified my judgment. Fuller hinted that he could not afford to be openly asso-

ciated with the Equinox. He also tried to interfere with my conduct of the magazine and made it a condition of his continuing with *The Temple of Solomon the King* that I should surrender my control. I saw that he had a swelled head and determined to show him that he was not indispensable. I quietly dropped the subject and wrote the section in number five myself. Hoping this demonstration had reduced the inflammation I resumed the discussion and we had practically come to an agreement when to my breathless amazement he fired pointblank at my head a document in which he agreed to continue his co-operation on condition that I refrain from mentioning his name in public or private under penalty of paying him £100 for each such offence. I sat down and poured in a broadside at close quarters.

"My dear man," I said in effect, "do recover your sense of proportion, to say nothing of your sense of humour. Your contribution, indeed! I can do in two days what takes you six months, and my real reason for ever printing your work at all is my friendship for you. I wanted to give you a leg up the literary ladder. I have taken endless pain to teach you the first principles of writing. When I met you, you were not so much as a fifth-rate journalist, and now you can write quite good prose with no more than my blue pencil through two out of every three adjectives, and five out of every six commas. Another three years with me and I will make you a master, but please don't think that either I or the Work depend on you, any more than J.P. Morgan depends on his favourite clerk."

To return, however, to the rituals. These seven were really seven acts of one play, for their order was necessary. The plot, briefly summarized, is this:

Man, unable to solve the Riddle of Existence, takes counsel of Saturn, extreme old age. Such answer as he can get is the one word "Despair".

Is there more hope in the dignity and wisdom of Jupiter? No; for the noble senior lacks the vigour of Mars the warrior. Counsel is in vain without determination to carry it out.

Mars, invoked, is indeed capable of victory: but he has already lost the controlled wisdom of age; in a moment of conquest he wastes the fruits of it, in the arms of luxury.

It is through this weakness that the perfected man, the Sun, is of dual nature, and his evil twin slays him in his glory. So the triumphant Lord of Heaven, the beloved of Apollo and the Muses is brought down into the dust, and who shall mourn him but his Mother Nature, Venus, the lady of love and sorrow? Well is it if she bears within her the Secret of Resurrection!

But even Venus owes all her charm to the swift messenger of the gods, Mercury, the joyous and ambiguous boy whose tricks first scandalize and then delight Olympus.

But Mercury, too, is found wanting. Now in him alone is the secret cure for all the woe of the human race. Swift as ever, he passes, and gives place to the youngest of the gods, to the Virginal Moon.

Behold her, Madonna-like, throned and crowned, veiled, silent, awaiting the promise of the Future.

She is Isis and Mary, Istar and Bhavani, Artemis and Diana.

But Artemis is still barren of hope until the spirit of the Infinite All, great Pan, tears asunder the veil and displays the hope of humanity, the Crowned Child of the Future.

I throw myself no bouquets about these Rites of Eleusis. I should have given more weeks to their preparation than I did minutes. I diminished the importance of the dramatic elements; the dialogue and action were little more than a setting for the soloists. These were principally three; myself, reciting appropriate lyrics — this involved, by the way, my learning by heart many hundreds of lines of verse every week — Leila Waddell, violinist, and Neuburg, dancer. I sometimes suspect that he was the best of the three. He possessed extraordinary powers. He gave the impression that he did not touch the ground at all, and he would go round the circle at a pace so great that one constantly expected him to be shot off tangentially. In the absence of accurate measurements, one does not like to suggest that there was some unknown force at work, and yet I have seen so many undeniable magical phenomena take place in his presence that I feel quite sure in my own mind that he was generating energies of a very curious kind. The idea of his dance was, as a rule, to exhaust him completely. The climax was his flopping on the floor unconscious. Sometimes he failed to lose himself, in which case, of course, nothing happened; but when he succeeded the effect was superb. It was astounding to see his body suddenly collapse and shoot across the polished floor like a curling-stone.

The Rites of Saturn and Jupiter, repeated and revised constantly in the studio among ourselves, were admirable. Nothing of Maeterlinck's ever produced so overpowering an oppression as this invocation of the dark spirit of Time. The better one knew it, the more effective it was. Familiarity did not breed contempt. Even the sceptic was impressed when the officers circumbulate the temple and the audience are picked at random, one by one,

to join the procession, the last to do so being reminded, "Thou also must die!"

But what was sublimely effective when performed in private lost most of its power to impress when transferred to unsuitable surroundings. I had no available spare money, no knowledge of the tricks of stagecraft, no means of supplying the proper atmosphere. I would not condescend to theatricalism. I was much too hasty in preparing the latter rites and they were not thoroughly rehearsed. It may seem impossible that any creature possessed of a grain of common sense should have failed to foresee failure; but my incorrigible optimism persuaded me that the public were gifted with reverence, intelligence, imagination; and the gift of interpreting the most obscure symbolism.

The first rite was, however, on the whole a success. Most of the ceremony takes place in semi-obscurity, so that the audience were not worried by the uncongenial surroundings of Caxton Hall; their attention was focused on the points of interest because of the illumination surrounding them, and the histrionic incompetence of the officers was mercifully concealed from them by the gloom, so that the sublime language of the rite made its full impression. The action again gave imagination every chance, because its minutiae were indistinct as was appropriate to their character. For instance, when a traitor is discovered and put to death on the spot, that would have been comic in full light, but there was only the sudden alarm which broke off the ceremony, the swift inspection, the rush, the gestures of the avenger, the scream and then silence, followed by the dragging of the carrion through the darkness. The illusion was perfect.

The ceremony proceeds and no hint is given of its nature. The omens are disquieting, but no one knows their import. Every question is answered in terms which imply ineluctable doom, every hope instantly crushed to the earth by despair against which no appeal can possibly succeed. All aspiration, all ambition ends equally in death. Help is sought from behind the veil where, as has been supposed, is a shrine upon whose altar dwells the unknown god. But the veil is rent, all is empty, and the chief officer declares, "Alas, there is no god!" An invocation is made that god may appear and the veil is rent from within. A figure is standing on the altar and he recites the paraphrase of one of Bradlaugh's sermons made by James Thomson in *The City of Dreadful Night*, "O melancholy brothers, dark, dark, dark." This superb dirge ends:

"But if you would not this poor life fulfil,
Lo, you are free to end it when you will,
Without the fear of waking after death."

Darkness falls, complete and sudden; a wild dance to the tom-tom ends in the crash of the dancer's body at the foot of the altar. Silence. A shot. The ghastly flickering of incandescent sodium vapour then lights up the veil. The officers are seen with all the colour of their robes, and faces transformed to livid greens. The veil is drawn aside once more and there lies the Master himself, self-slain upon the altar, with the principal woman officer bending over him as Isis lamenting for Osiris. The light goes out once more and in the darkness the final dirge of utter helplessness wails on the violin. Silence again succeeds. Two officers, briefly and brutally, declare that the rite has been accomplished and the ceremony stops with startling suddenness.

It was certainly a stupendous idea, carried out in what, after all, was a simple, dignified, sublime and impressive manner. It might have been much better. Dramatic experience and command of accessories would have made it nothing short of tremendous. As it was the better class of newspapers and magazines wrote sympathetic and laudatory criticism of the most encouraging kind. If I had had the most ordinary common sense, I should have got a proper impresario to have it presented in proper surroundings by officers trained in the necessary technique. Had I done so I might have made an epoch in the drama, by restoring it to its historical importance as a means of arousing the highest religious enthusiasm.

There was, however, another side of London life which till that time I had hardly suspected: that certain newspapers rely for their income upon blackmail. And they thought me a suitable victim. In particular Horatio Bottomley, in *John Bull*, published a page of the foulest falsehoods. There is a large class of people in England who argue from their own personal experience that whenever human beings happen to be together in a subdued light they can have no idea in their minds by that of indecent assault.

Bottomley subsided at once on discovering that I was not likely to pay up and look pleasant; but there was at that time a paper, *The Looking Glass*, edited by an animal called De Wend Fenton. He printed a scurrilous attack on the ceremony and concluded by a threat to proceed to expose my personal misdeeds. He then rang up a mutual friend, and said that he hoped I was not offended, and that he would like to meet me at dinner to talk things over. My friend rang me up. I merely said, "I take it that you don't want me to be blackmailed over your coffee."

Fenton accordingly proceeded to publish article after article, packed with the most stupid falsehoods about me; some of them deliberate distortions of fifth-hand fact; some simple invention. To my surprise many of my friends took fright and urged me to bring a lawsuit for libel. Fuller, in particular, to my great surprise, was almost dictatorial about my duty. He had probably

been persuaded by his brother, who was a junior partner in the firm of solicitors who had represented me in the matter of Mathers. I did not care one way or the other what I did, but I took counsel with two men whose knowledge of the world of men was indisputably great; one, a probationer, the Hon. Everard Feilding, the other, Raymond Radclyffe, who, though utterly indifferent to Magick, was passionately fond of poetry and thought mine first-class, and unrivalled in my generation. He edited a high-class financial weekly and was rightly reputed as the most incorruptible, high-minded and shrewd critic of the city. Their opinion was identical and emphatic: "If you touch pitch you will be defiled," said one. "Fenton has been warned off the turf and his city editor has just come out of jail," said the other. There was nothing to gain. *The Looking Glass* was bankrupt, living from hand to mouth on hush money. Its public was composed of stable boys, counter-jumpers who fancied themselves as sportsmen, and people whose only literary recreation consisted in reading smutty stories and jokes, or licking their lips over the details of the most sordid divorces, and gloating generally over the wickedness of the aristocracy.

Apart from this, my course had been made clear by my own Chiefs. It was almost as if they had foreseen the circumstances. The case was met by almost the last clause of "The Vision and the Voice":

"Mighty, mighty, mighty, mighty; yes, thrice and four times mighty art thou. He that riseth up against thee shall be thrown down, though thou raise not so much as thy little finger against him. And he that speaketh evil against thee shall be put to shame, though thy lips utter not the littlest syllable against him. And he that thinketh evil concerning thee shall be confounded in his thought, although in thy mind arise not the least thought of him. And they shall be brought unto subjection unto thee, and serve thee, though thou willest it not."

Even the Bible says much the same thing: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

"Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. V, 11-12)

And again: "Resist not evil." I have never been able to understand why Christians should be so surprised and angry when their friends, Christian or not, do what the Scriptures enjoin. Of course they have no authority for me,

but the Angel of the First Aethyr (quoted above) had been explicit, and the order was addressed to me personally. I was thus justified, both on worldly grounds by the advice of the two men whose characters I most respected and whose experience I most trusted; and on spiritual grounds by the above definite order.

I saw no objection to stating my position for the sake of sincere and worthy people who might, through ignorance of the facts, be turned away from truth. I accordingly availed myself of the editor of a high-class illustrated weekly, the *Bystander*, and wrote two articles explaining what the Rites of Eleusis were; how people might cultivate their highest faculties by studying them. I also published the text of the rites as a supplement to number six of the *Equinox*. I could not condescend to reply to personal abuse. God ignored Bradlaugh's challenge to strike him dead within the next five minutes, and the king does not imprison every street-corner socialist who attacks him. Only when such rumours as that of his secret marriage to Miss Beauchamp circulate among people sufficiently important to make it matter, does he deign to prosecute. The Head Master of Eton had not protested when Bottomley accused him of advocating Platonic Love. I was content to await the acquittal of History.

Again, as Nehemiah said, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down." I was up to my neck in every kind of business, from the editing of the *Equinox* to the superintendence of the Order, apart from my own literary labours. I had no time for lawsuits. Besides, preoccupation with such matters means anxiety and unfits one for calm concentration on one's real business. It was also in a sense a point of honour with me not to interfere with the Masters.

What has time to say? We know what happened to Horatio Bottomley. I am glad to recall that when I heard of his arrest I wrote to tell him that I bore no malice and that I hoped he would be able to prove his innocence. I am indeed sincerely sorry that a man with such great qualities should have turned them to such poor purpose. What is the summary of it all? So many fools confirmed in their folly, so many base, vile passions pandered to; so many simple-minded folk swindled out of their savings. And, on the other side, so many years consumed in cheap coarse pleasures, soured by constant fears of being found out, and crowned by utter ruin worse than death at the hands of a pettier scoundrel than himself. Even by the standards of the uttermost disregard of moral and spiritual success, it is the extreme stupidity to be dishonest.

The fate of Fenton is less notorious, but is no less striking a testimony to the vigilance and might of the Masters. One of Fenton's mistresses had an

admirer, a Peer of the Realm, prodigiously wealthy and extremely aged. She arranged with Fenton to marry the old man; he would die in the course of nature without too tedious waiting and the charms of the lady might even shorten it. But the Peer still adorns the Peerage! It is Fenton that sleeps with his fathers! I do not know any man or woman who has attacked, betrayed, calumniated or otherwise opposed my Work, who has not met with disaster. Some are dead, some are insane, some are in jail. The only exceptions are those whom I have protected from retribution by taking up arms for myself and thus inducing the Masters to stand aside and see fair play.

CHAPTER 96

There is another side to the medal. Fenton, seeing that I was not to be dragged down into his dirt, introduced into his filthy articles the names of Allan Bennett and George Cecil Jones. Bennett was described as a "rascally sham Buddhist monk" and it was suggested that (in common with everyone else I knew!) my relations with him were morally reprehensible. This was not likely to worry Allan meditating in his monastery upon the evils of existence and practising the precepts of the Buddha; but Jones was otherwise situated. He had married to the extent of four children. Family life and the contamination of commercial chemistry had insensibly drawn him from the straight path. He had allowed the "care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches" to produce their usual effect; they "choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

So he put on the armour of Saul, and Goliath made mincemeat of him. He went to a tame solicitor, a mild mystic addicted to alchemy; no doubt as congenial a companion for a chat in a club over a glass of lemonade as one could have found between Swiss Cottage and Streatham Common, but the last man in the world to scrap with a ruffian who had no idea of fair fighting. He briefed a barrister who had only recently been admitted, having previously been a solicitor. (It is, by the way, a curious fact that such transformations are rarely successful. I suppose the very knowledge of the law gained in one branch of its practice disqualifies for success in the other. One can in fact easily understand that the habit of regarding disease from the point-of-view of a physician might hamper the surgeon; or the virtues of a cavalry leader make him incompetent to handle artillery.) This man had to face some of the most formidable talent at the Bar.

The case occupied two days. I sat in court hardly able to contain my laughter. The farcical folly of the proceedings eclipsed Gilbert's *Trial by Jury*. Mr. Schiller, an admirably adroit and aggressive advocate of the uncompromising, overbearing type, had everything his own way. He actually got the Judge to admit the evidence of an alleged conversation which took place ten years earlier and had no reference whatever to Jones. The Judge, Scrutton, was evidently bewildered by the *outré* character of the case. He even remarked that it was like the trial of *Alice in Wonderland*.

Mr. Schiller constantly referred to me as "that loathsome and abominable creature", though I was not represented in the case. The evidence against me was, first, my alleged remark in the spring of 1910, which even if I had made it, might have meant anything or nothing in the absence of any context; and, secondly, that the initials of four Latin "finger-posts" out of sever-

al hundreds in one of my books made vulgar words, such as may be found in Sir Thomas Malory, John Keats, Robert Browning, Shakespeare, Urquhart, Motteux and a host of other infamous pornographers. It would have been equally fair to rearrange the letters of the judge's surname to make a sentence describing a deplorable fact in pathology, and accuse his Lordship of outraging propriety every time he signed a cheque.

The Judge made rather malicious fun of both sides. Every few minutes some mysterious fact would crop up which I could explain better than anyone else. "But surely," the Judge would murmur, "the proper person to tell the court about this is Mr. Crowley. Why don't you call Mr. Crowley?" And both sides would deplore the impossibility of discovering where Mr. Crowley was, though I was sitting in the court *lippis et tonsoribus notus*, thanks to my unmistakable peculiarities — I will not say the majesty and beauty of my presence; having been familiarized to everybody in England by innumerable photographs as an explorer, poet, Magician, publisher, religious reformer, dramatist, theatrical producer, reciter and publicist.

The Looking Glass, of course, could not call me, because I should have immediately disclosed that the libel on Jones was only an incident in an elaborate attempt to blackmail, and Jones would not call me because he was afraid that my contempt for conventions, my scorn of discretion as merely a euphemism for deceit, and my confidence in the power of truth and in the integrity and intelligence of men in general, would lead me to make some damaging admission.

He was ill advised. The intensity of my enthusiasm, my candour and my sheer personality would have dominated the court. They would have been bound to understand that even my follies and faults testified to my good faith, high-mindedness and honour. No man with a personal axe to grind would have done such frank, fearless, imprudent things. I had never been conciliatory; I had never been a flatterer or an opportunist. *Brand* himself was not more contemptuous of compromise. Such a man may be misguided, wrong-headed, a maker of mischief, but he must be sincere. It would have been seen at once that the beliefs and prejudices of men meant nothing to me, that my eyes were fixed on the eternal, my mind conscious only of God, and my heart wholly filled with the love of the Light. However, he feared. He had forgotten the first words of his initiation, "Fear is failure and the fore-runner of failure." Therefore he failed.

The only allegation against him was that he was my friend and colleague and he read into this the suggestion that our relations were criminal. The defendants denied that they had ever meant to make any such suggestion. The Judge said in his summing up that, obscure as the case might be in many

ways, one thing was clear: Mr. Jones had sworn emphatically that he was innocent of the offence in question, the defendants had sworn that they had never at any time, and did not now, intend to suggest that he was guilty of any such conduct.

The jury retired. Apparently they saw something sinister in the unanimity of plaintiff, defendant and judge. They *breathed together*, so to speak, and the Latin for that was *conspiracy*. If nobody had suggested this atrocity, it was time someone did! They returned as radiant as they had departed distressed. They declared that the defendants had perjured themselves in denying that they had accused Mr. Jones: that Mr. Jones had perjured himself in denying his guilt; that the Judge had made a fool of himself by directing them to believe the evidence on either side; that *The Looking Glass* had meant to accuse Mr. Jones of felony; and, finally, that a felon he was.

My contact with civilisation has taught me little and that little hardly worth learning. One sees only the superficial aspects of things and those as often as not are deceptive. One's comprehension is confused and incoherent; one's conclusions cancel each other out. But my two days in court did really add to my practical knowledge of *homo sapiens*. Jones had sworn so simply, sincerely, solemnly, earnestly and emphatically; Fuller had spoken up with soldierly straight-forwardness. Against these were matched the almost insane pomposities of Mathers, a notorious rascal, the bombastic blusterings of Berridge, an ill-reputed doctor on the borders of quackery, who had blanched and stammered at the first word of cross-examination; the sly evasions of Cran, a solicitor whose shifty glance was itself enough to warn the veriest tyro in physiognomy not to believe a word he said; and the twelve good men and true had brought in a verdict against the evidence, against the judge's direction, against the psychology of the witnesses. And the sole ground for their verdict was that the existence of entirely unsupported suspicion of so horrible a crime proved that it must be justified.

It was the psychology of the Middle Ages. A man might or might not be guilty of murder, but witchcraft was so unimaginable an abomination that it was unthinkable that anyone could accuse people of it unless it were true. I remembered the case of Eckenstein. He had committed a crime too frightful to put into words and therefore he must be guilty. I had found it much the same with myself. Nobody seemed to care whether I had or had not done various things which anyone might be expected to do, but nobody seemed to entertain a doubt of my having done things impossible in nature. Nobody troubled to find out the facts about the simplest matters. People printed falsehoods about my family, my fortune, the best-known events of my life. There was no attempt to be consistent or probable. To edit a newspaper while undergoing penal servitude seemed to strike nobody as beyond my

ability, and so on *ad nauseam*. Still more absurdly, trifles which are true of hundreds of thousands of people became charged with the most sinister significance when applied to myself. I have been accused of living in a farmhouse, as if only assassins so far forget themselves. If I turned down the light, it must be to conceal my crimes. If I turn it up, it proves my shamelessness. If I go to London, I must be fleeing from the police in Paris; if to Paris, from the police in London. The case of Jones showed me that my spiritual superiors were right not only as regards spiritual matters —common sense confirms them. The wisdom of the world is no doubt foolishness with God, but the wisdom of God works perfectly well in the world.

The result of the Jones case neither surprised nor shocked me. It simply confirmed me in my determination to do my work and nothing else but my work. It was none of my business whether what I did was popular. *The Pilgrim's Progress* would have been no better if its author had been a generally respected churchwarden instead of a jailbird, and no worse if he had been a highwayman instead of a tinker. One cannot even help oneself to become famous by any given methods. One may, indeed, push oneself into society where one does not belong for the moment. Compare the careers of Swinburne and Alfred Austin. The later became Laureate, thanks to his sound Conservative principles and respectability, but it hasn't made any difference, even twenty years later, except to afford an instance of the utter absurdity, even from the most practical standpoint, of wasting a moment on anything but making one's work as perfect as possible.

Here is another paradox. There are plenty of people in the literary world who know all about this, yet they still expect intelligent people to do all these stupid things which they have just proved utterly useless, as if their efficacy had never been doubted. I remember one evening how somebody dropped in to tell me that I was being damaged by some silly scandal. I turned pale and began to breathe quickly, crossed to my bookcase and opened some volume of mine. I gave a great sigh of relief and came back, my face flooded with joy. "Dear friend," I said pointing to the page, "your fear is quite ill founded." For a moment I thought that a semi-colon might have been changed into a comma.

As to the other point, I sometimes wonder whether I have not been affected by an incident of early childhood. My father used to go evangelizing the villages on foot. I would go with him. Sometimes he would give people tracts and otherwise deal straightforwardly, but sometimes he did a very cruel thing. He would notice somebody cheerfully engaged in some task and ask sympathetically its object. The victim would expand and say that he hoped for such and such a result. He was now in a trap. My father would say, "And then?" By repeating this question, he would ferret out the ambi-

tion of his prey to be mayor of his town or what not, and still came the inexorable "And then?" till the wretched individual thought to cut it short by saying as little uncomfortably as possible, "Oh well, by that time I shall be ready to die." More solemnly than ever came the question, "And *then?*" In this way my father would break down the entire chain of causes and bring his interlocutor to realize the entire vanity of human effort. The moral was, of course, "Get right with God."

The ingenuity and simplicity of this line of argument pleased me very much, and it sunk into my soul. It was not weakened when I came to discard superstitious beliefs, but rather strengthened. I have always kept in the back of my mind that all my plans were puerile. Everything I did was worth doing as well as possible for its own sake. It was a point of honour of immediate importance; but to wish for results of any kind was simply silly. I have lived up to this with comparatively few lapses; I may have been weak enough to wish to become famous, and so on, but I have rarely been foolish enough to think that any one course of conduct would be more likely than any other to contribute to this result. I have therefore devoted myself to my work without taking much pains to push it; sooner or later it may strike Fate as not a bad joke to put me on the pinnacle of popularity, and I shall have to be supplied with the material for permanence by acting as I have, instead of trying to play blind hockey with the imponderable forces of the Universe.

CHAPTER 97

At this time the consciences of men were much exercised, as our fathers put it, with regard to the monument which Jacob Epstein had made for the tomb of Oscar Wilde in Père-Lachaise. This monument had been on exhibition in his studio in London for some months and the most delicately minded dilettanti had detected nothing objectionable in it. No sooner had it been put in the cemetery than the guardian objected to it as indecent. The Prefect of the Seine upheld him. I went to see it. I did not greatly admire it; I thought the general design lumpish and top-heavy, but the modelling of the winged sphinx, or whatever it was, seemed admirably simple and subtle. The aesthetic point was, however, not at stake. The attitude of the authorities was an insult and outrage to the freedom of Art. The entire innocence of the statue made their action less defensible, though personally I do not believe in any restrictions based on prejudice. Great Art is always outspoken and its effect on people depends on their minds alone. We have now discovered, in fact, that the most harmless phenomena of dreams really represent the most indecent and abominable ideas. If we choose to find an objectionable meaning in *Alice in Wonderland*, or determine to persuade ourselves that the frank oriental obscenities of the Bible are indecent, no one can stop us. Mankind can only rise above his lower self by facing the facts and mastering his instincts.

I was indignant at the insult to Epstein and to art in his person. I therefore resolved to make a gesture on behalf of the prerogatives of creative genius. I printed a manifesto:

AU NOM DE LA LIBERTÉ DE L'ART

L'Artiste a le droit de créer ce qu'il veut!

Le beau monument d'Oscar Wilde au Père-Lachaise, chef d'oeuvre du sculpteur Jacob Epstein, quoique déjà mutilé et dégradé par ordre du Préfet de la Seine, reste toujours voilé.

A midi, Mercredi prochain le 5 Novembre, M. Aleister Crowley, le poète Irlandais, va le dévoiler. Venez lui prêter votre sympathie et votre aide, venez protester contre la tyrannie pudibonde et pornophile des bourgeois, venez affirmer le droit de l'Artiste de créer ce qu'il veut.

Rendez-vous, Cimetière de Père-Lachaise, auprès du monument d'Oscar Wilde, à midi, Mercredi, 5 Novembre.

I had this distributed widely through Paris. My friend and landlord, M. Bourcier, shook his head very sadly. They would send soldiers, he said, "with cannon and bayonet" to form a cordon round the monument and prevent me from removing the tarpaulin. Oh, will they? said I. So I opened my mind to an enthusiastic young American, who agreed to help me. We bought a coil of extremely fine and strong steel wire, which would be practically invisible in the dull November gloom. We waited till the gates were closed and then proceeded to attach the wire to the tarpaulin, so that from the shelter of a tree a couple of hundred yards away, a gentle pull would suffice to bring it away, I having cut through the cords which kept it in place in such a way that they held only by a fibre, apparently uninjured. I was to make no attempt to rush the military forces of the Republic, but make a speech on the outskirts. When I threw up my arm to apostrophize the empyrean, he was to pull the wires from his lurking place. These arrangements completed, we got out by explaining to the gatekeeper that we had lost our way.

The next day at the appointed hour, I went to the cemetery with one or two desperate adherents. A distinguished concourse of enthusiasts was awaiting the Darling of Destiny, the Warden of the Worthiness of Wilde, the Emancipator of the Ebullition of Epstein. We marched in solemn procession to the tomb. I was amused to observe that the patrols, immediately they saw us, scuttled away like rabbits. I supposed at first that they had gone to give warning, and expected to be arrested before the conclusion of the entertainment, but when we got to the tomb I found no serried ranks of soldiers shouting, *Il ne passeront pas!* There was not a soul in sight!

I then understood that orders had been given on no account to interfere with the mad Irish poet. It rather took the wind out of my sails. I made my speech and unveiled Epstein's effort in the dull drizzling weather. It was a disheartening success. The affair, however, made a great noise in the newspapers, both in France and in England, and the funniest thing about it was that Epstein himself, the one person above all others who should have been gratified, one would have supposed, took my action in rather bad part.

I have always found Epstein's psychology very puzzling. He is a German Jew, born in the lower East Side of New York City, and his genius, like Rodin's, is purely natural. His conscious ideas are out of keeping with it and destroy it whenever he allows them to interfere. Thus, at one time, he got into the worst set of pretentious humbugs in London, those nonentities who proclaim tirelessly at the top of their voices how great they are, and how their pedantic principles are the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. They theorize tediously in obscure cafés and produce either meaningless monstrosities or nothing at all.

Cubism, Vorticism, Dadaism, and such sectarian sillinesses all come to the same thing; they are embalmed intellectual fads, invented in order to prove that the imbecility of their adherents is sublime. Conscious of their incapacity they try to prove its perfection, just as a woman who squinted might try to persuade herself that cross eyes constitute a special charm. The fallacy lies in this: a work of art justifies itself by its direct magical effect on the observer. It is puerile to "prove" that Pope is a better poet than Shakespeare because his classicism is worthier than the "unhappy barbarism" (as Hume says) of the Elizabethan. Critical rules derived from analysis after the event are always impertinent. One cannot improve on Swinburne by using his merits more accurately than he did himself.

But Epstein allowed himself to be influenced by the pompous cocksureness of men who were not fit to cart his clay, and for a time tried to work on their principles instead of allowing his genius to express itself as it would, with disastrous results. I have myself made an ass of myself now and again, by trying to construct consciously according to my convictions. But at least I never let myself be influenced by the fashions of a clique.

I am reminded of an interesting circumstance which occurred in 1912. Epstein had made a Sun-God. Hearing this, I hurried to his studio. I thought it a sign that the ideas which moved me were independently penetrating other minds. "Hullo," said I, as I entered the studio; "you've been doing the Man of Vitruvius, have you?" "Man of what?" said Epstein. "Vitruvius; you know — the Microcosm?" I might have been talking Choctaw. I could not believe that Epstein did not know all about it. But he did not know even which of his statues I was talking about. I pointed. "Nonsense," said he, "that is my Sun-God. What has Vesuvius got to do with it?" I was struck dumb.

Vitruvius was (of course, but I suppose I had better explain!) the great Augustan architect, whose treatise on the subject is the supreme classic of its kind. He had discovered the rationale of Beauty and similar moral ideas. He had demonstrated the necessity of adhering to certain proportions. It chanced that I had in my pocket a proof of one of the illustrations of my Book Four, Part II. I pulled it out and put it under his nose. In all essentials it was identical with Epstein's idea of the Sun-God. The astounding thing is not this mere similarity, but the fact that Epstein had called it by that name; for the man of Vitruvius is really the Sun-God. It is the symbol which unifies the centre of our system with the true nature of man.

The genius of Epstein had expressed through him a mystical fact of supreme importance, without the aid of any intellectual process. It was one more instance of my theory that direct intuition is capable of discerning *a priori* truths as adequately as the inductive method of intellect reveals them

a posteriori. Its results are equally reliable, or more so, when their medium is genius, and this in its turn is its own all-sufficient witness by virtue of its power to express itself in beauty. "Beauty is truth; truth, beauty" has thus a precise logical meaning; it is not merely a poetical fancy.

Our appreciation of a sonnet and a syllogism is aroused by identical qualities in our nature. The same principle applied to each impression produces reactions whose interrelation is necessary. It is not merely a matter of taste to prefer Rembrandt to Dana Gibson. It implies a corresponding perception of scientific and philosophical problems. When men who agree about Goya disagree about geology, one may deduce confidently that there is somewhere a failure of self-comprehension on one subject or the other, for all our opinions are partial expressions of our essential spiritual structure. This fact may be used to detect the sources of error in one's own mind. I have often been able to correct my views of some problem in mathematics or physics by referring them to some artistic standard. Having detected where the incompatibility lies, it becomes clear where to look for the misunderstanding.

The Oscar Wilde monument was fated to furnish further amusement. With unparalleled insolence, the authorities decided to mutilate Epstein's work. They employed a sculptor, who must, by the way, have been utterly lost to all sense of shame, to fix a bronze butterfly over the "objectionable" feature of the monument. This feature had been quite unnoticeable to any but the most prurient observer. The butterfly, being of different material and workmanship, clamoured for attention to exactly that which it was intended to make people forget.

This incidentally is a characteristic of puritan psychology. Nobody would notice that side of nature to which those folk whose goodness resents that of God, attach a "bad" meaning, if they did not persistently emphasize its existence. The bad taste of this outrage went even further. The butterfly was notoriously the emblem of Whistler, whose controversies with Wilde were so savagely witty. To put this on the very symbol of Wilde's creative genius was the most obscene insult which could have been imagined. Martial never composed an epigram so indecently mocking.

I did not know that this outrage had been perpetrated. I had gone to the cemetery simply to see if the tarpaulin had been replaced. I confess that I fully enjoyed the flavour of this foul jest. It was all the more pungent because unintentional. (The idea had been simply to make a quiet, inconspicuous modification. It is really strange how polite propriety is always stumbling into Rabelaisian jests. I remember, for instance, writing in some article for the *New York Vanity Fair*, "Science offers her virgin head to the caress of

Magick." The editor thought the word "virgin" a little risky and changed it to "maiden"!)

Recovering from the first spasm of cynical appreciation, I saw that there was only one thing to be done in the interests of common decency and respect for Epstein. I detached the butterfly and put it under my waistcoat. The gate keeper did not notice how portly I had become. When I reached London, I put on evening dress and affixed the butterfly to my own person in the same way as previously to the statue, in the interests of modesty, and then marched into the Café Royal, to the delight of the assembled multitude. Epstein himself happened to be there and it was a glorious evening. By this time he had understood my motives; that I was honestly indignant at the outrage to him and determined to uphold the privileges of the artist, just as Whistler himself had done when he avenged Art upon the carrion of Sir William Eden.

CHAPTER 98

The Rites being over, and their lesson learnt, I felt free to go back to my beloved Sahara. As before, I took Neuburg with me and motored down from Algiers to Bou-Saâda to economize time. We proposed to take a more extended itinerary. There were certain little-known parts of the desert within comparatively easy reach. It was part of the programme to obtain visions of the sixteen Sub-Elements, as a sort of pendant to the Aethyrs, but the time was not yet. We began, but the results were so unsatisfactory that we broke off. I have, of course, no doubt that success depends entirely upon working for it, but it is ultimately as impossible to perform a given Operation in Magick to order as it is to write a poem to order, however one's technical ability seems to promise success.

Experiences of this sort ultimately taught me that the will which is behind all Magical working is not the conscious will but the True Will. Success depends therefore, firstly, on making sure that one's powers are equal to any required demand; but, secondly, upon learning the kind of work for which they are really wanted. It is an excellent training, no doubt, to plug ahead perseveringly in the most discouraging conditions. Indeed the professional is better than the amateur mainly because he has had to struggle on day after day; but this is a question of early training. When one has come to the height of one's powers, one still has one's "days off".

This second journey in the Sahara took us much deeper into desolation. We had two camels and a man to drive them and a boy to look after the camels. We picked up occasional wayfarers as we went, and dropped them again, in the most charmingly casual way. At our first halt we enjoyed the hospitality of a famous Sheikh who had established a sort of mystical university in that obscure corner of the world. We found him a courteous host and a most enlightened scholar. One of the advantages of spiritual development is the confirmation of one's results which one obtains from similarly disposed people whom one meets. There is a real freemasonry among such men, which does not depend upon formula and dogma. The instinctive sympathy proves that one has done right to climb beyond conscious conclusions. In the Kingdom of Spirit is freedom.

Our course took us across a chain of mountains. It was a beautiful morning, with but a touch of north-west wind. We were feeling very fit; I had forgotten all about England and we began to congratulate ourselves on another pleasant journey. I suppose the north-west wind was eavesdropping.

We has some food in an unexpected and decayed hovel about noon; for the wind had got up sufficiently to make it too cold to sit about. An hour later we struck for the mountains. It was a really fine mountain pass; the descent a splendid gorge, precipice-walled. The camel driver wanted to pitch camp about three o'clock and we had trouble with him.

Camel-drivers have no sense at all; in England they would get either the Embankment or the Home Office. This imbecile had been all his life in the desert and had not yet learnt that he and his camel needed food. He never took any with him, and having reached a suitable spot thirty miles from the nearest blade of grass, complained of hunger.

I had hoped he would have found some thistles.

This by parenthesis. We wandered on and presently emerging from the gorge came upon an Arab, who spoke of a Bedouin encampment downstream.

This we found a few minutes after nightfall. The wind was violent and bitter beyond belief, but no rain fell. "Rain never falls south of Sidi Aissa."

So we fed and turned in. Our tent was an Arab lean-to, a mere blanket propped on sticks, some necessary to its support, others designed to interfere with the comfort of the people inside.

My disciple, fatigued by the day's march, fell asleep.

As it happened — pure luck, for he had no more sense than the camel-driver; disciples never have! — he had chosen the one possible spot. As for me, I woke in about half an hour to feel the most devilish downpour. It was as bad as Darjeeling and the ridge that leads to Kanchenjanga. We had pitched the tent in a fairly sheltered spot under the walls of the river; but the rain ran down the props of the tent and through the tent itself, and soaked us.

In the morning, after a night spent in that condition when one is half asleep from exhaustion and half awake from misery, the storm still blew.

We waited till nearly nine. The Bedouins told us that four miles on there was a village. We thought of coffee and made tracks. So off we went over the sopping desert and reached the "village" in an hour. There were palms and gardens — and one deserted hovel, with no door. The roof, made of boughs weighted with big stones and made tight with mud, was half broken

through. A giant stone hung imminent, half-way fallen. All day we waited for the rain to stop falling in the place "where it never fell".

Night came and the blizzard redoubled its violence; but the shelter allowed us a little sleep until the mud dissolved and the roof became a sieve. The rest of the night was a shower-bath.

In the morning there was no great sign of improvement. I had to kick the camel-driver into action and chase the camels with my own fair feet. He had a million excuses for not going on, all on a level. "The camels would catch cold" — good from the man who had left them all night in the rain! "They would slip." "They would die." "They were too hungry." — From the man who hadn't brought food for them! "They were tired" — and so on. But I got the party off at last and came in a couple of hours to a tomb with a coffin in it. There they sat down and refused to stir. I simply took no notice. My disciple took one camel and I took the other, and went off. We left them in the tomb, grouching.

Steering by map and compass, I judged a good pass through the next range of mountains, and made for it. The flat desert was standing in water; and the streams were difficult for the camels who hate water as much as disciples do.

It was better on the mountain-side. Near the top of the pass we perceived our men following, as the lesser of two evils. I was sorry, in a way; it would have been a fine adventure to worry through to Sidi Khaaled with these two brutes and a daft Davie!

It was just as the top was reached that I said, without any apparent reason, "The storm's over." My disciple did his Thomas act. There was no opening in the furious grey heaven; the wind raged and the rain poured. But I stuck to it; I had felt the first contention of the south wind in a momentary lull. I was right.

The descent of the pass was far from easy. The "road" crosses and re-crosses the bed of the river as often as it can; sometimes even follows the course.

And this stream was a furious spate, slippery and dangerous for men, impassable for members of the Alpine Club, and almost impassable for camels. It was nearly night fall before we left the gorge and a barren plain confronted us.

It was useless to struggle on much further. The rain still poured; the desert stood six inches deep in water. The hills were a mass of snow.

(We heard later that many houses had been washed away at Ouled Djellal in this unprecedented storm. Traffic was interrupted by snow on the East Algerian Railway, and the Maréchal Bugeaud was forty hours late at Marseilles, having to beat up under the lee of the Spanish shore for shelter.)

So I picked out a good big tree by the stream and we pitched camp.

We had a little hope of lighting a fire; but there is in the desert a certain impermeable grass, and by using this as a starter, we got it going. No sooner had the blaze sprung up, filling the night with golden showers of sparks, than the envious stars determined to rival the display. Every cloud disappeared as by magic. But the fire remained the popular favourite!

All night I toiled to dry myself and my clothes, refreshing the old Adam with coffee, potted pheasant and Garibaldi biscuits at not infrequent intervals.

The morning was ecstasy. The light came over the sand, wave upon wave of grey. The desert was dry. There was no water in the stream, save in rare pools. We struck camp early.

We glanced up at the path which we had travelled; the ranges still glowed with unaccustomed snow; from the north-west the wind still struggled fitfully to assert its dominion, but we, with joy and praise in our hearts, turned our glad faces, singing to the assurgent sun.

The most interesting village on our route was Ouled Djellal. It was quite a tiny place, but there is a hovel which calls itself an European hotel, kept by a strayed Frenchman. The village boasts a barn where one can go every night and watch dancing girls. I need not describe their doings, but I may say that this is the only form of amusement that I have ever found of which I never get tired. I like to drop in pretty early and sit there all through the night, smoking tobacco, or kif, and drinking coffee, cup after cup.

The monotonous rhythm of sound and movement dulls the edge of one's intellectual activity in very much the same way as a mantra. The finest concerts and operas, or such spectacles as the Russian Ballet, alleviate the pain of existence by putting a positive pleasure to work against the pale persistent pang; but, as the Buddha has shown, the remedy increases the disease. I have long since come to the point in which I could say that I had enjoyed all possible forms of delight to the utmost possible extent. I am not blasé; I

can still enjoy everything as well as I ever could. More: I know how to extract infinite rapture from the most insignificant incidents, but this faculty depends on the refusal to accept such currency at its own valuation. This being so, it is on the whole easier to obtain pleasure from those things which soothe rather than from those things which excite.

It has just struck me that these remarks may seem very perverse. Average people associate Arab dances with animal excitement. Such an attitude enables me to diagnose their case. They are for the most part incapable of true passion, but their emotions are so disordered and uncontrolled that at the slightest touch they give a leap and a squeal. Puritanism in the conventional sense of the word is, in fact, a neurosis. One ought to possess one's physical powers in the greatest measure but they should be so collected and controlled that they cannot be excited by inadequate stimulation.

The puritan is always trying to make it impossible for those things which frighten him to exist. He does not understand that sensibility is not to be cured by protecting it from the obvious stimuli. The diseased tissue will merely begin to react to all sorts of contacts which have a merely symbolic relation with the original perils. This psychological fact is at the basis of such phenomena as fetishism. The saint hurries to the Thebaid to avoid the danger of Thais, only to find that the very stones rise up and take her place. Neuburg had a friend who had a friend who was an anarchist. He would not drink cocoa "because it excited his animal passions".

That is why the whole policy of prudery defeats its own ends. True morality would allow absolute authority to every tendency of the human heart, but prevent its becoming over important, or appearing so. In Anglo-Saxon countries everything is arranged so as to remind people constantly of sex. The frank appeal of certain theatrical producers and certain writers of fiction, is psychologically identical with the scientific and philosophical subterfuges of those who pretend to discuss the problem in an elevated spirit, and those who even more hypocritically keep the matter in people's minds by denouncing it.

I have myself been accused of excessive preoccupation with such matters. My excuse is that humanity is actually in the gravest danger. The subject has swamped all others, between efforts to cultivate and to suppress it. This constant nagging has ruined people's nerves, and the energy itself is generating and assuming all sorts of perverse forms. I therefore hold it of the first importance to settle the subject once and for all, by training people to master it.

The method is evidently to analyze it scientifically, to assess the importance with its relations with other things. As long as it fascinates and frightens folk, the effect of ignorance and hysteria, so long will they be its slaves. We must act as we have done with superstition and disease. Bacteriology was at first thought blasphemous; then people began to see germs everywhere. To-day we know more or less how to measure the influence of any given bacillus, and how to guard ourselves against its effects. The method is to replace imagination by knowledge, panic apprehension by precise analysis, quack remedies by scientifically tested measures, and fortification of the body by attention to health and hygiene.

I have worked a great deal at this problem, and may fairly claim that I can immunize almost any individual against attack. The method is simple and practical, and the only objection to making it public is that the bulk of the public believes that any such form of education must be malefic. Just as in the Middle Ages all scientific research was supposed to be connected with the Black Art and all religious investigation suspiciously close to heresy. At the present moment one of the greatest organic chemists in England is afraid to publish the results of many years' important research* till after his death, because its subject is unsuitable for Sunday afternoon conversation in a semi-detached suburban villa.

Little as I have seen of the Sahara, I have reconstructed its story in outline to my own satisfaction. I am convinced that the earth is slowly losing its water and that this explains what one sees in the Mediterranean basin, without assuming catastrophic changes in the earth's crust. We know the glaciers are generally retreating. We know that in the time of Horace snow fell heavily and lay long in the Roman winter.

In Tunisia, the railway from Sousse to Sfax, which crosses the desert like a chord whose arc is the bulge of the coast between these towns, passes a village called El-Djemm. This is an isolated spot; there is no fertile country anywhere near it. It consists of a cluster of Arab huts in the gap of a coliseum. This structure was at one time the headquarters of a formidable gang of brigands and the gap was made by the artillery sent to smoke them out.

The point is that this coliseum is a tremendous affair. The old town must have sheltered at least five thousand people, more likely four times that number. How did these people live? One is bound to assume that in those days the country was fertile. In the absence of rivers, this means regular and plentiful rains. Again, the northern districts of the Sahara are full of large chott or lakes, many of which are below the present level of the sea. A French engineer, in fact, proposed to dig a canal from near Sfax so as to replenish a string of chott which extends inland for about 250 miles. He

thought, and I agree, that the existence of these vast shallow reservoirs would automatically change the climate, as the irrigation of Egypt by English enterprises has made a perceptible difference in that of Cairo within a decade. The trouble is, how to keep them from silting up.

The upshot of all this is that many of the travellers' tales of people like Pliny, Strabo and Plato need no longer be scouted as fantastic. I at least see no reason to doubt the existence of extensive civilizations in North Africa within the last five thousand years. Their decay and total disappearance is explained quite easily by the gradual failure of the water supply. To the eye of a god, mankind must appear as a species of bacteria which multiply and become progressively virulent whenever they find themselves in a congenial culture, and whose activity diminishes until they disappear completely as soon as proper measures are taken to sterilize them.

"Westward the Star of Empire takes its way" sounds splendid, but it is really very silly. Since I have understood that I am the Spirit of Solitude, Alastor, I have learnt to look at life from a standpoint beyond it. The affairs of the parasites of the planet, including Aleister Crowley, appear abject and absurd. I cannot pretend to take them seriously. The only object in attaching oneself to an individual is to have a standard suitable for symbolic representation of certain phenomena which happen to interest one, though they cannot possibly possess any importance for one, and the only reason for interesting oneself in the welfare of any such individual is to increase the efficiency of one's instrument of perception. This, then, explains why the only intelligent course of action for a man is to obtain initiation. Even this is useless in itself. The highest attainment is insensate except in reference to the convenience of an intelligence who is not in any way involved in the individuality of its instrument.

* The chemical characteristics of human faeces after administration of various drugs.

CHAPTER 99

BOOK VIII

CHAPTER THREE

The desert is a treasure house. One soon gets behind the superficial monotony. Each day is full of exquisite incidents for the man who understands how to extract the quintessence. It is impossible to describe such a journey as ours. The events of a single day would fill a fat folio. The more obvious adventures are really the least memorable, yet these are the only things which are capable of description. We were sometimes obliged, for example, to push on at a great pace in order to reach a place where we could renew our water supply. On one occasion we covered 100 miles in two days and a half. The last stage was pretty bad. It taught me a useful lesson about physical endurance.

Most men who have practised athletics, even mildly, know the meaning of the phrase "second wind". One's original enthusiasm being exhausted, one goes on quietly and steadily, almost unsusceptible to fatigue. A night's rest restores one completely; and, given proper food, one can go on day after day for an indefinite period before getting stale.

But few men, fortunately for themselves, know that there is such a thing as "third" wind. One's second wind wears off and one is overcome by such severe fatigue that one cannot struggle against it. One feels that one must rest or break down entirely, as one did at the end of one's first wind, only far more fiercely. If, however, when one's second wind fails one knows that life depends on going on, the third wind comes into court. In this state one is almost anesthetized. One has become an absolute machine, incapable of feeling or thinking; one's actions are automatic. The mind is just capable of making connections with such circumstances as bear on the physical problem, though men of weak will, and those in whom the habit of self-control is not established inexpugnably, are sometimes subject to hallucinations. The famous mirage is sometimes seen apart from optical hallucination. Delirium often occurs. (*L'Atlantide*, chapter 19, describes some of these phenomena very finely in some ways, very inaccurately in others. The author is ignorant that all human feelings are abrogated.)

There seems no reason why one should ever stop once one has got on to this third wind. I take it that one does so exactly as a steam engine stops; when the physical conditions constrain one.

Once one has got one's third wind a single night's repose is no longer adequate; it seems as if one had outraged Nature. I have found that whether I walked on third wind one hour, or thirty-six, the reaction was pretty much the same. On this occasion we had to lie up for two days before we could go on. The psychology of this stage was interesting. While we were walking across totally featureless desert, we were simply unconscious, entirely inaccessible to any impression; but the sight of an oasis, by arousing hope, awoke us to a consciousness of our physical agony. The last mile was an interminable atrocity. When we reached the palms the shade gave us no relief whatever; the improved physical conditions simply intensified our sufferings, for we could not rest before reaching the houses.

One of the effects of travel of this kind, as opposed to the regular expedition, with its definite objective and its consequent insulation from the current of ordinary life, is that every incident acquires an intense and absolute value of its own. One can, for example, love as it is utterly impossible to do in any other conditions. Every moment of one's life becomes charged with unimaginable intensity, since there is nothing to interfere with one's absorption. The multiplicity of incident in civilized life makes even the holiest honeymoon a medley; delight is dulled by distraction.

The secret of life is concentration, and I have attained this power despite every original disadvantage, not so much by virtue of my persistence in the practices which tend to improve one's technique, but by my determination to arrange my affairs on the large scale so as to minimize the possibilities of distraction. The resolve to read no newspapers, to see as few people as possible, to read or write during meals, to live so that the petty problems of every day are as few and easily dispatched as possible — all these measures have made me less a man than the Spirit of Solitude. Every impression I receive is interpreted more analytically and yields a more intense integration than a thousand such to most other men. My life has been calm, simple, free from unusual or exciting incidents, and yet I often feel that I have lived more fully than many men of affairs.

Another result has naturally been that I have learnt to assess experiences by a totally different scale from that of other people. Some points of view never strike me at all. For instance, a publisher once wrote to me, "We cannot publish such and such a book until" — various things happened, which had nothing to do with the contents of the book as such. I was literally aghast. To me a book is a message from the gods to mankind; or, if not, should never be published at all. Then what does it matter who writes it, what the circumstances may be commercially, socially or otherwise? A message from the gods should be delivered at once. It is damnably blasphemous to talk about the Autumn season and so on. How dare the author or publish-

er demand a price for doing his duty, the highest and most honourable to which a man can be called? The only argument for surrounding publication with any conditions is that the message may be better understood in some circumstances than in others. I can imagine a series of syllogisms on which one might base an apology for many of the actual principles of publishing. The point, however, is that (as I suppose) the author is the hierophant or oracle of some god, and the publisher his herald.

I left Neuburg in Biskra to recuperate and returned to England alone. No sooner had I settled in my compartment that I was seized by an irresistible impulse to write a play dealing with the Templars and the Crusades. I had had with me in the desert the rituals of Freemasonry, those of the Scottish, Memphis and Mizraim Rites. A plan had already been mooted for me to reconstruct Freemasonry, as will be later described. The ritual of the 30° had taken hold of my imagination. The idea of my proposed play, *The Scorpion*, sprang into life full-armed.

I have always found that unless I jump on such inspiration like a tiger, I am never able to "recapture the first fine careless rapture". I accordingly jumped out of the train at El Kantara and wrote it that evening and next day. I had done little creative work during the walk. My Retirements, as a rule, especially when they involve physical hardship, keep me in intimate communion with the Universe and rarely dispose me to write the result. I lie fallow and the expression of ecstasy follows my return to physical comfort and leisure.

My last important work had been done at Marseilles on the way out, where we had to wait two days for a boat to take us to Algiers. I spent the time in writing the essay on the Qabbala which appears in the Equinox Vol. I, No. v. I had no books of reference at hand and therefore put down only what was in my memory. This is a good plan. It prevents one from overburdening the subject with unimportant details. In one's library one is obsessed by the feeling that one should aim at completeness and this is a grievous error. One wants to include only those elements which have proved their vitality by making a clear permanent impression on the mind.

The Scorpion was the first lightning flash of a veritable thunderstorm of creation. Its plot is this. A band of Crusaders, Knights Templars, are in the desert at Christmas. One of them, Sir Rinaldo de la Chapelle, later on the Grand Master of the Temple, lingers by the wall to which an Arab girl, a princess, comes for water. He violates her, and gives her a scorpion in gold and jewels, his crest, for a token. His object has not been brutal. The act was symbolic of the reconciliation of Christian and Saracen in the common passions of humanity. Laylah marries a chief, Sidi Omar, and has four sons, but

the eldest, Sliman, is Sir Rinaldo's. He is her favourite. Her true love is given to his father.

Twenty years later a battle takes place in which her husband and her other three sons are killed. Sliman has taken as a prisoner a young girl, who is the daughter of the Grand Master of the Temple. The child discloses that her father's crest is a scorpion. Sliman returns, having killed a Christian Knight and taken his crest, a scorpion. Laylah thinks that he has killed his father, but it is really his half-brother. The child discloses this fact, but Laylah has already killed her son under the wrong impression. The realization of her error maddens her. She becomes a virago, and rallies the Saracens to the attack.

Act III is again twenty years later. Laylah, now known as Princess Koureddin, after all these years of success, has been captured, and is accused of witchcraft. She is tortured and condemned to be burnt. Sir Rinaldo is present, but takes no part. He is utterly disgusted at the failure of his hopes to reconcile Eastern and Western ideas. Laylah is at the stake. Her robe is blown open, the jewelled scorpion is seen and recognized by Rinaldo, who rushes to her and perishes in her arms in rapture. The scene is watched by a child whose name is Saladin.

I am not sure and find no record of the writing of *The Blind Prophet*, but it may well have been during this wonderful week. It is an attempt at a new form of Art, a combination of ballet and grand opera. The predominant vowels in any passage indicate an appropriate passion. Thus "i" goes with shrillness and the violin; "o" and "u" coo, like flutes. *The Blind Prophet* represents the deep broad *a*; the Queen of the Dancers the fluent *e*. With this sound scheme, goes a colour scheme.

The Prophet is high-priest of a temple, and it is understood that if he utters a certain word the building will be destroyed. He woos the Queen of the Dancers; she mocks and eludes him. He utters the word; the pillars fall and crush him, but nobody else is hurt. The chorus rises again in the identical melody of its original dance.

The idea of the play is this: that the senseless forces of Nature are indestructible and obey no master. The scheme of the rhythm and rime is extremely complex and the execution extraordinarily fluent. For sheer verbal music it was one of the best things that I had done. I found myself able to introduce internal rimes at very short intervals, without in any way interfering with the rhythm or the sense. There is no distortion of grammar, no difficulty in reading.

"Hush! hush! the young feet flush,
The marble's ablush,
The music moves trilling,
Like wolves at the killing,
Moaning and shrilling
And clear as the throb in the throat of a thrush."

During the journey I wrote *The Pilgrim, Return* and *On the Edge of the Desert*, lyrics inspired by the idea of getting back to my inamorata in London.

CHAPTER 100

In Paris I wrote *The Ordeal of Ida Pendragon*. The hero, Edgar Rolles, meets a girl at the Taverne Panthéon (where I wrote the story) and takes her to a fight between a white man and a Negro, the latter suggested by Joe Jeannette, whom I had just seen and much admired for his physical beauty. He takes her to his studio and recognises her as a member of the order. He proposes to put her through the ordeal of crossing the Abyss. She fails and they part. Ida meets the Negro, who loves her. Rolles and Ninon (Nina Oliver already mentioned) lunch with them. Ida takes pleasure in torturing the Negro and begs him to "respect her modesty" — which she has not got. The Negro suddenly understands that she is heartless and sinks his teeth in her throat. Rolles kills him with a kick. He then consults one of the Secret Chiefs, who advises him to take Ida away. He tells Rolles that she has passed through the Abyss after all. The formula is that perfect love is perfect understanding. He marries her and a year later she dies in childbirth, saying that she has given herself three times, once to the brute, once to the man and now to God. Her previous failure had been to surrender herself. She wanted to get everything and give nothing.

This story marks a stage in my own understanding of the formula of initiation. I began to see that one might become a Master of the Temple without necessarily knowing any technical Magick or mysticism at all. It is merely a matter of convenience to be able to represent any expression as $x + iy = 0$. The equation may be solved without words. Many people may go through the ordeals and attain the degrees of the A.:A.: without ever hearing that such an Order exists. The Universe is, in fact, busy with nothing else, for the relation of the Order to it is that of the man of science to his subject. He writes $\text{CaCl}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4 = \text{CaSO}_4 + 2\text{HCl}$ for his own convenience and that of others, but the operation was always in progress independently.

Arrived in England, my Pegasus continued its tameless spurt. One after the other I wrote *The Electric Silence*, a fairy-story summary of my magical career; *The Earth*, a short essay on her, both as planet and as element, in which I express my filial and conjugal relation with her. It is an ecstatic dithyramb.

Finally I wrote *Snowstorm*. This is a play in three acts, but once again I have tried to introduce a new artistic form.

Leila Waddell was to play the part of the heroine, but as she was incapable of speaking on the stage, I had to write her part as a series of violin solos.

In Act I we learn that Prince Eric of Fiordland has kidnapped a violinist, Nerissa, and carried her off to a hunting lodge. His wife, the Princess Maud, is jealous and comes with her officers to interfere. The Prince is arrested and carried off to the Palace. Nerissa is driven into the forest at midnight in winter.

In Act II she has become blind from the exposure, and her hair has turned white. She is earning her living by fiddling in the streets. One day, Eric and his suite pass an inn outside which she is playing. He half recognizes her tone in the distance. He approaches and bids her play. Learning who he is, she is so upset that she cannot play properly, and he goes off without recognizing her, yet reminded of her and so reduced to despair. Maud is intensely in love with her husband; but revenges his coldness by indulging in intrigues. Eric hears of this, and seeks vengeance. He orders a young officer to make love to her. Maud sees the trap; but pretends to fall into it, and gives the boy an assignation by the Cathedral at midnight. Eric decides to go there disguised as his officer. Nerissa herself goes there with the intention of serenading the Prince, the windows of whose castle are visible from this point.

Eric arrives with his Chancellor and a picked band of soldiers, whom he conceals in the shadows, and when Maud appears, after placing one of her ladies to watch, he advances in his disguise. Maud's idea is to kill the boy as a sensational vindication of her innocence. Eric tries to embrace her, and is instantly stabbed. The Chancellor rushes from his hiding place, crying that she has killed the Prince, for love of whom she has undertaken this adventure. Stricken to the madness of despair, she kills herself on the spot, just by the exit, so that she falls off stage.

At this moment the vestry door of the Cathedral opens, and a gigantic priest rushes out and bids them begone. They are all stricken with panic fear and take to flight. The priest retires, and the stage is left in darkness and silence. In the centre is the corpse of the Prince. Nerissa now returns; she approaches within a yard of the body. She turns her sightless gaze towards the dark window of the Palace and plays the serenade which she hopes will bring him down to her. There is a pause. She sighs, and returns saying "Perhaps to-morrow."

The current of creative ecstasy stopped as suddenly as it had begun and I went on from Eastbourne to London. I found everything in confusion. I did not realize that the *esprit de corps* which is the essence of such books as *The Three Musketeers* was as dead as duelling. The men who had clustered round me enthusiastically when I seemed successful had dispersed like the disciples when they found that the Pharisee meant business. They all knew

perfectly well that the attacks on me were malicious nonsense, that Jones's fiasco was a mere accident due to over-confidence; but they were all, with very few exceptions, cowards to the bone. They were as afraid of nothing as so many babies in the dark, expecting to see the Bogey Man come down the chimney.

I suppose the proper thing would have been to have "rallied my desperate followers", but the fact is that I am congenitally incapable of beating the big drum. Most leaders induce their followers to fight in haste and leave them to repent at leisure. I always feel that this sort of thing is somehow unfair and in the long run useless. I am content to wait until people back me up wholeheartedly without the press gang or the revival meeting. I carried on imperturbably, exactly as if nothing whatever had happened. My utmost condescension was to print *X-Rays on Ex-Probationers*, three short contemptuous epigrams.

MISTAKES OF MYSTICS

Since truth is supra-rational, it is incommunicable in the language of reason.

Hence all mystics have written nonsense, and what sense they have written is so far untrue.

Yet as a still lake yields a truer reflection of the sun than a torrent, he whose mind is best balanced will, if he become a mystic, become the best mystic.

When a friend of mine, or an enemy either, gets into trouble, I go or write to him immediately and put myself entirely at his disposition. I don't so much as ask whether he is in the right or no, unless that knowledge is necessary to efficient help. I can hardly explain why I act in this extraordinary way, but I think the theory is somewhat as follows: I being in relation with the man, he is a part of my individuality, and my duty to myself is to see that he is flourishing. If I sprain my ankle I must use all my resources to put it right, and even if my ankle has damaged me in the course of the accident, by allowing me to fall and bump my head, my interests are none the less bound up with it. I make no pretence of magnanimity; it is plain self-interest which determines my action. I am even simple enough to expect everybody else to be equally selfish, but I have found that even my best friends, with few exceptions, run away or cool off whenever I need their assistance.

I also find that I am not understood. I remember an incident in America. A man who purported to be an occult teacher, and was in reality an ignorant

charlatan, had been the object of my onslaught. He had every reason to regard me as his bitterest enemy. In course of time, he was found out and arrested. I went at once to the police court. Only one of his hundreds of devoted followers — and they were extravagantly devoted, thought he was no less than Jesus Christ come back to earth, and allowed him to mock, bully and swindle them to the limit without losing faith in him — had stuck to him in his misfortune. I went to him and affirmed my belief in his innocence (he had been “framed up” on a false charge) and offered to go bail for him and help him in every possible way. He was acquitted and we resumed our enmity.

I am glad to say that, some time afterwards, when some would-be magicians sent spies round the country to get information about me from people who did not know me, he spoke up on my behalf. This could hardly have happened in England, where moral cowardice is in the marrow of every man's bones. However vile and venal a man's accusers may be, and however obviously absurd may be the charges brought against him, the very men who have been boasting of their friendship for the great man scuttle into obscurity — at the best; more often, they join in the hue and cry in the hope of escaping the suspicion of having once been in league with the offender. In England today a plain denial like Peter's must count as extravagant loyalty! To me the psychology is heartbreaking, not as it may affect me directly, but because I hate to think so badly of men. The standards of *The Three Musketeers* are mine, and the blackest blot in the book is the partial failure of Aramis. It is far worse than the conduct of Milady at its vilest.

I believed then, and believe now, that the Probationer of A:A: is nearly always offered the opportunity to betray the Order, just as the neophyte is nearly always tempted by a woman. We read in the *Book of the Law*, Cap. I, verse 34:

“The ordeals I write not.”

“He (the Beast) may make severe the ordeals.” (v.38)

“There is a word to say about the Hierophantic task. Behold! there are three ordeals in one, and it may be given in three ways. The gross must pass through fire; let the fine be tried in intellect, and the lofty chosen ones in the highest! (v.50)

“The ordeals thou shalt oversee thyself, save only the blind ones. Refuse none, but thou shalt know & destroy the traitors. I am Ra-Hoor-Khuit; and I am powerful to protect my servant.” (Cap. III, v.42)

These "blind" ordeals presumably refer to such tests of fitness as that of which we have been telling. In the ancient mysteries it was possible to appoint formal ordeals. A young man would go into the Temple to be initiated and he would know perfectly well that his life might depend on his proving himself worthy. Nowadays the candidate knows that his initiators will not murder him, and any ordeal proposed by them obviously appears a pure formality. In Freemasons' Hall he can swear quite cheerfully to keep silence under the penalty of having his throat cut across, his tongue torn out, and all the rest of it; the oath becomes a farce.

In the A.:A.:, which is a genuinely Magical Order, there are no extravagant oaths. The candidate is pledged quite simply to himself only, and his obligation binds him merely "to obtain the scientific knowledge of the nature and powers of my own being". There is no penalty attached to the breach of this resolution; yet, just as this resolution is in contrast with the oaths of other orders in respect of simplicity and naturalness, so also with regard to the penalties. To break away from the A.:A.: does actually involve the most frightful dangers to life, liberty and reason. The slightest mistake is visited with the most inexorable justice.

What actually happens is this. When a man ceremonially affirms his connection with the A.:A.: he acquires the full powers of the whole Order. He is enabled from that moment to do his True Will to the utmost without interference. He enters a sphere in which every disturbance is directly and instantly compensated. He reaps the reward of every action on the spot. This is because he has entered what I may call a fluid world, where every stress is adjusted automatically and at once.

Thus, normally, suppose a man like Sir Robert Chiltern (in *An Ideal Husband*) acts venally. His sin is visited upon him, not directly, but after many years and in a manner which has no evident logical connection with his offence. If Chiltern had been a Probationer of A.:A.: his action would have been balanced at once. He had sold an official secret for money. He would have found within a few days that one of his own secrets had been betrayed, with disastrous consequence to himself. But furthermore, having switched on a current of disloyalty, so to speak, he would have found disloyalty damaging him again and again, until he had succeeded in destroying in himself the very possibility of ever again being disloyal. It would be superficial to regard this apparently exaggerated penalty as unjust. It is not sufficient to pay an eye for an eye. If you have lost your sight, you do not stumble over something once; you keep on stumbling, again and again, until you recover your sight.

The penalties of wrong-doing are applied not by the deliberate act of the Chiefs of the Order; they occur in the natural course of events. I should not even care to say that these events were arranged by the Secret Chiefs. The method, if I understand it correctly, may perhaps be illustrated by an analogy. Suppose that I had been warned by Eckenstein always to test the firmness of a rock before trusting my weight to it. I neglect this instruction. It is quite unnecessary for Eckenstein to go all over the world and put unreliable rocks in my way — they are there; and I shall come across them almost every time I go out climbing, and come to more or less grief whenever I meet them. In the same way, if I omit some magical precaution, or make some magical blunder, my own weakness will punish me whenever the circumstances determine the appropriate issue.

It may be said that this doctrine is not a matter of Magick by of common sense. True, but Magick *is* common sense. What, then, is the difference between the Magician and the ordinary man? This, that the Magician has demanded that nature shall be for him a phenomenal mode of expressing his spiritual reality. The circumstances, therefore, of his life are uniformly adapted to his work.

To take another analogy. The world appears to the lawyer quite otherwise than it does to the carpenter, and the same event occurring to the two men will suggest two quite different trains of thought and lead to two quite different results.

My own errors of judgment, due to the annihilation of my ego and the consequent lack of leadership felt by my body and mind, produced their own immediate effect. I did not yet understand the extent of my fault, or even its real cause and character, but I felt myself forced back into my proper orbit. I was the Spirit of Solitude, the Wander in the Wilderness. I had no business to take part in the affairs of men by personal contact with them in their sheepfolds, monkey houses and pig-styes. My sole link with them was to guide such as adventured themselves into the desert. I was cast out from the Abyss into "the heaven of Jupiter as a morning star or as an evening star. And the light thereof shineth even unto the earth and bringeth hope and help to them that dwell in the darkness of thought and drink of the poison of life." It was therefore for me to attend strictly to the Great Work which had been appointed for me by the Secret Chiefs, to dwell in communion with mine Holy Guardian Angel and to write down the instructions by following which men might attain "to the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness".

CHAPTER 101

I attended to the production of No. V of the *Equinox*, but shortly after (my diary of 1911 is missing — if, indeed, it was ever kept — so I am uncertain of my dates) I went into Retirement, spending my time alternately between Paris and Montigny-sur-Loing on the southern edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau. It was immediately evident that I was in the right path. I had placed my body and mind entirely at the service of the Master of the Temple who had filled the vacuum of the universe caused by the annihilation of Aleister Crowley. I kept my body in perfect condition by walking almost every day to Fontainebleau and back, always choosing a new way through the forest so that by the end of the summer I knew every tree by name, as one might say. I had acquired a boundless love for that incomparable woodland, whose glorious beauty is still further hallowed by the romance which lurks in every glade. It was tame indeed in comparison with a hundred other jungles which I had known, but for all that it possesses an individual charm which endears it to me beyond any words of mine to utter. Nature herself opposed no obstacle to my wooing. The summer of 1911 was intensely hot and fine. I have always found that dry air is essential to the well-being either of my body or of my genius. Damp air seems to interfere with my insulation; my genius leaks away and leaves me empty and depressed.

This year indeed was another *annus mirabilis* for me. There was an almost continual outpouring of the Holy Spirit through my mind. The spring of poetry shot crystal clear from the hidden furnace of my being into the pure and brilliant air, and fell and fertilized the earth about the sacred hill. A thousand years from now men will still gather round in wonder and worship to gaze upon the gorgeous pageant of flowers that glow upon the glowing grass and to feast upon the ripe fruits that burden the two great trees which tower like pillars for a gateway to my garden — the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life.

Let me first enumerate the comparatively profane achievements of these few months. Firstly, *Across the Gulf*. This is a prose story of some twenty thousand words. The theme is my own life in the 26th Dynasty, when I was Ankh-f-n-khonsu and brought about the Aeon of Osiris to replace that of Isis. The story must not be taken as true in the ordinary sense of the word, but as allegorical.

I wrote many lyrics, but especially *The Sevenfold Sacrament*. This poem subsequently appeared in the *English Review* and has often been reprinted. It is, one might say, a pendant to *Aha!* It is one of my finest achievements from a technical point of view and describes the actual experience of a night

which I spent at Montigny. I was staying at an inn called the Vanne Rouge, on the bank of the Loing overlooking a weir. (The inn has since then become fashionable and impossible; at that time it was adorable in every way.)

In eddies of obsidian,
At my feet the river ran
Between me and the poppy-pranky
Isle, with tangled roots embanked,
Where seven sister poplars stood
Like the seven sisters of god.

Soft as silence in mine ear,
The drone and rustle of the weir
Told in bass the treble tale
Of the embowered nightingale.
Higher, on the patient river,
Velvet lights without a quiver
Echoed through their hushed rimes
The garden's glow beneath the limes.

Then the sombre village, crowned
By the castellated ground,
Where in cerements of sable,
One square tower and one great gable
Stood, the melancholy wraith
Of a false and fallen faith.
Over all, supine, enthralling,
The young moon, her faint edge falling
To the dead verge of her setting,
Saintly swam, her silver fretting
All the leaves with light. Afar
Towards the Zenith stood a star,
As of all worthiness and fitness
The luminous eternal witness.

I described how the silence stripped me of myself; how I came once more into the Abyss and was drawn thence into the most secret Temple of the Most High, and there received the seven-fold sacrament.

Nor is it given to any son of man
To hymn that sacrament, the One in Seven,
Where God and priest and worshipper,
Deacon, asperger, thurifer, chorister,
Are one as they were one ere time began,

Are one on earth as they are one in heaven;
Where the soul is given a new name,
Confirming with an oath the same,
And with celestial wine and bread
Is most delicately fed,
Yet suffereth in itself the curse
Of the infinite universe,
Having made its own confession
Of the mystery of transgression;
Where it is wedded solemnly
With the ring of space and eternity;
And where the oil, the Holiest Breath,
With its first whisper dedicateth
Its new life to a further death.

This experience lasted throughout the night, and I describe the dawn, the awakening of the world and myself to what men call reality.

The trout leap in the shingly shallows.
Soared skyward the great sun, that hallows
The pagan shrines of labour and light
As the moon consecrates the night.
Labour is corn and love is wine,
And both are bless,d in the shrine;
Nor is he for priest designated.
Who partakes only in one kind.

I suited the action to the word.

Thus musing joyous, twice across
Under the weir I swam, to toss
The spray back; then the meadows claim
The foot's fleet ecstasy aflame.
And having uttered my thanksgiving
Thus for the sacrament of living,
I lit my pipe, and made my way
To break fast, and the labour of the day.

There was also the poem *A Birthday*, written on August 10th for Leila Waddell, who was then twenty-six. She had gone to England to fulfil an engagement as leader of the Ladies' Orchestra in *The Waltz Dream*. The poem describes the history of our liaison. Some critics have thought this poem one of my best from the point of view of human romantic love. May be!

I wrote also two short stories. The hero of *The Woodcutter* is a forester who "chops to live and lives to chop". A silly Frenchman and his mistress are wandering through the forest. He fantastically exhorts the woodcutter to make an art of his work, while the girl amuses herself by trying to excite the old man's passions. That night there is a thunderstorm; and an English girl, who has lost her way, takes refuge in his hut. He combines the element of his thought during sleep, chops her to pieces, stacks her limbs neatly by the hut, and goes off to his regular work. A rescue party discovers him. The story ends, "They told him of a widow lady in Paris who could beat him at his own game."

I am passionately indignant that the persistent beastliness of the average mind insists that the woodcutter violated the girl. Such a suggestion completely ruins the point of the story, which is that his mind had room for no idea of any kind except chopping.

His Secret Sin was written on an idea given me by Neuburg. I heard afterwards it had already been used by *Punch*. It is admitted, of course, that this kind of plagiarism is allowable.

A prosperous English grocer is in Paris on business. He wants desperately to be "wicked", but is ashamed to inquire how these things are done. On the last day of his stay he is goaded to madness by seeing the statue of Joan of Arc astride a horse. He makes up his mind to buy an indecent photograph at least and dives into a shop, where he asks for something "tray sho". The shopman contemptuously produces albums of reproductions from the Louvre. When he strikes the Venus of Milo, he secrets it, pays half a sovereign in terror and slinks out of the shop. He keeps the photograph in his safe and brings it out at night and gloats.

His daughter is attending art classes; for a colonel and his wife have taken pity on her and tried to extricate her from her surroundings. One day she shows him some sketches one of which is the Venus of Milo herself. Her father abuses her furiously. She is "As bad as Cousin Jenny". She snatches the drawing, telling him not to touch sacred things. His secret sin has been visited on his child. She is perfectly shameless in her iniquity! And then it strikes him that no decent art class would use such a model. He blurts out, "How did you get the key of my little safe?" She understands the whole thing and walks out of the house in disgust, never to return. He, overwhelmed by the judgment of God, determines to commit suicide, after burning the accursed photograph. But he cannot summon up courage and flings the cocked pistol into the grate. It explodes; the bullet destroys one eye and cheek. But he recovers. The street boys take to calling him "Old Venus" and his guilty conscience persuades him that they have somehow heard the story.

This tale is one of the most bitter truths that I have penned. I am glad to say that it is almost the only evidence of what I felt with regard to the attitude of the English bourgeoisie towards art and sex; and, even so, my picture of the younger generation bears witness to my unshakable faith in the emancipation of my folk. Indeed, I have not wrought in vain. The young men and women of to-day, generally speaking, are as free from superstitions and sexual shame as I would have them. It is only a further proof of this that the "old guard" are more desperately narrow and fanatical than ever. They are trying to stop drinking, smoking, dancing and reading, by law. Intolerance is evidence of impotence.

I brought off an astounding double event in Paris, probably during August. I was at 50 rue Vavin and the idea of a dramatic poem or allegory to be called *Adonis* came into my mind. I went out for a *citron pressé* at the Café do Dôme de Montparnasse, preliminary to settling down to write. The argument was almost complete in my mind and the rhythm was beginning to flow through me. But at the Dôme were sitting my old mistress, Nina Olivier, and her latest conquest, an unpleasant and cadaverous hypocrite named Hener-Skene, whom I knew slightly from 1902, when he was posing as an earnest Nietzschean. With them was sitting a charming girl named (or calling herself Fenella Lovell, a consumptive creature in gaudy and fantastic rags of brilliant colours, who earned her living partly as a model, partly as a "gypsy" fiddle and dancer.

Skene and Nina had taken advantage of her sickness and poverty to amuse themselves by whipping and otherwise ill-treating her. It was not honest sadism on Skene's part; it was a pose. He thought it very glorious to be a character in Krafft-Ebing. They asked me to drink and introduced me to Fenella. Her pathetic beauty set me suddenly aflame with an idea to make her the heroine of a little play. My mind was swept clean of *Adonis*. Then minutes later I was back in my room, furiously at work on *The Ghouls*.

"*The Ghouls* is possibly the most ghastly death-dance in English literature. If Oscar Wilde had written it (but he could not have) everyone would know it. It is the very pith and marrow of terror. Cynical it may be, but I defy the lord of dreams to send any more plutonian nightmare to haunt our mortal sleep.

This criticism (from the *Poetry Review*) fills me with honest pride. The argument of the play is as follows: Waska, an old virtuoso, possesses one of the best Stradivarius violins in the world. He lies dying in the hotel at Foyers, attended by his pupil Fenella Lovell, a gypsy girl of seventeen, fantastically dressed, bejewelled and *maquillée*. Waska is apparently unconscious and the doctor predicts his death within a few hours at most. She is utterly

callous. Her one idea is to acquire the Stradivarius. Waska regains consciousness and says that he has sold his soul to the devil for his art; and that Satan has now promised him the enjoyment of Fenella. She defies him. He makes her dance under penalty of his curse. She fears and obeys. He demands her love. Again she defies him. He bids her bring the dog-whip with which he has been accustomed to beat her.

But instead she lashes him across the face, and pushes him savagely back on the pillow. The undertaker knocks and enters. She bids him measure the corpse. He protests that the man is not dead. Waska raves at the man, who thinks him insane and goes. Waska makes her swear on the wood of the true cross to bury the Strad with him.

I, Fenella Lovell, the gipsy, swear by my soul's salvation and by the blessed wood of the holy rood, to bury my master's violin with him --- don't falter, damn you! --- and if I don't, may Christ spit me out, Christ spit me out, and may I fall into hell and be roasted for ever by devils with pitchforks, Amen! And on earth may my hair fall out, and my eyes rot in my head, and the lupus eat my nose, and the cancer eat my tongue, and my throat be twisted, and my lungs wither away, and my heart be torn out, and my liver be earthen by worms, and my bowels be thrown to the dogs. May my skin be white with the leprosy, and my blood corrupted with the plague, and my bones rotted with the pox; so hear me, blessed Christ, Amen.

The doctor enters and Waska falls back. The doctor declares him to be dead. Fenella has a lover, George Foster, a sentimental respectable stick whom she despises. She promises herself to him if he will dig up the violin for her. They put pennies on Waska's eyes and tie up his jaw. The undertaker now returns, and they leave him with Waska.

Scene II is in the burying grounds of my estate. There is a little tower with a window for a watcher to prevent body-snatching. It is a summer night. Fenella and George come to dig up the violin. They are disturbed by various terrifying events; the howling of a bull-dog and the passing of drunken men. Their conversation is mingled with references to the uncanny superstitions about Boleskine, described elsewhere in this book. She dances while he shovels. They open the coffin and take the violin.

A whistle is heard; it is the M'Allister (myself, of course) calling one of his bloodhounds. He appears and inquires their business in his graveyard. She frankly admits that she is digging up a corpse; he invites her to lunch, and goes off. Loud laughter is heard; two workmen appear. She plays and dances, which frightens them off. Waska suddenly sits up and tears off his wrappings. He springs at George and chokes him to death.

I've killed your lover, my fine Virgin. I heard every word you said, I watched every filthy kiss till you put the pennies on my eyes. The devil told the truth after all.

(Fenella, breaking from her stupor, starts to flee. Waska "stumbles to his feet, roaring, and chases her among the tombs. She trips and falls. He catches her up and carries her to the tower. They disappear.)

Stop your shrieking, harlot! You'll only drive the folk away! Ah! we'll have a fine new story of Boleskine graveyard.

Satan! Satan! Satan! I thank thee! Thou hast kept thy word and I'll keep mine!

Satan! Satan! Satan! Oh, the bliss! Fenella, mine, mine! Fenella!

(He thrusts the corpse of Fenella half through the window, where it hangs limp.)

Mine she was, by God, though I'm dead this hour!

(He comes out, staggering, falls over a mound, crawls on hands and knees to his grave.)

Satan! what a morsell! what a bonne bouche! What a savoury to wind up life's feast! Well, here's my coffin. There's no place like home. I must play my own dirge.

(He seats himself in it. He takes the violin, and plays a dirge.)

This time it's the real thing. No play, no pay. I've had my fun, and here's the price of it.

(He plays again.)

And now Good night.

He then falls dead. The M'Allister returns, sums up the situation, and departs with the Strad, whistling a jig.

CHAPTER 102

I finished the play during the night and instantly picked up the idea of *Adonis*, which by an unparalleled *tour de force* I had kept intact at the back of my mind. I finished this play also straight off. The most remarkable point of this most remarkable achievement is that no two plays could have been more dissimilar, either in theme or style. *The Ghouls* is prose, save for one short song, and ranges from the loftiest sublimity to dialect and slang. *Adonis* is poetry, mystic, sensuous and comic by turn; much of it written in the elaborate and exquisite method of closely woven rimes which I myself invented. The argument is as follows:

Persons of the Allegory

The King of Babylon, tributary to the King of Greece
Hermes, a Greek Physician.
The Lady Psyche
The Count Adonis, at first known as the Lord Esarhaddon
The Lady Astarte.
The Warriors of the King of Babylon.
Hanuman, Servant to Hermes.
Charis, Attendants on Psyche
Elpis, Attendants on Psyche
Pistis, Attendants on Psyche
Three Aged Women.
Handmaidens and Slaves of Astarte.

Esharddon is a man ignorant on his high destiny, and lost in love of the Body (Astarte) whose five handmaidens are the five senses. The Soul (Psyche) appeals to him, in vain, but awakes his dread of the King of Babylon (the material planea0 who is Death — but also subject to the King of Greece, who is the One Lord. Hermes, the wisdom of God, leads the man to recollection of his true nature by putting him into Samadhi, the 'sudden death' of the Qabalah. He leaps up freed. The Body now feels worthless, and the man despises it; but the soul says: No. all three of us must enjoy together.

I can best give an idea of the style by inserting a few quotations:

The Boy: Even as the twilight so is she,
Half seem, half subtly apprehended,
Ethereally and bodily.
The soul incarnate, the body transcended!

The Girl: Aching, aching passionately,
Insufferably, utterly splendid!

The Boy: Her lips make pale the setting sun!

The Girl: Her body blackens Babylon!

The Boy: Her eyes turn midnight's murk to grey!

The Girl: Her breasts make midnight of the day!

The Boy: About her, suave and subtle, swims
The musk and madness of her limbs!

The Girl: Her mouth is magic like the moon's.

The Boy: Her breath is bliss!

The Girl: Her steps are swoons!

.

1st Maiden: Here is the wealth
Of all amber and musk,
Secreted by stealth
In the domes of the dusk!

.

Esarhaddon: How fair
And full she sweeps, the buoyant barge upon
The gilded curves of Tigris. She's the swan
That drew the gods to gaze, the fawn that called
Their passion to his glades of emerald,
The maid that maddened Mithras, the quick quiver
Of reeds that drew Oannes from the river!

.

Men: Mix in the measure,
Black grape and white cherry!
A passion, a pleasure,
A torment, a treasure,
You to be mournful an we to be merry!

Women: We shall be solemn
And grave and alluring,
You be the column
Upstanding, enduring.
We be the ivy and vine
To entwine –
My mouth on your mouth, and your mouth on mine!

.

Hermes: Then let me see the victim;
If bound, we'll loosen him; if loose, constrict him.
There, madam, in one phrase from heart to heart,
Lies the whole mystery of the healer's art!
Where is the pathic?

Astarte: Hush! in Babylon
We say "the patient."

Hermes: Yes?

Astarte: It's often one.
For Babylonish is so quaint a tongue
One often goes too right by going wrong!

.

Hermes: What did you drink for dinner?

Esarhaddon: Scarce a drop
At any time — four flagons, there I stop.
With just a flask of barley-wine to top.

Hermes: Just so becomes a nobleman of sense
Whose moderation errs toward abstinence.

Esarhaddon: Abstinence! That's the word I couldn't think of!
I'm an abstainer. Everything I drink of
Is consecrated by a melancholic Priest.

Hermes: Which prevents it being alcoholic!

.

HERMES First, fire your slaves, the rogues that thief and laze;
A slave's worse than two masters now-a-days.
Next, live on nothing but boiled beans and tripe,
With once a week a melon — when they're ripe.
Next, sent the Lady Astarte up the river;
She looks to me to have a touch of liver.
And you must teach your muscles how to harden,
So stay at home, and labour in the garden!

.

Most people have no sense.
If only they would sweat, and wash, eat slow,
Drink less, think more, the leech would starve or go.
But they prefer debauchery, disease,
Clysters, drugs, philtres, filth, and paying fees!

All: The Crown of our life is our love,
The crown of our love is the light
That rules all the region above
The night and the stars of the night;
That rules all the region aright,
The abyss to abysses above;
For the crown of our love is the light,
And the crown of our light is our love.

Later in the summer, I set to work on a really large idea, a play of Old Venice in five acts. I kept my two main principles of composition; the use of colour and form to distinguish my characters and compose a visible symphony.

MORTADELLO

The Doge has white hair, and is seventy years of age.

Mortadello has hair dyed dark auburn, and forty years of age. He is stout, tall and pompous.

Alessandro has rough hair of fiery red and is thirty years of age.

Lorenzo has scanty ashen hair, and is twenty-eight years of age.

Gabriele is a hunchbacked dwarf, very strongly built, with a large and intellectual head. He is bald, and is fifty years of age.

4. *After the fourth foot:*

Serene, august, untroubled, *cold*, her prayers are *worth*
More than our steel, more than our *gold*, that bind the *earth*.

5. *After the first foot:*

Bow *down* to the Cross! His love purge thee! His Passion *save thee!*
Christ *crown* the work! Here is the blessing that He *gave thee*.

6. *After both second and fourth feet:*

Come, let me *hold* my crystal *cross* up to the *moon!*
A guess of *gold* were at a *loss* to tell its *tune*.

7. *After the first and fifth feet:*

No *news!* No word of Mortadello's *fate!* No *hope*
To *bruise* the head of the old snake, the *State*. No *scope*.

8. *After the first half foot and the second foot:*

Come, save me, *save* Thy Maiden! Strike each barbed *dart*
Home to the *grave* convent and cloister of my *heart*.

9. *After the fifth foot:*

Last, to the lords who by their attitude *applaud*
This day of burial to faction, *feud* and *fraud*.

10. *After the second and fourth feet, but each line rimed within itself:*

Of for the *blind* kiss of the *wind*, the desert *air*
Thrilling the *blue* and shrilling *through* my soul's *despair*.

(“Thrilling” and “shrilling” are here thrown in without extra charge.

This device frequently recurs.)

There may be one or two other complications which I have over-looked.

I have made use of the usual liberties in the matter of using anapests and trochees for iambics. With regard to double rimes, I have sometimes treated them as single rimes, when they occur in the middle of a line; sometimes I have made the line of thirteen syllables to suit them.

I have even, once or twice, used the reverse method of calling a pause a half foot. “Stare, murderer, stare” counts as six syllables.

All this has been done of high purpose; there is some inflection or emphasis to be gained, or some tone to be given to the speech by the irregularity.

The argument of the play is simple. Monica aims at becoming the autocrat of Venice and succeeds. In each scene is a definite action of the highest pictorial, as well as dramatic, value that I could imagine. The play is full of violent scenes of love and murder. I believe that I have used three ideas entirely new in drama.

1. Monica has caused her Negro lover to murder the daughter of the Doge, till then his mistress. She bids him retrieve the corpse from the canal, where he had thrown it. The crime is concealed and the dead woman is hidden as the guest of Monica. She dresses up the corpse and has it married to Mortadello in St. Mark's

2. Monica, cornered in a crypt, is praying passionately while her Negro lover is slain by their enemies. Her hysteria produces the *stigmata*; and this apparent proof of her sanctity overcomes the assailants, whose leader she touches with the tip of a poisoned crucifix. He dies on the spot; his followers wish to fall at her feet, but she insists on being arrested.

3. Having forced Mortadello to marry her, she disguises herself as a Saharan dancer and drugs him with hashish. She then discloses her identity; and he, in the madness of the drug, attacks the Papal legate. She follows and, defending the old man, kills her husband. This last scene, by the way, fulfils my idea of true comedy; the dressing up of a man as a king or god, and inducing him to preside at a hunting of which he is in reality to be the quarry. I have shown in my essay *Good Hunting! (The International, March 1918)* that this central idea is universal in all the best comedy and tragedy from the Bacchae of Euripides, the story of Esther, the Crucifixion and the murder of Hiram Abif, to the plays of Shakespeare, Ibsen and many others.

"When daddy came back with a deer, there was great rejoicing in the tribe. Every one filled himself with meat; the cockles of his heart grew warm; he began to laugh. You can do the same to-day with a very hungry man, without the aid of alcohol. This expansive state being clearly associated causally with the killing of the deer, and the sportsman excitedly recounting his exploit, the story itself was food for laughter. And the key of the jest soon discovered itself as contempt for the foolish victim. "What a fine stag he was, how proud and swift! Nothing could catch him, and, if he wished, how sharp were those great, branching horns of his! And all the while there was I tracking him with my little flint axe — ha! ha! ha!"

"All these points were seen and seized on by the old comedians. They would always accentuate the self-esteem of the victim. They would dress him up as a king or a God, and hunt him down. A still funnier elaboration of the joke was to persuade him that he was the hunter."

I now turn to my magical writings during this astounding summer.

CHAPTER 103

In my spare time I began to make a list of Greek words connected with Magick and similar subjects, arranging them by their numerical order. The idea was to construct a dictionary of the Greek Qabbala similar to that of the Hebrew Qabbala on which I had been at work since 1899 and ultimately published in the *Equinox*, vol. I, No. VIII. But the Greek Cabbala presents difficulties which do not arise in the case of Hebrew. First, we have no sacred text in Greek save a few imperfect and most unsatisfactory gnostic documents, the hopelessly garbled Apocalypse and a few oddments like the Emerald Table of Hermes, the Divine Pymander and the Golden Verses of Pythagoras. Secondly, the various dialects of Greek affect the computations and there is no means of choosing between them. Thirdly, the terminations alter the values. It is even difficult to decide whether or no to reckon the article. Fourthly, the actual examples of Qabbala existent are shamefully unconscientious, as may be seen by reference to Messrs. Lea and Bond's brochure. They equate words and phrases quite arbitrarily. If it suits them to count the article they count it.

That this Qabbala exists is nevertheless certain. The correspondences in the Apocalypse in connection with the series 111 to 999 is undeniably intentional. Nor can it be an accident that Mithras (360) was altered to Meithras (365) to suit the correction of the calendar. The matter is of extreme importance; because Aiwass in dictating *The Book of the Law* repeatedly makes use of correspondences in Greek, such as Thelema, Will, 93 — Agape, Love, 93. 718 = Stele 666, and so on. He also equates Greek and Hebrew words. Thus his own name spelt in Hebrew has the value 93, but in Greek that of 418, thus bringing into relation the Word of the Law of the Aeon with the Magical Formula of the Great Work. My preliminary studies, however, tended to discourage me, for the fourfold reason above stated; and the proposed dictionary remains uncompleted to this day.

During this summer I wrote no less than nineteen books of magical and mystical instruction. Each is characterized by the simplest, sublimest and most concentrated prose of which I was master. The sceptical attitude is rigorously preserved; and, with the instructions already issued and a few minor matters to which I attend later, they comprise an absolutely comprehensive practical guide to every branch of the technique of spiritual attainment. The methods of every country, creed and clime, stripped of their dogma and prejudice, are here presented scientifically and simply. Besides these, there may be found certain methods prescribed in *The Book of the Law* or invented by myself. I will give a short synopsis of these nineteen Instructions.

LIBER I. The Book of the Magus.

This is an inspired writing. It describes the conditions of that exalted Grade. I had at this time no idea that I should ever attain to it; in fact, I thought it utterly beyond possibility. This book was given to me that I might avoid mistakes when the time came for me to become a Magus. It is impossible to give any idea of the terror and sublimity of this book, while the accuracy of its predictions and of its descriptions of the state of being, at that time wholly beyond my imagination to conceive, make it a most astonishing document.

LIBER X. This book is called "The Gate of Light". It explains how those who have attained initiation, taking pity upon the darkness and minuteness of the earth, send forth a messenger to men. The message follows. It is an appeal to those who, being developed beyond the average of their fellows, see fit to take up the Great Work. This Work is then described in general terms with a few hints of its conditions.

LIBER XI is a paraphrase of the instructions given in *The Book of the Law* for invoking Nuit.

LIBER XVI called "The Tower; or the House of God", describes a series of meditation practices, the general method being to destroy every thought that tends to arise in the mind by an act of will. The thought must be nipped in the bud before it reaches consciousness. Further, the causes which tend to produce any such thought must be discovered and annihilated. Finally, this process must be extended to include the original cause behind those causes.

LIBER LXIV gives instruction in a method of summoning suitable persons to undertake the Great Work. It includes a powerful invocation of the God of Truth, Wisdom and Magick.

LIBER LXVI. The Book of the Ruby Star, describes an extremely powerful ritual of practical Magick; how to arouse the Magical Force within the operator and how to use it to create whatever may be required.

LIBER XC. The Book of the Hermetic Fish-Hook, summons mankind to undertake the Great Work. It describes the conditions of initiation and its results in language of great poetic power.

LIBER CLVI. The Wall of Abiegnus (the Sacred Mountain of the Rosicrucians) gives the formula of Attainment by devotion to our Lady Babalon. It instructs the aspirant how to dissolve his personality in the Universal Life.

LIBER CLXXV. Astarte, The Book of the Beryl Stone, gives the complete formula of Bhaki-Yoga; how one may unite oneself to any particular deity by devotion. Both magical and mystical methods are fully described.

LIBER CC. The Book of the Sun. Here are given the four Adorations to the sun, to be said daily at dawn, noon, sunset and midnight. The object of this practice is firstly to remind the aspirant at regular intervals of the Great Work; secondly, to bring him into conscious personal relation with the centre of our system; and thirdly, for advanced students, to make actual magical contact with the spiritual energy of the sun and thus to draw actual force from him.

LIBER CCVI. The Book of Breathing, describes various practices of controlling the breath, how to ensure success, what results to strive for, and how to use them for the Great Work.

LIBER CCXXXI is a technical treatise on the Tarot. The sequence of the 22 Trumps is explained as a formula of initiation.

LIBER CCCLXX, The Book of Creation or of the Goat of the Spirit, analyses the nature of the creative magical force in man, explains how to awaken it, how to use it and indicates the general as well as the particular objects to be gained thereby.

LIBER CD analyses the Hebrew alphabet into seven triads, each of which forms a Trinity of sympathetic ideas relating respectively to the Three Orders comprised in the A.: A:.. It is really an attempt to find a Periodic Law in the system.

LIBER CDLXXIV. The Book of the Mouth of the Abyss or of Knowledge. A course of study in philosophy is prescribed as a preliminary. The aspirant having assimilated all existing systems, he is instructed how to analyse the nature of the reason itself and thus how to cross the Abyss on the Intellectual Plane. Having cleansed and renewed his mental faculties in this way, he resumes his aspiration to the Knowledge and Conversation of His Holy Guardian Angel, with whose reappearance he perfects his Magical Powers so that he is ready to undertake the Work of annihilating the universe, which, being done, he becomes a full Master of the Temple.

LIBER DLV. This is a paraphrase of the instructions given in *The book of the Law* for attaining Hadit.

LIBER DCCCXXXI, The Book of Vesta. This book describes three main methods of reducing the multiplicity of thoughts to one. (The magical me-

thod is to banish ceremonially the 32 parts of the universe in turn. One mystical method is to deny in consciousness that any part of the body or mind is real. Another is to stimulate the senses in turn with such concentration as to put it out of gear.)

LIBER DCCCLXVIII. This is an analysis of the 22 letters. To each is attributed a magical or mystical practice of progressive difficulty until attainment is complete.

LIBER CMXIII. The Book of the Memory of the Path. Here are given two methods of acquiring the Magical Memory so as to enable the aspirant to calculate his True Orbit in eternity. The first method is to learn to think backwards till he acquires the power of recalling the events of his life in reverse chronological order. The idea is to get back beyond one's birth to one's previous death, and so on for many lives. It should then be easy to understand the general object of one's existence. The second (easier and surer) method is to consider every event in one's past, determine the influence which each has had upon one's life, and by synthesizing these forces, calculate their resultant; that is determine one's general direction so as to be able to concentrate one's energies on fulfilling the function for which one is fit. Character, conduct and circumstances are to be considered as terms of a complex dynamic equation. This method is of extreme value to all. It should be applied even to the education of children so as not to force them into unnatural developments.

These nineteen books were published in Nos. VI and VII of the Equinox. During this summer, I also prepared the extremely important account of the circumstances in which the stele was discovered and the *Book of the Law* written, for number VII. In this manner I published a facsimile of the manuscript of that Book and my Comment thereon. This latter is shamefully meagre and incomplete. The truth is, that despite everything, I still felt an indescribable repugnance. I knew well how unworthy the Comment was as it stood, yet I could not force myself to work on it, partly, no doubt, because I felt, as indeed I feel now, that nothing I can write can possibly be worthy of or adequate to the text; but partly also, from an instinctive fear and dislike of the subject.

And so passed away this superb summer. The autumn had a new experience in store for me. The current of my life was once more to be suddenly turned; and as usual, this critical change came about as the result of a series of casual chances. I was caught in a web, some of whose strands had been woven as early as 1902. I must deal with this new development in a new chapter.

CHAPTER 104

BOOK IX

CHAPTER ONE

AB UL DIZ

That fertile passage through Paris on my return from Chogo Ri, which had already born so much fruit in my life, had still some seed — which now came to harvest. I have mentioned Nina Olivier, whom I loved so well and sang so passionately. In my sunlight she had blossomed into *La Dame de Montparno*, the Queen of the Quarter. But I have not mentioned an obscure prig whom I will call Monet-Knott, whom I had met through my fiancée, the “Star” to Nina's “Garter”. This brainless and conceited youth had become accompanist to the greatest dancer of her generation. Let me call her Lavinia King. She, first and never equalled, had understood and demonstrated the art of dancing as a complete language of the affections of the mind and heart. Knott and Nina, as already recorded, had contracted a liaison. I met Knott for the second time when I was introduced to Fenella Lovell and wrote *The Ghouls*, as previously related. I saw a fair amount of him in the next few weeks; so that, running across him in London on October 11th, he took me after supper to the Savoy to meet Miss King*.

A boisterous party was in progress. The dancer's lifelong friend, whom I will call by the name she afterwards adopted, Soror Virakam, was celebrating her birthday. This lady, a magnificent specimen of mingled Irish and Italian blood, possessed a most powerful personality and a terrific magnetism which instantly attracted my own. I forgot everything. I sat on the floor like a Chinese god, exchanging electricity with her.

After some weeks' preliminary skirmishing, we joined battle along the whole front; that is to say, I crossed to Paris, where she had a flat, and carried her off to Switzerland to spend the winter skating. Arrived at Interlaken, we found that Mürren was not open, so we went on to St Moritz, breaking the journey at Zurich. This town is so hideous and depressing that we felt that our only chance of living through the night was to get superbly drunk, which we did. . . .

(Let me emphasize that this wild adventure had not the remotest connection with Magick. Virakam was utterly ignorant of the subject. She had

hardly so much as a smattering of Christian Science. She had never attended a séance or played Planchette.)

. . . *Lassati sed non satiati* by midnight, I expected to sleep; but was aroused by Virakam being apparently seized with a violent attack of hysteria, in which she poured forth a frantic torrent of senseless hallucination. I was irritated and tried to calm her. But she insisted that her experience was real; that she bore an important message to me from some invisible individual. Such nonsense increased my irritation. But — after about an hour of it — my jaw fell with astonishment. I became suddenly aware of a coherence in her ravings, and further that they were couched in my own language of symbols. My attention being thus awakened, I listened to what she was saying. A few minutes convinced me that she was actually in communication with some Intelligence who had a message for me.

Let me briefly explain the grounds for this belief. I have already set forth, in connection with the Cairo working, some of the safeguards which I habitually employ. Virakam's vision contained elements perfectly familiar to me. This was clear proof that the man in her vision, whom she called Ab-ul-Diz, was acquainted with my system of hieroglyphics, literal and numerical, and also with some incidents in my magical career. Virakam herself certainly knew nothing of any of these. Ab-ul-Diz told us to call him a week later, when he would give further information. We arrived at St. Moritz and engaged a suite in the Palace Hotel.

My first surprise was to find that I had brought with me exactly those Magical Weapons which were suitable for the work proposed and no others. But a yet more startling circumstance was to come. For the purposes of the Cairo working, Ouarda and I had brought two abbai; one, scarlet, for me; one, blue, for her. I had brought mine to St. Moritz; the other was of course in the possession of Ouarda. Imagine my amazement when Virakam produced from her trunk a blue abbai so like Ouarda's that the only differences were minute details of gold embroidery! The suggestion was that the Secret Chiefs, having chosen Ouarda as their messenger, could not use anyone else until she had become irrevocably disqualified by insanity. Not till now could her place be taken by another; and that Virakam should possess a duplicate of her Magical Robe seemed a strong argument that she had been consecrated by them to take the place of her unhappy predecessor.

She was very unsatisfactory as a clairvoyant; she resented these precautions. She was a quick-tempered and impulsive woman, always eager to act with reckless enthusiasm. My cold scepticism no doubt prevented her from doing her best. Ab-ul-Diz himself constantly demanded that I should show "faith" and warned me that I was wrecking my chances by my attitude. I

prevailed upon him, however, to give adequate proof of his existence and his claim to speak with authority. The main purport of his message was to instruct me to write a book on my system of mysticism and Magick, to be called *Book 4*, and told me that by means of this book, I should prevail against public neglect. It saw no objection to writing such a book; on quite rational grounds, it was a proper course of action, I therefore agreed to do so. But Ab-ul-Diz was determined to dictate the conditions in which the book should be written; and this was a difficult matter. He wanted us to travel to an appropriate place. On this point I was not wholly satisfied with the result of my cross-examination. I know now that I was much to blame throughout. I was not honest either with him, myself or Virakam. I allowed material considerations to influence me, and I clung — oh triple fool! — to my sentimental obligations towards Laylah.

We finally decided to do what he asked, though part of my objection was founded on his refusal to give us absolutely definite instructions. However, we crossed the passes in a sleigh to Chiavenna, whence we took the train to Milan. In this city we had a final conversation with Ab-ul-Diz. I had exhausted his patience, as he mine, and he told us that he would not visit us any more. He gave us his final instructions. We were to go to Rome and beyond Rome, though he refused to name the exact spot. We were to take a villa and there write *Book 4*. I asked him how we might recognize the right villa. I forget what answer he gave through her, but for the first time he flashed a message directly into my own consciousness. "You will recognize it beyond the possibility of doubt or error," he told me. With this, a picture came into my mind of a hillside on which were a house and garden marked by two tall Persian nuts.

The next day we went on to Rome. Owing to my own Ananias-like attempt to "keep back part of the price", my relations with Virakam had become strained. We reached Naples after two or three quarrelsome days in Rome and began house-hunting. I imagined that we should find dozens of suitable places to choose from, but we spend day after day scouring the city and suburbs in an automobile, without finding a single place to let that corresponded in the smallest degree with our ideas.

Virakam's brat — a most god-forsaken lout — was to join us for the Christmas holidays, and on the day he was due to arrive we motored out as a forlorn hope to Posilippo before meeting him at the station at four o'clock or thereabouts. But the previous night Virakam had a dream in which she saw the desired villa with absolute clearness. (I had been careful to say nothing to her about the Persian nuts, so as to have a weapon against her in case she insisted that such and such a place was the one intended.)

After a fruitless search we turned our automobile towards Naples, along the crest of Posilippo. At one point there is a small side lane scarcely negotiable by motor, and indeed hardly perceptible, as it branches from the main road so as to form an acute-angled "Y" with the foot towards Naples. But Virakam sprang excitedly to her feet and told the chauffeur to drive down it. I was astonished, she being hysterically anxious to meet the train, and our time being already almost too short. But she swore passionately that the villa was down that lane. The road became constantly rougher and narrower. After some time, it came out on the open slope; a low stone parapet on the left protecting it. Again she sprang to her feet. "There", she cried, pointing with her finger, "is the villa I saw in my dream!" I looked. No villa was visible. I said so. She had to agree; yet stuck to her point that she saw it. I subsequently returned to that spot and found that a short section of wall, perhaps fifteen feet of narrow edge of masonry, is just perceptible through a gap in the vegetation.

We drove on; we came to a tiny piazza, on one side of which was a church. "That is the square and the church", she exclaimed, "that I saw in my dream!"

We drove on. The lane became narrower, rougher and steeper. Little more than a hundred yards ahead it was completely "up", blocked with heaps of broken stone. The chauffeur protested that he would be able neither to turn the car nor to back it up to the square. Virakam, in a violent rage, insisted on proceeding. I shrugged my shoulders. I had got accustomed to these typhoons.

We drove on a few yards. Then the chauffeur made up his mind to revolt and stopped the car. On the left was a wide open gate through which we could see a gang of workmen engaged in pretending to repair a ramshackle villa. Virakam called the foreman and asked in broken Italian if the place was to let. He told her no; it was under repair. With crazy confidence she dragged him within and forced him to show her over the house. I sat in resigned disgust, not deigning to follow. Then my eyes suddenly saw down the garden, two trees close together. I stooped. Their tops appeared. They were Persian nuts! The stupid coincidence angered me, and yet some irresistible instinct compelled me to take out my notebook and pencil and jot down the name written over the gate — Villa Caldarazzo. Idly, I added up the letters 6 + 10 + 30 + 30 + 1 and 20 + 1 + 30 + 4 + 1 + 200 + 1 + 7 + 7 + 70. Their sum struck me like a bullet in my brain. It was 418, the number of the Magical Formula of the Aeon, a numerical hieroglyph of the Great Work! Abul-Diz had made no mistake. My recognition of the right place was not to depend on a mere matter of trees, which might be found almost anywhere.

Recognition beyond all possibility of doubt was what he promised. He had been as good as his word.

I was entirely overwhelmed. I jumped out of the car and ran up to the house. I found Virakam in the main room. The instant I entered I understood that it was entirely suited for a Temple. The walls were decorated with crude frescoes which somehow suggested the exact atmosphere proper to the Work. The very shape of the room seemed somehow significant. Further, it seemed as if it were filled with a peculiar emanation. This impression must not be dismissed as sheer fancy. Few men but are sufficiently sensitive to distinguish the spiritual aura of certain buildings. It is impossible not to feel reverence in certain cathedrals and temples. The most ordinary dwelling-houses often possess an atmosphere of their own; some depress, some cheer; some disgust, others strike chill to the heart.

Virakam of course was entirely certain that this was the villa for us. Against this was the positive statement of the people in charge that it was not to be let. We refused to accept this assertion. We took the name and address of the owner, dug him out, and found him willing to give us immediate possession at a small rent. We went in on the following day and settled down almost at once to consecrate the Temple and begin the book.

T

he idea was as follows. I was to dictate; Virakam to transcribe, and if at any point there appeared the slightest obscurity — obscurity from the point of view of the entirely ignorant and not particularly intelligent reader; in a word, the average lower-class man in the street — I was to recast my thoughts in plainer language. By this means we hoped to write a book well within the compass of the understanding of even the simplest-minded seeker after Spiritual enlightenment.

Part One of *Book 4* expounds the principles and practice of mysticism in simple scientific terms stripped of all sectarian accretion, superstitious enthusiasms or other extraneous matter. It proved completely successful in this sense.

Part Two deals with the principles and practice of Magick. I explained the real meaning and *modus operandi* of all the apparatus and technique of Magick. Here, however, I partially failed. I was stupid enough to assume that my readers were already acquainted with the chief classics of Magick. I consequently described each Weapon, explained it and gave instructions for its use, without making it clear why it should be necessary at all. Part Two is therefore an wholly admirable treatise only for one who has already mastered the groundwork and gained some experience of the practice of the art.

The number 4 being the formula of the book, it was of course to consist of four parts. I carried out this idea by expressing the nature of the Tetrad, not only by the name and plan of the book, but by issuing it in the shape of a square 4 inches by 4, and pricing each part as a function of 4. Part One was published at 4 groats, Part Two at 4 tanners, Part Three was to cost 3 "Lloyd George groats" (at this time the demagogue was offering the workman ninepence for fourpence, by means of an insurance swindle intended to enslave him more completely than ever). Part Four, 4 shillings. Part Three was to deal with the practice of Magick, and Part Four, of *The Book of the Law* with its history and the Comment; the volume, in fact indicated in the Book itself, chapter III — verse 39.

The programme was cut short. The secret contest between the Will of Virakam and my own broke into open hostility. A serious quarrel led to her dashing off to Paris. She repented almost before she arrived and telegraphed me to rejoin her, which I did, and we went together to London. There, however, an intrigue resulted in her hastily marrying a Turkish adventurer who proceeded to beat her and, a little later, to desert her. Her hysteria became chronic and uncontrollable; she took to furious bouts of drinking which culminated in *delirium tremens*.

The partial failure of our partnership was to some extent, without doubt, my own fault. I was not whole-hearted and I refused to live by faith rather than by sight. I cannot reproach myself for this; for that, I have no excuse. I may nevertheless express a doubt as to whether full success was in any case possible. Her own masterless passions could hardly have allowed her to pass unscathed through the ordeals which are always imposed upon those who undertake tasks of this importance.

The upshot has been that, although I dictated Part Three to Laylah in the spring of 1912, I felt that it was not sufficiently perfect to be published. From time to time I revised it; but it remained unsatisfactory until in 1921 I took it in hand seriously, practically rewrote it and expanded it into a vast volume, a really complete treatise on every branch of Magick. Part Four is still incomplete. I feel that I cannot publish the Comment on *The Book of the Law* until I am absolutely satisfied with it, and there is still much work to be done.

My midwinter wandering was so wholly taken up with Virakam that there was no adventure of interest to recount, with one exception. In Naples we had a sitting with the famous Eusapia Palladino.

"But for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain

The Catholic Wop is peculiar —
Which the same I am free to explain.”

Her claim to extraordinary powers rests entirely on the famous report of Messrs. Feilding, Baggalay and Carrington. Feilding I knew personally very well. I had cross-examined him repeatedly about her without shaking his testimony. I met Baggalay once or twice and his evidence corroborated Feilding's. When I came to know Carrington later, I found myself unable to attach serious credit to anything he said, and it certainly seemed suspicious that he should have acted as impresario to Eusapia shortly afterwards and exploited her in the United States.

Besides this, I had analysed carefully the printed reports of the sittings. I could find no loophole; until one day my precious memory came to the rescue. It told me what is not by any means apparent on a straightforward reading, that in one of the séances, I think number six, no phenomena occurred in the cabinet. Somewhere else in the book, quite disconnectedly, we find that during this séance there was no table in the cabinet. “Aha!” said I, “so when the trumpets and tambourines and so on are really out of her reach (never mind whether her arms are under control or not!) she cannot sound them.” It may seem arbitrary and unjust; but to me that one fact knocked away the props from the whole structure.

I had had sittings with many celebrated mediums and never seen any phenomena which impressed me in the least as being caused by Occult forces. (It is to be remembered that I have seen so many phenomena of absolutely indubitable authenticity in the course of my magical work that I am predisposed to expect such things to happen.)

In sitting with Eusapia, my main objects were first to get an idea of the atmosphere, so as to visualize more clearly the events recorded in the famous report, and second to criticize my own evidence. The question had suggested itself: “Feilding and the rest are clever, wary, experienced and critical, but even so, can I be sure that when they describe what occurs they are dependable witnesses?” As luck would have it, my single séance threw a glaring light on this point.

Eusapia was sitting at the end of a table with her back to the Cabinet. Virakam was on her right, I on her left. It was my business to make sure that she did not kick and to keep hold of her left wrist. After a short time the fun began in the customary manner by the curtain of the Cabinet bulging and finally falling across Eusapia's left arm and my right. I could thus see into the cabinet, that is, into the corner of the room, by turning my head. Now, Eusapia was supposed to have a third arm, an astral arm, with which she

could do her deadly deeds. My attention was attracted to the cabinet by seeing a shadowy arm moving about it. My intellectual faculties were completely alert. I reasoned as follows: "The arm which I see is a left arm, not a right arm. It cannot therefore be Eusapia's left arm, because I am holding her left wrist with my right hand." Almost before I had completed this syllogism, the arm disappeared from the cabinet; at the same moment I felt Eusapia replace her left wrist in my hand, which had not informed me that she had removed it.

It is a small premise on which to found an universal proposition and yet I do so without serious hesitation. I dare not for a moment compare myself with such expert investigators as Feilding and the rest. Still, I have some experience. I am not entirely an ass and I certainly know a great deal about psychology for one thing, and the unreliability of sensory impressions for another. *Ex pede Herculem*. If I, such as I am, cannot be relied upon to say whether I am or am not holding a woman's wrist, is it not possible that even experts, admittedly excited by the rapidity with which one startling phenomenon succeeds another, may deceive themselves as to the conditions of the control? It seems to me extremely significant that Feilding has never obtained a cabinet phenomenon with any medium when he has interposed netting between the man and the curtain.

Feilding invited me to some of the séances of the then famous medium Caracini, who had been turning Rome upside down by turning tables upside down, teaching grand pianos the turkey-trot and materializing mutton chops. I was inclined at first to believe that there was some slight element of genuineness in the man for the simple reason that he failed to bring off anything at all in my presence. The trumpety elementals that amuse themselves at the expense of the spiritist type of imbecile keep very clear of Magicians. (Readers of Eliphas Lévi will remember that D.D. Home was panic-stricken at the approach of the Adept.)

After two hours of watchful waiting Feilding suggested trying for cabinet phenomena. The cabinet was, as usual, a corner of the room with a cloth pinned across, behind this being a table furnished with trumpets, tambourines and similar baitful bogies. At the suggestion Carcini sprang from his seat and extended his hands towards the upper part of the curtain. I required no further information. There was nothing suspicious in his act but the psychology was final. There was an association in his mind between cabinet-phenomena and physical manipulation.

I take this opportunity of pointing out that no cabinet phenomena of any sort have ever taken place when netting has been placed between the curtain and the medium. We can hardly conceive of any type of force capable

blowing trumpets, impressing wax, etc., which would be intercepted by netting, except that normal to humanity.

May I further remark that, in our generation, no professional medium has ever produced evidential phenomena of any kind with the exception of Eusapia Palladino, Mrs. Piper, Eva C. (if she can be classed as professional) and Bert Reece. I have dealt already with Eusapia. I never met Mrs. Piper, but her record somehow fails to impress me as remarkable. Eva C. is still *sub judice* and I will now deal with Bert Reece, after permitting myself the single observation that spiritists who talk about the cumulative value of their evidence have only four doubtful integers to add to an interminable string of zeros.

I met Bert Reece in London just before the war of 1914. His claim to fame was based on two items: —

(1) If you put your hand on his head you could sometimes feel a throbbing, which of course proves beyond all possibility of a doubt the immortality of the soul.

In this calculation I have adopted the official American standard of proof.

(2) He was able to read and answer questions which had been previously written on slips of paper in his absence (presumed), folded up and distributed in various pockets. Having answered the first question a paper was handed to him; he then answered the second and so on.

This *modus operandi* suggests that he relies for success on some variation of the trick known as "the one after", though I personally believe that he changes his methods as much as he can. It seems perfectly obvious in any case that a trick of some sort is being worked.

The real point of interest is that Hereward Carrington, who boasts that he has explained every single "sealed letter reading" that has come under his notice, admits failure to explain this case, and he has assured me personally that he is completely baffled and inclined to believe that some occult power is at work.

Bert Reece is an Americanized German or Polish Jew from Posen. He was, I suppose, at this time about sixty years old. He commanded enormous fees for consultations. Many of the biggest business men in the States acted habitually on his advice. My own interest was limited to the curiosity aroused by Carrington's statement.

I went to see him at the Savoy Hotel in London. His personality is delightful and he received me with charming courtesy. He then asked me to write five questions on five slips of paper as usual, fold them, and put them in separate pockets. I said that I could not possibly think of troubling him to that extent. I should be perfectly convinced if he would read a word of three letters already in my pocket. (I had put the word TIN inside the back of my watch.) He of course refused the test and I knew where I was. However to humour him, and incidentally to observe his method, I did as he asked. Some of my questions were such that he was unlikely to know the answer. Others concerned the Qabbala. In one case I did not know the answer myself; but if he was really in touch with a high intelligence he could find out and I could check his correctness by the method elsewhere explained.

He read my questions correctly, but failed to answer any of them. Before answering the first time he made a number of suspicious movements that inclined me to think that he manages to pick one's pocket of the first slip after which, of course, the "one-after" method proceeds merrily.

I called on him in New York early in 1915 with the idea of trying him out by offering him a share of the proceeds of persuading one of my friends to invest in a certain financial scheme. (Needless to say, my friend was a party to the plan.) Reece agreed without hesitation. I simply told him to answer the questions in such a way as to persuade the inquirer of certain facts. As luck would have it the test was even more conclusive than I had arranged for. In one of the questions a certain man's name occurred. According to my arrangement with Reece, he should have answered that this man was not to be trusted. The name bears a distinct resemblance to my own. He jumped to the conclusion that I was meant and praised the man up to the skies.

There was still one more sitting. He was to do his utmost to persuade his consultant to adopt a certain course of action. He tried every trick for the best part of an hour, without producing the slightest result. The atmosphere was one of cold disgust, mixed with a certain contemptuous pity. At the same time, one could not but understand that, given the original *sine qua non*, he could lead his client by the nose into the most absurd actions. This *prima materia* of the work need not be the pure gold of confidence. It is quite sufficient if the client is morally and mentally unstable from fear, credulity, anxiety, desire or even natural uncertainty — this last being, of course, an evident condition of any serious consultation whatever. Give him something to work on and little by little one is bound to fall into his line of thought, after which it is child's play to turn every incident to advantage. The client will come away from the consultation convinced of the supernatural powers of the charlatan.

From the beginning of my investigation of so-called psychical research, I felt sure from mere consideration of the conditions of the problem that the adherence of so many prominent men of science to spiritism must be explained by psychological facts. This saved me a great deal of time. The first key that I tried fitted the lock.

I noted immediately that the scientific men concerned were in some cases, though not in all, indisputably trustworthy as observers. They were capable of detecting fraud and of devising methods to exclude it. I was faced with the alternative of accepting the hypothesis of spiritism, which revolts my scientific spirit and is repudiated, by my instinct as an initiate, for a foul blasphemy and profanation, or I must find some reason for supposing that a number of men reputed trustworthy observers are for some reason rendered suddenly incompetent.

I have said a number of prominent men of science, but in point of fact very few of them have any sort of claim to rank in the first flight. However, such as they are, it is certainly curious that their first leaning towards spiritism becomes manifest on their reaching an age when the sexual power begins to decline.

I submit the following explanation of the psychological process of conversion in these cases.

1. The failure of the sexual energy turns their attention to death.
2. The inexpugnable fear of death demands the resort to some spiritual soporific.
3. Their scientific training makes it impossible for them to take refuge in any superstitious religion.
 - 3a. They probably lack the pagan courage to accept the situation philosophically, their moral integrity having been injured in childhood by their Christian upbringing.
4. They seek consolation in some theory of immortality which promises to verify its theses by scientific evidence such as they are accustomed to accept.
5. They approach their first séances with a subconscious will-to-believe of great intensity.

6. They are sufficiently aware of this attitude to make a point of exaggerating their scepticism to themselves; that is, they affirm their scepticism with an emphasis the more passionate in proportion as they hope, at the bottom of their hearts, to find sufficient evidence to shake it.

7. They satisfy their consciences by making a great display of their acuteness in detecting fraud, actual or possible, and thereby excuse themselves for adding, as if by afterthought, "obviously there are a few minor points whose explanation is not immediately obvious."

8. They concentrate their attention on these unexplained points until they fill the entire point of view.

9. What with overstrained attention, Freudian forgetfulness and the illusions of desire, they quiet their consciences sufficiently to assert the genuineness of some few of the phenomena, preferably those which are, so to speak, the thin end of the wedge and are explicable on hypotheses not fundamentally repugnant to the main body of scientific truth.

10. The critical attitude of their colleagues excites the usual reaction and rouses them to defend vigorously propositions originally put forward tentatively under every reserve.

11. Feeling their sand castle crumbling with each wave of the purifying salt water of criticism, they shovel fresh sand to the support of the threatened edifice. In their haste and eagerness they abandon all pretence of examining the quality of the material and no longer distinguish between the qualities of evidence.

12. It is now quite easy for mediums to persuade them that they are chosen captains of a crusade. Even when they continue their original methods of testing the genuineness of phenomena, the mediums have become familiar with their methods and found out how to circumvent them. In the words of Browning:

"So off we push."

So much for the so-called scientific contingent. Browning's *Sludge — The Medium* is to me the deepest and completest psychological study ever written. I only wish it could be matched by a parallel exposure of the half-hidden perversities and trickeries of the scientific mind.

* This incident and its sequel are described in *The Net*, Chapter One.