

THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

VOLUMES IV - VI

[PART III]

CHAPTER 105

As to the possibilities of people's psychology leading them astray, may I tell a couple of stories from my own experience; one to show how failure of a man's memory to record an apparently trivial detail, totally disconnected with the point at issue, may prepare the ground for a first-class miracle; the other to demonstrate not only the practical impossibility of detecting or preventing absolute amateur trickery, but of how the very perfection of the precautions against it may occasionally make possible a fraud which would have been baffled by much less adequate safeguards? I quote from an argument that even undoubted cases of such events as the appearance of a person at the moment of his death to a distant friend may be attributed to coincidence.

The point is that the failures are unrecorded. Take "pure chance" roulette for instance. Scientifically, any given run (say 500 on the red) is no more and no less remarkable than any other given run, say RBBRRBBBRRRBBBB, etc., to 500 coups. But the one is acclaimed a miracle, the other goes unremarked.

Now in the missions of séances in the last sixty years the "evidential" records can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

And it is not antecedently so very impossible that pure chance might dictate correct answers in so small a proportion of cases.

Further, the spirits have thrown upon science the task of proving a universal negative.

If Sir Oliver Lodge, or Professor Münsterberg, or Lord Cholly Cauliflower, or Mr. Upthepole comes to me with a tale of unicorns in Piccadilly, I merely humour him. Münsterberg, at least, might be dangerous.

But I should not investigate his statement, and I certainly should not claim to be able to disprove it on *a priori* grounds.

Even in the 'evidential' cases, there is so much room for a mixture of fraud, telepathy, chance, and hysteria, and humanity is so clever at stopping chinks with putty and then leaving the door open, that we must continue to suspend judgment.

An amusing case occurred some years ago at Cambridge. I offered to reproduce roughly the performance of the Zancigs (which was then puzzling the foolish of London) without preparation. A stranger to me offered to act as my 'medium.'

The conditions were these. The ten small cards of a suit were laid on the floor; one was to be touched in the medium's absence and in my presence. The medium was to return and say which it was. The rest of the company were to prevent me from communicating if they could.

Well, they tried everything. In a minute's interview I arranged a button-touching code with my medium, and as each new restriction was put on me I managed to invent a new code. Shifting my pipe, coughing, arranging books, winking, altering the position of my fingers, etc. etc., all were provided against. Then I obtained a second confederate. Ultimately the grand sceptic of all devised the following test just as I had passed the note to my medium, "If I can't manage any of the old ways, I'll try and write down the number and put it on the mantle-piece."

And this was the test.

The medium was to be taken from Whewell's Court (where we were) over to the Great Court of Trinity — well out of hearing. I was to be left alone with the sceptic, who by this time suspected *everybody* of being a confederate. He was to touch the card in my presence and then take me away in the opposite direction. The medium was then (at a given time) to return and tell the card. Now it happened that in the course of the general argument about fairness, which I encouraged to enable myself to plot unnoticed in the confusion of the talk, that I stipulated for my sceptic to write down the number that he had touched, to avoid dispute. This he agreed to do; he was allowed to hide it as he chose.

I gave up all hope but in bringing off the 9 to 1 chance of my medium's being right. The sceptic kept both eyes on me all the time; if I stirred a finger, he was up in arms. I did keep my back to the mantle-piece, but there was no way of writing down the number.

But it was just at that point that my sceptic's magnificent brain broke down. He had correctly argued everything so far; but then his brain said, "It is important that Crowley shall not know where I hide the paper with the number on it: I must hide it somewhere where he cannot see."

So instead of slipping it into one of the hundreds of books on the shelves, he hid it behind my back, i.e. on the mantle-piece, where it was duly found!

I must tell you just one other story to the point. It throws possibly some light on one or two of the 'miracles' which Blavatsky performed in order to disgust the more foolish of her followers.

In June 1906 I was at Margate (God help me!), and asked my friend Jones to lend me a copy of Abramelin.

"Sorry!" said he. "I lent it to So-and-so, and it has not been returned."

He forgot this conversation; I remembered it.

Staying at his house six months later, I was alone one morning and found the book, which 'he knew for a fact' to be in London sixty miles away. It was hidden by the panel of a glass-fronted bookcase.

I hid it in the stuffing of a music-stool, led the conversation at lunch-time to "apports," got my host to suggest my doing this very thing which he was sure I could not do, and, in the evening, did it.

If I had been a cheat, could I have produced better evidence? My host would have sworn that the book was in London in a house unknown to me, whose occupants were unknown to me. He is a man of science and of most accurate and balanced judgment. One little lapse of memory; he forgot that he had told me that the book was not in his shelves; another little lapse of memory; he forgot where the book was; and there is your miracle!"

The spring of 1912 found me once more hovering between London and Paris. I wrote a few first-rate lyrics, a few more or less important essays, such as "Energized Enthusiasm", but on the whole, the virtue had gone out of me as far as big conceptions and elaborate executions were concerned. The campaign of 1911 had exhausted my heavy ammunition for the time being.

None the less, I could point to one solid achievement on the large scale, as I must consider it, although it is composed of more or less disconnected

elements. I refer to *The Book of Lies*. In this there are ninety-three chapters: we count as a chapter the two pages filled respectively with a note of interrogation and a mark of exclamation. The other chapters contain sometimes a single word, more frequently from half a dozen to twenty phrases, occasionally anything up to a dozen paragraphs. The subject of each chapter is determined more or less definitely by the Qabbalistic import of its number. Thus, Chapter 25 gives a revised ritual of the Pentagram; 72 is a rondel with the refrain "Shemhamphorash", the Divine name of 72 letters; 77 Laylah, whose name adds to that number; and 80, the number of the letter Pé, referred to Mars, a panegyric upon War.

Sometimes the text is serious and straightforward, sometimes its obscure oracles demand deep knowledge of the Qabbala for interpretation; others contain obscure allusions, play upon words, secrets expressed in cryptogram, double to triple meanings which must be combined in order to appreciate the full flavour; others again are subtly ironical or cynical. At first sight the book is a jumble of nonsense intended to insult their reader. It requires infinite study, sympathy, intuition and initiation. Given these, I do not hesitate to claim that in none other of my writings have I given so profound and comprehensive an exposition of my philosophy on every plane. I deal with the inmost impulses of the soul and through the whole course of consciousness down to the reactions of the most superficial states of mind.

I consider this book so important as a compendium of the contents of my consciousness that I beg leave to illustrate the above points.

"Mind is a disease of semen" asserts a theory of the relations between the conscious and subconscious, whose main thesis is that the true ego lurks silent in the quintessence of physical form, whereas the conscious self is no more than the murmur of its moods whenever its supremacy is challenged by environment. In Chapter 37, thought is compared to the darkness of a lunar and spiritual ecstasy to that of a solar eclipse. Both shadows are rare accidents in a universe of light. Again, "In the Wind of the mind arises the turbulence called I. It breaks; down shower the barren thoughts. All life is choked." Elsewhere, deep spiritual wisdom is evoked by tea at Rumpelmayer's, dinner at Lapérouse, breakfast at the Smoking Dog, a walk in the forest, or the dealings of the Master with his disciples.

Let me further brag that even uninstructed souls have found enlightenment and ecstasy in these mysterious mutterings.

One brilliant boy wrote in *Poetry and Drama* as follows:

"Creation and destruction of gods has been for centuries mankind's favourite religious mania and philosophical exercise. *The Book of Lies* is a witty, instructive and wholly admirable collection of paradoxes, in themselves contradictory, summing up and illustrating various experiments in god-making. Frater Perdurabo, however, has not written a philosophical or mystical treatise; on the contrary, his book leaves one with a feeling of intense exhilaration and clearheadedness. The book cannot be judged by the mere reading of excerpts; nor can it be read straight through. Indeed, if one is really desirous to appreciate its subtleties, this should not be attempted before 12 p.m. To be carried about and discussed at leisure, to annoy, repel, stimulate, puzzle and interest, are evidently some of its functions. Stupendously idiotic and amazingly clever, it is at the same time the quintessence of paradox and simplicity itself; yet when all this is said one is still far from the core, for just when one thinks to have discovered it, one finds that many obvious beauties of thought and expression have been overlooked, others misinterpreted. Sometimes one is even doubtful if the author himself could translate into definite terms the exact meaning of his aphorisms and paradoxes without detracting from the value of the book as an artistic expression of his personality. This is, however, an individual appreciation. *The Book of Lies* will therefore be interpreted differently by each reader and judged accordingly."

The best short story, as some think, that I have ever written belongs to 1912, *The Testament of Magdalen Blair*. The idea was based on a suggestion of Allan Bennett's made in 1899, and fallow in my mind ever since. It was this. Since thoughts are the accompaniments of modifications of the cerebral tissue, what thoughts must be concomitants of its putrefaction? It is certainly as ghastly an idea as any man could wish for on a fine summer morning. It thought I would use it to make people's flesh creep. My difficulty was how to acquaint other people with the thoughts of a dead man. So I made him a man of science and provided him with a wife, a student at Newnham, endowed with extraordinary sensibility which she develops into thought reading. She and her husband make a series of experiments and thus develop her faculty to perfection. He gets Bright's disease and dies, while she records what he thinks during delirium, coma and finally death.

I managed to make the story sound fairly plausible and let myself go magnificently in the matter of horror. I read it aloud to a house party on Christmas Eve; in the morning they all looked as if they had not recovered from a long and dangerous illness. I found myself extremely disliked!

Encouraged by this, I decided to offer the story to the *English Review*; but (for various reasons) sent it in as from another hand. I got a friend of mine to enclose it with a letter to say that it was the work of her daughter at

Cambridge. (The story ends, by the way, with the widow, unable to endure the horror of knowing what was in store for her and the rest of humanity, urging everybody to blow out their brains with dynamite as the most practical method of minimizing the agony. She is then put in an asylum, where she demonstrates the genuineness of her claim to report accurately what people are thinking but fails to impress the English doctor through implored by the most eminent German professor in that department of science to allow her to work with him.) The editor wrote to my friend that he would like to publish the story, but required proof of its literal truth.

I cannot comment upon such incidents. I have never been able to understand the psychology of such crass stupidity as I have found almost universal among editors and publishers. I can understand any man considering any piece of literature worthless, or thinking it a supreme masterpiece. Hume's remarks on the "unhappy barbarism" of Shakespeare, and Shelley's delusion that Leigh Hunt was a poet, are perfectly intelligible to me; but I am completely baffled by such mental operations as here indicated. Another instance will be found in connection with my story *The Stratagem* on a subsequent page.

A third symptom of the disease of the same individual is brought out in my poem! "To A New Born Child". I consider this one of my best lyrics, for fluency, perfection of technique, simplicity and power of language, and depth of idea. The editor protested that it was rather rough luck on a kid to predict such misfortunes for it. In other words, he had not the remotest idea what the poem was about. Considering that this particular editor is quite justly reputed to be far and away the best man in England in the matter of appreciating first-class work, it is perfectly incomprehensible to me that he should be such an arrant blockhead.

Most of my time in 1912 was taken up by the O.T.O. The Order was a great success and ceremonies of initiation were of almost daily occurrence. I was also very busy helping Laylah in her career. The problem was not easy. I soon discovered that it was not in her to undergo the dreary remorseless drudgery demanded by ambition to the classical concert platform. Striking too as her success had been in the *Rites of Eleusis*, it soon became clear that its source was the impulse of my personality. I could invoke the gods into her; I could not teach her to invoke them herself.

The truth of the matter was that her art was a secondary consideration with her. Secretly, she herself was probably unconscious of it. She was obsessed by the fear of poverty, the Oedipus-complex wish for a "secure future", snobbish ambition to improve her social standing. As soon as she passed the age of 30 and came into contact with the atmosphere of America,

the spiritual and even the romantic sides of her character wasted away. She rushed desperately from one prospect of prosperity to another, only to find herself despised and duped by the men she was trying to deceive. At last she dropped to the depth of despair and in her drowning struggles lost her last link with life and love. She became a traitor and a thief; and bolted with her spoils to hide herself, like Fafnir, from the very eye of heaven.

I failed to divine the essential hopelessness of helping her. I idealized her; I robed her in the royal vestures of romance. The power and passion of her playing inspired me. Her beauty, physical and moral, bewitched me. I failed to realize to what extent these qualities depend upon circumstances; but it was clear by the beginning of 1912 that she could never get much higher than leading the Ladies' Band in *The Waltz Dream* as she had been doing. The best hope was to find something equally within her powers which would yet give her the opportunity to make an individual impression. I therefore suggested that she should combine fiddling with dancing. My idea was, of course, to find a new Art-Form. But of this she was not capable. She failed to understand my idea.

I acquiesced. I turned my thoughts to making a popular success for her. We collected six assistant fiddlers, strung together a jumble of jingles and set them to a riot of motion; dressed the septette in coloured rags, called them "The Ragged Ragtime Girls" and took London by storm. It was a sickening business; but it brought me into contact with a class of society to which I had been altogether a stranger; from the coarse Jew agent to the brutal producer and vulgar performer — all alike in their absolute absorption in money-making, all equally ignorant of and contemptuous of art in itself, all equally mean, cowardly, callous, and unscrupulous in everything that touched "the Show." However good-natured, refined, or noble by nature, the instant that business came in at the door every decent instinct bolted out of the window.

It was an astonishing and most interesting study, this tragic tyranny of the metier over its slaves. It is the same (no doubt) even in other professions. Whatever the lawyer may be in private life, he leaves it all behind when he enters his office. The most honest and generous banker will unblushingly carry out the most cruel swindle, and so on for the rest. But rarely is the separation between Jekyll and Hyde so complete as in Music Hall circles. Other professions always attempt to conceal the facts by conventions of courtesy, specious apologies, or what not. In Vaudeville, there is no attempt to camouflage; no one pretends that the business is other than utterly beastly. Is it possible that the habit of grease-paint teaches those who use it to despise deception? Do they learn to look upon life as necessarily gar-

nished by trickeries so gross that the inception to deceive seems imbecile except where the public is concerned?

However that may be, I learnt a good many lessons which might prevent most poets from making fools of themselves. I learnt the crudeness, the harshness, the rottenness, and the ugliness of life as I had never imagined it to be. It is perhaps because the vowed intention of the business is to present beauty, hint love, and give pleasure that it seems so impossible to conceal from themselves the cynical contrast between the appearance and the actuality. Down to a certain point prostitution can cover its limbs and veil its face, but when the contrast is too constantly present, shame can no longer soothe itself by shame; it finds relief from its pain in cynical effrontery. I have never been so sorry for any class of people as I am for the vaudeville artist. They join the profession in almost every case on account of an original impulse to express themselves beautifully, joyfully, and wittily. The disillusion must be terrible; the sense of prostitution utterly intolerable.

Laylah had spent some weeks in New York with *Two Little Brides*. I had given her introductions to various correspondents of mine in the city; people interested in my work. One of these demands attention, both for her own sake as one of the most remarkable characters I have ever known and for the influence of her intervention on my affairs.

Her name was Vittoria Cremers. She claimed to be the bastard of a wealthy English Jew and to have married a knavish Austrian baron. She was an intimate friend of Mabel Collins, authoress of *The Blossom and the Fruit*, the novel which has left so deep a mark upon my early ideas about Magick. In 1912 she was in her fifties. Her face was stern and square, with terribly intense eyes from which glared an expression of indescribably pain and hopeless horror. Her hair was bobbed and dirty white, her dress severely masculine save the single concession of a short straight skirt. Her figure was sturdy and her gait determined though awkward. Laylah found her in a miserable room on 176th Street or thereabouts. Pitifully poor, she had not been able to buy 777 and had therefore worked week after week copying in the Astor Library. She impressed Laylah as an earnest seeker and a practical business woman. She professed the utmost devotion to me and proposed to come to England and put the work of the Order on a sound basis. I thought the idea was excellent, paid her passage to England and established her as a manageress.

Technically, I digress; but I cannot refrain from telling her favourite story. She boasted of her virginity and of the intimacy of her relations with Mabel Collins, with whom she lived a long time. Mabel had however divided her favours with a very strange man whose career had been extraordinary. He

had been an officer in a cavalry regiment, a doctor, and I know not how many other things in his time. He was now in desperate poverty and depended entirely on Mabel Collins for his daily bread. This man claimed to be an advanced Magician, boasting of many mysterious powers and even occasionally demonstrating the same.

At this time London was agog with the exploits of Jack the Ripper. One theory of the motive of the murderer was that he was performing an Operation to obtain the Supreme Black Magical Power. The seven women had to be killed so that their seven bodies formed a "Calvary cross of seven points" with its head to the west. The theory was that after killing the third or the fourth, I forget which, the murderer acquired the power of invisibility, and this was confirmed by the fact that in one case a policeman heard the shrieks of the dying woman and reached her before life was extinct, yet she lay in a cul-de-sac, with no possible exit save to the street; and the policeman saw no signs of the assassin, thought he was patrolling outside, expressly on the lookout.

Miss Collins' friend took great interest in these murders. He discussed them with her and Cremers on several occasions. He gave them imitations of how the murderer might have accomplished his task without arousing the suspicion of his victims until the last moment. Cremers objected that his escape must have been a risky matter, because of his habit of devouring certain portions of the ladies before leaving them. What about the blood on his collar and shirt? The lecturer demonstrated that any gentleman in evening dress had merely to turn up the collar of a light overcoat to conceal any traces of his supper.

Time passed! Mabel tired of her friend, but did not dare to get rid of him because he had a packet of compromising letters written by her. Cremers offered to steal these from him. In the man's bedroom was a tin uniform case which he kept under the bed to which he attached it by cords. Neither of the women had ever seen this open and Cremers suspected that he kept these letters in it. She got him out of the way for a day by a forged telegram, entered the room, untied the cords and drew the box from under the bed. To her surprise it was very light, as if empty. She proceeded nevertheless to pick the lock and open it. There were no letters; there was nothing in the box, but seven white evening dress ties, all stiff and black with clotted blood!

Her other favourite story is more to the point. At the critical moment of her mission, Madame Blavatsky had been most foully betrayed by Mabel Collins with the help, according to the stratagems and at the instigation of Cremers, who not only justified, but boasted of her conduct.

It may be matter for surprise that I was not warned of the woman's character by this confession. But I have one invariable rule in dealing with those that come to me for training and that is: to pay no attention whatever to their relations with myself, but to advise them according to the principles of the A.: A.:, as if we lived in different planets. For instance, if a man tells me he is a thief, I refuse on principle to lock up my spoons; I use the information solely as a key to his character, and tell him that in robbing others he is really robbing himself by violating the principle which protects him from theft. I trusted Cremers absolutely, though I knew this — and even that she had, at one time, been the paid spy of some black-mailing vigilance society in America, which, under cover of moral indignation, forged false evidence against convenient candidates, implicating them in the white slave traffic, extracting hush money, or prosecuting when the victim was not worth despoiling or refused to pay up, and sometimes by way of “making an example”, in order to frighten the next batch whose blood they proposed to suck.

I left a book of signed cheques in her charge; I allowed her access to my private papers. I gave no sign that I saw how she was corrupting the loyalty of Laylah and making mischief all round. Presently, at the end of 1913, she got influenza. I went to visit her unexpectedly; there, on the table by her bed, was a memorandum showing unmistakably that she had embezzled large sums of money by fraudulent manipulation of the aforesaid cheques. I failed to conceal from her that I had seen and understood, but I continued to act towards her with unvarying kindness and continued to trust her absolutely. It was too much for her! She had hated me from the first, as she had hated Blavatsky, and vowed to ruin me as she had ruined my great predecessor; and now, when she had robbed me and betrayed me at every turn, I had not turned a hair. The consciousness that her hate was impotent was too much for her to endure. She developed an attack of meningitis and was violently insane for six weeks, at the end of which time she melted away to hide her shame in Wales, where she supposed sensibly enough that she would find sympathetic society in thieves and traitors after her own heart. I understand in fact that she is still there.

During the whole period up to the outbreak of the War, my work gradually increased and consolidated. I must mention the visit of my representative in South Africa, Frater Semper Paratus. This brother possessed the most remarkable magical faculties, within a certain limited scope. It was natural for him to bring into action those forces which impinge directly upon the material world. For instance, his ability to perform divination by means of Geomancy (which presumes the action of intelligences of a gross type) has no parallel in my experience. Let me illustrate what I mean.

By profession Frater Semper Paratus was a chartered accountant. He would be called in to audit the finances of some firm. He would find himself confronted by an overwhelming mass of documents. "It means three weeks' work," he would say to himself, "to discover the location of the error." Instead of exploring the mass of material at random, he would set up a series of geomantic figures and, after less than an hour's work, would take up the volume geomantically indicated and put his finger at once upon the origin of the confusion.

On another occasion, he bethought himself that, living as he did in Johannesburg, surrounded by gold and diamonds, he might as well use geomancy to discover a deposit for his own benefit. Indifferent as to whether he found gold or diamonds, he thought to include both by framing his question to cover "mineral wealth". He was directed to ride out from the city by a given compass bearing. He did so. He found no indication of what he sought. He had given up hope and determined to return when he saw a range of low hills before him. He decided to push on and see if anything was visible from their summit. No, the plain stretched away without promise, a marshy flat with pools of stagnant water dotted about it. At his moment of complete disappointment, he noticed that his pony was thirsty. He therefore rode down to the nearest pool to let him drink. The animal refused the water, so he dismounted to find out the reason. The taste told him at once that he had discovered an immensely rich deposit of alkali. His geomancy had not misled him; he had found mineral wealth. He proceeded to exploit his discovery and would have become a millionaire in short order had he not met with the opposition of Burnner Mond.

On the other hand, his clairvoyance was hopelessly bad, so that he could not pass the examination for the Grade of Zelator of A.: A.: though in other points entitled to a much higher degree. One of his practical objects in visiting England was to ask me personally to get him over the stile.

I did so. At the very first trial I enabled him to use his astral eyesight. Our joint work developed and we resolved to make a series of investigations of "The Watch Towers of the Elements", beginning with that of Fire. The question arose: "Why does the instruction tell us to rise vertically in the astral body for a great distance before penetrating the symbol under examination?" I said, "It seems to me a mere superstition connected with the idea that Heaven is above and Hell beneath one." To clear up this point, we decided to enter the Watch Tower directly, without rising. Our visions, occupying three successive days, showed no abnormal features. But — and here one cannot help feeling that Semper Paratus's faculty of making connection with forces in close contact with the material plane is involved — no less than five fires broke out in the studio during that period. On the third night,

Semper Paratus decided to walk home to the house of the friends with whom he was staying in Hampstead. It was late at night when he approached; but his attention was at once attracted by smoke issuing from the house. He gave the alarm and the fire was quickly got under. The mysterious and significant point about the incident is that the fire had got started in the one place in a house where there is no rational explanation for an outbreak — in the coal cellar!

One further illustration of the peculiar qualities of this Brother. I had advised him to evoke the forces of Fire and Air on return to South Africa, they being naturally plentiful in that part of the world. He began with the fiery part of Fire, which includes lightning. When he began his ceremony there was no indication of electrical disturbance; but in a few minutes a storm gathered and his temple was struck.

Another Brother similarly evoking the forces of Water, the cistern of his house burst during the ceremony and flooded it.

Similar incidents constantly occur to those Magicians whose forces tend to manifest in concrete expression. But such men are rare. In my own case, though many similar phenomena have occurred, as already recorded, I regard them as due to defects of insulation. They warn me to take pains to perfect my circle.

The art of producing phenomena at will is a totally different question. The simplest, most rational, and most direct method had been known to me since the summer of 1911; but for some reason, I had never practised it systematically or recorded my results methodically. I believe this to have been due to an instinctive reluctance in respect of the nature of the method. It was not until January 1st, 1914 that I made it my principal engine.

CHAPTER 106

BOOK IX

CHAPTER II

I think it proper to devote an entire chapter to the subject of my relations with Freemasonry. I have mentioned that I had obtained the 33° in Mexico City. It did not add much of importance to my knowledge of the Mysteries; but I had heard that Freemasonry was a Universal Brotherhood and expected to be welcomed all over the world by all brethren.

I was brought up with a considerable shock within the next few months, when, chancing to discuss the subject with some broken-down gambler or sporting-house tout — I forget exactly — I found that he would not “recognize” me! There was some trivial difference in one of the grips or some other totally meaningless formality. A measureless contempt for the whole mummery curled my lip. I squared the matter (as already related) by having myself initiated in Lodge Number 343 “Anglo-Saxon” in Paris. What that led to I have recounted elsewhere and now quote:

“I happened to know that the chaplain of the British Embassy in Z— was Past Grand Organist of a certain English province. He proposed me, found a seconder, and I was duly initiated, passed and raised. I was warmly welcomed by numerous English and American visitors to our Lodge; for Z— is a very great city.

“I returned to England sometime later, after “passing the chair” in my Lodge, and wishing to join the Royal Arch, called on its venerable Secretary.

“I presented my credentials. ‘O Thou Great Architect of the Universe,’ the old man sobbed out in rage, ‘why dost Thou not wither this impudent impostor with Thy fire from heaven? Sir, begone! You are not a Mason at all! As all the world knows, the people in Z— are atheists and live with other men's wives.’ ”

I thought this a little hard on my Reverend Father in God, my proposer; and I noted that, of course, every single English or American visitor to our Lodge in Z— stood in peril of instant and irrevocable expulsion on detection. So I said nothing, but walked to another room in Freemasons' Hall over his head, and took my seat as a Past Master in one of the oldest and most eminent Lodges in London!

Kindly note, furthermore, that when each of those wicked visitors returned to their Lodges after their crime, they automatically excommunicated the whole thereof; and as visiting is very common, it may well be doubted whether, on their own showing, there is a single "just, lawful and regular Mason" left on the earth!

By the end of 1910, thanks to my relations with the Grand Hierophant 97° of the Rite of Memphis (a post held after his death by Dr. Gerard Encausse ("Papus"), Theodor Reuss ("Merlin"), and myself) — Theodor Reuss, Sheikh Quilliam (representing our link with the Freemasonry of Islam), and certain highly placed brethren in France, Italy, England, Eastern Europe and America, whose name I am unwilling to disclose since they would get into trouble with their herds if it were known that they had ever possessed a scrap of common sense — I was now a sort of universal Inspector-General of the various rites, charged with the secret mission of reporting on the possibility of reconstructing the entire edifice, which was universally recognized by all its more intelligent members as threatened with the gravest danger.

I must briefly explain the circumstances.

(a) There is a great multiplicity of rites.

(b) There is a great multiplicity of jurisdictions.

(c) Even where rite and jurisdiction are identical, there are certain national jealousies and other causes of divergence.

(d) The Progress of feminism has threatened the Craft. (The meaning of the 3° having been totally lost, orthodox Freemasons are unable to explain why women cannot become Master Masons. They cannot. I, the fiercest of feminists, say so.) Co-Masonry, under Mrs. Besant, whose hysterical vanity compels her to claim any high-sounding title that she happens to hear, *Le Droit Humain* in France, and similar movements almost everywhere, were bringing Masonry into contempt by their sheer silliness. They were so obviously exactly as good as real Freemasons.

(e) The history of Freemasonry has become more obscure as the light of research has fallen on the subject. The meaning of Masonry has either been completely forgotten or has never existed at all, except insofar as any particular rite might be a cloak for political or even worse intrigue.

(f) It has become impossible for people living in modern conditions to devote adequate time even to learning the merest formalities.

(g) The complete lack of understanding which is now practically universal has made men inquire why in God's name they should cherish such pretentious pedantries?

A few anecdotes will illustrate the situation for the average non-mason.

1. A certain rite in England derives its authority from a document which is as notoriously a forgery as Pigott ever penned. The heads of this gang wished to break, in the most shameless and rascally manner, an agreement made some years previously with John Yarker. Yarker pointed out that their only real authority was derived from their agreement with him, since he, working under a genuine charter, had "heled" their breach with antiquity by recognizing them. They replied that they relied on the forged document. He said that he would cut away the ground from under their feet by publishing the proofs that their charter was worthless. Then they said that they knew as well as he did that the document was forged; but they didn't care, because they had induced the Prince of Wales to join them!

2. Several of the main rites of English Masonry are not recognized by each other, and some of these are not even tolerated (that is, if a member of A joins B, or even discusses Freemasonry with a member of B, he becomes liable to immediate expulsion); yet a certain Royal Duke was actually the head of two incompatible rites.

3. There is no uniformity with regard to toleration. Thus A and B sometimes recognize each other, but, while A recognizes C, B does not, so that a member of B and a member of C might find themselves meeting in a Lodge of A, and thereby automatically excommunicate each other.

4. English Craft Masons do not permit religious political or commercial motives to enter into Freemasonry, yet they are in official relationship with certain Masonic bodies whose sole raison d'être is anti-clericalism, political intrigue or mutual trade benefit.

5. The Scottish Rite, the Degrees of Knight Templar, Knight of Malta and others in England are definitely Christian, e.g. the point of one degree is the identification of prophet, priest and king, three in one, the Trinity of the Royal Arch, with Christ; and in the Rose Croix degree, Christ is recognized as the "corner stone" of earlier symbolism. But in America, the Christian elements have been removed so that wealthy Jews may reach the summit of Masonry.

6. I once attended a Lodge whose Master was one of the two local bankers. He used his influence to get business for his bank. The other bank-

er promptly obtained a charter from some "clandestine" body and started an opposition. In this district, the clandestine Lodges greatly outnumbered the orthodox.

7. I have visited Craft Lodges and Royal Arch Chapters in Fraternal Accord in England, where the "raising" and "exaltation" were carried out in shirt sleeves, while cigars were smoked and the legs conveniently disposed on other chairs, and only employed to kick the candidate as he went round.

8. At one ceremony in America, the officers being 33° masons, recognized by the orthodox Scottish Rite in England, there were two candidates, both Jews. They were hoodwinked and introduced into opposite ends of a tube through which they were instructed to make their way. In the middle of the tube was a live sow.

9. In Detroit, a member of the 32° was threatened by certain 33°'s with expulsion unless he complied with their views as to his domestic life. The matter was one with which they had no right to meddle on any conceivable theory of human relations.

10. In some parts of America, financial and social pressure is put upon people to *compel* them to take the 32°! It is common to boycott men in trade or business for refusing to give unfair advantages to their fellow masons.

11. A 33° mason, of many years' standing, holding high office in the Supreme Grand Council, who had joined in order to obtain the traditional secret knowledge, told me that he had never learnt anything from any of the degrees. The only peculiarity in this case is that he should have expected anything of the sort — or wanted it!

12. With hardly an exception, the "secrets" of Freemasonry are strictly arbitrary. Let me explain what I mean. If I am given the combination of a safe, I expect to be able to open it by the use of the word. If I can do so, it proves that that is the correct word. The secrets of freemasonry disclose no mysteries; they do not do what they profess to do; they are meaningless conventions.

13. With the rarest exceptions, Freemasons make no attempt to keep their obligations so far as the moral principles inculcated are concerned. For instance, the Master Mason is sworn to respect the chastity of the wife, sister and daughter of his Brother. Those who do so probably respect the chastity of any woman irrespective of her male connections.

14. Freemasons, generally, but especially in England and America, resent any attempt to take masonry seriously. I may quote an essay [**The Crisis in Freemasonry**] by a Past Grand Master. It appeared in the *English Review* for August 1922. It sets forth the initiated view. The question is: Why does a man become a mason?

"We ought to cross off the pettier human motives first, love of vanity, of mystery, of display, of make-believe; but the average man in England becomes a mason for as serious a reason as he become a Church member or a theosophist; and the average man is usually most abominably disillusioned.

"He may join the Craft with some idea of fellowship, because it is a tradition in his family to do so, or because he hopes to find in the Secret of the Mysteries something which he does not find in any of the exoteric forms of religion.

"How is it that the same Order satisfies — more or less — aspirations so diverse?

"We are brought at last face to face with the fundamental problem of the Masonic historian — the origin of the whole business.

"Without any hesitation at all, one may confess that on this critical question nothing is certainly known. It is true, indeed, that the Craft Lodges in England were originally Hanoverian clubs, as the Scottish Lodges were Jacobite clubs, and the Egyptian Lodges of Cagliostro revolutionary clubs.

"But that no more explains the origin of Freemasonry than the fact "many Spaniards are Roman Catholics" explains why the priest says and does certain things rather than others in the Mass.

"Now here is the tremendous question: we can admit all Mr. Yarker's contentions, and more, as to the connection of Masonic and quasi-Masonic rites with the old customs of initiating people into the trade guilds; but why should such a matter be hedged about with so severe a wardenship, and why should the Central Sacrament partake of so awful and so unearthly a character?

"As Freemasonry has been 'exposed' every few minutes for the last century or so, and as any layman can walk into a Masonic shop and buy the complete Rituals for a few pence, the only omissions being of no importance to our present point, it would be imbecile to pretend that the nature of the ceremonies of Craft masonry is in any sense a "mystery".

"There is, therefore, no reason for refraining from the plain statement that, to anyone who understands the rudiments of symbolism, the Master's degree is identical with the Mass. This is in fact the real reason for papal anathema; for Freemasonry asserts that every man is himself the living, slain and re-arisen Christ in his own person.

"It is true that not one mason in ten thousand in England is aware of this fact; but he has only to remember his "raising" to realize the fundamental truth of the statement.

"Well may Catholic and Freemason alike stand appalled at the stupendous blasphemy which is implied, as they ignorantly think, not knowing themselves of the stuff and substance of the Supreme Self, each for himself alike no less than Very God of Very God!

"But suppose that the sublimity of this conception is accepted, the identity admitted; what sudden overwhelming billow from the past blasts their beatitude? What but the words with which Freud concludes *Totem and Taboo*: In the Beginning was the Deed!

"For the 'sacrifice of the Innocent' celebrated alike in the Lode and in cathedral is this identical murder of the Master of the Fellow-Craftsmen, that is of the Father by his sons, when the ape system of the "Fatherhorde" was replaced by the tribal system which developed into the 'military clan!' "

These statements are undeniable, yet it may be doubted whether there are five hundred Freemasons of all the rites put together who would assent to them, or even refrain from objecting to them as bitterly as the average man in Victorian times disliked being told of his kinship with the other primates, and as his children and grandchildren are annoyed when science demonstrates that their religions are survivals of savage superstitions and their dreams determined by bestial instincts.

15. The W.M. [Worshipful Master] of an exclusive English Lodge told me that he had learnt his part by saying it over to his wife in bed, justifying himself for this apparent breach of his obligation by remarking, with a laugh, that the secrets were lost and that therefore he could not betray them however much he wanted to.

Faced with these, and similar difficulties, I gladly accepted the task laid upon me by the most intelligent Freemasons of the world, united as they were by their sincerity, understanding and good will, though divided by sectarian squabbles about jurisdiction.

My first object was to answer the question, "What is Freemasonry?" I collated the Rituals and their secrets, much as I had done the religions of the world, with their magical and mystical bases. As in that case, I decided to neglect what it too often actually was. It would be absurd to judge Protestantism by the political acts of Henry VIII. In the same way, I could not judge masonry by the fact that it had denounced the Concordat. I proposed to define Freemasonry as a system of communicating truth — religious, philosophical, magical and mystical; and indicating the proper means of developing human faculty by means of a peculiar language whose alphabet is the symbolism of ritual. Universal Brotherhood and the greater moral principles, independent of personal, racial, climatic and other prejudices, naturally formed a background which would assure individual security and social stability for each and all.

The question then arose, "What truths should be communicated and by what means promulgated? My first object was to eliminate from the hundreds of rituals at my disposal all exoteric elements. Many degrees contain statements (usually inaccurate) of matters well known to modern school-boys, through they may have been important when the rituals were written. I may mention one degree in which the candidate is portentiously informed that there are other religions in the world besides Christianity and that there is some truth in all of them. Their tenets are explained in many cases with egregious error. The description of Buddha as a god is typical. I saw no point in overloading the system with superfluous information.

Another essential point was to reduce the unwieldy mass of material to a compact and coherent system. I thought that everything worth preserving could and should be presented in not more than a dozen ceremonies, and that it should be brought well within the capacity of any officer to learn by heart his part during the leisure time at his disposal, in a month at most.

The eighteenth-century Rosicrucians, so-called in Austria, had already endeavoured to unite various branches of Continental Freemasonry and its superstructures; in the nineteenth century, principally owing to the energy and ability of a wealthy iron master named Karl Kellner, a reconstruction and consolidation of traditional truth had been attempted. A body was formed under the name O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis) which purported to achieve this result. It purported to communicate the secrets, not only of Freemasonry (with the Rites of 3°, 7°, 33°, 90°, 97°, etc.) but of the Gnostic Catholic Church, the Martinists, the Sat Bhai, the Rosicrucians, the Knights of the Holy Ghost and so on, in nine degrees, with a tenth of an honorary character to distinguish the "Supreme and Holy King" of the Order in each country where it was established. Chief of these kings is the O.H.O. (Outer Head of the Order, or Frater Superior), who is an absolute autocrat. This position was at

this time occupied by Theodor Reuss, the Supreme and Holy King of Germany, who resigned the office in 1922 in my favour.

CHAPTER 107

The O.H.O. put the rituals of this Order at my disposal. I found them of the utmost value as to the central secret, but otherwise very inferior. They were dramatically worthless, but the prose was unequal, they lacked philosophical unity, their information was incomplete and unsystematic. Their general idea was, however, of the right kind; and I was able to take them as a model.

The main objects of the instruction were two. It was firstly necessary to explain the universe and the relations of human life therewith. Secondly, to instruct every man how best to adapt his life to the cosmos and to develop his faculties to the utmost advantage. I accordingly constructed a series of rituals, Minerval, Man, Magician, Master-Magician, Perfect Magician and Perfect Initiate, which should illustrate the course of human life in its largest philosophical aspect. I begin by showing the object of the pure soul, "One, individual and eternal", in determining to formulate itself consciously, or, as I may say, to understand itself.

It chooses to enter into relations with the solar system. It incarnates. I explain the significance of birth and the conditions established by the process. I next show how it may best carry out its object in the Eucharist of Life. It partakes, so to speak, of its own Godhead in every action, but especially through the typical sacrament of marriage, understood as the voluntary union of itself with each element of its environment. I then proceed to the climax of its career in death and show how this sacrament both consecrates (or, rather, sets its seal upon) the previous procedure and gives a meaning thereto, just as the auditing of the account enables the merchant to see his year's transactions in perspective.

In the next ceremony I show how the individual, released by death from the obsession of personality, resumes relations with the truth of the universe. Reality bursts upon him in a blaze of adorable light; he is able to appreciate its splendour as he could not previously do, since his incarnation has enabled him to establish particular relations between the elements of eternity.

Finally, the cycle is closed by the reabsorption of all individuality into infinity. It ends in absolute annihilation which, as has been shown elsewhere in this book, may in reality be regarded either as an exact equivalent for all other terms soever, or (by postulating the category of time) as forming the starting point for new adventure of the same kind.

It will be clear from the above that the philosophical perfection of this system of initiation leaves nothing to be desired. We may write Q.E.D. The practical problem remains. We have already decided to incarnate, and our birth certificates are with our bankers. We do not have to worry about these matters, and we cannot alter them if we would; Death, and what follows death, are equally certain, and equally able to take care of themselves. Our sole preoccupation is how best to make use of our lives.

Now the O.T.O. is in possession of one supreme secret. The whole of its system at the time when I became an initiate of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis (IX°) was directed towards communicating to its members, by progressively plain hints, this all-important instruction. I personally believe that if this secret, which is a scientific secret, were perfectly understood, as it is not even my me after more than twelve years' almost constant study and experiment, there would be nothing which the human imagination can conceive that could not be realized in practice.

By this I mean such things as this: that if it were desired to have an element of atomic weight six times that of Uranium that element could be produced. If it were desired to devise an instrument by which the furthest stars or the electrons could be brought within the range of every one of our senses, that instrument could be invented. Or that, if we wished to develop senses through which we could appreciate all those qualities of matter which at present we observe indirectly by means of apparatus, the necessary nervous structure would appear. It make these remarks with absolute confidence, for even the insignificant approaches that I have been able to make towards the sanctuaries of this secret have shown me that the relations between phenomena are infinitely more complex than the wildest philosophers have ever imagined, and that the old proverb "Where there's a will there's a way" needs no caveat.

I cannot forebear to quote from Professor A. S. Eddington, Plumian Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy at Cambridge:

"Here is a paradox beyond even the imagination of Dean Swift. Gulliver regarded the Lilliputians as a race of dwarfs; and the Lilliputians regarded Gulliver as a giant. That is natural. If the Lilliputians had appeared dwarfs to Gulliver, and Gulliver had appeared a dwarf to the Lilliputians — but no! that is too absurd for fiction, and is an idea only to be found in the sober pages of science."

The injunctions of the sages, from Pythagoras, Zoroaster and Lao-Tze, to the Qabbalistic Jew who wrote the Ritual of the Royal Arch, and the sentimental snob who composed those of the Craft Degrees, are either directed

to indicating the best conditions for applying this secret, or are mere waste of words. Realizing this, it was comparatively simple for me to edit Masonic ethics and esotericism. I had simply to refer everything to this single sublime standard. I therefore answered the question "How should a young man mend his way?" in a series of rituals in which the candidate is instructed in the value of discretion, loyalty, independence, truthfulness, courage, self-control, indifference to circumstance, impartiality, scepticism, and other virtues, and at the same time assisted him to discover for himself the nature of this secret, the proper object of its employment and the best means for insuring success in its use. The first of these degrees is the V°, in which the secret is presented in a pageant; while he is also instructed in the essential elements of the history of the world, considered from the standpoint of his present state of evolution and in his proper relation to society in general with reference to the same.

The degree of Knight Hermetic Philosopher follows, in which his intellectual and moral attitude is further defined. In the VI°, his position having been thus made precise, he is shown how to consecrate himself to the particular Great Work which he came to earth in order to perform. In the VII°, which is tripartite, he is first taught the principle of equilibrium as extended to all possible moral ideas; secondly, to all possible intellectual ideas; and lastly, he is shown how, basing all his actions on this impregnable rock of justice, he may so direct his life as to undertake his Great Work with the fullest responsibility and in absolute freedom from all possibility of interferences.

In the VIII°, the secret is once more manifested to him, more clearly than before; and he is instructed in how to train himself to use it by certain preliminary practices involving acquaintance with some of those subtler energies which have hitherto, for the most part, eluded the observation and control of profane science.

In the IX°, which is never conferred upon any one who has not already divined from previous indications the nature of the secret, it is explained to him fully. The conclusions of previous experiments are placed at his service. The idea is that each new initiate should continue the work of his predecessor, so that eventually the inexhaustible resources of the secret may be within the reach of the youngest initiate; for at present, we are compelled to admit that the superstitious reverence which has encompassed it in past ages, and the complexity of the conditions which modify its use, place us in much the same position as the electricians of a generation ago in respect of their science. We are assured of the immensity of the force at our disposal; we perceive the extent of the empire which it offers us, but we do not thoroughly understand even our successes and are uncertain how to proceed in

order to generate the energy most efficiently or to apply it most accurately to our purposes.

The X°, as in the old system, is merely honorary, but recent researches into the mysteries of the IX° have compelled me to add an XI°, to illustrate a scientific idea which has been evolved by the results of recent experiments.

In the reconstituted O.T.O. there are therefore six degrees in which is conveyed a comprehensive conception of the cosmos and our relation therewith, and a similar number to deal with our duty to ourselves and our fellows, the development of our own faculties of every order, and the general advancement and advantage of mankind.

Wherever Free Masonry and allied systems contribute to these themes, their information has been incorporated in such a way as not to infringe the privileges, puerile as they often seem, which have been associated hitherto with initiation. Where they merely perpetuate trivialities, superstitions and prejudices, they have been neglected.

I claim for my system that it satisfies all possible requirements of true Free Masonry. It offers a rational basis for Universal Brotherhood and for universal religion. It puts forward a scientific statement which is a summary of all that is at present known about the universe by means of a simple, yet sublime symbolism, artistically arranged. It also enables each man to discover for himself his personal destiny, indicates the moral and intellectual qualities which he requires in order to fulfil it freely, and finally puts in his hands an unimaginably powerful weapon which he may use to develop in himself every faculty which he may need in his work.

My original draft of these rituals has required modification in numerous details as research made clearer, deeper and wider the truth which they comprehended; and also, as experience showed, the possibilities of misunderstanding on the one hand, and of improved presentation on the other. Great practical progress was made until the work was suspended by the outbreak of the war in 1914.

CHAPTER 108

One of my original difficulties was to restore the existing rituals to their perfection. There were innumerable corruptions due to ignorance of Hebrew and the like on the part of the unworthy successors of the founders. To take a gross example.

The word *Jeheshua*, spelt in Hebrew in the 18° of the Scottish Rite, was habitually spelt with a Resh instead of a Vau. So brutal a blunder is conclusive proof that the modern Sovereign Princes of Rose Croix attach no meaning whatever to the name of Jesus — which they profess to adore more intelligently than the mob because it represents the descent of the Holy Spirit into the midst of that tremendous name of God which only occurs in their ritual because of its power to annihilate the universe if pronounced correctly*.

The intelligence of the average Mason may be gauged by the following quotation from the R.A.M. degree. The twentieth century! — and such stuff is solemnly offered as instruction to grown men!

“Some have doubted whether the Ark was capable of containing two of every sort of creature, with provisions necessary for their support for a whole year; for so long and more did Noah stop in that Ark. But on a careful inquiry it has been found that only about 100 different sorts of beasts, and not 200 birds, are known, the greater part of them are of no bulk, and many exceedingly small, and it has been said all the creatures in the Ark would not take up the room of 500 horses. After 4,000 years human ingenuity cannot now contrive any proportions better adapted than that of the Ark for the purpose it was intended for. A Dutch Merchant, 200 years ago, built a ship answering in its respective dimensions to those of the Ark; its length being 120 feet, breadth 20 feet, depth 12 feet; while building, this vessel was laughed at, but afterwards it was found that it held one third more and sailed better than any other merchant vessel of the time.

Thus we have a collateral proof no way inconsiderable that the Spirit of God, from whom cometh all understanding, directed Noah in that manner.

Again, the central secret of a Master Mason is in a Word which is lost. This fact has induced various and ingenious persons to invent ceremonies in which it is found (in some more or less remarkable manner) amid the acclamations of the assembled populace, and proclaimed in pomp to the admiring multitude. The only drawback is that these Words do not work. It apparently never occurred to these ingenuous artisans to test it. It is useless to label a

brick "This is the keystone of the Royal Arch", unless the arch stands when it is put in place.

Much of Free Masonry is connected with the Hebrew Qabbala. My knowledge of this science enabled me to analyse the Secret Words of the various degrees. I soon found myself able to correct many of the corruptions which had crept in, and there was no doubt that my conclusions were not mere conjectures, since they made coherent good sense out of disconnected nonsense. (I am naturally unable to publish any of these discoveries; but I am always ready to communicate them to inquiring Brothers. When I have done so, my arguments have been found cogent and convincing.)

I supposed myself to have reached the summit of success when I restored the Secret Word of the Royal Arch. In this case, tradition had preserved the Word almost intact. It required only a trifling change to reveal it in all its radiant royalty. And yet my success only left me with a sense of deeper annoyance at my complete failure to deal with the abject anti-climax of the III^o with its lamentable excuses for having made a fool of the candidate, its pretentious promises and its pitiful performance.

As I lay one night sleepless, in meditation, bitter and eager, upon this mystery I was suddenly stabbed to the soul by a suggestion so simple, yet so stupendous, that I was struck into shuddering silence for I know not how long before I could bring myself to switch on the electric light and snatch my notebook. At the first trial the solution sprang like sunlight in my spirit. I remained all that night in an ecstasy of awe and adoration. I had discovered the lost Word!

The obvious line of criticism is this: How can you be sure that the Word which you have discovered is really the lost Word after all?

This may be made clear by an illustration. On the apron of the 18^o I find IHShRH in Hebrew characters. I find that this word means nothing; the context suggests that it may be an error for IHShVH, Yeheshuah or Jesus; but how do I know that this word and not another has power to make man triumphant over matter, to harmonize and sanctify the blind forces of the Universe? Thus: I know that IHVH represents the four elements; that 4 is a number symbolizing limitation. It is the square of 2, the only number which cannot be formed harmoniously into a "Magic Square". (Two represents the Dyad, the original Error.) I know also that the letter Shin represents a triune essence, the fire of the Spirit, and in particular Ruach Elohim, the Spirit of the Gods, because these two words have the numerical value of 300, which is also that of Shin itself.

I thus interpret the word Yeheshuah as the descent of the Holy Spirit into the balanced forces of matter, and the name Yeheshuah is therefore that of a man made divine by the descent of the Holy Spirit into his heart, exactly as the name George means a farmer. This exegetical method is not a modern invention. When Jehovah selected a family to be the father of Israel, he changed the name ABRM (243) Father of Elevation into ABRHM (248) Father of a multitude; and by way of compensation changed SRI (510) Nobility, to SRH (505), Princess. There are several other similar stories in the Bible. A change of name is considered to indicate a change of nature. Further, each name is not arbitrary; it is a definite description of the nature of the object to which it is attached. By a similar process, I am certain of my results in the matter of the Lost Word, for the Found Word fulfils the conditions of the situation; and furthermore, throws light on the obscure symbolism of the entire ritual.

I am thus in a position to do for the contending sects of Free Masonry what the Alexandrians did for those of Paganism. Unfortunately, the men who asked me to undertake this task are either dead or too old to take active measures and so far there is no one to replace them. Worse, the general coarsening of manners which always follows a great war has embittered the rival jurisdictions and deprived Free Masonry altogether of those elements of high-minded enthusiasms with regard to the great problems of society which still stirred even its most degenerate sections half a century ago, when Hargrave Jennings, Godfrey Higgins, Gerald Massey, Kenneth MacKenzie, John Yarker, Theodor Reuss, Wynn Westcott and others were still seeking truth in its traditions and endeavouring to erect a temple of Concord in which men of all creeds and races might worship in amity.

I attempted to make the appeal of the new system universal by combining it with a practical system of fraternal intercourse and mutual benefit. I formulated a scheme of insurance against all the accidents of life; the details are given in the Official Instructions and Essays published in the Equinox III, I; and to set the example I transferred the whole of my property to trustees for the Order. The general idea is this; that every man should enjoy his possessions and the full fruits of his labours exactly as he does under his original individualistic system, but the pooling of such possessions by economy of administration, etc., leaves a surplus which can be used for the general purposes of the Order. I wished to introduce the benefits of co-operation without interfering with the individual absoluteness of the elements of the combination.

The plan promised excellently. The working expenses of the Order were almost negligibly small. We were therefore able to allow members to borrow in case of necessity up to the total amount of their fees and subscriptions; to

give them a month's holiday for less than a week would have cost an outsider; to save them all medical, legal and similar expenses; to solve the problem of rent, and so on. We offered all the fabled advantages of Socialism without in any way interfering with individual dignity and independence.

I can hardly be blamed for the catastrophe which has temporarily suspended the work. During the War the Grand Treasurer became insane. His character changed completely. He developed a form of persecution mania, in which his oldest and best friends seemed to him to be conspiring against him. Abetted by a dishonest solicitor, he alienated the whole of the property of the Order with extraordinary thoroughness. He actually destroyed a great part of the library; he falsified the figures; and after opposing all sorts of delays to the demand for his account, he actually made away with my very underclothing. My only remaining resources were some £20,000 worth of books which he could not touch without paying the sum of £350 or so, which was due to the people with whom they were stored. I paid this amount in 1921 and the warehousemen then refused to hand over the books or to pay me the balance owing to me on their own statement. They trusted to be able to steal them, having heard that I was unable to find the money necessary to sue them.

I thus found myself after the war entirely penniless and without clothes, except for some of my Highland costumes which had been sent for repair to a tailor just before the outbreak of hostilities and had remained safely in storage. I do not regret these events, except that I grieve over the calamity to my brother. I believe it to have been part of the plan of the Gods that I should be compelled to face the world entirely without other than moral resources. Such is certainly a supreme test of the essential strength of any economic proposal.

The system has justified itself astonishingly even in these unheard-of difficulties; I have been able to establish a branch of the Order with entire leisure to work at high pressure at its own objects, without internal friction or economic collapse, although the income is derived exclusively from casual windfalls. If we were able to carry out the full principles of the system, we should already be so prosperous as to be able to devote ourselves exclusively to extending the advantages of the scheme to the world at large.

With regard to the original purposes of the Order, there can be no doubt that the reduction of the cumbersome mass of Masonic and similar matters to a simple intelligible and workable system enables people to enjoy the full advantages of initiations which, in the old days, were too multiple to be conferred even on those who devoted a disproportionate amount of their lives to the subject. The central secret of Free Masonry which was lost, and is found,

is in daily use by initiates of our Order. Scientific facts are accumulating rapidly; and it is certain that within a short time we shall be able to dispose of a force more powerful than electricity and capable of more extended application, with the same certainty. Our qualitative results are unquestionable. The lack of quantitative methods, which has for so many centuries prevented the systematic application of our knowledge, will soon be supplied.

I may say that the secret of the O.T.O., besides what has been mentioned above, has proved to all intents and purposes the simplification and concentration of the whole of my Magical knowledge. All my old methods have been unified in this new method. It does not exactly replace them, but it interprets them. It has also enabled me to construct a uniform type of engine for accomplishing anything that I will.

My association with Free Masonry was therefore destined to be more fertile than almost any other study, and that in a way despite itself. A word should be pertinent with regard to the question of secrecy. It has become difficult for me to take this matter very seriously. Knowing what the secret actually is, I cannot attach much importance to artificial mysteries. It is true that some of the so-called secrets are significant, but as a rule they are so only to those who already know what the secret is. Again, though the secret itself is of such tremendous import, and though it is so simple that I could disclose it and the principal rules for turning it to the best advantage in a short paragraph, I might do so without doing much harm. For it cannot be used indiscriminately.

Much fun has been made of the alchemists for insisting that the Great Work, an ostensibly chemical process, can only be performed by adepts who fear and love God, and who practise chastity and numerous other virtues. But there is more common sense in such statements than meets the eye. A drunken debauchee cannot perform delicate manipulations in chemistry or physics; and the force with which the secret is concerned, while as material as the Becquerel emanations, is subtler than any yet known. To play great golf or great billiards, to observe delicate reactions, or to conduct recondite mathematical researches, demands more than physical superiorities. Even the theological requirements of alchemy had meaning in those days. An Elizabethan who was not "at peace with God" was likely to be agitated and thereby unfitted for work demanding freedom from emotional distraction. I have found in practice that the secret of the O.T.O. cannot be used unworthily.

It is interesting in this connection to recall how it came into my possession. It had occurred to me to write a book, *The Book of Lies, which is also*

falsely called Breaks, the wanderings or falsifications of the one thought of Frater Perdurabo which thought is itself untrue.

Each of its 93 chapters was to expound some profound Magical Dogma in an epigrammatic and sometimes humorous form. The Qabbalistic value of the number of each chapter was to determine its subject. I wrote one or more daily at lunch or dinner by the aid of the god Dionysus. One of these chapters bothered me. I could not write it. I invoked Dionysus with peculiar fervour, but still without success. I went off in desperation to "change my luck", by doing something entirely contrary to my inclinations. In the midst of my disgust, the spirit came upon me and I scribbled the chapter down by the light of a farthing dip. When I read it over, I was as discontented as before, but I stuck it into the book in a sort of anger at myself as a deliberate act of spite towards my readers.

Shortly after publication, the O.H.O. came to me. (At that time I did not realize that there was anything in the O.T.O. beyond a convenient compendium of the more important truths of Free Masonry.) He said that since I was acquainted with the supreme secret of the Order, I must be allowed the IX° and obligated in regard to it. I protested that I knew no such secret. He said, "But you have printed it in the plainest language." I said that I could not have done so because I did not know it. He went to the bookshelves and, taking out a copy of *The Book of Lies*, pointed to a passage in the despised chapter. It instantly flashed upon me. The entire symbolism, not only of Free Masonry but of many other traditions, blazed upon my spiritual vision. From that moment the O.T.O. assumed its proper importance in my mind. I understood that I held in my hands the key to the future progress of humanity. I applied myself at once to learn all that he could teach me, finding to my extreme surprise that this was little enough. He fully understood the importance of the matter and he was a man of considerable scientific attainment in many respects; yet he had never made a systematic study of the subject and had not even applied his knowledge to his purposes, except in rare emergencies. As soon as I was assured by experience that the new force was in fact capable of accomplishing the theoretically predictable results, I devoted practically the whole of my spare time to a course of experiments.

I may conclude this chapter with the general remark that I believe that my proposals for reconstituting freemasonry on the lines above laid down should prove critically important. Civilization is crumbling under our eyes and I believe that the best chance of saving what little is worth saving, and re-building the Temple of the Holy Ghost on plans, and with material and workmanship, which shall be free from the errors of the former, lies with the O.T.O.

* The ignorance of Masons is quite boundless. In the Red Cross of Rome and Constantine Degree, for example, we read, "Lord, God of Sabbath."

No one knows the difference between ShBTh and TzBATH!!

CHAPTER 109

BOOK IX

CHAPTER III

1913

In the early part of 1913, my work had apparently settled down to a regular routine. Everything went very well but nothing startling occurred. On March 3rd, the *Ragged Ragtime Girls* opened at the Old Tivoli. It was an immediate success and relieved my mind of all preoccupations with worldly affairs. Most of my time was devoted to developing the work of the O.T.O. In May I took a short holiday in France and the Channel Islands. Only one incident is worthy of record. I had gone down to my beloved Forest of Fontainebleau for a walk. One morning, climbing the Rocher d'Avon, I saw a serpent cross my path. A little higher the same thing happened. This time I was impelled to kill the reptile, which I did.

I took it into my head that the Masters had sent this as a warning that treachery was at work in London. I returned and found that Cremers was intriguing against me; and that, in particular, she had corrupted the heart of Leila Waddell. The O.H.O., moreover, had found out that the Grand Hierophant of the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Masonry, John Yarker, had died some months earlier and that his death had been concealed from his colleagues by the machinations of a sort of man named Wedgwood, in the interest of Annie Besant who wanted to obtain control of the Rite. The outrage was baroque, it being the first condition of membership that the candidate should be a Freemason in good standing under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of England. However the conspirators had illegally convened a secret council at Manchester to elect a successor to Yarker. I was deputed to attend and convey the protests of the various Grand Masters on the continent. I did so. I challenged the legality of the council. I showed that Wedgwood was not a freemason at all. I exposed the whole intrigue. At the conclusion of my speech (printed in *Equinox*, Vol. I, No. X) the meeting was adjourned *sine die*. A council was then legally convened; and a man designated by Yarker himself as his successor in one of his last letters to me was elected Grand Master for Britain, with myself as his principal officer. Yarker's office as Grand Hierophant was filled by Dr. Encausse (Papus), the Grand Master of France.

Having accomplished these duties, I was free to accompany the *Ragged Ragtime Girls* to Moscow, where they were engaged for the summer, at the

Aquarium. They were badly in need of protection. Leila Waddell was the only one with a head on her shoulders. Of the other six, three were dipsomanics, four nymphomaniacs, two hysterically prudish, and all ineradicably convinced that outside England everyone was a robber, ravisher and assassin. They all carried revolvers, which they did not know how to use; though prepared to do so on the first person who spoke to them.

At the Russian frontier, we plunged from civilization and order, headlong into confusion and anarchy. No one on the train could speak a word even of German. We were thrown out at Warsaw into a desolation which could hardly have been exceeded had we dropped on the moon. At last we found a loafer who spoke a little German, but no man knew or cared about the trains to Moscow. We ultimately drove to another station. A train was due to leave, but they would not find us accommodation. We drove once more across the incoherent city and this time found room in a train which hoped to go to Moscow at the average rate of some ten miles an hour. The compartment contained shelves covered with loose dirty straw on which the passengers indiscriminately drank, gambled, quarrelled and made love. There was no discipline, no order, no convenience. At first I blamed myself, my ignorance of the language and so on, for the muddle in Warsaw; but the British Consul told me that he had himself been held up there by railway mismanagement on one occasion for forty-eight hours. When we reached Moscow there was no one at the station who could take charge of our part. We found an hotel for ourselves, and rooms for the girls, more by good luck than design. About one in the morning they sent for Leila to rescue them. She found them standing on rickety tables, screaming with fear. They had been attacked by bed-bugs. Luckily I had warned Leila that in Russia the bug is as inseparable from the bed as the snail from his shell.

In a day or two things calmed down. Then there came suddenly upon me a period of stupendous spiritual impulse — even more concentrated than that of 1911. In a café, I met a young Hungarian girl named Anny Ringler; tall, tense, lean as a starving leopardess, with wild insatiable eyes and a long straight thin mouth, a scarlet scar which seemed to ache with the anguish of hunger for some satisfaction beyond earth's power to supply. We came together with irresistible magnetism. We could not converse in human language. I had forgotten nearly all my Russian; and her German was confined to a few broken cries. But we had not need of speech. The love between us was ineffably intense. It still inflames my inmost spirit. She had passed beyond the region where pleasure had meaning for her. She could only feel through pain, and my own means of making her happy was to inflict physical cruelties as she directed. This kind of relation was altogether new to me; and it was perhaps because of this, intensified as it was by the

environment of the self-torturing soul of Russia, that I became inspired to create for the next six weeks.

How stupid it is, by the way, that one is obliged to use words in senses inappropriate to, and sometimes incompatible with, the meaning which one wishes to convey! Thus the idea of cruelty is bound up with that of the unwillingness of the patient, so that in the case of masochism the use of the word is ridiculous. We fail to see straight on such points whenever they concern emotional complexes like love. Love, that is, as the wrong-headed Anglo-Saxon defines it. We do not call it cruel to offer a man a cigar, though a small boy may suffer intensely from smoking one. An enormous amount of erroneous thinking springs from the mental laziness which allows us to acquiesce in a standardized relation between two things which is, in fact, dependent upon occasional conditions.

This constantly leads to the grossest injustice and stupidity. Words like "miscreant", "atheist" and similar terms of abuse in matters which excite the emotions of the vulgar, are constantly applied as labels to people whom they nowise fit. For instance, Huxley was branded as a materialist, Thomas Paine as an atheist, when they were nothing of the sort. It was particularly annoying during the war to observe the indiscriminate plastering of people with such mud as "pro-German", "pacifist", "Bolshevist", etc., without the slightest reference to their actual opinions. The proof of the pudding is in the eating; my relations with Anny must be judged by their fruits; happiness, inspiration, spirituality and romantic idealism.

I saw Anny almost every day for an hour or so. The rest of my time I spent (for the most part) in the gardens of the Hermitage or the Aquarium, writing for dear life. In Moscow, in the summer months, day fades into night, night brightens into day with imperceptible subtlety. There is a spiritual clarity in the air itself which is indescribable. From time to time the bells reinforce the silence with an unearthly music which never jars or tires. The hours stream by so intoxicatingly that the idea of time itself disappears from consciousness.

In all that I wrote in those six weeks, I doubt if there is a single word of Anny. She was the soul of my expression, and so beyond the possibility of speech; but she lifted me to heights of ecstasy that I had never before consciously attained and revealed to me secrets deeper than I ever deemed. I wrote things that I knew not and made no mistake. My work was infinitely varied, yet uniformly distinguished. I expressed the soul of Moscow in a poem *The City of God*, published some months afterwards in the *English Review*. It is a "Hashish Dream come true". Every object of sense, from the desolation of the steppes and the sheer architecture of the city, to the art, atti-

tude and amusements of the people, stings one to the soul, each an essential element of a supreme sacrament. At the same time, the reality of all these things, using the word in its grossest sense, consummates the marriage of the original antinomies which exist in one's mind between the ideal and the actual.

A prose pendant to this poem is my essay *The Heart of Holy Russia*, which many Russians competent to judge have assured me struck surer to the soul of Russia than anything of Dostoyevsky. Their witness fills me with more satisfaction as to the worth of my work than anything else has ever done.

Another poem, *Morphia*, has no ostensible reference to Russia, but the insight into the psychology of the "addict" was indubitably conferred by my illumination. I had no experience, even at second hand, of the effects of the drug; yet I was assured by a distinguished man of letters who had himself suffered from its malice, that I have expressed to the utmost the terrific truth. He could hardly believe at first that I had written it without actual knowledge.

During this period the full interpretation of the central mystery of Freemasonry became clear in consciousness, and I expressed it in dramatic form in *The Ship*. The lyrical climax is in some respects my supreme achievement in invocation; in fact, the chorus beginning:

"Thou who art I beyond all I am. . . ."

seemed to me worthy to be introduced as the anthem into the *Ritual of the Gnostic Catholic Church* which, later in the year, I prepared for the use of the O.T.O., the central ceremony of its public and private celebration, corresponding to the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church.

While dealing with this subject I may as well outline its scope completely. Human nature demands (in the case of most people) the satisfaction of the religious instinct, and, to very many, this may best be done by ceremonial means. I wished therefore to construct a ritual through which people might enter into ecstasy as they have always done under the influence of appropriate ritual. In recent years, there has been an increasing failure to attain this object, because the established cults shock their intellectual convictions and outrage their common sense. Thus their minds criticize their enthusiasm; they are unable to consummate the union of their individual souls with the universal soul as a bridegroom would be to consummate his marriage if his love were constantly reminded that its assumptions were intellectually absurd.

I resolved that my Ritual should celebrate the sublimity of the operation of universal forces without introducing disputable metaphysical theories. I would neither make nor imply any statement about nature which would not be endorsed by the most materialistic man of science. On the surface this may sound difficult; but in practice I found it perfectly simple to combine the most rigidly rational conceptions of phenomena with the most exalted and enthusiastic celebration of their sublimity. (This Ritual has been published in *The International*, New York, March 1918, and in *The Equinox*, Volume III, No. 1.)

Numerous other poems, essays and short stories were written during this summer. In particular there is a sort of novel, *The Lost Continent*, purporting to give an account of the civilization of Atlantis. I sometimes feel that this lacks artistic unity. At times it is a fantastic rhapsody describing my ideals of Utopian society; but some passages are a satire on the conditions of our existing civilization, while others convey hints of certain profound magical secrets, or anticipations of discoveries in science.

From my brief description of the conditions of travel in Russia, the intelligent should be able to deduce what I thought of the immediate political future of the country. I returned to England with the settled conviction that in the event of a serious war (the scrap with Japan was really an affair of outposts, like our own Boer War) the ataxic giant would collapse within a few months. England's traditional fear of Slav aggression seemed to me ridiculous; and France's faith in her ally, pathetic. The event has more than justified my vision. I have no detailed knowledge of politics; but, just as my essay, *The Heart of Holy Russia*, told the inmost truth without even superficial knowledge of the facts which were its symptoms, so I possess an immediate intuition of the state of a country without cognizance of the statistics. I am thus in the position of Cassandra, foreseeing and foretelling fate, while utterly unable to compel conviction.

I cannot leave the subject of Russia without rescuing from oblivion some of the significant stories which I had from the excellent British Consul, Mr. Groves. The most deliciously fantastic is that of what I may call the Phantom Battleship. This vessel cost well over two million sterling. She was to be the last word in naval construction. She was launched at Odessa in the presence of a great gathering of notables, and the scene lavishly photographed and described in the newspapers. Alas! upon her maiden cruise she was *spurlos versenkt*. The fact of the matter was that she had never existed! Her cost had gone straight into the pockets of the various officials, the photographs were simply faked, and the descriptions imaginary.

Here is another ray of searchlight on Russian rottenness. A crisis had arisen between England and France. A strong Chauvinist element was urging the government to hurl a flat defiance at St James'. The Minister of Marine was asked to report on the readiness of the French Navy. He replied in terms of absolute confidence; but within an hour of his doing so, one of his officers came to him in agitation and begged him to make a personal inspection of the Arsenal at Toulon. He rushed south on an express engine and found that the fortress was absolutely denuded of munitions. They had been quietly sold off by a gang of dishonest officials and the reports systematically falsified.

On this discovery, he advised the President to agree with England quickly while he was in the way with her, which was done. The Russian Ambassador got wind of this affair; it suddenly struck him that Sebastopol might be in the same street as Toulon; he hurried to St. Petersburg and put the matter personally before the Tsar. Investigation proved his fears well-founded. The Tsar was roused to bite. Every officer above a certain rank was left in a room with a revolver. They had the choice between suicide and shameful execution. Naturally, they all chose the former and the whole affair was hushed up by reporting their decease from sickness, accident and so on during the next few weeks.

At Vladivostok corruption was so universal and open that on pay day an agent of the contractor sat at the next desk to the naval paymaster and handed each man his share of the profits of the organized system of swindling the government.

One last luminous anecdote. The representative of a Birmingham munition factory called on our Consul about some permit or other, and told him the following story. The Russian naval agent in England had accepted the tender of his firm for supplying an immense number of shells. "About the price, now," he said to the managing director, "of course we pay you £150,000" (or whatever it was) "but understand that so much of this must go to Admiral A., so much to Councillor B., so much to the Grand Duke C." — a long list followed. "My dear sir," cried the Englishman, aghast, "surely I have made it plain that our price is bed rock. We shan't take a penny of profit. We only put in so low a tender because trade is so bad and we don't want to shut down." The Russian spread his hands mournfully. "Why, hang it," exclaimed the manufacturer. "If we were to allow you all those rake-offs, we should have to make the shells of tinfoil and load them with sawdust." The Russian brightened instantly. "But exactly," said he; "how I admire you practical English! I knew you would find a way out." And that was how they settled the business, and those were the shells with which Rodjiestvenski was sent round the world to meet the navy of Japan.

Our own red tape was responsible for a really Gilbertian stupidity in Consular matters. It had been decided to raise Moscow from a Consulate to a Consulate-General. Mr. Groves had been for many years in Moscow and spoke practically no Polish. Our Consul at Warsaw had been in that city also for many years and spoke practically no Russian. But he was senior in the service to Groves by a year or so. It was therefore impossible to continue Groves at Moscow over the head of the man in Warsaw, and they were therefore ordered to change their position, each being ejected from the city whose language he spoke, and whose affairs he had by heart, into one where the conditions were utterly unfamiliar and the language unintelligible. It was precisely the imbecility described in Gilbert's poem *Etiquette*:—

“And has the oysters, which he hates, in layers thick.
And Somers has the turtle — turtle always makes him sick.”

From early boyhood my imagination had been excited by accounts of the Great Fair at Nijni Novgorod. Finding “the time and the place and the loved one all together”, at the cost of a slight effort, I decided to trot off and see *The Fun of the Fair*, by which title I called the poem in which I describe my excursion. The way in which I wrote it is, I imagine, unique in literature. I wrote down in heroic couplets every incident of the adventure exactly as it occurred and when it occurred. The only variation is that occasionally I permit myself to exaggerate the facts (as in enumerating the races of men whom I met) when the spirit of humour takes charge.

This poem should have appeared in the *English Review* in the autumn of 1914. It was pushed out to make way for my *Appeal to the American Republic*, re-printed from boyhood's happy days, with such politically necessary revisions as “the traitor Prussian” instead of “the traitor Russian”. It has thus never yet seen the light; and, as it seems to me interesting as an account of fascinating conditions which have passed into history, and also as illustrating my own point of view about ordinary life, the scope and import of my observations, my method of travelling and the spiritual nourishment which I derive therefrom, I propose to print it in full as a chapter of this Autohagiography.

CHAPTER 110

This Chapter comprises the poem *The Fun of the Fair*.

CHAPTER 111

BOOK IX

CHAPTER V

From Moscow to New York

As I was sitting at lunch one day in The Hermitage beginning a lyrical ritual intended for the use of an individual in his private work, I found myself, in the middle of a sentence, at a loss for the next word. I have already explained how swiftly and spontaneously my spirit soars from stanza to stanza without need of previous reflection or subsequent revision. In all these weeks my pen had swung like a skater over the paper. Now suddenly it stopped; an eagle in full flight stricken by a shaft. That sentence has never been completed. The inspiration was withdrawn from me. My light had gone out like an arc-light when the cable is cut. It was long before I wrote again.

Three days later, the contract at The Aquarium was due to expire; and those days proved to me how perfectly my existence depended on inspiration. The city, from a crashing chorus of magical music, a pageant of passionate pleasure, became a cold chaos of inanity. The bells no longer sang; the sun and moon were stagnant, soulless spectres in a senseless sky — like a ghost on the gusts of the gale. I went from miraculous Moscow into a world of inarticulate impressions. St. Petersburg failed to rekindle the wonder and worship which it had awakened in me of old. The Nevski Prospekt seemed narrower, meaner; a mere street. St. Isaacs no longer enthralled me. I was able to compare the Neva with the Nile, the Ganges, the Rangoon River, and even the Rhine, as coldly and critically as Baedeker. My spirit need infinite repose after its incomparable effort, and this repose was granted to it by the voyage to Stockholm.

There are ways amid the Western Isles of Scotland, through the Norwegian fjords, and sometimes upon tropic seas, which speak to the soul in a language unknown to any other scenes. There is a solemnity and a serenity in their continual silence which seem not of this world. But the summer voyage across the Baltic, amid the archipelago is sovereign above any of these. There is no single ripple on the sea, no stirring in the air; the night is indistinguishable from the day, for neither suffers interruption; the steamer skins the surface of the sea as swift and silent as a swallow. One cannot even hear the engines, so utterly does their rhythm interpenetrate the totality of experience. There is a sense of floating in fairyland. One forgets the land whence one has come; one has no vision of the coast to which one is

speeding. It seems impossible that the journey even began, still less, that its end is appointed.

One seems to flit between innumerable islands, some crowned with foliage, some mere bare grey knolls, scarce peeping from the waveless mirror of water. There is a sense of infinite intricacy of intention as the steamer insinuates itself into one curving channel after another, or comes out suddenly from a labyrinth of lyrical islands into a shoreless silence. One's mind is utterly cut off, not only from terrestrial thoughts, but from all definite ideas soever. It is impossible to accept what we commonly call actuality as having any real existence. One neither sleeps nor wakes from the moment when Kronstadt fades to a pale purple phantom of the past till Stockholm springs from the sea, as if the Lethean languor of a dreamless death, a mere deliciously indefinite serenity, were being gently awakened to understand that its unguessed goal was at last in sight. The negative ecstasy of perfect release from the pressure of existence developed into its positive equivalent when the soul, soothed and made strong, by its swoon into stainless silence, was ready to spring, sublimely self-sufficient, to the summit of its starry stature, to grasp and grapple with the manifested majesty of the Most High. . .

. . . In vain have I striven to compel language to convey the meaning of that miraculous voyage. It stands aloof, so pure and perfect in itself that naught can blur its beauty. It remains in my memory uncontaminated by the sordid stupidity of Stockholm, the tedium of the discomfortable dreariness of the return to London.

I found my work precisely where I had left it. The tenth and last number of the *Equinox* was published in due course. There was a certain pride in having triumphed over such opposition, in having "carried on" despite neglect, misunderstanding and treachery; in having achieved so many formidable tasks. There was also infinite satisfaction in so many signal successes. I could not doubt that I had made the Path of Initiation plain. It was beyond doubt that any man of ordinary energy, integrity and intelligence might now attain in a very few months what, until now, had meant years of desperate devotion. I had destroyed the superstition that spiritual success depended on dogma. I was thus able, to some extent, to go fearlessly into the presence of the Secret Chiefs who had chosen me to carry out Their plans for the welfare of mankind, and say with upright head that I had not wholly proved unworthy of Their trust. Yet withal, there was a certain sadness such as, I suppose, every man feels when he comes to the end of a definite stage in his career. Nevertheless, I knew that Those who had thus far used me would not now throw me aside; that higher and holier service would be found for me.

During the autumn and until the solstice I went on with my regular work as usual, but with a sub-conscious awareness that my future lay in other fields; something was sure to happen to change the whole current of my life. Subtly enough, this change came about by diverting me from the public action to which I had so long been bound by the sheer necessity of producing the *Equinox* on definite dates. I began to pay more attention to my own personal progress.

It must here be explained that my innate diffidence forbade me to aspire to the Grade of Magus in any full sense. Such beings appear only in every two thousand years or so. I knew too well my own limitations. It is true that I had been used as a Magus in the Cairo working; that is, I had been chosen to utter the Word of a New Aeon. But I did not regard this as being *my* Word. I felt myself ridiculously unworthy of the position assigned to me in the *Book of the Law* itself. When therefore I proposed to devote myself to my own initiations, I meant no more than this: that I would try to perfect myself in the understanding and powers proper to a Master of the Temple. At the end of 1913, I found myself in Paris with a Zelator of the Order, Frater L. T. I had been working on the theory of the magical method of the O.T.O.; and we decided to test my conclusions by a series of invocations.

We began work on the first day of the year and continued without interruption for six weeks. We invoked the gods Mercury and Jupiter; and obtained many astonishing results of many kinds, ranging from spiritual illumination to physical phenomena. It is impossible to transcribe the entire record, and to give excerpts would only convey a most imperfect and misleading idea of the result. As an example of actual intellectual illumination, however, I may quote the very impressive identification of the Christ of the gospels with Mercury. This came as a complete surprise, we having till then considered him as an entirely solar symbol connected especially with Dionysus, Mithras and Osiris.

"In the beginning was the Word, the Logos, who is Mercury, and is therefore to be identified with Christ. Both are messengers; their birth mysteries are similar; the pranks of their childhood are similar. In the Vision of the Universal Mercury, Hermes is seen descending upon the sea, which refers to Maria. The Crucifixion represents the Caduceus; the two thieves, the two serpents; the cliff in the Vision of the Universal Mercury is Golgotha; Maria is simply Maia with the Solar R in her womb.

The controversy about Christ between the synoptics and John was really a contention between the priests of Bacchus, Sol and Osiris, also, perhaps, of Adonis and Attis, on the one hand, and those of Hermes on the other, at that period when initiation all over the world found it necessary, owing to the

growth of the Roman empire, and the opening up of means of communication, to replace conflicting polytheisms by a synthetic faith. (This is absolutely new to me, this conception of Christ as Mercury.) Some difficulty about the . . . (This sentence is now quite unintelligible.)

To continue the identification, compare Christ's descent into Hell with the function of Hermes as guide of the Dead. Also Hermes leading up Eurydice, and Christ raising up Jairus' daughter. Christ is said to have risen on the third day, because it takes three days for the planet Mercury to become visible after separating from the orb of the sun. (It may be noted here that Mercury and Venus are the planets between us and the sun, as if the Mother and the Son were mediators between us and the Father.)

Note Christ as the Healer, and also his own expression, "The son of Man cometh as a thief in the night"; and also this scripture (Matt. XXIV, 27), "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be."

Note also Christ's relations with the money changers, his frequent parables, and the fact that his first disciple was a publican.

Note also Mercury as the deliverer of Prometheus.

One half of the fish symbol is also common to Christ as Mercury; fish are sacred to Mercury (owing presumably to their quality of movement). (This I did not know before.) Many of Christ's disciples were fishermen and he was always doing miracles in connexion with fish.

Note also Christ as the mediator: "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me", and Mercury as Chokmah through whom alone we can approach Kether.

The Caduceus contains a complete symbol of the Gnosis; the winged sun or phallus represents the joy of life on all planes from the lowest to the highest. The Serpents, besides being active and passive, Horus and Osiris, and all their other well-known attributions are those qualities of Eagle and Lion respectively, of which we know but do not speak. It is the symbol which unites the Microcosm and the Macrocosm, the symbol of the Magical Operation which accomplishes this. The Caduceus is Life itself, and of the universal application. It is the universal solvent. It is quite easy to turn quicksilver into gold on the physical plane, and this will soon be done. New life will flow through the world in consequence. The God now lays his Caduceus upon my lips for silence; bidding me only remember that on the following night he is to come in another form.

The temple was then closed.

Our occasional failures produced results as striking and instructive as our successes. For instance, having made an error in invoking Mercury, and thus having created a current of force contrary to his nature, we observed that events of a Mercurial character, no matter how normal, failed to occur. For one thing, all communications with the outer world were completely cut off for some time. It had been arranged that I should receive a daily report from London from my secretary. None arrived for five days; and that although nothing had gone wrong in London. No explanation was ever forthcoming. This is one of the many incidents tending to similar conclusions, all explicable only on the theory that the natural energy, which is normally present and is necessary to the occurrence of certain types of event, had somehow been inhibited.

The Jupiterian phenomena were especially remarkable. We performed in all sixteen operations to invoke this force. It seemed at first as if our work actually increased the normal inertia. Jupiterian phenomena which we had every right to expect simply failed to happen. Even in the matter of banqueting, which we were supposed to do lavishly in his honour, the opposition became overwhelming. Hungry as we might be, we seemed unable to force ourselves to eat even a light meal. Quite suddenly the invisible barrier broke down and Jupiterian phenomena of the most unexpected kind simply rained on us. To mention one incident only; a Brother who had always been desperately poor suddenly came into a fortune and insisted on contributing £500 to the use of the Order.

I must mention one incident of the Paris Working as being of general interest, outside technical Magick. During the operation I had a bad attack of influenza, which settled down to very severe bronchitis. I was visited one evening by an old friend of mine and her young man, who very kindly and sensibly suggested that I should find relief if I smoked a few pipes of opium. They accordingly brought the apparatus from their apartment and we began. (Opium, by the way, is sacred to Jupiter, and to Chesed, Mercy, as being sovereign against pain, and also as enabling the soul to free itself from its gross integument and realize its majesty.) My bronchitis vanished; I went off to sleep; my guests retiring without waking me. In my sleep I dreamt; and when I woke the dream remained absolutely perfect in my consciousness, down to the minutest details. It was a story, a subtle exposure of English stupidity, set in a frame of the craziest and most fantastically gorgeous workmanship. Ill as I was, I jumped out of bed and wrote down the story offhand. I called it *The Strategem*. No doubt it was inspired by Jupiter, for it was the first short story that I had ever written which was accepted at once.

More: I was told — nothing in my life ever made me prouder — that Joseph Conrad said it was the best short story he had read in ten years.

I must give a brief outline of the plot — to introduce a tragic jest. A pompous Englishman and a small dark bearded lively individual find themselves obliged to wait on the platform of a wayside junction. The Englishman assumes that the other man is French, and feels distrustful, disdainful, and antipathetic accordingly. The supposed Frenchman, seeing boredom ahead, decides to play a practical joke, accosts the other, and insists on telling him a long wild murderous story, every word of which increases the alarm of his hearer. His tale becomes continually more obscure and senseless. The Frenchman has been sent to New Caledonia for his crimes, and plans to escape with the aid of a brilliant professor who has eaten his aged mother to prove a scientific theory. The professor proposes to escape "by a stratagem". The train comes in; and the narrator winds up his story rapidly. The professor turns out to be insane. His stratagem is sheer nonsense. Worse follows: it isn't the professor at all. The Englishman, interested despite himself bleats out: "But how did you escape?" and the last sentence is as follows: "By a stratagem", replied the Irishman, and jumped into another compartment.

The whole idea of the story. the essence of the satire and the humour, consists in this revelation; that the dark man was Irish, and that he had invented his ferocious darrago as a stratagem to escape from the boredom of an Englishman's company. The editor however, corrected the word "Irishman" to "Frenchman" in the proofs which he sent me! It was a delightful comment on that very English stupidity on which my story turned. But what beats me altogether is this, he had failed utterly to understand a single word I had written; why in the name of all the Professors that ever wrote about Shakespeare did he accept it?

We ourselves became identified with Jupiter, but in different aspects. Frater L. T. was for some months following the personification of generosity, through himself with the most meagre resources. All sorts of strangers planted themselves on him and he entertained them. In my own case, I became that type of Jupiter which we connect with the idea of prosperity, authority and amateness. I received numerous occult dignities; I seemed to have plenty of money without quite knowing how it happened; and I found myself exercising an almost uncanny attraction upon every woman that came into my circle of acquaintance.

To me, however, as a student of nature, the one important result of this work was the proof of the efficacy of the magical method employed. Henceforth, I made it my principal study, kept a detailed record of my researches,

and began to discover the rational explanation of its operation and the conditions of success.

More important yet, in the deepest sense, was a feature of the result which I failed to observe at the time, and even for some years after. In veiled language are hints, unmistakable as soon as detected, that I was destined to attain the Grade of Magus, and that I was even then, by means of the Working itself, being prepared for the Initiation thereto. The actual ceremony (using the word in its widest and deepest sense) extended over some years and is in fact the sole key to the events of that period. An outline therefore must consequently form a separate chapter, for without the light thereby thrown upon the facts of my career, they must appear incoherent, inconsequential and unintelligible. I was destined to undergo a series of experiences which apparently contradict the whole tendency of the past. My actions seem incompatible with my character; my environment seems incomprehensibly unnatural; in short, the effect of the narrative is to suggest that by some jugglery the life of a totally different individual has intruded upon my own.

Now, years afterwards, it still seems to me as if for the whole period of the initiation I had been transported into an unfamiliar world; their history is a magical history in the most comically complete sense. Its events are neither real nor rational — save only in relation to the condition of an experiment, exactly as a candidate in Freemasonry sees, hears, speaks and acts with his normal senses, yet in a way which has no relation to his previous experience. The stolid old gentleman in evening dress is really King Solomon. He hears a rigmarole both false and meaningless in itself, which he must understand as conveying something entirely other than it apparently implies. His words are put into his mouth, and produce an effect neither expected, desired, nor understood. He performs a series of gestures neither comprehensible in themselves, nor even (so far as he can see) calculated to assist his purpose. And even when, at the end, he finds that he has complied with the prescribed conditions and achieved his object, he is unable to bring what has taken place into rational relation with his ordinary life. The situation is only the more bewildering that from first to last each incident in itself is perfectly commonplace.

Such is my own point of view with regard to my adventures in America. They are all perfectly probably in themselves, perfectly intelligible regarded as details of a ritual; but they contradict every probability of human life as commonly understood. The chain of my career snaps suddenly; yet it continues as if it had never been broken from the moment that my initiation is over. The effect is to persuade me that this period of my life is in the nature of a dream. I meet strange monsters; one phantom succeeds another with-

out a shadow of coherence. Even those incidents which help me to recognize that I am the central figure of the dream complete my conviction of its unreality.

CHAPTER 112

BOOK X

CHAPTER I

AMERICA

It is one of the regular jokes in India that people on the strength of the season in Calcutta write a book about the Peninsula, but even the tourist of genius, like Charles Dickens, is far more presumptuous when he tackles the United States. India indeed is huge and varied beyond hope of human comprehension, but America, though its population is only a third of that of Hindustan, is composed of elements infinitely more varied, besides which India does at least stand still and allow one to look at it, whereas the United States undergoes a revolutionary change continually. I passed through the country in 1900. In 1906 I found it unrecognizable. My third visit in 1914 gave me another surprise, and during the following five years when I was actually resident the panorama shifted with kaleidoscopic swiftness.

I have now learnt enough to realize that any attempt at description must inevitably be futile and that any opinion cannot but be presumptuous and misleading. Yet the subject is by far the most important in every respect which I have ever had to consider and I cannot possibly offer my autohagiography to the impatient public without doing my best to set down what I think.

Intellectual generalizations must be discarded as insulting to my own intelligence as much as to the reader's. There is only one possible procedure; to state boldly a number of striking facts which came under my direct observation, leaving their significance and importance to fight for their own ends, but also to call upon the only testimony of equally assured liability, my spiritual intuition.

I admit frankly that the whole of my intellectual opinion and practically all my personal prejudice combine to condemn the United States wholesale with absolute contempt and loathing and this attitude will undoubtedly manifest itself whenever the subject crops up in the course of these reminiscences, for my normal conscious self is generally speaking as the writer of these pages. Against this my subconscious intuition, whose judgment is to be trusted absolutely, is altogether opposed. I propose therefore to set forth first of all that which the Holy Spirit within me moves to utter, and afterwards to record the observed facts which influence my human consciousness

to be so antagonistic to almost every feature of life and thought as I found it.

I definitely appeal to my American readers to stand apart from their natural gratification at the first and their natural indignation at the second of these sections of my work, and to understand that my spiritual apprehension of truth represents my real self, while my intellectual perceptions are necessarily coloured by my nationality, caste, education and personal predilection. I am not trying to shirk the responsibility for the harsh judgments which I promulgate. I should prefer to keep silent. I speak only in the hope that Americans may learn how shocking much of their morals and manners is to the educated European, and I insist upon the intensity of my utmost love for them and faith in their future, so that they may discriminate between my criticisms and those of such people as Mrs. Asquith who are unable to go deeper than the facts and cherish an unalloyed animosity.

Let me then begin by an analysis of my inmost spiritual sympathy for the people of the United States. First of all, let me explain about Europe. The war of 1914, and its sequel of revolution and economic catastrophe, is in my eyes the culmination of its many centuries of corruption by Christianity. The initial lesion was due to the decay of the Roman republican virtue. The immediate effect of the rise of Christianity was the break-up of social order, the suppression of philosophy and scholarship by fanaticism and the gradual engulfment of enlightenment in the Dark Ages. A partial resurrection was brought about by the Renaissance and from that moment began the long struggle between science and freedom on the one hand and dogmatism and tyranny on the other. During the nineteenth century, the triumph of the former seemed assured and almost complete. The forces of obscurantism and reaction were driven into dark corners but their natural cunning developed by centuries of experience inspired them to a final effort to regain their lost prestige and power. They adopted a new policy. They ceased to oppose openly the advance of science and the associated ethical and political principles which Science indicated. They clipped the claws of the Lion of Enlightenment by establishing an unspoken convention to the effect that it was bad form to insist upon applying the new ideas to practical politics. The Church of England was to retain its official status in spite of its spiritual death. Dissent and agnosticism ought to be tolerated indeed but ignored. The system of social snobbery was to continue concurrently with the boast of the triumph of democratic principles. In every subject which might give rise to controversy there was a tacit agreement not to tell the truth. The people who persecuted Byron, Shelley, Darwin, Bradlaugh and Foote smiled amiably at the much more outspoken blasphemies of Bernard Shaw. The hollowness of Christianity and feudalism became shameless. No one dared to defend his convictions, if indeed he possessed them. There was a universal conspiracy

to shirk facing the facts of life, with the result that the most complete moral darkness shrouded the causes and conduct of the war. We maintain our stupid shame with desperate determinations. A sham peace succeeded the sham war and the only realities were the revolutions which reduced civilization to chaos. Such reactions as that of Fascismo are manifestly phantasmagoric and I cannot but conclude that at least for a long period anarchy will triumph in Europe. I turn therefore to America from an expiring solar system to a nebulous mass which I expect to develop into an organized galaxy.

The elements of the United States are heterogeneous in a manner unprecedented in history. Every race, language and creed of Europe is represented. There is, moreover, an established contingent of Africans, a new infiltration of Asiatics, of whom the Jews are a critically important factor in the social and economic problems of the day, while even the Far East, despite fanatical opposition, is seeking to obtain a foothold. That so many inimical elements should consent to even a semblance of fraternity indicates some common spiritual impulse sufficiently strong to dominate lesser prejudices. I find this unity in the aspiration to escape from the restrictions of crystallized conventions. Germans who resented military service, Jews who found the pressure of persecution and ostracism unendurable, Armenians obsessed by the fear of massacre, Italians to whom the pettiness, poverty and priestcraft of their country were paralysing, Irish insulted and injured by English oppression, all alike bring me to America as a paradise of elbow room, liberty and prosperity.

One aspect of this aspiration has a more general bearing. All Americans are eager for power, in one form or another. They therefore pursue with passionate ardour every path which promises knowledge as well as those which lead directly to mastery of environment. So powerful and so irrepresible is this enthusiasm that the most grotesque disillusionments fail to disgust them and no charlatanism so crude, no pretence so puerile, no humbug so outrageous as to deter them from running after the next new religion. Their dauntless innocence persuades me that just as soon as they have acquired the critical faculty, they will progress spiritually more swiftly and sanely than has ever been known.

At present two hindrances hamstring them. Firstly, the desperate death struggles of dogmatism, and secondly the practically universal ignorance of the elements of spiritual science. They insist on impossible ideals and hoax themselves about their holiness to an extreme that English hypocrisy at its zenith never approximates and their credulity is so crass that the followers of Joanna Southcott, the Agapemonites and the peculiar people seem by comparison philosophers and sages. Yet all this extravagance is but as the froth upon the crest of an irresistible breaker. Even the puritan cruelty, the

social savagery, the extravagant racial ribaldry and the monomaniac stampede to acquire dollars testify more to the energy and enthusiasm of the people than to its casual concomitants of ignorance, delusion and fatuity which impress the ordinary observer. They are shrewd; none shrewder, lacking only the data to direct the shrewdness. They will soon discover how to distinguish between genuine teachers and quacks, as also the fact that the power of money is limited and can buy no food either for spirit or soul. They will then pursue the path of evolution on sane and scientific lines eschewing unsound methods and unsatisfactory aims.

My instinct has always assured me of this and stimulated my eagerness to educate and initiate everyone I met. I felt that fundamentally we were brothers, and I believe that this intense sympathy was just what deepened my disgust and darkened my despair at the impossibility of reaching them. Morally, socially, intellectually, the gulf was not to be bridged. There was no common ground of comprehension. When I insisted on scientific methods, I met with fear lest the foundations of their faiths should be shaken and every one of them come to some crazy creed, pompous, pretentious and puerile. When I tried to show them that conventional canons of conduct were children of circumstance, belief in whose absolute ethical value merely masked the face of truth and prevented them from perceiving nature, they were simply shocked. They had never inquired why any given virtue should be valid. The same of course applied to the question of creed. Even those who wandered from teacher to teacher were fanatically convinced that their momentary cult was perfect at every point. I could not persuade them that their admitted fickleness was evidence that their present creed reflected a mere mood.

For all that, I saw that all this silliness, obstinacy, prejudice, cocksureness and emotional exaggeration, were but tokens of nature's efforts to throw off by externalizing them the poisons secreted by their intellectual infection. There was only one serious symptom whose prognostic argues a fatal issue; this was that in nearly all cases there was an underlying assumption that truth and righteousness were definite entities to which all individuals should be compelled to conform. They implicitly confirmed the existence of an absolute independence of individual differences. The development of this can only culminate in an inquisitorial insistence on universal adherence to some fixed form of faith, representing the triumph of one of the contending creeds; just as in the early history of Christianity the original multiplicity of doctrine, betokening as it did the impossibility of making the Church a political engine, was suppressed by the council. The heresy hunt started an arbitrary unity in throne, and infallibility invented to discipline the Church militant on the obvious principle of polemics.

My real fear for America is that when it finds a few axioms on which a working majority can agree, a few dogmas to which it can rally, there will be an immediate effort to crush out all incompatible ideas, and even to atrophy its own possibilities of further development by extirpating any growth of genius within its own ranks, exactly as was done by Rome. In this event the tyranny would be infinitely worse than anything in the history of Christianity, for the worst of the moral defects of Americans is cold-blooded cruelty — their struggle against Nature and the corrupting influences of such vices as drunkenness and sexual immorality has let them to value the harder virtues at the expense of the more human.

The latter indeed are regarded as vices even by those who cherish them in secret. Thus, in spite of the extraordinary diversity of creeds, cults, codes, fads and ideals, there lies the instinct to compel conformity. The whole history of the country has hammered into their heads the evident truth that unity is strength. Their very motto affirms it — *E Pluribus Unum*. Their history itself bears witness to this. What was the Civil War but a murderous struggle against secession? Prussian methods were used to dragoon the pacifist majority into fighting Germany, and prohibition was put over by every unscrupulous trick against the will of the people. To-day, we see the Ku Klux Klan attempting to impose, by secret society methods of anonymous menace backed by boycott, arson and assassination, the ideals of a clique; and nearly as noxious are the arrogant aims and brutal tactics of Catholics and Freemasons.

In their own way Capital and Labour are influenced by the same idea, that of imposing a rigid and uniform rule on the entire community regardless of local conditions or any other considerations which might make for diversity. I need hardly point out that this principle is in flat contradiction with the Declaration of Independence in the constitution. I am afraid that the root of the evil lies in the psychological fact that men proclaim the principles of freedom only when they are suffering from oppression. No sooner do they become free and prosperous than they begin to perceive the duties of discipline.

It is already shockingly manifest that the moral correspondences of this tendency are in operation. As Fabre D'Olivet points out in his examination of *The Golden Verses of Pythagoras*, initiation, that is progress, requires that at every point the candidate should be confronted with the free choice between actions dependent upon the three principal virtues, courage, temperance and prudence. The aim of American statecraft is on the contrary to atrophy these virtues by making them unnecessary, and indeed limiting full choice to unimportant matters. A third spiritual danger arises from the dogmatic idealism which determines social and economic conditions. So multiform is the

prevailing error that the only course is to oppose to it the true doctrine as follows:

The growth of a nation depends on its ability to draw the greatest nourishment from the greatest area of soil as against the pressure of rival plants. This depends, *sequis paribus*, on numbers. Now numbers depend on the willingness and ability of women to make child-bearing and rearing the main business of life, and of the men to protect them and support them at their task. The surplus wealth may, nevertheless, be invested in another way, calculated to increase efficiency and potential; that is, in the support of a class which is not directly wealth producing as such, the class of the learned. This class must be abundantly supplied with leisure and the apparatus for research and freed from all anxiety or similar distractions. It should in fact be treated as a guild or spiritual fraternity. The existence of any other class which does not pull its own weight in the boat is evidence of plethora.

The above principles are extremely simple and self-evident, but in America they have been pushed out of sight by doctrinal propositions based on *a priori* considerations of things as they ought to be in the mind of the dogmatist.

I still hope that experience will eliminate these errors, and in that hope I address myself first of all to the American republic, notwithstanding the mass of intellectual antipathy from misunderstanding which seems to preclude the possibility of my philosophy for finding exceptions.

CHAPTER 113

Having thus affirmed the instinctive attitude to the American people, let me turn to the other extreme and record a number of observations which seem specially significant, the deductions from which appear unmitigatingly damning, but the antinomy with my spiritual standpoint is to be overcome by interpreting these flagrant and atrocious faults as symptomatic only of infantile and adolescent aberration, with the exception of a very few individuals indeed, and those, almost invariably, either of pedigree stock or educated by experience of Europe.

An adult American is a *rara avis*. The actual conditions which confront the developing intelligence are so incoherent and unintelligible that the unity of background which Europeans inherit and imagine to be the common property of mankind is absent.

Let me illustrate my meaning. In Europe we take for granted such first principles as the limits of the possibility of development of any given type of energy. We assume, for instance, that the efficiency of the aeroplane depends upon the ratio of power to weight in the first place, the increase of the former being limited by the theoretical potential of the sources of energy at our disposal. We also reflect that increase of size, power and velocity involves the overcoming of obstacles which become more formidable in geometrical progression. Again, at certain points in the advance, entirely new considerations begin to apply, such as the resistance of our material to the pressure of air, and the physiological potentiality of the airman. To us this nexus seems an integral element of necessity.

The average American argues in complete ignorance of any such restriction. To him, to double the power is to double the pace and so on. His whole experience inflamed by his native enthusiasm reminds him that during the last century innumerable inventions, which the greatest authorities declared to be theoretically impossible, are now in daily use.

Consider the discovery of radium; how it revealed the existence of a form of energy enormously greater in quality than anything previously known. More, we can now calculate that atomic energy — could we only grasp it — would stand to radium as radium to steam, or more so. He is therefore perfectly right in refusing to discredit, on common sense grounds, the report that a cannon has been constructed to carry a shell across the Atlantic, or a flying machine to go to the moon; an instrument capable of detecting any conceivable fact about a man from a drop of his blood; of penetrating the past or foretelling the future. There is, in fact, no theoretical limit

to human attainment, for the simple reason that Nature is known to contain all conceivable and inconceivable forms of energy and perceptive potentiality. Concentrated on this conviction, he constantly makes himself ridiculous, through ignorance of the details of the patient progress of science. Like other varieties of faith it lays its votaries open to the most fantastic follies.

I have shown elsewhere the psychological considerations which make Americans accept this liability to error as an evil less than that of hypocritical scepticism. The condition is, of course, somewhat similar to that produced by the administration of cocaine and the analogy is confirmed by the fact that American nerves are ragged and raw. The realities of life wreck their victim. In case of a general collapse of civilization under economic stress, such as seem actually imminent at present, it is to be feared that the shock to their spiritual self-sufficiency will find them unable to resist reactions. America, resenting the arrogance of Europe, refuses angrily to admit the extent of her indebtedness, but in the case of European anarchy, the main source of energy would be withdrawn. Few Americans realize that the moral, economic and selfish attitude towards sex means ultimate disaster. The emancipation of women, her ambition to compete with men in commercial and intellectual pursuits is, at bottom, a refusal to bear children, and this evidently implies the excessive increase of a parasitic class which the community will be unable to support.

It is notorious that the birth-rate is maintained by the immigrants. After very few years of life in the States sterility sets in. This, again, is a symptom of the insensate idealism of American psychology. Perceiving that progress depends on transcending animality, and refusing to realize the theoretical limitation of any such aspiration, they plunge into perdition. It is as if a man, admiring the beauty and perfume of the water-lily and loathing the miry darkness of the bed of the lake, were to sever the blossom from its root. This fatuity is shown directly by their attitude towards sex and indirectly by the attempt to suppress everything that suggests self-indulgence. The policy is disastrous.

We should found society upon a caste of "men of earth", sons of the soil, sturdy, sensual, stubborn and stupid, unemasculated by ethical or intellectual education, but guided in their evolution by the intelligent governing classes towards an ideal of pure animal perfection. In such a substratum variation will produce sporadic individuals of a higher type. History affords innumerable examples of the lofty intelligence and the noblest characters shooting up from the grossest stock. Keats, Burns, Sixtus the Fifth, Lincoln, Boehme, Faraday, Joseph Smith, Whitman, Renan, Arkwright, Watts, Carlyle, Rodin and innumerable other men of the highest genius came of pea-

sant parentage. Few indeed of the first class have been born of intellectually developed families.

The conditions of genius are not accurately known. But we may divide the class into two great groups; those in whom the development is a system of degeneration, and those who, though sometimes exhibiting the most exquisite fruition, fail to attain full development and achieve the work of which they should be capable through their frailty. The men whose achievement is uniform are always constitutionally robust; despite all difficulties they attain a great age and produce continuously. Rodin, Browning, Carlyle, Pasteur, Lister, Kelvin, Gladstone, Whitman were all grand old men. (That Carlyle was an invalid merely emphasizes this essential figure.)

To insure the supply, we need only plant a prosperous and prolific peasantry, watch the children for indications of genius, and pick out any promising specimens for special training on the lines which their tendencies indicate. The worst thing they can do is what is done in America, to disenchant the man of earth with his destiny; to fill him with the facts and fancies that enthrall etiolated and degenerated idealists and unfit him for his evident purpose, that of supplying society with supermen. It is not only impossible to try to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. It is an idealistic imbecility. The demand for silk purses is extremely limited, whereas sows' ears always come in handy.

America is seething with anarchy on every plane, because of the constantly changing economic conditions, the conflict between creeds, casts, codes, cultures and races. Society has never had a chance to settle down. The expansion westward, the discovery of gold, coal, iron and oil, the slavery question, the secession question, the constant flux caused by the development of technical science, the religious and moral instability, the conflict between federal centralization and state sovereignty, the congestion of cities, the exploitation of the farmer by the financier, the shifting of the economic centre of gravity, these and a thousand other conditions arising from the unprecedented development of the country combine to make it impossible even to imagine stability in any plane of life. There is thus a radical distinction between Europe and her daughter. We know more or less what to expect in any set of circumstances. Heterogeneous as we are there is a common ground of thought and action. We are even able to draw reasonable conclusions about Asia and Africa. London and Tokyo are sufficiently alike in essentials to make our relations intelligible, but in spite of the community of language, customs, commercial conventions, and so on, between London and New York, the difference between us is really more radical. There are many incalculable factors in any formula which connects the U.S. with Europe.

Let me give a few obvious illustrations. Almost all Europeans suppose sky-scrapers to be monstrosities of vanity. They are in fact necessary consequences of the conditions of New York City, as fogs were of the climate and situation of London and the physical properties of the available fuel. New York expanded as it had on account of:

1. The vastness of its harbour, and

2. Its situation on the Hudson, and as the most convenient outlet for the produce of the hinterland.

Manhattan Island, being so long and narrow, presented peculiar problems of transportation. To this is due the system of elevated and underground railways. The width of the water which separates it from Long Island, New York State and New Jersey limited its expansion in those directions. Even with bridges and subways, transport was tedious and congested. The evident consequence was that the value of land in Manhattan became prohibitive. The final determinant is the fact that the island consists of a scant deposit of soil on a foundation of granite capable of supporting any possible strain. It was accordingly an architectural possibility and an economic advantage to increase the height of the buildings, and this height was, in its turn, limited by economic considerations.

The early architects went gaily ahead. They saw no reason to suppose that they need ever stop, but presently actuarial calculation showed that thirty-six storeys represented the maximum of economic efficiency. Beyond that height the disproportionate increase in the cost of building and the difficulty of renting the loftier suites, on account of the fear of fire, made the higher buildings unprofitable. It is of peculiar interest, by the way, to observe that the artists were so impregnated with the Buddhist ideal of impermanence that in even the costliest buildings they calculated the life of the plumbing as at no more than twenty years; that is, they expected, from one cause or another, that the building would be superseded within that period.

The actual situation, by the way, is critical. There are, roughly speaking, two and a half of the seven and a half million people of Great New York put to grave inconvenience by the congestion and all alike are embarrassed by the ratio of rent to income. In Europe we reckon that rent should not absorb more than one-tenth or at most one-eighth of one's earning. In New York, this proportion is rarely less than one-fourth and sometimes more than one-third. Again, despite all efforts to establish a satisfactory system of transport, conditions are appalling. In the rush hours, the people are crushed like corn in a mill. One sees clusters of citizens hanging to the steps of a trolley car like a swarm of bees. The surface traffic is practically paralysed. I have

know it to take fifty minutes for a motor bus to get from 34th to 58th Street, walkable easily in less than twenty minutes. Except the few plutocrats with automobiles of their own, or residences within reasonable distance of their places of business, the average citizen has anything from fifty minutes to two hours to travel in this packed and pestilential conveyance twice daily. The waste of energy, the nervous strain, the physical fatigue and the annoyance all tell on his health and spirits. No wonder if indigestion and neurasthenia make him an old man at thirty-five.

But the worst is yet to come. Every year the congestion increases. The percentage of time and strength and money wasted and unnatural effort becomes more oppressive and exhaustive. Every desperate device imaginable is being tried, but the problem grows faster than the palliatives and one really wonders what will happen when things reach a deadlock, when nobody can pay his rent or get to his business; when, in short, it becomes impossible to carry on, what will follow the crash. Any diminution in the population would mean that rates and taxes would have to be further increased and so drive more and more away from the city. The logical issue seems to be desertion and decay; this obviously involving the collapse of the machinery of export, and so the ruin of the producer in the interior.

In the past, if my suspicions be sound, cities like Nineveh perished in some such way. Their prosperity led them to live beyond their means. They made up the deficit by constantly bleeding the provinces, thus eventually killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. To me, the present prosperity of the United States, like that of England under Queen Victoria, is due to the coincidence of various favourable but temporary conditions. In England, the invention of the spinning jenny, the steam engine and similar automatic ways of producing wealth, the opening up of new markets, the expansion of commerce and colonial success made us rich factiously. Similar processes are still at work in the States.

The vast wealth in almost every commodity became easy to exploit through the introduction of scientific methods and labour-saving machinery. The supply of cheap labour from exhausted Europe, and the removal of all restrictions to expansion by the extent of elbow room and the overcoming of natural obstacles; all these conditions have made America the commercial mistress of the planet.

She has not even been disturbed and hampered by any serious internal or external struggle since 1865. The Spanish War was a holiday and the A. E. F. little more than an organized extension of the normal tide of tourists. She has never had to fight for her life; she has never had a serious sickness, but now this curve is approaching if it has not already attained its summit.

The colonization is complete. People are beginning to jostle each other. Europe can no longer pay for her produce. The absence of moral unity is creating class conflict. The problems of politics are too vast and varied for even genius to grasp; the apparatus of order, both moral and physical, is showing signs of an imminent breakdown. The interests of the five principal sections of the country become more obviously incompatible. Any serious set-back might cause disaster in a dozen different directions.

They talk of the melting pot. The metaphor is not bad. For the last sixty years they have pitched into it indiscriminately everything that came along. They protest passionately that the product must be that perfect gold, the "100% American", which may be defined as the wish phantasms of a Sunday-School superintendent, a romantic flapper, an unscrupulous usurer, and a maudlin medium, worked up into a single delirious nightmare. More likely the interaction of all these formidable forces will result in an explosion. My faith in the future of the States is fixed on some rational reconstruction after revolution. The present attempt to amalgamate this fortuitous hotch-potch, neither calculating probabilities nor observing actualities, but asserting an amiable postulate as if it were axiomatic, is born of an illusion invented by despair of acting with intelligence; and when the moment of awakening arrives the disillusionment may shock them at first into insanity. Nothing less is likely to show them that human nature is a stubborn reality which no amount of humouring, befooling and bullying will alter.

These preliminary speculations set forth, I will now try to justify the diagnosis by exhibiting the salient symptom. For convenience I have classed my observations under a few principal heads. I shall show how America differs from Europe in its attitude towards law and order. I shall give examples of the unfathomable ignorance which prevails even among the most highly educated people, not merely of well established facts of what in Europe is called common knowledge, but of the most elementary principles of nature, that is to say of facts which quite illiterate Europeans would know instinctively without having to learn them. I shall give examples of the impotence of their extravagant idealism to preserve them from outraging European convention of Honour and Good Manners. Lastly, I shall illustrate the callousness and cruelty which characterize the people as a result of their fanatical faith in absolute standards of rectitude and definition of duty to one's neighbour as espionage and tyranny.

I will ask the reader to analyse each incident in order to discover the simple and radical motive which underlies the overt action. I hope thus to make it clear that even the most absurd and atrocious abominations are, so to speak, accidents caused by the impact of facts with which the American is unfitted to deal, owing to his childlike ignorance, inexperience and lack of all

sense of proportion; so that to every crisis he can bring only the intense impulsive energy of instinct.

CHAPTER 114

BOOK TEN

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN ART, LITERATURE, ETC.

In 1912 I took it into my head to write three essays on American art and literature, past, present and future. I only completed the first, which is published in *The English Review*. It aroused a hurricane across the Atlantic and, hard as it is to believe, the echoes have not yet died away.

Within the last twelve months it was violently attacked by one of America's best poets, Robert Haven Schauffler. I make a point of mentioning the fact. He accused me of prejudice and unfairness, ignorant of course that my essay was but one of three and that my plan had been to express the friendliest faith in the future. As it stands, my judgment is no doubt severe, but I see little to modify.

Poe and Whitman are still in my opinion the only first-rate writers until very recent years. I still find Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Emerson, Bret Harte, Mark Twain and the rest devoid of any title soever to rank among the sons of genius. I might admit that they possessed great talents, but that is foreign to the question. I had been prevented from writing the other two essays partly because the editor, following his invariable rule, broke his pledged word to me, and partly because my heart was broken by the perusal of the books which I had asked Leila Waddell to bring back from America to furnish me with material. They left me without a glimmer of hope. The trashiest piffle of England was Swinburne and Stevenson by comparison. The morality of American authors was too ghastly to contemplate. The artistic unity of the entire output consisted in its commonplace coarseness, behind which was the fixed determination to go for the dollars. There was neither ambition nor conscience anywhere. My already zero opinion dropped below the liquid air mark.

My first personal acquaintance with the actual conditions of the present time did not improve matters noticeably. My first glimmer of hope was supplied by the "candle and the flame" of George Sylvester Viereck. Here at least was a man with a mind of his own, a worthy aspiration and an excellent technique, even though the actual achievement was nothing to leave home for. His prose was better. *The Confessions of a Barbarian* which purport to describe Europe are excellent. Europe is the stalking horse from

behind which he shoots his wit. Every shot tells, and all are aimed at America. No better study of the United States has ever been written.

Through Viereck I met his friend Alexander Harvey who professed to admire my work and offered me the opportunity to reciprocate. At first I failed. I had somehow got the fine idea that he lacked virility and seriousness, and that his work was a shadow show. I had not understood my author. Only after reading *Shelley's Elopement* and his book on *Howell's* did I attain full insight into his mind and manner. But, having done so, a great light dawned upon me. I had to acknowledge him as a master. In the series of essays on which I am working at present I have consecrated one to him. I need only observe there that Alexander Harvey, more subtle and ethereal than Poe himself, possesses a delicacy and a sense of humour as exquisite, elfish, elusive as any man that ever wrote. His irony is incomparably keen. That I should have missed the point taught me a much needed lesson.

To pick up a book, persuaded that no good thing can come out of Nazareth, makes appreciation impossible.

Harvey introduced me to Edwin Markham, whose *Man with the Hoe* is assuredly first-rate of its kind. His work is uneven and it would be absurd to assert that he is of outstanding excellence. He lacks the stature of the sacred legion, but at least he proved to me the existence of what I had till then doubted; a poet true to himself and fearless of opinion; capable of high aims, conscientious in pursuing them and courageous in proclaiming them. I looked about me from that moment for a second poet, but here indefatigable research proved fruitless. Self-styled poets and poetesses are as common in America as common bacilli in a choleraic colon. They swim and squeal and squabble and stink unbelievably. Let me quote my sonnet on the Poetry Society:

(Sonnet on the Poetry Society)

The principal poetess present was E. W. Wilcox, looking exactly like a shaved sow plastered with brilliant unguents in a Greek dress and with a wreath on her wig. It was to vomit! In Europe, outside negligible cliques in Soho, buzzing round people like Ezra Pound and even smaller patchers of pretence in Paris, poets have some sense of dignity. They do try to write, and talk as little as possible about it. In America poetry is a branch of the patent medicine business. The medicine does not matter; what does is the label, the puff and the faked testimonial.

A very few manage somehow or other to turn out occasional stanzas, with some kind of idea in them fluently and even powerfully, but with the

exception of Markham and Schauffler there is practically nobody at all who even understands what poetry means. The one aim is self advertisement.

In the matter of prose, the situation is altogether different. As remarked elsewhere, the first urgent need of the country is a critic whose words carry weight, who knows good from bad, and could not be bullied or bribed. These were found in William Marion Ready, Michael Monahan and H. L. Mencken. The two former were not fully efficient. They were too refined to take off their shirts and plunge head foremost into the rough and tumble, but Mencken understood the psychology of the cattle he was out to kill, and he poleaxed them properly. Having thus secured the services of a fighting editor the rest of the staff felt free to do their work as they wanted it done and the result has been the startling sudden appearance of a regular army of authors and even dramatists who really matter. Conditions being as they are all red revolutionists are necessarily savage satirists; they dare not waste time in wooing beauty till the war is won. We find, therefore, Theodore Dreiser, Lewis Sinclair (as opposed to his hysterical, though well-intentioned, namesake Upton) and others of their school, who seem to regard themselves as a committee appointed to report on the ravages of respectability. Novel after novel describes unflinchingly the realities of life in America in its various departments.

Upton Sinclair and his school fail by overdoing it. Their sentimental indignation is just as false as the shop on the other side of the street. Howells and Chambers and all those pullulating boosters of the red-blooded, clean living hundred per cent. Gibson young man and his female rival them in invertebrate idealism. But the new school of realism makes a point of being just. The characters live; they are not mere excuses for piling up epithets. Yet beneath the feet of the actors is the stage and behind them a background. That stage is rotten. The foundation is equally social injustice and moral falsity. The background is equally bad. The scene is set for an obscene farce. The work of this school is at last beginning to tell. A constantly increasing percentage of Americans are beginning to understand that the vague horror which haunted them is the miasma of manufactured immorality. They see that the deliberate attempt to standardize social conditions, to trample originality under foot, to ostracize genius, to discipline life in every detail is turning the land of the free into a convict settlement and modelling civilization upon that of the ant.

Alexander Harvey stands outside this body of Warriors. His spirit is less in touch with the brutalities of daily life. His race is unblemished and he began his career in diplomacy. He was thus able to develop his fine and intricate passion for pure beauty without being constantly jostled by the hurrying fiends of commerce. He is able to treat American society as a joke. His cha-

racters are, for the most part, raised above the hubbub of hustle. America wounds him only in his spiritual nerves. The most hideous of the demons which haunts him is what he calls the native American of Anglo-Saxon origin and his ivory is aimed at the less obvious atrocities of his environment.

One other figure stands apart, Olympic and titanic in one. As I have tried to show in my (*Reviewer*, July 1923) James Branch Cabell is a world genius of commanding stature. He comes of famous stock and occupies an excellent social position, being secluded on his own property in Virginia. The turmoil of Main Street and the animal noises of the jungle are born to him as echoes from afar. The realities of modern America consequently occupy only one salient of his battle front, which extends from the seat of Jove himself to deepest Tartarus. All periods of history contribute to his pages and his characters include personifications of eternal principles, legendary demons and monsters of every type; eponymous heroes of fables and romance, and the everyday individuals of the modern world. Between these infinitely diverse orders of being, he makes no difference. All are equally real and mingle freely with each other. His epic includes Mother Cerida, one of the seven powers of destiny, her function being to cancel everything out. Helen of Troy, Merlin, the tyrant Dionysys and President Roosevelt fall each one in the proper place. His thesis covers the whole field of philosophy, but its ultimate conclusion — to date — seems to be almost identical with that of Main Street: that all aspiration is futile, attainment impossible in the nature of things.

Like James Thomson, however, as I have demonstrated in my essay on him, he has so extended the scope of his argument as to leave no possible escape by withdrawal to some loftier plane. Nevertheless, his intellectual acquiescence in the ineluctable futility of life, his gentle blood and his godlike genius compel him to make an irrational exception of this law in some quite inexplicable manner, and heroism wins through. Even as things stand, I regard Cabell as by far the greatest genius of his genus that has yet appeared on this planet. Before him nobody ever conceived so all-embracing a theme. Yet I am still unsatisfied! I demand that he shall be developed towards the solution of his problem, and perceive that the contradictory thesis is equally true: that the most trivial, vain and fatuous events, if rightly understood, are sublime; that the slough of despond is but an optical illusion created by the shadow of the snow-pure summits of success.

I have been accused of exaggerated enthusiasm for Cabell. The more stupid and mean-minded have even explained my ardour by my appreciation of the compliment which Mr. Cabell paid me by using my *Gnostic Mass* as the material for Chapter XXII of his *Jurgen*. The suggestion is utter rubbish; though, at the same time, I admit cordially that no other form of appreciation of my work would have pleased me half so well.

I regard his epic of such supreme importance to mankind as an exposition of the nature of the Universe that I have not only sent him a copy of *The Book of the Law* in the hope that he may find in it the way out of his Buddhistic demonstration that "everything is Sorrow" but followed it up by letter after letter urging him to use it, for his work cannot attain perfection until it culminates in a positive conclusion.

For many years he toiled at his task almost neglected. It is hardly nice to reflect that he only became famous when the smut-smeller society succeeded in suppressing *Jurgen* as obscene. I must admit, none the less, that when *Beyond Life* was sent me for review (the first I had heard of him) while perceiving straight away its excellence, I had no idea of its importance. It let the matter rest there. Then *Jurgen* reached me and I saw at once not only that the book was a supreme masterpiece, but extended my understanding of its stable companion. I proceeded to grab as many of his books as I could. Each volume opened a new world to my vision. It was not clear why he had not impressed even the best critics as he deserved. Nobody had seen that each volume, apparently self-sufficient, was in reality one chapter, a single vast epic. The more I read and re-read, the more fully I realize the extent of his empire.

I have gone into this at some length in order to firstly stress the importance of the work, and to prevent any reader supposing that any one book will give an adequate idea of his genius.

CHAPTER 115

Turning from literature to Art there are few signs of my distinctively American outbursts of genius to parallel what happened in prose. The sculptors and painters feed almost wholly on beauty. A writer can use things ugly, sordid, mean, vile and loathsome as material. The beauty of a book like *Main Street*, *Sister Carrie*, or *Huckleberry Finn* is not marred by the setting, but plastic art demand beauty in every part of the model. The nose of Apollo does not improve a statue of Caliban. I am not asserting that satisfactory models are unobtainable in the States, but the model is the smallest part of the picture. Artists need an environment, an atmosphere, sympathetic with their work, and in the States there is hardly a town or a village where at every turn the soul stumbles over a stone or a fence. American artists of any distinction are not only trained in Europe but manage to spend most of their lives there. They go to America mostly to sell their stuff, and hurry back as soon as their bankers beam.

There is no American tradition in art for the simple reason that the country present no peculiarities which might, in course of time, result in gravitation into some groove. The subjects of painting and sculpture are always essentially the same the world over. National differences arise from national characteristics. For instance, Chinese, Singalese, Indian, Egyptian, Greek and Italian schools of sculpture are differentiated partly by convention derived from philosophical or religious conventions, and partly by the point of view about morality, in the widest sense of the word. We thus find a delicacy and accuracy in Greek sculpture, a grossness and vigour in Roman, a mystery and awe in Egyptian, a smoothness and sensuality in Indian monuments. Now America has as yet no settled conviction, no national character. Her artists are therefore anchorless. Each must discover for himself the school which attracts him personally.

The other theory finds confirmation in the contrary conditions which obtain in the sister art of architecture. There is already a distinctively American Architecture. In past generations the conventionality of the cultured, in whose power lay the commissioning of work, caused them to tell their architects to copy existing styles as nearly as possible. Most of the earlier buildings of importance are deliberate imitations of classical masterpieces. (To expand the scope of the subject for a moment, one may mention that Washington was designed on the example of Paris and Versailles.)

A few sturdy spirits revolted against this apeish adulation of antiquity. They reasoned quite rightly that continuance in this course could only result in the complete sterility and atrophy of the art. Their reaction was neverthe-

less ridiculous and mere negation; they offered no suggestion of any alternative.

Their utmost was to postulate simplicity and bigness as the foundation of the American ideal.

The visitor to Washington consequently beholds an obelisk of gargantuan proportions. It contains one really very American ideal. Each separate state was to contribute a section of the structure. This obelisk puzzled me. I looked and looked, reckless of damaging my aesthetic sensibility beyond repair. The thing was perfectly beastly. I had never seen anything worse, bar the Albert Memorial and one or two similar horrors. But I could not see why it was wrong. It seemed impossible that so simple a thing as an obelisk should be outraged by any imaginable ingenuity of malignant bunglers. The shape seemed perfectly right, the proportion offered no line of attack; I hurried away and asked my friend Paul Bartlett what was the matter. He replied quite simply, "An obelisk is a monolith." The truth was evident. The crime was not in any external error. It consisted simply in this, that its perpetrators had wholly failed to understand the soul of an obelisk. One cannot explain what is wrong with trousers cut by a city tailor, with imitation pearls guaranteed to deceive experts, with poetry such as Oscar Wilde, or with an aristocracy of the Napoleonic order. The error is in the essence, not in the manifestations, and the only way to explain it is by saying that the thing, whatever it is, though it may possess every virtue and grace and worth in itself, is shipwrecked by its pretence to be something else. Philosophically the case is covered by the Law of Thelema.

"He wove a pair of golden boots
And silver underclothing."

The failure to perceive this fundamental fact underlies and explains most of America's mistakes.

Even their constitution, which theoretically is almost unrivalled, has been condemned by the touchstone of Time because it was constructed on principles of abstract political propriety without regard to the actual conditions. In the last 80 years, it has been tinkered up time and again to meet various emergencies, and has now become a patchwork of absurdities. The first amendment destroyed its spiritual unity, and the last plumber putting in prohibition has pulled the ramshackle old structure about to such an extent that at any moment it may fall to pieces. There will not be secession; there will be maniacal disruption.

Disgusted with mimicry and perceiving the vacuity of mere reaction, architecture came for a time to a standstill. It lost all hope of finding an ideal. Nature came to the rescue. The clash of economic, geographical and geological facts compelled construction to conform with conditions unprecedented anywhere. Forced by the facts to make utility the sole canon of construction, the original difficulty disappears automatically. The architect's problem was limited to considering how best to adorn, according to his own ideas of beauty, the bedrock idea of any given building. As a rule, he possessed sufficient sense to see the absurdity of hybridism. It would obviously be outrageous to put minarets on an apartment house. He was thus compelled to consult his own sense of fitness. The one glaring blunder is the Woolworth Building. The attempt to finish it off like a Gothic Cathedral! Apart from the spiritual imbecility involved, the building almost shrieks with pain at its own grotesqueness. It gives one the idea of stilts. The Gothic top is perched incongruously on pedestals of monotonous practicality. They did not preserve the proportions. Put a man on a horse, and their beauty harmonizes/ Hoist him on to a giraffe, the man becomes ridiculous. His kinship with the monkey is emphasized while at the same time the giraffe itself loses its dignity.

There are similar outrages. American architects have almost always been content to look for beauty in the proportions themselves and the fitness of style to purpose. They have limited their attempts at artificial adornments to such additions as spring naturally from the character of the Oedipus. In other words, they have understood that every building has a True Will of its own. Developing their designs on this principle is a true miracle. They have created an art which owes nothing to alien influences.

One occasionally sees attempts to better the best. In particular, there is a danger of aiming at the grandiose. Railway terminals often show this fault. The Pennsylvania Station in New York comes to my mind. The waiting hall is vast and lofty, dwarfing the offices and the throng. The proportions of the hall are admirable. Stateliness combines with simplicity. For all this, one feels lost — an effect which heightens the awe and emphasized the spiritual sublimity of a cathedral, but which, in a railway station simply increases the natural feeling of hopelessness.

The future of architecture seems to me very bright. It has found its feet; time will teach it to correct the aberrations of adolescence. The other arts show no signs of genuine development. Till the people find a soul, discover the existence of beauty and cease to identify it with sexual immorality, painters and sculptors will prefer Paris.

The case of literature is more than hopeful. It is already possible to point to Cabell and Harvey as of world-wide pre-eminence. They have smashed

their way to success. It is miraculous if we think of the obstacles. The ignorance of the vast majority, the indifference and aversion of the half educated, the downright antagonism of the self-appointed censors seems insuperable. The very few who understand are scattered and unorganized. Never forget to this hour Poe and Whitman are outcasts in the opinions of 95% of those who have so much as heard their names. But entrenched close up to the enemy, the sturdy guard of realists constantly threatens to break through compact and disciplined, intelligent and informed; armed with weapons of modern precision they are driving the enemy back much faster than the most optimistic experts venture to hope. It is necessity, not limitation, that keeps these men hammering away at positions which, in Europe, no one would dream of trying to defend, but as soon as they have won freedom for literature and awakened America to the abjectness of her attitude; as soon as the meaning of culture is understood, and the idea of success extended to spiritual enlightenment, these sappers and riflemen will go back to their cavalry regiments and charge on Pegasus up the long slopes of Olympus.

In this event will American literature retain its distinctive characteristics. These at present depend primarily on the strategical consideration set forth above. I personally foresee an independent literature.

Turn for a moment to the past.

In the earliest days, the few who read, read European classics; no one found time to write. When literature appeared, it was hypnotized by Europe, especially by English opinion. The universal fear of becoming ridiculous in English eyes as provincials without scholarship or style drove authors to concentrate on superficial qualities like elegance. Whatever virtue there may have been in such men as Emerson and Longfellow was watered by their embarrassed endeavour to exhibit their culture. Originality would certainly have been considered uncouth. Poe was the first to resent this helotry, though he was himself careful to stock his shop front with recondite learning.

As in architecture this reaction against lackeying England found no aim. The rebels simply outraged propriety by introducing slang and vulgarity into their work. I omit this as beneath notice. (The commercial scribblers who try to cover their shame by spredeagleism.) The revolt, despite its futility, served one good purpose. It made ridiculous and impossible the polite plagiarism of the frog-pendians.

Then came Whitman. Till quite recently I did not understand what he really achieved. He never wrote anything of absolute value, and he did not seem to wield any influence. He did though. He swept away all the shame,

broke down all the bars. He used English as he wanted to use it; he wrote in the speech of the people, which had never been done before. He created a written language. More than this, he achieved a similar victory in the spiritual world. He proved that the subject nearest the heart is proper to a poem. He based everything on truth, backed by a vigour which expressed its defiance of constraint by frankness. He did more for America than Shakespeare for England, Rabelais for France, Cervantes for Spain, Dante for Italy, Goëthe for Germany, or Ibsen for Norway. He asserted himself as the sole and sovereign authority for what he wrote.

In another time Mark Twain did similar work. He found the soul of America in Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. He made their speech classic. There is none of the affections of dialect to make it invertebrate. He also, like Whitman, affirmed the interest and importance of the common life of the common people. He felt no need to apologize for introducing the real inhabitants of the States. The four-hundred, and the millionaires, never worried him. In this way it made possible the work of the realists of the present time. Whitman was simply not read, and Mark Twain cheated the critics by disguising himself as a clown. He was accepted as a jester; no one suspected that he would hire them into taking an interest in the vulgar. It is thus that the modern realists have gained the ear of the reading public. They are really beginning to oust in popular favour the professional prostitutes who beslammer them with fulsome flattery. In the simplicity of their souls they assent to the truthful pictures of themselves unaware of the bitter irony which underlies the draughtmanship. Their vanity is so impenetrable and their perception so obtuse that the portraiture pleases them, just as one sees some illiterate pithecanthropoid beam with pleasure at a ghastly daguerrotype of a street photographer which shows him more ugly and brutal than he actually is. It is the thin edge of the wedge. The people on Main Street will soon come to see that monotonous dullness and dreary meanness are not to be appeased by fatuous self-satisfaction, for this will drive them to appeal to their teachers to show the way out, and then we may look for a deepseated revolution in the accepted attitude to life.

These preliminaries over, the masters will be free to turn their attention to universal themes, and there will be no danger of their drifting into doldrums of Anglophilia, because their conditions are radically different from ours, and they have achieved a language of their own purged of the effete politeness of the earliest school, and eschewing the senseless urinal inscriptions of the would-be pan-American hooligans. They have already shown that they can write good idiomatic American without offence to any but the most prejudiced purists of the Rip van Winkle family.

I am so convinced, personally, of the virility and the elasticity of many American methods, that I never hesitate to introduce them in my own work.

There are, needless to say, not a few even among serious artists who feel bound to drag in defiantly certain technical tricks of idiom or style which they think peculiarly American with no other excuse. The virtue of the new language lies in its power to convey emphasis, atmosphere, or actuality. Every author is entitled to use any means soever in order to communicate his thought with the greatest possible lucidity and vigour. All affectations stand self-condemned for the plain reason that their insincerity emasculates them. "Thou hast no right but to do thy will" applies emphatically to authorship. Any aim possesses absolute authority when it is in accord with the ultimate truth of the soul of the artist, and the justification of any means of expression is its efficiency in achieving this aim.

America must understand that the first step towards that 'uplift' whose 'urge' she 'senses' so '100%-edly' in cases of 'normalcy' is to quit monkeying with a buzz saw. To interfere with an author's aim is to blaspheme the Almighty who messenger he is; and to limit his means is to gag the prophet. All rent about blasphemy, obscenity, immorality, and other alleged offences is sheer impertinence and an outrage. The artist must be accepted as the authentic messenger of the Most High, and his unrestrained speech received in attentive silence. It is ultimately impossible for bad work to survive. Interference is more likely to galvanise it into activity than to squelch it. Gallic was a first-rate critic.

Every page of Cabell is like a heel stamped down on the cockroaches of the smut-smellers of Society. Yet Cabell might have drifted into oblivion, for generation at least, if they had not stampeded America into buying his books by getting *Jurgen* suppressed. No man is wise enough to say for sure what is good and what is bad in the long run. The only evidence of any weight is that of time. But even if we knew it would be foolish to interfere with the artist. He will corrupt only those who are susceptible, and those will find what they want, if not in one way then in another as long as we leave them the use of their senses. Equally and more importantly, the strong and pure will emerge from temptation unscathed, warned and fortified.

Apart from that interference with the artist in the nature of things implies tempering with his conscience. His fundamental claim to the attention of the public is that he has some truth to teach them. To insist, either by external pressure or monetary temptation that he shall teach something else is to disown him altogether. Imagine a class of schoolboys threatening to stone the master if he persists in asserting that the whole is greater than the part, and to stay away from the class unless he devotes his whole time to telling

them what splendid boys they were. Yet that is exactly the universal practice. In England it is bad enough; but we do at least admit the existence and the rights of an educated minority to read books written expressly for them.

In America, democracy is interpreted as including, among other things, the standardization of literature by the ideals of the weakest fool in the community. It makes no difference what the object of a book may be, or to whom it appeals. Should it contain anything, which, in the opinion of fanatical bigots, is savagely opposed for superstitious reasons to every sort of effort to enlighten ignorance, that book must be banned. We therefore find Charles Darwin officially put on the index by the vote of a western state. The works of Fielding are withdrawn from the public libraries and burnt. Side by side with this gushes the weekly sewerage of the Sunday supplement, its 96 pages hacked with suggestively scented pornography. Every trumpety divorce is described with every dirty detail that the editor thinks likely to excite the reader. Every sexual scandal is spun out to the utmost with salacious silliness; and even crimes like petty theft, burglary, and fraud in its protean romance. In every possible way, the papers, to say nothing of the movies, seek to stimulate the suppressed appetites of the animal side of the reader. The effect is heightened by hysterical headlines and crude illustrations which avoid indictable indecency by the narrowest possible margin.

One hesitates to draw the only reasonable conclusion. It imputes such conscienceless craft to the "men higher up". Here it is; the only alternative is sheer incapacity to calculate cause and effect.

Imagine a people exclusively nourished on the Old Testament, Shakespeare, Rabelais, Balzac, Zola, Boccaccio, Baudelaire, Swinburne, and other books of the kind, such as "the critics" label immoral. They will certainly be familiar with most forms of iniquity. But the fact that the books are admittedly first-class literature guarantees that, taking one thing with another, they will tend to enlighten and elevate the reader. Love for them will certainly disgust him with sensational sob stuff, and pornography disguised as vigilance on behalf of morality. They will cease to buy Sunday papers and frequent the movies.

Now suppose these books successfully suppressed. They will still know all about sin from the Sunday supplement, or even if not, from their vicious companions. But will they find any compensatory influence. The value of newspapers is quite clearly calculated from the fact that they are thrown away as soon as read. The only survivals would be cullings of personal interest. It surely must be that the vendors of rubbish deliberately do all they can to suppress the competition of the classics which bring no gain in greenbacks to anyone, and acquaintance with which would kill the rubbish as

surely as a man with a spring of clear water on his farm will never buy sewage at a dollar a drink.

Of course, even now, there is some sort of freedom left. The worst of the whole mischief is that the men of genius are compelled by absolute want to grind out garbage to the trade of editor and publishers. Too often they save themselves. What must be done? I put in two years, perhaps three, to belching balderdash and pile up enough to spend the rest of my life giving my best work to the world. Nine times in ten the appointed term finds them still struggling for success. The tenth proceeds with his plans only to find that the lease of his soul was really a sale. He has got into slipshod habits of thought, his style is incurable debased, he has got so accustomed to falsehood that truth stays absolutely at the bottom of the well; he will never see again until he kicks the bucket. I know, personally, quite a number of men who have persuaded themselves that there was no serious danger in playing *écarté* with the devil. Sometimes they are seized by a spasm of remorse, throw up their jobs, perhaps even force themselves to do some honest work, but they always go back. The original moral surrender is all the security that Satan requires.

The emancipation of the artists and the education of the public are essential to any reasonable Renaissance, any spiritual salvation and against any such endeavour are arranged the legions of Christianity and Commerce under the command of the world-conqueror Capital, who knows that all enlightenment is fatal to his designs. I am not ass enough to hope to persuade him how stupid and shortsighted is his policy. The actual result would be peace and prosperity. He prefers to drive his chariot wheels over civilization towards the precipice of the blind red revolution which always results from exciting and suppressing the animal passions.

I merely ask history, did the Renaissance ruin Italy? What happened in France in the '60's when Napoleon, the nobody, started to persecute the poets of Paris? He ended at Sedan; they triumphed and raised a republic on the ruins of his spiritual Bastille which still stands today, the most stable social system on the planet and at the same time the most tolerant of artistic freedom.

CHAPTER 116

BOOK TEN

CHAPTER III

THE LAST STRAW

Since December 1914, I have thought, time and again, how best to make public my political actions in America and the motives which determined my policy. I should have settled any other question off-hand, but I am already sensitive about my loyalty to England. I hasten to explain that by loyalty I mean neither admiration, approval or anything amiable of any kind. I reserve the right to speak as severely as Milton, Wordsworth, Byron Shelley and Swinburne. All this does not touch the point. I am English, and that in a very special sense, as being the prophet and poet appointed by the gods to serve her. We do not accuse Isaiah of being unpatriotic because he thunders against Israel. Isaiah's motive is mine. There does not exist an essence which constitutes England, uncorrupted and incorruptible by any possible phenomenal facts. I feel myself to be an integral element of this England; what I do I do for her sake. I may have to scrub her face with yellow soap, open an abscess, or extirpate a cancer. Working as I do in a world of spiritual causes altogether beyond the comprehension of common people I am liable to be misunderstood.

The essence of my adventure in America may be put in a nutshell. From August to October 1914 I had tried every means to get the government to use me — without success.

In America chance showed me a way, for which I was peculiarly fitted, by which I might conceivably play as important a part in the war as any man living. The price of success was moral courage up to the theatrical limit. I must beggar myself of funds, friends and honour for the time being. I doubt whether I considered this clearly beforehand; I might have funked if I had. I do not want to claim undue credit for courage. I did what I did because it lay in my war to do it. My first step was the natural reaction to the opportunity. But this at least I do claim, that when I found how loathsome my work was, what humiliations and privations it involved, I set my teeth and stuck to the job.

Now then, as to the form of my report. From time to time I sketched various statements intended for various readers. I have chosen the one which I wrote in a moment of heartbreak, when, after my work had been

crowned with success, I found that my two oldest friends understood me so little that they thought it their duty to urge me to justify my conduct to the world by bringing an action against the most scurrilous blackmailing weekly in London. I was the angrier because at the moment I was practically penniless, and because I hoped by submitting in silence a little longer to calumny, to make myself again useful to England in a similar capacity if certain eventualities, which I then thought not impossible, should materialize.

Outraged in my most sensitive spot, I went to the Cadron Bleu at Fontainebleau, lunched, and began my reply to Horatio Bottomley. I found myself too indignant to write, so I went back to the house in the rue de Neuve which I had hired and got the Ape of Thoth to take down the tornado from dictation. When she wilted, her stable companion, Sister Cypris, took her place; and so on by turns till I was appeased, some twenty-four hours later.

One circumstance conspired with another to hold up the publication, but some two years later, intending to go to England, I revised it, with the idea of publishing it immediately on my arrival as a challenge to my critics. Fate once more interfered. Bottomley's long lease was about to expire. The constable he had outrun was on his heels. The blackmailer, attempting to resist being blackmailed, was beginning to see one of the magical virtues of silence. I couldn't publish an attack on a man in the witness-box which was evidently temporary accommodation on the way to the dock. So I held my peace and wrote to Bottomley to tell him that I bore no malice and hoped he would clear himself. I hope it comforted him in penal-servitude to remember that one, at least, of the men whom he had wantonly wronged wished him well. I wish him well no less today, but alas that he cannot be hurt by the hard things I happen to say. Any alteration of my pamphlet would destroy the whole spirit of the spasm, the venomous virulence of my vituperation is the essay. I showed the manuscript to poor Tommy Earp who might have been a poet if he had not been a plutocrat. He said that "The Last Straw" was the limit in its line and my judgment jumps with his. Any considered statement, any documented plea, would lack the note of intensity and genuineness which my careless spontaneity and impulsive indignation taught me. I shall therefore print the scorpion as I wrote it. Its devil must excuse its indecorum. The savage contempt of Swift composed an indictment of human nature far exceeding the utmost ordered combination, and my "smashing blows" at my own best friends, at Bottomley, obscure officials in particular, and bureaucratic blockishness, may, I hope, by their very lack of philosophical proportion or aimed animosity, demonstrate into what blind rage my normally imperturbably spirit is whirled when any man whom I consider worth wasting a word on suggests that my loyalty to England could be brought in doubt by any aggregation of protoplasm whose intellectual level is above that of a Woodrow Wilson himself.

THE LAST STRAW

Dedicated

In all Duty and Devotion

to DORA

"The author is evidently that rare combination of genius, a humorist and a philosopher . . . I was moved to so much laughter that . . . I barely escaped a convulsion."

(John Bull)

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

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

His power of expression is extraordinary; his kite flies, but he never fails to jerk it back to earth with some touch of ridicule or bathos which makes it still an open question whether he will excite that life-giving animosity on the part of Public Opinion which, as we have hinted, is only accorded to the most dangerous thinkers."

(Florence Farr in *The New Age* — 1907.)

It is a shameful fact that in July 1914 there was an Englishman so dirtily degenerate — I quote the Patriot Bottomley — that he was engaged in solitary climbs among the High Alps, daring native and foreigner, professional and amateur, to follow him. He did not do this to annoy anybody; he had too often already exposed the cowardice of the moneyed "Herren" of the English alpine Club; but he wanted to encourage the younger generation to climb alone, and to keep himself in good training for his Third Expedition to the Himalayan Mountains, which he intended to make in 1915.

In this pursuit he was interrupted by several persons of intelligence so inconceivable low that they supposed that by destroying everything of value, from art right down to human life, they would obtain some advantage, of nature unstated, for some people unworthy of consideration. Everybody, Bloody Bill as much as, if no more than, his enemies, had prepared and calcu-

lated the war; and everybody had prepared insufficiently and calculated wrong.

England possessed the only diplomatist whose brains could have momentarily interested so much as an entomologist, in Sir Edward Grey; Germany possessed the only soldier who knew the difference between a battle and a parade, in Von Hindenburg — or Ludendorff — who knows or cares?

If Germany had possessed a statesman with a soul above a limpet's, or a mind above a Woodrow Wilson's, the word would have gone forth: "Come what may, we don't touch France or Belgium. These Russian savages who have instigated the murder of the Archduke of our ally, and are on the point of becoming Bolshevists, leave us to punish them, to execute the British policy of a century's standing, gratis." The gratis should have appealed to the nation of shopkeepers!

If England had possessed a soldier — whoa mare! we did, one — or — Robertson — Robinson — Robson — some such name, oh, of course, Roberts! How could I forget, with a great comedian and two great billiard players to remind me? — we said, "Bloody old ass, what does he know about war? He's only had sixty years of it, and never even had the illuminating experience of being licked — how different to our other generals!"

(That sentence seems to have gone wrong. I continue in a chastened spirit, with no further pretence of being a master of English grammar or syntax.)

II

Enfin! To sum all, "my country, right or wrong"; the dirty degenerate, whom I shall hereafter designate by the first personal pronoun, had the idea that the war was a serious matter; that it was time to recite:

"The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return."

He thought that he had ideas and virility, and that his country needed him.

The event indicates his fatuity. Descending the Jungfrau by the Rothsthal with a bruised toenail, for which it is not altogether fair to blame Messrs Dowie and Marshall, Bootmakers, West Strand, London, W.C., who are the best

yet, and may be a pound or two on the wrong side of the ledger, which this advertisement should square, our degenerate, I mean I, went to Bern and asked the British Minister how to get home. The B. M. (which does not mean Blasted Mutt) did not know; he said it was impossible — there might be a train in six weeks. Would Mr. Crowley write his name in a book to reserve a seat in that phantasmagoric train? Mr. Crowley wrote it; the B. M. might be hard up one day and get a meal — or an annuity — by selling my autograph.

(Hoist South Cone: syntax getting worse every minute.)

But he didn't wait for the train. The "British Committee" — headed by two gentlemen who sounded like a vaudeville combination, Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Waggett (reader please note that this essay is supported by an Alfred David — it's crazy, but it's literally true!) — asked Mr. Crowley what he would do. Mr. Crowley would go to London; if there was a train, good; if not, he could walk and swim, by Jabez Wolffe (wasn't it?) or charter a damn whale, by Jonah!

Luck — no, common sense! — favoured him; while twenty thousand English, and thirty thousand American, millionaires were stuck in dirty Switzerland for months, because they hadn't the sense to take a train to Paris, unable to cash their drafts, and living on the charity of calculating thieves — I refer to the Swiss Hoteliers — he walked down to the station and took the train to Paris, as aforesaid, careless whether the Grand Hotel Bubenburg would steal his portmanteau or no. (Somebody did. This is a true story: no surprises for the people who know.)

III

I spent a week in Paris. I was amazed at the *sang-froid* of the people. They turned from peace to war as simply as a man turns over in his sleep. I arrived in London — I found that Bernard Shaw had told the truth.* Twenty years of cheap newspapers had turned the British from the most stolid to the most hysterical nation in Europe. According to them the German was a monster like a bogey in a nightmare, and it was useless to struggle against him. At the same time, he was a coward who did not dare to advance unless behind a screen of Belgian nuns. He had no discipline, no morale, nothing but a talent for rape, torture, petty theft. His first line troops had been annihilated to a man by *les braves Belges*, whom we had hitherto only considered as persons who cut off the hands and feet of the innocent natives of the Congo basin.

* — I was so disgusted at the contrast between the calm courage of the French and the hysterical rage of my own people that my imp inspired me to try to discover whether there was any limit to the blank latent idiocy of patriotism.

So I composed the most outrageously imbecile letters I could imagine and sent them to various papers. They printed them with enthusiasm. I cannot remember all of them; they were far too silly. But I recall one in which I proposed to compensate for the destruction of Rheims Cathedral by transporting to its site the Cathedral from Cologne (stone by numbered stone) in American fashion. This actually pulled the leg of an artist named H.W. Nevison, who replied indignantly, setting forth various objections to the scheme.

I also took advantage of the change of Petersburg to Petrograd to propose an extension of the principle to England, as thus; Petrograd, Middlegrad, The Grad (South of London Bridge), Edingrad, etc. My climax was a protest against the name William. People who wanted to be called after a heroic king should change it to Albert. The application furthermore of this principle should be retrospective, as Albert the Conqueror, A. Rufus, A. of Orange, A. Blake, and A. Shakespeare. When the shouts of applause had died, I fell into a dead faint, and abandoned the unequal contest.

IV

I was more than ever convinced that I was needed by my country, which is England, and to Hell with everybody. In my excitement, I had the hallucination that England needed men. I found, on the contrary, that the guiding stars of England needed "business as usual". (Don't spill the water, it's only an earthquake.) No, England did not need men, or, well, perhaps, a hundred thousand who had never missed attendance at Sunday School, always parted their hair in the middle, and had never kissed a woman. They had better be five feet ten and a half, and it didn't matter whether they could shoot, so long as they could add up accounts, and sell pink ribbons to German Jewish prostitutes.

V

I was interrupted in my futile attempts to fight for my country as I had been interrupted in my attempts to climb the Alps, this time by an attack of phlebitis. I lay six weeks in bed, warned that the slightest movement might result in sudden death, and advised that in all probability I should never be able to climb a mountain again. The period of my illness covered September and most of October 1914.

At that time any man who suggested the advisability of conscription* was regarded as a traitor. Conscription was the very thing we were fighting. Austin Harrison said that we were fighting for our golf and our week-ends, Raymond Radclyffe said with, as it seemed to me, somewhat more plausibility that if we beat the Germans, it showed that the amateur was better than the professional.

* — A 'conscientious objector' in America was asked to state his position to the Court as to conscription:

Q: Have you any religious objections?

A: No, my religion is purely personal and had nothing to do with it.

Q: Moral objections, then?

A: No, morality is irrelevant.

Q: Political objections?

A: No, I quite understand that when a nation gets into way, conscription is the best way to get out again.

My own position was queerly parallel — coinciding nowhere. My religion told me that one side was as good as the other; my morality, that both sides had all the good and all the bad qualities distributed more or less evenly. I thought the war politically a disgrace to diplomacy, and conscription a disgrace to the people that needed such measures. But none of these considerations influenced my action at all. *I love the songs we sing* — or used to sing. The great war ballads of Dibdin, Campbell, and the rest; the faintest hint of bagpipe music in the distance, even the spirited sound of a drum and fife band, these things stir the essence of my manhood. No arguments for my country; and I therefore proceed to do so according to my means.

VI

From my sick-bed I dictated an article called "Thorough" in allusion to the plan of the Earl of Strafford in the time of Charles the First. I said, "Commandeer every man and every munition in the country." I said, "This is not a continental quarrel — this is life and death for England. We don't want debates in the House of Commons, or even in Earlswood asylum. We want a dictator." No editor would publish it.

Everyone wanted "business as usual", while Europe was overrun by madmen, fired by commercial ambitions, as it had been a hundred years before, fired by the military ambition of a man greater than Bloody Bill. Napoleon, at least, stood for humanity and for civilization. He gave France a Code of Laws better than any since that which Manu gave to India. Wilhelm

offered nothing but the Kultur of the pig-iron-brained Herr Professor, and the conception of woman as the Kuh of Küche, Kirche und Kinder. That was what we were fighting — not for our golf and for our weekends. There has been no golf since the introduction of Haskell ball — and if our weekends are to mean nothing but “adultry with home comforts” (in the great phrase of Frank Harris) I think Sunday a regrettable superstition.

VII

I grew tired of the heroic defence of Liege. I looked at the map and I couldn't reconcile it with the folds of our ragged line of absent-minded beggars. I didn't like the way in which the journalists excused our “contemptible little army” for running away because of the treachery of French generals who were always being shot at sunrise, and always subsequently writing to the papers to say how much they liked the war. My phlebitis affected merely my left leg and the fact that I was a sharp-shooter and an old artilleryman didn't interest the War Office. I couldn't use my leg — could I use my brains?

VIII

I was at dinner with an old friend, the Honourable A. B., the brother of the Earl of C. He mentioned that he was in the censor's office. I said, “What about me? I have some little reputation as a man of letters — as a critic — I am an expert in cipher — I read and write French as well as I write English (and the world knows how well that is) — I have a fair acquaintance with a dozen other languages, including Hindustani — my leg will keep me out of war as effectively as Mr. Woodrow Wilson will keep America — is there nothing I can do to serve my country as it appears that you are serving her?”

He said, “I'm afraid you can't do anything — you see I started in the Navy — I had a year or two on a training ship before I became a barrister — I have a locus standi. You didn't even take honours at Cambridge, as the Patriot Bottomley will one day suppose you to have done — you did not even take the ordinary degree. You wear a short blue gown and extremely battered mortarboard. You have an extraordinary personality — a reputation for having committed every crime from murder, barratry and arson to quaternio terminorum. You have the subtlest mind, the deepest knowledge of psychology and the most unusual way of brushing your hair in England. I cannot hold out any hopes that any way can be found whereby you might serve your country.”

IX

He drank eight cups of coffee; he swallowed fifteen glasses of 1911 brandy. But he could not make me a naval lieutenant who had forgotten the difference between a powder monkey and a taffrail.

"You cannot serve your country."

I said, "Lord Kitchener has asked for a hundred thousand volunteers. Damn this leg, but couldn't I write or talk?"

He said, "Lord Kitchener is only bluffing. We don't want men; Liege is holding out." (This was about a month after it fell.) "A million and a half Russians of the steam-roller brand passed through England last night in a first-class carriage on their way to Flanders. They travelled from St Petersburg to Archangel by a railway which has a single line and whose rolling stock consists of three engines, one tied up with really serviceable iron wire, and the others with pieces of excellent efficient string — and four trucks which aren't so bad, I honestly believe. And why they disembarked all those men in Scotland and sent them through England in a first-class carriage with the blinds drawn, instead of sending them direct to Dunkirk, I don't know. But it's strategy, or perhaps super-strategy, or maybe super-extra-double-super strategy. And we know nothing of it in the Press Bureau, and it's obviously the silliest rubbish, and you have to believe it, because otherwise someone might suggest conscription, which is contrary to the principles of true democratic monarchy. And while they are fighting in Flanders, we can play golf at Princes' because of the Russian steam roller, and I believe that Eusapia Palladino can lift tables without touching them, and you can't do anything to serve your country."

X

I said: can buy Holland for ten million sterling; and if she doesn't want to, we can threaten to take her colonies."

He said: "You'd better see Sir James Morrison (I think it was) about that, but I hope we aren't such pirates."

I said: "Oughtn't we to buy Bulgaria — a loan of five million would do the trick, and cut their line at the most vital spot."

He said: "Five million is a very great deal of money."

England does not seem to have foreseen that five million was going to be a fraction of our daily expenses.

XI

I said, "Why have we abandoned Turkey, our friends for a century? The Turk, as a man, is a gentleman like the best kind of Englishman. The Turkish Empire is our bulwark against Slav aggression as against Teutonic aggression. The Sultan is the spiritual head of Islam, and ours is the greatest Mohammedan Empire in the world. The 'Young Turks' are renegades to their race and to their faith — they are men without religion or country — the tools of German prostitutes. They are worse than degenerate Jews, because they had somewhere to fall from. They have been bought by the Germans at so many marks a pound, like the pigs they are. If you don't believe me, ask Pierre Loti and Claude Farrere. Why did we leave Abdul Hamid, the wisest man in Europe, to the wolves? Why, like a wounded man in the delirium of fever, did we tear off the bandage of our waterway to India, directly?"

He said, "The Turk is a very wicked man. He has not signed the Thirty-nine Articles. He is almost as bad as the Italian who worships idols and a piece of bread. I cannot see any way for you to serve your country."

It should be clearly understood that the Honourable A.B. is one of the few men of brains in England. He was entirely in sympathy with my point of view throughout, but he was in an official position, and had to give me (in his best ironic style) the official answers.

XII

My hair and my leg and my Sunday School record alike conspiring to keep me out of the trenches, and my deplorable lack of stupidity disqualifying me for the Intelligence Department, I accepted an invitation to go to New York. It looked as though there might be fifteen or twenty million dollars in it, and I had a feeling that my country, the richest in the world, would shortly be going, cap in hand, to the savages for cowries. I went to America by the *Lusitania*, on October 24th, 1914, expecting to stay a fortnight and return with the sinews of war. It did not take me forty-eight hours to discover that my egg was addled.

I had taken with me the equivalent of about fifty pounds in American coinage. As luck would have it, one of the first people I met in New York, Mr. D., whom I knew as a collector of rare books, paintings and sculptures, including some of my own introuvable publications, showed an interest in the purchase of some of my unique editions and manuscripts. I arranged to stay

in New York until these could be sent over for his approval. (As a matter of fact, I had understood him as offering to purchase them all outright. Money was at this time of considerable moment to me. In the upshot, he purchased between seven and eight hundred dollars' worth of my goods, instead of between three and four thousand dollars' worth, as I had expected; and this disappointment left me in great straits financially, as I had at that time no immediately available resources in England. New York is a place where one is continually led on to expect something to happen, and it never does — a city of glittering phantoms.)

XIII

While waiting for my manuscripts and first editions to arrive, I occupied myself in observing the attitude of New Yorkers to the war. Like most tenderfoot Englishmen, I imagined at that time that New York was America. I found the rulers of New York, the "malefactors of great wealth", inclined to favour England. Their banking connections made this inevitable. How they could make money out of Germany while the British navy held the seas? There were also many social and matrimonial links between the very biggest Berthas in New York and England.

I distinguished between the very biggest, who were few, and the multitude of the big. The honesty of the German had made him a bulwark against Yankee smartness; and nearly all the magnates of the second rank were either Germans or Jews with Teuton leanings. The temper of the people was not for one second in doubt. Though the German-American, or his father, might have left Germany because of Prussian tyranny, he had the sentimental racial hawser; and he had huge pride in the Empire which was begotten at Sedan. The revolutionist of '48 had become the Pan German of '71, if only because his revolt from slavery was the testimony that he was a slave.

His action in the war confirms this diagnosis, and intensifies it. The coward who fled from military service begat the double coward, who did not even dare to vote, unless he knew himself in an immense majority. Evidence: the election of Wilson, the pro-German, in 1918, and of Hylan, the puppet to Anti-English Tammany, two years later, while the war was actually raging. The Germans are perhaps the most influentially solid body in the United States, even in New York. They are the only people who can cook a satisfying meal without attempting to make 1000% on everything.

XIV

But the most politically formidable body in New York consists of Irish-Americans, who run Tammany Hall and innumerable brothels and gambling

houses under the presiding genius of a potato, names Murphy, and a load of manure, named Hearst. These Irish are immigrants with a genuine grievance against England, or the sons of such.

The English stupidity and Irish impracticality which has kept Ireland at spiritual was with England for over seven hundred years, which has given Ireland a history of saints, heroes and martyrs, instead of saints, artists and merchant princes, have driven these people by police persecution and sheer starvation from their holy island.

Arrived in America, their ignorance, eloquence and political genius have turned each one in twenty-four hours from the "poor exile of Erin" to "Alderman Mike, introducing a bill". American politics has reft from them every shred of decency. They were never much more than the peelings of rotten potatoes. They have kept the wrongs of Ireland and the wickedness of England for political capital, though they care for nothing but their hides and their pockets.

XV

But great as are the German and the Irish in New York, they are nothing, not a grain of dust in the balance, compared with the Jews. In 1914, the Jews were sitting on the fence; they too cared for nothing but their hides and their pockets. England has been pretty decent to the Jew. I hold no brief for England, but I am bound to say that England has produced a better brand of Jew than countries which have treated him less gently.* England had the weight of money — perhaps in 1914 and 1915 the point was arguable. But against that, the average Jew of moderate financial standing had German for his mother tongue, and he certainly had the continental point of view as opposed to the insular.

I have been obliged to emphasise this question of the Jew, because their real, if invisible, control of New York is hardly understood in Europe. It was against these people, influenced as they were bound to be not only by the German and the Irish, but by the bulk of the population, to whom Lafayette is little more than the name of a cafe, and England the unspeakable monster whom they were brought up from childhood to curse in every phrase of the Declaration of Independence,** that the very biggest financiers, such as Morgan and Otto Kahn, had to fight.

Rockefeller could have swung the situation. According to one story, he ultimately did so, as the result of a deal in oil, of which the statisticians have not yet calculated the cost per gallon in human lives.

* — North Africa, Spain, and Portugal produce Jews who are gentlemen and good fellows. Contrast these with the Sheeny and the Kike of Central and Eastern Europe. The French Jew, half tolerated, comes half way.

** — England, whose nationals came to America and treated the Americans as lower than the sewer rats of London. I am not contesting the English point of view.

XVI

A very brief inquiry showed me that America meant to make money out of the war. That meant that she would export food and munitions to the Allies, since our navy maintained the blockade against the Central Powers. It was, however, quite a little while before it dawned upon my dull brain that we were going to have to depend upon America for these necessities — that our industrialization had so sapped the economy of our resources, that civilization was going to seek salvation at the hands of the barbarian. This was the fatal error, pregnant with catastrophe, which was phthisis to Greece and creeping paralysis to Rome. This was the corruption which has been to China as a carcinoma; destroying her civilization within a quarter of a century, despite five thousand years of religious, philosophical, social, moral, and political health. The same delusion will gangrene England within the lifetime of most men of military age unless she turns to realize that gold is dung, that her poets and her scholars are her soul, that the great Gate of Trinity and Tom Tower are better worth preserving than almost anything else except the Fleet, and that the Avon and the Thames are sacred, not because they are highways of commerce, but because their banks bore Shakespeare and Boadicea.

XVII

In America, then, I began to understand that the problem of American policy was, for the moment, one of caste. The "very biggest" remembered that George Washington was an Englishman; tyrannized over by a Honoverian usurper of the throne of England, a German boor whose sense of his own dignity was expressed by his desiring to be called Farmer George. The English poet, Shelley, called him "an old, blind, mad, despised and dying king", about whom there was nothing kingly but his filched crown and sceptre, baubles as much fetish as the mace of the rotten rump of Praise-God-Barebones, inherited from a puppet grandfather, king by the grace of a Parliament in despair, its hand tied by the absurd laws of legitimacy, and its head threatened by the Damocles sword of a papistical Scot.

George Washington was an Englishman who was tired of Verboten and Bezshlen, and intended to exercise the immemorial rights of Englishmen. Harold, in his death agony at Hastings, the barons at Runymede, Hampden,

Monk, the seven bishops, and Prince Charles Edward Stuart; each in his own way stood for the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; also, as I said before, the right to tell anybody to go to Hell even before the time appointed by divine Providence?

What should the German and the Jew know of all this? As for the Irishman, among his bogs and moors, he cares for atmosphere, courtesy, saintship and potatoes. In New York he wants to get even with his Oppressors, by police tyranny, the financial vampirism of his roulette and baccarat balls, and the pathological operation of his 'sporting houses'.

XVIII

America is a democracy — worse — it is an ochlocracy — it is not merely the people, but the mob, that rules. At least, its masters pretend — sometimes even to themselves — that the mob rules. The stench of the unwashed is the incense of the God of political power; the blood upon his altar is furnished by the white slaves who rule the police and the political bullies, who think themselves their masters. In America, no men, however strong, however wise — I had almost said, however rich — dare go against the wind of popular borborygmous.

The friends of England had to excuse their attitude by pleading inane rubbish about treaties, despite Belgium's proved treachery* to the very covenant which assured its independence. They had to plead the necessity of doing business. They understood that the current of popular opinion was indifference and aloofness; with a fierce undertone of sentiment, which, even when not actively pro-German was bitterly anti-English.

* — P.S. I now understand that these words are hard to justify; yet at the best the facts dispose of all claims to lofty morality on any part; and at the time, no one in New York seriously challenged the German arguments on this point.

XIX

It is difficult to explain to Europeans the moral cowardice which is practically universal in America. No editor will print an independent article. The use of the word Jew is impossible in print, because the Jews believe, I will not say with how much justification, that the term is bitterly opprobrious. To print the word "virgin" may be construed as an obscenity, or as an insult to Romish Catholics. To say that anyone is ill or dead is an attack on Christian Science!

Americans — in the mass — are the lowest savages on earth. There is nothing there but totem and taboo; and they sacrifice human victims, when they can find anybody ill advised enough to visit them, with an enthusiasm which I am sure was never equalled in the South Sea Islands. Such people, let me say with more anatomical correctness, such mammals, are the prey of fear, the slaves of superstition.

But they had wheat and cattle and trinitrotoluol and gas and steel and coal. Labour had been crying like a starved child for employment. Its despair menaced the money lords with revolution. To supply the Allies with food and munitions solved America's problems beautifully for the moment, at least on paper.

To stop that supply meant bad business temporally for the United States, but it meant the gratitude of Germany. Germany was the best customer — ten per cent of Americans were Germans — Germany had smashed the British at Mons, the French everywhere save at Verdun, apart from the rally on the Marne, which, in America, seemed no such victory of the Russian army had been engulfed at Tannenburg by the slow maelstrom of the marshes. General Janvier and Maréchal Fvrier were not on the active list in the summer.

XX

I saw, then, in America, bewilderment and conflict; but the generous sort, the educated sort, rare like currants in a prison suet pudding, were on our side, As for the business sort, the calculating sort, is not the dollar God, and does not God fight for the general who has the preponderance of artillery? The question for them was whether the Germans had really sunk the Lion and the Tiger and the Audacious. As for the baser sort, yet baser if you can dive so deep in faecal mire, they were blind taeniae who sucked advantage from excrement. But they had instinctive hatred of anything so noble as the English, the race whose gentlefolk dare to dispute the palm of polite conduct with the high-caste Chinaman.

In America, the German lives next door to everybody else. Most of them are self-effacing, ingenuous, kind, obliging, honest, sentimental and harmless. The Teuton has a passionate love for music, in a country so degraded that otherwise it knows no distinction between man and beast, except on Western farms, where the law obliges shepherds and herdsmen to go afield in pairs lest miscegenation produce a race of sheep or cattlemen more singular than the mulatto! The German is everywhere welcome; and his opinion, always reliable in the business which is religion, carries weight with all.

XXI

A stranger to this planet, landing in New York in November 1914, when I landed, might at first have been impressed — I am supposing him to be a complete stranger and unprovided with the powers of reflection — by posters announcing the awful slaughter in a single battle of several million more Germans than have existed since Vercingetorix. The Allies, who were subsequently hyphenated (with only too good reason) as the All-lies, advanced daily, in the neighbourhood of some place of which no one had ever heard before, a distance of thirty-seven yards, two feet, and eight and a quarter inches. If of an enquiring disposition, he would go into the columns of small print, where he would discover that the Germans in some equally mysterious sector had advanced forty-seven yards, one foot, three and five-eighths inches. I apologize — the Germans had not advanced. The Allies had retired that distance for strategic reasons, according to the plan evolved by the super-human subtlety of that intelligent intelligence beyond all intelligences of intelligences that are beyond the empyrean of the intelligent one who is more intelligent than the intelligence which is beyond all intelligence, General French, whom ill-disposed critics had always ignorantly supposed to be a stupid fat old cavalry-man, a good deal too fond of his glass and — other things.

This observer might have failed altogether to learn that the Germans were at Warsaw or at Brest-Litovsk. Or, if they were there, it was on a visit or as prisoners. Or else it was the strategy, almost with that of the aforesaid General French, of the never-I-hope-hereinafter-to-be-mentioned Grand Duke Nicholas. And we now go on to a Sunday Supplemental story about his intrigue with a dancer, in the course of which he drinks some horrible champagne out of her shoe.

If the observer aforesaid had been miraculously endowed with some of the reflection aforesaid, he might have wondered why victorious armies kept on surrendering; why exhausted landsturmiers, toothless and dottering, kept on capturing hundreds of square miles of valuable territory every few days; why the Crown Prince was killed so often and in so many places at once; why (in short) the world did not come to an end with the precision and regularity expected of it by all newspaper readers with a proper respect for the venal and drinl-sodden editors who are responsible, if one may so abuse the word, for the interminable prostitutes' nightmares which are printed on the haemorrhoidogenous pulp which they call an enlightened press.

XXII

An intelligent stranger, even if he had not all that superfluity of intelligence duly accorded in a previous paragraph to our soldier-genius-machine-god Marshal Lord French, would not only read newspapers. He would find out from conversation what the people, who had always been reading the newspapers, thought, with such vestiges of mind as the constant perusal aforesaid might have permitted those of unusual intellectual stamina to retain. He would have discovered that these persons said "It is all rubbish — we know it quite well — Germany has won the war — it is only a question of time."

He might have gone on to ask: "What are you going to do about it? What of ravished Belgium? What of violated treaties, and the forcible conversion of nuns to an appreciation of the duty of repairing the losses caused to the owners of factory slaves by the war?" The typical answer would have been: "Don't be an ass, have a dry Martini — safety first — if you want to fight, go to Europe — if you want to talk war, go to Hell — this place is neutral." If you had insisted, "Do about it," he would have said: "I'm going to sell my goods at the best prices I can get, to any one whom I think can pay for them. And I'm going to take the greatest care in the world that the criminal insanity of Europe (I don't know who's right and who's wrong, but I suspect our traditional enemy, England, to be at the bottom of it) does not spread to the land of the free and the home of the brave."

XXIII

There was horse sense in that attitude. To a romantic young poet like myself it seemed ignoble. But then I am liable to shout with joy, not only at the surprise like Beethoven (dirty Hun!) who knew no music, but at the great simple words of the dying speech of John of Gaunt, of Dibdin, of Thomson, of Campbell. I can even glow at some lines of their imitator on the banjo, Kipling, who wished to sing of England's sea, but never got nearer than her sands, with a pink collar and a corked face. For he now and again touches the heart with a thrill, as those who strive after great things, who touch a truth (however vulgarity) must sometimes do.

But I had to admit the horse sense. I could not blame a man who had left kin and country, who had turned his back on civilization, who had trampled Greece, Rome and his own fatherland, that he might root in the mire for dollars with the other swine, if he continued to shove his snout into the midden. The problem for me was how to make pork of him, cold pork, if necessary, that I might save my country — my country which had found no way for me to serve her.

XXIV

I did not care whether my country were right or wrong. I could see both sides. Bloody Bill was not more certain than I was that the Triple Entente had been the masterstroke of Edward the Seventh. I think Edward VII, in his way, the greatest statesman in the world since Richelieu, nay, as great as or greater than he, to judge at least by the results obtained. I could see as clearly as Sir Edward Grey of the Patriot Bottomley, that German honesty, industry, and patience threatened English supremacy. But for my modesty I might even claim that I saw clearer than the Patriot Bottomley, who issued a poster "To hell with Servia", and a violent article to match, the week before the war.

If I had been a Martian, I might have thought Germany ill-treated. I might have seen her as a nation in the full flower of youth, expanding by the sheer force of what we commonly call virtue. I might have sympathized with her in her passionate efforts to develop herself as against the persistent Machiavellianism of the executors of the will of Peter the Great, the purely selfish and sentimental Vendetta of a Déroulède, and the aristocratically insipid pretension of England to bear the white man's burden alone and brook no rival. In fact, as a philosopher, I could take no other view.

XXV

But in me, there is something deeper than philosophy. It may be baser. It may be utterly irrational. It may be an animal instinct like that of a rat in his hole. But I have it. If it was a rat who wrote "Come the three quarters of the world in arms, and we shall shock them, naught shall make us rue if England to itself do rest but true", I am content to be a brother rat. I am celebrated for my immorality; and part of it is this; that no matter for 'right' or 'wrong', I am not going to have "Eintritt verboten" posted over the great gate of Trinity College, Cambridge, with a Prussian sentry to enforce it, while I have a drop of blood in my body.

The Patriot Bottomley is in error, I pray that he may pardon me if I indicate it. It is his kindness to me which seeks to flatter me unduly when he says that I took honours from Cambridge. Posterity will understand, on the contrary, that Cambridge has taken fresh honours from me. Nay, Patriot though thou be, Horatio, it is human to err. Homer and Jupiter have been known to nod. The Patriot Bottomley makes a worthy third to these. Put I did not even take the poll degree at Cambridge. I am an undergraduate of Trinity College. But I am a life member of that college; so much so, that when the Junior Dean attempted to prevent me from exercising my right to walk into its courts, I confronted him at the door of the Chapel and called

him a coward and a liar to his face. To rebuke the authorities of one's college is a distasteful duty; one too often imposed upon the modern undergraduate. But there is in me Roman virtue and I never shrink from a moral obligation.

XXVI

I found myself, then, in New York, awaiting the arrival of my books and manuscripts, an event, unfortunately as I then thought, long delayed. So I bethought me whether I could not, irrationally, immorally, unphilosophically, with a game leg but with all my heart and brain, serve England.

I was furious at the stupidity of the British propaganda. It was worse in America than it had been in England. At its best, it was an exaggeration and sheer falsehood, so transparent that Woodrow Wilson himself, to say nothing of a legion of Italian bootblacks, saw through it.

As for the German propaganda, it was hardly noticeable. Was it that they did not understand the importance of America in the Wilhelmstrasse? Was it that they had the good sense to rely upon the stupidity of the English apologists to defeat their intentions?

XXVII

I had a considerable opinion of the intelligence of Germans, dating from the time in my boyhood when Helmholtz was the great name in physics, Haeckel in biology, Mommsen in history, Goethe in poetry, Bach, Beethoven and Wagner in music; the time when one might say that the whole of organic chemistry had been developed in Germany. I had further to remember that the German social system was considered by nearly all thinking Englishmen as a sublime model. German thought and action had been made immortal by Carlyle. German social economy had been slavishly adopted by Lloyd George in the Insurance Act. Great lawyers like Lord Haldane and talented errand boys like H. G. Wells mingled their voices (of course, in the latter case, with a somewhat cockney accent) to extol the greatness of Germany and to hold her up as a pattern to all good Englishmen. I reflected that Bismarck was not exactly a fool in politics, that von Moltke had been hardly an amateur in the art of war. I had read von Bernhardt with admiration, both for his intellectual ability and his moral simplicity. I did not argue whether or no he came from Italian stock. Nietzsche was to me almost an avatar of Thoth, the god of wisdom; and, whether or no he was a Polish Jew, Germany had possessed sufficient intelligence to profit by the thwackings that he gave her. Yes, I was almost convinced that the German directorate had decided to

allow British hypocrisy and stupidity to win their battles for them by making themselves absurd and obscene in the eyes of all sensible people.

XXVIII

One day, I think early in 1915. I was seated on the top of what the American purists calls a stage, and we a bus. This vehicle was proceeding (or attempting to proceed) up Fifth Avenue, which is a sort of ditch lined with diamonds and over-rouged stenographers, all at a price totally disproportionate to the value of the article. I was not interested in these objects of merchandise; I was occupied by my own vanity. Somebody in England had sent me press cuttings which described me as the greatest poet, philosopher, blackguard, mountaineer, magician, degenerate and saint of all time; and I was thinking that, as in the case of the Queen of Sheba, when she visited King Solomon, the half had not been told.

I was aroused from this mood of mingled gratification and disappointment by a tap on the shoulder. A voice asked me to excuse its intrusion. Its owner explained that, seeing me reading cuttings with the superscription of a London firm, he assumed me to be at least English-speaking, in a city where Yiddish was the language of romance. If so, was I in favour of a square deal for Germany and Austria? I replied that I was. I have often thought how much nicer Germans and Austrians would be if they were cut up into little squares and made into soup.

I did not reveal to my interlocutor this interpretation of my reply, for at my initiation I was taught to be cautious. He, with the frank bonhomie of the Irishman, told me that his name was O'Brien, that he had to get off at 37th Street, but that if I could accept his card, he would be pleased to hold further conversation with me at his office. Like Jurgen in the master piece of James Branch Cabell, I am willing to taste any drink once, and I may incidentally remind my admirers that, if the drink should be Courvoisier over fifty years old, I will go on till something breaks and do good work all the time. So I went to see Mr. O'Brien.

XXVIX

Mr. O'Brien was not in. I think I never saw him again. But I discovered that his office was the office of a paper called *The Fatherland*, appearing weekly. To my surprise, the inmates seemed to know all about me; and, in the absence of Mr. O'Brien, they produced the most extraordinary little amniote — half rat, half rabbit, if I am any zoologist at all — whose name is Joseph Bernard Rethy. I looked at this specimen of the handiwork of the Creator with somewhat mixed feelings, gradually sagging towards a pessimistic

atheism, especially when I learned that, like anyone in New York who can string together a dozen words without sound or sense, he was a shining light of the Poetry Society. (But he is quite a nice boy.)

I must admit that I did not know how to talk to him. With all the quickness of his Jewish apprehension, he decided that I was meat for his master, for whom he sent by means of the complicated manual gestures which form the true language of Jews, and, *pace*, Professor Garner, of the other anthropoids. To my surprise, this master of his recognized me and came forward with extend hands, bulging eyes and the kind of mouth which seems to have been an unfortunate afterthought. The name of this person was George Sylvester Viereck.

XXX

I have a decided admiration of sorts for this individual. He has the extraordinary faculty of awakening an instructive repulsion in most people similar to that which many feel with regard to a toad. He is mean and cowardly to an extent psychologically almost unfathomable; but his cowardice is so protected by cunning that he is able to execute a desperate purpose. I may arouse a storm of execration for saying so, but I believe him to be fundamentally one of the bravest of brave men. He runs away all the time, but he never forgets to "fight another day". At one time he boasted that he was the grandson of the First German Emperor by an actress, Adele Viereck. The statement wounded America in its two worst places. It asserted superiority and defied propriety. Viereck has tried to live down his boast; but I believe that, in his heart of hearts, he fortifies himself in any crisis by saying secretly, "I am not of dregs like Americans." His manners are pleasant, too much so to be a gentleman's. He is homosexual at heart — though I believe not so in practice — and conscious of this inferiority, which makes him timid. This is accentuated by a nervous temperament. He has a remarkable gift for epigrammatic phrases, a strong sense of rhythm and a great critical ability, which is masked by his opportunism. His *Confessions of a Barbarian* is probably the cleverest book ever written by an American about Europe. Some of his poems are so simple and direct that, if they miss sublimity, which may or may not be the case, the blame is to be laid to the disastrous Jewish trait of conscious cleverness which came so near to shipwreck the greatness of Heine.

XXXI

He recalled himself to my recollection by saying that he had met me in the office of Mr. Austin Harrison, the editor of the *English Review*. It has been a lifelong rule of mine to take no notice of my contemporaries. My

companions are the great men of antiquity and my children those of posterity. I did not remember him; but as it has been another lifelong rule of mine to be polite, even to poets, I feigned the recognition and enthusiasm which I judged appropriate.

Viereck is a man of considerable talent for conversation. He knows the world well. He is not deceived by the humbug of public men and the prostitute antics of the press. He is able to see both sides of any question. His point of view possesses the sanity which comes from the second rater's perception of the necessity of compromise. I was able to talk to him as I could have done with an Englishman of similar education.

XXXII

But his intelligence was not sufficiently subtle to comprehend the moral paradox in myself. I praised Germany — I sympathized with Germany — I justified Germany — and he erroneously deduced, as the average Englishman might have done, that I was pro-German. He did not understand the attitude which I held. I can hardly blame him, for it would puzzle myself if I allowed myself to worry about it. I may or may not be a burglar; but even if I am, I am going to drill a hole through the householder who interrupts my in the exercise of my profession. This is my position. But Viereck could not guess it. I might be a high-souled cosmopolitan, like Romain Rolland; I might be an Irish fanatic, like Roger Casement; I might be a sordid traitor, like Mata Hari. But he could not understand my being sincere in thinking like Bernard Shaw would think if he could think, and equally so in acting like Sir Edward Grey would act if he could act.

XXXIII

During the conversation, it dawned upon my dull mind that here were the headquarters of the German Propaganda. Viereck was a man of suave insinuating manners and address, a man of considerable political experience and immense intellectual capacity, fortified by the cunning of one who has studied long in the hard merciless school which the world throws open to homosexuals. Poor fool, his innocence had betrayed him into indiscretion! The homosexual is comically innocent, and cannot understand the loathing which the average man regards what to him is a natural impulse. More, it is not merely moral righteousness, but moral exaltation above what he considers the animal instinct of the normal man. So he had plucked violets from the grave of Oscar Wilde and framed them with an autograph copy of one of the sonnets written by Lord Alfred Douglas to the shade of that most distinguished of His Ludship's "Messieurs". Is it imaginable that anyone should suppose that he can advertise himself and his sexual peculiarities on so

crude a poster without obtaining the kind of publicity that will hurt him most with men of cruder sexual prejudices? But Viereck had learned his lesson. He had learned to deny everything. Even to me, knowing my reputation, totally undeserved as it happens to be, for similar abnormalities, he would admit nothing. This is a most remarkable circumstance, for the persecution attached to this passion has created a Freemasonry among its devotees which makes them frank to the point of indiscretion when they think they recognize sympathy in an acquaintance. Bitter must have been Viereck's initiation that it should have taught him to be so extravagantly cautious; but it fitted him to handle the German Propaganda.

XXXIV

I claim this credit, that from the first I recognized him as a master of craft, an opposite well worthy of every trick of fence. I am still unable to agree with Captain (now Commodore) Gaunt (Director of the British Intelligence for some time, including this time, in New York) in classing him "as one of the lesser jackals around von Papen", as he wrote me during our correspondence on the subject. I claim further credit for perceiving the limitations of Viereck. Brilliant though he was, he was not old enough, solid enough or unselfish and high-minded enough to be trustworthy enough to handle a propaganda involving the destiny of a people.

XXXV

I looked for what the Americans call the "man higher up". I did not look in the direction of honest, well-meaning, sentimental von Bernstorff with all his capacity for routine, his noble credulity, his quite genuine desire to arrange everything amicably, and his hackneyed training in the diplomatic service with its hamstrings of etiquette and its chessboard punctilio. I did not look towards von Papen, with his stultifying conviction that he was so much cleverer than anybody else; still less towards Boy-Ed, who was a breezy naval ass with the instincts, ineradicable in the Turk, of a gentleman. Von Mack was a capable person of professional mind, adequate to gather and present statistics, and obsessed with the universal lust of the German University man to prove everything five times over after everybody else has ceased to take the smallest interest in the question. There were lots of small fry, good for subordinate positions. But was there not someone authentically anointed for the work, someone who had made a special study for years of the psychology of Americans, who had written books about them? Was there no man of master mind, ripe experience, balanced wisdom?

XXXVI

I found such a candidate for the secret director of the German propaganda in Professor Hugo Münsterberg. As it happened, the professor was an old enemy of mine. We had quarrelled about philosophy and physics. His mind was intensely positive, brutally matter-of-fact, but capable of appreciating subtlety, and far more open to new facts and theories than most of his opponents supposed. His arrogance was, to a great extent, the Freudian protection against his own uncertainty. He knew psychology, he knew men; he understood business; and in his capacity of instructor at Harvard, he had acquired the habit of forming and directing minds. So much I knew, and I pictured my duel with him in romantic terms of Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty.

But the facts were less enthralling. The professor had the great German gift of Being Always Right. My task was simplified; I had merely to keep on telling him how very right he was. He soon ceased to gauge the temper of the community correctly, began to lay down the law instead of arguing with moderation and good sense, was hardened in arrogance by opposition, and became as violent and stupid on his side as our own chosen propagandists were on ours. My meat!

XXXVII

But I am overrunning myself. My immediate problem was to confirm Viereck in his conviction that I was pro-German. There was a very serious snag in the English Review for November 1914. There was a poem of mine called "An Appeal to the American Republic" inviting an Anglo-American alliance. This poem having been written in 1898, I had had to alter "the traitor Russian" to "the traitor Prussian", to suit the political kaleidoscope. Fortunately I had no difficulty in persuading Viereck that this action was in the nature of camouflage, designed to exploit the stupidity of the British public in general and Austin Harrison in particular. His knowing Mr. Austin Harrison made this easier.

But personally I was so terribly English! My accent betrayed me as his did Peter. My clothes were obviously Savile Row. I had not even taken the precaution to be sufficiently un-English to pay for them. I clutched at the straw of my name. From the myths of antiquity looms a phantom Crowley somewhere near Kilkenny where the cats come from, and though my particular Crowleys have been mercifully well-behaved in England since the bishop of that name who published his naughty epigrams in the time of Queen Elizabeth, there are lots of Crowleys in America who come direct from Ireland.

I found Viereck very sympathetic about Irish independence and I billed myself as the only and original Sinn Feiner. My trouble was that I knew nothing about the Irish question and possessed nothing by the hazy idea common to most Englishmen, including those who have studied Ireland most profoundly, that it was a devil of a mess and a devil of a nuisance. However, Viereck wanted to believe; and he believed, like a Catholic who is afraid to sleep in the dark.

XXXVIII

Having thus established myself as an Irish rebel and a pro-German, I went away and considered what I could do about it. I read *The Fatherland*; I found the German case presented with learning, with logic and with moderation. The motifs were scholarship, statistics and statesmanlike sobriety. It seemed to me that, in the peculiar temper of the United States, whose people, however ignorant and dishonest individually, are always, as a whole, curiously anxious to know the truth and to do justice, this propaganda was infernally dangerous to British interests. I talked to my friends about it. All they could say was that Viereck was personally despicable. Some, like Captain Gaunt, affected to ignore the importance of *The Fatherland*. Others, even more hopeless from my point of view, seemed to think that they could suppress *The Fatherland* by continuing their lifelong policy of omitting to invite Viereck to dinner parties which would have bored him and given him indigestion.

XXXIX

I decided on a course of action, which seemed to me the only one possible in a situation which I regarded as immensely serious. I would write for *The Fatherland*. By doing so, I should cut myself off temporarily from all my friends, from all sources of income, I should apparently dishonour a name which I considered it my destiny to make immortal, and I should have to associate on terms of friendship with people whose very physical appearance came near to reproducing in me the possibly beneficial results of crossing the Channel with a choppy sea.

But the German propaganda was being done as well as the British propaganda ill. With a little moral ascendancy over Viereck, I could spoil his game completely by doing as much mischief to Germany as the Patriot Bottomley and the other hoarse-throated fishwives of Fleet Street were doing to England. I met with more success than I had hoped.

XL

Münsterberg was not Argus. I think moreover that folly is contagious. He could hardly keep his young men in hand, especially when apparent victory turned their heads. I found some of them incredibly silly. I had always known Paul Carus for an ass since he published *The Gospel of Buddah*, but I had no idea that he was such an ass! In *The Open Court* he published a fancy portrait from my pen of Bloody Bill as Parsifal! Poor old earnest Christian Endeavour Wilhelm, with his megalomania and his theatricalism and his fat-witted Lutheran Gott and his withered hand and his moving-picture-star galaxy of uniforms as the up-to-date Messiah! What a model for "King Arthur come again", to give the heathen Schrecklichkeit!

I must have been beautifully drunk to write that. I don't remember anything about it — but I must have been much more than drunk when I sent it to Paul Carus. I suppose I had become acclimatized to the idea that all serious and eminent people are perfectly brainless. He swallowed it, hook, line and sinker; and a poor little bookseller in London who had been agent for the paper for years, and had never read a line of it, got three months in prison! The truth is that the British lost all sense of humour when the war broke out. I wonder how many millions in blood and treasure it cost us to "jowk" with such "deeficulty"!

XLI

I worked up Viereck gradually from relatively reasonable attack on England to extravagances which achieved my object of revolting every comparatively sane human being on earth. I proved that the *Lusitania* was a man-of-war. I dug up all the atrocities of King Leopold of Belgium, from mutilated niggers in the Congo to Cléo de Mérode and Anna Robinson. I translated atrocity, not merely into military necessity, but into moral uplift. I put haloes on the statue of von Hindenburg with his wooden head and his nightgown of tintacks. But (on the whole) I took few chances of letting the Germans perceive the tongue in my cheek.

One day, however, I got genuinely drunk, not with alcohol but with indignation. It was the day of the murder of Edith Cavell. I sat down and wrote an article — a stained glass window representing von Bissing as Jesus Christ, "that great-hearted, simple-minded, trusting German". He extends his hand to her; and says, with tears in his eyes, "Miss Cavell, I trust you!" Then she acts the part of Judas; and I conclude with a display of fireworks, in which she is welcomed to hell by Lucrezia Borgia and the Marchioness de Brinvilliers and several other vampires, whose names I have forgotten, having others closer to hand.

It makes me weep for Germany when I think the Viereck published such hideous and transparent irony without turning a hair! Americans do not understand irony at all. But Viereck should have done so, considering the Jewish hetaera and the wily old robber baron in his ancestry. But are any tears salt enough to weep for England when I think that none of my countrymen could read my bitterness and anger between the lines of that comic travesty of blasphemy?

XLII

I must explain here that I had more than one string to my bow. It was really a minor part of my programme to wreck the German propaganda on the proof of *Reductio ad Absurdum*. I had hoped to gain the full confidence of the conspirators whom I had identified and deal with them as somebody whose name I forget dealt with Cataline; and Lord Mount Eagle or whoever it was, with Guy Faux. But nobody in British Intelligence had sufficient of that quality to notice me.

New York was full of obvious, even blatant Englishmen with their pockets full of money, manners indicative of never having had any to spend on previous occasions except on a Bank Holiday when they would indulge recklessly in fried fish or a Bath bun, and larynxes replete with unsynchronized aitches. These persons were labelled "secret Agents". They advertized their trade in every way short of actually affixing a button to their lapels inscribed with those mysterious words. They foregathered at the British Consulate at regular hours, and handed in neatly-written reports deploring the moral obliquity of the German-American, or conveying secret information, mostly incorrect, laboriously gathered from the columns of the evening papers. They were spiritually united by a glowing patriotism and a belief (infinitely touching, and I suppose in a certain sense creditable to their moral character), that the wicked German spy would never, never, never recognize them. Perhaps they were right. Most of the German spies I met would not recognize the Woolworth Building.

I have always been unduly optimistic about England. I know such a lot of people who are far from being fools. But war seems to deaden perception. Men who are in ordinary times quite acute become ready to assume that anyone who is waving a Union Jack and singing "Britannia Rules the Waves" must be an Admiral of the Fleet. Everybody assumed that the irritating balderdash I wrote for *The Fatherland* must be the stark treason that the Germans were stupid enough to think it was.

XLIII

A person in my position is liable to see Sherlock Homes in the most beef-witted policeman. I did not feel that I was advancing in the confidence of the Germans. I got no secrets worth reporting to London, and I was not at all sure whether the cut of my clothes had not outweighed the eloquence of my conversation. I thought I would do something more public. I wrote a long parody on the Declaration of Independence and applied it to Ireland.

I invited a young lady violinist who has some Irish blood in her, behind the more evident stigmata of the ornithorhyncus and the wombat. Adding to our number about four other debauched persons on the verge of delirium tremens, we went out in a motor boat before dawn on the third of July to the rejected statue of Commerce for the Suez Canal, which Americans fondly suppose to be Liberty Enlightening The World.

There I read my Declaration of Independence. I threw an old envelope into the bay, pretending that it was my British passport. We hoisted the Irish flag. The violinist played the "Wearing of the Green". The crews of the interned German ships cheered us all the way up the Hudson, probably because they estimated the degree of our intoxication with scientific precision. Finally, we went to Jack's for breakfast, and home to sleep it off. The *New York Times* gave us three columns and Viereck was distinctly friendly.

XLIV

Over in England there was consternation. I cannot think what had happened to their sense of humour. To pretend to take it seriously was natural enough in New York, where everybody is afraid of the Irish, not knowing what they may do next. But London was having bombs dropped on it, apparently with the idea of affording economical and blasé cockneys a fine free spectacle of burning Zeppelins. And anyhow, Englishmen have never understood, and never will understand, anything about Ireland. This fact is one of the best jokes provided by Providencer, and its combination of the humorous and the tragic confirms one in the belief that the Creator is a masochistic and intoxicated Irishman.

XLV

There was, however, one person in England who knew me — also a joke when he saw it: the Honourable A. B., my old friend aforesaid. Owing to the confusion inevitably attached to the mud with which we always begin muddling through, this gentleman had been inadvertently assigned to the Intelligence Department. He is a psychologist of extraordinary ability. He has

made it his business for many years to investigate some of the most difficult problems known to humanity. I do not wish to disclose his identity, so I will only say that his success largely depends upon deciphering his thoughts, and counteracting the tricks, of the most subtle class of rogues in the community.

When he saw the report in the *New York Times*, he wrote to me about it. I knew he would not talk. I knew he would not blunder. I wrote back explaining my position, with he immediately understood and approved. But intelligence such as his is a rare accident in an Intelligence Department. He could not authorize me to go ahead without appealing to his superiors. He put the case before them. They were quite unable to understand that I was merely in a position to get into the full confidence of the Germans if I had the right sort of assistance. They idiotically assumed that I already possessed a knowledge of the enemy's secrets and they sent me a test question on a matter of no importance — did I know who, if anybody, was passing under the name of so-and-so? I was not going to risk my precarious position asking questions. The official English idea of a secret agent seemed to be that he should act like a newspaper reporter. The result was that the negotiations came to very little, though I turned in reports from time to time.

XLVI

I must here emphasize the outrageous imbecility of most of our actions in America. As the *Evening Standard* (so I am told) remarked, commenting on our appointments of Babington Smith, Lord Reading and Our Freddy, we sent "a nonentity, a Jew, and a Wadhamite". In other departments we had a railway novelist whose tales I must admit to be amusing, and a dreadful little creature names Robert Nichols, whose poetry is bad enough to have made him the pet of the Poetry Society. But that body has little political influence save for purveyors of maple nit sundaes, and those messes which New York calls French pastry; and anyhow his vanity saved him from the contaminating intercourse of his fellow creatures.

There was a Temporary Gentleman named H...I in the British Military Mission with whom I had such dealings as is possible with the half-witted. He thought that he detected hostility in my attitude towards him, whereas it was merely the University Manner. It was this poor thing whom our secret service sent to interview me. I told him that I could find out exactly what the Germans were doing in America. I also told him that I had the absolute confidence, years old, of a man high in the German secret service — that I could go to Germany in the character of an Irish patriot and report on the conditions of the country. (There was desperate need of accurate information as to Germany's resources at this period.) He said, with the air of one detected

in the act of adultery by sixteen separate sleuths, to say nothing of being doomed by the Black Hand, "But how do I know that you won't go straight to Viereck and tell him I have been to see you?"!!! I am loath to record accents of human speech so eloquent of mental undevelopment. I said to him, "What harm would that do? How would that save Bloody Bill from his predestined doom?" He did not know the answer to that. But then, he did not know the answer to anything else. And I have no doubt that by this time, back on his old job, he is handing out hot mutton, tea and damper to the squatters in the book-blocks of Australia.

This subject may as well conclude with a brilliant contrast. As soon as America entered the war, the Department of Justice got busy. They had brains, and they used them. They estimated Viereck pretty well as I had done. They knew that the intellectual is a thousand times more dangerous than the clumsy kind, who blows up bridges in places that don't matter. The Department used me to the full. They helped me in every possible way, and to my astonishment (almost amounting to collapse!) they were even grateful to me for what I did to help them!

XLVII

I must now return to the main subject of this report. Partially baffled by the failure of the British to apply common sense to my proposals, I was compelled to go on playing a lone hand. It was necessary to persuade the Germans that arrogance and violence were sound policy, that bad faith was the cleverest diplomacy, that insult was the true means of winning friendship, and direct injury the proper conjuration to call up gratitude. I could not have succeeded had they not been hardened by temporary success, duped by the rigidity of their own logic, and rendered arrogant by the conviction of their own uprightness.

But it succeeded. Von Bernstorff's superficiality could not estimate America. He was too much a gentleman. He knew indeed the unhappy truth that Wilson had been elected because he had kept America out of the war. I drummed it into both his donkey ears. But he was deceived by the humbug of "the world kept safe for democracy". The people ruled — the people had voted against war. One can almost envy him his simple creed. Such a man might trust his wife and live happy ever afterwards.

He did not see that "the people" in America are slaves who count for nothing in the minds of their masters. But America had lent fabulous sums to the Allies, and would get nothing if Germany won the war but the kicks which so much pusillanimity and selfishness deserved. He did not see that America wanted a pretext for calling the conduct of Germany intolerable.

The scabby old camel, almost ready to start for its trip through dryness, was looking wistfully for the last straw.

XLVIII

For some time I had been contemplating the military situation in its largest sense. I had been thinking of water, air and earth as units. I had been at some pains to study the question of the necessary limitations of the three arms of war. I knew the history of Napoleon gazing glumly across the Channel, after his triumphant snatch at Europe. I had written a paper in *The Fatherland* called "The Future of the Submarine". I pointed out that hardly anyone had believed in the naval value of these craft until three British cruisers were sunk in fifteen minutes. I pointed out that this demonstration would convince Treasuries. Every nation would mobilize all the brains and all the gold and all the influence to find a means of opening the wound. I prophesied a development of the submarine as astounding as that of railways and automobiles — which dated from the hour when they were proved practicable and useful.

On January 3rd, 1917, I returned to the charge with an article which was ostensibly a criticism of Count von Reventlow's *Vampire*, but in reality my own sermon on that text. The Patriot Bottomley has quoted one of my best passages, that in which I proposed to reduce England to the status of a German colony. (The Germans printed it without a smile!) I was very proud of that article. It proved that all island races were primarily fishermen, who lived by snatching fish and must therefore become pirates. The argument is quite in the style of a real German professor. I advocated the "Unrestricted Submarine Campaign". I secretly calculated, rightly as the gods would have it, that so outrageous a violation of all law would be the last straw, and force America to throw off the burden of neutrality. *

My German friends were loud in their congratulations. It was confidently whispered among the *cognoscenti* that von Bernstorff's judgment swayed at its impact. He withdrew his objections to that brutality, that insane savagery, that brought America into the war.

* One of the first people I met in N.Y. was Belle La Costa Green, librarian of the late J.P. Morgan, and I believe, still in charge of the library. I made the following proposal substantially: that I should pose as an eccentric philanthropist of great wealth and collect indigent persons to found a new colony. A ship being chartered for this purpose, the colonists were to be taken off by English destroyers or cruisers and landed in some secret place where news could be stopped. The ship was then to be torpedoed in deep water; English

destroyers were then to chase the captured German submarine which had done the trick, which submarine was to be sunk in very shallow water on the American coast so that the evidence of the German crime would be obvious. The ship had passengers being American, the operation would have peeved the U.S.A. Miss Green may possibly remember the conversation. In any case, the scheme is interesting as the inception of the plan which matured later in the final article on England "The Vampire of the Seas".

XLIX

But there's a tick in every sleeping-bag. My countrymen stayed right with me to the finish! In what high glee did I not keep my secret rendezvous with a friend from a certain British Consulate, waving my article, and crying, "The damned fools have printed it — and it's going to turn the trick!" He read it; his face fell; he turned disgustedly and growled, "I didn't know you were a German."

Well, he wasn't as bad as the rest; he saw the point when it was explained to him. That is the foundation of my hope in preparing these few words, for I am as bored with the war as every other sensible man has been long since, and I should certainly not have been bothered to argue about the last straw showing which way the wind blew, or any other hash of proverbs, if the war had been in question, or if I had thought it worth while to offer a personal explanation to people dense enough to need one. There is a second camel's back in this story, much more important to me than that of the United States. The load which is crushing out my life is British stupidity. It will crush the life out of England unless something is done about it very soon.

The secret service people, while considering my application for employment, asked a friend of mine to explain my attitude. "We don't understand him," they wailed piteously; "we don't understand him at all." "Cheer up," said my friend; "you're not the first people to fail to understand Mr. Aleister Crowley!"

L

It is rather irrelevant; but it is certainly very amusing and very characteristic, the following incident of my campaign. I had asked the Honourable A. B. to help me consolidate my position with the Germans by heating the branding irons of infamy for me in the fire of publicity. I therefore attributed it to his ingenuity when I heard that the police had raided the office of an acquaintance of mine in Regent Street. They didn't know what I was after, took my articles at their face value, and thought to annoy, perhaps to intimidate me by the raid.

The person they arrested was a motherly old fool who had been prophesying with tea leaves for about twenty years at the same old stand, with the full knowledge of the police. The ordinary course in prosecuting a fortuneteller is for a polite young man to hand, with deference and apologies to his prospective victim, a summons to appear before a magistrate. But the charge against this woman was factitious. They wanted to get at me, at me barely more than three thousand miles away, and confidently supposed to be sitting in a luxurious suite at the Ritz-Carlton, quaffing beaker after beaker of champagne to the health of the Kaiser, as I conspired with the fanatical brewers of Milwaukee.

One would really have thought that modern education would have taught the police that the best zoologists agree unanimously that it is hard to please a tortoise by stroking its shell. And a comparatively brief course of logic might easily have enriched this theorem (by a syllogism containing the minor premise that tortoises are not so sympathetic and altruistic as, shall we say, policemen) with a corollary that it is even harder to please a tortoise by stroking the shell of another tortoise many miles away. Of course, there is no rigid proof of this. The premises may be disputed by the sceptic.

But at least the police should have heard of Sir Henry Hawkins, a being, after all, zoologically more akin to me than any tortoise. When he was presiding at the trial of some Fenian agitators, some of their friends planted a bomb on the doorstep of the Honourable Reginald Brett. Brett suggested that these earnest folk had committed one of those errors of judgment which seem inseparable from earnestness, and that the bomb had really been intended for Sir Henry. The judge replied, "Do they really think that they can intimidate me by putting a bomb on your doorstep?"

LI

So, at the zero hour, reckless of peril, a devoted band of detectives, with revolvers drawn, went over the top, cheering wildly, to the third floor of 93 Regent Street, broke down the door, which I think was unlocked, and found a dozen mild old people trying to browse on the lush grass of my poetry. These desperate criminals, finding themselves covered by all this young artillery, seem to have attempted no resistance. The nearest thing to it was that the husband of the ringleader of these determined villains — a man who had grown old in the service of the Navy, and so feeble in body and mind that mere accident seems to have prevented him from being an admiral on the active list — was scared by the raid out of his few remaining senses, and attempted to commit suicide a few days later.

The police did not even calculate on the possibility of my revenge. They imprudently entrusted the conduct of the raid to Inspector Currie, though they might have known that I was perfectly capable of some stupid joke about his being hot stuff. The Crown solicitor, too, who conducted the prosecution, was so named that I might have said, Their artillery is composed of an old rusty Muskett. But I matched my fortitude by my magnanimity and forbore.

However, I made the best of it. When I had done laughing, I made a wonderful scene of indignation in the office of *The Fatherland*, which helped me quite a little on my weary way. But I must admit that I was down-hearted. How could we hope to win the war if London had got as hysterical as that? I looked at the Germans and took courage. I thought of the two men who met in Piccadilly after recovering from influenza. The first whined, "I am as weak as a rat." The other replied in a faint whisper, "Oh, that's nothing; I am as weak as two rats." The first; "But two rats are stronger than one rat." The second: "If you argue, I shall cry."

LII

In the upshot, at last I got enough money to settle my affairs in New York, where I had been dodging starvation for five years. That legend of my growing fat on German Gold! I lost no time in coming home to England. But I was not at ease. I was fed up with human beings. I resolved to disappear into the desert and give myself wholly to the religious life. I knew that my personal friends in England would understand what I had done in America: they would perhaps be proud of me. So far, so good.

But I supposed, from the conversation of some genuinely intelligent Englishmen in high official positions who were travelling with me across the Atlantic, that England had recovered *sang froid* and settled down to reconstruction and the enjoyment of the fruits of victory. I wrongly judged that authority would administer a stern rebuke to any maniacs who aimed at the perpetuation of bad feeling. Indeed, I saw little in London to remind me that there had ever been a war.

Was there one man who thought that it might still pay to work upon the baser passions of the mob? It seemed so: it was Christmas; there was a man who made a two-page splash about abolishing the wicked German Santa Claus!* No! I was again in error. I must have misinterpreted the motives. The man was that great soul, the Patriot Bottomley!

* *John Bull*, Xmas number, 1919.

LIII

Such a man would doubtless be as difficult to understand as others had found me. He must have had some noble reason for his apparently vile and baseless attacks on bishops, judges and ministers of the Crown, to say nothing of firms like Waring and Gillow. I could not concur in the prevalent opinion that he was as much a blackmailer as De Wend Fenton. I could appreciate the eloquence and knowledge of law which, to the amused amazement of London, had thrice saved him from penal servitude at the hands of a British jury. I could not foresee that I should live to be horrified by the insults of that Shallow, Sir Charles Biron, "I cannot believe Mr. Bottomley on his oath."* A praetor pettier than Pilate! A crueller crucifixion for (surely) a sublimer sufferer!

I did not think that anybody took his *John Bull* more seriously than we used to do the "Ally Sloper's Half-Holiday" which it has — not too advantageously — replaced in the affections of the people. I must confess that I was rather disgusted when my own solicitors sent me half a page of ravings about myself and asked the explanation of my crimes. They must have known that there was hardly one statement which was true in fact. The article was full of careless blunders about matters within their knowledge.

But that was not what worried me. I kept on saying to myself, "Why only half a page?" The Head Master of Eton had had a whole page about his advocating Platonic pleasures for boys. My own father-in-law, a charming old gentleman with not even a national reputation, and not an enemy in the world, but a worthless curate he had discharged, had had a whole page (inspired by the aforesaid curate) about the way in which he swindled his servant-girls out of their savings. I knew that if the great Patriot seemed to be not giving me my duty, it was from shortage of paper or writer's cramp, not from lack of kindness of heart.

* I wrote this in January 1922, when Mr. Bottomley was prosecuting Mr. Bigland for criminal libel, and the magistrate made this remark.

LIV

I had indeed ample evidence of what wealth of magnanimity was buttoned beneath that patriotic waistcoat. A well-known journalist, who has never written a book on the Musical Glasses, a biography of either Lord Henry Somerset, Canon Aitken or F. E. Smith, any novel about Fenian dynamiters, or any short story about Portuguese matadors, had written various articles for the Patriot Bottomley; and he had not been paid. Now it came to pass in the fulness of time that the Patriot felt it his painful public duty to

make weekly attacks upon the firm of Waring and Gillow. A few days before these attacks ceased, which they did very suddenly, the journalist chanced to pass the offices of *John Bull* in a taxi and saw Mr. Sam Waring — the principal director of Waring and Gillow — descending the steps. Quick as thought, he paid off the chauffeur, bounced upstairs into the private office of the great Patriot and said firmly, though gently. "I've come for my three hundred pounds."

"How did you know?" was the Patriot's only question.

"Never mind. I know."

And Horatio handed over three hundred pounds in notes. This was indeed kindness of heart.

LV

I could not doubt that if he seemed to be neglecting my publicity, it was inadvertence. However, the Patriot Bottomley doubtless felt that he had wronged me, for he made amends by publishing another article to refresh public enthusiasm about my crimes, a month later. I have not seen it, but I hope he pitched it strong.

Earnestly let me express the trust that no man be so senselessly malicious as to suggest that the Patriot is capable for one moment of dishonesty in thought, word or action. Without any claim to serious scholarship, I am absolutely convinced that the 'Oratio Obliqua' about which I learnt at school is not the same man.

I was, however, quite annoyed by what seemed the stupidity of my solicitors in sending me this nonsense. It was only on reflection that I saw that they must have written to me as a formality, in order to protect themselves in case anything further came of it. But the idea of answering the Patriot Bottomley — still less of suing him — never occurred to me. The philosophy of another Horation had been sufficiently criticized by Hamlet several years previously, and the Patriot Bottomley takes after his namesake. There are more things than he knows about. I do not say this in criticism. Omniscience is beyond mortality; and at least there have been many, especially among shady solicitors, who have been wont to chuckle that what the Patriot Bottomley did not know was not worth knowing. I felt myself a perfectly strong camel, thank you, especially that now I was back from America and could get a drink. My conscience was clear. I had been loyal to England. I had suffered for her sake as much as any man; I had "fought the good fight, despising the shame". Starvation and solitude of soul and body: I was content.

LVI

But, as in a Greek tragedy, just when I thought myself most safe, the last straw was gently but firmly placed on my back by two of my oldest friends. The first of these is named George Cecil Jones. I had known him intimately since the autumn of 1898. We had been co-workers in the most arduous task known to mankind: that which Bergson — so far as his ignorance allows — described as “creating oneself a God”. But he had weakened in late years. He had married. Life to his optimistic eyes looked like a green field with a watering trough. Death in his mind became inseparably connected with the idea of mutton chops.

LVII

When De Wend Fenton was trying to blackmail me in 1910, he found to his chagrin that I would not even meet him at dinner, so that he might propose a “friendly arrangement” over the coffee and cigars, by which I should pay cash for credit, sovereigns for silence. Balked by my contempt, he cast about him for some less wary bird. If he could only get one of my friends to sue him for libel, he would be able to wriggle out of it somehow. Then, think of all the free publicity! Even if he lost the case, it didn't matter, for his paper was bankrupt anyhow. So he put in a paragraph so dexterously penned that anyone with a mind less clear than that of the solicitor who read it over, *ad hoc*, might have taken it to mean that Mr. Jones was a sodomite.

Mr. Jones ought to have known better than to waste his time in reading papers of this class. He ought to have known much better than to take any notice of such rubbish. He ought to have known very much better than to air his grievance in a court of law. His youngest baby ought to have known better than to employ a personal friend with no experience of such cases to act as his solicitor. And one would have thought that even such a solicitor would have known better than to brief a barrister of the kind that “will see the whole job through for a ten pound note”.

LVIII

When the case came to trial, the defendants pleaded that they had not suggested that Mr. Jones was a sodomite. They had not, and never had had, any intention of suggesting that Mr. Jones was a sodomite. Mr. Jones explained elaborately and excitedly that he was not a sodomite. The judge, summing up, said that, doubtful as the case might be on some points, one thing at least stood out sun-clear, that Mr. Jones was not a sodomite. It was also evident that the expressions which had offended the plaintiff were inoffensive; that nobody had ever suggested that Mr. Jones was a sodomite.

LIX

The jury then retired. They were dazed by suppressed sexual excitement. Their imaginations projected fascinating yet fearful phantasms. When this psychological delirium became articulate, each man was terrified lest he should let slip some phrase which might arouse suspicion of sympathy with sexual irregularities against the speaker. Instinct clamoured that a victim must be found on which to concentrate the frenzy of the crowd. Thus, obfuscated by panic, they stammered out confused and incoherent comments on the case.

They thought that there was something curious about the evidence. All parties *breathed together* that Mr. Jones was not a sodomite. The Latin for *breathe together* is conspire. That's what it was — a conspiracy! So they brought in the verdict that the article was a libel and that it was justified!!! — such verdict evidently implying that the defendants had perjured themselves, that the judge was a fool, and that Mr. Jones was a sodomite after all!

LX

I have reflected often on this exquisitely ironical incident. It is one of those masterpieces of unconscious beauty which blossom upon the tree of British jurisprudence. But I did not dare to expect such faint efflorescence to bear fruit. We drink our champagne; what we leave will not ripen to Port! I supinely thought that the farce was over, that the climax was perfect, that there could never be anything funnier than that. But the Lord keeps unsuspected bounties for them that love him, and my chalice overflowed when this very Mr. Jones wrote me, in the tone of a dictator, that I ought to go to law to clear my character from the aspersions cast upon it by the Patriot Bottomley! If not, let me communicate no more with mine truly, G. Cecil Jones!

LXI

When I was three or four years old, my father, walking with me through a field, warned me against a bed of nettles describing their properties. He then asked me if I would take his word for it, or whether I wanted to learn by experience. I replied that I wanted to learn by experience; and plunged into the nettles. Life has taught me not to take people's words for anything. But I have modified the ardour of my scientific spirit by a willingness to learn from the experience of other people. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili — and my compliments to Mr. Jones!*

LXII

But in this jest of Mr. Jones' pompous imbecility, there was something sad. He had induced my old friend Eckenstein to sign that silly letter. Eckenstein is a great man and my dearest friend. But he is an old man and (I fear me) a dying one.* His judgment cannot be what it used to be; but if his memory has not failed him, I will remind him of certain events in our long friendship.

I met him at Wastdale Head during Easter week of 1898. We soon became climbing companions, a relation which endured so long as he was physically able to climb. We were together in the English, Welsh and Scottish mountains; in the Alps, in Mexico; and ultimately in the Himalayas. Between us, we hold all but one or two of the world's records for various feats of mountaineering, both amateur and professional.

* This paper was first drafted in March 1920 E.V. I revised it finally in January, 1922 E.V. In the interval Eckenstein has died. I prefer to leave the passages which relate to him as they stand. His death adds grief to my thoughts of him; nothing can add to the love I have always had for him, or the honour in which I have always held him.

LXIII

In 1898, I was barely more than a boy, pitiably innocent and ridiculously ambitious. (In a sense, I am so still!)

My other climbing friends, with hardly an exception, came to me and warned me to "have nothing to do with that scoundrel Eckenstein". "Who is he anyhow? A dirty East End Jew." (I quote Mr. Morley Roberts, the cobbler of trashy novelettes, who said this to me at Zermatt.) Furthermore, Eckenstein had done something in India *so bad that nobody could even guess what it was!* But that Unspeakable Infamy was the real reason of his quitting the Conway expedition in 1892, and it was generally supposed that the murder of several natives, in cold blood, was one of the less unmentionable ingredients.

That was rather a hard test of comradeship, I think. But I knew my Eckenstein and I disdained to make investigations. I went on climbing with him as if the pompous humbugs of the English Alpine Club had never spoken. By paying guides to haul one over rocks like luggage, one can get a reputation — in England — as a hardy mountaineer. The envious snarls of such craven impostors did not disturb me.

LXIV

Yet there was something in it, too! There was enough for Eckenstein to be arrested in India by a "superior person" whose Christian names were George Nathaniel. I never knew the truth of the business; and Eckenstein always protested that he did not know it himself. It didn't matter much then; it doesn't matter at all now. But I want to recall to Eckenstein that I stood pat! I did not ask him to vindicate himself. I do not empanel a jury of jackals to try a lion. I do not think worse of the woman I love because the whiteness of their teeth defies Tonkinese standards of beauty, or of the hero I know, like and respect, if a lot of people whom I do not know, and should not like or respect if I did, happen to echo the execrations of Thersites.

I do not believe that Eckenstein was in full possession of his senses when he signed that silly letter. But the mere sight of his signature, to my unreflecting mind, seemed The Last Straw. I rashly promised myself to "make a statement"; and I regret to say that I have wasted nearly twenty-four hours of my time (and that of two amiable ladies) on producing it. I don't much care where it strikes.

POSTSCRIPTUM: New Year, 1922; two years less two months since I wrote this paper. I "got it off my chest"; next day I had relapsed into my normal indifference to human imbecility. I never so much as troubled to revise it until yesterday. Then I rescued it from its dusty pigeon-hole — like Browning with Sibrandus Schnafnaburgensis — simply because I heard from my Representative in London that my supposed pro-Germanism was a bar to the recognition of my Work in England.

I care nothing for public opinion. I care nothing for fame or success. I am perfectly happy in my retirement. The full leisure to work, the freedom from all interruption, the absence of temptations to distraction: Cefalù realizes my idea of heaven.

But I am pledged to give my life to the establishment of the Law of Thelema: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." So, if the operations on behalf of that Law are being tampered by the insensate belief that I ever was, am, or ever could be, disloyal to my country, which I love with an unreasoning passion, altogether beyond the interference of my intellectual opinions, I am willing to make this public statement as to what I did in the war, and why I did it.

My attitude is unaltered by time. I still think the English pot as black as the German kettle, and I am still willing to die in defence of the pot. Mine is the loyalty of Bill Sykes' dog; you can't make me believe that my master is

an injured innocent; and the fact that he starves and beats me doesn't alter the fact that I am his dog, and I love him.

Let the publication of this paper make clear my integrity! Let the British Public come to honour me for my stubborn endurance of the shameful martyrdom, still cruel and still dear, naught else might swerve for popularity and prosperity, any more than I did for ostracism and starvation. England has all my love; there is no more to give.

I waste no more words in whining that she loathes me, in pleading for her favour. I trust old Time to teach her the truth. True Love exults that it is great enough to give to the uttermost, to overcome the agony of being hated and despised by its object. I am proud to have lingered, these long years, upon the cross of shame and pain, to which England has nailed me, not knowing what she does. Mocked, scourged and spat upon, gall bitter on my mouth, alone in the Great Darkness, Death standing mercilessly aloof, my heart leaps high to feel that every beat of its blood bears witness to blind love for England. England is flesh of my torn flesh, bone of my aching bones.

England has tortured me to the uttermost: I laugh in triumph, for I could not be so sure that I love her, if I were able to render a reason.

Yet, having proved my truth, I come to her, splendidly a man; I claim her love by right of mine.

CHAPTER 117

BOOK TEN

CHAPTER IV

America — General Outline

I propose to summarize briefly my adventures in America. This chapter should form a framework into which may be fitted the special accounts of my activity. My worst encounter was with the *New York World* which had distinguished itself by printing Harry Kemp's rubbish about my magical exploits. The editor, a genial Irishman — remarkable precisely for being half educated neither more nor less correct to eight places of decimals — observing that Kemp's statements involved numerous physical impossibilities took him to a notary and made him swear to their truth. I have told elsewhere how it came to be written. Hearing of my arrival Kemp hurried to implore me not to give him away. I contemptuously agreed to save his face. Of course, I could not admit the truth of such asinine balderdash, so said that by magical power I had caused him to see what was not, as indeed in a certain sense I had done.

Cosegrave sent a sob sister to interview me on my arrival. She pestered me with a string of foolish questions, such as "What is your opinion of America?" I was insulted. What did she take me for that I should pronounce judgment on a continent after twenty-four hours? I replied, nevertheless, "I regard America as the hope of the planet — the white hope." About this time Jack Johnson was *hors concours*. White hope had become a slang phrase for a challenger without a chance. Of course she did not see the joke. I became so weary of the woman's stupidity that she was bound to make a hopeless hash of what I had said. I told her to try something easier. Reporting a dog-fight would have been about her mark. She went off in a huff, a sagging, shapeless suet pudding. He then sent Henry Hall, who had married a French wife and learnt courtesy. He had read a good deal of good stuff and possessed natural intelligence. I found him charming. He confirmed my diagnosis of W. T. Stead, whom he interviewed. In walking down the street, Stead broke off every minute or two to indulge in a lustful description of some passing flapper and slobber how he would like to flagellate her. Hall wrote a clever and accurate article about the evocation of Bartzabel.

I dined at Cosegrave's house one night. He had asked Evangeline Adams to meet me as being a famous astrologer. The meeting led to a lengthy association. She wanted me to write a book on astrology for her. The plan

failed through her persistent efforts to cheat me out of the profits, and her obstinate ignorance of the elementary facts of nature combined with an unconquerable antagonism to the principles of applying common-sense to the science.

I learned a good deal, nevertheless. The work kept me concentrated on the subject. At this time, it was my invariable practice to judge from the personal appearance of every stranger I met the sign rising at his birth. Having made up my mind, I would ask him to tell me either the hour or the day of his birth. I could then calculate the missing day as thus: Suppose I judge my man to have Libra in the ascendant and he tells me his birthday is October 1st. When the sun is in 5° or 6° Libra, I can tell him he was born at sunrise, within a limit of error of about two hours. Alternatively, should he say, "I was born at midnight", I can give his birthday to within a fortnight or so of Xmas. I tabulated my results over a considerable period and found that I was right in a little over two cases in three. Where I was wrong, I found that either the sign I had chosen for his ascendant was that occupied by his sun, which in some people determines the personal appearance more effectively than the ascendant, or else, in erecting his horoscope I found the rising sign occupied by planets whose nature modified the sign so that it could be mistaken for the one I had picked out.

(For instance, a person with Aries rising with the moon and Jupiter conjoined on the cusp. The aggressive martial characteristics of the sign would be toned down by their impelling influence. I might, therefore, state his ascendant as Sagittarius or even Pisces.)

There were, of course, a few cases in which I came a complete cropper, but the cause of this was almost always an instinctive personal antipathy to the individual which confused my Judgment. By the most severe standards I may claim fairly to have been correct in not less than eighty per cent. of the cases and considering the chance of getting right at random, I consider it demonstrated beyond dispute that a real relation exists between the personal appearance and the Sign rising at birth.

Lest any reader should seek to emulate these efforts and meet with disappointment, let me warn him of two common factors of failure:

1. People of unfamiliar races manifest the astrological appearance of their ethnological branch and this masks that due to their nativity. Experience enables one to penetrate the superficial indication.

2. The skill required to judge this matter develops with surprising speed as soon as a certain point has been reached. It is best to proceed sys-

tematically by asking oneself, first of all, to what element the examinee belongs. It is then simple to discriminate between the three possible signs. One might mistake Taurus and Scorpio, Gemini and Sagittarius, but the three Signs of any given element are always distinguishable as easily as a child, an adult and an old man.

Some signs are almost unmistakable from the first. But others are so weak in character that their influence is rarely found unmodified by planetary considerations. One must further remark that each sign governs two main types — the active and the passive. Thus Aries: the high brows, long face, aquiline nose, tall thin muscular figure, shows the fiery and martial qualities of the sign. But there is an evil and averse counterpart corresponding to the ovine nature. We have the gross, hooked, pendulous proboscis; the thick, flabby, moist lips; the patient stupid eyes, and timid, hunted gait of the bad type of Jew.

Thanks to the resolute refusal of even the educated astrologer to adopt scientific methods of study, their contemptuous indifference to the attitude of the recognized sciences towards them, and their adhesion to tradition, in the right interpretation of which they seek authority, rather than in the indications of critically analysed experience, the general ignorance of the subject is as great as ever.

I propose to demonstrate once for all the truth of the proposition, that the aspect of the heavens at the time of birth is connected with the observed characteristics of the native by collecting a large number of photographs, full face and profile for each subject, and classifying them according to the horoscope. I will thus have twelve sets, one for each sign ascending, twelve showing the possible positions of the sun. I should also examine the assertion that people with Mars rising have some scar or other abnormality on the face, by collecting the photographs of such people. Again, Saturn in the ascendant is said to give a melancholy cast to the countenance.

Should it, then, appear that one hundred "Aries" men showed a marked and characteristic difference from one hundred "Taurus" men, and so on through the Zodiac, physicists would be hard put to it to deny some nexus. The *apparatus criticus* should, of course, be very perfect. Complications of the ascendant by the presence of planets must be considered separately. Their failure to manifest the characteristic appearance of the sign ought not to be considered fatal to the theory.

Where the history of the subject is available it would furnish material for much further research. We would discover, for instance, whether the presence of Saturn in the seventh house invariably concurred with matrimonial

misfortune, or in the tenth with rapid rise of fortunes followed by a sudden crash as in the case of Napoleon, Oscar Wilde, Woodrow Wilson, Lord Northcliffe and several private cases in my own collection. The labour required for this research would be enormous, but the bulk of it would be done by ordinary clerks. And as for the preliminary difficulty of collecting material, any great newspaper could carry out the scheme easily enough. It would of course be necessary to publish an explanation of the proposal with a questionnaire covering the principal points, and asking for good photographs to be sent with the filled up form.

One final remark. I found myself able, as my experience increased, to divine not only the rising sign and the position of the sun, but both points together. Accordingly, on several occasions, I succeeded in telling a man I had never seen before both the house and the day of his birth. I could also judge, now and then, such matters as the angular distance between Sol and Luna, or the aspects and the zodiacal position of other planets.

The psychological reactions to these demonstrations were most interesting. Some people were quite unaffected by the most brilliant successes. Some were scared half out of their wits, such as they had. Others again fell prostrate in awed admiration and jumped from the facts to the fancy that I must be a Mahatma able to juggle with the stars in their courses if the wind took me. Only a small percentage showed intelligent interest. I made a great impression on Frank Crowninshield, editor of *Vanity Fair*. I was in form that night and told everyone exactly right. He realized it could not be guessing. The chances against me ran into billions.

I hung about New York all winter trying to get a foothold. My effort to countermine German intrigue was my worst handicap, in the case of the best people. But as to my literary career, I was no snowflake in hell. Nobody knew my name, bar the educated *rari nantes in gurgito vasto*. Nobody would look at my work, either in a periodical form or volume.

I shall tell later of my grotesque failure to make good as a Master of Magick. The people I met knew nothing and thought they knew everything, and whatever scraps of information they had, they had all wrong.

I took a week off in March [1915] to go to Philadelphia, where the great Billy Sunday was conducting a revival. The immense notoriety of the man, and the incompatibility of the accounts which my queries elicited, determined me, like the man in the Gospel, to hear and see for myself. I ran the fox to earth in a vast wooden tabernacle; I forget what won by a narrow margin on points; and when he came to New York where they had built a barn bigger than the Albert Hall for the purpose, he could not even get an

audience. Beelzebub had the best of every round. Shrewd to the last, he retired from the ring and left Lucifer with the laurels. He had had a great time and had made his pile. I suppose, at this hour, he is sitting under his own vine and fig tree, meditating with cynical enjoyment the Shakespearean aphorism, "Lord, what fools these mortals be!" and on Sundays that sublime saying of the Saviour — who had saved him if he had never saved anyone else — "Ye are of more value than many sparrows."

CHAPTER 118

All this time, I had been getting into deeper water financially. I had intended, when I left England, to conclude my special business in New York within a fortnight, to make a little splash in any case, and to get home in a month on the outside. What kept me, was that in the first week I sold over £100 worth of first editions to a prominent collector. He then expressed a wish to possess a complete set of my works and also two or three hundred manuscripts. This should have meant at least \$5,000. It sounded good to me; since the war nobody in England remembered the existence of such a thing as poetry. So I cabled for the stuff and hung around, with the result that my political opportunity came along. When the books arrived from England, the collector changed his mind and only bought a small proportion of the consignment. This left me flat, and besides, I was getting into my stride in countermining Münsterberg. So I stagnated in New York, getting lower in the water every day.

I was nearly down and out, when I got an introduction to the editor of *Vanity Fair*, a perfectly charming man, who reminded me not a little of Austin Harrison. He was, however, extremely intelligent and understood his business thoroughly. In a couple of years he had pulled the paper up from nothing to one quarter of a million. He treated me, through some inexplicable misunderstanding, as a human being and asked me to write for him.

I began with an account of a baseball game as seen by a professor from the University of Peking. This was followed up by a series of Hokku. This is a Japanese verse form. It contains three lines totaling seventeen syllables. I modified this by introducing regular meter, the first line dactyl-spondee, the second line spondee-dactyl-spondee, and the third dactyl-spondee. A Hokku must contain a very definite finely chiselled idea or rather, chain of ideas. Such is the strict rule, but one is allowed a certain degree of latitude.

The first line announces the subject of the meditation; the second the moral reflection suggested thereby, and the third some epigrammatic commentary. For instance: —

BUDDHISM

"I am a petal
Darkling, lost on the river
Being – Illusion."

We analyse this as follows: In saying "I am" one implies that one is only a detached derelict in the darkness of ignorance, whose essential quality is the illusion of existence.

I wrote a double Hokku on the Hokku itself. Here it is:

THE HOKKU

"Catch me, caress me,
Crush me! Gather a dewdrop —
Star to a system!

God in an atom!
Comets revel around it —
That is a Hokku."

I became a frequent contributor to *Vanity Fair*. I can never be sufficiently grateful to Frank Crowinshield for his kindness and patience. My association with him is the one uniformly pleasant experience of dealing with editors that I can quote. He always took pains to make the most of his material. If a contribution did not suit him, he did not reject it without a word of explanation. He talked it over, and suggested modifications. I thus found out how to suit his taste without injuring my self-respect. Most editors drive away their best contributors by treating them like street beggars and leave them bewildered at the rejection. Others, again, haggle over the terms and as often as not delay or evade payment. They then wonder why they fail to hit the public taste. It soon goes around that getting a cheque from so-and-so is like fishing for sharks with a trout-rod. The editor is tacitly boycotted.

This and my work with Evangeline Adams kept me going through the summer. I had a glorious time, what with love and sea bathing. I wrote a good deal of poetry; in particular *The Golden Rose*, and a set of lyrics, mostly sonnets to Hilarion, who appears later, in *The Urn*, as "the Cat Officer". This woman possessed a unique atmosphere. I can only describe it as "sweetness long drawn out". This translated itself in terms of rhythm. I quote a typical sonnet:

IN THE RED ROOM OF ROSE CROIX

"The bleeding gate of God unveils its rose;
The cavernous West swallows the dragon Sun:
Earth's darkness broods on dissolution,
A mother-vulture, nested on Repose.
Ah then, what grace within our girdle glows,

To garb thy glee-gilt heart, Hilarion,
An Alpenbluehn on our star-crested snows.

O scarlet flower, smear honey on the thigh
Of this shy bee, that sucks thy sweetness dry,
O bower of sunset, bring me to thy sleep
Wherein move dreams stained purple with perfumes,
Whose birds of Paradise, on Punic plumes,
Declare dooms undecipherably deep."

Compare this with any previous sonnet of mine and notice the lushness of the lines.

I also wrote a one-act play *The Saviour*. The main idea of this had been in my mind for a long while as a presentation of irony. The council of a city in the extremity of despair invoke a long-expected saviour. He appears to their rapturous relief but turns out to be the enemy they feared in his most frightful form. I elaborated this theme by introducing episodes where they are given a chance to escape. They throw this away for the sake of the saviour. The poignancy is further increased by various vicissitudes. The council is guided by a fool whom they ignore, being the only character with a grain of common sense, and by a prophet whose insane purpose is to deliver the city to destruction. By his inspired advice, the council are lured into one disastrous folly after another, and when the catastrophe occurs the prophet throws off the mask and bloats over the ruin he has wrought.

This play was accepted by Morris Brown but as bad luck would have it, war conditions obliged him to close his theatre before it could be produced. I published it in *The International* in March 1918, but only after a struggle with my lawyer, who was seriously alarmed lest Washington should think the cap fitted and suppress the number. The play being written three years earlier, and there being not the slightest allusion to or analogy with current events, his protest showed how dire a reign of terror had been established by the megalomaniac in the White House and his brutal and thick-headed bravo, Burluson.

On October 6th, I left New York for a trip round the coast. I wanted to see the San Francisco Exhibition, and I wanted to get first-hand facts about the attitude of the people, outside the Wall Street machine, to the war. With this I combined a honeymoon with Hilarion; though the sky was cloudy and windy, she popped in and out all the time, having decided to spice the romance and adventure by taking her husband in tow.

My first stop was Detroit, where Parke Davis were charming and showed me over their wonderful chemical works. They had installed countless and ingenious devices for conduction the processes involved in manufacture by machinery. Many of these produced effects of exquisite beauty of a land till then dreamed of in my philosophy. A great mass of pills in a highly polished and rapidly revolving receiver was infinitely fascinating to watch. The spheres tumbled over each other with a rhythmical rise and fall in a rhythm which sang to the soul.

They were kind enough to interest themselves in my researches in *Anhalonium Lewinii* and made me some special preparations on the lines indicated by my experience which proved greatly superior to previous preparations.

In Chicago, I met Paul Carus, who received me royally and showed me the city. The man had always interested me as being widely learned, yet understanding so little. After meeting him, I decided that I liked him for it. He was a big-hearted, simple-minded creature, with a certain childlike vision, by the light of which he judged the external world, a little like the White Knight in Alice!

I confess to dislike Chicago. It resembles New York more than its citizens would like to admit, but lacks altogether the cosmopolitan and man-of-the-world atmosphere of Gotham. It gives the impression of being a pure machine. Its artistic and cultured side shares the deadness of the rest. It compares with New York rather as Manchester with London.

I called on Narnet Munroe, described in the Charge Sheet as a poetess. She edits a periodical called *Poetry*. I am still not sure if she knew my name and my work, but she showed no interest whatever! She was loaded to the gunwhale with a cargo of conceit. She was the standard of perfection by which Milton and Keats might be measured in terms of their inferiority to her. Incidentally these two were bracketed Zero. The first article of her faith was that rhythm and rime were incompatible with poetry. Her creed contained many similar dogmas, all fixed with bigoted intolerance. I got away from this desiccated spinster and her dreary drone with alacrity.

I proceeded westward.

“As I came through the desert, thus it was.
As I came through the desert . . .”

Chicago is the forlorn outpost of civilized man. Every mile beyond marks a lower rung on the ladder of evolution. St. Paul and Minneapolis are merely magnified markets always open. There is no life of any kind outside busi-

ness. I suppose that poor damned souls are sweating all they know to get out somehow, somewhere.

West of the twin cities, even towns become rarer and each is more transient and inhuman than the last. The vastness of nature and the stupendous strength of her elemental forces have cried in vain. They move no man to wonder or admiration. He goes about his ant-like work with hurrying intentness, incapable of seeing or hearing anything not directly bearing on the problems that preoccupy him. Nobody reads, nobody thinks. When anyone does, they make short work of him. Not until one crosses the Rockies is there a semblance of resurrection. The coast, in touch with the Pacific archipelago and Asia, has caught a little of their culture.

I was warmly welcomed in Vancouver by my "Son", who had established a large and increasing Lodge of O.T.O. They had made with their own hands admirably effective furniture and ornaments, and they had been splendidly drilled in the Rituals. I regretted the necessity of going on so soon.

I travelled by sea via Victoria to Seattle. My principal observation is that the inhabitants of the Pacific coast have almost everything in common; original racial differences seem to matter little; I suppose because the great distance from the base makes them feel that they have burnt their boats. It would be quite impossible to distinguish a British Columbian from a Californian, while, on the other hand, the people of the coast differ very widely from anyone east of the Rockies. The point is important. The common psychology and common interests of the coast tend to unite them as against the transmontane tribes. The divergence of economic aims widens yearly. It seems certain that a time will come when the antagonisms of their neighbours will reach a climax. Few English, even those who have travelled in the States, have any real grasp of the geography. West of St. Paul only Denver and Salt Lake City boast over a hundred thousand inhabitants in all that weary wilderness. One thinks of Chicago as the capital of the Middle-West, as if it were half way across. In fact the distance of the two coasts is something like four to one. The political link which joins the coast with the Middle West is very much too long to be natural; it would have snapped long ago, but for the idealistic fancies about unity. They will have to yield to the persistent hammering of fact. Secession is certain, sooner or later, but the conditions are so peculiar that to forecast its form would be an insolence to fate.

The Middle West is predominantly Teutonic and Scandinavian. I found little overt sympathy with Germany for all that. Still less, any impulse to show active sympathy. But as for going into the fight on our side, the suggestion outraged elementary common sense. One prominent Kansas paper had a long editorial, angrily refusing sympathy with the ideas of "those fools down

east" and expressing the hope that an air-raid on New York would teach them a much needed lesson. It was argued with the utmost vehemence that the Middle West was independent of the east. They refused to admit for a moment that their prosperity as producers could be imperiled by the calamities of their transport agents and customers.

On the coast, this hard, cold-blooded selfishness was tempered by the climate. I met much superficial sympathy with both sides. But there was a universal agreement to refuse to judge the rights and wrongs of the war. It was Europe's business and nobody else's. It would be a crime, a blunder and stark treason to the constitution for America to take a hand.

Since my last visit San Francisco had been rebuilt. The old charm had vanished completely. It had become a regular fellow. The earthquake had swallowed up romance, and the fire burnt up the soul of the city to ashes. The phoenix had perished and from the cinders had arisen a turkey-buzzard.

I hurried south, stopping off at Santa Cruz, to see the famous big trees. I snatched a meal in the town and walked out in the gloaming. My sweetheart was waiting for me in the dusk just beyond the town limits. "How glad I am you have come," she whispered. "Let us walk together to the grove. You shall sleep on my bosom all night, beneath the shadow of the giant sentinel whose spear points salute the stars." My sweetheart wove herself about me, an intoxicating ambience. Drunk with delight I strode through the silence. It must have been sheer luck that I found the grove, for one cannot see it from a distance, at least on a dark night. But I walked straight to the clump and threw myself down dog-tired and happy beyond all whooping. I gazed awhile through the tangle of branches up to the stars. They closed. I slept.

At dawn, I woke refreshed, had breakfast in a cabin hard by and wandered back to the railway. I had had a perfect holiday from the Spirit of America! The fresh morning air became articulate and whispered a sound in my ear. Hear it is:

AT BIG TREES, SANTA CRUZ

Night fell. I travelled through the cloven chasm
To where the redwood's cloistered giant grove
Sprung gothic and priapic; wonder wove
God's glory, gathered in the Titan spasm
Nature's parturient anguish. Murk pantasm
Moving I seemed! I found the treasurer trove

Of fire, and consecrated all to love,
Smiting my soul within the protoplasm.

Within that temple of the midnight sun
I cried all night upon Hilarion!

All night I willed, I loved, I wrought the spell
That Merlin muttered low in Broceliaunde,
Till over Santa Cruz the day star dawned.

God should have heard me, had I cried from Hell!

I wandered on to Los Angeles, and, having been warned against the cinema crowd of cocaine-crazed, sexual lunatics, and the swarming maggots of near-occultists, I came through undamaged. I found a range of hills north of the city and had a marvellous day speeding from crest to crest. I was so exhilarated that walking would not serve my turn. I had to run! As I ran, this sonnet shaped itself in my spirit?

I ran upon the ridges of the hill

That from the North-guard watch Los Angeles.

Now I life up my priestly hands to bless

The Sun, from whose emblazoned cup God spills
The wine to comfort all earth's infinite ills;

The cordial of man's heart, whose dour distress

Heals only in immaculate silence

According as he knows, and love, and wills.

Ay! Thought is grown a geyser-gush of flame

Since those two hours this morning when you came,

When, like a comet swirling to its sun,

You strangled me in your Astarte's tress,

And wove me into serpent silences.

Upon your body's loom, Hilarion!

My outward journey ended at San Diego. Near the city is Point Loma where lived Katherine Tingley, who with William Q. Judge seceded from the Theosophical Society when Annie Besant snatched the reins. I knew nothing of the woman, but her refusal to accept the unscrupulous usurpation was in her favour, and a casual glance at her official organ had impressed me not unfavourably. I decided to see her and discuss the possibility of an alliance. To my amazement she refused to receive me when I called at the Settlement. From the moment I entered the grounds I was aware of the most nauseating atmosphere that I had ever met magically. The suggestion was of a putrefying and entirely bloodless flesh, as if a cannibal had sucked out its life to the last drop and flung it away. Her disciples corresponded. They

moved about limp and listless, corpse-pallid, with the eyes of dead fishes. I got out of the cesspool without wasting time, but even so I had to pay for my imprudence. The following entry from my Magical Diary tells the tale:

[The Diary Entry is MISSING from the Transcript]

San Diego possessed one most attractive feature. It is within a short motor ride of the frontier of Mexico. One comes to a town, Tia Juanta, which thrives on refugees from righteousness. It is composed exclusively of brothels, drinking saloons and gambling halls. I don't care for this sort of thing, but it was at least much better than anything north of the border.

Going east, I stopped off to see the Grand Canyon. It is superb, of course, the best thing in the whole country; but, at that, it is not in the same class as Himalayan scenery. The sunset effects are certainly splendid, but to me the many interests lie in the geological problem.

The canyon is a zigzag slit cut out deep through a practically level plateau. The upper part of the gap seems to show that side streams fed the main river at some time, and this explanation is usually offered. My objection is that the level is squarely cut away. One looks down over the edge to a perpendicular depth of some hundreds of feet before the sheer rock eases off to slopes. The flatness of the plateau makes it impossible that it could ever have been crossed by streams and I could hardly believe that tributaries so numerous and so short, springing from nowhere in particular, could have gouged out the gorges. I prefer to suspect that the original event was an earthquake, which opened a long crack, and that the river took advantage of this natural channel.

I went down the Colorado River by Angel Trail. I wanted to make sure I had not lost my old speed and surefootedness. The previous record from the edge of the cliff to the river was some minutes over two hours. I did it in one hour twenty minutes to a second! I paid the price; the nails of my big toes were so badly bruised that they came off completely. I rested by the river's edge and wrote this sonnet:

I lie beneath the cliff of the canyon.
Down the long trail I flitted like a swallow,
Daring the very elements to follow,
Nor paused to mark the crags I leapt upon.
Now, lying in the sun, my soul's a swan,
Soars through the boundless blue to greet Apollo:
I call my love by name. Remote and hollow
The rocks re-echo me: "Hilarion!"

How pure and beautiful the body is
Lapped in fatigue's caressing ecstasies!
For then the soul is free to leap above it,
To soar, to dive, to seek and find his mate
In the dominion of the uncreate,
And lastly — to return to it, and love it!

This was my last adventure. I returned to New York by short stages and resumed the anchorless tossing. The one new feature was my affair with Stuart X.

The next act was the appearance of Ananda K. Koomaraswamy, the Eurasian critic of religion and art, with his wife, Ratan Devi, a musician from Yorkshire, who had fallen in love with him and filched him from his first wife. He soon got sick of her and took refuge in India, but finding it a continual nuisance to have to send her supplies, wrote her to join him. It had been suggested, with the secret hope that the climate would rid him of his incubus. She made the journey in charge of his best friend, a wealthy Punjabi, whom she promptly seduced.

After a series of violent scenes in Bombay, the half-breed accepted the situation and all three travelled together for some time in the hills. Ratan Devi possessed a strange seductive beauty and charm, but above all an ear so accurate and a voice so perfectly trained, that she was able to sing Indian music, which is characterized by half and quarter tones imperceptible to most European ears. His idea was to bring her out to New York. He introduced himself to me, knowing my reputation on Asiatic religions and Magick. I invited them to dine and to pass the evening at my apartment, so that she might sing to the tamboura her repertoire of Kashmiri and other Indian songs. I was charmed and promised to do all I could to make her a success. I introduced them to several influential people and wrote a prose poem about her singing for *Vanity Fair*.

She and I lost no time about falling in love. This suited her husband perfectly. The high cost of living was bad enough without having to pay for one's wife's dinner. All he asked was that I should introduce him to a girl who would be his mistress while costing him nothing. I was only too happy to oblige as I happened to know a girl with a fancy for weird adventures.

He was anxious to rid himself of even theoretical responsibilities and therefore proposed a divorce. I agreed with a yawn. Details never interest me. Meanwhile, she had made her debut and scored a superb success. This had never occurred to her husband, who, being unable to appreciate her supreme art, hardly took her singing seriously. In fact, her success was largely

due to my assistance. I taught her how to let her genius loose at the critical moment. However, to her husband, only one thing mattered at all. There might be money in her. Right about face! He wriggled out of the divorce on various puerile pretexts and then pulled out the pathetic stuff, and pleaded with her to come back to him. She was the only woman he had ever loved, etc., *ad nauseam*.

These manoeuvres were conducted at the top of their voices. It was a series of scolding matches and epileptic fits. I had a gorgeous time! what annoyed them both more than anything was my utter indifference to the whole affair. My position was that if she chose to live with me, she could. When she wanted to get out there was the door wide open. But I wouldn't lift a finger for any purpose whatever.

The situation was complicated by her becoming pregnant. This changed my attitude. I still refused to interfere with her will, but now I was prepared to make any sacrifice necessary to insure her welfare and that of our child.

She was making quite a lot of money by now so he pestered her day and night, whenever he could spare a moment from the German prostitute with whom he was now living, having been thrown out by my eccentric friend. He had queer ideas, had the eminent mongrel. The cost of a double room being slightly less than that of two single, he effected a prudent economy by putting this girl in the same bed with his wife when he was out of town.

During this time I was often away in Washington, thus missing a good deal of the fun. In June, I came back proposing to spend the summer in a cottage by Lake Pasquaney. Ratan Devi was one of those women whose chief pleasure is to show her power over men. She tried it on me, but a bath brick would have done quite as well. Convinced after many desperate efforts that I would not run after her or even walk her way, she began to understand true love, to recognize me as her master and quit playing the fool. She did not divine that my Gibraltar firmness was calculated policy. I really loved her and knew that the only hope of making her love me was to kill the vanity which prevented her from being true to herself, and giving her whole heart.

Before I left for New Hampshire, we had a farewell meeting. She was now too far advanced in gestation to appear in public, so her husband had persuaded her to go to England for the confinement, and also to make various necessary arrangements with regard to the future. He had now cunningly pretended to give way about the divorce, admitting my right to my child and its mother. His real motive was very different. She was a particularly bad sailor. During a previous pregnancy, she had been obliged to break the journey to save her life. She was in fact on the brink of death when they

carried her ashore and she lay for weeks so ill that a breath of wind might have blown her away. It was, at least, not a bad bet that the Atlantic voyage would end in the same or even more fortunate way.

I still refused to put pressure upon her. I said, "Here's my address. You're welcome whenever you like to come, and I love you and will serve you with every ounce of my strength."

I went off. In a few days she joined me. The peace and beauty and solitude renewed the rapture of our love. I had given my word to do nothing to hold her and after a few days she decided to go to England; her children needed her. It was her peculiar perversity to be at one time the artist absolute; at another the mother and no more, and the trouble was that whenever common sense wanted her to be the one, she invariably assumed the personality of the other. So now, just because I represented art, music and love, her troll tugged at her to be maternal.

Off she went. The Eurasian's calculations were not far wrong. The voyage caused a miscarriage and she lay between life and death for over six weeks. Needless to say, the moment the mischief was done, she repented bitterly. When she returned to America, I was in New Orleans. She implored me to come back to her. She wrote once, and often twice, every day, each averaging a dozen pages. There were also telegrams. I replied with immovable firmness. "You insisted on going away, with the result of killing our baby. I love you and I'll take you back, but on this condition; that you make a clean break with the past."

Her unhappy temperament kept her at war with herself. She wanted to have her cake and eat it as well. She wouldn't burn her bridges. I maintained firm correctness and it all came to nothing. My heart is still not wholly healed, but I relieved myself of part of my pain by using the whole story, exact in every detail, as the background of my *Simon Iff* yarn *Not good enough* (*The International*, January 1918). I made one change. Koomaraswamy, Haranzada Swami; Haranzada being the Hindustani word for "bastard". The publication of this tale came as a slight shock to the self-complacency of the scoundrel.

I must not omit one characteristic incident. He happened to be momentarily hard up and conceived the really brilliant idea of concocting a fable that his German girl was a new Sappho. He made her copy out a number of poems from my *Collected Works* and sent her round to Putnam's to persuade them to publish the really remarkable work of this romantic young American beauty rose. The girl told his wife in bed one night, they having found a bond of common sympathy in their contempt and loathing for "The Worm"

as we had familiarly called him. She told me at once, and I have every reason to believe that the letter I wrote to Putnam's is treasured in the archives of the firm as the last word in savage contempt.

So ended my adventures with these fascinating freaks. I must now run back to New Orleans.