

# THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

## VOLUMES IV - VI

### [PART IV]

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#### CHAPTER 120

New Orleans and San Antonio are said to be the only two towns in the United States which possess souls of their own. That of New Orleans was already being driven out under my eyes, and I dare say that by this time the work of destruction is complete. Probably San Antonio has shared its fate. The most depressing feature in the country is the uniformity of the towns. However singular the geographical situation and its topographical peculiarities, the possibilities of beauty have been nullified by the determination of the people to do everything just right, according to the measure in fashion. Wherever one is, sooner or later, one gets tired of one's surroundings. In Europe, the cure is easy. One toddles along to the next place sure of finding some novelty. In America, however far one goes, the same hideous homogeneity disappoints one. The relief conferred by the old quarter of New Orleans threw me instantly into an ecstasy of creative energy. I wrote day and night continuously — poems, essays and short stories. My principal invention was the detective "Simon Iff" whose method of discovering the solution of a problem was calculation of the mental and moral energies of the people concerned.

I wrote a series of six stories about his exploits and followed it by *The Butterfly Net* or *The Net*, a novel in which he is a secondary character. In this novel I have given an elaborate description of modern magical theories and practices. Most of the characters are real people whom I have known and many of the incidents taken from experience.

During this time, I was also granted what mystics describe as "the Beatific Vision" which is the most characteristic of those attributed to Tiphereth, the archetypal idea of beauty and harmony. In this vision one retains one's normal consciousness, but every impression of daily life is as enchanting and exquisite as an ode of Keats. The incidents of life become a harmonious unity; one is lost in a rosy dream of romantic happiness. One may compare it to the effect produced by wine on some people. There is, however, no unreality in the vision. One is not blinded to the facts of existence. It is simply that

the normal incoherence and discrepancy between them has been harmonized.

While on this subject, let me mention that Tiphereth corresponds to the grade of initiation on the Threshold of the Order of R. R. et A. C., and to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. It therefore marks a critically important stage in initiation. Only one other is equally cardinal: the grade of Master of the Temple, which is the Threshold of the Order of the A:A:. I have called the vision corresponding to this the "Vision of Wonder" which permeates one's daily life in a similar way. The difference is that penetrating beyond sensory perceptions, one is aware of the mechanism of events, of the subtle chain of causes which connect them. One perceives in detail how each impression necessarily succeeds its forerunner. The effect is that one is lost in wonder at the ingenuity of the universe, to use a very inadequate word, as being the only one available. One feels the intense awed admiration which the greatest masterpieces of Kant, Beethoven, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Riemann, Kelvin, and such as they inspired, with this difference: that all impressions are equally puissant to produce it.

My best essay was "The Green Goddess" written in the old Absinthe House itself, and adorning its main theme the philosophical reflections suggested by absinthe with descriptions of the inn, its guests, and the city. I cannot do better than quote the pertinent passages to convey my impressions of this place:

[See *Absinthe—The Green Goddess*]

From New Orleans I went to stay with my cousin Lawrence Bishop on his orange and grape-fruit plantation in Florida. I shall describe elsewhere the spiritual abyss in which these lost souls were plunged. I cannot think of Florida, but in my ears rings the exceeding bitter cry of poor little sixteen-year-old Alma, "I've found it doesn't pay to tell the truth."

This visit opened up an expanse and depth of heartache which I had thought impossible. Cousin Lawrence saw how ill I was. The family fed on offal which I would not have thrown to a decent pig. He had stayed with us in England and realized that I could not be expected to eat such garbage, so he asked me kindly what I would like to eat so as to build up my strength. I said, "Don't bother about that. All I need is plenty of fruit and milk." It seems too rotten to be true but his wife made a point of cutting me off from milk as much as she dared, and went to the utmost pains to hide the supply, so as to cheat me out of the glass of milk I was supposed to have before going to bed. (I always stayed up late working.)

The mean malice of his hag is too dreadful to contemplate, yet all things serve the poet's turn. She gave me the idea of one of my best Simon Iff in America stories, "Suffer the Little Children".

"Not yet thirty-five! Her eyes seemed enormous because of the emaciation of her cheeks, sunken upon her toothless jaws. Her hair was scanty and turning grey over the temples. Her lean breasts sagged in her thin dress. She stooped as if with age. Her hands were coarse, dirty, like claws. Her thin long straight mouth was colourless, the lips pinched inwards."

The psychology of such States, so far as they are Christian, is set forth in these words:

"Imagine yourself a woman born into a universe containing three sections. The first is a colourless place, described as joyful by people who have no joy to colour their imaginations. The second is a place of dreadful, senseless agony, readily enough realized by those whose whole lives are full of pain. It is very much more real than the first, because both places are merely shadowy expansions to infinity of what they actually know. Eternal fire is much more suggestive than eternal — I won't call it music.

"The third place is a place of continual torment. Childhood is one long round of scoldings and punishments varied by threats of unknown terrors. Youth is an apprenticeship to slavery. Marriage means an increased dose of drudgery, with an annual agony of childbearing, more joyless and sordid than a sow's. All pleasures without exception are sins, and incur the penalty of going after death to the place which has been defined as the eternal and infinite exaggeration of all the known miseries of life. Oh straight is the gate and narrow is the way, when of the seventy-seven methods of baptism only one is efficacious, and the neighbours are as sure that their way is right as you are about yours! Life is a trackless abyss of pain and fear — above all, fear.

"Then remove all human society, even those naughty neighbours! Remove books! Remove music! Remove art! Remove even interest in politics, and the wide world! Leave such a woman for a while in an isolated house in a swamp, sick with malaria, acrid with mosquitoes, a year-long stench of putrefying weeds. Add a hot climate, with a summer of steaming rains. Can you, with all your educated imagination, picture a more abominable hell, physical, mental, moral, spiritual — can you?"

Let us hurry back to New York. I arrived there in the spring still sick of some malady which produced depression and weakness and took the spirit out of me without showing any obvious symptoms. I found once more that I

was a stranger. I had nothing definite to do, no plausible plans. I wandered wearily through the weeks utterly powerless to concentrate on anything, to interest myself in anything: I simply suffered. Things got worse and worse. My resources came to an end.

One of my old disciples, Leon Engers Kennedy, a portrait painter, had arrived from Europe. We renewed our friendship. Indeed he needed my help badly enough. His moral tone, never high, had been almost destroyed by the war. The trouble with him was that he had never grown up; he was in receipt of an ample allowance from his family, but it was always gone before it arrived, and he dragged on from month to month borrowing a dollar here and a dollar there from everyone he met.

I remember a scene almost too humiliating to tell. The janitor of his studio was a crippled lad, with a large family — a half-starved creature with the pathetic eyes of a wounded fawn. It was horrible to hear Kennedy, the adopted son of a multi-millionaire, pleading almost on his knees with eloquent appeals for pity, mingled with the cunning arguments of a confidence man, for a loan of two dollars. I am glad to think that I helped the boy both spiritually and practically. I badgered him into working regularly at his art, arranged an exhibition for him, interested a number of influential people in him, persuaded others to help him out, wrote him up in *The International*, and otherwise pulled him through. I failed, however, to keep him out of the clutches of a very beautiful red-headed Irish typist, hysterical from sexual suppression. She finally persuaded him to marry her, and I am afraid his last chance of a career is among the dusty documents in the files of the marriage bureau at City Hall. At least, I have heard no more of him since his return to Holland.

He, in his turn, showed me great kindness. When it came to the point where I could not pay for a bed, he let me sleep on the sofa in his studio. This was a garret in an old half-decayed house on Fifth Avenue, lacking even a water supply. But to me it was a paradise. Its poverty and discomfort were transformed into luxury by the thought of Kennedy's kindness. I slept here for quite a long time. My health picked up gradually and, as the result of a Magical Operation on May 27th, became suddenly perfect. I was thus able, on May 28th and 30th, to perform two important Magical Operations completed by a third a few days later, with the object of giving effect to my will to establish the Law of Thelema. The result was that I secured control of *The International* and became contributing editor (implying practically sole responsibility for the contents) in August.

This magazine was originally the organ of pure literature, the only one in the United States of any authority. Unfortunately, the editor — and to all in-

tents and purposes the proprietor — was Mr. George Sylvester Viereck. At the outbreak of the war, he transformed the character of *The International*, introduced pro-German propoganda and thus ruined its reputation. It was now on the black list in Canada and refused admission by the postal authorities of the colony. Its best friends had withdrawn their support; its circulation had dwindled almost to nothing, and it staggered on mechanically from month to month without heart or hope. In eight months I pulled it up so successfully that it became saleable. It was bought by Professor Keasbey, who issued one number so dreary, unintelligible and futile that it died on the spot.

Keasbey had been professor of Institutional History in the University of Austin, Texas. He was a charming and cultured man, but full of cranky notions about socialism, which he held with arrogant obstinacy. His literary style, on which he prided himself, as would have been ridiculous in Ruskin or Walter Pater, was turgid, convoluted, incoherent, over-loaded, redundant and beyond the wit of the most earnest and expert reader to comprehend. He was not far behind William Howell Williams, elsewhere mentioned, in his power to baffle inquiries. Frank Harris agreed on this point, no less than all the other people to whom I put it. He told me with amazement that he had been badgered into printing a half-page article of Keasbey's in *Pearson's*, of which he was then treasurer, able, therefore, to put pressure on the editor. This number came under the censure of Burleon. He had gone to Washington to justify himself. Burleon had shown him the copy which had been submitted to the censors. Keasbey's article was marked as objectionable by all three pencils. Harris exploded. "You can't understand it," he raged. "I can't understand it. I don't believe there's any man alive who could make head or tail of a single sentence. How can it do any harm?"

Keasbey's Socialistic opinions had cost him his chair at Austin. He had read and admired some of my work, and sought me out in my cottage by Lake Pasquaney. We spent three delightful days without even stopping talking, bar odd snatches of sleep. In conversation, he was delightful, breezy and instructive. Our acquaintance had ripened into something like friendship. He behaved very strangely in this matter of *The International*. He professed the warmest friendship for me, spent some time almost every day in my office chatting; we lunched and dined together quite often, but he never breathed one word of his intention to buy *The International*, and when the transaction became public, he went one better. He asked me to continue my contributions and even suggested that I should work jointly with him, yet all the time, his idea was to oust me altogether. He refused to print a single line from my pen, and that, although he was in despair about filling the number. He must too have known that the success of the paper was entirely due to my personality; he knew that I had written nearly everything myself, and

that the only other important elements had been given to me by their authors purely as a token of their personal admiration and friendship for me. I suppose he was utterly blinded by his conceit, which he possessed to a degree to which I can recall no parallel. However that may be, the result was that the May number was a monument of incomprehensible, worthless and unreadable rubbish, and that he found himself in his brand new and portentous offices, monarch of all he surveyed, with his overlaid infant a corpse at his feet. The episode is excellently mirthful.

I shall describe in its due place the course of my friendship with Maitland Ambrose Payne. One day he told me of a Singalese joint on 8th Avenue where they made real curry. I began to frequent it and thus met the lady who appears, in "The Urn", as the "Dog-headed Hermes or Anubis". She was a Pennsylvanian Dutch girl, the only member of her family not actually insane. We joined forces and took a furnished apartment in a corner house on Central Park West near its northern limit at 110th Street. From the bow window of the drawing-room trees only were to be seen. They rested and rejoiced my spirit. I could forget New York, although within half an hour from my office.

My salary was \$20 a week; \$2 more than that of my typist. Life had taught me to enjoy outrages of this kind. It gave me pleasure to contrast my own generosity with the meanness of the rich and to take pride in my ability to accept smilingly such insults and privations. During this autumn as fully detailed in another place, the passion to express myself through art was born in me. The months passed in a pageant of delight.

My liaison with "The Dog" came suddenly to an end. Exactly as in the case of my wife, the half-suppressed strain of madness in her blood came to the surface. She took to orgies of solitary drunkenness. This was nothing new; in fact, when I met her they were of almost daily occurrence. I succeeded in pulling her together for a time, but she relapsed. When I found this out, I told her the story of my wife and put my foot down. I gave her to understand that if it happened again I was through. She knew me for a man of my word and quit, but a few days later it was as bad as ever. I gave her one more chance, but of course in vain.

Early in October, I broke up the ménage and transferred my headquarters to a studio in West 9th Street, which I shared with a friend of the Dog's, hereafter described as The Camel.

Her name was Roddie Minor, a married woman living apart from her husband, a near artist of German extraction. She was physically a magnificent animal, with a man's brain well stocked with general knowledge and a

special comprehension of chemistry and pharmacy. She was at this time employed in the pathological laboratory of a famous doctor, but afterwards became managing chemist to a prominent firm of perfumery manufactures.

I have said that she had a man's brain, but despite every effort, there was still one dark corner in which her femininity had taken refuge and defied her to expel it. From time to time the garrison made a desperate sortie. At such moments her womanhood avenged itself savagely on her ambition. She was more frantically feminine than any avowed woman could possibly be. She was ruthlessly irrational. Such attacks were fortunately as short as they were severe, but unfortunately too often did irreparable damage.

In the upshot, this characteristic led to our separation. I treated her as an equal in all respects, and for some months everything went as smoothly as if she had been really a man. But that beleaguered section of her brain sent out spies under cover of night, and whispered to the besiegers sinister suggestions, to shake their confidence in themselves. The idea was born and grew that she was essentially my inferior. She began to feel my personality as an obsession. She began to dread being dominated, though perfectly well aware that I wished nothing less, that her freedom was necessary to my enjoyment of my own. But she failed to rid herself of this hallucination, and when I decided to make a Great Magical Retirement on the Hudson, in a canoe, in the summer of 1918, we agreed to part. There was no quarrel. Our friendship and even our intimacy continued. My last night in New York before leaving for Europe was spent in her arms.

Such weekends as she could manage were passed in my camp on Oesopus Island. Her first visit was rather an adventure. She had brought up supplies of canned stuff from New York to Staatsburg, where I met her with the canoe. She had understood from my letter that the island was close to this town, and had foolishly failed to consult a map. She was tired with her week's work and the long journey; the train was late, night was falling, the wind was getting up, and the rain beginning to skirmish. The canoe was loaded down within an inch of the gunwale. The wind blew dead in our teeth. The river began to roughen and the rain to come down more steadily. Our progress was tediously slow and the journey not without peril. At one point the stream is bayed out so that for something like a mile one is right out of reach of land. The slightest accident would have been critical. We hardly dared paddle with our full strength. We took something like five hours to reach the island using our utmost effort. It was after eleven o'clock when we beached the canoe. By this time the poor girl was drenched to the skin, completely exhausted and almost starving. Her femininity took advantage of the weariness of the besieging army to sally forth from the main gate. She wanted to curse God and die, and, presumably to get into training, cursed

me. I could not comfort her. She threw herself on my couch and collapsed. I covered her with rugs and watched by her side all night. Refreshed by sleep, she was herself again when the sun struck the rocky ridge which walled the lilled creek which my camp overlooked. The sky had cleared, the rain dried off the rocks. We brought the provisions across from the southern inlet and made breakfast. We patted our bellies, contemplated life and behold it was very good.



## CHAPTER 121

My summer was uneventful. Such adventures as I had were pleasant variations from routine. I must tell one tale from its interest to amateurs of coincidence and philosophers whose favourite subject of meditation is "What a small world we live in!"

To ascend the Hudson in a sailing canoe is not so simple as it sounds. No great effort is required to come to grief. It had taken me all I knew to get round a certain rectangular bend against a gusty wind of uncertain temper. The river was white with foam, and what with cross currents and sudden squalls I had wondered more than once how matters would turn out. In case of capsizing it might have been no joke to scramble up the perpendicular cliffs which hemmed in the stream in many places. Once or twice, while trying to use my sail, I had just shaved upsetting. The bend once past, the breeze had steadied, and I was able to lounge luxuriously in the stern and watch the shores stream past. The only question was where to sleep. The hours passed and no sign of human habitation. In the end I submitted to fate and spent the night in the open on a stony slope.

The next day, after lunching gloriously on a convenient islet, I came to Newborough Bay, where the river widens out to something like three times its average. There is a town on either bank connected by a steam ferry. I was merrily sailing along, when a squall struck the canoe without warning. I found myself rushing recklessly through the water, with the spray shooting from beneath my bows high into space. I was then aware that I was being driven helpless between the two steamers. My sail refused to come down. At infinite risk, I crawled forward and unshipped the mast, thus managing to pull up before reaching the point of danger.

I looked south. The weather threatened to worsen. It might be nasty. I was more than a mile from the shore. My best chance was to reach safety before the storm came to its full powers. I therefore put the tackle in order, reshipped the mast, and half-hoisted the sail, ready to lower again if things got bad. I flew upstream at a terrific pace for over an hour. The threatened tempest passed clear to the south. It was now dark and once again I bethought me of a bivouac. Exhausted by my struggle, I paddled wearily, the wind having dropped entirely, past a wharf. Having no money to waste on a bed — my \$2.25 of original capital not having noticeable increased — I shook my head and shouted a genial refusal to a stripling who hailed me from the quay and suggested my sleeping in the village. But an older man came forward and offered to let me doss it in a boathouse. I was really all in and decided to accept.

He hailed some boatmen who carried my canoe on shore, while I walked with the kind old captain to the boat club. We had settled on where I was to sleep, when in came a man, obviously a gentleman and obviously English. He made the same observation about me, though what with my inch of beard, deep sunburn and general air of ruffianism. I presented an aspect rarely to be found in the Royal Enclosure at Ascot. He insisted on taking me to his house for supper and putting me up for the night. I gratefully accepted. Five minutes later we had found out that he had at one time been a master in King Henry VIII's School in Coventry, and had known my Aunt Annie and her family who honoured that town with their residence since their childhood. The next morning after breakfast I resumed my journey. He took me in his launch with the canoe in tow as far as Poughkeepsie where we parted.

I promised to write and tell him where my permanent camps was, in the hope that he would allow me to share his hospitality by bringing his family to lunch. The sequel has one more amusing coincidence. There was, of course, no way by which he could warn me of his visit. One morning there came to me a quite irrational wish. I found myself thinking, "How I wish I had prawns for lunch!" The thought recurred despite indignant attempts to banish it. An hour or so later, I heard my name shouted. I jumped up and found no trace of the shouter. I knew the voice must come from a boat, and ran up and down the island furiously. Still nothing in sight. It must have been half an hour before we found each other, though looking everywhere, and the island being quite small. Whitehead had brought his wife and her sister with various luxuries to mitigate the austerity of the fare traditionally proper to hermits, and one of these was — prawns!

On August 19th, I was obliged to go to New York for two days on O.T.O. business. The result was amusing. I called on my old friend Tony Sarg, the artist, and gave him an enthusiastic description of my holiday. "There is only one fly," I said, "in the apothecary's ointment. Like Adam in Eden, I lack an Eve." He laughed. "Don't worry! I know a girl game for any adventure. She has wonderful hair — orange-red curls, calculated to produce delirium tremens at a moment's notice. Here's her name and address." At that moment a small crowd called and for the next half hour we rocked with laughter at the astounding imitation which Tony gave of me wooing a woman. I left a note for the girl — Madeleine was her name — at her hotel, asking her to drop in to lunch any day she felt like it. I didn't expect her to come and once more I was wrong.

I went back to Oesopus the following day, supplied with several large cans of red paint. On both the east and west shores of the island are wide steep cliffs of smooth rock, obviously provided by Providence for my conven-

ience in proclaiming the Law. I devoted a couple of days to painting "Do that thou wilt" on both banks for the benefit of passing steamers. The little paint left over was dedicated to Madeleine. I barked a tree in front of my tent for the name of the beloved, and again on a convenient rock hard by. No sooner was this done than a man came off from the mainland in a boat with a telegram from Madeleine to meet her at Hyde Park Station, a few miles below the island. I went down. As I paced the platform I noticed a tall, distinguished, military-looking man, who seemed to be eyeing me strangely. He finally made up his mind to speak. "Are you Mr. Crowley?" he said. In my surprise I nearly forgot to say, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." We then got into conversation.

It appeared that he was in charge of the "Intelligence" of Dachers County, New York; whereupon I confided to him that the Department of Justice had instructed me to keep my eyes open for any suspicious incidents. He requested me to report anything of the sort also to him, to which, of course, I gladly agreed. He then confided that my own behaviour had turned the country upside down. The mysterious stranger, the fact of my having no companion, had aroused suspicion, as also my habit of sitting for hours in an apparently uncomfortable attitude and absolutely motionless. Reports had been made to him. He had set inquiries on foot. The mystery only grew deeper. Nobody seemed to know anything definite. He had had all Staatsburg "on the grill". He had found it impossible to identify me, until at last one of the girls in the post office, evidently in a class by herself in the matter of intelligence, supplied a clue. She knew me by the scarlet tassels of my golf stockings. He had had me watched, and of course found nothing wrong, but on asking New York City if they could supplement the information, he learned to his intense amazement that I was myself working for the Department of Justice. He told me of various sinister rumours about spies. "Hang it," said I, "what could a spy possibly do in a section like this?" "Well," said he, "there are rumours of flashes of light on the west shore at night which suggest signalling. It might mean serious mischief. We are sending the troops to New York by night train. A spy might easily estimate our numbers, send the news east by a chain of flashed signals and have it wirelessly to Berlin!"

I promised to keep watch, and then the train came in. There was no difficulty in recognizing Madeleine in that background of barbarism. She stood out like a strawberry among a heap of hips and haws; a short sturdy figure trimly tailored, with a round smiling face, and an ivory complexion framed in that pyrotechnic display of hair. Sarg's eloquence had failed to do her justice. She had brought a huge trunk. My face dropped. What would the canoe say? We managed to get it aboard and started upstream, reaching camp without incident but a narrow squeak of being swamped by the wash of a

passing steamboat. We had a great lunch with the burgundy and absinthe and old brandy, which I had brought back from New York.

But some people are never satisfied. She apparently expected to find a young palace with livery lackeys by the dozen, so she explained that she had merely dropped in for lunch, as per invitation, on her way to visit her brother, the incumbent of the parish of Staatsburg. She gave so many details so ingenuously that I might have believed her if I had not happened to know that the amenities of Staatsburg did not include any such person as she described. I politely professed to credit her and promised to take her ashore in time to reach him by dinner. To pass the afternoon we went for a paddle round the island. Near the northern point I noticed that my feet were wet. I knew that the canoe leaked slightly and forgot it. A hundred yards or so further on I found my ankles immersed. It was evident within the next minute that the leak was serious. We were opposite the cliffs, landing was impossible. The water gained. Nothing remained but to bale and paddle for dear life and reach the south inlet before sinking. She thought the opportunity unequalled for a display of hysterics. But I spoke so sharply and sternly that she postponed the performance and began to bale. We just did it and only just, thanks to the help of two boys who had come to camp close to the landing place a couple of days earlier.

They rushed in waist deep and pulled us in. By that time the waterlogged wreck hardly answered the paddle. We dragged the canoe up the beach. The water poured from the stern through a gap six inches across.

We sat and smoked and swapped stories, while Madeleine had her hysterics. When she tired of being not noticed, I took her back to the tent and made tea. "And that", I remarked, is good night to the visit to the vicarage. If we can mend that bundle of firewood at all, which I doubt, we can't even begin till we've got materials from Staatsburg, which means tomorrow morning!" "But I must get to my brother's!" she persisted petulantly.

I gave a short, but instructive lecture on the physical geography of islands, especially insisting on the definition as a piece of land wholly surrounded by water. She began to howl like a hyena. (I knew, of course, that she had not the slightest intention of going, had Neptune himself arrived to conduct her.) "But I must go!" she wailed, and then put up a big bluff about her virtue and her reputation. I said I would ask the boys to row her ashore in their boat. They of course agreed, but when I came back with the good news, she had bethought herself of the privilege of her sex, and declared that here she was and here she would stay. Again I acquiesced.

She spent some time trying to think up some excuse for a fresh fuss, but the best she could do was to say that she must have a bath. "Make your mind easy," said I, and quoted statistics about the area of the Hudson river. It took her quite a long time to convince herself that I was really one of those inhuman monsters who cannot be dislodged from the fortress of patient smiling politeness and imperturbable good temper. But after dinner she gave it up with a sigh.

"Oh well," she thought, "if I can't have my holiest joy of keeping a man on the jump, I suppose I may as well make shift with the next best thing, my famous imitation of a grand passion." She suited the action to the thought, and swooned into my embrace.

Having mended the canoe as well as I could — it was old and rotten beyond permanent repair — I took her to Central Park on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, her stay had been otherwise exciting. I spent my nights watching for signals on the west shore, and sure enough, from time to time the dark mass of the woods was lit up, now here, now there, by shafts of momentary brilliance at irregular intervals. I noted the exact time of each and compared them. They showed a periodic function. Further analysis convinced me of the cause. Whenever a train passed, the light from the funnel became visible whenever the trees thinned out. I explored the woods, and found the gaps corresponded to these calculations. That ghost was laid. I could see only a narrow section of the river close to the shore. At 10:07 on the second night this section was traversed by a rowing boat manned by two men and a shapeless heap in the stern, which might have been a third or a cargo — it was too dark to make sure. They rowed in dead silence with muffled oars. They were clearly about some secret business.

The next morning, looking for something under my pillows, I found my revolver was missing. I did not like it. The evening before, both the boys and I thought we saw a strange man on the island just after dark. We gave chase and thought we saw him slipping through the trees, but failed to report him.

I decided to call on my friend the Colonel and report. He was very pleased with my solution of the mystery of the alleged signals, and agreed that the incident of the boat looked bad. On his part, he had a new yarn. An old boatman, as steady and sober as one could wish, swore to having seen an object of the size and shape of a football surmounting a stick about two feet out of the water, and moving against the current at a regular rate. The word "submarine" was whispered by the pallid lips of patriots. Every day the new type of submarine chaser might be seen steaming downstream, to be

fitted with its armament, five or six a day. No one knew the limits of German genius. The *Deutschland* had crossed safely with her supplies of 606, America's most urgent need. It was perfectly possible that they had built a new type of submarine capable of raising hell in the Hudson.

When I got back to the island, one of the boys brought me my gun. Madeleine, expecting me to bring back a squad of secret service men, had owned up that she had found it in my pillows, got scared and thrown it into the brushwood.

The climax of the joke came after my return to New York. The secret service, unaware of my relation with the Colonel, got wind of the rumours about the mysterious hermit and sent two men to investigate. They found the island desolate and no more illuminating clues to crime than the words "Madeleine" and "Do what thou wilt" on the rocks. After a prolonged enquiry, the District Attorney met him at the Murray Hill Hotel, and spent a delightful evening, telling my tale. He had never heard anything quite like it, and was vastly amazed, especially when it appeared that two of his best men had spent weeks of painstaking strategy on the trail of a man from the department next door.

## CHAPTER 122

I was back in New York on September 9th and started at once to make arrangements to publish Volume III of the *Equinox*. (I should explain that volume II consists of ten numbers of silence to balance those of speech.) I found a studio at 1 University Place, at the corner of Washington Square. Having only one room I thought I would camouflage the bed and had a large screen with three sections made for me. I covered the canvases with a triptych, my first attempt at painting in oil. The design was symbolic of the three principles, Sun, Moon and Agni (fire), of the Hindus. The bed being still visible from some parts of the room, I got a second screen of the same pattern, which brought me to fame. For some days it stood patiently pleading to be painted, but I could not think of a subject.

Early in January, I received a visit from the lady hereafter called the Ape of Thoth and her elder sister. The chain of circumstances antecedent is strangely tenuous.

I had brought a letter of introduction, from England, to Hereward Carrington from my friend the Hon. Everard Feilding. Through Carrington, it came about that I was asked to lecture under the auspices of a particularly transparent charlatan named Christiansen, who worked the sealed letter swindle with a crudity that paid a very poor compliment to his audience. Among my hearers was only one bearing even a remote resemblance to the human species, an old lady painted to resemble the cover of a popular magazine. I went to talk to her after the lecture and found she was an intimate friend of dear Hereward's. I saw no more of her except by accident for a few minutes' chat on two or three occasions.

One evening in the spring of 1918, I was surprised by her calling with her youngest sister. I could not ask them into the studio, being engaged in an important conference with an antique, but sprightly German lady who boasted of having introduced cabarets into America, and had abandoned worldly pleasures for spiritual joys. She had been entangled in the toils of one of the charlatans who worked the Rosicrucian racket, merrily disdainful of criticism based on his elementary blunders in Latin and his total ignorance of the history of the Order which he claimed to rule. The old lady was simple-minded, sincere and earnest. I did not grudge the labour of trying to get her to use common sense, but as almost invariable in America, and heartbreakingly common even in Europe, the task was beyond my powers.

Just as extreme hunger makes a man shovel down anything that looks like food, so the ache of the soul for truth makes it swallow whatever prom-

ises. The poor old woman was so pathetically eager to find a Master, that she would not banish the phantasm. I proved in a dozen different ways that the man was a foul liar. That was easy enough. His claims were grotesquely absurd. For instance, he said that I don't know how many knights of England and France — the most improbable people — were Rosicrucians. He said the Order was founded by one of the early Egyptian kings and professed to have documentary evidence of an unbroken hierarchy of initiates since then. He called the Order Rosae Crucis and translated it Rosy Cross. He said that in Toulouse the Order possessed a vast temple with fabulous magnificent appointments, an assertion disprovable merely by consulting Baedeker. He said that Rockefeller had given him nine hundred thousand dollars and at the same time sent round the hat with an eloquent plea for the smallest contributions. He professed to be a learned Egyptologist and classical scholar on terms of intimacy with the most exalted personages. Yet, as in the case of Peter, his speech betrayed him. He was a good chap at heart, a genuine lover of truth, by no means altogether ignorant of Magick, and a great fool to put up all this bluff instead of relying on his really good qualities. But her faith in him was built on the rock of her wish that his nonsense was true, and because he stood between her and blank despair.

To return, I went out to excuse myself to my visitors. The "little sister" reminded me of Solomon's friend, for she had no breasts. She was tall and strangely thin, with luminous eyes, a wedge-like face, a poignant sadness and a sublime simplicity. She radiated an indefinable sweetness. Without wasting time on words, I began to kiss her. It was sheer instinct. She shared it and equalled my ardour. We continued with occasional interruptions, such as politeness required, to answer her sister in the rare intervals when she got out of breath.

They went away after a while and I saw them no more until this equally unexpected call in January. They wanted my advice about finding an apartment in the village (a geographically vague section in this part of New York is called "Greenwich Village"). She wished to be near the New York University, having begun a course of lectures on law, being sick of her job as a teacher in Public School No. 40, the Bronx, which meant telling lies to an amorphous mob of adolescent Hebrew huskies, the only consolation being the certainty that no one would notice the nonsense she was obliged, by the city, to grind out.

While we talked, I took off her clothes and asked her to come and pose for me when she felt inclined. I proposed, half in joke, to solve her problem by taking her as a lodger. They drifted out and I never expected to hear any more of the matter. But on the eleventh of January she suddenly blew in.



(She swears I telephoned to ask her and perhaps I did. I have my moments of imbecile impulse. I undressed her again, but this time not with impunity.)

To appease conscience I proceeded to make a sketch, a rough rude scrawl. I had never drawn from the nude before. The essential simplicity of the human body beneath its baffling complexities was the Sphinx itself. I threw down my pencil in disgust and despair. But after she had gone I could not sleep. I lay in the dark and found my thoughts drawn by invisible gossamer to the drawing. I picked it up and was suddenly aware that looked at with the figure vertical instead of horizontal, it meant something. I was seized with a spasm of creative energy and all night long I splashed the central canvas with paint. When she took the pose I had asked her, "What shall I call the picture; what shall I paint you as?" She had said, "Paint me as a dead soul." My screen is called *Dead Souls*.

She stood central, her head the keystone of the arch of monsters. Her face is ghastly green. Her fleshless body lustreless, white and grey-blue shadows beneath the ribs. On the left-hand panel is a kneeling Negress, bestially gross, her gaze fixed adoringly on the Queen of *Dead Souls*. Perched on her shoulder, a parrot of brilliant plumage, many hued, surveys the scene with insolent indifference. On the opposite canvas is a kneeling woman huddled as if in agony, a cascade of lustreless hair tumbling to her hips.

Along the entire base are rows of misshapen heads; all anguish, all perversity, all banishment from the world of reasonable things is portrayed in almost endless variety. The screen is grotesque, yet is undeniably a work of genius. It possesses a unity. The dead souls have composed a living soul. Everyone who saw it went away horror-struck or in the spirit of Shimei. But they all talked of nothing else. Bob Chandler came again and again to gaze and gloat. He brought everyone he knew to look at it. And even artists famous for their classical refinement had to admit its grisly power. In short, the dead souls conquered the city and their Queen their creator. She came like Balchis to Solomon, bringing gifts, an endless caravan of fascinations. Innumerable elephants groaning under the treasury of virtues, while in her own slim-fingered hands, she brought her heart. Before her coming the concubines covered their faces and fled. We found almost at once a splendid studio on the south side of Washington Square, a long and lofty room with three wide windows, looking out across the tree tops to the opening of Fifth Avenue.

From this point of vantage the ensuing months appeared tolerable. I was occupied in defeating the dishonest intrigues of the people in Detroit who had sent emissaries to approach me in the winter. I was persuaded to put the publication of the *Equinox* III, Vol. I into the hands of those latter, and

they immediately began to try to evade fulfilling the terms of the contract. I spent the summer in a tent beyond Montauk at the extremity of Long Island. The Magical Retirement made it clear that the current was exhausted. I had finished my work in America and began to prepare my escape.

In the autumn I accepted an invitation to visit my friends William and Kate Seabrook on their farm in Georgia to which they had retired. He had held an important position on the Hearst papers, and his sanity and decency had revolted against so despicably disgusting a job. He knew he was a genius and the effect of knowing me was to make him ashamed of himself. Alas, not long after my influence was removed, he became a backslider. He made sporadic attempts to escape from his environment, but the caress of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the artist's word and it becomes untruthful.

I passed a delightful six weeks in the south. Political and social conditions were of great interest. The standardized surface has overspread the south, but it has not completely smothered the old violence of passion and prejudice. The hatred of the Yankee and his fear of the Negro are as great as ever. In the latter case it has increased. The recent revival and the nationwide spread of the Ku-Klux-Klan is one of the most sinister symptoms of recent years.

From Atlanta I went to Detroit and then took in the Mammoth Caves of Kentucky. I need not describe them. I content myself with the remark that they make a third wonder of the world worth seeing, from Niagara to the Grand Canyon. Except for the Yellowstone Park, which I have not yet seen, nothing else in America is worth seeing first or last for the matter of that.

A final inspection of the bughouse in Detroit left me free to get back to Europe. I reached London a few days before Christmas 1919.

## CHAPTER 123

### BOOK XI

#### CHAPTER I

##### *THE URN*

The title of this chapter requires a detailed explanation. In *The Vision and the Voice*, the attainment of the grade of Master of the Temple was symbolized by the Adept pouring every drop of his blood, that is his whole individual life, into the Cup of the Scarlet Woman, who represents Universal Impersonal Life. There remains therefore (to pursue the imagery) of the adept "nothing but a little pile of dust". In a subsequent vision the Grade of Magus is foreshadowed; and the figure is that this dust is burnt into "a white ash", which ash is preserved in an Urn. It is difficult to convey the appropriateness of this symbolism, but the general idea is that the earthly or receptive part of the Master is destroyed. That which remains has passed through fire; and is therefore, in a sense, of the nature of fire. The Urn is engraved with a word or symbol expressive of the nature of the being whose ash is therein. The Magus is thus, of course, not a person in any ordinary sense; he represents a certain nature or idea. To put it otherwise, we may say, the Magus is a word. He is the Logos of the Aeon which he brings to pass.<sup>1</sup>

The above is obscure. I perceived and deplore the fact. The idea may be more intelligible, examined in the light of history. Gautama Buddha was a Magus. His word was Anatta; that is, the whole of his system, which revolutionized the thought of Asia, may be considered as based upon and consecrated in that one word, which is his denial of the existence of the Atman or "Soul" of Hindu philosophy.

Later, Mohammed also partially overturned an age by uttering his word, Allah. But to us, practically, the most important case of the kind is that connected with such "gods" as Dionysus, Osiris, Baldur, Marsyas, Adonis, Jesus, and other deifications of the unknown Magus concerned. The old pagan worship of the Mother-idea was superseded by the word IAO or its equivalents, which asserted the formula of the Dying God, and made the Male, dying to himself in the act of love, the engineer of the continued life of the race. This revolution cut at the root of all previous custom. Matriarchy vanished; self-sacrifice became the cardinal virtue, and so through infinite ramifications.

This idea of accomplishing the Great Work by a voluntary death was bound up with the belief that the sun died, and was reborn with the hours and the seasons. Astronomy having exploded this fiction, mankind was ready to gain a further comprehension of its own parallel case.

My own word, Thelema, supplies a new and scientifically sound basis for ethics. Self-sacrifice is a romantic folly; death does not end life; it is a temporary phase of life as night and winter are of terrestrial activity. Many other conceptions are implied in this word, Thelema. In particular, each individual is conceived as the centre of his own universe, his essential nature determining his relations with similar beings and his proper course of action. It is obvious that these ideas are revolutionary. Yet to oppose them is to blaspheme science. Already, in a thousand ways, the principles involved have replaced those of the Dying God. Little remains but to accept Thelema consciously as a statement of law, so that any given problem may be solved by applying it to each case.

The man Crowley had been chosen to enunciate this Law, that is, to exercise the essential function of a Magus. But he had yet to understand it, a task which involved the crossing of the Abyss, already described; and further, to identify his will with the Law, so that his personality might act as the focus of its energy. Before he could be that pure will whose name is that word, he had to be purged by fire of all competing volitions; and this was done by those who had chosen him during this part of his life, which I am about to record.

He had indeed got rid of his sense of the personal self, yet his force was discharging itself dispersedly through all sorts of channels appropriate to the various elements in his nature. It was necessary to constrain every particle of his energy to move in one sole direction. (The physical analogy of a gas whose electrons are polarized and one not so organized is not so bad.)

It must now be explained how he was able to understand what was happening to him in this initiation — his life from 1914 to 1919. The Grade of Magus is traditionally connected with the idea of the number 2; male creative energy, wisdom and the expression of a single idea in terms of duality. It transmits the idea of the divine unity to its feminine counterpart, the understanding, somewhat as a man transmits the essence of his racial character to his wife so that he perceives his inmost nature, itself unintelligible to him directly, by observing the flowering of that essence in his son. The Hebrew title of the idea embodying these characteristics is Chokmah, whose numerical value is 73. This fact appears arbitrary and irrelevant; but it forms part of the symbolic language in which the praeterhuman intelligences who control the initiate communicate with him. Thus, my adventures in America

seemed a series of stupidities for a long time. Nothing I did produced the expected results. I found myself suddenly switched from one episode to another so irrationally that I began to feel that I had somehow got into a world where causality did not obtain. The mystery only became clear when analysis disclosed that the events which threw me about in this manner occurred at almost exact intervals of 73 days, or of some multiple or sub-multiple thereof. I understood from this that 73 terrestrial days made up a single day of initiation. As soon as I had grasped this singular fact, I was able to interpret each such period by considering how its events influenced my spiritual development. In this I succeeded so well that towards the end I became able to predict the sort of thing that would happen to me beforehand, which helped me to meet circumstances intelligently and make the fullest and most appropriate use of them.

One further point with regard to this initiation must be mentioned, though it sounds so fantastic even to myself that I can scarcely smother a smile. In the ancient ceremonies of the Egyptians the candidate was confronted or guided on his journey by priests wearing the masks of various animals, the traditional character of each serving to indicate the function of its wearer. Quaint as it sounds, I found myself discovering an almost stupefying physical resemblance to divers symbolic animals in those individuals whose influence on me, during their appointed period, was paramount.

From these and other indications I have been able to construct an intellectual image of the initiation; and if these preliminary remarks be thoroughly understood, it should be easy to follow the course of my progress to the Grade of Magus.

The first period of my sojourn in the United States was consecrated to my preparation for more active instruction by isolation and darkness. I had arrived with a not inconsiderable reputation, both as a man of letters and as a Magician. I had numerous connections with prominent people in both camps and was furnished with excellent introductions. I was positively stupefied to discover, by the most baffling experiences, that by none of these means could I make my way into public life. I lectured with apparent success; yet literally nothing came of it. I was welcomed by editors and publishers, written up and entertained with surprising enthusiasm; yet I failed to sell a single poem, story, essay or even article (except in the special case of political writing in one paper of no credit) and no one would hear of publishing a book. Occasionally, a man promised great things; but the arrangements always fell through suddenly and unreasonably. I had a host of friends in the city, yet days and weeks would pass without my seeing a soul except in the most casual way.

I was even unable to practise my personal Magick. An inscrutable paralysis had me by the spine. After many days I said to myself that I must break up these conditions forcibly; I would a-wooing go whether my mother would let me or no. I set my teeth and began my ritual. But I was now confronted by a new obstacle. I could not do the proposed operations, urgently necessary as they were. I found myself forced to a daily invocation of Mercury (the god corresponding to the Grade of Magus) with whom I did not consciously want to have any dealings. For three times three-and-seventy days I remained thus blind and impotent, oppressed and overwhelmed by the sense of my utter failure and futility, although on the surface all the conditions were in my favour, and there was not anywhere one single visible obstacle. I met dozens of interesting and important people; yet on none of these did my personality seem to produce the slightest effect, while (equally) none had any message for me. The surprise of the situation can only be understood if it be remembered that during my whole life I had never failed to attract eager attention wherever I went, to bring off whatever I planned, and to feel myself in every way a centre of electric energy.

My paralysis extended to every relation of life. I had never known what it was to lack human love; and now, not only did I fail to find a single friend, but when Laylah came from England to join me, I recognized instantly that she was a stranger.

The three Chokmah days (let me so call these periods of 73 days) ended on June 9th, 1915. On the tenth the oppression and obscurity were over. I was asked to dinner by a journalistic friend. He had bidden two women to meet me; one prominent as a poetess; the other, as an actress. I will call one the Cat, the other the Snake; Pasht and Apophis. The Cat was ideally beautiful beyond my dearest dream and her speech was starry with spirituality. The Snake glittered with the loveliness of lust; but she was worn and weary with the disappointment of insatiable desire. Her intellect was brilliant but cynical. She had lost faith in the universe. Her speech was like a sword, to shear away the subtlest sophistries by which we so pitifully persuade ourselves that the perfection which we seek is possible.

A magnetic current was instantly established between the three of us. In the Cat, I saw my ideal incarnate, and even during that first dinner we gave ourselves to each other by that language of limbs whose eloquence escapes the curiosity of fellow guests. It was the more emphatic because we were both aware that the Snake had set herself to encompass me with the coils of her evil intelligence.

The sequel was as strangely significant of the symbolic character of the ordeal as its beginning. I took tea with the Cat at her club the next after-

noon. We lost no time. She told me — a string of lies — of her loveless marriage with an old satyr who had snatched her almost from the cradle. She was about to divorce him; and having loved me at first sight, not sensually, but as my spiritual sister, we could be married quite soon. We sealed the sacrament with a kiss; and there was no reason why, in the ordinary course of events, we should not have proceeded to an immediate liaison. But the gods wished to test me. I really believed in her spirituality. I really loved her with a love more exalted than aught in all my experience. Yet in my soul I knew, against all reason, that she was a fraud; her aspirations affectations; her purity a pose; a false, heartless, brainless, perverse imitation of my Ideal. I fought down the intuition; I swore with all the passionate power of the poet that she was what she seemed. I staked my happiness on her truth and made oath to be utterly worthy of her love.

They tested me by sending her out of the city for nearly a month. I endured the torture of absence, of doubt, of despair, with all the might of my manhood. To confirm myself ceremonially in this course of combat, I saw her rival occasionally, so as to affirm my absolute devotion to my ideal. To repulse the demons of realism, I set my foot upon the neck of the Snake that strove to shake my faith in the existence of perfection.

On July 8th, the Cat returned to New York. Love had conquered. We consecrated ourselves that same night to its service. But though the Cat had given herself thus simply and straightforwardly, she enjoyed the exercise of her power over me by tormenting me with doubts of her truth. She pretended to be disgusted by the sexual side of love and in a thousand ways kept me on pins and needles. Not many days elapsed before she suddenly left the city without leaving word for me. She had driven me to such desperation that I nearly lost control of myself when I heard that she had gone.

Summoning my veteran chief-of-staff, General Gynoniastix, I was readily convinced that this was a case for employing the strategy familiar to all men who have made up their mind to preserve their independence even at the cost of a broken heart. I telephoned straightaway to the Snake and asked her to lunch, after which we went round to my apartment. I was not moved by love; I simply wanted to torture the woman I hated as the woman I loved was torturing me. I made no advances; I was brutally rude; and to clinch the matter, I inflicted physical pain.

I had unusually pointed canine teeth. I fix a fold of flesh between the two points; and then, beating time with one hand, suddenly snap, thus leaving two neat indentations on the flesh concerned. I have often done this as a demonstration; often as a jest or a psychological experiment, sometimes as an intimation of affection, but never till then as a callous and cruel insult.

Probably I misjudged my own motives. Somehow or other the genuineness and integrity of this lost soul began to appeal to me. I began to contrast her hard bitter cynical disbelief with the soft honied superficial assurance of her rival: before I knew what I was doing, our duel had developed into a death struggle in which my hate and hopelessness strove to swamp themselves in a surge of amorous frenzy.

The spasm swept me away. I no longer remember how we went out and dined, or how we got down to her house. Every nerve in my soul was screaming with implacable pain. Through it all I stuck to my guns; I never forgot that I loved the other woman and all that she stood for. But when at last exhaustion ended the orgy, twelve hours or more of indescribably insane intoxication, I sank into a sleep deeper than death — and woke at dawn to find myself inscrutably purged of iniquity. I knew myself innocent in a sense more sublime than any imagination can conceive, and from this state I came mysteriously into a trance of a kind which I had never experienced. Its occurrence marks a definite stage in my spiritual career.

It is so important to the understanding of my life that it must be quoted verbatim from the record which I made immediately on my returning to my apartment — where I received an additional proof that I had come successfully through the ordeal in the shape of a telegram from Pasht explaining why she had left the city, and how she had been prevented from letting me know. (Another string of lies!)

“Result: This is one of the greatest experiences of my life. Curious that the 1906 success also came through a magical thanksgiving under stress of passion. I went off to sleep almost at once. In the morning I woke early, before seven, in an absolutely renewed physical condition. I had the clean fresh feeling of healthy boyhood, and was alert and active as a kitten — post talem mortem! Mentally, I woke into *Pure Love*. This was symbolized as a cube<sup>2</sup> of blue-white light like a diamond of the best quality. It was lucid, translucent, self-luminous and yet not radiating forth. I suppose because there was nothing else in the cosmos. This verb love is intransitive; the love has no object. My gross mind vanished; when, later on, memory pictures of Hilarion<sup>3</sup> arose, they were rejected automatically. All the desire — quality, the clinging, the fear, were no more; it was Pure Love without object or attachment. I cannot describe the quality of the emancipation given by this most wonderful experience. Aum.”

It may not at first sight be apparent why this rather silly and commonplace intrigue should merit the attention which I paid it. The reason is this; just as the Master of the Temple is sworn to interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with his soul, so is the Magus to make his every



act an expression of his magical formula. Being in course of initiation at the time, I did not realize what was going on. It is only on reflection that I have come to understand that my relations with these two women constituted an ordeal; a test of my fitness for the Grade. It is written "as below, so above"; and my reaction to these women furnished a sure indication of how I should act in the greatest circumstances. For having succeeded in completely harmonizing the various energies of my being, there was no longer any danger that I should regulate my actions by conflicting standards. When therefore I rejected the Snake and chose the Cat, I was affirming magically that I would insist upon realizing my ideal (most people idealize the real — which they dare not face) even though I knew it not to exist and was broken-hearted by the continual mockery of the deception.

The word of a Magus is always a falsehood. For it is a creative word; there would be no object in uttering it if it merely stated an existing fact in nature. The task of a Magus is to make his word, the expression of his will; come true. It is the most formidable labour that the mind can conceive.

Having made this decision, my next task was to cause my word to become flesh. The morning of the fifth Chokmah day was devoted to the begetting of a son. I wanted to fulfil the love which I had found. As before, I understood nothing of this; I simply wanted to have a child by the Cat, and performed a series of Magical Operations with this object. I did not know that I was attempting a physical impossibility.

(I must digress to explain that every cause must produce its proper effect; so that, in this case, the son whom I willed to beget came to birth on a plane other than the material.) I must have been very blind indeed not to recognize my true situation, if for no other reason than the following. The celebration of the autumnal equinox coincided with an Operation with the object above stated. It was the last of this series of Operations, though I had no reason whatever for stopping, and only discovered the fact, much to my surprise, long after. Now, the word of this equinox was "Nebulae", which evidently points to the conditions which result in the birth of a star. What I had really done was therefore to beget a Magical Son. So, precisely nine months afterwards, that is, at the summer solstice of 1916, Frater O.I.V. (the motto of C. Stansfeld Jones as a Probationer) entirely without my knowledge became a Babe of the Abyss.

I failed completely to understand the telegrams in which he announced the fact. His action was unprecedented in the whole history of Magick. It was utterly beyond my imagination to conceive of such an occurrence. He, on the other hand, while ignorant of my Operation in the autumn, understood perfectly at the time what he was doing; that he was being born as "The Child"

predicted in the *Book of the Law*. This interpretation does not rest upon any arbitrary ideas, either on his part or mine. The *Book of the Law* speaks of this "Child" as "One", as if with absolute vagueness. But the motto which Frater O.I.V. had taken on becoming a neophyte was "Achad" which is the Hebrew word for "One". It is further predicted that this "Child" shall discover the Key of the interpretation of the Book itself, and this I had been unable to do. (The Book asserts that I should not succeed in this, astounding as it may seem, as I had 93 well in my mind, also 31 ( $93 \div 3$ ) as the value of AL and LA, whose importance in the Book I understood perfectly. The text literally teems with hints; yet I never thought of 31 as the Key. Such blindness is a miracle more surprising than any amount of perspicacity.) And in actual fact he did so discover that Key, two and a half years later.

Those unacquainted with our methods may ask for the basis of the assurance that the key in question really fitted the lock. The answer is that the moment it was communicated to me, I applied it to a number of obscure passages in the Book, and found that it elucidated them completely. Incidentally, I received another very striking proof of the genuineness of the discovery. Every six months, at the equinoxes, it becomes my duty to obtain a word from the gods, whose symbolic meaning indicates the events of importance to the Order which will occur in the course of the ensuing Equinox.

(For instance, in the autumn of 1918, the Word was "Eleven". Apart from its special technical meanings, there was this: that the Armistice was signed at 11 o'clock on the 11th day of the 11th month of the year.) Now, the word of the equinox in which this Key was discovered was SAC. I was greatly puzzled to interpret this word and it did not become clear in the light of the events of the period as it usually does. Only now, when I am writing this account, some four years later, has it suddenly flashed upon me that the numerical value of the word is identical with that of the Key!<sup>4</sup> There are numerous other confirmations; but the above ought to suffice the most sceptical that the author of the *Book of the Law* possessed an accurate knowledge of future events.

The next important stage in my initiation was the formal proclamation of my attainment. As the Master of the Temple I wore a seal-ring; the lapis lazuli, engraved with my cipher, was covered by a platinum lid studded with pyramids to represent the City in which the Masters of the Temple abide. On October 12th, in the train from Chicago to Vancouver, while engaged in my annual Sammasati meditation on my Path since the previous birthday, I was suddenly impelled to tear off this lid. A little later I left the train; and on reaching the hotel found that the lapis lazuli had dropped out of its setting. In the morning I sought and found it on the platform of the station, broken into seven pieces. I picked them up and put them away with the utmost care

in my travelling safe, intending to distribute them on my death to my nearest representatives. Just over a year later, looking through my belongings, the packet was missing. (I have noticed that every time I receive an important initiation, some cherished article mysteriously disappears. It may be a pipe, a pen or what not: but it is always an object which is impregnated with my personality by constant use or special veneration. I cannot remember a single occasion when this has not happened. The theory is that the elementals or familiar spirits in attendance on the Magician exact, so to speak, a tip on all important occasions of rejoicing.) My idea in tearing off the lid was to proclaim ceremonially that I would come out of the darkness of the City of the Pyramids. (The exact period between these two initiations was predicted during the former; of course, in symbolic language, whose meaning appeared only on fulfilment.)

By thus accepting the Grade of Magus I had incurred certain responsibilities. Previously, I had taken the attitude that, while the *Book of the Law* had been given to the world through me, and though I was ineluctably bound thereby, I could stand aloof to some extent. I could consider myself as a Magician pledged to the Law, accepting it and working by its formula: but not identified with its promulgation to the exclusion of all other aims.

My formal attainment of the Grade involved my identifying myself with the word Thelema. My personality must be completely merged in it. On realizing this I realized also how carefully I had avoided compromising myself in this respect. I had never openly proclaimed the Law in the first person, as one might say, either in speech or writing.

Accordingly, when (on arrival at San Francisco) I found myself invited to address a semi-public gathering, I began my speech with the words, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", and proceeded as best I could to explain their import.

Again, on the last day of the year, whose midnight I habitually devote to a meditation on the past, culminating in a formulation of my future career, I was moved to write what was shortly afterwards published (1) as a pamphlet in England, (2) as an article in the *International*, New York, (3) in the *Equinox*, Vol. III, no. 1, (4) as a pamphlet in Australia by Frater Ahah.<sup>5</sup> In this I summarized shortly the events which had led to my attainment of the Grade, and explained that I was thereby committed to an irrevocable and absolute identification of myself with my office as the Logos of the Aeon of Horus. For the future my whole essence must be conterminous with that of the word, and my dynamical formula with that of its utterance.

I continued by setting forth the import and purport of that word. I announced that since "Every man and every woman is a star.", each of us is defined and determined by a set of co-ordinates, has a True Will proper and necessary, the dynamic expression of that nature. The conclusion from these premises is that the sole and whole duty of each of us is, having discovered the purpose for which he or she is fitted, to devote every energy to its accomplishment.

It need hardly be said that the theory of ethics thus outlined involves the consideration of many difficult and important problems. I did not understand at that time the extent of the implication and have devoted immense labour in recent years to the solution of the theorems which are corollary to the fundamental proposition. It must suffice for the present to record the writing of this message. The act was the ceremonial gesture significant of my attainment: as one may say, the King's speech at the opening of the Parliament of the New Aeon.

"And all men kill the thing they love,  
By all let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword."

The sixth Chokmah day was devoted to a terrible ordeal. I had by this time been enlightened as to the falseness of the Cat; it therefore became my duty to slay her. I had created truth by means of an untrustworthy material and must therefore no longer cling to the image of the ideal. I must destroy it, well knowing that it would never again be possible for me to delude myself with poetical puppets. I must face reality for good and all.

[Insert story of Massacre of the Cat.]  
[THIS IS MISSING]

The desolation in my heart was unspeakably dreadful and the seventh Chokmah day found me in the same solitude and silence as the first three; with this difference: that a minister was appointed to comfort and console me. Exactly as before, every single relation that I had established snapped suddenly. I had plenty of friends; but none of them meant anything. However, my consolation was supreme. On the one hand, the despairing cynicism of the wise realist Snake, on the other, the heartless vanity of the foolish idealistic Cat, had left me hopeless for humanity.

In this extremity, I met a very rare animal. A woman! She was a regular street-walker. She had been familiar with hardships, callousness, obsession, shame and poverty from her cradle; but she possessed every noble quality to the full. Hers was the true pride, generosity, purity and passion to which the Cat so basely pretended; and hers also the clear-insighted intelligence, the wide experience and deep insight of the Snake. Yet she had faced and conquered her foes, instead of acquiescing in despair.

I am not one of those sentimental slop-mongers who are always finding angels in the mud. On the whole, my experience of outcast woman had not provoked any excess of sympathy. I thought that in most cases their own defects were responsible for their misfortunes. Indeed, I failed to realize consciously the sublimity of this girl until long afterwards. But today, I see clearly enough the nature of her mission; which ended as strangely as it began, at the close of the Chokmah day. She disappeared into the *Ewigkeit* without a word and all my efforts to trace her were fruitless.

This day of repose and reward had prepared me for my next ordeal. At the beginning of the eighth day appeared a Monkey and an Owl. Once again I was confronted with the necessity of choosing between two ideas. The Monkey had all the insensate passion, volubility and vanity of the less developed primates. She was a great artist and a great lover; yet in each of these functions she displayed the utmost inanity of conceit. The Owl, on the other hand, was incapable of sublimity and at the same time free from affectation. She was as pleasant and sensible as the Monkey was excruciating and absurd.

The nature of my ordeal was twofold. In the first crisis, it was put up to me to do the right thing without permitting any interference from personal inclination or consideration of the ultimate consequences of my line of action. The test was applied at a conference of the parties chiefly concerned. The Monkey's husband wanted me to take her off his hands. A divorce was to be arranged and a marriage to follow. Asked to give my views, I began "I have no personal feeling in the matter." The words were a bombshell. Both husband and wife realized, to their amazed horror, that they had neither of them any means of influencing my conduct. I found myself completely master of the situation. It is only necessary to destroy in oneself the roots of those motives which determine a man's course, in order to enjoy the omnipotence and immunity of a God.

The second point of the ordeal concerned the choice between the women. The Owl offered all the delights of carefree ease and placid pleasure; but there was nothing to be gained. The Monkey represented a life of turmoil and anxiety, with few magnificent moments amid the hours of fretfulness;

but progress was possible. It was as if the Secret Chiefs had asked me, "Are you content to enjoy the fruit of your attainment and live at peace with the world, surrounded by affection, respect and comfort, or will you devote yourself to mastering and fertilizing mankind, despite the prospect of continual disquietude and almost certain disappointment?" I chose the Monkey. I was perfectly willing to make the best of the Owl, in my spare time, so to speak; but I accepted the responsibility attached to her rival without reservation.

A single day was sufficient for this part of the initiation. At the dawn of the ninth day all had been arranged. The Monkey went to England to wind up certain of her affairs and the Owl had no string on me. I was thus able to undertake a Great Magical Retirement in June. For this purpose I went to live in a cottage on the shores of Lake Pasquaney in New Hampshire. My initiation now took on a more strictly magical character. I was able to enter into direct communication with the realities of existence instead of conducting them by means of symbolic gestures.

My very first experience was the announcement of the birth of my "Son", as above mentioned. I did not understand the matter in that light but in this: that by means of my system of training, a man had crossed the Abyss and become a Master of the Temple in much shorter period than had ever been known. My own case had been extraordinary. Eleven years had sufficed me to accomplish a task which in human experience had never required much less than triple the time. Moreover, the conditions had been almost uniquely favourable for me. I possessed all the qualities, all the resources requisite.

In the case of O.I.V. the period was shorter still, and by much; while for him the conditions had been wholly adverse. He was obliged to earn his living in a distasteful and exhausting manner. His domestic circumstances were atrocious. He had not the means of travel or even of scholastic research. I could only conclude that his success was almost wholly due to the excellence of the system which I had given to the world. In short, it was the justification of my whole life, the unique and supreme reward of my immeasurable toils.

Fortified and rejoiced by this good news, I began at once to devote myself to research in the strict sense of the word.

And then the fun began! I found myself unable to do anything of the sort. I am not quite sure how the circumstances responsible for this fit in with my general situation, but they are well worthy of record for their own sake.

I have mentioned elsewhere that in the bosom of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis of the O.T.O. is cherished a magical formula, extremely simple and practical, for attaining any desired object. It is, however, peculiarly appropriate to the principal operations of alchemy, most of all the preparation of the Elixir of Life and the Universal Medicine. At first I used this method casually. It was only when various unexpectedly and even astoundingly successful operations compelled my attention, that I devoted myself systematically and scientifically to the serious study and practice of it. For some two and a half years I had conducted a careful and strenuous research into the conditions of success. Experience had shown me that sometimes this was complete, but at others partial or even negligible, while not infrequently the work would result in failure, perhaps almost amounting to disaster.

Just before leaving New York I had prepared by this method an elixir whose virtue should be to restore youth, and of this I had taken seven doses. Nothing particular happened at first; and it never occurred to me that it might be imprudent to continue.

I was mistaken. Hardly had I reached my hermitage before I was suddenly seized with an attack of youth in its acutest form. All mental activity became distasteful. I turned into a mere vehicle of physical energy. I could hardly bring myself to read a book even of the lightest kind. I could not satisfy my instincts by paddling the canoe which I had imported. I spent about an hour every day in housework and cooking; the remaining fifteen hours of waking life were filled by passionately swinging an axe without interruption. I could hardly stop to smoke a pipe.

There was no self-delusion about this, as I might have persuaded myself to believe in the absence of external evidence. But this was furnished by an irrefutable monument. I wanted to build a wharf for my canoe. With this object I cut down a tree and trimmed a twenty-two foot log. Its circumference at the smaller end was too great for my arms to meet round it. My only instrument for moving this was a wooden pole. The tree had fallen about a hundred yards from the bank; and though it was downhill all the way to the lake, the ground was very uneven and the path so narrow that it was impossible to roll the log at all. Nevertheless, I moved it singlehanded into the lake, where I fixed it by driving piles. Passers-by spread the story of the hermit with superhuman strength, and people came from all parts to gaze upon the miracle. I should mention that normally my physical strength is far below the average, especially for work of this kind. It is quite an effort for me to shift a sixty pound load for even a few feet.

So much for the sufficiently remarkable truth. Of course imagination improved on the story. I received an indignant letter from New York from the

lady who had lent me the cottage, reproaching me for having built a dam right across the lake, to the detriment of navigation!

This spasm of energy continued without abatement for some three weeks, after which I gradually recovered the balance of my normal faculties. The effect of my operations was now to increase the energy of each of them, but in reasonable proportion. I was now able to begin my proposed magical research.

In order to erect the temple of the New Aeon, it appeared necessary to make a thorough clearance of the rubbish of its ruined predecessors. I therefore planned and executed a Magical Operation to banish the "Dying God". I had written in "the Wizard Way":

"He had crucified a toad  
In the Basilisk abode"

and now I did so. The theory of the Operation was to identify the toad with the "Dying God" and slay it. At the same time I caused the elemental spirit of the slain reptile to serve me.

The result was immediately apparent. A girl of the village, three miles away, asked me to employ her as my secretary. I had had no intention of doing any literary work; but as soon as I set eyes on her I recognized that she had been sent for a purpose, for she exactly resembled the aforesaid toad. I therefore engaged her to come out every morning and take dictation. I had with me a copy of Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion* and bethought myself that I would criticize the preface. The almost unparalleled knowledge of the text of the Bible which I had acquired in early childhood was shocked by Shaw's outrageously arbitrary selection of the texts that sustained his argument. His ignorance of Asiatic life and thought had led him into the most grotesque misapprehensions. I set out to criticize his essay, section by section; but the work grew under my hand, and in three weeks or so, I had produced a formidable treatise of some 45,000 words. I had intended to confine myself to destructive criticism of my author; but as I went on, my analysis of the text of the gospels revealed the mystery of their composition. It became clear both those who believe in the historicity of "Jesus" and their opponents were at fault. I could not doubt that actual incidents and genuine sayings in the life of a real man formed part of the structure. The truth was that scraps of several such men, distinct from and incompatible with each other, had been pitch-forked together and labelled with a single name. It was exactly the case of the students who stuck together various parts of various insects and asked their professor, "What kind of a bug is this?" "Gentlemen," he replied, "this is a hum-bug."



In writing this book, I was much assisted by Frazer's *Golden Bough* and, to a less extent, by Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*. But my main assets were my intimate knowledge of the text of the gospels, of the conditions of life and thought in the East, of the details of magical and mystical work, and of the literary conventions which old writers employed to convey their ideas.

I may mention the absurdity of Shaw finding difficulty in the fact that the visit of the three "Kings" is not mentioned in profane history. Shaw did not realize that a "King" may be the equivalent of a very minor chieftain in the Highlands.

Again the injunctions to abandon family ties and worldly cares involve no social theories. They are addressed only to would-be disciples, and have been so given — from the dawn of history to the present day — by every Eastern teacher that ever balanced himself upon one thumb, used a hip bath instead of a soup plate, or rode the Wheel of Samsara in preference to a bicycle.

Once more, the irrational incidents of the life of Christ become entirely normal when understood as the rubric of a Ritual of Initiation.

I claim that my book establishes the outline of an entirely final theory of the construction of Christianity. The subject is far too vast and complex to be adequately discussed in this autohagiography. But I have no hesitation in referring the student to my essay for the solution of any and every difficulty which he may have found in the consideration of this matter.

Having completed this treatise, I discovered myself to be inspired to write a number of short stories based on *The Golden Bough*. They are "The Hearth", "The God of Ibreez", "The Burning of Melcarth", "The Old Man of the Peepul Tree", "The Mass of St Secaire", "The King of the Wood", "The Oracle of Cocytus" and "The Stone of Cybele".

Now with regard to my magical work strictly speaking, its character was presumably determined by my Grade. The Magus corresponds to the Sephira Chokmah, whose manifestation in the universe is Masloth, the Sphere of the Fixed Stars. It was accordingly proper that I should receive a revelation of the universe in this aspect. I began my meditation with no special objective in view. Almost immediately (instead of after a long-continued effort, as had been the case generally speaking in the past) I obtained a Samadhi of which my conscious memory brought back the account "Nothingness and twinkles", adding subsequently "but what twinkles!" This Samadhi developed in the course of time, as I repeated it, into such importance that I feel almost justi-

fied in calling it the radix of my whole philosophical outlook. I have described it, giving historical details, in my Comment on the *Book of the Law*, Chapter I, Verse 59. It seems convenient to quote this in this place, as throwing light upon the progress of my inmost apprehension of the universe from this time forward.

### THE "STAR-SPONGE" VISION

There is a vision of a peculiar character which has been of cardinal importance in my interior life, and to which constant reference is made in my magical diaries. So far as I know, there is no extant description of this vision anywhere, and I was surprised on looking through my records to find that I had given no clear account of it myself. The reason apparently is that it is so necessary a part of myself that I unconsciously assume it to be a matter of common knowledge, just as one assumes that everybody knows that one possesses a pair of lungs, and therefore abstains from mentioning the fact directly, although perhaps alluding to the matter often enough.

It appears very essential to describe this vision as well as is possible, considering the difficulty of language, and the fact that the phenomena involve logical contradictions, the conditions of consciousness being other than those obtaining normally.

The vision developed gradually. It was repeated on so many occasions that I am unable to say at what period it may be called complete. The beginning, however, is clear enough in my memory.

I was on a retirement in a cottage overlooking Lake Pasquaney in New Hampshire. I lost consciousness of everything but a universal space in which were innumerable bright points, and I realized this as a physical representation of the Universe, in what I may call its essential structure. I exclaimed, "Nothingness with twinkles!" I concentrated upon this vision, with the result that the void space which had been the principal element of it diminished in importance; space appeared to be ablaze, yet the radiant points were not confused, and I thereupon completed my sentence with the exclamation, "but what Twinkles!"

The next stage of this vision led to an identification of the blazing points with the stars of the firmament, with ideas, souls, etc. I perceived also that each star was connected by a ray of light with each other star. In the world of ideas each thought possessed a necessary relation with each other thought; each such relation is of course a thought in itself; each such ray is itself a star. It is here that the logical difficulty first presents itself. The seer has a direct perception of infinite series. Logically, therefore, it would appear

as if the entire space must be filled up with a homogeneous blaze of light. This however is not the case. The space is completely full and yet the monads which fill it are perfectly distinct. The ordinary reader might well exclaim that such statements exhibit symptoms of mental confusion. The subject demands more than cursory examination. I can do no more than refer the critic to the Hon. Bertrand Russell's *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, where the above position is thoroughly justified, as also certain positions which follow. At the time I had not read this book; and I regard it as a striking proof of the value of mystical attainment, that its results should have led a mind such as mine, whose mathematical training was of the most elementary character, to the immediate consciousness of some of the most profound and important mathematical truths; to the acquisition of the power to think in a manner totally foreign to the normal mind, the rare possession of the greatest thinkers in the world.

A further development of the vision brought to the consciousness that the structure of the universe was highly organized, that certain stars were of greater magnitude and brilliancy than the rest. I began to seek similes to help me to explain myself. Several such attempts are mentioned later in this note. Here again are certain analogies with some of the properties of infinite series. The reader must not be shocked at the idea of a number which is not increased by addition or multiplication, a series of infinite series, each one of which may be twice as long as its predecessor, and so on. There is no "mystical humbug" about this. As Mr. Russell shows, truths of this order are more certain than the most universally accepted axioms; in fact, many axioms accepted by the intellect of the average man are not true at all. But in order to appreciate these truths, it is necessary to educate the mind to thought of an order which is at first sight incompatible with rationality.

I may here digress for a moment in order to demonstrate how this vision led directly to the understanding of the mechanism of certain phenomena which have hitherto been dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders as incomprehensible.

Example No 1: I began to become aware of my own mental processes. I thought of my consciousness as the Commander-in-Chief of an army. There existed a staff of specialists to deal with various contingencies. There was an intelligence department to inform me of my environment. There was a council which determined the relative importance of the data presented to them. It required only a slight effort of the imagination to think of this council as in debate; I could picture to myself some tactically brilliant proposal being voiced by the Quarter-Master-General. It was only one step to dramatize the scene, and it flashed upon me in a moment that here was the explanation of "double personality"; that that illusion was no more than a natural personifi-

cation of internal conflict, just as the savage attributes consciousness to trees and rocks.

Example No. 2: While at Montauk, I had put my sleeping bag to dry in the sun. When I went to take it in, I remarked, laughingly, "Your bedtime, Master Bag," as if it were a small boy and I its nurse. This was entirely frivolous; but the thought flashed into my mind that after all the bag was in one sense a part of myself. The two ideas came together with a snap, and I understood the machinery of a man's delusion that he is a teapot.

These two examples may give some idea to the reader of the light which mystical attainment throws upon the details of the working of the human mind.

Further developments of this vision emphasized the identity between the Universe and the mind. The search for similes deepened. I had a serious impression that the thing I was looking for was somehow obvious and familiar. Ultimately it burst upon me with fulminating conviction that the simile for which I was seeking was the nervous system. I exclaimed "The mind is the nervous system," with all the enthusiasm of Archimedes, and it only dawned on me later, with a curious burst of laughter at my naiveté, that my great discovery amounted to a platitude.

From this I came to another discovery: I perceived why platitudes were stupid. The reason was that they represented the summing up of trains of thought, each of which was superb in every detail at one time. A platitude was like a wife after a few years; she has lost none of her charms, and yet one prefers some perfectly worthless woman.

I now found myself able to retrace the paths of thought which ultimately come together in a platitude. I would start with some simple ideas and develop them. Each stage in the process was like the joy of a young eagle soaring from height to height in ever-increasing sunlight as dawn breaks, foaming, over the purple hem of the garment of ocean, and, when the many coloured rays of rose and gold and green gathered themselves together and melted into the orbed glory of the sun, with a rapture that shook the soul with unimaginable ecstasy, that sphere of rushing light was recognized as a commonplace idea, accepted unquestionably and treated with drab indifference because it had so long been assimilated as a natural and necessary part of the order of Nature. At first I was shocked and disgusted to discover that a series of brilliant researches should culminate in a commonplace. But I soon understood that what I had done was to live over again the triumphant career of conquering humanity; that I had experiences in my own person the succession of winged victories that had been sealed by a treaty of

peace whose clauses might be summed up in some such trite expression as "Beauty depends upon form".

It would be quite impracticable to go fully into the subject of this vision of the Star-Sponge, if only because its ramifications are omniform. It must suffice to reiterate that it has been the basis of most of my work for the last five years, and to remind the reader that the essential form of it is "Nothingness with twinkles".

I conclude this note, therefore, by quoting certain chapters of *Liber Aleph*, in which I have described various cognate forms of the vision.

"De Gramine Sanctissimo Arabice."

"Recall, o my Son, the Fable of the Hebrews, which they brought from the City Babylon, how Nebuchadnezzar the Great King, being afflicted in his Spirit, did depart from among Men for Seven Years' Space, eating Grass as doth an Ox. Now this Ox is the Letter Aleph, and is that Atu of Thoth whose Number is Zero, and whose name is Maat, Truth, or Maut, the Vulture, the All-Mother, being an Image of Our Lady Nuit, but also it is called the Fool, who is Parsifal, "der reine Thor", and so referreth to him that walketh in the Way of the Tao. Also, he is Harpocrates, the Child Horus, walking, (as saith David, the Badavi that became King in his Psalms) upon the Lion and the Dragon; that is, he is in Unity with his own secret Nature, as I have shewn thee in my Word concerning the Sphinx. O my Son, yester Eve came the Spirit upon me that I also should eat the Grass of the Arabs, and by Virtue of the Bewitchment thereof behold that which might be appointed for the Enlightenment of mine Eyes. Now then of this may I not speak, seeing that it involveth the Mystery of the Transcending of Time, so that in One Hour of our terrestrial Measure did I gather the Harvest of an Æon, and in Ten Lives I could not declare it."

"De quibisdam Mysteriis, quae vidi."

"Yet even as a Man may set up a Memorial or Symbol to import Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand, so may I strive to inform thine Understanding by Hieroglyph. And here shall thine own Experience serve us, because a Token of Remembrance sufficeth him that is familiar with a Matter, which to him that knoweth it not should not be made manifest, no, not in a Year of Instruction. Here first then is one amid the uncounted Wonders of that Vision; upon a field blacker and richer than Velvet was the Sun of all Being, alone. Then about Him were little Crosses, Greek, over-running the Heaven. These changed from Form to Form geometrical, Marvel devouring Marvel, a Thousand Times a Thousand in their Course and Sequence, until by their

Movement was the Universe churned into the Quintessence of Light. Moreover at another Time did I behold All Things as Bubbles, iridescent and luminous, self-shining in every Colour, Myriad pursuing Myriad until by their perpetual Beauty they exhausted the Virtue of my Mind to receive them, and whelmed it, so that I was fain to withdraw myself from the Burden of that Brilliance. Yet, o my Son, the Sun of all this amounteth not to the Worth of one Dawn-Glimmer of Our True Vision of Holiness."

**1** — Cf. Rabelais: the final secret is in the bottle inscribed TRINC.

**2** — I say "a cube"; yet its most salient property was that it was without boundaries. Experience of similar trances is necessary for the understanding of this statement, which is a perfectly proper expression of a perfectly observed fact, despite its intellectual self-contradiction.

**3** — This was the "mystic name" chosen for herself by the Cat. She had a smattering of theosophy and remembered this as being the name of some "Mahatma".

**4** — SAC = Shin, Aleph, Chet, HB:Chet HB: Aleph HB:Shin ,  $300 + 1 + 8 = 309$ . (Tarot Trumps corresponding to these letters.)  $XX + XI + 0 = 31$ . The compound letter (Greek äT) in special reference to this combination of Tarot Trumps is the third of the words of value 31 (AL and LA) which complete 93. A volume might be (and has been) written on the fitness of this whole symbolism.

SAC = Tzaddi, Aleph, Kaph, HB:Koph HB: Aleph HB:Tzaddi ,  $90 + 1 + 20 = 111 =$  HB:Peh HB:Lamed HB: Aleph = Aleph. 1 = HB:Dalet HB:Chet HB: Aleph = "One". (Fratr O.I.V. and the predicted discoverer of the Key.) Both spellings are valid to reveal the word and its discoverer! Such intricacy of device is one of the most evident proofs of the praeterhuman intelligence of the author of the *Book of the Law*.

**5** — G.H. Frater AHAH 6°=5<sup>□</sup> R.R. et A. C. is the humblest and simplest of the Brethren of the Order. He has worked with his hands since he was nine years old and he understands and loves the Law and its Logos as a child does its mother and father. He has my respect and affection as no other of my Brethren: for he represents to me mankind incarnate at its weakest (and therefore strongest) and noblest (and therefore most "common"). He is, in a word, that "Man" of whom I am, being 666 (the number of a man) and whom I love and serve. An illuminating incident: he cannot spell, but under inspiration writes as none has ever done save one — John Bunyan!

## CHAPTER 125

It is a remarkable fact that physical phenomena of an appropriate character frequently accompany a spiritual event. I fail to see any special significance, from a magical point of view, in the experience now to be related; but it is highly interesting in itself, and there is unquestionably a striking correlation between it and the vision just described.

One morning I had started before dawn for the upper reaches of the lake. The day was breathlessly intense, the calm was somehow positive rather than negative, and seemed to conceal some huge menace. It was as if the heart of the world had stopped. I felt an indescribable awe, overwhelming in its solemnity. The act of paddling seemed almost a blasphemy. However, I made a fire on a rocky islet and cooked and ate my lunch, returning to the cottage in a curiously exhausted state. It was one of those days when the electrical conditions seem to abstract every particle of energy from one's nerves. The condition is familiar enough to me, and I understood that it foreshadowed an approaching thunderstorm; in fact, an hour later, as I sprawled lazily on the verandah, I saw the imminence of the tempest. I realized that, wharf or no wharf, my canoe could not possibly live through what was coming. I dashed down to the water's edge at the exact moment when the first drop of rain fell, and although the distance was barely 150 yards in all, and I picked up the canoe and tucked it under my arm like an umbrella, I was soaked and dripping before I got back to shelter. At this moment, a dog-cart, occupied by a man, a woman and a child, was hastily backed up away from the road, and they asked leave to take refuge till the rain stopped. I showed them into the main room, staying outside myself to watch the wonder of the storm. Daylight had disappeared with the utmost suddenness. A pall of purple black drove down the valley at a height of scarce 100 feet above the water, and this pall was veined with a network of incessant lightning. Beneath it the air seemed praeternaturally clear. It was the most spectacular performance I had ever seen. Ahead of the storm, the vast blue sky stood speckless above the unrippled sheen of the lake. Then the advance guard of the tempest, the hail and the rain splashed down in giant drops like bullets. Then came the berry purple of the cloud, and under it the wind lashed the lake into tempestuous froth so fiercely that no water remained visible.

The storm struck deadly chill: and, having been reminded recently of the lurking malaria in my blood, I decided to put on dry clothes.

I must give a brief description of the construction of the cottage. It was of wood, built round a chimney stack and fireplace of brick. The main room

faced the lake; and on the other side of the stack were a bedroom which I did not use and the kitchen. The main room, where I slept, being occupied by my guests, I had to take my dry clothes into the bedroom. This room had two small windows. I forget whether they were both closed; but if open, the slit was not more than two or three inches wide. There was a door, also closed, leading into the kitchen. The other door which led to the main room may possibly have been a little ajar. To put on my stockings, I sat down on a chair close to the brickwork of the chimney stack. As I bent down, I noticed, with what I can only describe as calm amazement, that a dazzling globe of electric fire, apparently between six and twelve inches in diameter, was stationary about six inches below and to the right of my right knee. As I looked at it, it exploded with a sharp report quite impossible to confuse with the continuous turmoil of the lightning, thunder and hail, or that of the lashed water and smashed wood which was creating a pandemonium outside the cottage. I felt a very slight shock in the middle of my right hand, which was closer to the globe than any other part of my body. I must emphasize that I was not in the slightest degree alarmed or otherwise mentally disturbed. It will be remembered that I had been struck by lightning on the Pillar Mountain many years earlier. I have always felt extreme oppression while an electrical storm is gathering and a corresponding exhilaration the moment it breaks. I have a powerful instinctive feeling that I am myself an wholly electrical phenomenon, and the wilder the storm, the more completely do I feel myself in my element. I am impelled to physical enthusiasm expressed in delightedly triumphant magical gestures and outbursts of ecstatically religious incantations. I am thrilled to the marrow by the mere full title of the Tarot Card called the Knight of Wands, "The Lord of the Flame and the Lightning, the King of the Spirits of Fire!" I want to shout aloud the superb Enochian invocation of that force. Something of that exaltation may be divined from the rhythm and swing of the lyric into which I have introduced this title:

"By the Brood of the Bysses of Brightening, whose  
God was my sire;  
By the Lord of the Flame and the Lightning, the King  
of the Spirits of Fire . . ."

This spiritually sublime intensity does not in any way interfere with my intellectual activity. On the contrary, I become more alert than in almost any other conditions. It is as if the illumination of the flash interpenetrated my spirit, as if my mental faculties entered into enjoyment of their ideal nourishment and simulation thereby.

I was consequently in the best possible condition to observe. My perfectly impersonal interest, and of course my scientific training, stood me in ex-



cellent stead. My time sense was markedly altered, much as I have described in the account of the attack on me in Calcutta. I was thus able to observe the events of what was probably not more than five seconds as if it had been as many minutes.

I thought the phenomenon of sufficient interest to record; and wrote a brief description to the *New York Times*. The result was surprising. I found myself inundated with letters of inquiry from so many electrical students that I had at last to have an account multigraphed to send out.

I had supposed that globular electricity was a well-known and undoubted, if rare, phenomenon, and was amazed to learn that until then it had never been seen by any reliable and competent observer. I had quite an elaborate correspondence with Professor Elihu Thompson, one of the greatest living authorities on electricity, about it. It appeared that previous accounts were the statements of common sailors. They left considerable room for doubting the existence of globular electricity at all. This doubt was strengthened by the extreme difficulty of framing any satisfactory hypothesis to explain the occurrence. My observation turned out, therefore, to be (in its way) a matter of primary importance. I ventured to suggest an explanation of my own; but Professor Thompson felt that, while it covered the facts of the case and even those of previous observations, it involved a conception of electricity which was not easy to reconcile with the implications of certain other phenomena.

In the course of our correspondence, Professor Thompson communicated several extremely subtle and stimulating ideas as to the nature of matter, electricity and indeed of nature in general. They perhaps helped me to envisage consciously, for the first time, a strictly formal identification of the results of rational intellection with those of immediate intuition. I had felt, not without severe qualms, that the data of Neschamah might be in irreconcilable antagonism with those of Ruach. I was not in any way shaken in my opinion that the crown of Ruach (Daäth, Knowledge) had no true place on the Tree of Life, that it was essentially illusory and self-contradictory. It had been my constant preoccupation to find a means of expression for the truth of spiritual illumination in terms of rational comprehension, and moreover to justify the former without denying the validity of the later. Professor Thompson's remarks filled me with hope. It must be remembered that at the period when I studied science most exclusively, the reaction against mysticism was in full swing. The persecution of Darwin was like an unhealed scar; its contemplation bred resentment against the very root of any religious interpretation of the universe. I had been forced into the awkward position of having to be ready to go to the stake with Maudsley, Ray Lankester and Haeckel, as against superstitious religion, and yet to attack their conclusions with the

utmost vehemence in the interests of the impregnable spiritual position which I had built on the rock of my own actual experience. At last it had become conceivable that this antinomy might be overcome, and that in the best way, in the way indicated by the symbolism of the Qabbala itself; that is to say, the eyes of science were opening gradually to the perception that the results of observation and experiment demanded an interpretation as repugnant to common sense (as understood by the man in the street and the Rationalist Press Association) as the utmost conceptions of Pythagoras, Paracelsus and that Great Order itself of which I was an initiate. My subsequent researches have been almost exclusively determined by considerations of this kind. While I have done my utmost to advance directly towards truth by the regular traditional magical and mystical methods which The Book of the Law had perfected, I have constantly sought *pari passu* to correlate my results with those of modern intellectual progress; indeed, to demonstrate that the deepest thinkers are unwittingly approaching the apprehension of initiated ideas, and are in fact, despite themselves, being compelled to extend their definition of the Ruach to include conceptions proper to Neschamah, that they are, in other words, becoming initiates in our sense of the word without suspecting that they are committing high treason against the majesty of materialism.

The remaining Chokmah-Days of the initiation proper seemed to be devoted principally to showing the candidate the material on which he is to work. I hope it will not sound too strange if I say that up to this time of my life I had been to a certain extent living in a fool's paradise. In one way or another, either by actual shelter, by the protection of social and financial resources, by my own poetic rose-coloured spectacles, or by the singularly happy choice that I had made of the people among whom I dwell, I had not seen in all its naked nastiness the world of mankind. I had seen a good deal of cruelty, stupidity and callousness; I realized how ignoble were the lives of the average man and woman, but there had been practically always a reasonable amount of compensation. It is necessary to live in the United States and know the people well to get a really clear view of hell with the lid off. I had already been some time in the country, but the truth about New York had been camouflaged. I, being who I was, had come into contact with the very cream of the city, and on my travels about the Union, I had seen little more than the superficial life of the people as it appears to the wanderer whose tent is a Pullman Car, a swagger hotel, or the abode of some friend who by that very fact is not truly representative of his community. I was soon to be brought into intimate relations with a society so primitive that it had no means of knowing who I was or recognizing the class I represented; to experience what the French rather neatly call *le-struggle-for-lifeisme*; and that with the absolute moral certainty of being completely beaten from the very nature of things. In a country where the most weak and ignorant, the

least intelligent and resourceful, find it easy enough on the whole to earn a fairly decent living, and where the slightest capacity of almost any sort makes it a safe bet that ten years will put its possessor in Easy Street, I was to find myself a Candidate for complete destitution. For many months I was, for the first time in my life, constantly preoccupied with the problem of keeping myself alive, and did so only by the operations of periodical wind-falls. Again and again my coracle sank under me and each time those responsible for the conduct of my initiation handed out something to go on with from some totally unexpected source, in order to keep me on that psychological razor-edge whence one can always see the abyss as one can no longer do when one is in it. In this way, I saw all classes and all races, but no longer from the privileged standpoint, with the result that I was able to understand thoroughly what they were like to themselves and to each other. The horror and loathsomeness of those conditions left a permanent mark upon my character. It went far to destroy my capacity for lyrical expression, or perhaps rather to make impossible the point of view necessary to that kind of creative impulse. Love itself was to appear in a totally new form. I had never before understood its roots in the moral weakness and physical incompetence of our breed of monkeys. I had been familiar enough with its romantic and spiritual implication, with the social and economic complications which degrade its ideal, and even with the brutalities and blasphemies which lust and greed impose upon it. I had never understood it as the expression of the bitter need of desperation which is after all its true nature so far as all but a very few individuals *rari nantes in gurgito vasto* are concerned.

It would be impossible for me even to attempt the merest outline of the abomination of desolation upon which the Chiefs forced me to gaze during these long dreary dreadful days. It was not that I saw only the vilest and basest elements in society; on the contrary, I was deeply impressed by the essential virtue which forms part of every human being, and the poison upon the barb of my experience was the fact that ignorance, unskilfulness, moral weakness and the like made the helplessness and hopelessness of virtue utterly complete. Everywhere I saw unspeakably loathsome and inhuman vices triumphing with scarce a show of resistance; commerce in its uncleanliest forms had harnessed morality, religion and even science to its Jaganath car. Every decent instinct, whether of the individual or of the community, was the prey of this ghoul. In another chapter I shall give instances of the kind of thing which was not wholly dominant but practically universal. I have said enough to convey a general idea of the nature of the ordeal through which I was passed at this period. I need only record a few of the actual magical results.

The misery which I underwent at this time had done much to cloud my memory. I do not clearly remember, for example, my reasons for going to New Orleans almost immediately after returning from Lake Pasquaney. It was my last glimpse of beauty for a long while. The old French-Spanish quarter of the city is the only decent inhabited district that I discovered in America. From the architecture to the manners of the people, their clothes, their customs and their cookery, all was delightful. It was like being back in Europe again with the added charm of a certain wildness and romance; it was a civilization *sui generis*, with its own peculiar adornment in the way of history. It enabled me to realize the spirit of the Middle Ages as even the most remote and time-honoured towns of Europe rarely do. I took a room conveniently close to the Old Absinthe House, where one could get real absinthe prepared in fountains whose marble was worn by ninety years' continual dripping. The result was that I was seized by another of my spasms of literary creation, and this time, the definite sexual stimulus which I had imagined as partly responsible for such attacks was, if not absent, at least related to an atmosphere rather than to an individual.

It lasted, if I remember rightly, some seventeen days. I completely lost track of the properties of times and place. I walked over to the Absinthe House in my shirt sleeves on one occasion without being in the slightest degree aware of the fact. My best work was an essay "The Green Goddess", descriptive of the Old Absinthe House itself in particular, and the atmosphere of the quarter in general. It may be regarded as the only rival to "The Heart of Holy Russia" for literary excellence and psychological insight. I wrote also *The Scrutinies of Simon Iff*, a series of six more or less detective stories; two or three less important essays; some short stories, of which I may mention "Every Precaution" for its local colour; and all but the last two or three chapters of my first serious attempt at a long novel, *The Net*. I also began from the very depths of my spiritual misery a very strange book of an entirely new kind; so much so that I describe it as "A Novelissim". Its title is *Not the Life and Adventures of Sir Roger Bloxam*. It remains unfinished to this day; in fact it is hardly theoretically possible to finish it, strictly speaking. I have indeed serious qualms as to whether I have not overstepped the limits of truth in saying that I began it. To be safe, I should be content to say I wrote a good deal of it.

The lyrical faculty remained almost entirely dormant, no doubt owing to the fact that in a quarter where almost every woman attracted me intensely, I was quite unable to fix my affection on a single specimen. Perhaps also it was inhibited by the iron which was entering my soul inch by inch and being twisted in my heart by the pitiless love of the Secret Chiefs of the Order. It was this, without doubt, which threw a monkey-wrench into my creative ma-

chinery and its destructive energy may be measured by the frightful circumstance which must next be recorded.

The city of New Orleans is divided into two main sections by a broad thoroughfare. On one side is the Spanish Quarter, on the outskirts of which was a large and picturesque red light section; one of the most interesting places of its kind that I have ever seen. In fact, if we except Cairo, it would have been hard to beat. Across the main street was the modern commercial Americanized section where hardly a brick but screamed an obscene blasphemy against everything that might delight a poet, arouse enthusiasm in a lover, or abstain from revolting the instincts of a gentleman. Before I had been long in the city, it had become obvious that this cancer was eating away the breast of the beautiful city, and the conviction was stamped into my soul by a very definite hoof-mark of the Mule Morality.

A millionaire with a very large interest in the Race Course at Havana be-thought him that it would be good business to do away with the competition of New Orleans in that form of sport. He therefore proceeded to organize what is called a "clean-up" of the city. He bribed prominent pulpits to awake the consciences of sincere puritans, squared the politicians and the newspapers, brought blackmail to bear on any honest people that seemed likely to stand in his way, and in every other respect fulfilled the conditions requisite for plundering the city and persecuting the poor, in the name of righteousness according to the most approved methods. His most spectacular success was to shut up the Red Light district, so far as the poorest classes were concerned. The effect of these proceedings was brought home to me by an incident which, happening in the United States, appeared to me vastly comic. I had been to the library in Lee Circle to get a book and descending the steps was accosted by a woman with a request for charity. I recognized her as one of the denizens of the wooden shanties of the Red Light district. My sympathy was aroused by the shameful cruelty to which she had been subjected by the hypocritical and dishonest manoeuvres of the millionaire and his myrmidons. Her case was peculiarly pathetic as she was suffering from an active and contagious form of disease. The most elementary common sense and decency would have come to her rescue long before, in the interest of her clients, no less than her own. I asked her what she was going to do now that her office had been closed. To my surprise, she was perfectly cheerful. The relief which she sought was only temporary, for she had got a good position as a nursemaid in a family of three young children for the following week!

Such was one of the innumerable similar symptoms of the foul disease which is ravaging the United States, and has already destroyed almost every vestige of the political, religious and individual liberty which was the very essence of the original American idea. My spirit sank under the contemplation

of the irremediable calamity which threatens to engulf the whole of humanity since it is now an accepted principle of business to endeavour to make tyranny international, to suppress all customs of historical interest, and indeed everything which lends variety or distraction to human society in the interest of making a market for standardized products. The moral excuse for these activities is miserably thin, for the element which it is most important to suppress is originality as such, even when the question concerns the very idea of craftsmanship in itself. The idea at the back of puritanism is the reduction of the mass of humanity to a degree of slavery which has never previously been so much as contemplated by the most malignant tyrants in history; for it aims at completing the helplessness of the workman by minimizing his capacity. He must no more be permitted to exercise the creative craftsmanship involved in making a pair of boots; he must be rendered unable to do more than repeat mechanically, year in, year out, one meaningless item in the manufacture, so that when the pinch comes it shall be impossible for anyone to have boots at all except through the complex industrial conspiracy of the trusts. This idea, consciously or subconsciously, lies underneath all attempts to extend "civilization". The progress of this pestilence is only too visible all over the world. Standardized hotels and standardized merchandise have invaded the remotest districts, and these would be economically impossible unless supported by the forcible suppression of local competition. When, therefore, we find the newspapers indignant at Mohammedan morality, we may suspect the real trouble is that American hatters see no hope of disposing of their surplus stock, as long as the wicked Oriental sticks to his turban or tarbush. The exquisite, dignified and comfortable clothes of remote people, from Sicily to Japan, must give way to the vile shoddy products of foreign factories, and the motive is supplied by a worldwide campaign on behalf of social snobbery. The people are persuaded that they ought to try to look like a sporting duke or a bank president. Such plans obviously depend on the destruction of everything that makes for originality, self-respect, the love of beauty or the reverence for history.

It took me a long while before I could formulate consciously this idea, so Protean are its disguises and so subtly sinister its stratagems. But I have always possessed the instinct, I have always reacted automatically against this principle whenever I found it. It should be obvious that "Do what thou wilt" cuts diametrically athwart this modern civilization to destroy the distinctions which constitute the sole hope of humanity to make real progress by the selection and variation which are the means of evolution. It may be said that my own work is in the nature of missionary enterprise; and that this is, in fact, the very thing to which I object, since its idea is to persuade people to abandon their established beliefs and customs. This criticism is invalid. I do, as a matter of fact, object to missionary enterprise as such, whether it take the form of imposing the cult of Osiris on the worshippers of

Adonis, of persuading the Chinese to eat with knives and forks, or of making Eastern women obscenely ridiculous by changing their superb and suitable robes for frocks which pretend to have been made in Paris. But my message differs fundamentally from all previously promulgated precisely at this point. My predecessors have invariably said, "My belief is right and yours is wrong; my customs are worthy, yours are ignoble; my dress is decent, yours is not; think as I think, talk as I talk, do as I do, or you will be wretched, poor, sick, disgraced and damned; besides which, I shall cut your head off, burn you alive, starve you, imprison you, ostracize you and otherwise make you sorry you did not agree to be a good boy." The essence of every missionary message has been to assimilate the taught to the teacher; and it has always been accompanied by bribes and threats. My message is exactly opposed to any of this. I say to each man and woman, "You are unique and sovereign, the centre of an universe. However right I may be in thinking as I do, you may be equally right in thinking otherwise. You can only accomplish your object in life by complete disregard of the opinions of other people. You must not even take the outward signs of success as indications that the course of action which has produced them would serve your turn. For one thing, my coronet might not suit your complexion but give you a headache; for another, the measures which I took to obtain that coronet might not succeed in your case."

My mission is, in short, to bring everyone to the realization and enjoyment of his own kingship, and my apparent interference with him amounts to no more than advice to him not to suffer interference. It may appear from this as if I were opposed to joint action directed to the attainment of a common purpose. But, of course, this is not the case. The advantages, not merely of cooperation but of disciplined union are the same as they were with previous theories of life. Yet there is a certain practical difference which, by the way, is curiously illustrated by the parallel of military discipline. In primitive warfare, the nexus between comrades is practically limited to an agreement to forget their individual quarrels in face of the common enemy. The training of a soldier thus amounted to encouraging his personal prowess. It was gradually seen that some sort of plan for combined action made for victory, so that one leader or chieftain should be detailed to carry out a definite duty. It soon became clear that isolated action was dangerous to the whole army; and the consequent tendency was developed to the point at which the Prussian drill sergeant was invaluable. The aim was to reduce the soldier to a brainless bulk of brawn, to be manipulated as mechanically as a chessman, exercising his inherent energies without the slightest wish or power to think or act for himself. (This stage corresponds to that which we are rapidly approaching in industry.) Now at least we have reached a further stage. The complexity of a battle and its mere extent in space have made it impossible for a single man to handle his troops as was done by Marlborough

and Napoleon, and therefore it has become once more necessary for the subordinate officer, and even, to some extent, the private soldier to understand his responsibility, to exercise initiative within limits, and also to train himself to be able to carry out a variety of operations demanding very varied knowledge and skill, instead of, as before, being confined to a highly specialized task demanding blind obedience and the suppression of all intelligence. The Charge of the Light Brigade has in fact become impossible. We are moving intelligently enough back in the direction of Sir Launcelot and Crillon. The necessities of warfare are the more truly instructive in that the military type of mind is so contemptible. The commander-in-chief is always hopelessly incompetent either to conceive or to perceive correctly the very elements of his business. The progress of military science is imposed upon stupidly by the facts; and it affords us, therefore, the best possible illustration of the blind workings of evolution. That is why industry, whose chiefs are just one degree less brainless than the Kitcheners and Frenches, is actually behind war in its biological adaptation to environment. Industrial crises are not so immediately fatal as those of tactics. Necessity has not so free a hand with the birch rod; and so, conditions alter more slowly, and their significance is less easy to interpret.



## CHAPTER 126

Considerations of this kind were constantly present to my mind at this period. Before my eyes was the sickening spectacle of humanity sinking ever deeper into the sticky slime of slavery. The tragedy of New Orleans illustrated one phase of the calamity. While as to the individual, his position might be gauged by the case of my own cousin in Florida, who quite seriously believed that God had sunk the *Titanic* to rebuke the presumption of the builders, of the pitifully comic worship of the weakly megalomaniac at the White House, and of the moral and mental level of such people as I met in the Masonic lodges whose gambols I have described in a previous chapter.

Hope died in my heart. There was not one glimmer of light on the horizon anywhere. It seemed to me an obscene mockery to be called a Magus. I must have been afflicted by "lust of result"; at least it came to this, that I felt that I could not go on with my work. On every side the wizened witches of religion and morality were shrill in celebration of their obscene Sabbath. I felt that I had not only failed, but that it was little short of lunacy to imagine that I could ever make the slightest impression upon the monstrous mass of misery which was soaking through the very spine of mankind. My faith failed me; I made a gesture of despair; I committed spiritual suicide, I closed my Magical Record and refused to write. "If the Masters want me to do their Work," said I, "let them come forward and call me."

This action is the only of my life of which I am really ashamed. I should not have surrendered while there was breath in my body. Well, perhaps it was not altogether a surrender; but it was at least a desperate appeal of anguish.

The penalty of my momentary lapse was frightful. Its effects are still observable today. The subject is really too painful to discuss at length. I need say no more than this: that my lack of confidence in the Secret Chiefs recoiled on myself. (In Magick, of course, the punishment always fits the crime.) At the same time, the Secret Chiefs themselves had made no mistake. They knew perfectly well what was my breaking strain and they deliberately pushed me beyond my limit for several excellent reasons. They wanted me to know the extent of my capacity to endure; and thereby, of course, to increase that capacity in the future by showing me that even when I thought I had broken the chain it held by invisible links as firmly as ever and was, in fact, unbreakable; for it is an essential element of my being to be pledged to the performance of the Great Work. They also taught me by this means the consequences of any such error; and this has been very useful to me in dealing with those who may be in danger of making a similar

blunder. The penalty itself was also the means of arranging events in such a way as to be of service to me in subsequent initiation.

I don't know whether I thought the world would come to an end, because I chose to turn nasty — but I was certainly very much annoyed to find that, as in the case of the great Lord Cardinal, when he had finished cursing “nobody seemed one penny the worse”. The Secret Chiefs were to all appearance entirely unconcerned at what I had done. Like my own Blind Prophet, I had pulled down the pillars on which I supposed the temple to be supported, but he at least succeeded in crushing himself, and I had not even done that!

What happened was in fact extremely curious. Stevenson observes that when a Magi is cashiered, he does not fall to be a rural dean or words to that effect. I found myself, like Othello, with my occupation gone. I might not be able to perform the task of a Magus, but there was certainly nothing else for me to do. I had no remorse, not so much as a qualm of conscience. The Secret Chiefs kept silent. And I found that after a fortnight or so I simply could not stand it any longer. I felt more than a little like a naughty dog, but there was simply nothing to be done but to crawl back with my tail between my legs, and I remember with somewhat shamefaced amusement, that I had a sort of hope that I had escaped notice.

The situation had not in any way changed; when I reopened my Magical Record I did so entirely without hope of any kind; in fact, perhaps the best way to express the situation is that my misdemeanour had served to purge me of the “lust of result”. But as for having escaped notice, if I had really harboured any delusions on that point, my mind was completely disillusioned in the first eleven seconds.

I said to myself that the obvious first step was to invoke Mercury. I instantly found myself, with a little internal laugh simmering in my solar plexus, saying, “But I am Mercury.” The suppressed chuckle was cut short suddenly by that feeling akin to alarm which a man often feels when he is sitting up late at night enjoying a book, and is suddenly reminded, perhaps by some slight noise, of some serious matter; an unexpected visitor, can it be, outside his door? For I was aware that there was something more in what I was saying to myself than its plain implication, and it came to me by some inscrutable instinct to couch the idea otherwise. *Mercurius sum*” I murmured, and now the unheard voice, not so loud as a whisper yet more compelling than a burst of thunder, told me without the use of language, “No, that isn't it, say it in Greek.” *Epsilon rho mu eta sigma epsilon iota mu iota*, I affirmed solemnly, and knew immediately that I had done what was required of me, yet wondering almost contemptuously what was the object of the

translation, and then, far more rapidly than I could have discovered by conscious calculation, I knew that *Ερμησειμι* had the numerical value of 418, the Magical Formula of the Aeon. At the very first moment of resuming communication with my soul, the Secret Chiefs had given me an indubitable token of their existence, of their vigilant guardianship, by communicating Their password, so to speak, in this cipher. My spirit leapt with joy to be reassured once more by this superbly simple means, this exquisitely neat and convincing language; yet stark shame savaged me. How could even such a mule of a mind as mine have been so obstinate to resist such perfect control? How could I ever have been such a coward as to lose my courage even for a moment, seeing that year after year the Secret Chiefs had never failed me? I had never despised myself so deeply. But the very sharpness of my scorn had also its use. It guaranteed me forever against a repetition of any such collapse. I did not ask for any further token; I did not even form resolutions, or so much as ask for instruction. I simply became alive to the fact that I was a Magus, with every implication possible, and that I should infallibly perform whatever tasks might be given me. I even began to understand that the actual absence of any task was evidence that my present conditions were essential to the Great Work; that my apparent impotence was part of the plan of the Secret Chiefs. I had been childishly petulant in wanting to bathe in "Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus", and thinking myself insulted by being told that the petty trickle of Jordan, a stream that did not even lead to the ocean, would suffice to cleanse my limbs of leprosy. Somehow or other, the ghastly situation in which I found myself, the stagnation of my career and the paralysis of my powers were essential to my proper progress. I ceased to fret about the future, as to protest against the present. I took everything as it came almost without comment, confident that at the right moment I should find myself in the right position to do what was right.

Having witnessed the bedevilment of New Orleans, I was sent to Titusville, Florida, to complete my contemplation of the unspeakable degradation of humanity which is constantly being wrought by Christianity and commerce. I saw my cousin Lawrence, as decent a lad as one could wish to see, spiritually stunted and corrupted in every way by savage superstition; his wife, hardly turned thirty, a wrinkled hag of sixty, with no idea of life beyond the gnawing fear for the hereafter and the horrible pleasures of venting her spite on her neighbours and thwarting and persecuting her children; his son, deprived of every boyish amusement, driven to secret indulgence in the most wretched vices, and his sisters (one of them with a voice which would have made her a queen in any civilized capital) thwarted in every innocent aspiration, and their eyes wide open to the frightful knowledge that they could never be anything but drudges sold into the worse slavery of marriage at eighteen, and ruined old women, dead to every possibility, at twenty-five. Their constant cry was "I don't want to grow up to be like Mother!" Their

least actions were spied on, their every attempt to fit themselves by education to get out of the ghastly swamp where they sweated away their youth in conditions which made the fever and famine themselves, with which they were familiar, more bearable than the malignant tyranny of the people to whom the very crocodiles might have served as a reproach and an inspiration.

From this hell of ignorance and family life I was removed to a very different place of punishment. I was to have a view of New York as it must appear to the average stranger, to all such of its inhabitants (these must constitute a very considerable percentage) who have not established business and social connections. It is striking evidence of the ability of the Secret Chiefs to arrange the conditions of an initiation that such an experience was possible for me; for, by this time, I was pretty well-known in the city in very varied sets, and as it happened, I had under my hand as good a means of making myself not only prosperous but popular, as any man could possibly wish for.

During my retirement by Lake Pasquaney I had, according to my custom when in solitude and in need of relaxation, passed the time by dealing myself hands in such games as skat, piquet and bridge. I was led to invent a new game, a variation of auction bridge, which we subsequently called "pirate bridge". This appeared to me such an improvement on the ordinary game that I thought I would introduce it to the public. I convinced the editor of *Vanity Fair* of its merits and suggested that R. F. Foster should be called in to put the rules into definite shape.

It gave me a very curious feeling, by the way, to be in such relations with a man who, twenty years before, had been the inaccessible godhead of the universe of card games to my under-graduate enthusiasm! As a matter of fact, he misunderstood one of my rules; and I think the game was spoilt in consequence. However, even as it was, *Vanity Fair* was devoting a long article every month to the subject, and I had only to wander into the appropriate circles to make myself the darling of the community. But the Secret Chiefs had it in mind that so far from doing anything of the sort, I should spend months of absolutely sickening solitude, direst poverty and impotence to take any action whatever, so that I might realize how the world feels to the very vast majority of the inhabitants of its civilized sections, to people without resources, prospects, friends or exploitable abilities. I was also to be prepared to take up a public career for the first time in my life; my previous manifestations having been of a semi-private or amateur kind.

This period was inexpressibly distressing; apart from other unpleasantnesses, my health broke down in a quite inexplicable way. There was no sa-

tisfactory diagnosis; the symptoms were confined to a spiritual and physical malaise which deprived me alike of ambition and energy. (I have good reason to suspect that this was partly due to the reaction from my experiment in reviving youth.) And there were other trials. At one time I was so poor that I had to lie on the sofa of a friend in the garret which he called his studio to have anywhere to sleep, and I really don't quite remember what I did about eating. I suppose I must have earned a few dollars now and again in one way or another.

The Chokmah-Day beginning in June saw the break-up of these conditions. A new officer appeared. The initiation had now entered upon an entirely different phase. The function of the officers was no longer to administer ordeals (I had passed the tests); they were sent as guides to lead me on a journey through the Desert to the appointed "House of the Juggler" in which a Magus symbolically lives.

The first part of the initiation had occupied thirteen Chokmah Days counting from November 3rd, 1914 to June 9th, 1917. I was able to recognize my guide. During the past days I had done much work in analysing and interpreting the mysterious events which had characterized my sojourn in America. From this time on my progress was far less unintelligible than had hitherto been the case. I was therefore not surprised when an officer appeared at about the expected date, and her physical appearance told me at once where I had got to in my journey; for the god whose place is on the Threshold of the Temple, whose function is to guard the portal of the sanctuary and introduce approved candidates to the assembled deities, is Anubis. This god is always represented with the head of a jackal. (This has sometimes been interpreted as a dog; whence the dog-headed Hermes in the mythology which the Greeks borrowed from Egypt.)

Now this guide exactly resembled a dog; not only physically but morally. She had all the canine qualities, the best and the worst, in perfection, and she certainly served to start me on my new journey. The impending section of my initiation was easy to understand. In the former I had been prevented from establishing any regular relations as a teacher or prophet with humanity. I had been prepared in solitude to become such. I was now, little by little, to enter upon my life as the Prophet of the Law of Thelema.

In July I was made the editor of *The International*, a monthly which had the distinction of being the only publication in the United States with a genuine claim to represent the best literary tradition. The editor had made the fatal mistake of prostituting its columns to political propaganda. The paper was, therefore, on the rocks. Its literary merits had been entirely forgotten in the salient fact of its pro-German tendencies. I explained elsewhere how I

came to be connected with anti-English sentiments, and part of my plan in taking over the paper was to restore it to political propriety, unknown by its backers, and also to keep close watch upon their activities, on behalf of the Department of Justice. But my main object was, of course, to obtain a medium for the proclamation of the Law.

For all practical purposes, I was in complete control of the policy of the paper; but as far as pushing it was concerned I was obliged to rely on the broken reed of merit, for it was conducted financially with short-sighted meanness. I had no idea that cheese-paring could be reduced to such a fine art. My own salary was \$20 per week, which was, at that time, little more than the wage of an unskilled stenographer, and it was a Titan task to extract as much as \$10 or the price of a lunch for a long article or story by a well-known writer. They expected me to get a cover design by a first-rate artist for five dollars and would try to cheat him or her out of it at that. I was horribly ashamed of having to cadge contributions in this way, but very proud to remember that many brilliant people seemed only too glad to give their work. They felt it an honour to support a magazine with such high standards as I introduced. One little fact illustrates the position with lurid light. Having got my article free, the least I could do was to have half a dozen copies of the number in which it appeared sent to the authors. The proprietor would countermand such instructions behind my back, not because of the cost of the paper, for there were always ample "returns", but to save the postage.

The upshot of all this was that I wrote the bulk of the paper myself, camouflaging the fact by the use of pseudonyms. After eight months I had so improved the reputation of the paper that it had become a valuable property, and it was accordingly sold to a man who was so stupid as not to know that its sole asset was myself, and so fat-headed that he thought he could run it himself. He would not even accept a contribution from me, though I offered him one out of pure kindness. He pretended to be a great friend of mine and I had not realized the dirtiness of the intrigues against me. Well, he had his way and got out just one number. As soon as people found my name absent they would not buy it. Its sudden destruction was the greatest compliment I had ever received.

During the Three Chokmah-Days of my control of the paper I devoted every energy to proclaiming the Law of Thelma in its pages both directly and indirectly.

My first important step in this direction, the thin end of the wedge, was an article *The Revival of Magick* which ran serially, ending in November. The last paragraph, a mere coxcombical flourish, though written with the quite

serious idea of indicating to some person of adequate intelligence, the direction in which to seek for a Master, provided an element in an incident of the utmost complexity. I propose to recount this in great detail, because it gives an idea of the extraordinary strength and subtlety of the proof that I am in communication with some intelligence possessing knowledge and power altogether superior to anything that we can reasonably ascribe to any human being.

This paragraph runs as follows:

"Herein is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of The Beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and three score and six."

I must now return to the feature of my initiation: for the other conditions of the incident in question are connected therewith.

After only One Chokmah-Day I was obliged to get rid of my faithful Anubis. She had been a fine friend, but her manners were such that I could not really have her about the camp. Besides this, such a journey as I was now about to undertake required an animal of greater strength and size than the dog. To take me to the oasis I required a camel; and at the beginning of the next Chokmah day I found an admirable Mehari at the door of my tent. It is to be noticed that in this part of the initiation I was in no perplexity. I understood the proper function of the officer in charge of my progress and wasted no time in discussing right relations.

In January 1918, I published a revised version of *The Message of the Master Therion* and also of *The Law of Liberty*, a pamphlet in which I uttered a panegyric upon the Law as the key to freedom and delight. (To get rid of the subject I had better mention here the other magical essays which appeared in *The International: Cocaine, The Ouija Board, Concerning Death, Pax Homnibus Bonae Voluntatis, Geomancy, Absinthe, De Thaumaturgia, Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae*. Of these, *Liber XV*, its scope and purpose, I have already described at length.) The point which I wish to bring out is that despite the constraint imposed upon me by the requirements of public taste, I succeeded in proclaiming the Law to a wide audience of selected readers, explaining its main principles and general import in straightforward language, and also in putting over a large amount of what was on the surface quite ordinary literature, but implying the Law of Thelema as the basis of right thought and conduct. In this way I managed to insinuate my message perhaps more effectively than could possibly have been done by any amount of visible argument and persuasion. *The Scrutinies of Simon Iff* are perfectly good detective stories, yet they not only show a mas-

ter of the Law as competent to solve the subtlest problems by considerations based upon the Law, but the way in which crime and unhappiness of all sorts may be traced to a breach of the Law. I show that failure to comply with it involves an internal conflict. (Note that the Fundamental principle of psychoanalysis is that neurosis is caused by failure to harmonize the elements of character.) The essence of the Law is the establishment of right relations between any two things which come into contact: the essence of such relations being "love under will". The only way to keep out of trouble is to understand and therefore to love every impression of which one becomes conscious.

Even in my political articles I make the Law of Thelema the sole basis of my articles. I apply it, in short, to every circumstance of life, securing in this way a completely coherent point of view. Most men and practically all Anglo-Saxons have an elaborate system of mental watertight compartments. One of the most important elements of the panic fear of truth in every form, the distrust of any man who seems likely to investigate things seriously, is due to the consciousness that even a superficial analysis will reveal a state of spiritual civil war whose issue it is impossible to foresee. They all pretend to be Christians, yet the injunction "Love your enemies", which by the way is really the first corollary of the Law of Thelema, is universally regarded as infinitely objectionable. I am myself in all kinds of a mess simply because I insist upon putting this into practice. I refuse to consider my enemies as irreconcilable; I take the utmost pains to understand and love them. By this means I invariably succeed sooner or later in destroying them, that is, of incorporating them into my own idea of myself. (I am liable to express this operation by saying that having slain my foe in ambush, I devour his heart and liver raw in order to fortify myself with his courage, energy and other fine qualities, and then I become very sad when I am currently quoted as a cannibal. Picturesque metaphor is not always appreciated.) I cannot make the public understand that to treat a man as an enemy in the ordinary sense of the word, to damage him in every possible way, and otherwise to disintegrate him, is simply to cut off one's nose to spite one's face. There is nothing in the universe which is not indissolubly one with every other thing; and the greatest man is he who makes no difference between any one thing and any other thing. He becomes the "chief of all" as stated in *The Book of the Law*.



## CHAPTER 127

### BOOK XI

#### CHAPTER II

We may now return to the subject of the initiation itself. Besides my work of proclaiming the Law to the profane and expounding it to the aspirant, I was set the task of analysing it in such a way as to illuminate the most advanced. During most of the winter I gave most of my spare time to the creation of literature which corresponded nobly with this three fold labour. I wrote the twelve stories *Simon Iff in America*. These were a continuation of the previous *The Scrutinies of Simon Iff*, but constructed for the most part on mere mechanical principles. I may even compare them to chess problems. The general method was to think of a situation as inexplicable as possible, then to stop up all chinks with putty, and having satisfied myself that no explanation was possible, to make a further effort and find one. I find it hard to consider this sort of thing as serious literature, and yet so ineradicable is the artistic instinct in me that the Old Adam peeps out sufficiently often to remove these stories from the category of *jeux d'esprit*. In particular, the story *Suffer the Little Children*, whose setting is in Florida as I knew it, flames so fiercely with the passion excited in me by the conditions which I found there, a passion which I cannot fairly describe as pity, scorn, disgust, indignation, or even any combination of these, that I believe this tale may stand like the broken statue of Osymandias, in the eyes of a new civilization, as a witness of the tyranny and abomination which Christians have taught us to associate with the name of Christ. It is at least an extremely accurate study of life in Florida; the accuracy is guaranteed by the acuteness of the suffering of the observer. One does not see children vivisected before one's eyes without receiving an impression, and the emotion which in ordinary cases might obfuscate and mislead the looker-on was in my case transformed into an ideal stimulant of clear-sightedness. I felt intensely that I had to have all my wits about me in order to expose the atrocity of the abominations which I was compelled to witness. The brilliance of the story is striking evidence of the fierceness of my reaction against the conditions of the backwoods life of the United States. One of the chief reasons for the inexpressible intensity of my feeling is doubtless that the nameless tortures which I saw inflicted as a mere matter of routine upon women and children as such broke open the sepulchre in which I had long since buried my own sufferings at the hands of Evangelicalism and released these fetid, noxious and malignant spectres once more to prey upon my mind.

So much for the profane. For the aspirant I wrote the book called *De Lege Libellum*, otherwise called *The Sandal*, in which I analysed the Law as the source of light, life, love and liberty, and pronounced a panegyric upon it in each of these respects successively. For sustained sublimity of prose this book perhaps ranks next to those in which my pen was definitely and authentically inspired. (The criterion of such inspiration, by the way, is that in the case of an inspired book such as *Liber VII* or *Liber LXV* I do not dare to “change as much as the style of a letter”. I show, in fact, precisely that reverence for the author which should always be observed by the mere editor, and in this case, having not only the manuscript but my memory to assist me in case of any question arising as to the text in consequence of what my earliest tutor would doubtless have considered imperfections of calligraphy, there is fortunately no reason for anxiety as to the critical perfection of the text.)

The above remarks may appear strange as a preliminary to the statement that I regarded and still regard this book *The Sandal* as essentially an exercise in technique undertaken in order to fit myself to write *Liber Aleph*, *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, which is beyond question a consummate masterpiece in its particular sphere in literature. It has always been my custom to practise with a rapier very thoroughly before fighting a duel. If occasionally these friendly bouts have resulted in a few deaths — the more the merrier!

*Liber Aleph*, *The Book of Wisdom or Folly* was intended to express the heart of my doctrine in the most deep and delicate dimensions. (Before using the word dimensions many considerations occurred to me. It is startling; that quality itself is not repugnant to its use in such a connection. Its use was followed by a discussion between myself and my cynocephalus, who was herself struck by the singularity of the word, so much so, that I had to warn her not to spell it with two d's, and my explanations, thought unsatisfactory, decided me to insert this note in the text of my autohagiography.)<sup>1</sup>

*Liber Aleph* is the most tense and intense book that I have ever composed. The thought is so concentrated and, if I may use the word, nervous, that both to write then, and to read now, involved an involves an almost intolerable strain. I remember how I used to sit at my desk night after night — it was the bitterest winter that had been known in New York for many years — but even if the central heating had been the flames of Hell itself, I doubt whether I should have been warm. Night after night I sat, all through, rigid as a corpse, and icier; the whole of my life concentrated in two spots; the small section of my brain which was occupied in the work, and my right wrist and fingers. I remember with absolute clearness that my consciousness appeared to start from a perfectly dead forearm.

The book is written in prose, yet there is a formal circumscription more imminent than anything which would have been possible in poetry. I limited myself by making a point of dealing thoroughly with a given subject in a single page. It was an acute agony, similar to that of Asana, to write, and the effort removed me so far from normal human consciousness that there was something indicibly ghastly in its unnaturalness when I got into bed in full daylight in the hope of acquiring a particle of warmth from the complacent Camel.

I may now deal thoroughly with the complex and astounding incident which I promised to describe above. The Camel was a Doctor of Pharmacy, employed in pathological analysis, and later in manufacturing perfumery. She had never had any interest in Magick or any similar study, and I had not attempted to rouse it. One weekend she was lying on a mattress on the floor smoking opium, the apparatus having been lent us by a famous Chiropractor who had bought it during a trip to Cuba, out of curiosity. I was sitting at my desk, working. To my surprised annoyance, the Camel suddenly began to have visions. I shut off my hearing in the way I have learnt to do; but after some five minutes babbling she pierced my defences by some remark concerning an egg under a palm tree. This aroused me instantly, for the last instruction given to myself and Soror Virakam was to go to the desert and look for just that thing. I saw then a kind of continuity between those visions and these. It was as if the intelligence communicating were taking up the story at the point at which it had been dropped. Of course, it might have been a mere coincidence. But that point could be easily settled by cross-examination. I began to ask questions. The Camel said that someone, whom she called "the Wizard", wished to communicate with me. I am not a spiritualist who accepts any message as of divine origin. I insist on knowing with whom I am talking, and on his showing such qualities of mind that the communication will benefit me.

Now, as it happened, I had a test question to my hand. I had taken the name Baphomet as my motto in the O.T.O. For six years and more I had tried to discover the proper way to spell this name. I knew that it must have eight letters, and also that the numerical and literal correspondences must be such as to express the meaning of the name in such a way as to confirm what scholarship had found out about it, and also to clear up those problems which archaeologists had so far failed to solve. Here, then, was an ideal test of the integrity and capacity of the Camel's Wizard. I flung the question in his face. "If you possess the superior knowledge which you claim, you can tell me how to spell Baphomet!" The Camel knew nothing of the Hebrew and little of the Greek. She had no idea that a conventional system existed by which one could check the accuracy of any given orthography. Her Wizard answered my question without hesitation. "Wrong," said I, "there must be

eight letters." "True," he answered, "there is an R at the end." The answer struck me in the midriff. One theory of the name is that it represents the words Βαφη μητεος, the baptism of wisdom; another, that it is a corruption of a title meaning "Father Mithras". Needless to say, the suffix R supported the latter theory. I added up the word as spelt by the Wizard. It totalled 729. This number had never appeared in my Cabbalistic working and therefore meant nothing to me. It however justified itself as being the cube of nine. The word χηφας, the mystic title given by Christ to Peter as the cornerstone of the Church, has this same value. So far, the Wizard had shown great qualities! He had cleared up the etymological problem and shown why the Templars should have given the name Baphomet to their so-called idol. Baphomet was Father Mithras, the cubical stone which was the corner of the Temple.

I therefore felt justified in concluding that the Wizard really possessed sufficient intelligence to make it worth my while to listen to him. I hastily recorded the dialogue to that point. My next question inquired his name. He replied "Amalantrah." I added this up. This time the result was conclusive. Its value is 729. Already he had shown me that I, in my office as Baphomet, was the rock on which the New Temple should be built, and he now identified himself with me through his own name being of equivalent value. There was however so far no link between the Order to which he belonged and the Great Order; 729 is not a significant number in the Qabbala of Thelema. But when I asked him to assign a mystic name to the Camel, he replied "Ahitha" which adds to 555, an obvious correlative with my own number in the Great Order, 666. It defined, so to speak, the function of the Camel in that Order.

Striking as were these results, I maintained my sceptical method and proceeded to apply test after test. The Wizard never made the slightest mistake. Taking his answers as a whole, he made it mathematically probably to a degree approximating certainty as closely as the most exact physical equations that he spoke with conscious knowledge.

We began a series of interviews with him. There was what I may call a permanent background to the vision. He lived in a place as definite as an address in New York, and in this place were a number of symbolic images representing myself and several other adepts associated with me in my work. The character of the vision served as a guide to my relations with these people. More especially there were three women, symbolized as three scorpions of the symbolic desert which I was crossing in my mystic journey. It is not yet clear whether I dealt with these women as I should have done. One was Eva Tanguay, the supreme artist, whom I hymned in the April *International*; one, a married woman, a Russian aristocrat in exile, and one, a maiden, to whom the Wizard gave the mystic name of Wesrun. This name

can be spelt in two ways: one adding to 333, the number of Choronzon, Dispersion, Impotence and Death; the other to 888, the number of Redemption. It seemed that it was my task to save her as Parzifal saved Kundry. But as I say, I am not clear whether I did not fail completely in my dealings with all three women. I doubt whether I trusted the Wizard as I should have done. It may be that I made "a great miss", the result of which has been to ruin my work temporarily.

Besides this regular visit to the place where the Wizard lives, it was my custom to ask his aid in the solution of any problems which occurred in the course of my regular working. On the night of February 24th, I happened to want to know whether I could use my name in the Great Order, TO MEFA ΘHPION, in conjunction with Hebrew letters. The Wizard replied, "Yes." I asked, "Shall I use the whole name or ΘHPION alone?" He answered, "ΘHPION alone." I then spent some hours in trying to transliterate ΘHPION into Hebrew in such a way as to give a number which would mean something in my general Qabbalistic scheme. I failed completely! This is very remarkable in itself, I having had twenty years' experience of the art, and the possible spellings being very numerous. Ingenuity can nearly always find a more or less satisfactory orthography for any given combination of letters. However, I was completely baffled. I gave it up as a bad job, cursing Amalantrah heartily for having made me waste my time.

On Monday morning I went to the office of the *International*. It was a "workless Monday", Dr Garwood having ordered that no office buildings should be heated on Monday for five weeks, on account of the coal famine. I stayed only a few minutes to look over my mail. On Tuesday I returned to the office, and found on my desk a letter addressed to Viereck and transferred by him to me to be answered. This letter had therefore arrived the day before and had been written in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on Saturday evening at the identical hour at which Amalantrah had told me that I could use a Hebrew spelling of Theta Eta Rho Iota Omicron Nu in my work. The writer of the letter was one Samuel A. Jacob, a designer of Syrise and similar founts of type. He was an entire stranger to anyone in the office, as to myself. His letter concluded, "Please inform your readers that I, Shmuel bar Aiwaz bie Yackou de Sherabad, have counted the number of The Beast; and it is the number of a man: Th = 400 R = 200 I = 10 V = 6 N = 50," giving the spelling ThRIVN = 666. At the exact time, therefore, when the Wizard had told me that this could be done, a stranger in a distant town was actually writing the solution which baffled me. Observe that the preparation of this was the problem in my article *The Revival of Magick* published three months earlier!

This incident in itself is sufficiently startling. On the theory that Amalantrah is what he claims to be it is quite natural and simple. Any other theory, such as coincidence, or telepathy outrages reason. But this was not all.

Besides his Americanized signature "Samuel A. Jacob", he gave his true name: "SHMUEL Bar AIWAZ bie YACKOU de SHERABAD". I could hardly believe my eyes. Till that moment I had had no idea that Aiwass was anything but an artificial name, like Ahitha. I had tried to find a spelling for it, having never seen it written except in the English in the *Book of the Law*, but only heard it. I had decided on AIVAS = 78, the number of Mezla, the influence from the highest unity, and therefore suitable enough as the title of a messenger from Him. I wrote to Mr. Jacob for the Hebrew spelling which he gave as OIVZ, whose value is 93. The import of this discovery was terrific; 93 is the value of ΘΕΛΗΜΑ, the Word of the Law proclaimed by Aiwass, and of ΑΓΑΠΗ, Love, part of the interpretation of ΘΕΛΗΜΑ. It was also that of the Lost Word of freemasonry, which I had re-discovered, thus linking up the mysteries of the O.T.O. with those of the A:A:.. 93 is also the number of the Secret Word of the Neophyte of A:A:., a word indicating symbolically the whole course of existence. It is in fact a completion of the ideas contained in the Sacred Word of the Hindus, AUM. It was to be discovered later that the Secret Key of the *Book of the Law* is the number 31, 1/3 of 93. There are three words, each of the value of 31 which represent perfectly the whole mystery of existence. That Aiwaz should have, so to speak, signed himself with His Law, was irrefutable proof of his existence.

I must add one cumulative proof which came to light only in 1923. The *Book of the Law* claims to express its ideas not by its literary meaning alone but by the actual letters of the manuscript. It had annoyed me — after the above demonstration — that in the manuscript the name was spelt AIWASS, which does not add to 93. But this year, reflecting that the *Book of the Law* is connected more with the Greek Qabbala than with the Hebrew, I transliterated AIWASS into Greek off-hand. Its value is 418! and this is the number of the Magical Formula of the Aeon. It represents the practice of the Book as 93 does the theory. It is now evident with what inconceivable ingenuity AIWAZ has arranged his expression. He is not content to give one spelling of his name, however potent; he gives two which taken together are not merely twice as significant as either alone, but more so, in a degree which is beyond me to calculate.

This incident with its many ramifications is perhaps the most remarkable thing that has ever happened to anybody. I was not only shown the knowledge and ingenuity required to choose a name for himself which will sum up my life and thought both in the past and in the future as also to include explanations of historical mysteries; but he seems able to arrange for people

that I never hear of to exercise an intimate influence on my life at the exact moment when the effect will give the demonstration its highest possible dramatic value. Suppose, for instance, that Jacob had sent me his solution within a month of the publication of the problem. It would have been no more than an interesting contribution to the Qabbala. It is necessary to obtain a comprehensive idea of the facts of the relationship between him and myself as a whole in order to grasp the subtlety and strength of his plan and its execution.

Any man who studies the circumstances with intelligence will be forced to the hypothesis as to the nature of AIWAZ which I myself entertain. It is true that this hypothesis involves difficulties of its own; it implies a magical theory of the Universe altogether incompatible with materialism. One might call it an Arabian Nights Theory. But one must dismiss one's prejudice from the start. This theory, however antecedently absurd, is constantly bearing fruit of new facts and new discoveries. This after all is what science requires. I have already given a number of other instances where fresh facts confirm the old. For myself in particular the ultimate fact is that I have been able to govern my life quite satisfactorily year after year on the basis of this theory. My life, interpreted by it, is intelligible, and when guided by it, successful. Whenever I do anything reasonable I come a cropper, and if I were to attempt to explain the events of my career in any other way, I should be confronted by a piled chaos of utterly unintelligible absurdities.

The sale of the *International* left me stranded. War hysteria had reached its height. The British would not employ me, failing to understand or to trust. The Department of Justice, though warmly appreciative of my work, did not offer to pay me for it, nor did I ask them to do so. My stupid kingliness still stood in my way. I should have felt dishonoured by accepting payment for my patriotic service. All sources of income dried up completely. I therefore borrowed a canoe, tent and camp outfit from a friend and started up the Hudson on a Great Magical Retirement with two dollars and twenty-five cents as my total capital, no prospect of obtaining more when that was exhausted, and full confidence that the Secret Chiefs would supply my physical needs. It was my business to do Their work and Theirs to look after Their servant.

This Magical Retirement proved of critical importance. A week's paddling put me in perfect physical and mental condition. I found an ideal solitude on Oesopus Island. The Camel spent the first weekend with me, bringing me a supply of canned provisions. I began at once to work on a new translation, with *Commentary, of the Tao Teh King*. This book, one of the oldest in existence, is surely one of the wisest. But all previous translations, however scholarly, had completely failed to convey the meaning of Lao-Tze. An unini-

tiated translator is bound to meet constantly with apparently nonsensical passages. One must know what the author is likely to mean by any given phrase, and this can only be done by a man who has intimate experience of the spiritual states and magical principles set forth. Otherwise, the translator is in the position of a scholar ignorant of football who should try to translate some slangy description of a Cup tie. He will think that "wing" has something to do with a bird and be puzzled as to how it got into the game; a "hot shot" will set him thinking of the Siege of Gibraltar, and the result of his labours will be a farrago of nonsense. Alternatively, realizing the general character of the text, he will wrench every passage to suit his own ideas on the subject. No one has understood what Lao-Tze meant by either Tao or Teh. I, possessing the keys to the Universal Qabbala, and also experience of the spiritual states which Lao-Tze is discussing, was able to produce a lucid and coherent version of the classic. Those who have seen my manuscript after bitter disappointment with previous translations, have instantly recognized the sublimity and wisdom of the Chinese Master.

**1** — The content of the above passage, properly analysed, should serve as an immensely valuable indication of the methods employed by my mind. Note in particular my reliance on obscure allusion. The remark about spelling expects the reader to be instantly reminded of the story of the "Something ... Marquis of Queensberry" who, receiving the sympathetic condolences of a friend on having been mixed up with the trial of Oscar Wilde, replied that he regretted only one thing about the whole case; which was that on the libellous card, handed by him to the porter of the club, to be given to Oscar Wilde, he had spelt the word sodomite with two "d's".



## CHAPTER 128

I found that my long abstinence from Magical practices had injured my powers. I resumed elementary drill and soon got back to my old form. For one thing, my protection against mosquitoes had worn off. I spent a night motionless, offering my body to them and concentrating on the thought that they were equally divine with myself. I forced myself to love them, so that in union with them the apparent differences between us might vanish in ecstasy. I compelled my body to accept, to welcome and even to long for their bites, as being acts of love whereby I nourished their lives. In the morning, though badly bitten all over, there was no inflammation whatever; and from that time on they never bit me at all.

I soon recovered the powers of Pratyahara and Dharana. My mind became still; the impact of impressions ceased to obsess me, I became free of the illusion of the reality of material things. All events became equally indifferent, exquisite phrases in an eternal symphony. (Imagine listening to Beethoven with the prepossession that C is a good note and F a bad one; yet this is exactly the stand point from which all uninitiates contemplate the universe. Obviously, they miss the music.)

I soon began to acquire the Magical Memory to recall my past incarnations. I refuse to assert any theory of what this really means. All memory is a re-awakening of ancient impressions. What I was really doing was penetrating to the deeper layers of my unconscious self. When, therefore, I remember my life as Cagliostro or Pope Alexander the Sixth, I am quite willing to interpret the experience as a dreamlike imagination, a dramatization of certain deeper elements in my character. I may, however, argue on the other side, that my present life is, almost equally, an artistic representation of my nature. There are also some fairly strong arguments for the actuality of such memories. Events in the past sometimes throw light on the present. For instance, when I came to remember what had happened to me in Rome, Naples and Paris, I understood certain obscure instinctive feelings about those cities which had always been unintelligible,<sup>1</sup> and were in direct conflict with my conscious ideas about them. I will summarize as follows:

Shortly before the time of Mohammed, I was present at a Council of Masters. The critical question was the policy to be adopted in order to help humanity. A small minority, including myself, was hot for positive action; definite movements were to be made; in particular, the mysteries were to be revealed. The majority, especially the Asiatic Masters, refused even to discuss the proposal. They contemptuously abstained from voting, as if to say, "Let the youngsters learn their lesson." My party therefore carried the day

and various Masters were appointed to undertake different adventures. Mohammed, Luther, Adam Weishaupt, the man we knew as Christian Rosencreutz, and many servants of science, were thus chosen. Some of these movements have succeeded more or less; some have failed entirely. In my present incarnation I have met several such Masters, who, having failed, are now building up again their shattered forces. My own task was to bring Oriental Wisdom to Europe and to restore Paganism in a purer form. I was involved in the catastrophe which overtook the Order of the Temple, and as Alexander the Sixth, failed in my task of crowning the Renaissance, through not being wholly purified in my personal character. (An appropriately trivial spiritual error may externalize as the most appalling crimes.)

Before this Council, there is a long gap of complete amnesia. I merely remember that I was Ko Hsuen, a disciple of Lao-Tze, the author of the *King Khang King*, the classic of Purity; which, by the way, I translated into English verse during this Retirement. All I know is that somehow or other I made a "great miss", forfeited my Mastership, and had to climb the ladder again from the bottom. It is the shame and agony of this which have prevented me from facing the memory — so far.

Almost every day I found myself in some new trance, each of course perfect in its own way, and each of a depth and sublimity which makes description impossible to attempt; yet all the time it seemed to me that each trance was no more than the letter of a word, as if some truth were being revealed which could only be expressed piecemeal. The crown of these trances was an angelic vision such as I had never before enjoyed. The communication was perfect on all planes of being; and this completeness conferred a sense of reality altogether beyond previous experience. It was the difference between meeting a friend face to face, and trying to reconstruct his personality from letters, photographs, gramophone records, memories and cherished flowers.

It may be that this vision was granted me in order to fortify me for the climax of my Retirement. On September 5th, my record contains the following entry.

I feel that I am more likely to be able to convey some hint of the colossal character of this revelation if I simply quote the broken staggering words in which I wrote it down at the time. As will be seen, I did not dare to write what it actually was, but I remember at this moment how I had to invoke the deep-seated habit of years to get courage to drag myself to my diary. I felt like a soldier wounded to death, scrawling in his own blood the horrifyingly disastrous information which he has lost his life in seeking.

"5:00 p.m. The meditation of this afternoon resulted in an initiation so stupendous that I dare not hint at its Word. It is the supreme secret of a Magus, and it is so awful that I tremble even now — two hours later and more — 2:20 p.m. was the time — as I write concerning it. In a single instant I had the Key to the whole of the Chinese wisdom. In the light — momentary glimpse as it was — of this truth, all systems of religion and philosophy became absolutely puerile. Even the Law appears no more than a curious incident. I remain absolutely bewildered, blinded, knowing what blasting image lies in this shrine. It baffles me to understand how my brother Magi, knowing this, ever went on.

"I had only one foreshadowing of this Vision of Jupiter — for so I may call it! — and that was a Samadhi which momentarily interrupted my concentration of Sammasati. This can only be described vaguely by saying that I obtained a reconciliation of two contraries of which "There is a discrimination between good and evil" is one.

"This experience has shaken me utterly; it has been a terrible struggle to force myself to this record. The secret comes along the Path of Aleph to Chokmah. I could write it plainly in a few words of one syllable, and most people would not even notice it.<sup>2</sup> But it has might to hurl every Master of the Temple into the Abyss, and to fling every adept of the Rose Cross down to the Qliphoth. No wonder One said that the Book T was in ashes in the Urn of a Magus! I can't see at all how it will affect me at present. Even the Way of the Tao looks idiotic — but then of course that's what it is! So I suppose that's it, all right. And its freedom, in an utterly fascinating and appalling sense, is beyond my fiercest conception."

An experience of this intensity demands a period of repose, no less than a boat race or any other form of intense effort. The adepts have always insisted on due preparation for any initiation. As the *Book of the Law* says, ". . . Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy." I accordingly broke up my camp after a few days' holiday from magical work, and returned to New York.

The next period is strangely confused. It was as if I were left in the Desert with no idea of direction and surrounded by a series of mirages. Innumerable people came into my life and passed out again, without leaving any trace.

The fact was that none of the people appointed by Amalantrah to various tasks were willing to undertake them. It may well be that this was due to a lack of real faith on my part. The communications from the Wizard had become confused and even contradictory. I had failed to understand his plan

and to acquiesce unreservedly in it. This weakness of mine naturally reacted on the other people concerned.

Only one clear duty lay before me. The Five years of Silence which were to follow the publication of No. 10 of the *Equinox* were at an end. I therefore devoted myself to planning another ten numbers, beginning at the spring *Equinox* of 1919. I had an immense amount of material ready for publication. The one critical omission was *The Comment on the Book of the Law*, which I had constantly shirked re-writing. I pulled myself together and went down to Atlantic City for the purpose of getting this done. My idea was to write it inspirationally; which is correct. The only drawback was that the inspiration was forced and feeble. I know now that the writing of this Comment must be a definite miracle, parallel with that of the production of the Book itself.

I stumbled on through the Desert somehow. Even to-day I hardly understand the object of the ordeals of this journey. At the beginning of the next Chokmah-Day I found myself on the edge of the oasis which I was to make my home. I had identified myself with the god of my Grade of Magus, Tahuti, the Lord of the Word, and I was invested accordingly with the attributes proper to him. The last of the officers in my initiation was the Ape of Thoth. This creature translates into action his thought or, in other words, is the instrument through which his idea assumes sensible form. This Ape became my permanent companion. At this moment, she is beside me in a bathing house at Marsa Plage near Tunis, writing these words.

Tahuti being the Lord of Speech, I published No. 1 of Volume III of the *Equinox* on March 21st, 1919. I arranged for it to contain something like a complete programme of my proposed Operation to initiate, emancipate and relieve mankind.

The first item is a *Hymn to Pan*, which I believe to be the most powerful enchantment ever written. Next, after explaining the general idea of my work, I issued a curriculum, classifying the books whose study should give a complete intellectual knowledge of all subjects which bear on the Great Work.

The book of *The Sandal* presents a lyrical interpretation of the *Law of Thelema*. This is followed by the first installment of *The Magical Record of my Son*, Frater O.I.V.V.I.O., to show how in actual practice a fairly normal man came to attain to be a Master of the Temple. Every pertinent detail of his career from the start is clearly set forth.

The latter half of the volume is devoted to explaining the principles of the O.T.O. showing how men and women may work in groups publicly, and giving outlines of a social system free from the disastrous defects of our present civilization. I republished the *Ritual of the Gnostic Mass* in this section. The supplement consists of Blavatsky's *Voice in the Silence* with a very full Commentary. My purpose was to bring back Theosophists to the true principles of their founder; principles which have been shamefully abandoned by her successors — to the utter ruin of the Society, either as a Nursery for Adepts or as a civilizing influence in barbaric Christendom.

During this winter, I was approached by a powerful body of High Grade Freemasons in Detroit. They knew only too well that their Order was at the best tomfoolery; and, for the rest, anything all the way down to fraud and blackmail. They desired the light which they knew me to possess. I offered to re-organize Freemasonry, to replace the pompositives and banalities of their ragbag of rituals by a simple, lucid and coherent system.

I soon saw that any effort would be a waste of time. Even their compact group was torn by bitter jealousies. Their leader, for all his fine talk, had only one real desire — to communicate with his dead wife, a silly smirking society waxwork, a Pink-tea princess! Their second string was a doctor, who spent sleepless nights sweating with shame and sentimentality in an agony of anxiety as to whether it was his duty to get divorced in order to marry a white-haired spinster, half-crazy with the pain of cancer, with whom he had no sexual relation at all, but an overwhelming obsession that she was his sister-soul, his mystic mate, his psychic partner and his Ouija Wife. A third, illiterate and bigoted, was a mere spat of ignorant argument that the signs of the zodiac had somehow got mixed up, apparently owing to some confusion about the precedence of the Twelve Apostles! The only member of the group who had even a smattering of education, as we understand it in Europe, was more than half insane on the subject of sex. He had got it into his head that a secret method of managing such matters existed, the possessor of which could perform all sorts of miracles, from curing consumption to making a million dollars. He spent his life hunting for books on sexual Magick; and, knowing that I was in possession of the secret he sought, spent a whole night shivering in the corridor with his ear to the keyhole of my bedroom, in the hope of hearing something that would give him a hint. He even tried to use his own mistress to spy on me: when she came from my room, he started to browbeat and bully her into giving the minutest details of her adventure!

The best of the crowd was a young doctor who had sufficient sense to see how stupid the rest were, to disdain the bluff of the advertising adepts, and to realize that genuine magicians were necessarily gentlemen and scho-

lars. He felt himself utterly lost in the darkness of Detroit, but despaired of mending the matter by setting forth to seek the Graal without guidance. He was so fixed in doubt and distrust that even the truth, soiled by his suspicion, could not quell the whispers of the demons of denial. They persistently persuaded his shaking soul that the weeds of falsehood grew so rank that never a seed of truth might find a space to shoot. Thus, doubting the whole world, he had learnt to doubt himself. His Will was sodden with scepticism. He could never make up his mind to do anything definite. The man had many great qualities, but the dollar-snatching charlatans that pullulate in America had driven him to drift and potter. He did not even understand that he might have saved his soul by devoting himself to the shallowest quack in Chicago, daring death and damnation for the hollowest humbug that ever wrote himself Rosicrucian without knowing how to spell it. Pluck would have pulled him through in the long run; as Blake said, "if the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise."

It did not take me long to see that the real object of this gang was to exploit me. They wanted something for nothing; instead I was the only man to profit — I gained the knowledge of the astonishing variety of dirty tricks that men could play under the mask of friendship and respect.

But I was immune to the virus. I possessed not only something, but everything, and was only too eager to give it for nothing. I naturally became an object of the deepest suspicion. Unable to comprehend honour, unselfishness and generosity, my frank loyalty and royal largesse baffled their brains. They felt sure that it concealed some super-subtle scheme for swindling them or getting them into my power. They thought they knew that the more noble an action appeared, the deeper the deceit and the dirtier the design beneath it. I adhered to simple straightforward sense. I told the truth without a thought of what might happen in consequence. It was inconceivable to them that I, knowing so much, should yet be innocent. They knew me poor. It was strange indeed that I never tried to make money, or even accepted it when offered! The result of all this was that I, doing my utmost to enlighten them, deepened their darkness. I simplified and emphasized the truth; they merely floundered further into falsehood.

I tried my hardest to manifest myself, to explain my point of view, my mental methods, my morals, manners, motives and magical objectives. I merely became the more mysterious. They could never guess how I would act in any circumstances. My purpose being single, it was incomprehensible to their complex confusion of cravings. My "yes" appalled them — it was such a sinister way of saying "no"; and when I said "no" they sweated and swooned with fear of what I might mean by so satanic a way of saying "yes". I kept on smiling; I became silent; they saw me as the Sphinx. They began

to quarrel among themselves; scandal, divorce suits, bankruptcies and every sort of nastiness followed. My "son", who had lived in Detroit for some months trying to teach them the elements of sense and decency, left them to stew in the stinking soup they had cooked, and went off to Chicago. Both he and I learnt a priceless lesson in our dealings with these demoniacs. We have that to thank for the steady, quiet, natural success of his campaign in Chicago.

One cannot deal with Americans on the principles which seem inevitable in Europe. On this side of the Atlantic there is a uniform standard of education, not necessarily intellectual, but often a matter of sub-conscious racial certainty. In the New World there is no such uniform background of what I may call axiomatic assumptions. One meets people of really wide reading and deep reflection, who are yet quite ignorant of the most ordinary facts familiar to young children in Europe; facts, indeed, which hardly need to be taught. Very, very few Americans have any idea of proportion or limit. An aeroplane can fly 100 miles; it seems only a question of building one bigger to make a trip to the moon. They have no idea of what we mean by the limits of theoretical possibility. This quality makes them open to new ideas; the bigger, the better. But it leaves them at the mercy of every plausible charlatan. The silliest stuff, if smeared with a show of science, is swallowed with glee.

Again, one notable characteristic is thus expressed: "Sell your hammer and buy a horn". One often sees a placard in offices, "come in without knocking. Go out the same way." They would rather not hear unpleasant truths. What! Shoot a sleeping sentinel? Nope; rush the chloroform in case he wakes! They have learnt the psychological fact that confidence is a real asset. A man works best when he feels he is sure to succeed. A fear of failure palsies every faculty. The vogue of Christian Science, and countless cults for drawing in dollars by wishing one had them, persuading oneself that somehow or other they will arrive, scorning every success, forgetting every failure, shutting one's eyes to unpleasant facts, and interpreting every bit of good luck as a triumph beyond the power of trumpets to tell — a token of the intense interest taken by the Almighty in His favourite child — this course of conduct, though its more reasonable practitioners are ready to admit that it is rant and rubbish, is pursued as part of a calculated policy. They are ready to fool themselves in order to take advantage of the stimulating effect of optimism.

The other side of the medal is this: when any man points to any fact that shakes this opium-serenity, checks this cocaine self-assurance, that man takes a chance of a free ride out of town on a rail. The spirit of criticism is detested and dreaded. It is easy to understand why this is. The States have

been won from the wilderness by a system which demanded courage and clear sight from the pioneers; but once the trail was blazed, the rest of the work was done on a basis of credit which a European banker would consider utterly reckless gambling. Everyone, from the farmer and merchant to the manufacturer and financier, entered into a tacit agreement to bet that any given enterprise would succeed. As the natural resources were there, while luck decreed that the commonwealth should not have to face any overwhelming obstacle, the gamblers have won. It is obvious that any man in an outpost besieged by nature (such as is every new settlement outside New England, the Atlantic coast and the old settlements in the South) was really a traitor if he said, however truthfully, anything which might daunt the spirit of his comrades. Those men won out through sheer ignorance of the chances against them, stolid stupidity which blinded them to their desperate plight and bestial insensibility to the actual hardships which they had to endure. It was criminal to insist on the existence of evils for which there was no remedy.

This spirit has persisted, though its utility is past. It has become a fixed feature of the religion of the country. It was the deadliest delusion that I had to meet. Spiritual attainment, magical; development, any line of work soever whose material is subtler than the sensible world, demands (as the first condition of success) the most severe spirit of scepticism, the most scientific system of research. For immediately one becomes aware of impressions and ideas which are not subject to the criticism of sensory perception, they are inevitably influenced by the individual characteristics of the observer and the distortion is difficult to detect because, until one is very advanced indeed, one is not aware of the aberration caused by the error of the instrument. Even in the world of sense, similar troubles occur. To a man who is colour-blind, the red light is "really" green — beyond his power to make any correction, because the source of his error is in the instrument of sight itself. He might well say, "But if, as you tell me, this green lamp is red, how do I know that it is a lamp, not a tiger? I have only my eyes to depend on."

In the United States that man would be lucky to escape lynching. On the contrary he would be encouraged to insist that the light was as green as he saw it, and drive the Express past the horrid signal.

I found it impossible to persuade even the most intelligent people who came to me to take the first step — that of clearing the ground of their minds of every preconceived idea. They yearned for me to fill them up to the neck with any ridiculous rubbish that flattered their vanity, fed their folly, doped their dread of death and damnation, and inflated their idle fancies, intoxicated their inane ideals. I simply hammered away with cold common sense. I drenched them with douches of doubt. I pricked their bladders of



bluff; I tapped their dropsical sentimentality and applied a clyster of candour to the constipation of their respectability. By this simple expedient I drove them all away. I made myself enemies everywhere. The crowd of charlatans were particularly annoyed. They were eager to hail me as their master and even to give me the lion's share of the swag. It hurt them horribly when they found I would not play the game, or even take the trouble to hail them to my barn door. Every people has the prophets it deserves; the credulous cowardly ice-cream-soda idealist is best left with the illiterate illuminati, rascally Rosicrucians, magpie mediums, parrot psychics, and cockroach clairvoyants with whom they feel at home. One cannot initiate imbeciles.

My adventures in Detroit came as the climax which confirmed the conclusions I had already formed from casual conversations and correspondence with a fairly large and varied selection of would-be disciples. Only in rare individuals could I detect a trace of genuine aspiration, of the ambition to attain, either for their own sake or for that of others, in any allowable sense. They wanted more social success. Nobody seemed to have the faintest idea of what is really meant by knowledge and power. Some seemed anxious to help the progress of humanity; but here again, the wish was partly a puff-ball of pride, partly a maudlin sentiment such as one finds in servants' hall novelettes.

The ignorance of all, without exception, was simply without limit. It was rare to find a man who knew so much as the names of the most famous classics. Their ignorance was not even accessible to instruction. It was armour-plated, and adorned with a bigoted belief in the most blatant balderdash. I met the heads of four flourishing cults who claimed to be Rosicrucians. Not one of them had so much as heard of The Fama Fraternitatis or The Chymical Marriage. The most famous astrologer in the States, who makes \$50,000 a year, did not know that the solar system was essentially a disk. She thought the planets were stuck at random in the sky like so many plums in a suet pudding. In thirty years of daily use of the Ephemeris, she had never observed that Neptune takes fifteen years or so to pass through a sign of the zodiac, and told her clients that Neptune being in such and such a sign at their birth, they must possess various curious powers. When I pointed out that this applied to everyone born in three lustres, she was at first bewildered, then incredulous; and, proof being produced, angry and insulting.

These were the highest class of merchants of Magick. The majority of writers on the subject bleat on from blunder to blunder. I met no single man in the United States in five years who had any idea what Yoga actually is, much less of the metaphysical theories on which it is based. Its objects and methods were either understood so vaguely as to be a mere variation on

Sunday School sob stuff, or distorted by dreams of the dollar or the dread of disease; their information being based on some book purporting to be the secret instruction of a particularly prominent yogi, but in fact the illiterate rubbish of an unsuccessful horse doctor from Idaho who could hardly find India on the map — even if you offered him a dollar to do it.

This illiterature is distributed indiscriminately; a vast venomous vomit! There being no background of education, no standard of criticism, the reader has no means of distinguishing between the best and the worst. He has no means of forming a groundwork on which his mind might build. It is impossible for the European to understand the helplessness of these people. We have definite principles in our minds by which, consciously or unconsciously, we judge with fair correctness of things which may be in a sense entirely strange to us.

For instance, suppose that I am unable to read a single word of Russian. I am nevertheless able to get a fair general idea of the probable character of the contents of any book by applying what I may call Sherlock Holmes methods. Obviously, I might be deceived. Gogol's masterpiece might be badly printed on rotten paper and defaced with vile illustrations in order to fool me. A series of such traps would teach me to distrust my judgment.

Now, this is just the position in which the American finds himself. He has been sold so many pups that he flinches when he hears "the watchdog's honest bark". He has been told, till his ears are nigh bursting, every sort of falsehood, even a truth being exaggerated until its original nature hardly matters, on every conceivable subject. Patriots tell him that the Americans invented the steam engine, discovered the X Rays, and so on up the scale — to scientific marvels which not only have not been achieved either by Americans or others, but are theoretically grotesque. Lecturers tell him that messages have been received from Mars, or that the surface of the earth is the inside, not the outside of a sphere, sun, moon and stars, poised in the midst, as proved by building a fence into the sea in Florida! They tell him that Harold Ball Wright is a greater novelist than Thomas Hardy; that Alfred Noyes is a poet; that an American professor has found a temple in the head of the Sphinx containing cinema films of the crucifixion, and gramophone records of God's conversation with Enoch. The science department of the newspapers tell him that a doctor has found out how to tell the state of a man's health, his race, religion, and present whereabouts, from a drop of his blood, or a specimen of his signature. They tell him that there are 10,000 aeroplanes hidden in Washington, each capable of crossing the Atlantic and dropping a new poison gas so deadly that a single bomb would wipe out the population of Paris. Behind the platform, press and pulpit, perverters of truth come, the ant-like army of salesmen who carry on the glorious gospel of

flamboyant falsehood, each in its own special sphere of activity. Their superiors have prepared their path. Having listened to Senator A., and Brother B., and read the Sunday edition of C., the buyer is easily the prey of the salesman's carefully thought out and repeatedly rehearsed campaign to convince the customer of the truth of claims so staggering that a European unfamiliar with the country cannot believe that any sane salesman would commit himself to such crude, coarse, self-evident falsehoods. It is an actual fact that salesmen are drilled in dialogue. He has to open fire on a man of Type 16, with the greeting of Dialogue J. He may be expected to answer in one of, say, half a dozen ways. If he gives Answer A, the Salesman proceeds with Dialogue J-1, if Answer C, with Dialogue J-3, and so on. The possibilities are analyzed and the best continuation discussed, exactly as in an opening at Chess.

Behind the public liar, swathed in the Stars and Stripes, and his semi-public replica sporting the toga of a prospectus, buttons and charms of various vociferous Secret Societies to prove that he is a regular fellow, and his ritual of falsehood learnt by heart with variations calculated to cover all conceivable contingencies, we meet the raw material of the False Prophet; the private family-speaker-of-the-thing-which-is-not. From earliest infancy, every American citizen is trained in "make-believe". That is why *Huckleberry Finn* is the one masterpiece of character drawing that America has produced. The American is at heart acutely ashamed of his defects. His ideal of perfection is intensely dear to him, and I am the last person to blame him for refusing to admit that its attainment is impossible. But his nerves are constantly raw from realizing in his inmost heart that he is, after all, lacking in all sorts of ways. It hurts him to know that a man cannot be well dressed outside London, or a woman except in Paris. His ignorance hurts him; his social uncouthness shames him. His provincialism makes him feel at once a prisoner and a savage. He knows moreover, the utter impossibility of putting these things right. Money will cure some complaints; so he digs for the dollar. But money merely soothes the superficial soreness. I know one man who counts his millions by the score; a man of excellent taste, able to get the best from art in every form, refined, charming, conscious of his colossal power to convulse a continent if the whim should take him. Yet his life is bitter to him merely because his heart is gnawed by the rat of social inferiority. I know him well; he has everything, I have nothing; and yet that man would cheerfully give half of his fortune to be asked to dinner at a household where it would be natural for me to stroll in; a house whose threshold would shake with my sighs were I compelled to cross it and expose my cranium to the bludgeon of boredom. In one way or another practically every American is devoured by this demon of discontent, which is by no means the species which we call divine. The yearning of the poet to surpass all other singers, his rage at the resistance of the language to his rapture, have their root in

his absolute trust in and worship of himself. "If I could only express myself" he cries in anguish, "think only, the greatest poem ever written!" and even so, to the very humblest of us, the dullest ploughboy really believes himself to be a sovereign soul, unique and splendid, his life marred and his truth misunderstood by the accidents of his environment. His discontent is curable; a bit of luck, and poor young Dick would be Lord Mayor of London as he ought to be! He falls in love, this grocer's errand-boy, and knows that he has reached the height of happiness. Love wraps him in a robe whose very hem is so holy that death would avenge the touch of the profane. But the American, save in rare individual cases usually possessing pedigree, is the tortured victim of the ever-present sense that he is an inferior. This part of the penalty of his optimism. He has aimed so high, and sword so deeply that he is the impossibly impeccable piece of perfection that he has imagined, that defects which we accept smilingly in Europe as inevitable and possibly even picturesque, cut with chill cruelty to the bone of his being, vitriolize the exposed ends of his nerves. The richest and most powerful man, the deepest thinker, the most assured genius, no matter how proud he may be in the eyes of eternal justice, as in his own — suffers always what one may almost call, the consciousness of sin. The European thinks: "Would God that I were stripped of this disguise, that I might appear to all men as a king!" The American thinks: "No matter how I hide myself, the truth may out that I am unworthy."

This is the explanation of the conspiracy of optimism, of the insistence, in the case of the liar in private life whom we are analyzing, upon keeping up appearances. It explains the extravagantly Puritanical laws of which Americans boast as evidence of their lofty ideals, laws furtively broken without the slightest feeling that there is something disgraceful in itself in disloyalty to the social contract. It explains the hysterical insistence of all publicists on the superiority of America to other sections of the Milky Way; it explains the vogue of religions whose main tenet is an assertion of perfection in everything without any reference to the facts, and the practically universal agreement to emasculate Christianity by eliminating Hell. Even Roman Catholics would hardly dare to retain the lower regions in their spiritual Atlas were it not for the emphasis of the priestly assertion that damnation is reserved for the other fellow. It explains the dread of, and distaste for, any form of art or literature which bears any relation — save that of incompatibility! — to truth, since life being so wholly anguish, shame, anxiety, fear, and horror, it is mere senseless cruelty to rouse the sufferer (from the exhausted swoon in which he has found slight momentary relief) to Reality. The only Word they are willing to hear is a lie which they can — under its short-lived stimulus — pretend to believe, some alcoholic drench to persuade tam that they are fine fellows, some opiate fumes which will cloud their sight and ease their pain, or some sweet-smelling anaesthetic with vir-

tue to abate the agony of the ego which knows itself eternally inadequate to existence. Flatter us! Soothe us! Give us hope and faith! The public cries to the artist.

I cried, Like Elijah: This is no country for the poet Aleister Crowley, or the adept, To Mega Therion, whose hope to help his fellow men has this one anchor: Truth shall make you free!

**1** — Revising this chapter, in Tunis, my Ape reminded me of how much of these past lives was spent in Sicily and North Africa; and that, when my present life came to an end (of a sort; all the forces which had till then acted upon me having been worked out) I drifted quite aimlessly to that part of the world, as if my unconsciousness, its labours accomplished, had automatically turned its face towards home!

**2** — I find that I wrote it down plainly seventeen years ago! But I had no conception of its terror — one must be a Magus to get that!

## CHAPTER 129

However, now that we have been sufficiently surprised and shocked to satisfy our feeling of what is due to ourselves, we may as well realize that what in Europe is crudely called falsehood is in America a virtue without which the structure of society would collapse. Roughly speaking, they are the same size as we are; but their environment is so much more huge and hostile that it would crush them out of existence unless they persuaded themselves that they were very much bigger than we are. Our total ignorance of American conditions, our failure to understand that what we regard as fundamental truths and virtues, may be to them mere prejudices, is creating a chasm between the continents into which civilization itself is only too likely to fall.

I was simply too young, ignorant and bigoted to make any impression on the United States. The real work which I accomplished in my five years was the unconscious preparation for my real mission, which is not a matter of flags and trumpets, but of silent growth in darkness. This preparation was now practically complete. With the appearance of the cynocephalus my journey through the Desert had reached its last stage. I went on struggling for some months to get things done, not understanding that I was attempting what was not impossible but undesirable. But at least my impotence was only too evident; and I returned to Europe in December. Even at the time, I felt more or less clearly that I had come to a definite turning-place in my career. It is still difficult to interpret the next period, if only because, for one thing, it is incomplete, and for another, too close to see in proper perspective. But so far as I understand it at all, it seems as if my work were to construct a model of a new civilization to replace that which we see before our eyes reeling towards catastrophe.

For the next three years, then, I was to build, as it were, an ark of refuge, in which that which was worth saving from the Aeon of the Dying God might be in safety while the floods covered the face of the earth; and it is really not for me but for history to record and interpret the events of my life following my return to England at the end of 1919. I will only say that my main idea had been to found a community on the principles of the *Book of the Law*, to form an archetype of a new society. The main ethical principle is that each human being has his own definite object in life. He has every right to fulfil this purpose, and none to do anything else. It is the business of the community to help each of its members to achieve this aim; in consequence all rules should be made, and all questions of policy decided, by the application of this principle to the circumstances. We have thus made a clean sweep of all the rough and ready codes of convention which have characterized

past civilizations. Such codes, besides doing injustice to the individual, fail by being based on arbitrary assumptions which are not only false, but insult and damage the moral sense. Their authority rested on definitions of right and wrong which were untenable. As soon as Nietzsche and others demonstrated that fact, they lost their validity. The result has been that the new generation, demanding a reason for acting with ordinary decency, and refusing to be put off with fables and sophistries has drifted into anarchy. Nothing can save the world but the universal acceptance of the Law of Thelema as the sole and sufficient basis of conduct. Its truth is self-evident. It is as susceptible of the strictest mathematical demonstration as any other theorem in biology. It admits that each member of the human race is unique, sovereign and responsible only to himself. In this way it is the logical climax of the idea of democracy. Yet at the same time it is the climax of aristocracy by asserting each individual equally to be the centre of the universe. When, therefore, it comes to the question of the relations between groups, those truths whose utterance has smashed all theories of government lose their destructive qualities. The Law of Thelema does not require the individual to behave himself because God set the squire and the parson to boss him. In obeying the law of his country he is fighting for his own hand. Modern social unrest is largely due to misunderstanding of the Law of Thelema. The workman has learnt to covet motor cars and portfolios, which he was not born to have. When he gets them, he becomes still more unhappy — a fish out of water — and ruins the community into the bargain. Under the Law of Thelema, all false ideals and incongruous ambitions will be driven away as delusions. The first principle of moral education will be the biological truth that the health and happiness of a cell depends upon the fulfilment of those functions which are natural to it. Intellectual education, which is not education at all, is the basis of our present critical position. It has, so to speak, insisted on each cell becoming conscious. The result has been to make society hyper-aesthetic. Those elements which were satisfying themselves and supporting the total organism have been forced to suffer; they have been rendered conscious of their apparent inferiority to other elements. So, what between artificial anguish and false ambition for impossible attainments, they have become intensely painful to themselves and unable to perform their proper function; to their own ruin and that of the state.

The *Book of the Law* was given to mankind chiefly in order to provide it with an impeccable principle of practical politics. I regard this as more important for the moment than its function as a guide in its evolution towards conscious godhead. It is only while writing this chapter that I have come to understand the real purport of the book, and it is evident that the Secret Chiefs have prevented me from putting in the clutch, as I may say, from releasing the enormous energy of the New Aeon, until on the one hand, I had become capable of directing that energy wisely, and on the other, until civili-

zation had reached the crisis in which my interference would save the race from crashing into chaos.

For three years I have laboured to construct an Abbey of Thelema in Sicily on the principles of the Law, so that I might have experience of the problems of government. Those years have taught me how to deal with all classes of people of all ages and races. It had been practically proved to me that the intelligent application of the Law of Thelema solves all social problems, and that its violation is immediately and automatically avenged. I am now getting ready to write *The Comment on the Book of the Law* as it bade me do. I had stupidly supposed this Comment to be a scholarly exposition of the Book, an elucidation of its obscurities and a demonstration of its prae-terhuman origin. I understand at last that this idea is nonsense. The Comment must be an interpretation of the Book intelligible to the simplest minds, and as practical as the Ten Commandments. For the time is at hand when the bankruptcy of all theories of religion, all systems of government, will become obvious to all. Already we see the corruption of tsarism collapsing in the chaos of communism. We see that communism is utterly unable to put its principles into practice, being in fact a desperate despotism which is bound to break down even more completely than the system which it replaced, because of the internal conflict between its principles and its performances. We see the paralysis of parliamentary government. In Italy, for instance, those very classes who naturally respect the law and the constitution have acquiesced in the usurpation of power by the chief of a gang of banditti, simply on his promise to put an end to the insecurity of exercising power because uninspired by any principle of action sufficiently rigid to contend with circumstances.

It is evident to all serious thinkers that the only hope of saving mankind from a catastrophe so complete that the very name of civilization will perish is in the appearance of a new religion.

The Law of Thelema fulfils the necessary conditions. It is not limited by ethnological, social, religious or linguistic barriers. Its metaphysical basis is strictly scientific. Its principle is single, simple and self-evident. It does not deny human nature or demand impossible virtues. It offers to every individual the fullest satisfaction of his true aspirations; and it supplies a justification for all types of political systems beyond the criticisms which have undermined all previous theories of government. There is no need for the fraud of Divine Right or the cant of Democracy. The right of the ruler to rule depends solely upon the scientific proof of his fitness to do so, and this proof is capable of confirmation by the evidence of the experience that his measures really result in enabling each individual in his jurisdiction to fulfil his own peculiar function as freely as possible.



In many respects, no doubt, the Law of Thelema is revolutionary. It insists on the absolute sovereignty of the individual within the limits of his proper function. And this principle will be resented by all those who like to interfere with other people's business. The battle will rage most fiercely around the question of sex. Hardly any one is willing to allow others their freedom on this point. Sometimes it is a personal matter; false vanity makes men try to enslave those whom they desire. They cannot understand "There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: . . . ", and they outrage others in every way in order to obtain the outward show of affection. It is the most hideous error conceivable, yet nearly all men make it, and nine tenths of the misery caused by wrong sexual relations is due to this determination to enslave the soul of another. It seems impossible to make men see what to me is obvious; that the only love worth having or indeed worthy of the name is the spontaneous sympathy of a free soul. Social conventions which trammel love are either extensions of this stupid selfishness, or expressions of the almost universal shame which results from false ideas on the subject. Mankind must learn that the sexual instinct is in its true nature ennobling. The shocking evils which we all deplore are principally due to the perversion produced by suppressions. The feeling that it is shameful and the sense of sin cause concealment, which is ignoble, and internal conflict which creates distortion, neurosis, and ends in explosion. We deliberately produce an abscess, and wonder why it is full of pus, why it hurts, why it bursts in stench and corruption. When other physical appetites are treated in this way, we find the same phenomenon. Persuade a man that hunger is wicked, prevent him satisfying it by eating whatever food suits him best, and he soon become a crazy and dangerous brute. Murder, robbery, sedition and many meaner crimes come of the suppression of the bodily need for nourishment.

The *Book of the Law* solves the sexual problem completely. Each individual has an absolute right to satisfy his sexual instinct as is physiologically proper for him. The one injunction is to treat all such acts as sacraments. One should not eat as the brutes, but in order to enable one to do one's will. The same applies to sex. We must use every faculty to further the one object of our existence.

The sexual instinct thus freed from its bonds will no more be liable to assume monstrous shapes. Perversion will become as rare as the freaks in a dime museum.

I have insisted on this because my experience in the Abbey of Thelema demonstrated the possibility of emancipating humanity from the obsession. At first and in the case of newcomers, the familiar troubles threatened our harmony. But by sticking to the Law, by training ourselves to treat our sexual life as a strictly personal matter, we abolished jealousy, intrigue and all

the other evils usually connected with it. We eliminated quarrels, spitefulness, back-biting and the rest.

So far so good. But the Gods had a surprise in store for me. I had rather expected that by releasing and encouraging the instinct it would loom larger in our lives. The exact contrary was the case. In healthy people this instinct is not particularly predominant. The importance of the subject, its omnipresence, is due to the constant irritation set up by its suppression. We are always thinking of it, like an Anglo-Indian of his liver. In the Abbey we removed the sources of irritation, with the result that it slipped back into its proper physiological proportion, into serenity and silence. We almost forgot its existence. It began to surprise us when the sexual symbols which we had exhibited in the Abbey, so that familiarity might breed forgetfulness, excited strangers. A man who is either stimulated or shocked by an obscene photograph is just as much of an invalid as one whose mouth waters at the sight of a cookery book.

Economic relations, again, were solved by the Law. Whatever funds we had — and we experienced all conditions from absolute want of the barest necessities of life to overflowing abundance — were regarded as means to enable each of us equally to do his or her will. Whatever anyone needed in his work was provided without a moment's grudging. None of us hankered after anything unnecessary to our work. We had found out and fixed in our minds that all such possessions, however delightful as new toys, were in the long run a nuisance. Whatever is not ultimately useful is a source of distraction and anxiety. It gets in one's way. It is like having to live with someone whom one does not love. We thus got rid of that senseless envy which embitters life by filling the mind with perverse cravings for things neither good nor bad in themselves, things fruitful of pleasure and profit to the people to whom they properly belong, but a source of misery to oneself, yet desired and hugged by the foolish who have not sense enough to see that what the mass of men imagine they want on the evidence of newspapers and salesmen may bring to them selves nothing but disappointment.

We accordingly found in the Abbey that happiness and peace which comes from contentment. We each had all we wanted; and nobody made himself wretched by wanting something belonging to somebody else merely because it was in itself beautiful or convenient. It should be clear to the stupidest statesman that the economic problem can be solved on these lines, and that any other principles are wasteful as well as irrational. The world is bankrupt to-day chiefly because well-meaning philanthropists have tried to make people happy by loading them with what they believe to be benefits because they are so to themselves.

"The mind is improved by reading." We therefore insist on everyone learning to read, with the result that their minds have been unsettled, clouded, confused and filled with falsehood by cheap fiction, sensational nonsense and deliberately dishonest propaganda. We praise the dressmakers of Paris and the tailors of London till we persuade the poor to deny themselves comfort in order to imitate the leaders of fashion. The logical error is essentially this unfitness which violates the Law of Thelema.

In the Abbey each of us respected the will of the others as absolutely as they respected his. It was nobody's business to inquire what the will of another might be. And so the total energy of each of us was perfectly free to achieve its own end, sure that no one would interfere, and that he could count on the moral support of the rest to assist him. He therefore saw that in giving his own support to the Abbey he was helping himself. He did not have to be threatened with Hell or urged to be altruistic. Society has always been asked to regulate its actions either on grounds which everyone knows in his heart to be absurd, or on motives which nobody really accepts. The Law of Thelema avows and justifies selfishness; it confirms the inmost conviction of each one of us that he is the centre of the cosmos. Previous prophets have invariably tried to dodge this truth as making all social systems impossible. Now, for the first time, we can build practically every variety of social structure on this fact. All laws, customs and co-operative efforts can be constructed by the application of this principle for the conditions of environment. And all such structures will be stable, being free from the flaw which has been the bane of all previous systems. The theocracies of antiquity broke down as soon as their theory was challenged by science. Divine right met with disaster immediately that its absurdity became apparent, so that humanity will never repeat the experiment; despite the fact that in many cases the absurd axiom led to the greatest prosperity. Social systems founded upon philosophy have failed even more frightfully, for the premises of the syllogism were false. It was always implied that man as such possessed various virtues which are in reality only found in a few individuals.

In the New Aeon, each man will be a king, and his relation to the state will be determined solely by considerations of what is most to his advantage. The worker will support a strong government as his best protection from foreign aggression and seditious disturbance instead of thinking it tyrannical. Everyone, whatever his ambition, will feel that he can rely on the whole force of the State to assist him; for all ambitions alike will be respected by all, with the single proviso that they shall not tend to restrict the equal right of the rest. No man will be ashamed of himself, and so be forced into concealment and hypocrisy while at the same time having his idea distorted into monstrous shapes of disease by the pressure of public opinion.

Of course (in practice) many people, perhaps the majority, will not accept the Law of Thelema. We found that life in the Abbey with its absolute freedom was too severe a strain on those who were accustomed to depend on others. The responsibility of being truly themselves was too much for them; but sooner or later, without any action on our part, without any quarrel or ostensible reason, they found themselves ejected into their "previous condition of servitude". The *Book of the Law* anticipates this: "the slaves shall serve." The bulk of humanity, having no True Will, will find themselves powerless. It will be for us to rule them wisely. We must secure their happiness and train them for ultimate freedom by setting them tasks for which their nature fits them. In the past, the mob without will or mind have been treated without sense or scruple; a mistake socially, economically and politically, no less than from the humanitarian point of view. We must remember that each man and woman is a star, it is our duty to maintain the order of nature by seeing to it that his orbit is correctly calculated. The revolutions and catastrophes with which history is crammed are invariably due to the rulers having failed to find fitting functions for the people. The obvious result has been social discontent ending in the refusal of the cells to perform their work in the organism.

So-called education (on which countless millions are squandered with the sole result of unsettling and unfitting the vast majority of its victims for their work in the world) becomes inexpensive, efficient and profitable when the Law of Thelema dictates its principles. The very work means "leading out" of each child the faculties which he naturally possesses. The present system deliberately discourages the development of individuality and deforms minds by forcing them to perform functions for which they were not designed. In the Abbey, our plan was to watch the children to discover in what direction they wanted to develop, having given them the greatest possible variety of facts from which to choose. We helped them in every way to carry out their choice, but refrained from any efforts to persuade them to pursue any line of study, however necessary it might seem to ourselves.

Extending this principle to the world at large, my plan would be to classify children in infancy according to the subtle indications afforded by their gestures and reactions to various stimuli. Any child who showed a desire to read and write would be given every possible encouragement altogether irrespective of social and other considerations. Similar principles would apply to other activities: draughtsmanship, building, mechanics and the rest. He would be made to understand that the fulfilment of his ambitions would depend on his willing submission to discipline, the conquest of idleness and so on. But unless and until a child showed real discontent with his ignorance on any subject, we should not try to enlighten him. His lessons should be a relief; the satisfaction of a real appetite.

By this plan the resources of the State available for education would be concentrated on the development of all really promising children instead of being in the first place wasted on stuffing all alike with a smattering of knowledge and then leaving them to shift for themselves, probably in danger of moral ruin by acquiring a taste for bad fiction and shallow sedition, and in the second, of blunting the best minds by penning them with the herd.

The Abbey of Thelema has thus demonstrated practically how to cope with the three main problems of our time: sex, economics and education. We dealt with a host of minor difficulties. But the most striking phenomenon of all was that the majority of petty worries never appeared at all. It became clear that many such troubles have no real root in the facts of life, but are artificial symptoms suggested by the fundamental diseases.

My final interpretation of my five years in America may be summarized somewhat as follows. Firstly, before I was fit to take my place as the prophet of the Law of Thelema I must complete my personal initiation into the mysteries of the Grade of Magus.

Secondly, that I might understand the problems which I should later on be called upon to settle, it was necessary to bring me into intimate personal contact with the very varied conditions of mankind. Before this journey I had not even begun to understand what America meant. I ignored it, disliked it; my only idea of dealing with it was that of an ignorant nurse to smack it into propriety. It had hardly occurred to me to inquire why such poetry as that of Keats and myself was not the daily joy of Minnesota farmers. I thought it simply showed their baseness. I now understand that the bonds of brotherhood which make mankind a spiritual unity are everywhere identical, though their appearance varies so as to be unrecognizable to all but very few initiates.

I have attained to Understanding, I have made my magical model of society, and I await the moment when those who have chosen me to carry out their colossal conception summon me to stand forth before the world and execute their purpose. At this point, then, I leave my Memoirs. My individual life is ended forever. It was always a mere means of bringing the *Book of the Law* to mankind. No man yet lived whose personal adventures were worth wasting a word on. I feel a sort of shame at intruding myself in this way on the public. And yet this book will not be altogether an impudent inanity if it shows how every adventure may serve to bring about some achievement of eternal importance.

## CHAPTER 130

### BOOK XII

#### CHAPTER I

#### EPILOGUE

The last lap! I sweep into the straight. The last jump has been cleared. Nothing now between me and the winning post.

I made a rapid summary of my situation. The bronchitis and asthma, which were the symptoms of the emphyzema exacted by the God of the Mountains as the sacrifice due from whoever would approach his altars, had become a regular feature of winter. My obvious course was to dodge it by migrating to North Africa. There was no opposing argument. England was still upside down. I perceived the futility of any campaign to establish the Law there at present.

My original plan had been to join the Ape of Thoth in Switzerland where she was staying with her sister pending my arrival. But I found myself disinclined for some obscure reason to go there. I wanted to be within easy reach of London for the time being, and accordingly wired her to join me in Paris, which she did on January 11th, the first anniversary of our liaison. With her was her two-year-old son who appears in *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* as Dionysus. We were hoping to "put his nose out of joint" in February or March.

My object in staying near London was as follows.

When I left for New York, I had confided the administration of the O.T.O. to the Grand Treasurer, George MacNie Cowie, VIII°, Frater Fiat Pax, a Neophyte of A: A:. He was a man of over fifty years, the art editor of Nelson's, the publishers of Edinburgh. He was deaf and dumb. His character was unselfish and noble, his aspiration intense and sincere.

"He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust."

During the war, he wrote voluminously to keep me informed of the affairs of the Order. I had but one complaint to make of his conduct. I asked repeatedly for his accounts as treasurer and he would not send them. As time passed his letters became increasingly rabid against Germany. De-

prived of adequate verbal communication with others, he trusted the newspapers and took their frenzy for fact. I was alarmed at his attitude and referred him to the *Book of the Law*.

Cap. II, v. 60: "Therefore strike hard & low, and to hell with them, master!"

Cap. III, v. 59: "As brothers fight ye!"

and similar passages.

"Don't hate the Germans," I urged. "Love them. Keep cool in order to help them in the only way possible; by smashing them up to teach them how to behave." He only grew worse. I warned him at last that such virulent hatred would end in this going mad. And my words came true. His character changed completely; he began to intrigue against me secretly and even to rob me, or rather the Order, outright. I cannot say how far he was abetted by the solicitors of the Order but they, no less than he, evaded rendering any account of the property of the Order. I was ultimately compelled to appeal to the police. Under this pressure he sent a balance sheet. The cat was out of the bag. The Order had been systematically defrauded. Let me instance only one item. A sum of £500 was entered twice. It was the most barefaced outrage in experience. The Grand Secretary General had had the same idea. A sum of £1,000 had been entrusted to her. She realized the securities and disappeared into the unknown. As to the furniture and other assets, practically all the more valuable items had been taken out of the warehouse by Cowie and were not to be found. Cowie's insanity was made the excuse for endless delays in settling the various matters. I found myself almost penniless. My available funds scarcely sufficed to postpone starvation for more than a few weeks. It was quite impossible to seek legal redress against the thieves. I was also foolish enough to hope that Cowie might explain his actions and restore the property. (I have not yet succeeded in extracting the account from the lawyers.)

I bethought myself of Fontainebleau and took the Ape to Moret. We encamped at a charming inn, the Hotel de Bourgoyne, while looking around for a house where the ape could receive proper care when her crisis arrived.

During the Atlantic crossing she had made friends with a Provençal girl, born in Paris, who had spent some years in America as nursery governess to some first-class people; in particular a well-known ambassador. She had married and given birth to a son. Her husband being killed in an accident, she had gone back to her old work, but sickened and wearied. So she had made up her mind to return to Europe.

It struck me that the Ape ought to have a woman to look after her and I suggested her writing to this girl to join us. She brought her boy down from Paris. They gave me the shock of my life. The girl was bloodless, drooping like a thirsty flower, and she dragged her brat along listlessly, he as lifeless as she. His face was ghastly white and his limbs as a damp rag. I thrilled to the marrow with pity and made up my mind then and there to begin my work of saving mankind by bringing these two back to life.

This opportunity came right on the heels of the spiritual crisis already describes in Book Chapter .

The new current of courage and confidence was irresistible. I found a charming house at 11 bis rue de Neuville, Fontainebleau. We took it from February on. My new patients, who appear in *The Diary of A Drug Fiend* as Sister Cypris and Hermes, had joined us without any definite agreement as to the future. Hermes was in shocking shape. He whined and wailed unceasingly like a puppy in pain. He clung to his mother with pitiful helplessness and she had no idea beyond spoiling him in every way. My personality and moral fortitude soon took effect on Cypris. I made her take long walks through the forest with me, the Ape being of course unable to exert herself beyond mild exercise. Cypris regained physical health and strength rapidly with the natural result that her spirits recovered their tone. She saw me as her saviour no less than Jairus's daughter must have seen Jesus and her gratitude soon turned to an ecstasy of romantic love. It carried her beyond herself. She was almost ready to kill herself in despair at the thought of my attachment to the Ape.

One superb afternoon, sunny and spring-like — it might have been May — we had lunched at the Barbison, the wine went to our heads. After our first burst of speed, we sat down in a glade upon a bank of soft green moss and, without a preface of words, fell into each other's arms. We walked home on air and the next few days passed like a pageant of purple pleasure and passion.

And then she struck a snag. She had taken it for granted that my love for her would make me forget my friendship, cancel my obligations and abrogate my affection. She was amazed and angry to find that my attitude to the Ape had not been altered in any way whatever by my liaison with her. She supposed the conventional stupidities, cruelties and crimes were laws of Nature; not understanding the Law of Thelema and hankering after exclusive possession, she fell into a frenzy of mistrust and jealousy. It made things worse that I smilingly accepted her tantrums exactly as an alienist with the outbursts of a maniac. I refused to quarrel; my kindness, tenderness, affection and nonchalance were inexpugnable. She went from bad to worse dur-



ing the following months, but I maintained firm correctness and at last she gave up trying to drag me down to her ignoble ideal. In the depths of her despair there grew a glimmer. She began to understand that love was not necessarily accompanied by meanness, falsehood, callousness and selfishness. Beholding Beauty afar off, she staggered stumblingly up the ragged rocks towards the Light, and in the end cast off the chains of selfish lust and became a free and happy woman, as she is to-day.

“He must teach; but he may make severe the ordeals.” In her case, she had to suffer indescribably anguish to attain salvation, because her ignorance and animal appetite had usurped the throne of her soul and reigned so long unchallenged. Yet even of this came a marvel.

Her command of English was imperfect; her spelling and grammar very defective. She had read little and that little worthless. Nor had she any ambition to learn to write. I had, of course, insisted on her recording her experiences in a *Magical Diary*, and what was my amazement, on reading the first section, to find it an unsurpassed masterpiece! This ignorant untrained nursemaid had analysed herself so deeply and accurately, had dramatized her tragedy so powerfully, and had expressed her experiences in intense and emphatic language, eked out by metaphors derived from direct observation, that this record is more pitilessly truthful than Marie Bashkirtseff at her best; the stark savagery, the naked cruelty of her passions, is no less fierce than anything in *Wuthering Heights*. She had plumbed the bottomless pit of damnation and ravaged the heights of heaven with rage and rapture.

Some passages in this marvellous manuscript contain expressions which propriety declares unsuited for publication. She had no skill in polite euphemisms and, of course, no idea that her work would ever be read, save by me. In fact, she tried to destroy it on my asking to see it and I only secured it after physical struggle. We must, I fear, bow in the Temple of Rimmon to the extent of editing such passages, which I hate to do; their brutal obscenity is an essential element in her character. Should a tiger describe his sensations while eating a man, we should lose by amending his account so as to make it as elegant as that of a city banquet. I will either publish it in a country with common sense or edit it in such a way that the intelligent reader, by the use of a little imagination, will be able to reconstruct the text.

(How ridiculous and disgusting this mealy-mouthed morality is! We print Mark Twain's schoolboy smut about Sir Walter Raleigh at the court of Queen Elizabeth — it circulates under the rose among the most prominent people in society. Why balk at a masterpiece, sublime by virtue of its naked truth, and its spiritual intensity and exaltation, in every way the greatest work ever yet achieved by a woman? I say, emphatically, on my honour that I know of

nothing in the whole range of literature which compares with it for all those qualities which are the root of beauty and power, and so saying, I am mindful of my exaggerated enthusiasm about my own achievements in precisely these directions.)

## CHAPTER 131

I go back in time to Fontainebleau. The winter was superb. It rained rarely, and the sun was so strong that even in February we used to picnic in the forest and snatch an hour's sleep upon the hillside. Everything went well.

Little by little Hermes was weaned from his woes; his wail grew less continuous; he began to enjoy life as a child should. I gave him and Dionysus their first lessons in rock climbing. In two or three days they began to find the best way to tackle a crag and to use their muscles to the best advantage. The central principle of my teaching is to compel the pupil to rely on his own resources, and having thus acquired good judgment and confidence, to develop intelligent initiative. One must show them how to choose the best hand holds and foot holds, but not let them acquire the habit of looking for the teacher to tell them what to do. They must be forced to find out for themselves how to meet any possible emergency. It is important to give them from the beginning as great a variety of crags as possible; smooth slabs, rough ridges, narrow chimneys, shallow gullies, straight faces, some with ample holds that they may select the best from the abundance; scanty holds to teach them to make the best use of what scarcely suffices; sound rocks to measure their full strength; smooth faces to teach them the value of friction, and rotten or loose cliffs to exercise their judgment as to what strain they may safely put on a hold and to check a slip when it breaks suddenly away from hand or foot.

Both boys showed a great capacity for cragmanship, but their qualities were very dissimilar and gave me any amount of clues to their moral characters. The soul is one, and in whatever way it expresses itself its characteristics are invariable. Let me watch a boy climbing a cliff, or playing chess, or building sand castles, or listening to music, and I will tell you how he will act when he grows up whether to be a statesman, a soldier, a doctor, a lawyer or an artist. Hermes would look at the cliff which I asked him to climb with cool wary wisdom. He thought out every step one by one, and when he had made up his mind he would execute his plan in every detail as he worked it out. When he had made a mistake of judgment and found himself obliged to improvise, he was bewildered and frightened. At first he used to begin to cry and look round piteously for his mother. The unexpected difficulty threw him right out of his sense of reality. He lost his head and the old instinct of infancy reappeared. He never showed excitement or eagerness to climb, and after the victory never exulted in the normal fashion of children, but he was suffused with the satisfaction of having demonstrated his ability.

Hermes had nothing in common with his companion. To him a rock was almost like a living thing. His first reaction was a passionate fear, which a few successful climbs transmuted into an equally eager enthusiasm. It suggested the sexual parallel of a boy's shrinking shyness from women turning into an almost spasmodic lust to conquer them. He would tackle a cliff without considering the details, and when he came to a point which his first impetuous assaults failed to carry, he would call upon his genius to come to the rescue, and overcome the obstacle tempestuously. On reaching the top his triumph was pure ecstasy. I found it impossible to get him to use intelligence in choosing his holds. He defied the laws of mechanics. The obviously most suitable projection did not appeal to him. He made his choice at the bidding of an irrational instinct.

It is surely plain common sense and not a mystical fancy to foretell how these two boys will act in the future. Suppose they enter public life. Hermes will never be a Mohammed, nor Dionysus a Colbert. Hermes might write like J. S. Lillie, paint like Verestchavin, rival Ernest Haeckel in biology, or play chess like Qarrasch. Dionysus would rather challenge comparison with Blake, Dandin, or Bolyai, or Capablanca. One is genius, the other talent without a mixture. And I half believe that these two young boys and no others were given to me by the gods as pure example of the two extreme types, so that I might study how best to develop each to its theoretical optimum. If indeed it must be that in the first few years of life, at any rate, all children must be trained alike, the problem may be stated as the discovery of a method applicable to all. We must not stamp down, discourage or deform genius, nor must we try to obtain from talent qualities beyond his scope.

Elsewhere I have laid down the fundamental principles of early education which my experience with these two boys has led me to formulate. My first practical difficulty was to wean them from self-distrust. I had to break up the Oedipus complex. I had to destroy the false and fatal link between mother and son. A child needs a woman to look after him, no doubt, but we found that his own mother was the worst woman possible. Whenever Cypris and Hermes were together the morals of both suffered. She became hysterical with phantom anxieties and he collapsed into an invertebrate jelly quivering with querulous agitation. I trained the four little by little to treat each other as equals. I destroyed the idea of possession. When a child needed attention, I insisted on a spirit of comradeship almost manly in tone. If a wound had to be dressed there must be no slopping over of sympathy. The child must not whimper and abdicate his dignity nor the mother disgrace the dignity of her function as healer. At first I feared that habit and convention would be hard to overcome. But I was surprised how soon all four found their feet. This self-respect and respect for others made them disclaim the abject attitude which they had supposed natural and right, with this unex-

pected result: that having got rid of such false ideas as that a child was the property of its mother, in the same sense as a limb to be controlled and used without consulting its inclination; and on the child's part, that it need not face reality but run to its mother for comfort in any trouble, the psychological root of quarrelling, pestering, lying and cringing was torn up and thrown on the bonfire of self-apprehension as a sovereign soul. The boys never cried, never lied, never made themselves a nuisance and never disobeyed. We respected their rights, we conformed to the rules of the Abbey as devised for our protection, and nothing ever happened to create even five minutes' discord after this understanding had been established, which I may say roughly as having taken place by the end of 1920, nine months after the foundation of the Abbey. It was really amusing to contrast the calm certainty and inevitable ease of the five founders with the awkwardness, irritability and vacillation of newcomers.

At the end of February, the Ape had passed through the valley of the Shadow of Birth, and our household was gladdened by the addition of a tiny girl whom we named Ann Lea in honour of the great mother goddess of summer and of the Ape herself. We wanted a pet name and while discussing various suggestions when walking home from the forest, Hermes suddenly broke in, "I shall call her Poupée." This was delightfully apt and was adopted on the spot by acclamation.

The newcomer fulfilled the dearest wish of my heart. As a man only one gift would have seemed more excellent, and yet I dared not give myself over to gladness, for on the birth of the child I had inquired of the Yi King concerning her. She was symbolized by the 41st Hexagram, called Sun, which signifies diminution. My intuition, quickened by meditation upon this symbol, warned me to beware of getting grained to my love for my child, or nourishing my human hope upon her. As ever, the Yi made no error; despite every effort she never took firm hold of life. She grew feebler and frailer constantly, and in the second week of October bade us farewell.

Weak fool that I am! I would not accept the warning of the wisdom of the Yi. I set my teeth and swore that she should live. Her helplessness only inflamed my love. I clutched the broken straw of hope more desperately every day, and when at last the axe fell it was as if my own neck had been upon the block. For over a week I could not trust myself to speak. I fought my anguish in silence. The agony of my earlier bereavement came back with tenfold terror. I cannot tell why, insane as I was with grief, I escaped being tempted to revenge myself upon the gods by betraying their trust and breaking my oath of allegiance. It was indeed my most poignant pang to reflect that this was part of the price I had paid for my success in Magick. In my original oath I had pledged myself to pursue the path without withhold-

ing the minutest fraction of my earthly assets or permitting human affection to influence my actions. By this I debarred myself from using my magical power either to procure wealth or in the interests of my natural affection, and thus I was impotent to save the life of my child.

This almost mortal stroke was followed up instantly by an even more atrocious thrust, as I shall tell a little later.

In March, we began to discuss the immediate future. Various considerations decided us to send the Ape to England to stay with my aunt and see to various business details. Cypris and I and the boys were to look for a more or less permanent abode. We consulted the "Yi" with great care, asking successively whether it would be wise to settle in this place or that. The only favourable suggestion was Cefalu. I have previously told how I came to think of it as a possible headquarters.

We reached Cefalu there on the last day of March. I could not doubt that the Gods had guided our steps for finding the hotel so sordid, dirty and disgusting, I swore I would not spend a second night there. The gods rose to the occasion. A man named Giordano Giosus came round after breakfast and said he had a villa to let. Anyone who knows Italy will appreciate the magnitude of this miracle. To get the most trifling business through demands the maximum of good luck at least a month before the first move is made.

Giosus took me up the hill and lo! a villa that might have been made to order. It fulfilled all my conditions; from possessing a well of delicious water to a vast studio opening northwards. The Gods took no chances. They meant me to live there and guarded against any possible perversity on my part by planting two tall Persian nuts close to the house. They might have been the very same trees as those in the garden of the Villa Caldarazzo, which, as I have told, I had taken for a token in the days of Ab-ul-Diz. I struck a bargain on the spot, sent for the family, and the furniture with all our belongings were installed the same day. We hired a man to market, cook and clean ship; and there we were as much at home as a mummy in a pyramid, in the loveliest spot of the entire Mediterranean littoral.

A week or two later the Ape arrived, and I began to occupy myself with Magick, poetry and painting on my own account, and on theirs with a systematic training essential to establish the Law as the ethical basis of the new social order of which I intended to construct a working model from such material as the Gods might supply.

My cornerstones represented considerable diversity. The Ape was German-Swiss, with long experience of America. Cypris, French; her son's fa-

ther American, while the other boy was half English. More diverse still were the four personalities. To harmonize them should be most instructive.

I had begun to get them more or less into shape and found out the nature of the essential obstacles to perfect success by the end of June, when I went to Tunis to meet a new disciple.

Since 1918, I had been in correspondence with this lady, Jane Wolfe, of Pennsylvania Dutch stock, about my own age, by profession originally an actress, but now a star of the screen. In order to test her courage I had told her to meet me on the day of the Summer Solstice at Bou Saâda. She cabled consent and then my heart smote me. It was rather rough to ask a woman to take that uncomfortable journey to a place, which at that time of the year was frequented chiefly by the devil and the more favoured of the damned for hell on account of the heat. So I wired and wrote proposing Tunis instead. She never received this message. I stayed a fortnight in Tunis wondering where she could be. She sweated in Bou Saâda equally perplexed. In the end she decided to come to Cefalu. The Ape and I met her at Palermo and took her to the Abbey — and then the fun began!

Jane Wolfe was full of fixed ideas about America, of the regular spread-eagle stuff. ("Los Angeles was the modern Athens!!" This actual phrase is hers.) The stars and stripes stood for wisdom, virtue and truth; for spirituality, good manners, progress, civilization — you know, it goes on till somebody faints. Woodrow Wilson was the reincarnation of Jesus Christ and the Hearst newspapers the standard of literary excellence.

Her aspiration was utterly pure, unselfish and all-absorbing. She disdained to count the cost or to seek reward. But alas, in her eagerness she assumed that so long as she ran, it did not much matter which way she was going. She had fallen in with a crowd of charlatans of the vulgarest sort, sheer frauds without knowledge of any one fact about Magick and only concerned to dupe. She accordingly claimed to have received messages from several "Masters on the other side". She showed me this stuff. I have read a lot of rubbish in my life, but nothing in the same street, city, county, country or continent which would stand a moment's comparison for sheer asininity. These "masters" did not even take the trouble to invent plausible accounts of themselves; e.g., there would be a Persian guide named Schmidt and her Chinese master who issued instructions which were on the level of, and quite indistinguishable from, Sunday School exaltation. Her pet persuasion was that she was to travel eastward for three years and after some adventure with a "M. Joperal", an Englishman (the well-known Shropshire or the Essex branch of that typically English tribe), she would proceed to Japan where her

destined soul-mate was waiting to marry her, the climax being the birth of a Messiah.

Amid this steaming midden of putrefying manure, I detected rare posies. She had got two or three symbols both intelligible and indicative of initiation.

During her first few weeks at the Abbey, every day was one long battle. I hacked through her barbed wire of aggressive axioms. I forced her to confess the incongruity of her assertions. I drilled holes in her vanity and self-satisfaction. I dug her critical spirit out of its corner, and made her clean off the rust, sharpen the edge and the point, and polish the steel till it shone. When she saw it, she feared it all the more; but I forced her to grasp it and use it. At every stroke she split the skull of one of her dearest delusions and shrieked as if its destruction were her own. She dropped the sword every time my eye was off her, but I always made her pick it up and do some more damage, till at last she found out that killing falsehoods, never so smiling and so like her idea of herself, did not hurt her, but on the contrary freed her, and she also found that the harder she struck at truth the stronger it stood. So in the end, she learnt the value of the critical spirit and made it one of her regular weapons.

Besides this intellectual trouble she suffered from moral maladies of a similar sort. She had always taken for truth any assertion that sounded impressive and seemed to suit her ideas of right and wrong. She was shocked to the limit by our principles and conduct. She gazed with a dropped jaw and glassy eyes, wondering how it was that the frightful catastrophes which were bound to result did not happen. It was a little like those crofters at foyers waiting to see the wrath of God consume the aluminum works that scorned the sabbath. Was she dreaming? Were we really living, loving and laughing, healthy and happy, when, by all rules, we ought to be shrieking with agony in the madhouse, the gaol or the lock hospital! Worse still, she missed all those familiar features to be observed in even the best of families, petty jealousies, scolding, quarrelling, bickering, tyranny and the rest. Can you beat it? Being a woman of sense, it soon struck her that there must be some reason for these strange phenomena, and we took every chance to point out how in any particular case, whose circumstances would have created trouble in other communities, the strict application of the Law of Thelema provided a solution which satisfied all parties. She observed also in her own case that for the first time in her life she was really free to do what she willed. Her only trouble came from her own attempts to interfere with us in the interests of some cold-storage convention, whenever she tried to put forward some opinion or popular principle originally invented to suit medieval conditions, and so cherished through centuries as a fetish, despite its irrelevance to reality.



Let me illustrate this by one case. In her room was a sketch of a famous group in the museum of Naples. It shocked her; blinded her eyes. She could not see what it was, that is, a symphony of exquisitely harmonized lines. The subject obsessed her; whereas we, being trained to seek truth and beauty in each and every impression, saw the implication of the sketch as a secondary and quite unimportant quality. More, granting the subject to suggest the expression of a passion which might or might not be sympathetic, we could at least temper our approval or aversion by reflecting that whatever we personally might feel about it, its right to existence was absolute, exactly as we acquiesce in the horse, the tiger, the eagle and the snake as equally essential to the perfection of the Universe. But to her, perception was paralysed by emotion, and emotion was at the mercy of the idea which assailed it. She was incapable of reasoning about the sketch or even of resisting its influence as being unworthy to occupy her mind. What she thought evil was to her so terrible and irresistible that she surrendered herself to its loathed embrace without an effort, or even the faith in herself or in God that its empire might end.

This attitude is, of course, characteristic of that vast class of moral cowards, whose only remedy for evil is to remove the occasion; whether it is a glass of cognac, a piqué blue blouse or a dollar left lying about. They feel themselves helpless. Sin must follow temptation. Righteousness is only possible in the absence of an alternative. We of Thelema pursue a policy exactly contrary. We resist temptations through the moral strength and the enlightening experience which comes of making a series of systematic experiments with divers iniquities. A Few trials soon teach us that wrongdoing does not pay. We find also that as soon as the arbitrary penalties of misconduct, which society adds to the automatic reaction, are removed, and we do all in our power to mitigate the evil effects, the sting of the serpent loses its virus. It is an old saying that one sin provokes another. This is only true when the sinner, driven into a corner by the avengers, tries to escape by some desperate deed. Thus a boy robs the till to pay for his folly in gambling away his earnings, and being found out is maddened by the thought of jail, sees red and kills his employer. We should rather sterilize sin.

The sense of shame is cowardly and servile. It is based on ignorance that one is a Star. "Conscience makes cowards of us all." The man who respects himself will not act unworthily, but if we hammer into his head from infancy that most of his natural impulses are evil, we enslave his spirit. The most natural actions are done furtively. He lurks and lies. Brought up to believe that his right is wrong, he will do what he thinks wrong as easily as what he thinks right. In this way canned ethics breed crime.

Jane Wolfe soon found that we were immune from the effects alleged to follow various causes. Erotic pictures did not stimulate us sexually. Descriptions and illustrations of diseases neither disgusted nor frightened us. The girls did not dress against each other. The new hat of one aroused no envy in her friend. The most cutting criticism made no wound. I would say frankly and even brutally what I thought of this or that trait in one of the girls, and she would take it in the same spirit as a patient submits to the surgeon's knife, knowing first, that whatever I said was inspired by the wish to eliminate error, and secondly that beneath the most ruthless contempt there was absolute respect as due to a star. "If he be a King, thou canst not hurt him." The instant Jane realized that she was a sovereign soul, unique and of equal splendour to every other, she was no longer hurt by criticisms of the complexes which blasphemed her simplicity and which she had been silly enough to suppose organic functions of her essence.

So passed the summer. With autumn came calamity. I have already told of my own great sorrow. The second sword stroke was that her own inconsolable grief so prostrated the Ape that our hope to retrieve our great loss dragged its anchor. The past had perished and now the future failed us. An operation was necessary to save her own life. My faculties were utterly paralysed. I stood as if petrified in the studio, while in the next room the surgeon drew forth the dead from the living. I shall never forgive myself. I can only say that my brain was benumbed. It was dead except in one part where slowly revolved a senseless wheel of pain. Thus, although I had ether in the house, and I was competent to administer it, it never came into my mind to suggest to the surgeon to use it.

What really pulled me from the pit was the courage, wisdom, understanding and divine enlightenment of the Ape herself. Over and over again, she smote into my soul that I must understand the way of the Gods. They had sent our Poupée for their own ends, and she, having accomplished her visit, had gone on her way. One of the principal conclusions to be drawn from the ruin of our earthly joy was this. We must not look to the dead past or gamble with the unformed future; we must live wholly in the present, wholly absorbed in the Great Work, "For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result." Only so could will be pure and perfect. More grossly, we must understand that being chosen by the Gods to do Their work for the world, we must not waste our love on any one child. The race of man is our real offspring begotten by my word Thelema upon her vessel of fulfilment thereof, viz: Love. We must train up our child in the way which it should go, foreseeing every danger and providing a safeguard thereto.

By her heroic and inspired interpretation heartened, I set my feet upon my sorrow and used it to make firm my feet. I went on with my work. My

energy came back, little by little, and I was able after a time to silence the complain that continually called to my consciousness, but only in the spring did I fight my way to freedom. I had gone to Paris, and went down to Fontainebleau for fresh air and exercise, and also to make a little Magical Retirement. As soon as I sat down to look at myself, I was aware of the old wound. I knew there was only one way. I must open it up and cleanse it thoroughly. I went out northward. On my left, as I came to the city wall, was the hospital where just over a year before, the child was born. I strode fiercely forward with clenched teeth. But at the first breath of forest air the universal sorrow of nature flooded me and I broke out into strong sobbing. I refused to fool myself in any of the familiar ways. I faced it open-eyed. I felt its fullest force in every nerve. So having attained the courage to accept it, without resistance or resentment, I conquered it. I slew the fiend that had beset me. From that hour to this I have suffered no more. When memory brings it back the sorrow is as a shadow — the shadow cast by a drifting cloud upon the sea, powerless to darken it, gone swift and silent as it came, leaving no mark, and even adding beauty to the sunlit splendour of the sea by varying its values.

## CHAPTER 132

My precise motive in going to Paris eludes me. I seem to have acted upon general principles. My visit proved eventful. Firstly, I met a man named Sullivan, "a fellow almost damned with a fair wife" named Sylvia. They had been married some time and she had developed a pain in the old place. A friend of hers asked my advice. I gave it, not suspecting the object of her solicitude. The situation suddenly developed by Sylvia and myself starting trouble.

Sullivan came of the people. His brilliant brain had pulled him up to the position of "mathematical and scientific reviewer" for *The Times* and the *Athenaeum*, besides casual contributions to various papers. Absorbed in his work, he had no taste in common with Sylvia bar music, and he had begun to find it rather a nuisance to have to trail her along at his heels. He asked me point-blank to take her off his hands for a time. As in the case of Ratan Devi I was glad to oblige. He could have her back when he liked by whistling for her.

The dialogue reverted after this short digression to the subject that enthralled us — *The Book of the Law*. I astounded his science by setting forth the facts of its origin, and the evidence of its contents that the author possessed the key to several problems insoluble by any intellect hitherto incarnate. We talked day and night for a fortnight. On his part, he showed me a great many mysteries in *The Book of the Law* that I had not suspected till then. I may indeed say that more than once he asked me some questions on a subject of which I was quite ignorant, and that on searching *The Book of the Law* I discovered a satisfactory reply in a text whose meaning had escaped me through my ignorance of the subject in question.

Our conversation was uninterrupted except for the tyranny of sleep and Sylvia. She became pregnant, a complication necessitating a further brief digression. It was agreed that she should return to Cefalu with me, he to join us and work out fully the mathematical theories of *The Book of the Law* as the convenience of his editor permitted. After Sylvia's confinement, we would confer more about the proper course of action. He then went off to Mentone to bid god-speed to the girl he really loved, a woman writer who was living with one of his editors so long as her lungs would let her (they lasted till 1922). Alas for Gods whose wings are clipped by love and their feet hobbled by habit. We were to meet Sullivan at Marseilles, sailing for Palermo with or without him as his editor might permit. The few days of absence had wrecked him mentally and morally. We had no sooner sat down to lunch than he burst into a torrent of maniacal ejaculations.

All this was spouted by a whale answering to the name of "I want Sylvia back". When his breath failed, and he fell back panting like a mad dog, I remarked between mouthfuls, "Righto!" I'll have to get the cabin changed and take a few of Sylvia's things out of my trunk. I think there's nothing else, provided, of course, Sylvia wishes it." The poor man was flabbergasted and Sylvia flew into a royal rage. My contempt for him was one thing; my indifference to her quite another. But neither ran any danger of pride. They were reduced to shamefaced stammering. My cheerful calm daunted them. Sullivan, selfish and stupid, actually proposed to hurry back that night to Paris, though Sylvia was obviously fagged out with the journey of the day before, to say nothing of her having set her heart on spending a few days enjoying the beauties of the Riviera — it was her first escape from England.

On that point only did I try to influence Sullivan. He saw that I was right and grudgingly agreed to give the poor child a few days' enjoyment. With this exception I concentrated my whole energy on impressing Sullivan with the supreme importance to science of *The Book of the Law*. I further offered to prove the efficacy of its formulae by developing him within three months into a first-rate man.

I repeated my invariable epitome, "Every man and every woman is a star." "You, being a man, are therefore a star. The soul of a star is what we call genius. You are a genius. This fact is obscured either by moral complexes which enmesh it, or lack of adequate machinery to express it in terms of action." To this universal theorem must be added a rider suited to any case under consideration.

To Sullivan I explained, "You already possess a perfected machinery. Your knowledge is enormously above the average. You reason clearly and correctly. You have a fair command of English. You lack only the link between soul and sense. You admit yourself second-rate and refuse to believe in the possibility of becoming first-rate, despite my theoretical demonstration and the testimony of my previous successes. That despair is, itself, one complex which inhibits your genius. To-day you have shown me another. A mere animal appetite sharpened by a few days of starvation can wreck your intellect, sweep every decent instinct overboard and make you treat your word of honour as idle."

He had then just enough sense to understand me; but the foul fiend tore him the more terribly at the least effort of his sanity and decency to assert itself.

I saw them off by the train, very heavy at heart. I was sorry for Sylvia buried alive in a South coast village without a soul to speak to and no re-

source in herself but her music. Yet after all she did not much matter. She was one of millions in a similar plight. Also even if saved, the profit was mostly personal. The case of her husband was altogether more serious. His abject surrender to the brute was a defeat involving a whole world in the disaster. I could have made him the evangelist of Thelema; with his abilities he might have been more important in history than St. Paul. But he could never do any great work as long as he was liable to be obsessed by the body, any more than a motorist could break the record from Land's End to John o'Groats if he shied and ran off the road every time his eye was caught by a tree.

I found the Abbey in admirable order. We had a new member, a boy named Russell, whom I had known in America. When he first wrote me, he was in Annapolis, an attendant in the Naval Hospital. The boy had amazing ability, backed by exceptional energy and other moral qualities such as the Great Work, or indeed any work worth the name, requires. Out of his scanty savings he had bought a set of the *Equinox* for \$100 and several other expensive items. He grudged his time as little as his cash. He learnt by heart an astounding number of our sacred books, and when later on I asked him to compile a dictionary of Sanskrit roots for my use on a certain research, he went at it with a will and made good. As against all this, he was surly, mulish and bitterly rebellious. He raved against the injustice of being punished for breaking the regulations of the navy. I vainly showed him that when he signed on as he did of his own free will, he pledged himself to conform with the regulations and that in breaking them he blasphemed himself.

Reckless in his ardour for knowledge, he injected himself with forty grains of cocaine. He had never tried it before. All he knew was that half a grain had been known to cause death. The record of his experiment makes interesting reading. He began by trying to set a piece of glass on fire by the force of his will.

The next act was plagiarized from Samson. He hung on to a pillar while the Philistines, some half a dozen husky sailor boys, tried to pull him off. They finally managed to sit on his head and control his frantic punches and kicks. They then got surgeons on the job who pulled him through. In a couple of days he was all right again. His experiment, if intended to escape notice, failed. They hauled him before the Lord High-Muck-Amuck, who told him, with the best respects and wishes of Uncle Sam for a prosperous passage to perdition, that after a careful consideration the Navy Department had unanimously decided that they could sweep the seas clear of the White Ensign without troubling themselves to put him to the inconvenience of co-operating. Shaking the pipe-clay of Annapolis from his person, he favoured New York with a flying visit, dropped in on me, and — please could I find

him a job? I did what I could, but before I found him work, he had got the Lafayette to try him as a waiter. I thought he might be of use to my "Son" in Detroit and wrote asking him to find an opening. He did so and Russell went off.

In all he said and did, one peculiarity obtruded itself — this violent reaction against any act of authority as such, however reasonable, however much to his own advantage. When he noticed the suggestion of discipline, he became blind with rage. His mental faculties were simply snowed under. Having habitually yielded to this impulse, it became a fixed form of his mind, so that even between spasms he would brood incessantly over his wrongs. I hoped the Abbey would break up this complex. For a time he improved greatly, but in my absence the Ape, in whose hands I had left the sole authority, had very ably established a routine, adherence to which minimized the time necessary to the prosperity of the household, and thus allowed each mentor the theoretical maximum of leisure for his own chosen work. Russell rebelled. On two occasions he became, if not literally insane, at least so lost to self-control as to assault her murderously. In both cases, she cowed him by sheer moral superiority as wild beasts are supposed to shrink from the eye which is fixed fearlessly upon their fury. After my return he improved. I recall only one outbreak. My experience was the same as the Ape's. I stood up to him and made him obey, and he obeyed.

The occasion is not without interest. Frater Progradior, 1°=10<sup>□</sup> A.: A.:, and IX° O.T.O., was expected to arrive from New South Wales to spend some four months seeking initiation under my personal guidance. His age was fifty-three and his rank in both Orders such as to command the utmost respect from junior members. Apart from this, his age and the fact of his having come so far should have made Russell eager to show him all possible consideration. The question arose where he should sleep. The answer was self-evident. The only possible arrangement for many reasons was for Russell to give up his room temporarily. We gave Russell several opportunities of making the suggestion spontaneously. The propriety was as obvious to him as to anyone else. He sulked in silence. I was sorry to have to issue an order, a thing I had not done for many months, but I had to do so. Russell refused point-blank. I pointed out quite kindly the various considerations which applied. I might as well have talked to a turnip, better in fact, for a turnip's eye would not have got bloodshot, nor the eyes swollen with blood almost to bursting. He again refused violently. It was absurd, he being our guest with no claim whatever upon us. I had to say, "Out of your room by six o'clock, or out of the Abbey and you don't come back!" By six o'clock he was in his new quarters.

Alas for these men who cannot be taught the elements of common sense by any means soever. Not long afterwards some trivial incident touched the same spot. I thought he would be the better for a holiday from the Abbey. He was working so hard that his health began to make me anxious. He interpreted my suggestion as a banishment and instead of going, as I proposed, to Palermo, and putting in a month working up the interest of the people there about us, he went off to the top of the Rock without any provisions of any kind. He had taken an oath not to come down before eight days. In subsequent clauses appeared such austerities as this; not to allow water to touch his face! It was a rotten thing to do. Cypris was very fond of him and she went through agonies watching him pace to and fro on the parched sun-blistering crags like the possessed of Godara among the tombs. I refused to interfere. He was up there by no will of mine. Whenever he chose he could come down and eat and drink, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. So Cypris filled a rucksack with food and drink and dragged herself up those sweltering slopes to the ruined stone hut, where the crazed creature had made his headquarters. He refused to speak to her, but I think she got him to drink some water. He must indeed have perished for thirst otherwise.

I wish I had a copy of his Magical Record of this Retirement. It was an incoherent scrawl of furious ravings mostly aimed against the innocent Jones (Jesus Stansfield Christ was his favourite brickbat) in Chicago. I have no idea what excited such animosity. His magical work was chiefly to count the loose stones of the floor of his hut, and divine from their number the most erratic nonsense which seemed to him the sublime arcana of Grades so exalted that a mere Magus was in comparison one poor pip of a China orange to all Lombard Street and the City of London to boot. For a magical wand, he had picked up a piece of dry stick which he chewed incessantly under the impression that by so doing he was putting the affairs of the planet in shape during such moments as he could spare from adjusting the solar system and showing the Gods how to run the universe, any recalcitrant deity being ruthlessly smacked into repentance.

Cypris begged me to intervene, urging that he was irresponsible. She said she felt sure that he would come down if I wrote to him to do so. I consented. That day after lunch, as I lay half asleep on a couch by the main door, Russell rushed in. His appearance really alarmed me; unshaven, unwashed, his movements violent and jerky and his eyes rolling wildly, I should not have mistaken him for the Prince of Wales. He flung a rucksack on the floor at my feet and roared out "Aleister Crowley" in a harsh, angry, uneven growl. He then went off as suddenly and strangely as he had come. When I saw him next he was himself again, merely showing signs of exhaustion. He was tired and penitent like a naughty child who has found forgive-



ness. His final fireworks had been dramatically admirable. He had gone to the barber's to be shaved. But no sooner was he thoroughly lathered than he remembered his oath not to let water touch his face. He bolted out of the shop and stamped up the street, the foam from his face flying in all directions. He put his head down and charged through somebody's private estate, vaulted the wall at the back and spurted up the slope as if the devil were at his heels instead of merely in his heart.

This was the beginning of the end. Even after he had regained sanity in most matters, he clung to the conviction that his adventure on the Rock had initiated him to a Grade far superior to mine. I should, of course, have been only too glad if this had happened. The decaying debris of my Oedipus Complex still stinks, which stink being interpreted may be rendered in English, "How I wish I had someone to go to, a man like myself, not an angel, whose humanity would understand and sympathize with my weakness and weariness, and on whose shoulders I might shift at least a little of the responsibility which is breaking my back!"

Poor Russell tried to smother his shame by piling pride upon it. His megalomania grew on him at a frightful pace. His conscience was crushed into a pulp and his common sense scattered to the winds. He suddenly developed an entirely new defect. I had always found him truthful. He now adopted a policy of deliberate deceitfulness with the greatest subtlety. It was perfectly imbecile. He had only to say what he wanted and I should have done whatever I could to help him, whatever it was. He, however, persuaded himself that he must keep his plans dark and the final absurdity of the whole thing was that I was aware from the beginning exactly what he intended to do. Our relations ended, bar occasional correspondence, towards the end of the year, when he left us to go to Australia avowedly to help Frater Progradior in establishing the Law. However, he only stayed a short time in Sydney and went on to San Francisco, where, free from all guidance or control, he broke out into a series of spasms of which I do not know the details, and which are of little interest as being merely casual symptoms of a state of mind which I had already studied sufficiently.

I asked myself, "How now?" Has Thelema failed in this case? I have thought this over ruthlessly, but my final judgment is that the Law is not touched by these events. It seems to me beyond dispute that any conceivable code of conduct presumes implicitly that men always act on certain fundamental principles which they carry out, well or ill, within wide limits; those limits being exceeded, the man is not a man "within the meaning of the act" and the Law cease to apply to him. For instance, we feel safe in acting on the assumption that a man will not walk into a blazing house, and we make no law to punish any such action. We assume that a man always acts in

what he believes to be his own best interest. The conduct of Russell was irrational, his motive had no logical link with his actions. It is therefore impossible to imagine any formula by which to judge him.

So far, so good, but at least I failed to break up the complex which obsessed him. That is true, but I blame my inexperience and nowise the principles on which I proceed. I am not without excuse. Let me give one example to illustrate the impossibility of guiding him or even enlightening his mind. He was anxious to do certain magical work, which forms part of the task of a Grade which he had not attained. In order to devote himself to this, he proposed to neglect the work prescribed for the Grade which he actually possessed. I pointed this out, and after some show of sulks, he agreed. A day or so later, in discussing some point of magical theory, I happened to say, "I want you to understand very thoroughly what this implies." He retorted violently, "I'm not an  $8^{\circ}=3^{\square}$ ! To understand is not a part of the work of my Grade!" To that he stuck. It was useless to argue that the understanding of an  $8^{\circ}=3^{\square}$  has a technical definition, and that a child of two years old must understand the alphabet, if it is to be any use to it. Stupidities of this type were constantly coming up.

In matters like Chess, he was just as bad as he was about Magick. He begged me to teach him the game. I prescribed a system of study to be vitalized by daily practice with me over the board. For some reason which I never succeeded in grasping, he refused obstinately to follow my advice in any single point. When we played he grew steadily worse and when asked to account for this, he took up the position that nothing was to be gained by winning. He was even ass enough to quote the *Book of the Law* about lust of result. He could hardly help seeing that unless one played to win, there was no point in playing at all. Nothing moved him. He simply gave up playing. The stupidity was really disheartening. He had a fine natural ability to judge position and invent combinations. A little technical knowledge of the openings, and a systematic study of the end game which he might have acquired in a year, should have made him a first-class amateur. My worst weakness is this: I hate to see good material wasted.

So much for Russell. In brilliant contrast stands the figure of Frater Progradior.

My success with him is enough to wipe out a dozen failures and more. He was a Lancashire man of good family which had fallen into undeserved distress. As a result he had had to work with his hands from the age of nine. He had always been eager and earnest about spiritual affairs. He had begun by joining the Theosophical Society, but after seventeen years found himself unlightened in the slightest. He had then put in eleven years with the A.: A.:

but in the absence of personal guidance his progress had been slow. He arrived weary of life, despairing of truth.

I begin my training as a general rule by prescribing a few preliminary practices such as are universally beneficial. In the meantime I watch quietly for symptoms by which to determine the diagnosis. He was rather a hard case. I was puzzled. There was clearly something very wrong indeed, but I could not imagine what. Of course in my conscious self I am always stupid, but the Magus who uses me knows his job.

One afternoon we went off bathing with the Ape. I prattled as we walked quite pointlessly and just as we reached the edge of the cliff above the bay I made some casual remark which proved a winning shot. He stopped short and gasped; his eyes starting from his head. I am so stupid, let me report, that I failed to notice anything special. I was mildly surprised to see him dash down the path like a young goat, tear off his clothes, and sprint into the sea like an alarmed seal. He never spoke a word till after the swim and the return to the road. He then said with a pale face and in awed accents, "Please tell me again what you said just now?" "How the devil should I remember?" I returned courteously. He stammeringly reminded me of the subject, and of course I was able to repeat my remarks, which were nothing specially striking. He asked me to discuss the subject more fully, which I did, after which he relapsed into silence. Directly he reached the Abbey, he passed into a state of trance which lasted three whole days without a break. He then came to me looking like an incarnation of pure joy and told me what had happened. Without knowledge of his need I had unwittingly given him the key to the inmost treasury of his soul. One minute facet of truth unveiled from the matrix by the wheel of my word had let in the light. In three days he had achieved the critical initiation which had baffled him for nearly thirty years. I prescribed a Magical Retirement so that he might fix in his consciousness that lightning flash as a permanent arc-lamp. This proved a success.

My own joy was boundless. I was inspired to prepare a perfected ritual for the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, and presented him with a copy of the manuscript for use in his operation. I entitled it *Liber Samekh*. It is the most powerful and exalted of all my magical instructions. I think he was helped not a little, not only by the ritual itself, but by the feeling that I had sufficient care for him — he suffered from humility — to devote myself so passionately to making his path plain.

One result of this Retirement is astounding from the point of view of the profane. The Spirit of the Lord descended upon him and opened his eyes to a series of visions of a class far more exalted and intense and intimate than

anything he had hitherto experienced. He was inspired to write these down during their actual occurrence, and here is the marvel. His education had been quite elementary. He could neither spell nor construct his sentences correctly, nor had he command of any extended vocabulary. What, then, was my amazement to perceive in his style and originality and power of the first order. It, not less than his subject, was quite dissimilar from that of John Bunyan, and yet the suggestion of identity was undeniable. It was a kinship of soul.

Parallel with this spiritual attainment, his mental and physical powers were renewed as the eagle's. His depression vanished and was replaced by calm, deep joy, overflowing and manifest to all of us. He began to take long solitary walks across the hills and did his twenty miles a day as he had not done for a quarter of a century. We felt it as an actual bereavement when the time came for him to go back to Sydney.

## CHAPTER 133

Few jewels in my collection of freaks are more precious than Cecil Maitland. From his birth, he aroused the liveliest hopes among students of entomology; for his father, a distinguished Anglican controversialist, followed Newman and Manning into apostasy. His projects for attaining the papacy were, however, thwarted by the unscrupulous action of a charming lady, who insisted upon dragging him from the very foot of the altar to a rival sacrament pedlar, who promptly conjoined them in wedlock at the regular rates. This escapade did not escape the notice of the Vatican. The Pope was surprised into the exclamation "Tut", or its Latin equivalent. He scratched his head and muttered, "Martin Luther!" After a moment's reflection he dispatched his chamberlain for bell, book and candle; and proceeded to the magical operation against this occasion made and provided. As in the case of the Jackdraw of Rheims, the effect of the curse was to ruffle the feathers of the audacious follower after the false god Hymen. A touch of rheumatism brought matters to a climax. He rang up Harrods and ordered a supply of sackcloth and ashes. Receiving, like Job, visits of condolence from various righteous friends he besought them to intercede with the Almighty on his behalf; and as they numbered not a few influential people, with strings on the College of Cardinals, the Pope was eventually persuaded to "silence that dreadful bell", return the book to its shelf and snuff the comminatory candle. The Rev. Maitland was restored to the bosom of the Harlot of the Seven Hills; though not to the priesthood; and on the strict condition that for the future he should regard his wife as tabu. Things thus satisfactorily settled, she brought forth a man child and called his name Cecil James Alexander, rejecting with contumacy the suggested alternative Caoutchouc. He grew in stature and in favour of God and man, so far as research had hitherto been able to determine. But he was subject to amiable delusions, one of which took the sinister shape of Cacoethes Scribendi. In the Great War he joined the army and became a real "capturing". Advised of this fact, the Germans wisely refrained from entering Edinburgh. His next step was to become a dipsomaniac and lose his teeth. During this period he suffered from hydrophobia and did not wash for eighteen months. This romantic situation enflamed the virgin heart of a large, white, red-haired maggot named Mary Butts, or rather Rodker.

In the previous spasm she had rushed to the registrar the most nauseating colopter that ever came under my microscope. It was a Whitechapel Jew who proclaimed himself a poet on the strength of a few ungrammatical and incoherent ramblings, strung together and chopped at irregular intervals into lines. He used to hang about studios in the hope of cadging cigarettes and drinks. He even got into mine on one occasion, owing to a defect in the

draught excluder. Luckily the plumbing was perfect. One tug on the chain, a gush and a squeal, and I saw him no more. But somehow he squirmed out of the sewers and, as I said, obtained the official position, louse pediculosis, with Mary Butts. She washed him and dressed him, which naturally led to disenchantment, and Cecil reigned in his stead.

In 1922, they were paying the price of their outrage on morality. They were both in very bad health and very hard-pressed for money. One of their favourite amusements was playing at Magick. Idle and mentally muddled, they were attracted by all subjects which seemed to require no orderly thought or steady work. Nothing is easier than to pick up a few awe-inspiring terms and stir them into soup. It is the only way to impress those even more ignorant. They therefore came to me. With my invariable optimism, I picked out all the promising points and overlooked the faults, I promised myself that I could easily correct them. Their wretchedness kindled my pity and I invited them to spend their summer in the Abbey at Cefalu. I really believed that a month or two of simple life, free from temptations and distractions, with the quiet discipline of our regulations, might put them on the right road.

They arrived.

The very next day I got the shock of my life. I must mention first that, some time earlier, Maitland had had some sort of job mining or planting in the East. On his journey out, his ship was standing off Colombo pending quarantine inspection. He was sitting on the rail talking to a girl. Suddenly he fell backwards and was pulled into a boat by Singhalese pedlars who had no consideration for the perfectly justifiable feelings of the local sharks, or any philosophical care for the welfare of humanity.

He told this story to excuse his aversion to water. It was, however, of vital importance to his health that he should learn to swim. We went down to the Caldara alone, took off our clothes and started round the rocks. I showed him how to proceed without the slightest need of swimming, by letting the water take most of his weight, and using his hands to hang on to the large convenient knobs of rock which abound everywhere. He showed the most abject fear, but I supposed that a few minutes would give him confidence. On the contrary his terror increased and I had infinite trouble to get him to come even a couple of hundred yards. We reached the breaking point. He found a ledge, scrambled ashore and shivered. I gave up and swam back. I dressed and smoked. No sign of Captain Webb. I climbed to the top of the cliff, where I could see the whole edge. There he was like a cat on hot bricks, with all due apologies to the feline race. He had chosen to try to find an overland route, stark naked on sharp rough rocks — and there

really wasn't a way. He reached, at last, a cave, which possessed a fairly broad opening above water, so that I could throw him his sandals. He had merely to walk home on a broad flat shelf which would not have asked him to wade more than waist high. But he insisted on the most excoriating and dangerous scramble across slimy crags. An hour or so later, he finally got to his clothes. The unfortunate wretch was bleeding all over. We then walked home and he took occasion to thank me for the most unpleasant afternoon he had ever spent in his life. Even then I took the remark lightly. I could not seriously believe that he had been really in torture. It is a fixed idea in my mind that any Englishman of good blood enjoys an adventure, the rougher the better. But the spirit was not in him. Of course, I know that his father's psychology amply accounts for this abject attitude. In him the exhaustion of the stock had reached its climax. I learned later that he had already attempted suicide. He had tried to shoot himself in the heart with a revolver. One would imagine that it would have been safe to bet on his doing some damage. But no! His pistol was spiritually his twin. The bullet thought that it might hurt itself if it happened to hit a bone, so it skipped nimbly round his ribs and sought repose from the tribulations of existence in a comfortable cushion.

I soon discovered the root of his rottenness. After all, there must be a star somewhere there behind that bank of trembling fob. I worked with a will to save him. And one of the most pathetic incidents in my memory is that he came to me one morning with tears on the threshold of his eyes, and said in a quivering tenor, "I want to live!", grasped my hand, fell on his knees and broke out sobbing. I felt that I had won the fight. The root of his weakness was that the will-to-live was absent.

From that moment he began to mend. Of course, all sorts of suppressed perversities externalized, and had to be analysed and destroyed. But I had great hopes of him when he left the Abbey. Alas! it is easy to cure evil whose source is error; enlightenment restores righteousness. The misdirected energy returns to its proper course. But weakness is usually incurable; even the most hopeful cases require the discipline of years to establish habits whose inertia will protect the will from interference.

In the case of Maitland, the moment he showed the wish to become independent, the vanity of Mary Butts was wounded and her jealousy inflamed. She might have won the love of a first-rate man, but she preferred to dull the anguish of the consciousness that she was a weakling, as she admitted, by keeping in abject dependence upon her a man on whom she could look down. She accordingly did all she could to push him back into the mire of misery and self-contempt; and of course, no sooner was my influ-

ence removed, than he sipped back into the stinking slime from which I had tried to rescue him.

Less than a year later, I heard that he swallowed a bottle of poison — not even a decent poison, such as a self-respecting suicide might be expected to use. I forget the precise ingredients. I think it was some sort of disinfectant, such as is sold without restriction because legislatures had failed to imagine anyone asinine or abject enough to make it a beverage. The luck still held. I don't know whether it disinfected him, but it certainly made him as sick as a sewer. He pulled through and I am only sorry not to be able to say, in the present edition, what happened next. It would not be a bad subject for a guessing competition. Perhaps he will hang himself with a pair of Rodker's braces, and have them break at the point where his perspiration rotted them. Perhaps he will cut his throat with Mary's scissors, and have the blade snap where she had breathed on them. Perhaps he will try to drown himself after making sure that the river is dry, or toss himself off from the parapet of St. James, only to be blown back to safety by a favouring breeze.

I cannot be serious and yet I am honestly sad beyond expression whenever the man comes up in my mind. His character was charming as few other men I ever met. His talent for writing, though limited by his moral weakness to trivialities, possessed many admirable qualities. His expression was simple and effective, and his fascination undeniable. It is hard to have to think of him as fit only for the garbage man. And yet if indeed it were possible to build him up sufficiently to make him of positive value, one would have to ask oneself whether the most optimistic estimate of success would not have to be weighed against the cost in patience and perseverance and found wanting.

The great value of such men as Maitland and Neuburg to me has been to strengthen my conviction that in the absence of will-power, the most complete collection of virtues and talents is wholly worthless. Combine in one man the strength of Hercules, the beauty of Apollo, the grace of Antinos, the wisdom of Athena, the intelligence of Hermes, and every other gift of every other god, unless the anatomist is careful to supply a spine to support the structure, you will have a mollusc and not a man. You must have a fulcrum, not only to move the world, but to move a feather.

Besides our regular members we had a short visit from the two sisters of Cypris, Mimi — her twin — and Helen, nearly twenty years her senior.

Mimi was delighted. She yearned intensely to throw in her lot with us for life and yet she was inhibited by subconscious fear. The chains from civiliza-



tion clanked on her ankles and wrists. She stayed with us for a fortnight and then went back to her work with the Red Cross in the devastated districts round Soissons. But the gods had their rod in the pickle for her.

I must explain that members of the Abbey bore certain distinguishing marks. The official costume for those not entitled to the special robes of the A.: A.: was a vestment of bright blue hanging from neck to ankle with sleeves widening from shoulder to waist so that on extending the arms horizontally from the body it suggested the letter Tau. It was lined with scarlet and provided with a hood. When desired the dress was completed by a golden girdle. In addition the male members shaved the head with the exception of a single lock in the center of the forehead. The women wore bobbed hair dyed red or yellow with henna. In these customs were symbolized certain spiritual or magical affirmations. The aureole of the women was in honour of our Father the Sun, and the upstanding lock of hair worn by the men a token of worship to His viceregent in the Microcosm.

One afternoon the women were retouching their hair with henna, and Mimi took it into her head to tint her own tresses slightly with the same paste. The change was barely perceptible to any sane eye, but the moment she showed up at Soissons the horrible hags in authority pounced on the child, overwhelmed her with outrageous insults and cast her forth from their chaste company. It was an abominable abuse of power, no less than a foul-minded frenzy and a sadistic injustice. I wrote congratulating her on having achieved such a drastic demonstration of the truth of what we had told her about such people, and reminded her that she would always be welcome in the Abbey.

But now a strange obsession assailed her. During her visit I had been even more absorbed in my work than usual and had hardly exchanged a dozen words with her. I had not urged her to undertake the Great Work. On the contrary I had been specially careful to maintain an attitude of simple friendliness. Yet she found herself the prey of a mingled fear and fascination. I was constantly present in her mind. She desired passionately to live in the shadow of my personality, yet at the same time was filled with panic fear of what seemed to her a surrender of her soul. The obsession grew to insane intensity. She felt that she was not safe in France. She must escape to the ends of the earth. She would hide herself in America. The poor child never guessed that she was trying to elude herself. However, she was carried away by her fears and fled to the States, where she paid the penalty of her panic. Fate has smitten again and again, and I hope that suffering will teach her what intelligence failed to impart. I shall be very surprised if sooner or later, she does not find her True Will. For her only foes are ignorance and fear. Her heart is whole and honest.

With Helen the case was very different. I had met her in Paris early in '21, taken her to lunch at Lavenue's several times, and introduced her to some of my friends. I saw in the first few minutes that her life was one long pang. She had nothing to look back upon with pleasure or any hope for the future. Her face told the tale. The skin was dry, wrinkled and jaundiced; the thin lips were compressed with constant bitterness. Her intelligence was sufficient to tell her what was wrong. She had never known freedom. She had been robbed of her soul so that her masters might have a machine they could trust not to play any trick. The steam roller of social injustice had flattened her. Every drop of her blood had been drained by sterile servitude to soulless wealth. Yet she would not accept the way of escape that we offered so freely. Her suffering was intensified by the sight of the carefree happiness which she found in the Abbey. At the time of her visit, we happened to be particularly short of funds, and it enraged her to see that poverty was powerless to destroy our happiness or drag love from his throne in our hearts. Why couldn't we quarrel and scold like the people she was accustomed to? Envy gnawed at her liver and black bile oozed from the wounds. She began to hate us with insane intensity and the fiend fattened on the fact that her malice was impotent to make us unkind to her.

However, she succeeded at least in making herself impossible. She started a campaign of venomous falsehoods, which she knew to be such. The Ape and I had planned to go to England before she arrived, but by a series of accidents we were obliged to postpone the journey. However, in view of our plans we had given up the second house, so that when she began to try to corrupt the children I was obliged to interfere. I gave her the choice between retracting some of the more malignant lies, in which I had caught her out, or pursuing her career of crime in some more favourable environment within fifteen minutes. She had no defence. The witnesses were unanimous. Her denials and evasions were nailed to the counter with a single smack the instant they were out of her mouth. So out she went, and we gave a great gasp of relief. Yet still I felt sorry. Even such cold malignity as hers only confirmed me in compassion. In other circumstances she might have developed into a human being. My action surprised her completely. I had seemed so easy going and unobservant, so uniformly considerate and kind. When that lazy Big Lion suddenly leapt from his lair, she suffered the shock of her life. "I thought there might be something of the sort," she said, startled out of prudence, "but I didn't think it would come for a long while." She had hoped to do irreparable damage before being found out, and now she learnt, as so many before her and since, that the big lion sleeps with one eye open. Baffled and broken, her only idea was revenge. She did an amazing thing. She went to some consul in Palermo and swore to a long list of lies. She thought she could make trouble for us, though even after racking her brains for slanders she could only think of one thing which might bring

us into conflict with the law. It was an act of unspeakable vileness. Success could only mean that her sister would be utterly ruined, torn from her home and her children, and either put in prison or thrown upon the world penniless in a foreign country without resources of any kind. Having shot the poisoned arrow, she pursued the Parthian policy of putting as many thousand miles as possible between herself and her victims. Before we found out what she had done she must be safe from pursuit. It was no part of her scheme to have to confront us and be cross-examined.

Of course the whole thing fizzled out. On the one alleged breach of the law, we were raided by the Cefalu police, of course without warning. They did their duty, while, of course, well aware that they had been sent to look for a mare's nest. They behaved with charming courtesy and withdrew with many apologies for their action. We have heard from time to time of Helen. She is back on the treadmill, lonely and loveless, wearily and miserably dragging her despair through life — to call it life — down to death. Should these words come under her notice, let me assure her that we bear no ill-will, that she will always be welcome when she learns her lesson: that love is the only principle which makes life tolerable.

I gladly leave this wretched episode. The Ape and I left Cefalu for Paris early in February and took up, as usual, our abode with our friends Monsieur and Madame Bourcier, 50 rue Vavin, a few doors below the Boulevard Montparnasse near the Rotonde. I cannot let pass this occasion of expressing my affection and gratitude which these good folks have won. Their hotel has been my headquarters in Paris for over fifteen years and from the very beginning they treated me more like a son than a stranger. When people talk against the French and complain of the difficulty of getting on with them, I smile only a little at their stupidity, and all the rest at the memory of the kindness which I have received from the Bourciers.

Nor is the case unique. I confess that now and again, I have met French people without real politeness or real good feeling. I will add that the wealthy and alleged aristocratic classes are sprinkled much too thinly with individuals for whom I have any use. I find them selfish and boring. The first is the cause of the second, for the secret is that they lack faith in life; seeking self they have found an inane nullity, and being bored with themselves they naturally bore other people. But French artists, the professional classes and the much abused bourgeois are almost always delightful. What's more, you can trust them to do you a good turn when opportunity occurs. As to the peasant in the provinces, I find *La Terre* very one-sided. No doubt thrift often becomes avarice and meanness, and contact with the soil a hardening and dehumanizing influence. But if you know how to take them the right way, you will find them a pretty good sort.

I have a theory that English people find the French unsympathetic for one fundamental reason. Our neighbours and allies, from the President to the most primitive toiler, possess one quality which I have analysed at length elsewhere. They insist on refusing to fool themselves. They see no sense in pretending things are pretty when they are not. They think it stupid to dope themselves and an insult to the intelligence of others to kiss the blarney stone. The English mind is accordingly shocked. It is so fixed in the point of politeness to refuse reality.

For the first time in my life, Paris disappointed me. All the old enchantments had somehow vanished. I felt that my work lay elsewhere. London called to me. It was quite unreasonable. I had no motive for going. I had no means to go. Uneasy and undecided I got through the days as best I could.

Then suddenly Fortune gave a flick to the wheel, and I found myself in partnership with a man named Booth-Clibborn, grandson of the fanatical old Jew who revived the timbrels and dancing of Mosaic times in the London slums, applied the principles of Jesuitry, militarism, and usury to evangelical and social hysteria by dint of sheer determinism.

Clibborn, an Irish aristocrat of Norman stock, was more fanatical and sincere than his father-in-law. He eventually broke away from Salvationism, became a devotee of the prophet Dowie, and on the death of the alleged Elijah, set up in business for himself as an interpreter of the Apocalypse. His son Augustine had been outlawed by the family as a backslider, infidel and the rest. Left to shift for himself, the boy had drifted from one odd job to another, and was finally driven to prostitute himself as a dancing man. This led to a sexual mess with his partner from whose importunity he had finally fled to Paris. He cherished a pathetic belief that he was a born novelist, and with patient perseverance sweated to overcome his awkwardness of expression and sterility of idea. The divers whirlwinds of Fortune had dismayed his moral schooner and he was now living on a dole from his mistress, a highly temperamental termagant whose husband bossed several theatres on Broadway.

I liked the lad and thought I would try to rescue him. He needed stamina and self-respect. The Law of Thelema was clearly indicated as a specific. I made him face the furious female and insist on superseding her cantankerous charity by a proper contract by which she was to make him a monthly allowance for three years, repaying herself out of his fees and royalties. He had, as a matter of fact, begun to earn an occasional cheque. He had a story in *The Smart Set* that spring called "Anna Zanina", the principal character and main idea of which I thought first class. I proposed to him to develop it into a play. He agreed. We decided to seek a solitude favourable for concen-

tration at Hardelot, near Boulogne, in a delightful old inn where I had stayed before. The Ape of Thoth was in London. I wired her to meet me at Boulogne. So far there was no hitch in the proceedings. She met me at the train.

## CHAPTER 134

For some time past the City of London had amused itself by wondering mildly what could have happened to a dear old friend of theirs named Bevan. He was the head of several important concerns which, in fact, felt such dependence upon his gracious and intelligent guidance that they could hardly get on without him, especially as he had absent-mindedly packed in his portmanteau all their available assets. His absence aroused such anxiety and his speedy return was so desirable, that his friends had succeeded in interesting even Scotland Yard in the matter. Sympathetic friends all over Europe joined the rescue party and the *Daily Mail* lent its aid by publishing a photograph of the missing millionaire every day, week after week, and offered a prize of twenty-five thousand francs for information calculated to reassure the bereaved ones.

Excuse the digression. Both I and the Ape of Thoth strolled across the station to the Hotel Christol é Christol, proposing to dine and sleep, and go on to Hardelot in the morning. Tired by the journey we lay down for an hour and then came down to dinner. The restaurant opens out of the hall; to reach it from the staircase one inclines to the right. I was slightly surprised to find the whole staff of the hotel, from the manager to the porter, drawn up in a line between me and both the entrance and the restaurant. They all smiled and bowed obsequiously and awkwardly, like so many marionettes.

The manager stepped forward, louted him low, and motioned me towards a passage leading to the left. I supposed that, it being out of the season, the regular restaurant was shut and meals served elsewhere. He bowed me into a sort of smoking-room and suddenly shut the door behind me. I found myself, with no little surprise, in the presence of six men, dressed in black sprinkled about the room. Only one was seated; and he jumped up and asked my name. I told him. He asked for my papers. By the merest chance I had left my passport, which I usually carry with me, in the bedroom. I told him I would go and get it. Two men sprang to the door. My inquisitive friend snapped out, "Apportez-moi le bagage!" which a couple of his satellites proceeded to do.

I was, by this time, completely bewildered, but he motioned me to a chair and sat down, asking various questions, especially about the Ape of Thoth. Had she come from London, and why, and so on, which only served to increase my wonder as to what it could all be about. From time to time he consulted a large thin sheet of paper as if to guide him in his queries. The light fell on it and all of a sudden I saw from the back that its centre was occupied by a photograph which I instantly recognized.

"Mais, Monsieur," I said, breaking into laughter, "vous n'imaginez pas que je suis pour quelque chose dans cette affaire de M. Bevan." He retorted instantly, "Mais vous êtes M. Bevan!" I behaved very badly, I roared with laughter. Of course he was not put off by any such crude camouflage. "But this is absurd," I said, "I am perfectly well known as a poet and explorer. I don't know the difference between a joint stock company and a debenture." By this time my baggage had been brought. I found my passport which was, of course, in perfect order, but as evidence of identity produced no more effect on his mind than the initials of a shirt; we argued the matter for nearly an hour. One of his myrmidons after another stood at my side to be scrutinized for comparative height and width. One man thought my nose good enough to arrest me; another urged that my mouth cleared me of the crime. But the chief of police was tenacious. He had in his mind his step and the Legion of Honour and the *Daily Mail's* 25,000 francs. Almost in despair I pulled out Guillamod's account of the 1902 expedition and showed him my photograph with my name printed under it. "Do you really wish", I said, "to maintain that I am a defaulting director?"

I don't know why, but this piece of evidence convinced him that I was not his man. He changed his tone, his men filed out, he bowed and apologized. I did not mean to be cruel, as no doubt I was. I told him that no excuse was necessary. I had not enjoyed myself so much in five years. What could a man want more — official reception, and the rest? It was a bitter pill for him but it still is sweet in my mouth. One serious reflection only mars the music. Suppose I had happened to be an unknown man, unarmed with every possible proof, I might quite well have been a week or more in jail before establishing my identity.

I must not leave this subject without a few remarks on the tendency in recent years of the police to attempt to arrogate themselves a function of authority altogether beyond a theoretical limit. Even in England, in 1922, there were several cases in which magistrates had to rebuke the police for encroaching upon judicial functions. In the United States, of course, conditions are outrageous. The extreme case is that of Becker. But apart altogether from individual iniquity the police claim that they cannot control crime unless they are empowered to make an inquisition into every man's private affairs. They take every opportunity of exceeding their powers of bluffing and badgering anybody that seems to them objectionable in total absence of any evidence whatever to establish so much as a *prima facie* case against them. In England so far we have not reached the stage of regular frame-ups with deliberate perjury, but there are suspicious signs of movement in that direction.

Let me quote from my own experience. As early as 1907, I was warned by a friend, I cannot say with what truth, that the police were watching me. My conscience being clear, I replied, "Good, I shan't be burgled." In 1910 during "The Rites of Eleusis" in Caxton Hall, to which we purposely invited a police representative, they had other men in plain clothing outside the building, apparently hoping that something indictable would ooze through the brick work.

In 1913-14 again, my studio near Onslow Square was a regular rendezvous for spies. I was always seeing them in the courtyard, skulking behind trees as I went to and fro from dinner. What they had hoped to find out I cannot imagine.

In Detroit, months after my return to Europe, they repeatedly raided poor half-crazed Ryerson's house in search of some evidence of the "Devil Worshipper's Mystic Love Cult" and of course found nothing; from which they concluded not my innocence, but that my pact with the devil contained a clause guaranteeing me against the discovery of my crimes. If any of those obstinate asses had possessed sufficient intelligence to study a single page of my writings, he would have seen at once what ridiculous rubbish were the accusations made against me by foul-minded and illiterate cheats whom I had never so much as met.

While I was in America, the London police not only disgraced themselves by the brutal raid on poor old Mrs. Davies, described in "The Last Straw", but covered themselves with shame and ridicule by sending to prison a poor little bookseller who had sold for many years *The Open Court*, a well-known philosophical magazine of the highest character for many years, and naturally had never troubled to read it when I persuaded that dribbling dotard Paul Carus to publish my masterpiece of satire "The New Parsifal".

Again they sent round a man to Frank Hollings to frighten him out of selling the *Equinox*, though no complaint had ever been made about it. Even my personal friends were haunted by sinister spies who made mysterious inquiries and uttered oracular hints about the frightful things that might happen if they happened. They wrote to my lawyers, and called on them to inquire my address which they knew perfectly well, and on my complaining to them about the theft of some of my property, not only refused to take up the matter, but answered me through the local police of the place where I lived, saying that I was "well-known" in Scotland Yard. The fact is undeniable, but the insinuation cowardly and dirty.

The latest news from the front is that the special commissary in Tunis, having asked me to call with regard to an irregularity in my permis de



séjour, amplified his remark with the cock-and-bull story intended to persuade me that I ran the risk of assassination by ferocious Fascisti. I asked the British consul to make inquiries and as with Hamlet — the rest is silence.

What interests me is the perverse psychology in this case. What can be their object? I am not annoyed but amused. But why should they waste so much energy and public money on watching a man year after year when one would have thought that the most elementary common sense would have told them anyhow, after the first few months, that I was no more likely to infringe the law than the Archbishop of Canterbury?

I vaguely assume some connection between this puerile policy of half-hearted pinpricks and the perennial flowering of the fantastic falsehoods about me. It suggests that I possess some quality which attracts the attention of the half-witted so that they cannot leave me alone. I have often wished to collect *The Thousand and One Nights of Nonsense*, of which I am the hero. Seabrook's serial in 1923 is absurdly incomplete.

My arrest in mistake for Bevan, whom I resemble about as much and as little as I do any other featherless biped, is rather typical of the odd incidents that help to keep me young. But when people ask me to clear my character of the aspersions upon it, my mind runs back to that scene in the smoking-room. I say to myself, "My dear man, if it took you an hour to prove to a perfectly sensible Frenchman so simple and clear a case with all the trumps in your fist, how long would it take to persuade a prejudiced ignorant public, congenitally incapable of understanding your point of view, that you are innocent of crimes, the witnesses to which are unavailable, and whose very nature translates the court into a wonderland far more weird than anything in the adventures of Alice?"

My second stay in Paris was short. Everything pointed to my trying my luck in London. One of the most amusing results of the wholesale robbery of my money and effects was that I had no single suit of clothes fit to wear in London. I had worn out what I had taken with me to America and had never had enough spare cash to replenish my wardrobe.

All the clothes I had left in London had been stolen with this exception; that in the summer of 1914 I had sent my Highland dress to Scott Eadie to be overhauled. I now recalled this fact and wrote to them to send it to Paris. I had three kilts, a dress tunic and waistcoat, a tweed coat and vest and a green military tunic. *Faute de mieux*, I donned the garb of old Gaul which, if unusual, was dignified, and scrapping together very nearly ten pounds, I crossed the Channel in the first week of May.

The first problem was to find rooms. I was taking tea with my old friend Gwendolen Otter and asked if anyone knew a suitable place. The vague reply was that there were plenty round the King's Road, Chelsea. I went off, weary in body and spirit. I could hardly drag one foot after the other. I had alighted at a horrible hotel in Russell Square thronged with hustling hooligans of the middle classes. My heart sank at the thought of going back there. I wanted to save the fivepenny bus fare. I came to the corner of Wellington Square and was suddenly seized with a direct inspiration to try my luck. "Try the sacred numbers, especially the Secret Key of The Book of the Law — 31!" Fagged as I was, I obeyed. The first number connected with my work was this very "31" and in the window was a card "Apartments to Let". A van stood at the door, which was open. I went in. The landlady showed me a large front room on the first floor, with French windows opening upon a balcony which overlooked the spirit-soothing oasis of the square; the small green oblong with its ancient trees. It was clean and comfortable, the rent reasonable, and the people of the house sympathetic and intelligent. The bow drawn at venture had hit the ideal at the first twang of the string. The miracle was the more striking that the card had not been in the window till a few hours before; they had in fact not finished moving in.

I must flit back to Paris for a moment to mention that before starting I had asked the Yi for a general symbol of my visit to London. I had obtained the hexagram "Shih Ho", whose indications I may thus summarize.

General Comment: It will be advantageous to use legal constraints.

I took this to mean that my proper course to restore my stolen property was to take legal action. The special comment on each of the six lines indicates the successive events of the period covered by the question.

1. Shows one with his feet in the stocks and deprived of his toes.

I had interpreted this that I should be hampered, presumably by financial stress, but should meet the situation rightly.

2. Shows one . . . . . most.

By this, I understood that my personality would prevail against possible prejudice, and that I should succeed in persuading people to do what I wished. Again I should act rightly.

3. Shows one gnawing . . . . . no error. This suggested that the callousness of certain people with whom I had dealings would cause unpleasantness. I should be badly treated, but not through my own fault.

4. Shows . . . . .

This seemed to indicate that by persistent pressure I should overcome the meanness of the inhumane person, and obtain contracts with advances. I must remember that my success will depend on my giving my best work and sticking to my guns.

5. Shows . . . . .

This emphasizes 4, and adds a warning that my campaign will bring about a position of danger.

6. Shows . . . . .

My campaign would clearly end disastrously through the enmity of others. I resolved not to be deterred by this forecast, since the previous lines absolved me from blame. I should make no error. "Hew to the line, let the chips fall where they may!"

In a second Hexagram, asking for advice how to conduct myself, I received one emphatic warning: avoid getting mixed up with unworthy people.

I now propose to narrate the principal events of my sojourn in England and show how exactly they confirmed the Yi King.

My first objective was obviously to obtain possession of my published works which had been warehoused with the Chiswick Press. This press, under the auspices of Mr. Charles T. Jacobi, had no rival, except Constable's, for excellence of printing. I had entrusted them with the production of the majority of my books. When I left England in 1914, I owed them some £350; their security was the stock of the approximate value of £20,000. In 1920 Jacobi wrote to inform me the firm was changing hands, and although he would remain as a director of the new company, it was essential that I square the account. I therefore sent them £350. They had authority from me to sell any copies which might be asked for.

On my arrival in London the position was that after paying warehouse charges to date, they owed me a little over £10. They had written several times to urge me to remove the stock, alleging lack of space in their warehouse. I called and renewed my friendly acquaintance with Jacobi who agreed to hold the books till the end of May, to give me time to arrange for their removal. He furnished me with a complete set of the books as samples. I had approached Heinemann's with a scheme to dispose of the stock. They were to publish every month for a year a small volume of selections, lyrics,

religious verses, essays, stories, plays, etc., with the idea that the readers would acquire the taste and buy the original editions. Heinemann's ultimately rejected this proposal — very reluctantly, and I believe on account of the violent personal opposition of one of their staff, a man whom I had never met. I found a new warehouse in due course and called to arrange a convenient day to remove the books.

To my surprise a perfect stranger came into the outer office, a weird creature of nightmare, long, loose-jointed, shaking and tottering with palsy, with a head grotesque and ghastly, rocking upon narrow sloping shoulders that seemed to shrink from its weight. This fantastic horror announced itself as the managing director of the new company. I stated my business. To my amazement, he broke out into a spate of unmeaning insults. He refused point-blank to deliver the books on the ground that Scotland Yard would be down on him if he did. I said, "But this is ridiculous. What has Scotland Yard to do with the matter? If you really think they are concerned, ring them up at once. Ask them!" He went off saying he would telephone, and returned in a few minutes saying that they would make inquiries and let him know in a few days.

Of course the police had no interest in the matter at all. But this goblin still refused delivery. I could only suppose him a lunatic. He did not merely insult me but Mr. Jacobi, the best of printers, by far the most eminent in England, a man who had spent his life in the service of the art and who had done more for it than any single man since Caxton.

Warner, for so my lunatic called himself, spoke of Jacobi in terms that would have been harsh applied to a dishonest office boy. I wrote to Jacobi personally. He replied as I anticipated, but admitted that the control had passed from his hands. Warner flew in even a more furious rage than ever at my having written, and his having replied. I had known Jacobi since '98, and our business relationship during the twenty-five years had been unbroken and uniformly pleasant. I found my friends scarcely able to believe the story. Such conduct as Warner's was incredible. It was obvious, however, even to him that some settlement was necessary. We had a final interview. He resorted to all kinds of absurd arguments quite impertinent to the business on hand and took an attitude in flat contradiction to that adopted by the firm. At the last moment, he suddenly shifted his ground. A furtive gleam of cunning came into his eyes and he suggested that it would be all right if I took the books away without his official knowledge. It was the first sensible thing he had said. It was arranged that he should consult the directors as a matter of form, and then arrange an hour for the removal over the telephone as it might be convenient for him to be out of the way at the time. We parted on

this understanding. But the next morning I got a letter that everything was off.

I reflected on the Yi's research: "It will be advantageous to use legal constraints" and went round to my lawyer. He advised me that they had no case. The one technical difficulty which related to some few volumes could be obviated easily enough. Correspondence ensued, and finally he interviewed the solicitors of the firm and came to a satisfactory arrangement. Warner was away on his holiday, but the business would go through directly he returned. Not at all! He went back on everything and defied me to obtain possession. And there the matter stands, as far as I know. I have never been able to collect sufficient funds to recover my property which constitutes my principal asset. If Warner is even partially sane the motive is beyond my wit to imagine. Can he possibly hope that I shall drop the matter, and let him get away with £20,000 of stolen property?

To keep a straight story, I have admitted that at Warner's suggestion two roundabout ways were tried. I was to make a fictitious sale of the stock to another man, and he, having taken them away, could transfer them to me. When he called he was assailed in the most intemperate language and the delivery refused. The second idea was to get my tailor to obtain judgment against me for the few hundreds I owed him, to be executed by seizing the stock. But the sheriff received the same treatment as everyone else. Warner started at once to heap insults upon, and hurl defiance at, the representatives of the law. What interests me most in all this is the problem of how such a man ever does any business. In my own case, part of my original plan involved the placing of large orders with his firm. When a stranger calls to bring him gold he is thrown out. It beats me altogether.

My next important business was to re-establish my connection with editors. I called on the *English Review*. Austin Harrison welcomed me as warmly as ever, and asked me to write the centenary article on Shelley and some minor work. I signed the Shelley essay "Prometheus". I created a furore in literary London. They were stupefied. Who the devil could have written it? There were not three men in England anywhere near that class. It was the best boost the *English Review* had had since Frank Harris and I had left England. Mond had withdrawn his support, turning over the Review, lock, stock and barrel, gratis, on his attention being called to the fact that Harrison possessed a letter from Lord Roberts denouncing Mond in such terms that its publication would have probably been followed by the wrecking of Mond's house in Lowndes Square, and, as likely as not, a lynching. Sir George Lewis called at the office (Harrison boasted to me that Lewis never went outside his lair for anyone less than a royal duke) and concluded the deal on the terms stated above on Harrison's giving his word not to make public the let-

ter. It went through. But when Harrison looked for the lethal letter he failed to find it, and believes that Mond had arranged for someone to pay an unauthorized visit to his sanctum and extract it. This hypothesis involves the assumption that Mond harboured doubts as to the value of Harrison's word of honour, which is too painful to think of.

Deprived of financial support, and of the guidance of Frank Harris and myself, he was left to plough his lonely furrow and a crooked furrow it was. The *English Review* lost interest for the educated classes whose taste it was designed to please. The circulation sagged lower every month. Its dullness became devastating. Harrison's own work is always amazing and sometimes first-rate. But other contributors fell off. They got tired of being asked to write at nominal rates, and at that to have to extract the cheque with a Big Bertha corkscrew. He paid me five pounds for my Shelley essay. Subsequent articles were even less adequately remunerated. And it was not only a task which Jove would have thrown up to get paid at all, but after prolonged humiliating haggling over the price, the ultimate cheque was more annoying than agreeable. He would argue for an hour that he had said pounds and not guineas. I put up with the pest because it amused me. I can hardly explain why I enjoy watching such contemptible wriggings. I suppose it is the same sort of fascination as makes one stop to watch a street squabble between two prostitutes.

A further unpleasantness was that he always wanted to mutilate what I wrote by removing the strongest passages or reshaping them so that my style was spoilt entirely and diluted with his journalistic commonplaces and clichés. I made the best of a bad job. My reply to Rabbi Joel Blau, "The Jewish Problem Re-stated", for example, seemed to me so important that any sacrifice was worth making. I doubt my wisdom. His emendations reduced a masterpiece of reasoning and eloquence to a comparatively unremarkable pleading, and it fell almost flat.

My real plan was to put persistent pressure upon Harrison. I thought that in time my moral superiority and intelligence would convert him to a course by adopting which thoroughly and enthusiastically, the stone might be rolled away from the sepulchre, and the *English Review* regain its preeminence as the only organ in England with a soul of its own. In fact, so long as I stayed in London I made a good deal of headway. But the moment the cat was away, the mice began to play. I ran over to France for a fortnight in August, and when I got back he had broken his word on every point. My return restored order, but on leaving for Sicily, it was the same story. He had promised to publish something of mine every month and send me not less than eight pounds every time the first came round. He did not even send me the

ten pounds he had promised when we parted, knowing well that I counted on him for this to stand between me and actual starvation.

I could have born with his treatment of myself, but he used me to injure others. In our early conversations he had argued with perfect justice that the English market for the *English Review* was hopeless, at least for a long time, and that therefore the only chance of restoring solvency was to push it in America. It was obvious that I could do this with success. He agreed to my plan, and I wrote accordingly to several of my friends, first-class writers, far better than any in England — bar Conrad and Hardy — asking them to contribute. They one and all wrote charmingly and enthusiastically, and sent a number of admirable stories. They further promised to use their influence — in two cases enormous — they being editors of periodicals whose combined circulation must be in the millions, to introduce the *English Review* to the American public. The scheme prospered beyond my greatest expectation. H. L. Mencken himself came to see us, and he formulated a plan of action which would have certainly succeeded and put Harrison's circulation up to thirty thousand at the lowest estimate within a few months.

But this was not all. Hearing that my friend Otto Kahn, the famous financier and the admirably judicious appreciator of fine creative work, was in England, I asked him to lunch with me to meet Harrison. His agenda was full, but he proposed to call at the office. We talked matters over some two hours, and laid down the outlines of a scheme, the success of which was that a chronic invalid magazine called the *Forum* should be bought and amalgamated with the *English Review*. We were to publish two editions, I to be in charge of the *English Review* in New York. The bulk of the contents was to be identical, but a proportion to cover matters of local interest in the respective countries. Otto Kahn, while not pledging himself definitely to finance the proposal, gave us to understand that he would not be unwilling to support it.

The sequel is really too stupid. We discussed the details of the scheme and wrote to Mr. Kahn accordingly. But when Harrison showed me the draft of his letter I could hardly believe my eyes. He wanted £6,000 for the paper which everyone knew was being literally hawked about London on the chance of finding a fool to pay two thirds that amount, and besides he to be guaranteed £2,000 a year for three years. And on top of all he was to have an interest in the company. I didn't tell him that Otto Kahn was not in the market to buy gold bricks and that nothing would disgust him so thoroughly as so obvious an attempt to pull his leg. I knew that moderation and — well, hang it, common honesty would determine Kahn to do his utmost for us. To him £12,000 is of course a microscopic object, but he would resent any attempt to take advantage of that fact as strongly and rightly as a diner in a Soho gargote objects to mistakes in his bill. I was furious at the abuse of my

introduction, but I kept my temper, put things as pleasantly as I could, and begged Harrison to moderate his grab. His conscience convicted him. He put up the feeblest arguments I ever heard in my life about the great value of the property which he constantly declared a thankless burden and a financial loss. I knew it was hopeless, and of course Kahn wrote back briefly that he had inquired and found that the Forum was not for sale. We had discussed that point. It made little difference, but it saved Kahn from having to say what he thought about the try on.

Having enthusiastically accepted my plan about pushing the paper in America by publishing the work of their best men and a series of essays by myself to introduce them to English readers, a line of attack quite independent of the more wide-read big proposal, he suddenly broke away. "What would happen to the English market?" he wailed. "What do they care about American writers?"

"My dear man," I replied, "the whole point of the game is that you have told me again and again that the English market is hopeless. Whatever you do you cannot win out in England. And even if the American campaign does diminish your sale by a few hundred copies, what's that as against the splendid chance of building up a circulation in the States?" But he wouldn't see it. He dropped the whole thing.

I made one other suggestion — to try to get readers among occult students. I arranged a scheme of co-operation with the *Occult Review*. Ralph Shirley was enthusiastic and willing to help in every possible way. But Harrison never liked the scheme. His ignorance of the importance of the occult public was not merely complete, but invulnerable to all information. I gave him the figures. I proved that for one person who cared for poetry, there were at least 1,000 whose only form of reading was spiritualism, theosophy, psychical research, Magick, Yoga, mysticism, Christian Science, and its congeners, Occult Freemasonry, etc., etc., *ad libitum*. He flatly refused to admit the facts. I begged him to try it out, if only by asking a few dozen strangers what they themselves cared to read. His very secretaries rose up against him and confirmed my statement. It was useless. His own objection to the occult was so strong, that he deliberately shut his eyes to the facts; even the vogue of Conan Doyle's senile dementia did not move him. And that is the end of that.

I have not seen the *English Review* this year. I can only suppose that it has dropped back after the spurt of last summer into its regular ditch-water dullness, if indeed it has not passed away altogether by that kind of passing away which leaves nothing whatever behind.



I now refer the reader to lines 2 and 3 with the first phrase of line 4 of the Yi King divination. Could anything describe more accurately in symbolic language my relations with the *English Review*?

My third string was to publish new books. Sullivan had suggested my trying Grant Richards, firstly with a plan for marketing the existing stock, and secondly with a proposal to write my memoirs. He promised to put in a good word for me as he knew Grant Richards well and was influential as being a man of sound business and literary judgment. I therefore called and made my proposals. But after some consideration, Grant Richards could not see his way to accept my terms. I think we were both reluctant to part; and one night I was inspired to try him with a third artificial minnow. I would write a shocker on the subject which was catering to the hysteria and prurience of the sex-crazed public: the drug traffic insanity. It provided a much needed variation from the "white slave" traffic. I proposed as a title *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* and sketched out a synopsis of its contents on a sheet of notepaper. This was mostly bluff. I had not really any clear idea of my story. I took this round to Grant Richards, who said it was not in his line. I asked him to suggest a likely firm. He said Hutchinson or Collins. Neither name meant anything to me. I gave Collins the first chance simply because he was on my way home.

Invited to interview the responsible man, I found myself wondering who he was — I had surely met him before. He shared my feeling and was the first to discover the source. Over fifteen years earlier he had been on the staff of a paper called *What's On* belonging to my old acquaintance Robert Haslam and at one time edited by poor crazy Dartnell.

The Gods had certainly started a new drama. The accident of this man, J. D. Beresford his name is, being the literary advisor of Collins probably made all the difference to the fate of the book. The synopsis was accepted enthusiastically and I obtained the pledges of money and advances, as per the "Yi" forecast, to the extent of a £60 advance and a contract on much better terms than a new author could have hoped.

I contracted to deliver the manuscript within a month. My idea was to rush the book through as a suitable for holiday reading. I wired to Paris for the Ape, who hurried over. We sat down at once to work. She takes my dictation in long hand, and it was therefore some "stunt" to have written the 121,000 words in 27 days, 12 3/4 hours. Mrs. Marshall, the best typist I ever employed — she had worked for me off and on since '98 — could hardly believe her eyes as one stack of manuscript came tumbling on the top of another. It gave me a chance to boost the Law of Thelema. I was able to

show how the application of the principles increases efficiency as the profane deem impossible.

Beresford was delighted with the manuscript and in high hopes of making a big hit. Unfortunately, my plan for publishing the book in August was not adopted. For various reasons they kept it hanging about till November. This annoyed me greatly. I expected its publication to arouse a tempest in the teapot around which the old women of criticism nod and talk scandal. I wanted to be on the spot when the fur began to fly, so as to give as good as I got. However, the Gods have their own ideas.

I now put forward my scheme for publishing my Memoirs — my Autohagiography I playfully called it — before Collins. Beresford knew Sullivan well, another lucky coincidence; and when I sent him a fairly full synopsis, they accepted my proposals gladly. I took a short holiday in Paris, chiefly to give the Ape a good time at the seaside, and on my return settled down to dictation.

## CHAPTER 135

Another thread is now woven into my destiny. Before the war, one of my best men in the O.T.O. was a man named Hammond. He was an engraver of astonishing skill and had been very useful in preparing plates for the diplomas of the Order. He was enthusiastic about its principle and advanced rapidly from the IV° to which he had been affiliated from Royal Arch of old-fashioned masonry, to the very exalted rank of Grand Inquisitor Commander. I liked Hammond personally so well that I even asked him to spend a week with me in Paris and see life, which till then had meant to him only the narrow and sordid circle of lower middle class English in parts of London barely distinguishable from slums. He beheld the heavens opened. Overflowed with gratitude and adoration, he acquired the sort of affection for me that a dog has for its master.

Alas! this dog had the mange! supposedly as the result of vaccination in childhood with an impure preparation, he suffered the tortures of psoriasis. The irritation was perpetual. He had tried every known treatment and received from none more than temporary relief. (I think it throws light on my character that ever since I met him, I have never forgotten, whenever I met anyone likely to be able to suggest some new remedy, to ask him about it.)

Hammond had executed the work entrusted to him by the Order with rapidity and excellence beyond praise. I gave him a new job of the utmost importance. I had written a short treatise on the central secret of the O.T.O. for members of the IX°, and proposed to issue this embossed in the style of headings on notepaper and illustrated with numerous symbolic designs. Hammond was to cut the dies for the text, a really tremendous job. The reward was of course commensurate. It implied his initiation to the IX°, which otherwise might have cost him years of effort. But now appeared a strange defect in the man's character. After preparing nearly one third of the dies he broke off. I was out of London. Letters and telegrams sometimes elicited no reply; sometimes he wrote explaining his failure and promising immediate amendment; but I could not keep him up to the mark even when I got back; and I could not be angry with him if only because of his disease which seemed to me as the excuse for his conduct. Nor did I want to wound such affectionate enthusiasm. In his devotion, he had even called his latest son after me, Aleister Crowley. I left London, leaving him to complete the work as best he could.

I wrote several times from America, but failed to get any reply. On my return I tried to find him, but without success. It became vitally important to re-establish relations as Cowie claimed that the missing property of the Or-

der was in his charge. I tried all sorts of plans, but without result. One day, however, as the Ape and I were taking a short cut through Soho, she insisted on inquiring at one of his old addresses. I objected to waste time on a certain failure. But she insisted and went round. Incredibly enough we found him. He was enraptured. We had tea and dinner together, and then went home with him to his house in Highbury. He had some of the missing assets and had kept them faithfully with all possible care. I was overjoyed to find that my trust had not been misplaced in at least one instance. I rewarded his loyalty by conferring upon him the IX<sup>o</sup> O.T.O. The prize should have been infinitely precious, for it put in his hands an almost certain cure for his lifelong affliction. We held numerous conferences and concerted plans for re-establishing the Order in London, the old Lodge having suspended its labours in consequence of the ridiculous raid described in "the Last Straw". For greater convenience, it was decided that the Ape and I should rent from him the top floor of his house, which we did on my return from the Continent.

But now a new ordeal was prepared for me. Despite her quality, the Ape of Thoth began to show the effects of her long strain, anxiety and suffering. I called in a doctor who suspected the beginnings of phthisis, complicated with nervous weakness so serious that practically all her reflexes were abolished. The girl's courage is so infernally sublime that she performs miracles of camouflage to prevent me discovering her condition lest my anxiety should distract me from my work. But at last the cat was out of the bag. It was imperative that she should return to Cefalu at once and regain her health by freedom from work and anxiety, fresh air, fresh food, easy exercise and medical care. It was easy to prescribe this cure but its execution was another matter. I spent the next week chasing round London trying every expedient to collect sufficient cash for her journey and the living expenses of the next few weeks. I pawned every object of value and extracted every penny I could from everyone I knew. Finally I succeeded and off she went to Sicily. She picked up at once. A month later, she was almost herself again, though of course she needed a long period of care to replace the vital capacity which she had spent in the service of the Great Work.

I, too, was very far from well. My desperate situation, my anxiety about the welfare of those for whom I had made myself responsible, unremitting overwork and the eternal disappointments were beginning to break me down. At this moment a letter was forwarded to me from Cefalu addressed to me by Betty Dartnell. Her crazy husband had taken her and his daughter to British Columbia, I think about 1913. The new conditions had transformed her. When I saw her in Victoria in 1915, the flabby sensual debauched rake had become clean, muscular, trim, bright-eyed and self-controlled. I begged her to break entirely with her maniac who had steadily drifted into crazier courses. She was within an ace of cutting the painter, but could not quite

bring herself to take an irrevocable step. I had only an hour with her. If I could have stayed a week in Victoria I might have rescued her. Soon after they drifted to Los Angeles, where Dartnell got into the movie job and took to writing scenarios. In that crowd of debauched degenerates, his own insanity was not so fatal as in more sober surroundings. He took to writing me voluminous letters raving about some cinema star or other whom "god designs for his soul mate! And what was he to do? Was he to yield to unchaste impulse?" Page after page, he poured out the most violent megalomania. I wrote back the obvious advice; to act sensibly without imagining that the Solar System would go to smash on account of his sexual explosions. At last even Los Angeles found him a nuisance.

Lydia Yonska had taken pity on him at a time when he was desperately in need of money. He had shown his gratitude by pestering her with his unwelcome attentions, even climbing into her house at night through an open window and scaring her half out of her wits with frantic protestations and threats. She found herself obliged to protect herself. Dartnell wrote me a long letter abusing her. He said that she was a vampire and had tried to seduce him, and on his refusal had begun to persecute him. She had been deputed by the devil to destroy men's souls, and God had appointed him to avenge her victims by killing her when opportunity offered.

It happened that Madame Yonska was in New York when this letter reached me. I had, in fact, met her a few days before, and painted her portrait, one of my best pictures, by the way. I thought I would warn her and showed her his scrawl. She told me of course the true facts as narrated above.

Since that time, the winter of 1918-19. I had heard no more of him directly. But Jane Wolfe had seen a good deal of them in Los Angeles. They had separated finally. (They were always doing that, but always the madman had come back and started some new scrap.)

Sheila, his child by his first wife, now in her teens, had shown the taint of his insanity by developing incurable kleptomania. Having inherited also her father's cleverness and cunning, her thefts had escaped detection for a long while, with the natural result that innocent people were always suffering from her misdeeds. Even when found out, she succeeded as often as not in putting her crimes on to others. No one would accept the responsibility of looking after her. She had returned with her parents to England. Betty and she lived in a big house in Cleveland Gardens. Dartnell had buried himself in Devonshire, turning up only when some demoniac impulse to make mischief seized him. Since 1920 Betty had written to Jane for help and advice. Her sexual obsessions had begun to turn into religious channels as so often hap-

pens to women on reaching the forties. Jane begged her to come to Cefalu and develop her spiritual and moral self beyond reach of the constant temptation of London to drown her aspiration in drink and debauchery. Betty knew in her heart that her only salvation lay in some such decision. But her almost complete lack of self-control prevented her from taking the plunge.

Such were the conditions when she wrote direct to me, begging me to take her in hand and save her from the stinking mire in which she felt herself slowly being sucked down.

I took this letter as a sign. It was surely strange that I should be in London still. The delays which had annoyed and puzzled me became comprehensible. I went round to Cleveland Gardens. Betty was out. Sheila, whom I had not seen since she was a baby, gave me tea. She fascinated and horrified me. I had never seen a girl so perfectly evil. She had not a trace of heart. Such callous cynicism would have been abominable in a rake of sixty. A sinister malice lurked in her most casual remarks. Her deceitfulness was overpoweringly evident in her looks, no less than her words. Her eyes gleamed with ghastly glee. It suggested that she imagined herself as a sort of scourge to inflict obscene suffering upon anyone she might meet. I waited some time hoping Betty would return. She did not and it was arranged for me to come to tea the next day.

I found her in a curious state. She had lost most of the wholesomeness and health which she had enjoyed when I last saw her. She knew she was going downhill and in danger of stumbling and pitching over the cliffs in the dark. She clung to spiritual aspirations as her only hope and told me her experiences. They resembled Jane's for the most part, but certain incidents were indubitably evidential of genuine communication with intelligences of a very high order of initiation. Her trouble was that she lacked the means of discrimination between the most contemptible drivel and the most exalted truth.

She begged me to stay in her house till I left for Cefalu, urging that I was ill and in need of loving care. She overcame my hesitation by emphasizing her need of a strong hand to guide and help her. Finally I consented. I was well aware that she was precisely one of those wrong people against mixing with whom the "Yi" had so earnestly warned me. I went with my eyes open, saying to myself, "Whatever mischief may come of this, it is none the less my duty to save this woman's soul. I will keep my oath, come what may!"

At first things went well beyond my highest hope. I showed her how to invoke the Gods, and to banish evil and malignant entities that had hitherto

deceived her by impersonating them. The very first experiment succeeded. She brought back information of great value. Its truth and the exalted nature of the being who uttered it was guaranteed by internal evidence of the strictest accuracy. Shortly after this the sun entered the sign of Libra. I chose her to assist me in obtaining the word of the Autumnal Equinox. She made good. The word was given by her as "THIGHS", to which she assigned the number 542 and the meaning "Light, Eyes, Flame and Will".

I wrote this in Hebrew: Teth + Ayin + Shin + 93, which might be pronounced Thighs. Teth is the letter of Leo, the House of the Sun, and therefore a hieroglyph of Light. Ayin means an eye. Shin is the letter of fire or flame; while 93 signifies Thelema — Will. Further 542 is a number which I had long sought to interpret as being the arithmetical mean between 418 (the Magickal Formula of the New Aeon) and 666, my own cipher. I had never succeeded in finding a word to express this idea of the unification of my own nature with that of my dynamic structure. It must surely strike the most sceptical mind as remarkable that an untrained woman, wholly ignorant of Qabbalistic formulae, should obtain words, letters and numbers, so accurately interwoven, so complete an hieroglyph of an idea which defied my skill to analyse. As is my custom I sought in the Holy Books and in the Yi King for an interpretation of the word in terms of the events of the ensuing six months. I will mention one or two signal examples of the trustworthiness of such divination.

1. The hexagram which defined the scope of the work of the Order was "Kieh" meaning "Regulations". In the first three months I am described as unable to organize the affairs of the Order. But in the last three, a sudden change takes place. A way is found of establishing the proper system.

Now, until the Winter Solstice the chaos grew more confused than ever. A few days later a man suddenly came forward precisely fitted to undertake the organization required. I say suddenly, for he had steadfastly resisted the Secret Chiefs for years. His soul was torn by an earthquake and he broke with his past ruthlessly, devoting himself wholly to the Great Work from that hour henceforth.

The work of the Abbey was described by the 51st hexagram "Kan". The first month indicates anxiety mingled with cheerful intercourse with friends. Till the last week in October I was worried indeed, but meeting many pleasant people and enjoying agreeable conversation with them.

Line two indicates peril which makes one abandon one's immediate business and go to an exalted place. The affairs which he dropped will be taken up again without effort on his part. This describes my last month in England,

which brought about a new crisis in my affairs. I dropped them and went to the high house of Cefalu. After a time the abandoned business was resumed.

Line 3. To Christmas. Startling events occur. This corresponds to the attacks on the Abbey in the *Sunday Express* and *John Bull*.

Line 4. The Abbey is supinely sinking in the mud. We were unable to do anything to improve our position and our activity was hampered by illness.

Line 5. All ways in peril and assailed by startling events; there is a coming and going, which hints at the gathering storm of persecution, the constant assaults of ill-health, and the irregularity of the work, or perhaps even the death of Raoul Loveday is implied by the word going.

Line 6. Startling events continue causing breathless dismay and anxious watchfulness. In this one might read the renewal of the newspaper attacks on the Abbey and the discouragement and worry produced by events.

My own fortune was described by the 9th hexagram "Hsiao Khu".

The first line. "Returning and pursuing his own course." Fulfilled by my lectures and new disciples in London.

2. "Returning", i.e. to Cefalu.

3. Various symbols of a check to progress and sudden opposition. As happened on publication of *The Drug Fiend*.

4. Shows sincerity averting murderous attacks. My attitude put an end to the libels.

5. My sincerity attracts sympathy and help. This was fulfilled by the adhesion of several new disciples.

6. "The rain has fallen and progress checked." Raoul's death put a stop to my regular work.

Even the symbols for subordinate members of the Order forecast accurately their fortunes. For instance, Hammond had the 32nd hexagram, whose symbolism is that of a ram attempting more than he can do, becoming entangled with the obstacles, and finally being paralyzed.

The description is marvellously accurate. He made fierce quick attempts to achieve his ends. They were baffled. He dashed himself against a wall,



was enmeshed in the intrigues of my enemies, and found himself in the end neither able to go forward to victory, nor to extricate himself from the circumstances. He had committed himself to my interests irrevocably.

## CHAPTER 136

In the following month, Betty arranged two lectures on the Law of Thelema in her house and brought a number of friends to seek my assistance.

One such introduction proved pregnant with Fate. A brilliant boy, just down from Oxford, where he had distinguished himself by his attainments in history, had long wished to meet me. For over two years, he had studied my magical writings with the utmost enthusiasm and intelligence. His character was extraordinary. He possessed every qualification for becoming a Magician of the first rank. I designed him from the first interview to be my Magical heir. He possessed, of course, the defects of these qualities.

His daring had made him reckless, and his insight contemptuous of phenomena. He had thus been notorious at Oxford as the leader of madcap escapades, in one of which, escaping from the proctors, he had taken a leap in the dark and landed on a spike which transfixed his thigh. He lay between life and death for some months and was still weak from the effects of the loss of blood. Even worse, perceiving the splendour of his soul, he refused to be daunted by its sheath, which led him to commit the fatal folly of marrying a girl whom he had met in a sordid and filthy drinking den in Soho, called the *Harlequin*, which was frequented by self-styled artists and their female parasites. One of these went by the name of Betty May. Born in a slum in the East End, she had become an artist's model of the most vicious kind. She had been married and divorced, remarried and widowed by the war. In her childhood an accident had damaged her brain permanently so that its functions were discontinuous, and she had not mended matters by taking to cocaine at the age of about twenty. After some years of addiction, she found herself using a quarter of an ounce or more daily. She suddenly took fright and cured herself by switching over, first to injections of morphia, and then to plain alcohol. She made no secret of this, and I admired her immensely for her frankness about it and her superb courage in curing herself. She was a charming child, tender and simple of soul.

Yet with all that, Raoul should not have married her. It meant the sterilization of the genius of success in life. Already the evil effects were manifest. His University career was closed. The friends who might have helped him refused to succour a man who had deliberately cut himself off from decency. The mere fact of marriage, had his wife been a Duke's daughter, disqualified him for most of the positions which otherwise might have been open. His parents were poor, self-made and at that only on the fringe of the middle classes. They could not help out. He had struggled along by getting odd articles into various papers. He and Betty lived in one filthy room in Fitzroy

Street, a foul, frowsty, verminous den, stinking of the miasma of that great class who scrape through the years by dint of furtive cunning in dubious avocations. They were living from hand to mouth, with disaster eternally looming ahead, and the whisper of hope more faint and feeble as each effort ended in failure.

Again, I thought I saw the design of the Gods. This was the man I had needed for the last ten years, a man with every gift that a Magus might need, and already prepared for initiation by practically complete knowledge, not only of the elements but of the essence of Magick.

I wasted no time. I urged him to join me and work with me until his initiation was complete. My proposal not only fulfilled the holiest hope of his soul, but solved his material problem. In the Abbey he would be able to make himself a career as a writer as he could not hope to do in the loathsome surroundings of slum life in London. His health, too, demanded urgently a complete change. He had already been ill at frequent intervals. During October the foulness of Fitzroy Street fastened its foetid fangs on his throat. Both he and Betty escaped death by a hairbreadth. It decided him to accept my offer which I had renewed in a long letter written from Rome. I was equally anxious to rescue him for the verminous vagabonds, squalid and obscene, who constituted the court of Queen Betty. He had taken me to the *Harlequin* one night. In a corner was his wife, three parts drunk, on the knees of a dirty-faced loafer, pawed by a swarm of lewd hogs, breathless with lust. She gave herself greedily to their gross and bestial fingerings and was singing in an exquisite voice, which might have put her among princes, an interminable smutty song, with a ribald chorus in which they all joined, hoarse and harsh from drink and disease. The beauty and charm of the girl, the pure music of her notes, emphasized the contrast with the incarnated filth that swarmed over her. I expected an explosion. In Raoul's place, I should have fallen like a thunderbolt on the swine and driven them into the street, taken my wife straight home, washed her and thrashed her, and told her that if it happened again I was through. But he, poor innocent lad, took it all as a matter of course.

I am not a prude, as I hope this book may prove. But passion is one thing and dirt another. In my letter from Rome, I wrote the naked truth — that an Oxford man should look after his wife and that if he mixed with such creatures infection was inevitable. I think my straight speaking opened his eyes. He collected the necessary cash and came to the Abbey. Betty had done her best to hold him in London. Her only idea of life was this wallowing in the hog trough nuzzled by the snouts of the swine of Soho.

The success of Betty Dartnell in her spiritual work increased her enthusiasm at first, and I was still so young in experience that it surprised me one day, when she came into my room full of rubbishy rigmarole purporting to come from some angel. "Have you learnt nothing in all this time?" said I. It was all no good. The verbose pomposity and extravagant promises of the false meant more to her than the calm wisdom of the true. Having fallen on one plane the others were sympathetically affected. Next day she was hopelessly drunk, broke her evening appointment to work with me and went to the Harlequin. She brought home half a dozen drunken wastrels and their female friends with a supply of whisky. They drank themselves into a stupor and slept all over the house like so many swine. The debauch produced the usual reaction. Betty Dartnell repented and promised never to do it again. But she would not do the one thing that would have saved her, cut that crowd once and for all. She found excuses for them. She persuaded herself that it was her duty to rescue them, which, of course, only meant that subconsciously she craved the oblivion of the mire.

Needless to say, I did not repeat the warning. I concentrated on my work, ready to welcome her back to comradeship whenever she chose. But she began to see me as a skeleton at the banquet. I was an avatar of her conscience. She accordingly did what people who are determined to follow the primrose path always do with conscience. She avoided me when she could and insulted me when she couldn't, with the ultimate aim of eliminating me entirely. In this, of course, Sheila abetted her eagerly.

It had been understood that Betty Dartnell was to come with me to Cefalu as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. The proposal was advantageous to her in every way. Spiritual progress, moral reconstruction, physical welfare and economic freedom. She was to come provisionally for three months and then consider further plans. In these circumstances, I felt free to borrow twenty pounds from her. For this I gave her my note due at the end of October on the understanding that, should I be unable through any misfortune to repay her, it should be regarded as an advance on her dues to the Abbey. Only a few days later came her relapse and from that time she did all in her power to prevent my bringing off any of my business deals. It was, therefore, entirely her own fault that I could not meet the note on the date it fell due. I explained the position and she had a generous movement of real regret that her moral collapse had injured me as well as herself. She promised amendment and said that she would come to Cefalu as soon as possible, the twenty pounds being put to her credit. Yet the next day she was again attacked by hysteria. Sheila took advantage of her half-crazed condition to get her to spend the entire weekend with some friends in the country while she got rid of me.

I had observed this unhappy child with great care, in the hope of finding some remedy for her paranoia. I felt little hope. The mischief was rooted in her essence. She stole right and left both from me and others in the house. It was never possible to prove guilt. The evidence amounted merely to this: that she was known to be a thief and only she had the opportunity in most of the cases. The insane element was manifest; she stole for stealing's sake. She stole things that she could not have sold for sixpence. I suspect that part of her complex was that she enjoyed the annoyance caused by the theft.

Betty once out of the way, Sheila told me a string of the most stupid lies I ever heard, each absurd and incompatible with known facts in itself, and in contradiction with the rest of her remarks. She then proceeded to lock up all the rooms and hide all the keys on ridiculous pretexts so that I could not get at various articles to pack them. I decided, of course, to go elsewhere at the earliest opportunity, and had only stayed at first to satisfy myself that I had done all I possibly could to save Betty from the frightful abyss for which she was heading, and after she had gone, in order to study the psychology of poor Sheila. I saw Betty twice more before leaving London. She had begun to realize what a fool she had been and promised on her honour to join us a month later. We parted in perfect amity but my influence being removed Sheila's plans for destroying her stepmother, body and soul, proceeded gaily. She made her drunk and got in a man from one of the *Sunday Express* for an interview. Betty was worked up to indignation against me. She twisted all my sayings and doings into evil, and those which involved her co-operation were garbled. Most of her statements were barefaced falsehoods and the rest falsifications of fact. When this filth was published she saw for a moment how vilely she had been induced to act, and wrote to me expressing the bitterest remorse; but at the same time pleading that they had reported her falsely. I begged her to make amends in the only possible way; by coming forward publicly and testifying under oath to the falsehood of the allegations. Alas, poor Betty! It has been the curse of her life that she cannot act decisively.

Sheila had still one more chance to steal from me and she took it. She knew where I had sent my property to be warehoused, and guessing that I had left in London such things as were useless in Sicily, rang up the warehouseman, announced herself as Mrs. Crowley, and told them to send to her the goods they were holding to my order.

It does not say much for the regulations of the firm that this transparent trick succeeded. They had strict instructions to hold the goods to my order or Hammond's, and it was certainly a shock to find that they would part with

property entrusted to their safekeeping on the unsupported statement of an unknown person that she was my wife.

I must now retrace my steps to the summer. Austin Harrison has a house in Seaford where he lives with his wife, a charming lady whom he had successfully removed from the protection of her previous husband. He worked the scheme with extraordinary ability. A man of his prominence in London might expect the fullest details in every newspaper of a divorce case in which he was co-respondent. But he managed the matter so craftily that only a few of his intimate friends even got wind of the game.

When in London, he had his rooms in the house of a man named Robinson Smith, a retired concert agent with a wife apparently selected in order to prevent him imagining that life is nothing but music. I met him at Seaford one day after playing golf with Harrison. Nothing much transpired but later in London, he suddenly appeared in the character of a brother Adept. His attainments were considerable, though his knowledge was unsystematic and his judgment correspondingly unbalanced. But his genius and his enthusiasm warmed the cockles of my heart. His idea of helping humanity was through social simplification and economic readjustment, with corresponding rectifications in other directions. He allowed his inspiration too much liberty. It being late in life when he devoted himself exclusively to the Great Work, he had not learned that Pegasus should be ridden on the curb when riding out with friends who bestrode spavined hacks. Harrison constantly hinted he was insane. This he was not. But I thought that his friend and his wife were conspiring to put him into an asylum; in fact I was definitely warned by the Secret Chiefs of his danger, and wrote in veiled language, in view of his mail being tampered with, to put him on his guard.

To his kindness I owed it that I was able to leave London at all. He paid me a month in advance for his proposed visit to Cefalu at Christmas.

At his house in Gordon Square occurred a most amusing incident, the climax of a whole series. It started thus. H. L. Mencken had written me to expect his visit on a certain date. We had corresponded a good deal while I was in America. But he lived in Baltimore and I managed to miss meeting him. On the day expected I saw in a paper a notice that he had arrived, and went at once to the office of the *English Review* expecting him to call. No word had arrived so we thought we would hunt him up, and assuming he would be staying at the Savoy, telephoned. "Mr Mencken is at lunch. Please hold on!" Presently he came to the 'phone.

I welcomed him warmly after telling him who I was and made the usual kind inquiries. Yes, he had had a pleasant voyage. Thank you, his health was

excellent. Well, of course he was very busy. He couldn't possibly dine that night, but wouldn't we call at the hotel about it? We would and we did. He would be disengaged in five minutes. Would we please wait?

It was the day of Northcliffe's funeral and Harrison got into communication with some friend who had been among the mourners. While thus engaged, Mencken appeared. I greeted him with enthusiasm though not a little surprised at his appearance. I did not expect to see such a giant, so robust and hearty, so rubicund. It was not my idea at all of what the keenest critic in the United States should look like. However, we strolled off to the smoking-room. Harrison would join us in a few minutes. The conversation became fluent and friendly. He ordered the best brandy and the biggest cigars. But, somehow I could not help feeling that his reaction to my remarks was peculiar. Could I possibly have offended him somehow? Impossible; he was friendliness itself! Then why did he fail to catch fire at my suggestions, or even appreciate the cordial compliments with which I interspersed my remarks.

He, on his side, seemed embarrassed. But we had talked quite ten minutes before he said, "You will excuse me, I'm sure; but I don't understand what you mean by that last observation." This was absurd. It was some perfectly simple straightforward comment on his last book. I began to suspect him of pulling my leg in some supersubtle system invented since my return to Europe. "Are you sure?" he said . . . and then stopped. "I am not sure of anything," I retorted, "that's just where a critic of your ability comes in to guide our wanderings." He apologetically answered that nothing was further from his mind than to criticize anything I said. He agreed entirely; but what he wanted to know was – well, to put it plainly, who I was, and why I had asked to see him? "But you're Mencken!" I gasped. "I certainly am," he admitted. "Well," said I, "I'm Aleister Crowley." He bowed deeply. "I don't doubt it for a second, but as I have not had the pleasure of hearing your name till now — "I saw a great light. "Heaven help me for a fool," I cried. "You can't be my Mencken at all!" Explanations took place. He was a business man from South Africa. At this moment Harrison strolled up and we all enjoyed the joke over more brandy and still bigger cigars.

When the real Mencken turned up, the tale of the conversation wagged out the message — Jane Burr. This lady had recently arrived in London and created a silly-season scandal by walking about in knickerbockers. On this frail foundation, she had erected a superstructure of sexual ethics which bored the educated, excited the suppressed, and scandalized the orthodox. That night she was to be the lioness at a reception at Robinson Smith's. I said, "What rot this sensation stunt business is. I'll bring a girl who wears knickerbockers for their convenience in playing Thelema and climbing rocks

in Sicily. This Miss Burr will look like a model of Madame Tussaud's beside the original."

I did not know that Jane Burr was to be escorted by Mencken himself, and he told her what I had said. The Ape in her flowered black suit and stockings, wearing the silver and scarlet Star of the Temple, arrived with me and Harrison. Some took her to be Jane Burr, but all were spontaneous in admiration. Her success was due to her having the secret of wearing clothes, oblivious of their existence. She had been acclaimed the Queen of the Evening when Jane Burr arrived. She had realized that she stood no chance against the real thing, put her principles in cold storage and donned her best evening dress. She did her best to oust her rival, but the failure was grotesque. And the worst of the whole thing was that the affair got into the papers. Her recantation had ruined her chance of being taken seriously.

The incidents of my London campaign have constrained me to a somewhat zigzag course. But I think this completes the account. I need add only a brief epitome of my successes.

Besides the *Diary of a Drug Fiend* and my *Autohagiography* I had contracted with Collins for the publication of *Simon Iff*. By this they pledged themselves to pay me an advance equivalent to the subscription sales of the *Drug Fiend*. They promised to let me have this before November 9th. I had also sold to Ralph Shirley the rights of my translation of Eliphas Lévi's *La Clef des Grands Mystères* in volume form, and he had paid me the advance due. The position was that on leaving London I had about £20 on hand after paying my fare and allowing for bare subsistence on the pledged word of Collins, Hammond and Austin Harrison.

All three failed me! If I have survived, it is that the gods have some further use for me. My own efforts break down every time, and that in circumstances such that the improbability of their doing so is enormous. The one miracle matches the other. If I were even tempted to doubt that my career is planned in every detail by my spiritual superiors with the precision of a chess player whose pieces are powerless to move except at his command, incidents of this surprising kind would bring me back with a jerk to a sense of reality.



## CHAPTER 137

I broke the journey at Rome. All through northern Italy we had been held up by bandits of Fascisti, who had occupied the railway stations. It was the day of the *Coup d'État*. For some time I had interested myself in Fascismo which I regarded with entire sympathy even excluding its illegitimacy on the ground that constitutional authority had become to all intents and purposes a dead letter. I was delighted with the common sense of its programme and was especially pleased by its attitude towards the Church. It was proposed to use forcible means to prevent the Vatican employing the influence of the priests to attain political ends. I was also convinced of the importance of the movement and of its almost immediate success. I did my utmost to persuade Austin Harrison of the soundness of my judgment. He pooh-poohed the whole thing and only after interminable argument did I persuade him to let me write an article on the situation. He ultimately agreed, and I hunted all round London for a representative of Fascismo from whom I could obtain documentary material for my article.

(The sequel is characteristic of Austin Harrison. He printed an article written not by me but by one of the men I had discovered, and he never paid me a penny for my work, which had kept me busy most of the time for a week.)

The Fascisti patrolling the railway were delightful. They had all the picturesque of opera brigands. They were armed with a most miscellaneous assortment of weapons. They had the irregular discipline of banditti, which of course they, in fact, were.

My English friends had anticipated the success of the movement to follow naturally upon the forthcoming election. Mussolini would not accept power, they told me, even if it were offered. He had too much sense. I was consequently amazed to hear of the *Coup d'État*. Rome was wild with enthusiasm. The Fascisti swarmed all over the city. I thought their behaviour admirable. They policed the towns and suppressed any attempted breach of the peace with the utmost efficiency; but for all that my first doubts disturbed my pleasure in the victory. I thought Mussolini was acting rashly in overthrowing the constitutions. Not only was a reaction certain to follow, as always when success is not the final flowering of regular growth, but I foresaw that Mussolini would be obliged to play politics just as fatally as his predecessors in order to survive the first few crises of his government.

My apprehension has proved only too true. Almost at once, he had to sell his soul to the Vatican in whom a real statesman would have recognized his

most dangerous foe. Like the devil, Rome takes care that its part, however fair it seems on the surface, really involves the giving of nothing and the again of all. During the winter I heard nothing from the outer world, but when I went to Naples in April I found that my worst anticipations had been exceeded. The price of power had proved exorbitant. Mussolini was bankrupt. He had been compelled to purchase papal support by attempting to re-establish the darkest hour of the Dark Ages. Superstition and priestcraft were the real masters. It could not endure. A country cannot wipe out the evolution of a thousand years without becoming an opéra-bouffe absurdity. I began immediately to write epigrams against Mussolini, and every fresh act of farcical folly and blustering braggadocio furnished me with fresh facts for the fires of my wrath. My own personal experience of this farcical despotism, though characteristically ridiculous, did not increase my indignation or contempt. There was no lack of much better material.

I spent three days in Rome, observing the course of events. Everything passed off quietly, so I wandered on to Cefalu. My troubles began almost at once owing to the three men I had trusted breaking their word as above narrated. In all other ways, things were in fine shape. I settled down to dictate these memoirs with my usual energy. The Ape and Jane took turns to take down my story and to type it out. On the 26th of November further help arrived. With great kindness Robinson Smith had lent Raoul enough money to take the journey. Both he and Betty were still suffering from the remains of septic sore throats and general cachexy, but within a month they both recovered their health.

At first Betty moped. She craved the excitement of being mauled about in boozing dens by tipsy vagabonds. But the clean living and atmosphere of love and happiness gradually weaned her from this artificial appetite. She became a gay and careless child finding pleasure in every detail of everyday life. She went about singing. On increasingly rare occasions she would suddenly relapse into her old self and feel wretched for a few hours. I expected this, of course, and watched for the first symptoms. It was easy enough to comfort her. Unfortunately, she was not a wholly sane individual. The lesion in her brain gave rise to symptoms difficult to control. The complete disassociation of her consciousness may be illustrated by such incidents as the following.

One of her fixed ideas was that she was a miracle of modesty. She used to confide in one or another of us that she had never allowed anyone, not even her husband, to see her naked. This seemed strange in view of her career as a model, and one day she brought out a fat package of photographs of herself in the nude. But this was in no sense a confession that she had been telling us lies. She maintained quite sincerely with the photographs un-

der her eyes that no one had ever seen her naked. This incident is typical of her. Almost in the same breath, she would say that she had never known happiness till she came to the Abbey, and that she had been uniformly wretched since her arrival. She would boast of her superiority to sex, and continue by complaining that her husband absorbed in his work was starving her. She would proceed to claim great credit for being faithful to him, but we found out that she was carrying on any number of intrigues with the young bloods of Cefalu.

Raoul, on his part, amply justified my faith in his future. A few weeks' work enabled him to fill the gaps in his knowledge of Magick and to unify its elements. He showed an understanding of the subject which was almost enough to satisfy the requirements of the Grade  $8^{\circ}=3^{\square}$ . I admitted him as a probationer in the Order on the day of the solstice, and he took the name A V D. I advised him to repress any ambitions to pass quickly to higher Grades and to concentrate on thoroughness. With admirable good sense, he agreed. As evidence of his amazing genius for Magick, let me mention that I showed him a thesis which had been sent me by a member of the Order in support of his application for admission to the Grade  $7^{\circ}=4^{\square}$ , the highest of the Second Order, implying complete knowledge of all matters magical, and command of all powers. Frater A V D wrote a criticism of this thesis to which I could find no error of any kind. There are not alive a dozen men today who could do as well.

In practical Magick, he showed promise of the same order, though, of course, not having previously attempted any work of the kind, he had much to learn. Nevertheless, he progressed with astonishing rapidity. Within a fortnight, he was able to perform the Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram sufficiently well to produce unmistakable modulations of the Astral Light. He acquired the faculty of visions in astonishing perfection from the very first. The usual preliminary practice on unimportant explorations was unnecessary. In January I gave him a talisman symbolizing the alchemical mystery of V.I.T.R.I.O.L. He travelled straight through to the corresponding plane of the Astral, and entered into relation at once with an intelligence who gave his name Neral, who demonstrated his authenticity and authority in the approved manner by means of letters and numbers, but also by straightforward statements which had no meaning for Raoul but which I recognized as correct expositions.

## CHAPTER 138

To turn to other matters. At the end of November I received a telegram from Hammond which I took as a sort of joke. He said:

"English press states you are guilty of sending girls on streets in Palermo or Naples and that you served prison sentence in America for procuration tone (?) ans (answer) per imperative pire (wire immediately)."

(Signed) HAMMOND."

I replied "Allegations utterly absurd." My only annoyance was having to pay for the telegram. Presently copies of the *Sunday Express* for November 28th arrived. I read them with tireless amusement. I had read in my time a great deal of utter balderdash, but nothing quite so comprehensively ridiculous. It gave me the greatest joy to notice that practically every single detail was false. There was, for instance, a description of the Abbey, without a single failure to misstate the facts. If a thing was white, they called it red, if square, circular, if stone, brick; and so for everything.

I saw no reason for taking any action. I was content to enjoy the absurdity and profit by the publicity. Unfortunately the sense of humour is rare in England. My friends wanted me to prosecute the paper for criminal libel, which was all very well, except that I had not enough money to get to Naples, much less London, to say nothing of the costs of an action against a corporation backed by millions and the influence of its coroneted proprietor. £5,000 would not have given me a dog's chance. Incidentally, there was internal evidence in the article that they had not taken the risk of printing it without making sure that I was not in a position to prosecute.

In earlier chapters, I have given my views with regard to libel actions in general; I should refuse to fight in any circumstances for the simple reason that I cannot waste my time on anything of the kind. I must maintain my concentration upon creative work. There is a further objection, mixing oneself up with people of alien mentalities.

The only misfortune in the matter was that my publishers reflected that doing as they did a large business in bibles and similar pious publications they could not profit by the publicity as their clear duty was to do. They professed all sympathy with my position, but insisted on some sort of vindication before proceeding to carry out their contracts. I find their attitude inexcusable. They live in a country which boasts of sportsmanship and fair play as their copyright, but refuse to apply their principles, to say nothing of ele-

mentary justice, to cases which involve the suspicion of sexual irregularity. The accusation is sufficient. Even a successful public defence does not clear the character of the person attacked. It is notorious that most exculpations of this sort are the result of compromise or the payment of blackmail and it is known universally assumed that everyone is guilty of the offences of which they know themselves at least potentially capable and whose commission is a function of opportunity and moral courage. The sense of sin assures the English that all men alike are inevitably transgressors.

What struck us as the best joke in the whole article was the description of the Abbey as a focus of all possible vices. We were all drug fiends devoting ourselves uninterruptedly to indulgence in all conceivable sexual abominations. Our morality compared favourably with that of the strictest puritan. The only irregularity that had ever occurred at any time was intercourse between unmarried people, which is, after all, universal in good society, and in our case was untainted by any objectionable features apart from the question of formality. I fail to understand why it should be considered excusable to seduce a woman and leave her to shift for herself, while if one receives her as a permanent friend and cares for her well-being long after the liaison had lapsed one should be considered a scoundrel. The idea seems to be that it is immoral to prevent love resulting in every kind of ill-will and misfortune. O fools and blind, not content with inventing a sin, you insist on the fears and pains which haunt the nightmares of superstitious slaves from wrecking the lives of the children of truth and freedom.

By this particular period, our conduct was so moral by the strictest standards that it would not be matched by any community of equal numbers in the world. We were all working so hard, to say nothing of having so little to eat, that we had neither time nor need to think of sex at all. The one exception was Betty and her actions did not affect the Abbey. She had to go outside for sympathy in such affairs.

Two events of far-reaching influence upon the course of events occurred about the New Year. I received a long cable from my old friend Bill Seabrook asking me for photographs and other material to assist him in composing a serial on the subject of myself, opinions and adventures. He hoped to syndicate this widely throughout America by means of simultaneous publication in a large number of Sunday papers. The plan prospered. He was naturally hampered by having to consider his public. The most trivial and commonplace incident must be cooked up with all possible spice of sensationalism. When the facts fail they must be filled up with fiction, and where they obstructed his wild career, they must be distorted into fantastic form. He did his work well on the whole. He was as fair as his circumstances permitted and in my judgment the ultimate effect of his hotel polish mixed fact and fa-

ble will be to familiarize the American public with my name and interest them in my career sufficiently to induce the few intelligent individuals who have read it to inquire independently into the facts of the case. The strong point of my position is that there is nothing in my life of which I need be ashamed. Inquiry must inevitably result in clearing my character, and any person whose attitude is worth a moment's consideration should experience a reaction of indignation and disgust. The stench of the cesspool of calumny will offend his nostrils and he will insist on restoring equilibrium by long reviving inhalations of the perfume of my personality.

The other event was that a seed which had long slept in darkness suddenly shot up into the light. My proposal that Sullivan should devote his mathematical abilities to demonstrating the sublimity of the origin of the *Book of the Law* having failed, I bethought me of Norman Mudd. Since the skirmish at Cambridge, he had sunk below the horizon, having emigrated to the most barbarous and benighted realms of perdition; he had in fact become lecturer in applied mathematics at Grey University College, Bloemfontein. All these years, his conscience had never ceased to accuse him in respect of his conduct at Cambridge. He thought of it as the "Great Betrayal".

For my part, I find every excuse for him. He was hardly more than a boy, without resources, friends or influence. Against him were arrayed the entrenched forces of authority. Their power was arbitrary and extended for all practical purposes to life and death! Stripped of his scholarship and expelled from the university at the most critical moment of his career, he would have found himself almost as desperately situated as a tramp with a bad record thrown out of work on to the Embankment. Yet so conscious of their guilt were his oppressors that they feared to face the consequences of any such action and they therefore assailed him in various underhand ways; even trying to induce his father to put pressure upon him by appealing to his filial instincts and begging him not to destroy the hope of his family.

I cannot blame him for pretending to yield and proceeding as before to defy them by his actions. None the less, the Lords of Initiation exacted the penalty of surrender. Shame dogged him by day and haunted him by night; in 1919, he could not stand it any longer and went to England to find me. Having heard I was in America, no one knew exactly where, he crossed the Atlantic and ultimately discovered Frater Achad who admitted him as a probationer of the Order with the motto *Omnia Pro Veritate*. It seems strange that he missed finding me. Once again I perceived the design of the gods. The time was not ripe.

He wrote me a letter which I answered at once, but I failed to elicit further communication. However, when Sullivan broke down at the first ordeal,

I said to myself, "Why, of course, Norman Mudd is the man for the job." I wrote immediately, asking him to work with me on the demonstration indicated above. He did not answer. Thinking my letter might have failed to reach him, I wrote again sometime later with similar fortune. About Christmas 1922, his problem reached a crisis. His obstinate resistance collapsed. He opened and read my letters, which he had put aside till then, being instinctively aware that if he read them he would be unable to withstand the call of his own soul to be true to himself and take the consequence. His way became suddenly clear. He was on this earth with one object and one object only; he must devote his energies exclusively to the welfare of mankind; in other words, to establishing the Law of Thelema. He cabled and wrote, putting himself entirely at my disposal. I accepted and told him to come straight to Cefalu and work with me. He did so, arriving on the 20th of April, and has since that time been exclusively occupied in collaboration in the Great Work.

These encouragements were balanced by fresh tribulations. The enemies of mankind, seeing that despite everything my work was nearing manifest success, redoubled their malice.

Both Raoul and I began to have attacks of rather inexplicable illness which increased in frequency and severity, until we were both almost continuously ill. My trouble was a strange fever — Mediterranean fever, I finally concluded. The temperature never reached any great height, but quinine had no effect. The local doctor diagnosed it as an infection of the liver and spleen, but confessed that he had no idea of what could have caused it. I grew steadily worse and at one time, for a few days, my condition caused some alarm. Not until early in April was I well enough to walk. But on the thirteenth I felt fit enough to go to Naples with the idea of convalescing in favourable circumstances, and buying a few things which the imminent arrival of Frater O. P. V. made requisite.

Raoul was less unlucky. How could the gods help loving him, who in so many ways partook of their pure nature. At first he suffered mostly from a recurrence of malaria of many years' standing. The attacks were hard to throw off, owing to his accident at Oxford already described. Various complications ensued. We called in the doctor at the first sign of any symptoms with which we were not familiar and able to deal. For some time he got neither better nor worse, but then, without warning, developed acute infectious enteritis. The doctor, summoned in all haste, did what he could, but his answer told me at a glance that he expected a fatal issue. I wrote out a telegram informing his parents so that they might come if they thought fit. Betty offered to take it to the office, but instead of returning, collapsed hysterically in the street before sending it off. It was a common trick of hers to excite

sympathy, attract notice or annoy her husband if he happened to say or do anything which she disliked. In her absence, Raoul developed paralysis of the heart and died at once without fear or pain. It was as if a man, tired of staying indoors, had gone out for a walk. At the first appearance of symptoms which alarmed me as to the immediate issue, I dressed myself, ill as I was, and hurried to bring the doctor. Alostrael, being already ready to go out, had gone on ahead. But even in those few minutes matters had gone so far that I felt sure he was already dead. It was all so quiet that certainly on the point was hardly possible. When we returned with the doctor and Betty, all doubt was at an end.

The usual arrangements were made and on the following day I conducted the burial service according to the ritual of the Order; improvised and simple as the Ceremony was, its dignity and sublimity were not unworthy of our brother. My duty done, I surrendered to my own bodily assailants. I had probably done myself harm, both by going into Cefalu and by presiding at the obsequies. Till then I had been able to get out of bed and crawl about for an hour or two every day. It was many weeks before I managed to leave my bed even to walk on somebody's shoulder to another mattress and drink in the early spring sunlight.

Except for Betty, whose ideas of nursing were restricted to an alternation of lamentation, savage abuse of a patient, petulant complaints about his selfishness in not looking after her instead of her looking after him, and attempts to obtain restitutions of conjugal rights, Raoul had been tended with all possible care. In fact, during the absence of Betty, owing to circumstances to be described shortly, he picked up surprisingly and I feel pretty sure that if she had not come back he would be alive to-day. The Ape and Jane Wolfe are the best nurses I ever struck. They do everything just right. I never had to ask for anything I wanted, they had foreseen the need and supplied it in advance. They never showed the faintest sign of fatigue and anxiety, which they must have felt. The doctor spared no pains to study my complaint, but he confessed frankly that it puzzled him. It was common enough, he said, in Sicily; one could not say what caused the mischief or what its nature really was, and there was certainly no definite cure. All one could do was to treat the symptoms empirically. So I think he should not receive more than ten to fifteen per cent. of the blame attached to my survival; the balance must be borne as best they can by my nurses, and in the background, Sister Cypris, invisible, but indefatigable in seeing that nothing went wrong.

I must now explain the incident which led to Betty's temporary absence from the Abbey from the Sunday evening before the Friday of her husband's death, till the following day. It is an absolute rule of the Abbey not to attack



people behind their backs. Betty had taken a frantic dislike to Sister Cypris and pestered us with complaints, not of anything definite that she did, but on general grounds. I happened to hear an outburst of this sort and put my foot down at once. I told Betty that we all agreed with her on many points, but it was none of our business. "If you must abuse anyone, do it to their faces as you see us all do every day, and no ill feeling comes of it."

Betty said, "But she's breaking the rules of the Abbey."

I replied, "Quite true, we've been getting slack. We'll start right now to be stricter."

Now one of the most important rules is that no newspaper is allowed, unless it bears directly on some point of the work. The reason, of course, is that having a library of first-class books we should not spoil our appetites by eating between meals, especially the dirt of the streets. It chanced that the very next day a bundle of rubbish was sent to Raoul. Here was the very chance to be strict. Betty was reminded that newspapers were forbidden; she flew into a fury — she would leave the Abbey instantly unless allowed to read them. I agreed. She was free to stay or to go but while she was there the rules were the rules, and she was the only person who had objected to them being relaxed. She flew into a fury even more furious. Heedless of Raoul's pitiful appeals to control herself, she flung a glass at my head and attacked me like a maniac. I tried to soothe her and abate her violence. Poor Raoul, weak as he was, got up and held her and begged her to be quiet. At last she calmed down, but the room was a wreck. It was imperative to move Raoul to proper surroundings and prevent his being disturbed and neglected by the tantrums of the termagant. We carried him into my own room and made him comfortable. Betty continued to conduct the concert in the absence of an audience, so she finally announced her intention to go. Both Raoul and Alostrael begged her to be sensible, but off she went to the hotel where she was at once consoled by a series of admirers. She wrote a string of lies to the British consul in Palermo, but the next morning came up to the Abbey on receipt of a note from Raoul, saying that he hoped she would return and behave decently, but if not, to send for her effects and go back to London for good. I offered to pay her fare if necessary. She came back on condition of promising amendment, writing to the consul to ignore her letter as mere hysteria and admitting the entire falsehood of its contents. This letter was countersigned by Raoul. She also signed a statement of the whole episode drawn up by us and signed. She justified our faith in her better nature and gave us no further trouble as long as she remained with us.

After Raoul's death, she came to me for comfort and I am glad to think that I helped her through the worst. It was arranged for her to return to

England. Raoul's parents cabled and wrote, asking us to take various steps, and pledging themselves to repayment. It is hard to believe that any human beings should act as they did; repudiating all liabilities. They wouldn't pay to have their son decently buried — not they.

Every day Betty seemed to grow fonder of us all. We told her, of course, that she was welcome to stay if she chose, and it seems hard to design a reason for her decision to leave. But on her arrival in England trouble began. The reporters of the gutter press got after her, made her drunk and prompted her to give them a sensation story which was on long series of falsehoods. The rabble resumed their chorus of calumny. They completely lost touch with reason. Each fresh article was crazier than the last. I was accused of the most fantastic crimes up to cannibalism. Their principal liar was poor Dartnell, but he was ably assisted by some Dutch interpreter whose name I had never heard. He pretended to know me well. In one article, he let himself go about my cynical audacity in returning to London. He had seen me in Holborn, a decrepit derelict, hardly able to walk. This was fine! My only difficulty in believing everything he said was that at the time of my visit to London I was lying ill at Cefalu.

The papers had hinted that I was in some mysterious way responsible for the death of Raoul. A man who had known him in his Oxford days, Raymond Greene, of Pembroke College, wrote to one of Betty's lovers and asked him to spy on us. By mistake the letter was delivered to me. I wrote pointing out to Greene that when establishing a secret espionage some of the authorities recommend that the persons to be watched should not be the only ones informed of the plan. Having shot off this little sarcasm, I said that if he really cared for Raoul's memory, he should investigate for himself; we would give him every facility. He did not reply, but came to Sicily, as he thought, secretly. Unfortunately he had given his address as Post Restante, Cefalu. Letters arriving for him, the Post Office people asked us what they should do about delivering them. So I wrote myself in care of Poste Restante, welcoming him warmly to Cefalu. As it happened I left for Naples the day before he turned up, but he called at the Abbey. It took away his breath to discover perfectly charming people, patently guiltless of any offense. He was obliged to hurry back to England, but managed to run into me at Naples. I took him to lunch and confirmed him in the faith.

At Naples, I struck an American poet who had been head master in a high class private school. In a motor accident he had damaged his head and was not yet normal. He was out of his head over a dancing girl whom he had found in Florence, and was drinking himself to death in the hope of keeping himself from suicide. I instantly forgot my own need of convalescence and

devoted myself to healing his spirit. He came with me to Cefalu, a week of which worked wonders.

The following day Frater O. P. V. arrived and on his heels two Oxford men: Pinney and Bosanquet. We put them up for three nights. They were flabbergasted to find us perfectly normal decent people. They were keen rock climbers. I was too ill to join them, but I dragged myself to the foot of the crags and showed them the two problems which I had not cared to attempt without a trustworthy companion. These were the outside way up the Cavern Pitch in Deep Gill and the Deep Gill pillar. They succeeded in climbing both, to my great joy. The morning after their arrival, I was summoned to the police, who showed me an order from the Minister of the Interior expelling me from Italy. No reason was given, no accusation made. The policy of backstairs intrigue and foul strokes, whenever they felt sure that I could not defend myself or hit back was still the order of the day. The commissary of Police was staggered by the smiling calm with which I received this stab in the back. I did not even protest or ask for the reason of the outrage. I courteously requested a week's grace to arrange my affairs, which he, with equal politeness, granted. He tried one dirty police trick. These people seemed unable to help themselves. He tried to persuade me that the order included the whole community.

The injustice and tyranny of this order excited the utmost sympathy and indignation in our guests, who promised to do all they could to secure fair treatment. My behaviour in this ordeal aroused their admiration. It became abundantly manifest that my conscience was clear. Such calm courage, not only on my part, but on that of the others, who were really much more deeply injured than I was myself, showed that we possessed the secret of sailing triumphantly above the clouds of circumstances in the pure air of freedom in the sunlight of happiness.

I left O. P. V. in full charge of the business of the Abbey. Despite my world fortitude, I was near a physical breakdown, and at Palermo seemed so ill that the Ape decided to accompany me to Tunis. We reached our City of Refuge on the 2nd of May, and I knew that the spirit of liberty still lived and laughed under the banner of France.

During the first weeks of my illness, I had hung on grimly to the preparation of these Memoirs, but the weak flesh had overcome the willing spirit from the time of Raoul's death to the end of March. We now tackled it with renewed energy and, for the sake of fresh air and quiet, left the city for La Marsa, where we stayed at Au Souffle du Zephir working day and night, so far as my health permitted, for nearly two months, when O. P. V. joined me,

while Alostrael returned to Cefalu for a rest. I had once more worked her beyond her strength.

We were joined shortly afterwards by Eddie Saayman, an old pupil of Frater O. P. V.'s in Bloemfontein, and now a mathematical scholar at New College, Oxford, one of the most brilliant students in the university. He became interested in the mathematical theorems of the *Book of the Law*, which he thought, no less than myself and O. P. V., capable of revolutionizing mathematical ideas and marking a new epoch in that science. We agreed that to demonstrate this would prove that the author of the *Book of the Law* was an Intelligence beyond any hitherto known. He therefore decided to write a thesis on this subject for a Fellowship of his College.

Early in August, I returned to the city for a little Magical Retirement of about a fortnight, at the conclusion of which Alostrael rejoined us in Tunis where I dictate these actual words.

I must now give a short summary of my personal spiritual work during the three years of my residence in Cefalu. The hopelessness of getting anything published operated to discourage me from producing formally perfect work. I wrote a considerable number of poems and short stories, but found myself horribly hampered by the overwhelming abundance of creative ideas. I need a staff of at least a dozen colleagues and secretaries to keep up with my work, and all the time there is the subconscious worry about the possibility of carrying on.

Since 1909, it has become constantly more difficult to keep afloat. The Gods have taught me to trust them absolutely to provide me with everything I really need for my work, as opposed to my own ideas on the subject. Yet despite this long experience of being saved from smash at the critical moment, almost always through some channel which I had no reason to expect, I have not succeeded in entirely dismissing doubt from my mind on these constantly recurring occasions when there were no funds in hand and no rational expectation of receiving any. That is, of course, when the current of creative energy is checked so that my mind, temporarily exhausted, becomes the prey of apprehension. Yet even so I find myself better able, as every year passes, to set my heel on the serpent of worry. Only in moments of complete mental and spiritual collapse from the overstrain of prolonged effort does my faith falter for a few hours. Perhaps the Gods intend to insist on my acquiring the power to triumph, even at such moments, over adversity. The serpent's fangs will fix themselves in my heel if it share the vulnerability of the heel of Achilles. It is not enough to dip the Magus in the Styx, he must be thrown in left to sink or swim.

In one way or another, for all that, I achieved an enormous amount of work in the three years. But my most important labours have been definitely magical.

I practically re-wrote the third part of *Book 4*. I showed the manuscripts to Soror Rhodon (Mary Butts) and asked her to criticize it thoroughly. I am extremely grateful to her for her help, especially in indicating a large number of subjects which I had not discussed. At her suggestion, I wrote an essay upon every phase of the subject. The result has been the expansion of the manuscript into a vast volume, a complete treatise upon the Theory and Practice of Magick, without any omissions. I further added appendices, the first giving an account of the system of initiation of the A·A·°. Next comes a curriculum of the classics of Magick and mysticism. Thirdly, I illustrate the text of the treatise by giving actual examples of ritual. Fourthly, I propose to reprint the more important books of instruction of the A·A·° from the *Equinox*; and finally, I crown the work by Liber Samekh, the operation of the Sacred Magick of the Attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, as proved effective in my own experience, and confirmed by that of Frater Progradior for whose benefit I set it forth in writing.

More important still, I applied the formula of the *Book of the Law* to the solution of the classical antinomies of Philosophy. I resolved such triads as Being, Not-Being and Becoming into a Unity. I identified Free-Will with Destiny. I proved that action was impotent and non-action omnipotent. As I went on, new problems constantly presented themselves, and each one in its turn yielded to the Law of Thelema. I wrote all these theorems in my Magical Record. I was greatly assisted in all this work by the constant study of the work of Einstein, Whitehead, Russell, Eddington and Henri Poincaré, whom Sullivan had recommended to me. They seemed to be on the very brink of discovering those truths which the *Book of the Law* concealed and revealed. Their passages directed my attention to the *Book of the Law*. Obscure passages in the text became clear when interpreted as solving the problem of modern higher mathematics.

From this huge mass of work I extracted the quintessence and transferred it to my New Comment upon the *Book of the Law*. This is now an extensive work, and I have not yet succeeded in making a systematic study of the technical Cabbalistic proofs of those based on the facts of experience which demonstrate that Aiwass is an intelligence of an order altogether superior to that of man. The proof of his existence is therefore the proof of the postulate of all religion, that such beings actually exist, and that communication with them is a practical possibility. Thus, apart from the stupendous value of the *Book of the Law* itself, it opens up a path of progress to man-

kind which should eventually enable the race to strike off the fetters of mortality and transcend the limitations of its entanglement with earth.

I continued my researches in many other lines of Magick, from the preparation of a new edition of *Liber 777* with an elaborate explanation of each column and a further analysis of the Yi King, to such matters as the critical observation of success in the Operation of the IX° O.T.O.

I have written a very full comment on the *Book of the Heart Girt with a Serpent*, which as I proceeded manifested innumerable mysteries of transcendent importance which I had till then never suspected to inform the text.

I also began an examination of the *Golden Verses of Pythagoras*. I was struck by the fact that it was incumbent on disciples to commit them to memory and repeat them daily. From this I deduced that the somewhat shallow meaning of their injunctions concealed the heart of the initiated doctrine. This speculation was confirmed by research. For instance, the phrase "Honour the Gods" which "needs no ghost come from the grave to tell us" is proper, conceals a magical injunction of the first importance. "Tima" honour etymologically means "Estimate" or "calculate". The instruction thus is to make a scientific investigation of the formulae of the various gods, i.e., to discover the laws which express their energies, exactly as in physics to honour gravitation is senseless, but we may increase our control of nature by inquiry into its nature and action. The more I studied these verses, the more tremendous seemed their import and should I succeed in completing my translation and commentary, the long lost secret of Pythagoras should be brought to light and Greek philosophy assume an aspect hitherto hidden which must revolutionize our ideas of the ancient wisdom.

The true significance of the Atus of Tahuti, or Tarot Trumps, also awaits full understanding. I have satisfied myself that these twenty-two cards compose a complete system of hieroglyphs representing the total energies of the universe. In the case of some cards, I have succeeded in restoring the original form and giving a complete account of their meaning. Others, however, I understand imperfectly, and of some few I have at present obtained no more than a general idea.

It is heartbreaking to have to write on this matter, "So much to do, so little done." I am overwhelmed by the multiplicity of urgent work. I need the co-operation of a whole cohort of specialists and my helplessness lies heavy on my heart, yet the word which I uttered at my first initiation, "Perdurabo", still echoes in eternity. What may befall I know not, and I have almost ceased to care. It is enough that I should press towards the mark of my high

calling, secure in the magical virtue of my oath, "I shall endure unto the End."