

WAITE'S WET
OR
THE BACKSLIDER'S RETURN

"All things come to him who Waites."

"I waited patiently on the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry."

IT was a brilliant May afternoon when the Prodigal returned. At the offices of the *Equinox* the usual constellation was assembled. Crowley lay lost in meditation upon the 1500-guinea Persian rug, which he had received from the executors of the late John Brown; Neuburg, covered from head to foot with yellow paint and his own post-prandial poetry, was yelling with laughter over a telegram which informed him that his favourite uncle had been disembowelled by a mad bull; Wieland, his head among the fire-irons, his soul among the stars, was trying to remember two important engagements which he had written down in his note-book five minutes earlier; Ethel Archer, talked to by Meredith Starr, but not listening to him, sat pale and classical on the edge of a table in default of a promontory, saying softly: "Bysses—aster—kisses—caster—blisses—faster—this is—master—misses—disaster—Pisces—poetaster—Cambyses—chaster; Madame Strindberg, still smarting under the description of herself as "relict or derelict" of somebody, having

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telegraphed to the Bank to stop any cheques she might draw in the next twelve months, was committing suicide with the murmured apology: "After all, this isn't an hotel"; while "Boy Billy," tastefully costumed for walking in Bond Street as an Egyptian *sais*, was romping with her third best pal in spite of the broken heart which she had left beneath the boots of Mr. Hener Skene; Mr. Austin Harrison, who had dropped in for a quiet afternoon, was quite failing to grasp the situation created by the Editor herself, who, shaking in every chin, declared rather more than less than aloud that, waiters or no waiters, she meant to marry him, and the gentleman down-stairs could go—my grandmother's hat!—and——

She was interrupted by the arrival of a telegraph boy, who delivered a bulky envelope containing the following message—

"Notwithstanding categorical imputations sacramentally integrated similitudes undedicated warrants antecedent Paulopetrine typology casually unworthy hypostaticism predecessorial superincession archidiaconal arch-amphibians osify elpidize redintegration status lymphaticus."

"A cipher telegram! How romantic!" cried the Editor, releasing Austin Harrison for the fraction of a second.

"Oh no," said Crowley, "it's quite plain English; it's from Arthur Edward Waite. He repents; he comes back to the fold. He begs forgiveness. Osify means 'dare'; elpidize, 'hope'; redintegration, 'restoration'; status, 'status.'"

"But he says 'status lymphaticus.'"

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"It's a disease; he read about it in the *Daily Mail* on the Underground between Aldgate and Blackfriars; but it sounds better than plain 'status'; so he damned the extra ha'penny, and put it. To my mind it's the shortest and plainest thing he's ever written. And I forgive him all."

The company, overborne by authority, acquiesced. Only Neuburg, always a pessimist, doubted. "It's unsigned!" he groaned, his lips, blood-stained bolsters dipped in ink, writhing like half-boiled lobsters.

The Editor, with one shriek, one sob, and one sigh, thinking of the veil of the temple, tore a napkin in default of anything else to tear, and cried: "It is finished! Votes for Women!" Neuburg, his nose working feverishly, burst into hyena-howls. The Master arose; calling for hot water and sulphuric acid, he comparatively cleaned the victim's left ear, and bit another piece off. Calm was restored.¹

Remembering Mr. Waite's statement in *Who's Who* that he "holds nearly all degrees of Masonry known in England, and some which are here unknown," Crowley dictated the following telegram—

"Waite, Esquire, Etcetera, Sidmouth Lodge, South Ealing.

"Yes.

"ALEISTER CROWLEY.

"Apprentice, Companion, *Master*, Secret Master, Perfect Master, Intimate Secretary, Provost and Judge, Valiant

¹ In the event, Neuburg proved to have been justified in his scepticism. The telegram was not from Waite; it was a practical joke of Dr. Wynn Westcott's, possibly. But I can no more rewrite this article than Crowley can replace Neuburg's ear.—A. Q., JR.

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Master, Elect of Nine, Elect of the Unknown, Elect of Fifteen, Perfect Elect, Illustrious, and in Scotland of the Holy Trinity, Companion, Master, Panissière, Master of the Triangle, of J.J.J., of the Sacred Vault, and of St. Andrew : Little Architect, Grand Architect, and Architect in Light and Perfection ; Apprentice, Companion, and Master Perfect Architect, Perfect Architect, and in Scotland Sublime, and Sublime of Heredom ; **Royal Arch**, Grand Axe, Sublime Knight of Choice, Knight of the Sublime Choice, Prussian Knight, *Knight of the Temple*, Knight of the Eagle, Knight of the Black Eagle, Knight of the Red Eagle, Knight of the White East, *Knight of the East*, Commander of the East, Grand Commander of the East, **Sovereign Commander of the Temple**, and *Prince of Jerusalem* : **Sovereign Prince Rose Croix of Kilwinning and of Heredom**, Knight of the West, Sublime Philosopher, Discreet of Chaos, Sage of Chaos, Knight of the Sun, *Supreme Commander of the Stars*, Sublime Philosopher Knight Noachite, of all four grades of the Key of Masonry, True Mason Adept, Sovereign Elect, Sovereign of Sovereigns, Grand Master of the Symbolic Lodges, Very High and Very Powerful, Knight of Palestine, Knight of the White Eagle, **Grand Elected Knight Kadosch Sovereign Inspector**, and **Grand Inquisitor Commander**, Beneficent Knight, Knight of the Rainbow, Knight of Banuka, Very Wise Israelite Prince, Sovereign Prince Talmudim, Sovereign Prince Zadkim, Grand-Haram, Grand Prince Haram, Sovereign Prince Hasid, *Sovereign Grand Prince Hasid*, and **Grand Inspector Intendant Regulator of the Order** : Sovereign Prince of the 78th, 79th, 80th and 81st degrees ; Sovereign Prince of the 82nd, 83rd, 84th,

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85th and 86th degrees ; *Sovereign Grand Prince of the 87th degree, Grand Master Constituent of the Order for the First Series, Sovereign Grand Prince of the 88th degree, Grand Master Constituent of the Order for the Second Series, Sovereign Grand Prince of the 89th degree, Grand Master Constituent of the Order for the Third Series,* and of the NINETIETH AND LAST DEGREE SUPREME GRAND CONSERVATOR AND ABSOLUTE GRAND SOVEREIGN AND PATRIARCH OF THE ANCIENT ORIENTAL RITE OF MIZRAIM : Pastophoris, Neocoris, and Melanophoris ; Christophoris, Perfect Master Balahate, Sublime Master Just and Perfect, *Sublime Epopht,* and Knight of the Iris ; Sublime Minerval, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Grand Elect Mysophilote, Knight of the Triangle, *Knight of the Sacred Arch, Knight of the Secret Vault, Knight of the Sword,* Knight of Jerusalem, Knight of the East and **Knight of the Rose Croix :** Knight of the Red Eagle, *Knight of the Temple,* Sublime Aletophilote, Knight of Libanus, *Knight of Heredom,* Knight of the Tabernacle, *Knight of the Serpent,* Knight Sage of Truth, *Knight Hermetic Philosopher,* Knight of the Key, Knight of the White Eagle, KNIGHT KADOSCH, Knight of the Black Eagle, KNIGHT OF THE ROYAL MYSTERY, and KNIGHT GRAND INSPECTOR ; Knight of Scandinavia, Sublime Commander of the Temple, Sublime Negotiate, Knight of Shota, Sublime Elect of Truth, *Grand Elect of the Æons, Sage Savaist, Knight of the Arch of Seven Columns, Prince of Light,* Sublime Hermetic Sage, *Prince of the Zodiac,* Sublime Sage of the Mysteries, Sublime Pastor of the Huts, *Knight of the Seven Stars, Sublime Guardian of the*

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Sacred Mount, and Sublime Sage of the Pyramids ; Sublime Philosopher of Samothrace, Sublime Titan of the Caucasus, Sage of the Labyrinth, Knight of the Phoenix, Sublime Scald, Sublime Orphic Doctor, Pontiff of Cadmia, Sublime Magus, Prince Brahmin, Grand Pontiff of Ogygia, Sublime Guardian of the Three Fires, Sublime Unknown Philosopher, Sublime Sage of Eleusis, Sublime Kawi, Sage of Mythras, Grand Installer Guardian of the Sanctuary, Grand Consecrator Architect of the Mystic City, Grand Eulogist Guardian of the Ineffable Name, Patriarch of Truth, Knight of the Golden Branch of Eleusis, Patriarch of the Planispheres, Patriarch of the Sacred Vedas, Supreme Master of Wisdom, Doctor of the Sacred Fire, Sublime Master of the Sloka, and Knight of the Lybic Chain : Patriarch of Isis, Sublime Knight Theosopher, Grand Pontiff of the Thebaid, Knight of the Redoubtable Sada, Sublime Elect of the Sanctuary of Mazias, Patriarch of Memphis, Grand Elect of the Temple of Midgard, Sublime Knight of the Valley of Oddy, Doctor of the Izeds, Sublime Knight of Kneph, Sublime Philosopher of the Valley of Kabal, Sublime Prince of Masonry, Grand Elect of the Sacred Curtain, Prince Pontiff of the Mystic City, Sovereign Master of Masonry, and Perfect Pontiff Sublime Master of the Great Work : Grand Defender of the Order, Sublime Catechist, Adept of Sirius, Adept of Babylon, Companion Banuke, Companion Zerdust, Companion of the Luminous Ring, Sage of Elea, Sage of Delphi, Sublime Sage of Symbols Intendant of Hieroglyphics, Sublime Sage of Wisdom, Sublime Sage of the Mysteries, Sublime Sage of the Sphinx, Priest of On, Grand Inspector Regulator General of the Order, Prince and Pontiff of Memphis, Grand Administrator of the Order,

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Looking-Glass; but he was in any case not there, being busy in working out by applied mathematics the problem as to which public man was worthiest of a biography in his columns next week.

The words "blasphemous orgie" altogether fail to give any idea of what occurred.

"Twenty-eight naked demi-mondaines now brimmed the buckets with satyrion," hardly describes it.

"These loathsome and abominable creatures next abandoned themselves to frenzied scenes unparalleled in Degenerate Rome," conveys an altogether false impression.

Only my own pen can describe it accurately; and I suppose the printer will refuse to set it up, and very likely telephone the Public Prosecutor. However, I shall try and sneak it through in Ciceronian Latin.

Crowleius dixit: Quid circa—(what on earth's the Latin for "tea"?)?

Omnes biberunt.

(There must be some concealed horror in these words. It *apparently* means "Crowley said—what about tea? They all drank." With this reservation we prepare to fly to Ostend, but print it. Printer.)

The good news ran through London like wildfire, doing every hundred yards in even time.

Ralph Shirley, stirring uneasily in his office chair, stroked his pet rhinoceros, and murmured "Piles o' money"; Leopold Rothschild asked if the zebra could indeed change his stripes; and although ninety and nine just persons that needed no repentance had that very minute been presented to the angels in heaven, the subject was completely forgotten in the exuberance of the higher joy.

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Waite's photograph, frock-coat and all, was carried in its red plush frame shoulder high by Mr. Battscombe Gunn ; Kennedy took a tailor's bill from his bosom, and dropped a silent tear upon it, murmuring "*His* letter!" The Editor, bustling Austin Harrison aside, took a bottle of champagne and a taxi to South Ealing, ignorant or careless of the reception that she might expect from that mother of "one *d*," née "Ada Lakeman, of Devonshire family and Greek extraction," with the words "Sidmouth Lodge—lickitysplit—my grandmother's hat!" while the stock of all those "public companies," of which Mr. Waite is "in business secretary and director," soared beyond the clouds, and had subsequently to be watered with tears.

Brooklyn, N.Y., where he was born, organized a procession which, instead of taking so many hours to pass a given point, decided, in flattering imitation of its greatest son, to take several weeks to come to it. The "old family of Lovell," which boasts itself to be his ancestor through his mother, saw the culmination of its own fortunes in this great fortune of its fortune-telling scion, and gave itself the Glad Eye; the "earliest settlers in Connecticut," who were responsible for his father, wriggled with pleasure in their graves, like tickled children: the "orders and fraternities which are concealed within Masonry or have arisen out of it," with which he "is connected in particular," tyed themselves and gave themselves over to unbridled joy: the "Hermetic Text Society" recently established by him "for the production by experts of rare old books and MSS. belonging to the literatures of Christian Mysticism, Rosicrucianism, Kabalism, and Alchemy" (*more commercial candour!*) tried in its joy to sell the MS. of

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the Book of Deuteronomy at Sothebys' : the very timbers of the ship in which he was "brought in infancy" to England shivered with ecstasy; the girls at the London Wall Exchange unanimously resolved never again to ring up 3469, however often and however angrily asked for, that the Restored-to-Favour might remain in the Adytum of God-nourished Silence for ever.

Neuburg himself wrote the following sonnet—

"They also serve who only stand, and—Waite,
Sweeter than sugar and as soft as silk,
You could not stand, you would not serve! What fate
Threatened the hope of Horlick's Malted Milk?
Graver than Gladstone, decenter than Dilke,
You, called to be the Peter of the State,
Tried in your agony to do a bilk :—
Though you could handle rod, and master bait.

"Now all is changed. Offended Crowley cries
Upon your shoulder. All's red nose, wet eyes.
You shall be Mary now as well as Martha!
The mystic quest is yours as well as mine,
Dilucid : sacramentally, in fine,
Victoria loved Albert : I love Arthur."

I shall now draw the Veil of Sanctimoniosity upon this touching scene.

A. QUILLER, JR.