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THE KING

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THE POET

WE left Frater P. at the end of 1906, acknowledged and admitted a Master of the Temple, and even more than this, as it were in perspective, and yet refusing to admit even to himself that he had obtained that Crown for which he had striven so earnestly since the beginning. Into these eight years had been concentrated the work not of one lifetime, but of many, but he felt that this work was in no sense complete. He might be entitled to the Grade without as yet being initiated into it, and we shall find that these eight years grew to eleven before this occurred.

We must now record how these three years were occupied. We learn that in September 1906, with Frater D. D. S., he had prepared a Ritual of the Augoeides, which might serve to initiate those who had not yet made any attainment on the path. We may again quote from the History Lesson :—

19. Returning to England, he laid his achievements humbly at the feet of a certain adept D. D. S., who welcomed him brotherly and admitted his title to that grade which he had so hardly won.

20. Thereupon these two adepts conferred together, saying : May it not be written that the tribulations shall be

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shortened? Therefore they resolved to establish a new Order which would be free from the errors and deceits of the former one.

21. Without Authority they could not do this, exalted as their rank was among adepts. They resolved to prepare all things, great and small, against that day when such Authority should be received by them, since they knew not where to seek for higher adepts than themselves, but knew that the true way to attract the notice of such was to equilibrate the symbols. The temple must be builded before the God can indwell it.

22. Therefore by order of D. D. S. did P. prepare all things by his arcane science and wisdom, choosing only those symbols which were common to all systems, and rigorously rejecting all names and words which might be supposed to imply any religious or metaphysical theory. To do this utterly was found impossible, since all language has a history, and the use (for example) of the word "spirit" implies the Scholastic Philosophy and the Hindu and Taoist theories concerning the breath of man. So was it difficult to avoid implication of some undesirable bias by using the words "order," "circle," "chapter," "society," "brotherhood," or any other to designate the body of initiates.

23. Deliberately, therefore, did he take refuge in Vagueness. Not to veil the truth to the Neophyte, but to warn him against valuing non-essentials. Should therefore the candidate hear the name of any God, let him not rashly assume that it refers to any known God, save only the God known to himself. Or should the ritual speak in terms (however vague) which seem to imply Egyptian, Taoist, Buddhist, Indian, Persian, Greek, Judaic, Christian, or Moslem philosophy, let him reflect that

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this is a defect of language ; the literary limitation and not the spiritual prejudice of the man P.

24. Especially let him guard against the finding of definite sectarian symbols in the teaching of his master, and the reasoning from the known to the unknown which assuredly will tempt him.

We labour earnestly, dear brother, that you may never be led away to perish upon this point ; for thereon have many holy and just men been wrecked. By this have all the visible systems lost the essence of wisdom.

We have sought to reveal the Arcanum ; we have only profaned it.

25. Now when P. had thus with bitter toil prepared all things under the guidance of D. D. S. (even as the hand writes, while the conscious brain, though ignorant of the detailed movements, applauds or disapproves the finished work) there was a certain time of repose, as the earth lieth fallow.

26. Meanwhile these adepts busied themselves intently with the Great Work.

27. In the fullness of time, even as a blossoming tree that beareth fruit in its season, all these pains were ended, and these adepts and their companions obtained the reward which they had sought—they were to be admitted to the Eternal and Invisible Order that hath no name among men.

28. They therefore who had with smiling faces abandoned their homes, their possessions, their wives, their children, in order to perform the Great Work, could with steady calm and firm correctness abandon the Great Work itself : for this is the last and greatest projection of the alchemist.

In the spring of 1907 we consequently find Frater P.

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living quietly his ordinary life as a man and engaged in no particular practices. His diary for this year 1907 has been lost, and we shall not be able to fill in the events of the year in any detail. We have, however, been able to inquire of those who had conversation with him during this period, and we hear of him as occupied mainly in reviewing the whole of his magical career—though why should we use an adjective, since every second of that career had been understood as part of the operation of the Magic of Light? It seems to him that this career was in some ways imperfect—as if he had jumped over some of the puddles in the path. He wished to explain to himself how this could be so, and, in particular, why. He found, for example, with regard to magical powers, that he was not able to exercise these in the way which he had originally conceived. He found, in short, that they were like all other powers, and could only be exercised as circumstance permitted. Even Herr Salchow could not cut his famous star unless there happened to be ice, and he was able to get to that ice with skates. Although he had performed so many wonders he perceived that his ability depended entirely upon some antecedent necessity. He was not a free agent. He was part of a universal scheme. Now the principal mark of the Master of the Temple was, in his opinion, that he could exercise these powers at will; that he could enter Samadhi at will. He now saw that these words “At will” really meant at the will of the Universe, and he could only obtain this freedom through the coincidence of his will with the Universal Will. The active and the passive must be perfectly harmonious before free-will became intelligible. Only Destiny could exercise free-will. In order to exercise free-will he must,

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therefore, become Destiny. He was then to know sooner or later the meaning of the Thirteenth Ether, to which subject we shall return in the proper place.

We are now to consider a further passage from the History Lesson :—

29. Also one V. V. V. V. V. arose, an exalted adept of the rank of Master of the Temple (or this much He disclosed to the Exempt Adepts), and His utterance is enshrined in the Sacred Writings.

30. Such are Liber Legis, Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente, Liber Liberi vel Lapidis Lazuli and such others whose existence may one day be divulged unto you. Beware lest you interpret them either in the Light or in the darkness, for only in L. V. X. may they be understood.

Of V. V. V. V. V. we have no information. We do not know, and it is of no importance that we should know, whether he is an actual person or a magical projection of Frater P., or identical with Aiwass, or anything else, for the reasons previously given when discussing the utterance of Liber Legis, *Equinox VII*, pp. 384 and 385. It is sufficient to say that all the Class A publications of the A . . . A . . . should be regarded as not only verbally and liberally inspired by Him, but that this accuracy should be taken to extend even to the style of the letter. If a word is unexpectedly spelt with a capital letter, it must not be thought that this is a mistake ; there is some serious reason why it should be so. During this year 1907, therefore, we find a number of such books dictated by him to Frater P. Of the sublimity of these books no words can give expression. It will be noticed that they are totally different in style from Liber Legis, just as both of them are

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different from any of the writings of Frater P. We may turn for a moment to consider the actual conditions under which he received them. We find the hint of the nature of the communication in Liber LX and Liber VII. On one or two occasions the scribe introduced his thought upon the note, in particular Liber VII, Chapter I, Verse 30, where Verse 29 suggested Verse 30 to Frater P., who wrote it consciously and was corrected in Verse 31. Frater P. is, however, less communicative about this writing than about Liber Legis. It appears that during the whole period of writing he was actually in Samadhi, although, strangely enough, he did not know it himself. It is a question of the transference of the Ego from the personal to the impersonal. He, the conscious human man, could not say "I am in Samadhi"; he was merely conscious that "that which was he" was in Samadhi. This came to him as a sort of consolation for the disappointment which he was experiencing, for it was in his attempt to get into Samadhi that the writing of these books occurred. Yet the consolation itself was in a sense a disappointment. The transference of the human conscience to the divine, the partial to the universal, was no longer an explosion, a spasm, an orgasm. It was a passing into peace unaccompanied by any of the dazzling and overwhelming phenomena with which he was familiar. He did not realize that this was an immense advance. He did not see that it meant that he had become so attuned to Samadhi that its occurrence became hardly noticeable. He was still farther from understanding that that Samadhi is permanent, eternal, entirely beyond accident of time or place; that it was only necessary, as it were, to lean back into it to be there. He knew that by pronouncing the

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Ineffable Name, the Universe dissolved in flame and earthquake. He was far from the point at which by the utterance of a single sigh the universe slipped into dissolution. Like Elijah in the mountain, he expected to see the Lord in the tempest and the lightnings. He did not understand the still small voice. We shall find an increasing difficulty in writing of Frater P., because from this time he is increasing that nameless and eternal Nothing of which nothing true can be said, and it sometimes seems as if the conscious man was ever diminishing, ever less important, ever much nearer to the normal human being. In reality it is that he is much less confused. He does not allow the Planes to interfere with each other. He perceives that each Plane must work out its own salvation; that it is fatally wrong to appeal to the higher. He has identified himself with the will of the higher, and that will must extend downwards, radiating upon the lower. The lower may aspire to the higher, but not in order to get help from its troubles. It may wish as a whole to unite itself with the higher, to lose itself in the higher, but it should be very wary about asking the higher to rearrange its parts.

Apart from these writings, the years 1907 and nearly the whole of 1908 are quite uneventful. We do, however, find that he went into several Magical retirements, for in the spring of 1907 we hear of him at Tangier; in the winter in the English Lakes; but a great deal of his time must have been taken up by the personal matter referred to on page 44 of No. VIII of the *Equinox*. That cup of bitterness, at least, he drank to the dregs. In May 1908 he was at Venice while we find that he spent August and September on a long walk through Spain. We do not learn that he did anything particular during this

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period, but on the first of October, he began a serious Retirement of a really strenuous character of about a fortnight in duration, which has been recorded for us minute by minute in a book called *John St. John*, published in *Equinox I*. The ostensible object of this Retirement was to discover for certain whether by the use of the plain straightforward methods accessible to the normal man he could definitely attain Samadhi within a reasonable time. In other words, whether the methods themselves were valuable. This was a most important experiment, for a great many people had argued that he owed his Attainment to his personal genius; that any methods would have done for him; that his methods might be useless for another. He was sufficiently satisfied with the efficacy of the methods to determine upon a course for which he had hitherto found no excuse—that of undertaking the gigantic task of the publication of all these methods on the basis of pure scepticism. There is, further, no doubt that by this Retirement he acquired a stock of magical energy which enabled him to carry out this work, to all intents and purposes without assistance, except of the most temporary and casual kind, from any other person. The mere quantity of this work in itself constitutes a miracle. The quality of this work is such that the word miracle is quite inadequate. It must be remembered that it was not only a question of writing down the details of this extraordinary knowledge, though that is surprising enough. For example, Book 777 from cover to cover was written down by him from memory in a single week, at a time when he was seriously ill and in constant pain. But in addition to this, he was compelled to waste his time in overseeing the mechanical details of printing and publishing. It is better to fight with beasts at Ephesus like

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St. Paul than with printers in London as he did. He had, moreover, to furnish practically the whole of the funds required for the publication. He gave not only the remains of his great fortune, but all his hope of future fortune, and he issued his publications at cost price, often very much below it. In addition to this he was continually harassed and distressed by every form of domestic affliction. The ability to endure these five years following seems cheaply purchased at the cost of a fortnight's hard work.

From this moment, however, our own task becomes extremely simple. Hitherto Frater P. has been a private character, of whose life no one was competent to speak. Without his diaries it would not have been possible to write a single page of this book. But henceforward he is a public character, occupied in public work, and little, indeed, will be the content of his private life; and yet there remains the most important event to be recorded: the dissolution of that life, the losing of his name.

(To be continued)