was a sound churchman; but he kept his religion to himself and went his own triumphant way in the world, keeping ecclesiastical discipline at arm's length as far as he himself was concerned. He was *prima facie* one of the saved, whenever he troubled to think about it, no doubt; but in practice the Church of England was simply a machine for keeping the lower classes in their proper place. At Trinity it was the same thing. Christianity was the official religion with which it was convenient to comply, just as it is convenient to go to a good tailor. It was, in short, a political paganism.

I don't suppose that I appreciated this fact at the time, in that way. My attitude was determined by the unquestionable beauty of ecclesiastical architecture and the comparative dignity of the Ritual. But when I discovered that Chapel was compulsory I immediately struck back. The Junior Dean halled me for not attending Chapel, which I was certainly not going to do, because it involved early rising. I excused myself on the ground that I had been brought up among the Plymouth Brethren. The Dean asked me to come and see him occasionally and discuss the matter, and I had the astonishing impudence to write to him that "the seed planted by my father, watered by my mother's tears, would prove too hardy a growth to be uprooted even by his eloquence and learning." It sounds like the most despicable hypocrisy, but it was pretty good cheek, and I had made up my mind that I would not be interfered with. I regarded any attempt to control my actions as an impertinent intrusion, and I was not going to waste time in taking any but the easiest way out.

I entered for the Moral Science Tripos with the idea that it would help me to learn something about the nature of

things. I don't know why it should have interested me. It must have been my subconscious will speaking. In any case, I was profoundly disgusted to find that Political Economy was one of the subjects. I attended the first lecture; the professor told us that the subject was a very difficult one because there were no reliable data. It is easy to imagine the effect of such a statement on a boy who had been trained in the exactitude of mathematics and chemistry. I closed my note-book, and never attended another lecture. My tutor naturally called me to account, but by great good fortune he was a man of extraordinary ability—Dr. A. W. Verrall. He accepted my plea that my business in life was to study English Literature. He was, indeed, most sympathetic. He knew only too well that the University curriculum afforded no opportunities. He knew, too, that my school knowledge was amply sufficient to take me through the University examinations without my doing any work for them. In fact, during my three years I only did one day's work for the University, and that consisted in employing a boy to read through a translation of a Greek play while I followed it in the text. I got either a first or second class in every subject.

One of the dons at Pembroke, a clergyman named Heriz Smith, ran a sort of secret cult which was disrespectfully called by outsiders the Belly-banders. There were said to be 7 degrees of initiation, in the highest of which the candidate was flagellated. I took the first degree out of curiosity. It made so little impression on me that I have altogether forgotten what took place. I remember that I was alone in the man's room with him. He blindfolded me. I waited for something to happen; it did not. I was, of course, utterly unable to divine what purpose

might lie behind the scheme. It was, of course, looked upon as cant by the man's own colleagues, who probably presumed certain undesirable features.

I am rather sorry now that I did not continue. There may have been nothing in it beyond sensuous mysticism, but for all I know Heriz Smith may have developed a method of psycho-analysis of quite possibly great value. I am inclined to think that the most scientific and reliable way of exploring people's unconscious minds would be to watch their reaction to a well-thought-out series of unfamiliar circumstances. One could compare their respective qualities, such as will-power, patience, dignity, courage, imperturbability, and so on. Such data should be of great use in answering the question, "Wherewithal shall a young man mend his ways?"

I was very put out by finding, as a first year man, that Hall was at half-past eight. I objected to my evenings being cut into by dining so late, and soon acquired the habit of having all meals sent in from the kitchen. I was thus almost totally dissociated from the corporate life of the College. The only institution which interested me was the Debating Society, The Magpie and Stump. But I could not take even this seriously. It seemed to me absurd for these young asses to emit their callow opinions on important subjects. I was only interested in "rag" debates. I remember on one occasion that the suggestion had been made by a committee inspired by one of the tutors, the eminent Mathematician, W. W. Rouse Ball, to establish a junior common-room. My contribution to the discussion was to say that "this proposal seems to me to be all Ball's." (An even happier moment was in a debate on a proposal to institute a Passion Play in England, when

Lord Kilmarnock said that it would certainly be a popular attraction to hear Arthur Roberts say "I thirst.")

My three years were determined by the influence of a fourth year man named Adamson, whom I think I met at the Chess Club. He started to talk to me about English literature. For the first time I heard the name of Shelley. "Wie gesagt, so gethan." Nothing else seemed to me worth while but a thorough reading of the great minds of the past. I bought all the classical authors. Whenever I found a reference of one to another I hastened to order his works. I spent the whole of my time in reading. It was very rare that I got to bed before daylight. But I had a horror of being thought a "smug"; and what I was doing was a secret from my nearest friends. Whenever they were about I was playing chess and cards. In the daytime I went canoeing or cycling. I had no occupations which brought me into close touch with any great body of undergraduates. I even gave up the habit of going round to see people, though I was always at home to any one who chose to call. I was not interested in the average man; I cultivated the freak. It was not that I liked abnormal people, it was simply the scientific attitude that it is from the abnormal that we learn.

Most people of this disposition are readily carried away into anti-social channels. But with me this was not the case. I dropped my subscription to the Boat Club because I was getting nothing out of it; but I was always wildly enthusiastic about the success of the boat. I have always had a passionate yearning for mankind, wholesale and retail, but I cannot endure to have them anywhere around. It is a very peculiar psychology; yet it is frequently found among poets. We are lonely, and suffer intensely on that

account. We are prepared to love any and every specimen of humanity in himself, for himself, and by himself; but even a dinner party gets on our nerves.

It is perhaps part of the psychology of sensitiveness. We cannot bear having our corners knocked off, and at the same time we are so well aware of the intense suffering of isolation that we long to lose ourselves in a crowd at a football match. I can be perfectly happy as an unknown individual in a revel, from a political meeting to a masked ball; but inevitably one's unique qualities draw attention to one; the cruel consciousness of self is reawakened, one becomes utterly miserable, and flees to the ends of the earth to be rid of one's admirers. A certain coarseness is inseparable from popularity, and one is therefore constantly driven away from the very thing one needs most. It is a quasi-electrical phenomenon. One can only find satisfaction in intimate union with one's opposite.

This fact explains very largely the peculiar nature of the love affairs of great men. They cannot tolerate their like. Their superiority is recognised as the cause of their pain, and they assuage their pain by cultivating people to whom that superiority means nothing. They deliberately seek the most degraded and disgusting specimens of women that exist. Otherwise, they brutalise themselves by addiction to drink or drugs. The motive is always the same; to lose consciousness of their Promethean pangs.

I must here point out that the social system of England makes it impossible for a young man of spirit and intelligence to satisfy his nature with regard to sex in any reasonable way. The young girl of position similar to his own is being fattened for the market. Even when his own situation makes it possible for him to obtain her he has to

pay an appalling price; and it becomes more difficult than ever for him to enjoy female companionship. Monogyny is nonsense for any one with a grain of imagination. The more sides he has to his nature, the more women he needs to satisfy it. The same is, of course, true, *mutatis mutandis,* of women. A woman risks her social existence by a single experiment. A young man is compelled by the monogamic system to develop his character by means of corrupt society vampires or women of the lower classes, and though he may learn a great deal from these sources, it cannot but be unfortunate that he has no opportunity to learn from women of his own birth, breeding, education, and rank in society.

Now, monogamy has very little to do with monogyny; and should have less. Monogamy is only a mistake because it leaves the excess women unsatisfied and unprovided for. But apart from this, it provides for posterity, and it is generally recognised that this is the crux of all practical arguments on the subject. But the defect of monogamy, as generally understood, is that it is connected with the sexual appetite. The Practical Wisdom of the Astrologers has made this clear. The Fifth House (love, children) has nothing to do with the Seventh (marriage, lawsuits, public enemies). Marriage would lead to very little trouble if men would get rid of the idea that it is anything more than a financial and social partnership. People should marry for convenience, and agree to go their separate ways without jealousy. It should be a point of honour for the woman to avoid complicating the situation with children by other men, unless her husband be willing, which he would be if he really loved her. It is monstrous for a man to pretend to be devoted to securing his wife's

happiness and yet to wish to deprive her of a woman's supreme joy: that of bearing a child to the man whom she desires sexually, and is therefore indicated by nature as the proper father, though he may be utterly unsuitable as a husband. In most cases this would be so, for it must obviously be rare that a man with a genius for paternity should also possess a talent for domesticity. We have heard a great deal in recent years of the freedom of women. They have gained what they thought they wanted, and it has availed them nothing. They must adopt the slogan, "There shall be no property in human flesh." They must train men to master their sexual selfishness, while of course allowing them the same freedom as they themselves will enjoy. The true offences against marriage arise when sexual freedom results in causing injury to the health or estate of the partner. But the sentimental wrong of so-called infidelity is a symptom of the childishness of the race.

Among artists, the system here advocated has always been more or less in full swing. Such societies exist in circumstances highly inimical to a satisfactory life. Financial considerations alone make this obvious; yet it is notorious that such people are almost uniformly happy. There is no revolt against the facts of life, because there is no constraint. The individual is respected as such, and is allowed to act as he or she likes without penalty or even reproach. Only when selfish or commercial considerations arise do we find catastrophe.

It is commonly supposed that women themselves are the chief obstacle to such an arrangement. But this is only because they have been drilled into thinking that the happiness and well-being of the children depend upon their supporting the existing system. When you tackle a woman

on the subject she pretends to be very shocked; and hysterically denies the most obvious facts. But she wilts under cross-examination, and agrees with the above conclusions in a very short time. For women have no morality in the sense of the word which is ordinarily understood in Anglo-Saxondom. Women never let ideals interfere with their practical good sense. They are also uninfluenced by selfishness; it is natural to them to put the interests of their children before their own. Men, on the other hand, are hard to convince. When forced to analyse the situation, they arrive not at a reason but at a prejudice, and this is purely the brainless bestial lust for exclusive possession.

Anthropology proves these theorems thoroughly. The first step in civilisation is to restrain women from infidelity. The institutions of the Pardah, Sati, and the marriage laws all show that men think that women must be kept under lock and key, whereas women have always realised that it is impossible and undesirable to prevent men from taking their happiness where they find it. The emancipation of women, therefore, depends entirely upon leaving them free to act as men do. Their good sense will prevent them from inflicting the real wrongs; and besides, their complete independence and happiness will encourage them in nobility and generosity.

We already see, in America, the results of the Emancipation of Women from the economic fetter. There is an immense class of bachelor girls (and of married women whose husbands are strictly business machines) who pick up men with the same nonchalance as the young "blood" picked up women in my time at Cambridge.

I found myself, from the very beginning of my University career, urged by circumstances of every sort to indulge my

passion in every way but the right one. My ill-health had prevented me from taking any part in the ordinary amusements of the public-school boy. My skill in avoiding corporal punishment and my lack of opportunity for inflicting it, had saved me from developing the Sadistic or Masochistic sides to my character. But at Cambridge I discovered that I was of an intensely passionate nature, physiologically speaking. My poetic instincts, further, transformed the most sordid liaisons into romance, so that the impossibility of contracting a suitable and serious relation did not worry me. I found, moreover, that any sort of satisfaction acted as a powerful spiritual stimulus. Every adventure was the direct cause of my writing poetry. In the periods of suppression my brain had been completely clogged ; I was as incapable of thought of any kind as if I had had the toothache.

I have a genuine grudge against the system on this account. Whole months of my life, which might have been profitably spent in all sorts of work, were taken up by the morbid broodings of the unsatisfied appetite. Repression is as mentally unwholesome as constipation, and I am furious, to this hour, that some of the best years of my life, which should have been spent in acquiring knowledge, were sterilised by the suffocating stupor of preoccupation with sex. It was not that my mind was working on the subject ; it was simply unable to work. It was a blind, horrible ache for relief. The necessities of men in this respect vary enormously. I was, no doubt, as exceptional case. But I certainly found even forty-eight hours of abstinence sufficient to dull the fine edge of my mind. Woe unto them by whom offences come ! The stupidity of having had to waste uncounted priceless hours in chasing what ought

to have been brought to the back door every evening with the milk!

Cambridge is, of course, an ideal place for a boy in my situation. Prostitution is to all intents and purposes non-existent, but nearly all the younger women of the district are eager to co-operate in the proper spirit—that of romance and passion.

There is thus little trace of Public School "faute de mieux" pæderasty: it survives only in very small "æsthetic" coteries, composed mostly of congenital perverts, and in theological circles, where fear of scandal and of disease inhibit natural gratification. Oxford, of course, is different, chiefly, I believe, owing to the great Balliol tradition of statesmanship. The idea seems to be that intrigues with women are more dangerous than useful to a rising politician: while on the other side of the fence the state of the Law supplies one with a pull on one's intimates on the Bench or in the Privy Council which is only the stronger because it is not, and never can be, used.

STANZA XIII

"I looked, and saw that hope was hell"
Shelley.
"In diplomacy it is necessary for a diplomatist
to be diplomatic." Steel Croston.
"Oh Charley is my darling, my darling, my darling!
Oh Charley is my darling, the Young Chevalier!"
Scottish Song.

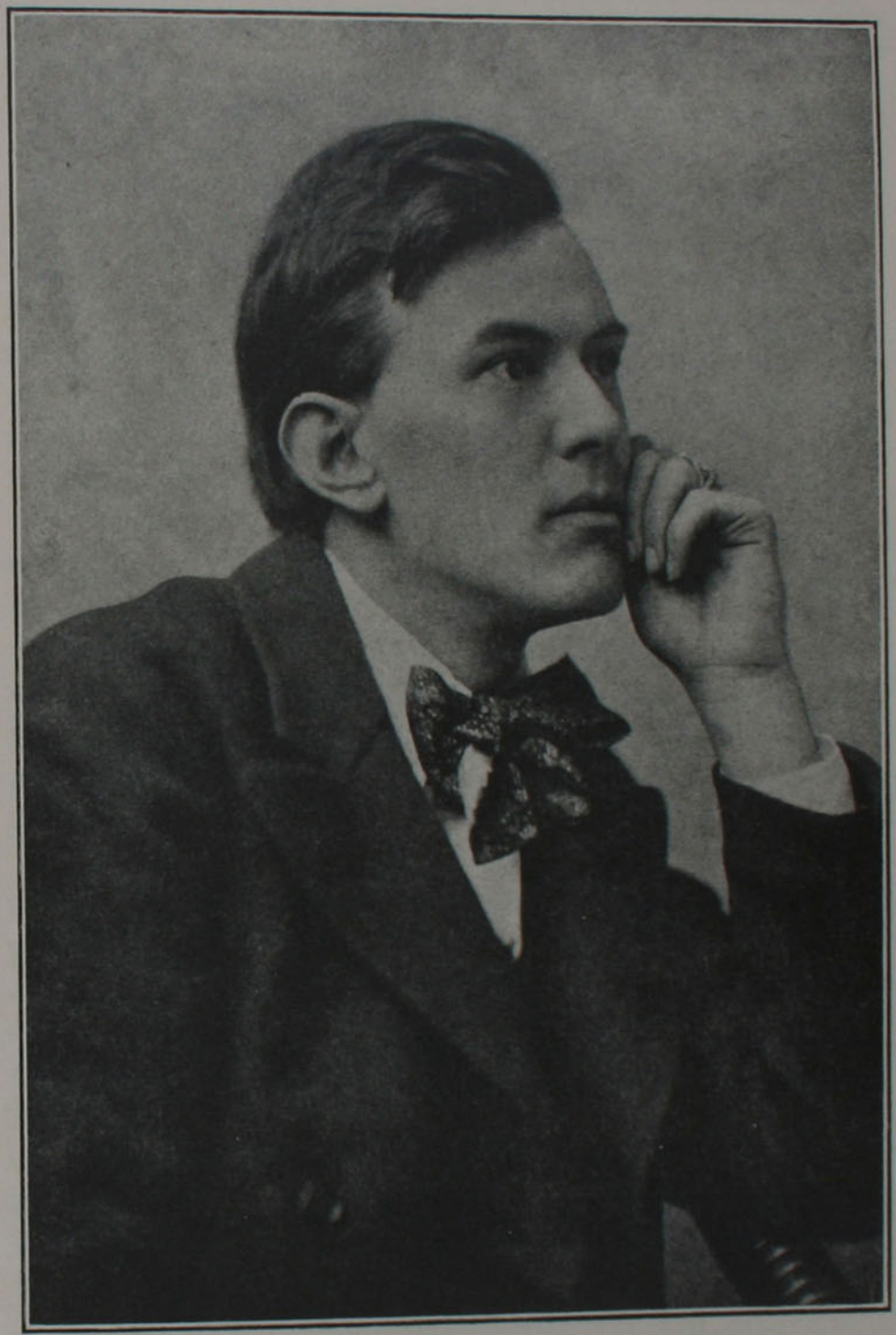
Till the Great Gate of Trinity opened me the way to freedom I had always been obsessed more or less either by physical weakness or the incubus of adolescence. I had never known what it was to be able to work freely and gladly. Now, however, I was able to give myself with absolute concentration to literature, and I read everything important in the language with the utmost thoroughness. For example, I read the whole of the writings of people like Carlyle, Swift, Coleridge, Fielding, Gibbon, and so on. In this way I obtained a much more comprehensive idea of these men than if I had, as people usually do, picked out the masterpieces.

I was very anxious that my style should not be influenced by my contemporaries, and also not to waste myself on anybody who had not stood the test of time. I made it a rule to read no one who had not been dead for fifty years, unless brought under my notice in some special way. For example, I could not avoid Swinburne, as one of my friends was crazy about him, and I could not doubt, after the first acquaintance, that he was a classic. Similarly, I allowed myself to read Sir Richard Burton, because the "Arabian Nights" was an established masterpiece, and his was the best translation. I also read a good deal of

French literature and all the best Greek and Latin authors. But my peculiar temperament made me balk at one or two fences. I had certain innate ideas about literature ; I say innate because I cannot imagine on what grounds I formed them. Thus I could not tolerate the idea of a novel exceeding a certain length, with the result that I have never read a page of Samuel Richardson. It is easier to understand the objection which I had to what I thought gossip. I have never read Boswell, and have never been able to bring myself to face the average memoir. With regard to history* again, I demanded that the subject should be important. I did not see why I should bother my head about the Crimean War. I studied philosophy and kindred subjects with the greatest enthusiasm ; but resented the form in which it was set forth by such people as Plato. It seemed to me that the argument of any of Plato's dialogues might have been presented much more clearly and cogently in about a tenth of the space. I made a very thorough study of logic as being my critical apparatus.

It is hard to say what motive impelled me to work so desperately hard as I did. Much of the work was anything but pleasant ; and at the time, no less than now, it appeared quite useless. But I had a strong sense of duty about it. I think the idea was mostly to make sure that I knew everything that there was to be known, and incidentally to avoid the possibility of plagiarism. There was a certain tinge of vanity in the matter as well. I thought it shameful to leave anything unread. I was influenced by Ruskin's imbecile remark that any book worth reading was

* There is no such thing as History. The facts, even were they available, are too numerous to grasp. A selection must be made ; and this can only be one-sided, because the selector is enclosed in the same network of Time and Space as his subject.



ÆT. XXIII

worth buying, and in consequence acquired books literally by the ton.

My plan of going from each author to those whom he quoted had a great advantage. It established a rational consecution in my research; and as soon as I reached a certain point the curves became re-entrant, so that my knowledge acquired a comprehensiveness which could never have been so satisfactorily attained by any arbitrary curriculum. I began to understand the real relation of one subject to another. I think I must have unconsciously asked myself which subject treated of reality in the most intimate and ultimate sense. I was, of course, far from the conception that all truth is equally important, or that no truth can by itself cover the whole ground of existence. My tendency was to discard certain types of research as immaterial. I gradually got the idea that the thing I was looking for was abstruse; and one of the results of this was to induce me to read the literature of alchemy. It is perhaps natural for a young man to confuse obscurity with profundity.

With regard to the choice of a profession, I decided on the Diplomatic Service. It seemed to me to afford the greatest opportunities for worldly enjoyment, while at the same time demanding the highest qualities of mind. The subtlety of intrigue has always fascinated me. It is very curious that this should have been the case, in view of my master passion for truth and my relentless determination to tell it without regard for consequences. The obstacle to my success in the preliminary canter was that I had no aptitude whatever for learning languages. I could master the grammar of a language in a few hours; but I was impatient of acquiring the vocabulary. Genders and inflections

irritated my sense of simplicity. It is also difficult for me to acquire a language by ear, partly because my hearing is not particularly acute, and partly because I resent any conversation whatever which does not deal with matters of prime importance. The early stages of learning a language are, therefore, agonising.

I had been advised with regard to the fourth language required for the examination not to take Italian, because so many people spoke it so perfectly, or Spanish, because it was considered the easiest way into the service, but Russian, on account of its extreme difficulty, and because the knowledge of it made one eligible for appointment to the most interesting and brilliant Court in Europe. This led to my going to St. Petersburg, a journey which worked wonders in enlarging my outlook on the world.

The passion for travel was already very strong in me. Home was my idea of hell ; and London itself had a sordid aspect which never appealed to me. The idea of wickedness in London is connected with that of shame, and besides this there are certainly excellent reasons for a poet to feel unhappy there. To begin with, I can't stand the climate. I have known rare days in May and June when youth pays a fleeting visit to town, when the sunlight excites and the breeze braces one. It is this idea of the Young Dionysus with which I am in love. I always feel myself as about eighteen or twenty ; I always look at the world through those eyes. It is my constant sorrow that things do not always accommodate themselves to that point of view ; and it is my eternal mission to redeem the Universe to that state of intoxicated innocence and spiritual sensuality.

" I bring ye wine from above
From the vats of the storied sun.
For every one of ye love,
And life for every one."

The air of London is damp and depressing. It suggests the consciousness of sin. Whether one has a suite in the Savoy or an attic in Hoxton, the same spiritual atmosphere weighs upon the soul.

To a poet, moreover, the artistic side of London is the abomination of desolation. The plays are commercialised either for sentimentality or pornography. There is something uncomfortable in going to see a play by Shakespeare or Ibsen. Actors and spectators alike seem to be engaged in a dreary ritual. Grand Opera is even worse. Covent Garden patronises Wagner ; he is an excuse for the display of diamonds. I shall never forget my first experience of Continental opera : " Lohengrin " at Stockholm. The atmosphere was absolutely natural ; people had gone there because they really liked the music. I was transported into my own ideal world of love and melody. The caresses of my companion were the overflowing of ecstatic passion. Sin had been abolished, I was back in Eden.

In London one cannot even go to the National Gallery or the British Museum with a pure heart as one goes to the Louvre or the Prado. One cannot get away from the sense that one is performing an act of piety.

Concerts are even more dreadful than the Opera. The surroundings are invariably bleak ; one feels that the artist is doing it on purpose. Singing and playing demand background. Singing is the natural expression of human emotion, the joy of youth and life as connected with the landscapes of Corot and Gauguin, or with the interiors of

Teniers. Elaborate instrumental music asks for appropriate architecture, not necessarily that of the cathedral. Music should have its own temples. London concert halls are blasphemous and obscene.

Before the cinema—the panorama. The camera obscura and the magic lantern were the popular scientific wonders of the period. Some nameless *pompier* had sluiced I do not know how many acres of canvas with a representation of Niagara. They built a pavilion to house it. One was supposed to be standing on Goat Island—in fact, one was rather the goat—and one walked round a vast gallery and inspected each segment of the waterfall in turn. In due course everyone had seen it, and the question was what to do with the building. They turned it into a *palais de glace* with real ice. I, always keen on skating, bought a ticket for the season. The convention was for the ordinary skater to swing round and round the outside, while the experts performed their evolutions in the centre. At that time I was bent on learning the outside forward loop, which involves raising the unemployed leg very high until you discover the knack. Absorbed in this labour I failed to observe the Duke of Orleans, a glaring girl on either arm. He swerved, swanking, out of the ruck, and collided with me. We both sat down very hard, but I on the point of his skate to the detriment of my much prized perineum. Being then a perfect young fool, as I am now a perfect old one, I supposed it incumbent on my race and caste to pretend not to be hurt, so I forced myself to go on skating despite agony so great that I could hardly bite back the tears, until I thought I had done enough for honour and felt free to slip away. I was engaged that night to a committee meeting of the Climbing Club at the rooms

of H. V. Reade in Jermyn Street. I managed somehow to sit through the meeting, the matter being made worse by my insane bashfulness which prevented me asking my host to let me use his bedroom. We proceeded to a restaurant to dinner, but there I broke down and excused myself.

The rest of the evening's entertainment remains a mystery. I have a vague memory of being stretched on the seat of a railway carriage, and I learned later that I had reached home, some six miles from London, soaked to the skin. I suppose I must have wandered about in the rain for an indefinite period, in pain too great to know what I was doing except to try to be brave. The blow had set up cystitis which kept me in bed for the next three weeks. The inflammation gradually disappeared after spreading to the prostate gland and the urethra. Nor was that the end of the trouble. The urethritis caused a discharge which proved very refractory to treatment, and ultimately determined a triple stricture for which I am being treated at the moment of dictating this paragraph more than a quarter of a century after the accident. The moral is, of course, to avoid the Bourbons, though, as the Duke is reported to be dying at the present moment, it is quite possible that his physician is shaking his head wisely and saying : " Ah, Your Highness, this is what comes from getting mixed up with people like Aleister Crowley ! . . ."

The very streets testify against the city. On the one hand we have pale stunted hurrying pygmies jostling each other in the bitter search for bread ; an ant heap is a miracle of beauty and dignity in comparison. On the other, when it comes to excitement or amusement, we see perspiring brutes belching the fumes of beer ; coarse, ugly parodies of apes. Nature affords no parallel to their degradation.

There is no open air life, physical or mental, and there is the ever-abiding sense of sin and shame to obsess these slaves. Nowhere, except in English cities, do these conditions exist. Slum life there is elsewhere, and misery enough; pitiful struggle, monstrous greed and triumphant brutality. But only in England are the people poisoned through and through; elsewhere there is a sense of independence even in the most servile. The Russian mujik is in his way an aristocrat.

And the cause of all these phenomena is one and the same. It is the Anglo-Saxon conception of Christianity which pollutes the race. Only the well-fed Pagan, whether he be a bishop or a bookmaker, is exempt, because he either does not take religion seriously, or takes it individually without reference to his neighbour. The most bigoted members of the Greek and Roman communions on the Continent, though they may feel their religion passionately and make it the mainspring of their lives, are not bound together by that insect-like collective consciousness which stamps the Anglo-Saxon. The English Pagan is in nine cases out of ten a Norman or a Celt. He has the aristocratic consciousness, whatever he may tell you about his religious opinions. Now it is all very well to be one of the master class and smile contemptuously while bowing the knee in the temple of Rimmon, but a poet cannot be content with the situation. Hence the most intensely aristocratic types, like Shelley and Byron, instead of acquiescing in the social system which made them superiors, felt with acute agony the degradation of the slaves among whom they moved, and became revolutionaries and exiles because they could not endure to live in such a degraded community.

Certain classes in England possess manliness and self-respect. As a rule they are connected with sport and agriculture, or are skilled workmen. The essence of aristocracy is to take a pride in being what you are, whatever that may be. There is no room for this in industrialism, and the result is that one can watch a London thoroughfare for hours together without even seeing an individual whose nonentity is not repulsive. Every one who possesses natural advantages has got out of the ruck, and takes very good care to avoid further contamination. Such people lead lives of artificial seclusion. It is part of their Freudian protection to become unconscious of the mob. But it is the business of the poet to see, hear, and know everything. He dare not let himself forget. England is the most fertile mother of poets, but she kills the weak and drives the strong to happier lands. James Thomson, John Davidson, Richard Middleton, Ernest Dowson, and I don't know how many more even in our own generation found England unendurable for this one reason. The English poet must either make a successful exile or die of a broken heart.

At Cambridge I was surrounded by a more or less happy, healthy, prosperous set of parasites. The Paganism of the University had to a great extent redeemed them from the sense of sin. But during vacation I either hid myself in the mountains among the sturdy peasants or went abroad. North-Western Europe appealed to me. There was a certain element of romance in the long nights, the cold clear air, the ice. I loved to wander solitary in Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. There was a mystery in the streets, and a spontaneous gaiety in the places of amusement, which satisfied my soul. Life seemed both more remote and more intense. As a stranger, I never came

into contact with the *malaise,* the soul-searching, the psychological dissatisfaction which Ibsen and Strindberg describe. But though my view was thus entirely superficial, it was none the less in a certain sense profound and accurate. One can get a very good idea of a country by travelling through it in the train. The outward and visible signs do, after all, reveal, especially to the poet, its inward and spiritual graces. The people who lead one astray are the analysts who fail to come out the other side. Mr. Jorrocks and Mr. Pickwick give a better idea of England than Charles Reade or Sir Walter Besant. Dumas père tells us more about France than Zola. A great deal of the interior workings of a national mind ought to be taken for granted. One can distinguish profitably between two pretty girls at the end of an opera glass. It is absolutely misleading to disembowel them, as the average so-called psychological writer tries to do. There are all sorts of obscure processes always at work in Nature, and they are more or less the same for all of us. To insist upon them is one of the worst kinds of false thinking. Zola's peasants in *La Terre* are untrue, except as among themselves. The ultimate issue is that these people breed cattle, grow corn and wine, and fight like demons for their country. Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu* was a disgrace to literature. Mass psychology is the only important thing about the masses. The greatest artists, such as Emily Brontë—or was it her brother?—make no such blunder. They deal with individuals; but they never lose sight of the fact that the individual is only such to a limited extent. He is only one figure in a picture; and when he stands out unnecessarily, there is something wrong with the picture. Captain Marryat's stories contain masterpieces of individual portraiture, but he

never loses sight of the background. I am convinced that the English people were very much happier under the old semi-feudal system. "Hard cases make bad law." We have abolished all kinds of injustice on our attention being called to them; but the result has been that we have created an artificial doctrinaire society in which nobody is really happy or prosperous. All classes are complaining. We are in the condition of a man whose nerves all talk at once instead of doing their work quietly. The most appalling of political mistakes is to develop consciousness in sections of the social organism which are not its brains. The crash has come in Russia; and we shall not have long to wait.

But in those days of adolescence I had no inducement to do any political thinking. The atmosphere was one of prosperity and stability. It was taken for granted that England was the greatest country in the world, and that nothing could go wrong. One heard about Ireland as a perennial nuisance; and Mr. Gladstone was regarded as a traitor, neither more nor less. One of my tutors had been a Caius Don named d'Arcy, whose father was the Rector of Nymphsfield in Gloucestershire. I had spent some time there—to make my first appearance in the hunting field. "Chapel-folk" were looked upon as criminals of no class. I remember the old rector chuckling over a riddle. "Why is Gladstone's hair like a tuft of grass?" "Because it grows on the top of an old sod." That was the quality of political thought which was considered on the same level of certainty as two and two make four. I recall two lines of a poem that I wrote to Lord Rosebery:

> "And now, my lord, *in medias res,*
> Get rid of all your red Rad fleas."

I had been invited to meet Gladstone in North Wales, refused to go, and wrote him a poem.

LINES ON BEING INVITED TO MEET THE PREMIER IN WALES, SEPTEMBER, 1892.

I will not shake thy hand, old man,
I will not shake thy hand ;
You bear a traitor's brand, old man,
You bear a liar's brand.
Thy talents are profound and wide,
Apparent power to win ;
It is not everyone has lied
A nation into sin.

And look not thou so black, my friend,
Nor seam that hoary brow ;
Thy deeds are seamier, my friend,
Thy record blacker now.
Your age and sex forbid, old man,
I need not tell you how,
Or else I'd knock you down,* old man,
Like that extremist cow.

You've gained your every seat, my friend,
By perjuring your soul ;
You've climbed to Downing Street, my friend,
A very greasy poll.
You bear a traitor's brand, old man,
You bear a liar's brand ;
I will *not* shake thy hand, old man,
I will *not* shake thy hand.

And I didn't.

My life at Cambridge did nothing to make me think more deeply. With regard to foreign politics, the position

* Mr. Gladstone was attacked by a cow in Hawarden Park in 1891.

was parallel. It was pure Kipling; but (in another water-tight compartment) I was passionately enamoured of the views of Shelley, though I did not correlate them with any practical programme.

There was yet another compartment. Scott, Burns and my cousin Gregor had made me a romantic Jacobite. I regarded the Houses of Hanover and Coburg as German usurpers; and I wished to place "Mary III and IV" on the throne. I was a bigoted legitimist. I actually joined a conspiracy on behalf of Don Carlos, obtained a commission to work a machine gun, took pains to make myself a first-class rifle shot and studied drill, tactics, and strategy. However, when the time came for the invasion of Spain, Don Carlos got cold feet. The conspiracy was disclosed; and Lord Ashburnham's yacht, which was running the arms, fell into the hands of the Spanish Navy.

This part of my mind did succeed in getting disturbed by the other parts. My reactionary conservatism came into conflict with my anti-Catholicism. A reconciliation was effected by means of what they called the Celtic church. Here was a romantic and mystical idea which suited my poetical and religious notions down to the ground. It lived and moved in an atmosphere of fairies, seal-women, and magical operations. Sacramentalism was kept in the foreground, and sin was regarded without abhorrence. Chivalry and mystery were its pillars. It was free from priestcraft and tyranny, for the simple reason that it did not really exist!

My innate transcendentalism leapt out towards it. The "Morte d'Arthur," "Lohengrin" and "Parsifal" were my world. I not only wanted to go out on the quest of the Holy Grail, I intended to do it. I got the idea of

chastity as a positive virtue. It was delightful to be pure. Previously, chastity had been my chief abomination; the sign-manual of cowardice, heartlessness, and slavery. In the Celtic church there was no fear of God, but a communion with Him as nobly familiar as the relations of Roland and Charlemagne. I still took everything very literally. Browning's quotation:

"Childe Roland to the dark tower came"

was as real to me as the Battle of Waterloo. In a sense, perhaps, even more so. I think it was only due to my subconscious common sense that I did not go and see Browning and ask him where to find the dark tower!

STANZA XIV

O Fool! Begetter of Both I and Naught, resolve this Naughty K-Not!
O! Ay! This I am IO! IO! IAO! For I owe "I" aye to Nibbana's Oe.
I say — Pé, the Liquid Letter of the House of God! for Pé comes after
O — after Ayin that triumphs over Aleph in Ain, that is O.
OP — us, the Work! The OP-ening of THE EYE!
Thou Naughty Boy, thou spendst THE EYE OF HORUS to fit
Blind Eye that weeps! The Upright One in Thine Upright mood
rejoiceth — Death to all Fishes! Liber 333

I obtained the honour of Knighthood* from one of Don Carlos's lieutenants. It is part of the legitimist theory that the sovereign had abrogated to himself the monopoly of conferring spurs, while on the other hand a woman could not confer knighthood. All Victorian creations are invalid.

The effect of adopting the official Anglo-German theory is even more patent to-day than in the nineties. Then it was City Knights; the next step was the matinée idol; now the pawnbroker, the movie star, and the low comedian have made the title a badge of nastiness. There is only one honour connected with true knighthood, that of being a man of honour, of having taken the vows—to uphold the right, to serve mankind, to protect the distressed, and generally to exercise the manly virtues. When renegade Jews and clowns walk in to dinner before gentlemen, the latter may prefer to go without.

I took my admission to the Order with absolute seriousness, keeping vigil over my arms in a wood. The theory of the Celtic church was that Romanism was a late heresy, or at least schism. The finest cathedral in the world was too small for the church, as Brand found. The mountains and

* There is a great deal more to this story; but I may not tell it—yet.

forests were consecrated spots. The nearest thing to a material house would be a hermitage such as one was likely to encounter while travelling on the Quest.

But all these ideas, seriously as I entertained them, were in the nature of reverie. In practical life I was still passionately engaged in cleansing myself from the mire of Christianity by deliberate acts of sin and worldliness. I was so happy to be free from the past tyranny that I found continual joy in affirming my emancipation.

There were thus several divers strands in the loom of my soul which had not yet been woven into a harmonious pattern. I dealt with life empirically, taking things as they came, without basing them on any fundamental principle.

Two main events were destined to put me on the road towards myself. The first took place in Stockholm about midnight of December 31st, 1896. I was awakened to the knowledge that I possessed a magical means of becoming conscious of and satisfying a part of my nature which had up to that moment concealed itself from me. It was an experience of horror and pain, combined with a certain ghostly terror, yet at the same time it was the key to the purest and holiest spiritual ecstasy that exists. At the time, I was not aware of the supreme importance of the matter. It seemed to me little more than a development of certain magical processes with which I was already familiar. It was an isolated experience, not repeated until exactly twelve months later, to the minute. But this second occasion quickened my spirit, always with the result of "loosening the girders of the soul," so that my animal nature stood rebuked and kept silence in the presence of the immanent divinity of the Holy Ghost; omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, yet blossoming in my soul as

if the entire forces of the Universe from all eternity were concentrated and made manifest in a single rose.

The second event took place in October, 1897. The occasion was an attack of illness. It was nothing very serious, and I had long been accustomed to expect to die before I came of age. But for some reason or other I found myself forced to meditate upon the fact of mortality. It was impressed upon me that I hadn't a moment to lose. There was no fear of death or of a possible "hereafter"; but I was appalled by the idea of the futility of all human endeavour. Suppose, I said to myself, that I make a great success in diplomacy and become Ambassador to Paris. There was no good in that—I could not so much as remember the name of the Ambassador a hundred years ago. Again, I wanted to be a great poet. Well, here I was in one of the two places in England that made a speciality of poets, yet only an insignificant fraction of the three thousand men in Residence knew anything about so great a man as Æschylus. I was not sufficiently enlightened to understand that the fame of the man had little or nothing to do with his real success, that the proof of his prowess lay in the invisible influence which he had had upon generations of men. My imagination went a step further. Suppose I did more than Cæsar or Napoleon in one line, or than Homer and Shakespeare in the other—my work would be automatically cancelled when the globe became uninhabitable for man.

I did not go into a definite trance in this meditation; but a spiritual consciousness was born in me corresponding to that which characterises the Vision of the Universal Sorrow, as I learnt to call it later on. In Buddhist phraseology, I perceived the First Noble Truth—Sabbé Pi

Dukkham—everything is sorrow. But this perception was confined to the planes familiar to the normal human consciousness. The fatuity of any work based upon physical continuity was evident. But I had at this time no reason for supposing that the same criticism applied to any transcendental universe. I formulated my will somewhat as follows: "I must find a material in which to work which is immune from the forces of change." I suppose that I still accepted Christian metaphysics in some sense or another. I had been satisfied to escape from religion to the world. I now found that there was no satisfaction here. I was not content to be annihilated. Spiritual facts were the only things worth while. Brain and body were valueless except as the instruments of the soul.

The ordinary materialist usually fails to recognise that only spiritual affairs count for anything, even in the grossest concerns of life. The facts of a murder are nothing in themselves; they are only adduced in order to prove felonious intent. Material welfare is only important as assisting men towards a consciousness of satisfaction.

From the nature of things, therefore, life is a sacrament; in other words, all our acts are Magical Acts. Our spiritual consciousness acts through the will, and its instruments upon material objects, in order to produce changes which will result in the establishment of the new conditions of consciousness which we wish. That is the definition of Magick. The obvious example of such an operation in its most symbolic and ceremonial form is the Mass. The Will of the priest transmutes a wafer in such wise that it becomes charged with the divine substance in so active a form that its physical injection gives spiritual nourishment to the communicant. But all our actions fit this equation.

A tailor with the toothache takes a portion of the wealth derived from the business to which he has consecrated himself, a symbol of his accumulated and stored energy, in order to have the tooth removed and so to recover the consciousness of physical well-being.

Put in this way, the Magical Theory of existence is self-evident. I did not apprehend it clearly at this time; but I unconsciously acted upon it as soon as I had discovered the worthlessness of the world. But I was so far from perceiving that every act is magical, whether one likes it or not, that I supposed the escape from matter to involve a definite invasion of the spiritual world. Indeed, I was so far from understanding that matter was in its nature secondary and symbolic, that my principal preoccupation was to obtain first-hand sensory evidence of spiritual beings. In other words, I wanted to evoke the denizens of other planes to visible and audible appearance.

This resolution was the first manifestation of my true will. I had thrown myself with the utmost enthusiasm into various occupations from time to time, but they had never occupied my entire attention. I had never given myself wholly to chess, mountaineering, or even to poetry. Now, for the first time, I felt myself prepared to expend my resources of every kind to attain my purpose.

To me the spiritual world consisted roughly of the Trinity and their angels on the one side; the Devil and his on the other. It is absolutely sophistical to pretend that Christianity is not Manichæan in essence. The Vedanta theory of Advaitism in the Upanishads makes evil—and indeed all manifested existence—Maya, pure illusion. But even at this, there is no satisfactory explanation of the appearance of the illusion. In Christianity evil is just as real as

good ; and so long as two opposites exist they must either be equal, or there must be a third component to balance them. Now this is in itself sophistical, for the third component only exists as a make-weight ; and it is pure fiction to discriminate between two things whose only function is to counterbalance a third thing. In respect of the Universe of Discourse involved, a proposition cannot have two contradictories. If the opposite of good exists at all, as it must, if " good " is to have any meaning, it must be exactly equal in quantity and quality to that good. On the Christian hypothesis, the reality of evil makes the Devil equal to God. This is the heresy of Manes, no doubt. But those who condemn Manes must, despite themselves, implicitly affirm his theorem.

I seem to have understood this instinctively ; and since I must take sides with one party or the other it was not difficult to make up my mind. The forces of good were those which had constantly oppressed me. I saw them daily destroying the happiness of my fellow-men. Since, therefore, it was my business to explore the spiritual world, my first step must be to get into personal communication with the Devil. I had heard a good deal about this operation in a vague way ; but what I wanted was a Manual of technical instruction. I devoted myself to Black Magic ; and the bookseller—Deighton Bell, God bless 'em !—immediately obliged with " The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts," which, judging by the title, was exactly what I needed.

It was with intense disappointment and disgust that I read this compilation. The author was a pompous, ignorant and affected dipsomaniac from America, and he treated his subject with the vulgarity of Jerome K. Jerome,

and the beery, leering frivolity of a red-nosed Music Hall Comedian making jokes about mothers-in-law and lodgers.

It was, however, clear, even from the garbled texts of the Grimoires which he quoted, that the diabolists had no conception of the Satan hymned by Milton and Huysmans. They were not protagonists in the spiritual warfare against Restriction, against the oppressors of the human soul, the blasphemers who denied the supremacy of the Will of Man. They merely aimed at achieving contemptible or malicious results, such as preventing a huntsman from killing game, finding buried treasures, bewitching the neighbours' cows, or "acquiring the affection of a judge." For all their pretended devotion to Lucifer or Belial, they were sincere Christians in spirit, and inferior Christians at that, for their methods were puerile. The Prayer-book, with its petitions for rain and success in battle, was almost preferable. The one point of superiority was nevertheless cardinal; their method was in intention scientific. That is, they proposed a definite technic by which a man could compel the powers of Nature to do his bidding, no less than the engineer, the chemist, and the electrician. There was none of the wheedling, bribery and servility which is of the essence of that kind of prayer which seeks material gratifications. Sir J. G. Frazer has pointed out this distinction in *The Golden Bough*. Magic he defines as Science which does not work. It would be fairer to state this proposition in slightly different terms: magic is science *in posse*.

The compiler of the "Book of Black Magic and of Pacts" is not only the most ponderously platitudinous and priggishly prosaic of pretentiously pompous pork-butchers of the language, but the most voluminously voluble. I

cannot dig over the dreary deserts of his drivel in search of the passage which made me write to him. But it was an oracular obscurity which hinted that he knew of a Hidden Church withdrawn from the world in whose sanctuaries were preserved the true Mysteries of Initiation. This was one better than the Celtic Church ; I immediately asked him for an introduction. He replied kindly and intelligibly, suggesting that I should read "The Cloud on the Sanctuary" by Councillor von Eckhartshausen. With this book I retired to Wastdale Head for the Easter Vacation of 1898. This period proved to be the critical moment of my early life : in two most important respects it determined the direction of my efforts. The two were intimately linked in certain ways, and in order to make clear my position I must retrace my steps for a little and bring myself up to date in the matter of climbing, as also of literature.

The summers of 1896 and 1897 were spent in the Alps. They were the logical development of my previous experience. I had made up my mind to look for a climbing companion of a permanent character. I had met Professor Norman Collie in Westmoreland. His teaching and advice were invaluable. I arranged to spend part of the summer with Morris Travers, Collie's demonstrator at University College, London, and a very admirable "second man" he was. A man who writes treatises on "Gas Manipulation," and knows how to rebuff the advances of his girl students, is an ideal companion on a mountain. Unfortunately, he obtained an appointment in a far country, and had to give up climbing in consequence. But we made our mark in the Alps, beginning with the first guideless traverse of the Mönch, the Vuibez Séracs, and

the first traverse of the Aiguilles Rouges, climbing all the pinnacles.

Travers joined me for a short time in August. We began by making the first guideless traverse of the Mönch. We started for the Guggi hut within two or three hours of his arrival, he having come straight through from London without breaking the journey. We started the next morning very early, and made great speed up the lower slopes in our enthusiasm. Travers became extremely mountain sick. It was obvious that the barometric pressure had nothing to do with it ; he was simply upset from the fatigue of the journey, the change to coarse food, and the sudden call upon his full physical strength when out of training. Numerous other similar observations prevented me from ever being so foolish as to attribute this sickness to the altitude. I have produced all the symptoms on Beachy Head in men who had been perfectly comfortable on the high Alps ; and I experienced no discomfort whatever above 23,000 feet.

Travers and I wandered about the Oberland for a week without going below the snow-line. His mountain sickness soon disappeared, but he became badly sunburnt. In these days we cherished the superstition that lanolin was a preventitive ; but the application seemed to feed the sores instead of healing them. A few days after leaving me he arrived at the Gornergrat, whither he had despatched his baggage, in fluttering rags and with a face which was little better than one single suppurating sore. A lady sitting outside the hotel exclaimed indignantly that such disgusting objects should not be allowed to frequent public places. It was his mother !

Talking of sunburn, there was once—improbable as it may appear—a Doctor Bowles, of Folkestone, interested in

the subject. He arranged with Morris Travers to carry out a research on the actinic value of the solar rays on glaciers. Travers and I and his brother went to live in a hut on a glacier somewhere above Bel Alp, where Travers was to carry out some experiments. One day there arrived Bowles and a number of voluntary victims, each member of the party having his face painted with grease paint of divers colours, the right half vermilion and the left sky-blue, or the left bright green and the right orange, and so on. I record, with regret, that I, who had refused to abdicate the dignity of humanity to this extent, was the only person in the party who was not badly burnt. The sun showed no respect of persons in the matter of their camouflage. My freedom was due to the fact that I had spent most of my life in the open air and gradually acquired immunity. It sometimes strikes me that the whole of science is a piece of impudence: that Nature can afford to ignore our impertinent interference. If our monkey mischief should ever reach the point of blowing up the earth by decomposing an atom, and even annihilate the sun himself, I cannot really suppose that the Universe would turn a hair. If we are ever to do anything, it can only be by the manipulation of those spiritual forces which lie behind the consciousness of which the Universe of matter is but a symbolic phantasm.

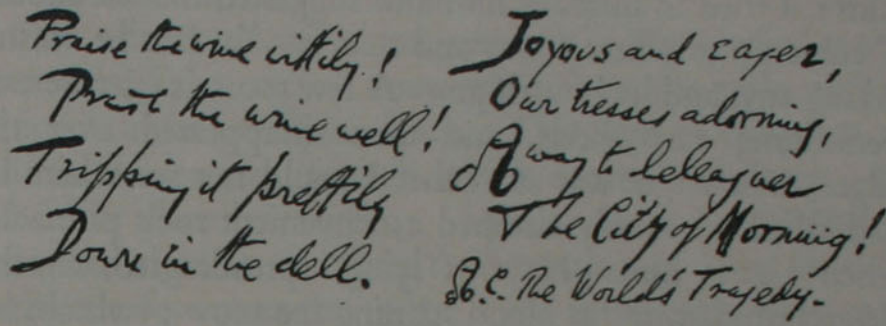
The second of these exploits—the Vuibez Séracs—constituted one of the most interesting ice climbs that I had ever done. They had not been climbed for a generation, when the glacier was in a very different condition, and were reputed impossible. Jean Maître, who was supposed to be the best guide in the valley, with other strong guides and some distinguished members of the Alpine Club, decided to attempt it. They returned

with a wonderful story of desperate adventure. They had been stopped, they said, by the final obstacle, an overhanging ice wall guarded by a wide crevasse. This interested us. We set out the following morning, reaching the obstacle without any difficulty, which gave us a poor idea of the capacity of the mighty men of valour. But we could not be surprised at their failure to negotiate the obstacle. We found ourselves standing on a knife-edge, separated from the overhanging wall by a crevasse so broad that we could only just reach it with our axes. Travers held me on the rope while I leant across and cut a ledge in the wall which could be used for his hands. Having anchored him to his brother lower down, I lowered him cautiously so that he was able to lean across with his hands on the ledge, thus forming a bridge. I then climbed, in my crampons, on to his shoulders and stood there for forty minutes while I cut hand and foot holds in the overhanging ice. Trusting myself to these, Travers was hastily pulled back to the vertical by his brother. In this position he was able to support my weight on his uplifted axe-head sufficiently to allow me to use one hand. In this way I cut fresh hand holds in the overhanging wall and ultimately pulled myself over the edge. There was still some step-cutting to be done before I got to a sufficiently good place to pull up the others. I have never seen the performance of Travers equalled on any occasion. Hastings himself could hardly have been more strong, steady and enduring, to say nothing of the qualities required to allow a man to stand on his head and shoulders with sharp spikes!

We now found that so far from this obstacle being the last, it was the first! I take a good deal of credit to myself for finding the way to the top through the tangled pinnacles

of ice. I began to be not a little alarmed; the *séracs* stretched line after line above us. There was no way of getting out of them, and at any moment the sun might strike the glacier and overthrow their pride and our temerity. We climbed with desperate haste, and managed to reach the snow-covered glacier above them just in time. As it happened, a party had gone out from the hotel after breakfast with the idea of watching us from the opposite slopes, and they told us next evening that our tracks had been obliterated in a dozen places by falling ice.

STANZA XV



I must not omit to mention the first descent of the west face of the Trifthorn. It was early in the season of '96. Going up to Zermatt in the train I met an English climber whom I will call Arthur Ellis. He was anxious to do guideless work, and we agreed to try a few mountains together. We made some minor expeditions, and he proved highly competent. One day we climbed the Trifthorn by the ordinary route, with the idea of attempting the traverse. As I was to go down last, he was carrying the rucksack with our provisions. We made several attempts to find a way down the Zinal face ; but always the slopes steepened until it became evident that they pitched over, and we had to retrace our steps. Ellis, however, was very annoyed at my caution and wanted to glissade, which was a proposal about as reasonable as jumping off the Eiffel Tower. Presently he made an excuse for taking off the rope and retired behind a rock while I sat down and lit my pipe. I was aroused by a hail. Ellis was three or four hundred feet down the slope ! He urged me once more to glissade. He said he had invented a new method of exercising this art, which was to hold the axe by the shaft and use the pick as a brake. It was downright insanity ; and took me absolutely by surprise, as previously he had been a

sound and careful climber. I could do nothing to restrain him : I tried to humour him and suggested that he should "come up to where I was and start fair." But he wasn't taking any, and let himself go. A few seconds later he was performing cart-wheels, and then disappeared over the edge. The angle was such that I could not see where he had fallen. I hastily climbed a convenient rock pinnacle. Then I saw him. He was lying, spreadeagled, in the Bergschrund, with his blood staining the snow ; which, by the way, ought not to have been there, and would not have been but for the continuous bad weather.

The task before me was hardly prepossessing. It was up to me to find my way alone down a face which had never previously been climbed. However, I discovered a route which took me to the glacier in about five hours. At one point I was obliged to lower myself down by the rope ; and, as I could not unhitch it, I was thrown more than ever on my own resources after that. On several occasions I was obliged to make some very risky jumps, so that I might have been cut off if I had found a passage beyond my powers.

I must admit feeling considerable disgust at seeing Ellis making his way over the glacier as if nothing had happened. He had fallen some eight hundred feet, the last three hundred sheer drop. I was utterly exhausted, and badly in need of food. It was all I could do to catch up to him. The only damage he had suffered was a trifling cut on one leg ! Nightfall was at hand ; and though the hut was not very far off in actual distance, we had a terrible time getting there, having to wade through soft snow up to our waists. The hut was "bewirtschaftet" ; but the guardian had not come up in consequence of the weather, so we had to force

our way in and break into the provision room in order to get fuel and the like.

Our adventures were not yet over. My clothes were (naturally) dripping. I threw my coat on the table, above which hung my Alpine lamp. This type of lamp has a hole in the bottom through which a candle is thrust. It is held in place by a spring. I threw myself on the straw, being too tired to complete the operation of going to bed without a few moments' rest. I felt sleep overcoming me, knew it was my duty to put out the candle, but began to argue that even if it did drop out the fall would extinguish it, or if not, the wet coat would do so. It was a perfectly good argument ; but the one chance in a million came off—it didn't go out till my coat was burnt to cinders.

Luckily, the next morning the guardian of the hut came up. I borrowed his coat and went down to Evolena, where my baggage had been sent. Ellis was not fit to be moved, and I arranged to come up two days later and fetch him. At Evolena I got a change of clothes, and sent up the guide's coat by a porter.

Now, in the hotel was a Girls' School, being conducted to admire the wonders and beauties of nature. The following day they came down in the afternoon from the glacier, very excited at having found the tracks of a chamois on the mule path. I knew, of course, that this was hallucination, and thought no more of it. Just before dinner I was outside the hotel taking the air, when I saw in the distance a solitary figure slowly approaching. Its action was very peculiar, I thought.

> " The wild man wends his weary way
> To a strange and lonely pump."

Yet it seemed somehow familiar. It drew nigh ; yes, it was Arthur Ellis. I expressed surprise ; but he said that he had felt so much better he thought he might as well come down, but it had been a long and terrible day. He had started at dawn. This was absurd, as it was only a couple of hours easy walking from the hut. Ah yes, he said, but he had come down over the snout of the glacier, and he had had to cut steps all the way—no more glissading for him ! This story was again rather incredible. But his axe had been tremendously knocked about. The truth slowly dawned on my benighted brain : he had solemnly cut his way down the mule path—he was the chamois whose tracks the girls had seen !

Well, it was not time for me to join my friends at Arolla ; but I wasn't going to climb any more with Ellis, so I made my excuses and departed.

The fag-end of the story is as peculiar as the rest. We arranged to dine together in London, and when I got back I wrote to him. He replied at once, asking me to dine with him at his club. I duly turned up ; but he was not there, and I have never heard a word of him since !

Another very amusing incident occurred at Arolla. A little way above the old hotel is a large boulder, which had never been climbed from the hotel side. I spent some time before I found out how to do it. One had to traverse the face to the right, with a minimum of hand-hold and foot-hold, until one came to a place where the slope eased off. But this point was defended by a bulge in the rock which threw one out. It was just possible for a very slim man with a prehensile abdomen. But it was a matter of a quarter of an ounce one way or the other whether the friction grips were sufficient or not. It was one of

the most difficult pieces of rock climbing I had ever tackled.

I decided to have some fun with it, and taught a girl how to do it. I then offered a hundred francs to any guide who could get up. We got together a little party one afternoon, and I proceeded to show off. Several other people tried, but without success. I began to mock them and said, "But this is absurd—you fellows can't climb at all—it's quite easy—why, I'd back a girl to do it—won't you have a try, Miss So-and-so?" My pupil played up beautifully, and pretended to need a lot of persuasion. Ultimately, she offered to try if she were held on a rope from above. I said, "Nonsense, you can do it perfectly well by yourself!" The company protested that she would kill herself; and she pretended to be put on her mettle, refused all help and swarmed up in great style.

This made everybody very much ashamed. Even the guides were stung into trying it. But nobody else got up. So I started to coach them on the rope. Several succeeded with the moral support, and without being hauled. A fair number, however, came off, and looked rather ridiculous, dangling. People began to urge the chaplain to try his hand. He didn't like it at all; but he came to me and said he would go if I would be very careful to manage the rope so that he did not look ridiculous, because of the respect due to his cloth. I promised him that I would attend to the matter with the utmost conscientiousness. I admitted that I had purposely made fun of some of the others, but that in his case I would tie the rope properly; not under his arms but just above the hips.

Having thus arranged for the respect due to his cloth, I went to the top of the rock and sat sufficiently far back to

be unable to see what was happening on the face. When he came off, as the rope was fastened so low, he turned upside down. I pretended to misunderstand, and jerked him up and down for several minutes before finally hauling him up, purple in the face and covered with scratches. I had not failed in the respect due to his cloth. But quite a number of people were sufficiently lacking in taste to laugh at him.

One day I took my Cousin Gregor, who by this time was married and had discovered that his life was not worth keeping. We made the second ascent of the N-N.E. ridge of Mont Collon. It is a long and severe climb. The conditions were very bad, and Gregor was quite unequal to this class of climbing, so that I had to pull him up most of the way. We were very late on the mountain in consequence. I had no idea of the best way down, but decided to try the short and precipitous route which leads to the level glacier above the Vuibez Séracs. The descent of a difficult mountain is always awkward when the second man is not up to the mark. He cannot go down last because of the danger ; and in going down first he is pretty sure to take the wrong road, wherever he cannot be guided by voice. However, we got down the steep part, safely enough, just before dark.

We took off the rope to descend some slopes covered with loose rock. As I sat down to coil the rope I realised that I was completely exhausted, though mentally rather than physically. My brain played me a curious trick. Gregor had reached a patch of broken rocks at the bottom of the slope, and I followed him slowly. Suddenly I saw a troll, one of those funny little dwarfs with pointed caps and formidable beards that one sees pictured in German

fairy stories and on beer mugs (Heinzelmännchen appears to be the official name). This creature was hopping about the rocks in a very jovial way. He appeared quite real in every respect. For instance, he was not transparent. But it never occurred to me to believe in him. I put him down to cerebral fatigue. The apparition only lasted for a few minutes. He was gone before I rejoined my cousin.

It would, of course, have been madness to attempt to cross the glacier that night, the snow being very deep and soft, so we managed as best we could to keep warm. I did not sleep very much—it was my first night out. In the morning we ran across the frozen snow to the little pass which leads down to the valley. We had hardly crossed it when we met a rescue party sent up by the dear old hotel keeper, Anzevui, who had a curious personal affection for me as the bad boy of the valley who was always making things interesting. Our descent had been watched through glasses ; and they had come to the conclusion that we must have met with an accident, because our route down the mountain was an original variation on the regular way and supposed to be impossible. We had, in fact, met with one exceedingly bad pitch where I was glad of the hitched rope.

On another occasion I was benighted ; it was with Morris Travers and his younger brother on the Aiguilles Rouges, owing to our extreme conscientiousness in climbing every pinnacle accurately and the breakdown of the younger Travers from fatigue. It was one more example of the disadvantage of a third man. A party of two would have finished the climb at least three hours earlier. A bitterly cold wind was blowing from the north-west, so that we could not pass the night on the ridge or on that side of it. We had to find shelter on the eastern face. It was too

dark to get down the cliffs, even if young Travers had been equal to the effort, and they were very steep. There was not even a reasonable ledge.

However, we found a chimney where the boy could rest in moderate comfort, and there was a sort of shelf which accommodated his brother. As for me, the best repose I could find was to wedge myself across the chimney with one foot, my back against a steep patch of snow; the warmth of my body melted this, and the water trickled down. As my knickerbockers had been torn to pieces on the rock, there was a certain degree of discomfort connected with my night's rest, and the strain on my leg somehow damaged the knee joint, which used continually to give trouble for years afterwards. But I was so tired that I went to sleep with my pipe in my mouth. It is extraordinary that I did not fall—the pipe did.