

question whether we are to interpret it according to the mind thereof or another mind. My answer is that I doubt if the Great Experiment was ever pursued to its term in Christian Times on the part of any person who had once been incorporated by their mystical body but subsequently had set himself unconditionally aside therefrom. Even Jacob Böhme, who was hunted, deafened and silenced for overlong by the post-Lutheran rabble about him, did not explicitly come out of the raving Görlitz sects. When the Quest of the Holy Grail was in fine achieved, there were some, as we know, who were translated, but others became monks and hermits: they were incorporated, that is to say, by the official annals of sanctity. I am dealing here with what I regard as a question of fact, not with antecedent grounds; and the fact is that the Church has the Eucharist—namely, *Signum Magnum*.<sup>1</sup> It may have hampered and hindered Christian Mysticism by the restriction of its own consciousness so especially to the letter which killeth; it may, on the historical side, have answered too often and faithfully to that picture of the King of Castle Mortal who sold God for money; it may in this sense have told the wrong story, though the figurative elements placed in its hands were right and true elements. But—speaking as a *doctor dubitantium*—I know that the Church Mystical on the highest throne of its consciousness does not differ otherwise than *per accidentia* from formal Catholic Doctrine, understood essentially. It can say with its heart of knowledge what the ordinary churchman says with believing lips: the *Symbolum* radiates, for its meaning wells up from within. It is as if a shell had opened and an embodied life had come forth, a life embodied in experience. In another form of symbolism, the meaning has unfolded itself, like a flower from the bud. The Christian Mystic can recite therefore his *Credo in unum Deum* by clause and by clause, including *in unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam*, and there is neither heresy in the construction nor any casuistry of an *arrière pensée*.<sup>2</sup> It has seemed worth while to make this plain, because the Holy Grail is the Catholic Quest drawn into Romance.

It may be inferred that at this stage there can be no need to exhibit in formal words after what manner the Quest of the Holy Grail became in the later texts a deeper religious experiment and thus justified the titles from which it began in that story of Robert de Borron which is the earliest extant History. Anyone who has proceeded so far in the present inquisition as to have reached these lines—even if he be unfamiliar otherwise with the old treasury of books—must be aware that the Quest was ruled throughout by the dogmatic Counsels of Perfection. They ruled in fact so strongly as to have entered that state when two of them were implied only, meaning that they were taken for granted: (1) Voluntary Poverty, for the Knights-Errant possessed nothing, and whatever came into their hands was

<sup>1</sup> Over *signatum* it has been bewrayed for centuries.

<sup>2</sup> On the score of sincerity, it must be indicated that these statements postulate implicitly a *noumenon* behind *Symbolum*.

distributed there and then ; (2) Entire Obedience, in dedication to the proposed term, and all the ships of the world burnt with fire behind them : otherwise there followed complete *avortement*, as that of Gawain in the Great Quest ; (3) Perpetual Chastity, as the only Counsel which stands forth declared—and in this connection it will be remembered that Bors returned to Logres. The zeal of these Counsels does not appear—as I have said—to guarantee election utterly : they are rather tests of merit. It has been said also that there are cases of partial success apart from fulfilment in the absolute degree. Gawain received signal favours in the PERLESVAUS, yet it is admitted that he was wanting in purity, and hence he could make no response when the Questionable Mystery appeared once in his presence.<sup>1</sup> The external vision was his, but not the attainment.<sup>2</sup> The King also beheld an Arch-Natural Mass on the manifested side thereof ; but Perceval alone possessed the plenary qualifications in this text. On the other hand, in the story of stories there was one who surpassed him, but not so utterly that they were otherwise than classed together as Companions of the Quest. The distinction seems to have been that Galahad had dissolved temptation, as one more than human. Perceval overcame temptation but was not beyond its reach, as if he carried within him the latent desires of the body :<sup>3</sup> it came about therefore that after beholding the Grail he required the final experience of a Hermit's life before he entered into the true inheritance of those Thrones which are above. By some of my fellowship in research it has been said most truly, though they do not understand Galahad, that the *haut prince* was just as fit for the Quest at its beginning as he was at its end. Now, that is exactly the sign of perfect vocation—of election as well as calling : the criterion of those who are meant for Heaven is that they might ascend thither at any moment. Another test of Galahad was that he knew really from the beginning the whole Mystery by the Tradition thereof.<sup>4</sup> He who returned to the House belonged

<sup>1</sup> Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 88, 89 ; HIGH HISTORY, Branch VI, Titles 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Atant ez-vos II damoiseles qui issent d'une chapele et tient l'une en ces mains le sentime Graal, et l'autre la lance de quoi la lance (pointe) seigne dedanz.* " Thereon, lo you, two Damsels that issue forth of a Chapel, whereof the one holdeth in her hands the Most Holy Grail, and the other the Lance whereof the point bleedeth thereinto."—*Ib.*

<sup>3</sup> Sommer, *Op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 75-79. The only English translation is that of Dr. W. W. Comfort : THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL : see *cap.* VI, pp. 84-88.

<sup>4</sup> The illustrations are casual in the text, but prominent here and there. A few may be cited in their order, beginning from the moment when Galahad has taken, as instructed, the Siege Perilous at the Round Table. (1) His greeting to all who abide in the Holy Hostel—obviously the Castle of Corbenic—especially his uncle King Pelles and his grandsire the Rich Fisher King. This may be compared with what has been derived otherwise in my text from the prose LANCELOT. Galahad came from the House Mystical of the Holy Grail and that he knew the way thereto is shewn by his added undertaking to visit those who abode in it as soon as he could. (Sommer, *Op. cit.*, VI, p. 8.) (2) In answer to the King's greeting, he says that he was bound to come—*Je sui venus et je le devoie faire*—Camelot and the Royal Court being the starting-point of that Quest which was about to begin (*ib.*, p. 10). A little later he exhibits (3) foreknowledge of the fact that the Sword fixed in a certain Stone (*perron*) was destined for him and that no others could remove it (*ib.*, pp. 10, 11). As this enumeration must end, I will add only (4) that at the first stage of the Quest Galahad started without a shield, as one who knew well concerning the Shield of Evalach which had been kept through the centuries in view of his advent and which was presently to be conferred upon him in a miraculous manner (*ib.*, pp. 20-26).

thereto and may have been born therein.<sup>1</sup> I am enumerating here the general implicits of the subject which should be latent at least in the minds of those who are addressed: they do not constitute a question put forward for sifting with a view to a settlement, but of fitness and power to see—of the *verus certusque intuitus animi*, in some degree and proportion. This being agreed by those who can suffer the ruling, it will be obvious that the religious experiment about which I begin to speak can depend only from two express conditions: (1) the manifest attainment of a sanctified state in the Questing Knights, and (2) the descent of a peculiar Grace upon them, which may be described alternatively as a manifestation of Grace from within. I enumerate both points, though it is obvious that one of them has, in another form, passed already through review; but in dealing with a very difficult subject it is necessary to look at it in more than a single light, and I wish to make it clear that the specifics of the sanctified state—by which I mean the Counsels of Perfection—are not things that are determined in the given case by a trend of thought and emotion at a given period, and are not therefore to be dismissed as a presentation of ascetic life or as the definition of canons which have passed now into desuetude. The same experiment always demands the same conditions for its success, and to set aside these is really to renounce that, or in this instance it is to reject the Experiment as one of the old ecstasies which never came to a term. On the contrary, the Experiment of Sanctity is always approximating to a term, and the measure of success is the measure of zeal in its pursuit. I propose therefore to look a little closer at one of the Counsels of Perfection. The essential point regarding the condition of *virgo intacta*—not in respect of the simple physical fact, which has no inherent sanctity, but in respect of its conscious acceptance at what cost soever—is that there neither was nor can be a more perfect symbol of the prepared matter of the work.<sup>2</sup> It is the analogy in utter transcendence of that old adage: *Mens sana in corpore sano*, and its nearest expression is: *Anima immaculata in corpore dedicato, ex hoc nunc et usque*, etc. In other words, the Banns of Marriage in the Higher Degrees cannot be proclaimed till the contracting parties are warranted in their respective orders to have that proportion and likeness, apart from which no union could be effected. The consummated grade of sanctity is an intimate state of union, and the nearest analogy thereto is found in human marriage:<sup>3</sup> as the latter presupposes in the Sacramental Order an antecedent or nominal

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 31.

<sup>2</sup> The word "symbol" is used here expressly; and in this connection there may be added, as regards what is called liturgically "the unspotted sacrifice," that in the wide world of symbolism there is nothing to compare with the Eucharist as a figurative but plenary representation of the Mystical Path and Term. It will be observed that this affirmation is not in competition with what is said above on the *virgo intacta* state, which belongs to the inward preparation of those who would travel the Path and reach its end.

<sup>3</sup> The use of the word "analogy" should not be overlooked: in the deep mystical sense the state of *virgo intacta* or that of matrimonial union is not a sex question, though sex may intervene to promote or mar the utter dedication at issue.

purity, and has for its object the consecration of intercourse which in its absence is of the animal kind, so the antecedent condition in high spiritual grades—or the life of perfect dedication—is in correspondence with the state of *virgo intacta*. I need not say that because these things are analogical so the discourse concerning them partakes of the language of symbolism or that the state itself is mystical. Entire Obedience involves no earthly master; Voluntary Poverty is of all possibility in a palace and the Law would not deny it at the headquarters of an American Trust; as Regards Chastity, that is guaranteed to those who receive and maintain the Sacrament of Marriage worthily. It is to be noticed that this Sacrament differs from Baptism, which is administered once and for all, while Marriage, in the effects thereof, is administered in continuity as an abiding presence and a grace abounding, so long as its covenants are observed. On the other hand, the perpetuity of Spiritual Chastity in the life within does not mean of necessity that man or woman has never known flesh in the physical order. Galahad in the story had the outward signs as well as the Inward Grace. His Quest is a parable throughout, but allegorical motive obtrudes too often into the expressed matter, which is either an error of art or an awkward explanatory device to indicate that the given text has a second meaning everywhere.

The term which is proposed in the *QUESTE*, as the consideration thereof, will be given best in the words of the *QUESTE* itself. "Now at the year's end and the self day after Galahad had borne the crown of gold, he arose up early and his fellows, and came to the palace, and saw tofore them the Holy Vessel, and a man kneeling on his knees in likeness of a Bishop, that had about him a great Fellowship of Angels, as it had been Jesu Christ Himself; and then he arose and began a Mass of our Lady. And when he came to the Sacrament of the Mass and had done, anon he called Galahad and said to him: Come forth, the servant of Jesu Christ, and thou shalt see that thou hast much desired to see. And then he began to tremble right hard, when the deadly flesh began to behold the spiritual things. Then he held up his hands toward Heaven and said: Lord, I thank Thee, for now I see that that hath been my desire many a day. Now, Blessed Lord, would I not longer live, if it might please Thee, Lord. And therewith the good man took our Lord's Body between his hands and proffered It to Galahad; and he received It right gladly and meekly. . . . And therewith he kneeled down tofore the Table and made his prayers; and then suddenly his soul departed to Jesus Christ and a great multitude of Angels bare his soul up to Heaven", etc. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In this citation the most important point for our purpose rests neither in that which it expresses nor in that which it conceals. It is assumed and realised that such a term is always hidden because it

<sup>1</sup> At this point the account of Malory—Book XVII, *cap.* 22—follows the French text without abbreviation. Sommer, *Op. cit.*, p. 197. Cf. Dr. Comfort's translation, pp. 223, 224.

exceeds expression always, and is the closer veiled whenever it is announced the most. But here was the consummation of all. But here was that more open seeing than was granted at Corbenic and that wherein all the outward offices of things arch-natural were set aside utterly. There was no vision of Transubstantiation Metamorphoses, and as evidence that this was of concert and not of chance, there is the same report to make concerning the PERLESVAUS: when the Questing Knight comes to his own therein no signs and wonders are connected with the Holy Grail.<sup>1</sup> As regards the Vision itself of Galahad and that which he saw, we may remember the words of Nasciens after his attempt to penetrate the Secrets within the New Ark of the Covenant. "*Et Nasciens dist que il l'en descouverroit tant comme nule mortieus langue em porroit descouvrir, ne deveroit. Je ai, dist-il, veut la coumenchaille dou grant hardiment, l'ocoison des grans savoirs, le fondement des grans religions, le dessevrement des grans felonniees, la demoustranche des grans mierveilles, la meruelle de totes les altreiz meruelles, la fin des bontés et des gentilleces vraies.*"<sup>2</sup> This extract from the GRAND SAINT GRAAL is thus rendered in the halting measures of Lovelich:

" ' I have sein,' quod the sire Nasciens,  
 ' Of alle manere of wykkednesse the defens ;  
 Of alle boldnesse I have sene the begynneng,  
 Of all wittes the fowndyng.  
 I have sein the begynneng of Religeown  
 And of alle bowntes, bothe al & som,  
 And the poyntes of alle gentrye,  
 And a merveil of alle merveilles certeinlye.' "<sup>3</sup>

Other masters have expressed the same wonder in other terms, which are the same—as, for example: *quædam prælibatio æternæ vitæ, gustus et suavitas spiritualis, mentis in Deum suspensa elevatio*, etc.

The qualifications of Galahad and Perceval in the Great Quest are not therefore things which are the fashion of a period, like some aspects of what is termed the ascetic mind; but they obtain from *Aleph* to *Tau*, through all grades of expression. Those who speak of the ethical superiority of the PARZIVAL are saying that which, in all moderation and tenderness, signifies that they are still learning the elements of true discipline.

<sup>1</sup> When Perceval had overcome the King of Castle Mortal, and when " he who sold God for money " had destroyed himself, it is said in all simplicity that " the Grail presented itself again in the Chapel "—that of the Grail Castle—" and the Lance whereof the point bleedeth, and the Sword wherewith St. John was beheaded that Messire Gawain won, and the other Holy Relics whereof was right great plenty."—HIGH HISTORY, Branch XVIII, Title 36. Cf. Potvin, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 216, 217. I have noted elsewhere that when King Arthur was at the Grail Castle, on pilgrimage, and saw the Hermit Priests begin the Grail Service, " most holy and most glorious," at which also the Sacred Vessel appeared " in five several manners," it does not seem that Perceval himself was present, but the King only and Monseigneur Gawain.—Potvin, *Op. cit.*, p. 250; HIGH HISTORY, Branch XXII, Title 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Hucher: LE SAINT GRAAL, Vol. II, p. 308, and compare Sommer, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 79, 80.

<sup>3</sup> F. J. Furnivall: THE HISTORY OF THE HOLY GRAIL. Englished about 1450 A.D., by Henry Lovelich (or Lovelich), Skynner. Early English Text Society, Extra Series, No. XXIV, Vol. I, p. 217.

I have now dealt with the indispensable warrants of the state, and the mode of Grace manifested belongs to the same category : it was a revelation to and within the Spiritual Flowers of Christian Knighthood through the Eucharist—the form of symbolism made use of for this purpose being that of Transubstantiation. I have no design to cover the deeps of disillusion which open on this subject ; but here again we must as our research proceeds approach it from various standpoints ; and, for the rest, it must be obvious that of all men I at least should have no call imposed on me to speak of the Holy Grail were it not for its connection with the Great Emblematic Sacrament. It is the passage of the putative Reliquary into the Chalice of the Eucharist, the progressive exaltation of its cultus and the consequent transfiguration of the Quest which have substituted insensibly a Tale of Eternity for a mediæval Legend of the Precious Blood : in place of the Abbey of Fécamp, we have Corbenic and the *Palais Espritueux* shining in the high distance, and where once there abode only the suggestion of some relative and rather trivial devotion, we have the presence of that Great Sign behind which there lies the Beginning and the End of all things.

The Romance-writers, seeking in their symbolism a reduction to the evidence of the senses, selected and exaggerated the least desirable side of Eucharistic Dogma ; but it serves no purpose to dispute with them on that score, seeing that—for the skilled craftsman—any material will serve in the purposes of the Great Work. The only point which stands out for our consideration is that—following the sense of all Doctrine and the testimony of all experience—the gate by which Faith presses most readily into Realisation was for them, as for others at the period, the gate of that Sacrament from which all others depend—of that Sacrament the Institution of which was the last act of Christ Mystical and the term of His Ministry : thereafter He suffered only until He rose in glory. When therefore the makers of Grail Books designed to shew after what manner, and under what circumstances, those who were still in flesh could behold the “ Spiritual Things ” and have opened for them that door of understanding which, according to the Keepers of the Old Law, was not opened for Moses, they had no choice in the matter ; and it is for this reason that they represent the Bread of Life and the Chalice of the Everlasting Testament as being lifted up, not only in the secret places of Logres, but even in the *palais esperiteux* of such a city as Sarras.

Hereof are certain mystical aspects of the Great Quest, and it seems to follow that the Secret Temple of the Soul was dreamed of, if not entered by those who dwelt in the World of Romance as by those in the World of Higher Religion. The Masters of both Schools were saying the same thing at the same period, seeing that during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which moved and had their being under the wonderful ægis of the scholastic mind, there began to arise over the intellectual horizon of Europe the light of another experience than that of Spiritual Truth realised intellectually : this was the experience

of the Mystical Life, which opened—shall we say?—with the names of Bonaventura, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, and closed for the period in question with that of Ruysbroeck. It is understood that there were great antecedent names and great also to come.

## IV

## THE SECRET SCHOOL

SETTING aside its sacramental part, the literature as literature is Celtic on the surface and Celtic also in atmosphere; but these are the vesture and the environment in which the spirit of its Mystery reposes. The Grail itself is in the root a Reliquary Legend. This Legend was taken over or invented and was connected with rumours of Secret Doctrine concerning the Eucharist and the Priesthood. It passed into Romance or was put forward therein, and it incorporated certain folk-lore elements which seemed adaptable to its purpose: they are naturally its hindrance. In the hands of the Northern French writers, it removed from the Celtic environment as it drew towards its term. We cannot explain therefore the French Cycles and much less the German Grail literature by means of the Celtic Church. On the external side it looks as if it came out of cells and stalls and scriptoria; but in the last resource it cannot be explained by Rome. We have searched also the findings of qualified research on the Catharist Mystery; but it is not to be explained thereby. The Secret Doctrine reflected into the literature abode in a Secret School: it was a School of Christian Mystics and was of necessity Catholic at heart.<sup>1</sup> The Doctrine concerning it is that there were High Princes of the Spirit whose experiences surpass not only those of devout souls but of many of its great saints. Their time was not "about half an hour" but an experience as if in perpetuity. The School would have said that the way of the Church, in thesis apart from practice, was a true way and not a good one only; but it would have added also that the heights are still the heights. It comes about therefore that any message of Secret Words and Super-Apostolical Succession can be only a shadow of reality until its life is attained within: yet that shadow is a sacred reflection. The claim concerning them is like a word written against the Churches, but those who are satisfied with the literal sense of sacred things are not defrauded thereby and can receive ministry therein. Yet the second sense remains, and it is brought from very far away, because it draws from the Sanctuary of the soul. The Mystery which the School explored corresponded in figurative language to a Mass of the Beatific

<sup>1</sup> Catholic in the sense of Rome at the highest point of Roman Catholic experience in the way of the Mystic Life; but Catholic also in a sense unacknowledged by Rome and officially beyond its purview.

Vision. It is obvious that this was celebrated by the Hermit in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL. The Prologue to this Book is the nearest that we are likely to get on the pictured side of the Mystery. The Mass of the Grail is recoverable in the quest of consciousness; but it is understood that it takes place only in a Secret Church and that Church is within. When the Priest enters the Sanctuary he returns into himself by contemplation and approaches the Altar which is within. He says: *Introibo*. When he utters the words which are Spirit and Life, the Christ Mystical communicates to him in the heart; or, in alternative symbolism, he is raised into the Third Heaven and enjoys the dilucid contemplation. Like St. Augustine, discoursing of the Holy Trinity, I do not put it in this way as one who is satisfied with the expression: only we must have some expression.<sup>1</sup>

As the Supreme Mystery of the Christian Church, the Eucharist is said to have been compared with the last Ceremony of Initiation, constituting the final enlightenment of the Neophyte. There may be some exaggeration in the statement; but those who were the original Stewards of the Christian Mystery had in many cases received the Mysteries of the Gentiles and may have adapted some of their procedure. The rumour which came into Romance—and this in the natural manner, because Official Religion, its variants and competitive substitutes permeated Romance everywhere—centred about the Eucharist, and in the minds of external piety was translated into memorials of the Divine Body and the Precious Blood. It would be idle to suggest that any Higher School of Religion was concerned with the veneration of Relics; but there would be a desire to behold behind the Eucharist that which was held in the symbolism to abide and repose therein. Beyond all knowledge of the outside world, founded on faith and teaching, there is another knowledge; but it dwells in hidden places of the mind: it has, however, its correspondences in Eucharistic terms, one of which is called the Communication of Christ. In the deeper speculation behind the EPICLESIS Clause, it is described otherwise as a Descent of the Comforter within. He who has performed the one rigorously scientific experiment and has opened the inward Holy Place does enter and that which takes place answers to the Celebration of a Mass:<sup>2</sup> it is not as such the work of an Official Priesthood, though it does not set it aside or compete therewith. Herein is an experiment which I believe to be performed even now in the world, because the great ventures of experience do not pass into desuetude. The Grail Romances in their proper understanding—but chiefly because of their implicits—recall this great subject, testifying after many ways. The Grail is like a guide of the distressed in the Lesser Chronicles: they shadow forth that which is implied inwardly by the Hidden Voice of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Their Secret Words were

<sup>1</sup> Remember Schiller in his *WALLENSTEIN*: "But still the heart needs a language."

<sup>2</sup> Because the experiment is on the subject of that communication which has been mentioned above in the text. The Christ is personal only in the sense of Indwelling Divinity.



Words of Power, because that which rules above rules also below. As such the Lesser Chronicles did not derive from Fécamp, which put forward only the wonder side of Transubstantiation. But the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, which cuts short the discourse between Christ and Joseph in the Tower and so suppresses all reference to the divulgation of Secret Words, can derive no more than a reflection from this source and suffers inevitably from the insufficiency of its doctrinal terms, above all on the picture side. On the spiritual side there is no suggestion that sacramentally the Arch-Natural Body of Christ is communicated to our earthly part and the Divine Life to the human spiritual part. The PERLESVAUS hints at a Secret of the Sacrament which was held in utter reserve, telling us by inference that it was the revelation of Christ in His own Person, behind which there is another Mystery. Curiously enough perhaps, it is only in the texts of Transubstantiation that we find, approximately or remotely, the suggestion of these deeper aspects.<sup>1</sup> The CONTE DEL GRAAL has not heard of them; the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL is aware of an undeclared Mystery, but has no licence to speak; the German PARZIVAL suggests an office of concealed mercy amidst suffering, and hereof is Heinrich a shadow. Yet all of them, in their several manners, are haunted from far away: Joseph II began in Priesthood and the Perceval of Manessier ends therein, as if he too discerned that those who attained the Great Mystery were made Priests thereby. I think also that the Fish in the Metrical Joseph has curious sacramental intimations: it is a sign of spiritual sustenance, of Christ's Presence among His faithful, and hence of the Eucharist. Recurring to the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, it only duplicates one part of a canonical miracle. The Catholic master-key is provided most surely by the Galahad Quest, where, long after the Magical Marriage of High Art and Nature has taken place in Transubstantiation, the Questing Knight bows his head, utters his *consummatum est*, and is dissolved. I conclude that the Christian and Grail Mystery of the Mass was a veil which at need could be parted by warranted hands and that behind it there was found the Path which leads to the Union. The knowledge of that Path arose within the Church but led behind it, the Church remaining a gate by which man may enter into attainment. The Quests of the Grail worked towards a knowledge of the Path.

I speak of course as I find, and it is such a finding that it imposes words of witness, not only in Hidden Temples when the Great Rites are held but in the thoroughfares of life, or in books which all may read and a few will cherish in their hearts. If I have said *Introibo* within me through the days and the years; the *Vere dignum et justum*; and the *Supplices rogamus ac petimus*, remembering *hæc dona, hæc munera, hæc sancta sacrificia illibata*, it is because of the GALAHAD and the PERLESVAUS, in part for what they are in themselves and in the

<sup>1</sup> Possibly because the Master who said that "He who eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood," etc., said also that "the Flesh profiteth nothing," and thus opened a world of possibility concerning Spirit and Life in the Word.

greater part for where they have led me, from Romance into Ritual and from Ritual into that not undiscoverable realm which lies beyond and is called the Mystery of Faith.

But we have reached now a stage where it is necessary to glance at other aspects which environed the Grail literatures, though in relation to those which were considered previously.

It is wholesome to remember, among many other points that might be enumerated: (1) That before 1000 A.D. Claudius, Archbishop of Turin, characterised the censure pronounced on his anti-papal writings as the voice of the members of Satan; (2) that Arnulph, Bishop of Orléans, at the Council of Rheims,<sup>1</sup> pointed to the Roman Pontiff, saying: "Who is that seated upon a high throne and radiant with purple and gold? . . . If he thus follow uncharitableness . . ., he must be Antichrist sitting in the Temple of God"; (3) that Everard, Bishop of Salzburg, said much later: "He who is *servus servorum Dei* desires to be Lord of lords; he profanes, he pillages, he defrauds, he murders, and he is the lost man who is called Antichrist"; (4) that Cardinal Benno, speaking of Sylvester II,<sup>2</sup> said that by God's permission he rose from the abyss; (5) that the same Pope was described at the Council of Brixen as the false monk and the prince of abomination. These were the accusations of Prelates, and with them may be compared the opinion of Figueiras the Troubadour, who described Rome as an immoral and faithless city, having its seat fixed in the depths of hell; that of Petrarch, who called Avignon the Western Babylon, and—like a comparison by way of antithesis to the Rich Fisherman—exclaimed: "Here reigns a proud race of Fishermen who are poor no longer"; and that of the same poet, who described the Papal Court as a people who follow the example of Judas Iscariot—in other words, selling God for money, like the King of Castle Mortal. So also St. Bridget termed Rome the Whirlpool of Hell and the House of Mammon, wherein the devil barter the patrimony of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

These are judgments on life and its conduct, on passion and policy, on the spirit of the world in the Holy Place and its centre: they are not impeachments of Doctrine and much less of that world of intuition and Experience which lies behind Doctrine. It is evident that on the side of government, apart or not from teaching, the yoke of Rome was no longer easy or its burden light. It is conceivable, from this point of view, and were other things equal, that the Grail symbolism of a bereft Castle or Temple might be an appeal against the Church as that which had become unfaithful to itself, a protest against the power of Lucifer which had invaded the Sanctuary. The admission of these facts does not derogate of necessity from the claim that the Church had all the means. Even in new definitions and altered practice there might by supposition be a guiding hand.

<sup>1</sup> Such a Council was held in 1119, under Calixtus II.

<sup>2</sup> He reigned from A.D. 999 to 1003. I am not quoting chronologically.

<sup>3</sup> St. Bridget died in 1373.

During the evolution of the Grail literature it will be remembered that two unhappy ferments were at work in the Western Branch: (1) the denial of the Chalice to the laity; (2) the various doctrinal tendencies which resulted in the definition of Transubstantiation. From this point of view the wound of the Latin Church would be that it misconstrued the *Mysterium Fidei*; that it had in fact five wounds corresponding to the five changes of the Grail.<sup>1</sup> Among these the last only seemed to be a Chalice, for it is said that there was none at that time, perhaps because *Dominus qui non pars est sed totum* is not contained in a Chalice, though the Lord is *Pars hæreditatis meæ et calicis mei*. Obviously the Latin Church cannot be accused of having failed to discern after its own manner the Body of the Lord, but that discernment was apart unfortunately from the life which its own Scriptures tell them is resident symbolically in the Blood. On the basis of Transubstantiation it might be difficult to reject the Roman plea, that he who receives the Body receives also the Blood, because that which is communicated *ex hypothesi* in the Eucharist is the Living Christ made flesh. On another basis, the implicit of such symbolism looks rather in the opposite sense, namely, that the Elements are twofold to shew how the flesh of itself profits nothing, while the Spirit and the Truth are the communication of Divine Life. By those who regard Transubstantiation as the burden of the Church which defined it, there is a disposition to condemn the Latin Eucharist as a dismembered Sacrament; by those who look upon the Observance as a mere memorial, all subtleties notwithstanding, there is a feeling that the remembrance is broken and that the isolated Sign does not signify fully. On the other hand, that view which belongs more especially to the Mystics, namely, that the Covenant of Christ to His followers concerns what I have called so frequently the communication of Divine Substance does not of necessity affirm that the accidents of such communication are of vital consequence: if therefore transposition or substitution of external signs need not occasion a shadow of vicissitude in the Mystery which is imparted, it would follow that the Official Church was perhaps more astute than otherwise when it denied the Chalice to the laity. For the rest, and to extinguish these questions, those who speak of Christ's Spiritual Presence say well, but the Mystery of Abiding Redemption is the perpetuity of the Incarnation among those to whom Christ came in flesh.

If it is not to be said that at the epoch of the Grail literature the highest minds had grown weary of the Vatican and all its ways, it can be affirmed at least that there were both competitive and uncompetitive streams of tendency which pursued their paths openly and in secret towards another term. I think that Southern France stands out obviously under the first designation; but there were those also who raised no voice of debate and pursued their secret way towards the realisation of Divine Ends. They may have had no remedies to offer

<sup>1</sup> See Book VI, sect. 1.

on the practical side of things, and they were too wise to denounce abuses which they were powerless to rectify—even as I who write, supposing that I had attained the term of the Great Experiment, should not for such reason be qualified to purify the commercial houses of exchange. That term belongs to a region about which it is idle to speak in connection with schemes of amelioration or the raising of the masses. So far as those who have prosecuted or do now follow it have led or lead to-day the life of the world, it is implied in their calling that they should do what to do is given them ; yet in respect of the Experiment itself, if those who attain can lead others in the way, they do not come with helping hands for the furtherance and welfare of the body politic.

Some of them were Bishops and Priests in their days and generations, some active in the world and some withdrawn in far-off priories or leading a Hermit's life. A few would not have passed muster as orthodox in the clamour of doctrinal debate, supposing that they had frequented the Schools. A few among these few were heard therein, some at earlier and some at later dates than those of the Grail literature. Within the limits of that period, there were those who left records behind them, and they shew in a plenary sense that the writers were familiar alike with Path and Term. They knew also the void in the heart of the age and the deadly sickness of the outer Church. These old witnesses, whose remains are with us, like golden sheaves of testimony, are indubitably but signposts pointing to many others, their graduating pupils and their silent followers, abiding in many places and helping to produce a still but not ineffective spirit of the time. It is from out this stream of tendency that there came, as I believe, the voices of the Grail Books. They were not of Bernard, him above all, of the impassioned Bonaventura, or of Victorines, any more than of Cistercians. They were of poets in the stream and of a few who wrote in prose. They had heard the other voices, and some may have lived among those who loved and honoured them. Some of them spoke as from a great distance, amidst the distraction of outward things and all the sorcery of sense. For others at their best and highest, the efficacious Grail—that which is Life and Grace—came not out of their literal or figurative fasts, their watches and their prayers, but out of their hearts of ardour. They proposed Secret Words and a Super-Apostolical Priesthood to body forth the accredited fact of their Leaders' lonely state apart from all that raged about them, shaping its own ends in the name of Religion. They knew that other but not dissimilar Quests were pursued around them, many and strange. They dreamed of Mysteries of Sanctity which as yet they had not fathomed ; it may even be that the story of Prester John expressed that dream after a manner of parable in their yearning minds.<sup>1</sup> When they left the House of Doctrine empty in respect of its chief Hallow, the PERLESVAUS

<sup>1</sup> It is meant only that the derision of that great hoax had possibly a purpose behind it.

and the *QUESTE* testified only in their picture-form to the great inhibition of the time. In other language, sounded on every side, the dominant Church in arms had made void its claims and Sacraments. This condemnation is written in great letters on many signposts of the period and is heard in all its voices, those above all which rang through Southern France. But the records of those who spoke otherwise than in Romance perished in the red Thermopylæ of Toulouse and Montségur. There is only a vestige left to speak of the life-experiment behind the white cord of all those lost legions. But it is just sufficient to indicate its analogies with that living catholic research which has been pursued everywhere and of that Mystery to which St. Augustine alluded when he said that Christianity had been always in the world, to which the New Testament itself testified when speaking of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the cosmic order. The Catharist may have connected it only with primitive Christ Doctrine, as this was understood by him; but it follows that those who look on the experiment as something which became Christian at a certain date are in error over the elements of the subject, to which there belongs in a superlative sense the *locus communis* of the ecclesiastical test: *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*. We should remember that things which concur with one another do of necessity find one another at some point of their extension: so also the one Quest adopts many veils, but without diminution of identity. It has been disguised frequently under the old formula concerning Words of Power; but though this is an obvious illustration it carries a suggestion of fatality, because in no case did the sign survive the idea—and so lapse into superstition—more often or with greater facility. In its proper understanding the term of Quest corresponds with the conception of an union between the consciousness of the soul and the Word of God, the *verbum caro factum*, declaring itself in the world and in the heart of man. Robert de Borron, an emissary *ex hypothesi*, pictured it as Secret Words of Christ, leaving it seemingly an open question whether they were Eucharistic or not.<sup>1</sup> Those or he who converted his work into prose knew otherwise or concluded that they could have no other office, and so allocated them accordingly, but hardly with an eye on the kind of Mass which was proffered to Simon de Montfort in Joinville's story, if only he came to see. The author of the *GRAND SAINT GRAAL*, having other intimations, including those which were incorporated in his Prologue, put forward his thesis in the guise of another Sacerdotal Mystery and followed those who had preceded him in developing a Conversion Legend. But the Companions whom he brought from Sarras, where the Evangelical Sodality received their titles in the Ordination of Joseph II, came over, it may be, in his dream, to convert the Papal Saracens of the twelfth century and not the Druids of old. Wolfram von Eschenbach represented the Secret Custodians as an autonomous Chivalry after the model of the Knights Templar, bringing into it

<sup>1</sup> We have ascertained the state of the *JOSEPH* text in an Appendix note to Book IV.

materials from oriental sources and proclaiming that the Grail story, the oldest story of all, was written in the starry heavens, as no one doubts that it is who has contemplated the celestial sphere from a Darien peak of unity. Other Traditions had already presented Joseph of Arimathæa as the Grand Master of an Instituted Knighthood. The authors of the PERLESVAUS and the Galahad QUESTE connected their whole subject with Eucharistic Transubstantiation as the most approximate gate through which they might draw others to follow those things which issue in mystery. But when this symbolism had served its purpose they were glad enough to present its dissolution, as I have shewn. They might have chosen other material; but it has been in no sense my design to suggest that they had overcome all burdens of their period by an excess of wisdom: the glass through which they looked was clouded and scoriated enough; their task was difficult enough; and in leading towards their peculiar Doctrine as they did it may even be that the more intolerable aspect of Transubstantiation had not occurred to them. It is sufficient for our purpose that they discerned something of the secrets which lay beyond the Altar and the Sacrifice, and which had not been found by Rome. To do this they must have travelled far.

Did they know in the mind's contemplation—a few perchance—outreaching from afar, or—it may be—near at hand, something about a state of being which opens on the infinite? And because of that which in sacred hypothesis was communicated through the observance of the Eucharist, did they picture it as attained by the help of Secret Words used in Consecrating the Elements? Did certain others—who also knew—picture it as attained in ordination by Christ Himself? I question whether they would have dwelt upon an EPICLESIS Clause, were there such in any Celtic literature; but I am certain in any case that they did not dream of a pan-Britannic Church. Nothing could be less in correspondence with such an ambition than their conception of a Mystery of Grace which could at no time have been expected to prevail in public. But seeing that the Mass went on for ever in the lands and islands, had they found it by way of the Mass, as happened once, it would seem to the Angel of the Schools? In a state apart and beyond all declaration, did they dream of a Hidden Union and represent it to themselves and others as something beheld inwardly by the help of the Unspotted Sacrifice celebrated according to an Arch-Natural Mode? In such case the Grail indeed is a Sacred Legend of the Eucharist, and as behind its Castle of Souls there was a Hidden Paradise, so, like a Grail which is behind the Holy Grail, there was conceived an inward or transcendent sense of the entire Mystery.

Herein assuredly is the Quest for that which is real, wherein Enchantments dissolve and the Times of Adventure are also set over. The Enchantments are in the natural world and so again are the Adventures; but the Unspelling Quest is in the world of soul. The witness of this

Doctrine, in one or other of its forms and under many veils, has been always in the world. In its realisation the Shekinah is restored to the Sanctuary: when it is overshadowed there is a Cloud upon the Sanctuary. It is the story of the individual man passing into the concealment of the interior and secret life, but carrying with him his warrants and his high insignia. In a word, it is that Doctrine the realisation of which in the consciousness has been called, under all reserves and for want of a better term, the Secret Church, even the Holy Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

The presence of this so-called Secret Church is like that of angels unawares. In the outer courts there are those who are prepared for Regeneration and in the *Adyta* are those who have attained it: these are the Holy Assembly. It is the place of those who, after the birth of flesh, which is the birth of the will of man, have come to be born of God. It is in the persons of those who are regenerate that the gates of hell cannot prevail against this Church, or utterly against its working substitutes. The place of the Holy Assembly is called Eden and Paradise: it is that whence man came and whither he returns. It is also that unapparent realm of being from which the Spirit and the Bride say "Come"; or it is the place of the Waters of Life, with power to take freely. It is like the still, small voice: it is heard only in the midst of the heart's silence, and there is no written word to tell us how its Rite is celebrated; but it is like a Priesthood within the Priesthood and a Mass behind the Mass. Its work upon things without is a work of harmony, wherein is neither haste nor violence. There are no admissions—at least of the ceremonial kind—to the Holy Assembly: it is as if in the last resource a Candidate inducts himself. There is no Sodality, no Institution, no Order which throughout the Christian centuries has worked in such silence. It is for this reason that it remains an implicit in mystical literature rather than a formal revelation: it is not a revelation but an inherence; when it is not an inherence, it is an attainment vaguely adumbrated. It is neither an interference nor a guidance actually: it is described better as an influence. It does not come down: more correctly it draws up; but it also inheres. It is the place of those who have become transmuted and tingeing stones.

<sup>1</sup> In so far as it has passed into expression, the idea of the Communion of Saints in the Sanctuary of the Secret Church is that of an union in still consciousness fixed on the abiding God, realised within. It is not the union one with another in psychic consciousness of *Frater Ex Millibus Electus* and *Frater Vix Unus Ex Millibus* under seals of the Rosy Cross in a state of absorbed contemplation, and remembering the Golden Doctrine that IMMANUEL, GOD IS WITH US. The reason is that we meet at the figurative and mystical centre by a participation in God-consciousness and not otherwise. The deep inward state in which such realisation takes place alone is not a travelling in the so-called spirit vision, when Z ∴ Y ∴ X ∴ and W ∴ V ∴ may haply encounter each other in a mutual psychic act. The mystical centre is not, in other terminology, a dream-medium which is and has been a realm of meeting from time immemorial, all the wide world over. Experiences of this kind would lead nowhere, even if prolonged for ever. The true meetings are not in time and place and not in the external personalities. When those who have dwelt at the centre return therefrom to take up their part in manifestation, it is then that they know one another in the authentic sense, wherever they meet abroad.

The inspired poets and the great prose writers sat in their stalls and scriptoria during the High Adventurous Times, while the rumour of the Holy Grail moved through the world of literature. They dreamed of a Chivalry Spiritualised and a Church of the Holy Spirit. So came into being the PERLESVAUS, the QUEST OF GALAHAD, perhaps even the PARZIVAL of Wolfram. Whether in the normal consciousness I know not, or in the super-consciousness I know not—God knoweth—that dream of theirs was of a concealed Sanctuary behind the official Chancel and the visible Altar. This is the sense in which I understand my own and the other allusions to a Secret Church and its traces, wheresoever discovered. But, as before, I am not speaking of formal institutions, of esoteric brotherhoods, or incorporations of any kind: it is a question of inward realisation, turned in a particular direction and of a growth therein. For the rest, a man need not leave the external Church if he enters that of the Spirit. It is not on record that Ruysbroeck ceased to say Mass because he had been in those heights and across those seas of which we hear in his ADORNMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE. At the same time his language is not exactly that of the Official Church in its earliest or latest Encyclical; it is not like that of St. Irenæus thundering forth against heresy or a modern Pope denouncing the spirit of Modernism. So also a lay member of any one among the Churches whose instruction has scarcely exceeded some Catechism of Christian Doctrine need not be less a Christian than he who has studied SUMMA. But again there are degrees of consciousness in the Mystery of Faith.<sup>1</sup>

The Secret Tradition in Christian Times is like the rumour of a Secret Sanctuary, and the Tradition has many voices. The voice at its highest of so-called Spiritual Alchemy, succeeding that of the Grail at a long distance, is like the voice of the Grail itself under another veil of symbolism; and it is witnessed that in those days many earnest persons beheld the Vessel of Singular Devotion. The voice of the Rosy Cross says that in places withdrawn He, being dead, yet testifieth. The voice of St. John on Patmos says that he was given a book to eat and that in his mouth it was sweet but in his belly it was bitter, because thenceforward he was in travail with the Secret Doctrine. The voice of Masonry created a pregnant Legend to commemorate a great loss, and testified that the Quest would never end till the Speculative Masons recovered that which was once among them. The voice of the Rosy Cross said that, having found the body of the Master, the Brethren again closed the Sepulchre and set seals thereon, though they also looked for a great Resurrection. On these accounts and all others I have written this book as the record of a Great Initiation. Meanwhile, the Churches are not made void utterly, but they are in widowhood and desolation, holding the letter of the Word. We are not deceived by their distractions; and yet it is certain also that Divine reflections

<sup>1</sup> And the Mass of an Angel of the Schools is something more in the spirit thereof than that of an average Parish Priest, who has no eyes beyond the letter.



abide with them. Chrétien may have drawn from an episodic Romance of Adventure in the possession of a Count of Flanders. Master Blihis, great maker of fables, may have recited things with or without consequence concerning Quests and Findings. Neither theirs nor others that could be cited are Books containing the Secret Words of the Eucharist or texts of the Secret Ordination. The Legends of Welsh Saints may tell us of Sacred Hosts coming down from Heaven ; but the EPICLESIS Clause—again, if the Welsh had it in their Mass—is not the Lost Word which we seek like the Mason. Other stories, for all that I know, may recount Consecrations by Christ, and the inventions may be famous indeed, but they are likely to want that atmosphere which fills the Chronicles-in-Chief of the Holy Grail with meanings and suggestions of meaning. Therefore I hear and listen with all my ears while the voices of many Traditions say the same things differently. The Holy Sepulchre is empty ; the Tomb of Christian Rosy Cross is hidden in the House of the Holy Spirit ; the Word of Masonry is lost more desperately the more often it is found in the Arch and the High Grades ; the Zelator of Alchemy looks in vain for a Master. The Traditional Book of the Grail, by whatever name of convention we may choose to term it—LIBER GRADALIS or SANCTUM GRAAL—remains beyond external finding, like the Grail itself.<sup>1</sup> But beyond this world of loss there lies a world of attainment and the Grail is found therein, perchance—as well it may be—by some among you who listen and—not, as I pray, impossibly—by me who bears this witness, but assuredly by many to come, as there were many in the past behind us, who raise their lamps and lanterns to light our clouded ways.

Within the Christian centuries, the first witness of the unity, of the state beyond the Vision, which is that of *anima transformata in Deo* was he who is called Hierotheos, on the hypothesis that the text which passes under this name is antecedent to pseudo-Dionysius and was or may have been the work of that master to whom the latter appealed. He testifies concerning the Second Birth of the Soul, to its experience of Mystical Death, the Resurrection therefrom and in fine the Soul's Ascension, when the Mind of Soul is united with the Universal Essence.<sup>2</sup> It is notable and pregnant that at such an early date—whatever the date was, fourth or fifth century—the epochs of the Christ Life in Nazareth were adapted thus to the story of the Christ Life in the individual soul. The self-styled Areopagite follows—or precedes as the case may be—and does not adopt the formulary of this symbolism. Dionysius is he for whom an all-perfect *Agnosia* “is a knowledge of Him Who is above all known things”.<sup>3</sup> He is the expositor of a Secret and Mystical Theology which is to be distinguished from another that is evident and known.<sup>4</sup> The *Agnosia* which knows is of course a contradiction in terms, and the Dionysian Jacob's Ladder is an ascent

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 32.

<sup>2</sup> It will economise space if I refer at this point to my WAY OF DIVINE UNION, 1915, pp. 170-172.

<sup>3</sup> Letter I to Gaius Therapeutes.

<sup>4</sup> Waite, *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

into attainment on the rungs of paradox. God is not so much light as darkness, were it lawful to conceive Him as either; but the kind of darkness is greater light than any light of earth or mind. He is approached by the way of negation rather than an affirmative way, and His quest is in a cloud of unknowing. We are not concerned, however, with portents on the Path of Attainment but with the Term itself. It is an union in the highest part of soul with That Which is unknown by mind, but above the mind is known.<sup>1</sup> The Latin Church, which could not dispense with Dionysius because of his ECCLESIASTICAL HIERARCHY, has put up as it could with his MYSTICAL THEOLOGY, and being in that position has had to maintain its orthodoxy. He himself, who knew that the path which he proposed to travel was in pure theism, set off by invoking the Holy Trinity, which Christianity might never have dreamed of, so far as his text itself is concerned. He who borrowed from Proclus knew well where his source was. In the seventh century there is St. Maximus, who wrote Greek SCHOLIA on Dionysius and affirmed that the soul is united with the Unknown Divinity by the suspension of all cognition.<sup>2</sup> John the Scot follows in the ninth century. I have shewn elsewhere that as regards the return of man's spirit to God it is for Erigena a path of seven stages, the last of which is the absorption of the soul in Deity.<sup>3</sup> He was not a witness of experience, his great dedications being those of realisation in the logical mind. We are brought to the threshold of the Grail period when we glance at Hugh of St. Victor and his successor Richard of the same monastic house, for they belong to the twelfth century. The first tells us that to ascend unto God is to enter into oneself and to transcend oneself. Richard says of the soul: *Ascendat per semetipsum super semetipsum*, being the clearest intimation possible that the knowledge of God is attained in exploration of the world within us.

At once by necessity and purpose, this is a bald sketch and passes through a field which I have travelled already in the past. It would demand a special study to exhibit the influence of Dionysius on later Christian Mysticism, through the translation into Latin of his writings by John the Scot, and that of Erigena Johannes in many directions. There arose in this manner an unincorporated school of experience which was with the Church and was of it in the deeper sense, but was following indubitably a course in which the Church and its Offices had the least possible part, always excepting the great symbolical sacrifice and living memorial of the Holy Mass. Its chief developments were subsequent to the Grail period, towards the close of which St. Bernard, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Bonaventura are illustrious signposts but are not of the School itself, though the Franciscan movement had later developments which were in an occasional proximity thereto, while later still the so-called BOOK OF THE MAN FROM FRANKFURT, Nicholas

<sup>1</sup> TRACT ON MYSTICAL THEOLOGY, Cap. I.

<sup>2</sup> Migne's edition of Dionysius, Vol. II, col. 422.

<sup>3</sup> WAY OF DIVINE UNION, p. 166.

of Basle and Rulman Merswin were of its spirit at the root thereof. There is an excellent estimate of Erigena by Dr. F. W. Bussell,<sup>1</sup> which exhibits the kind of influence that he would exercise, his Theophany in respect of the universe, his unbending monism, his deification—*Theosis*—of the soul, its absolute resumption into God. At the Grail period itself the New Apocalypse of Joachim and his followers is a pregnant sign of the times ; but to this I have referred elsewhere. My position is that the Latin Church has tolerated its Mystics as it best could when they were of the Dionysian type, and when there was no excuse or opportunity for dealing with them in a summary fashion ; that it condemned and persecuted them when it might and dared ; but that it had no use for any, or if any, for those only who were characterised by dreams and visions, who suffered from stigmatic and other pathological conditions, who had marriages with the personal Christ, more especially when the nuptials were made evident—so to speak—psychically by rings or crowns and by choirs of angels for witnesses. The pseudo-miraculous side was the side which appealed and that only, because Rome was dedicated above all to the phenomenal aspect of things ; and (1) to rigid and literal dogma, literally and rigidly understood, in the teeth of St. Augustine on the Trinity and in the teeth of the Apostles' Creed in its titular designation as *Symbolum* ; (2) to the multiplication of dogma, as if the Mystery of Faith could be exhibited more intelligibly by ever increasing broidery on the veils thereof. How should Rome take into its heart the *Agnosia* of Dionysius and the *Theosis* of John the Scot ? But the one is a plain statement on the bankruptcy of the logical understanding when confronted by the issues of Reality, from which it follows that the Way to Reality is in another mode of mind ; and the other is that to which the Mysteries of valid experience have borne their witness in all ages, and without break or interruption through all the Christian centuries. In the face of the rack and the faggot it may have camouflaged its authentic findings, but ever are the findings there : the *Theosis* of experience is as much in Ruysbroeck, all his concessions notwithstanding to the regnant dogmatism which affirms separation for ever ; and it is almost as much in Gerson, who accuses Ruysbroeck of Pantheism. It does not come into mystical records as a favoured point of view, but because the faithful annals of experience could bear no other witness.

Robert de Borron may have written already his JOSEPH—thus starting Grail literature on its historicity side—when Clement III encouraged the Calabrian Abbot Joachim to continue his apocalyptic writings, *anno* 1188, and Frederic II was his patron when Joachim died in 1200. A few years later the QUESTE crowned the French annals of the Grail. Here is one of the spiritual aspects in which the Legend grew up and flourished, and about it also surged the material terror and unrest of the times. The year 1198 ushered in the consolidation of Papal Monarchy, as it is called, under the auspices of Innocent III.

<sup>1</sup> RELIGIOUS THOUGHT AND HERESY IN THE MIDDLE AGES, 1918, pp. 672-679.

But it was an Empire more than a Monarchy in the dream of theory and less or more substantially in the world of fact. "The temporal sword of St. Peter stretched far beyond Italy and Germany to the limits of Christendom, and the spiritual relationship in its political interpretation implied the vassalage of Europe to the See of Rome."<sup>1</sup> But it happened that the policy of Innocent in his relations with England and his duel with King John "alienated the heart of a nation for ever from its allegiance to the Papacy."<sup>2</sup> It was the days of Interdict; but no sentence pronounced in Rome and no Kingly submission was destined to make England a fief of the Papacy. The Interdict passed in fine, and MAGNA CHARTA followed, when "the Pope stood side by side with John and his tyranny".<sup>3</sup> So was there sown successfully and ineradicably the seed of an "antipapal spirit preceding the Reformation." And the Tree of the Grail Legend was putting forth branches and flowers. Was the spirit not rife already in England during the reign of Henry II? And if in England, at that distance from the centre, we have only to look at Rome during the pontificate of Innocent III, at France and Germany. The story repeats itself in many places and times. Very often also it was the spirit of Christ, as understood by earnest Christians, which was set against the spirit of Rome. It was of those who believed in the doctrine so much and so well that they denounced the lives and ambitions which gave the lie to doctrine. It was of those who resented doctrinal accretions. It was of those who chose the peace and recollection of the inward way, who "let the legions thunder past and plunged in thought again". It was of those who adored Masses and bowed to sacred Relics. It was of those who compared the pattern of the gospel with the pattern of Rome. It was of those who led the life that they might know the true doctrine. It was of those who by leading the life had passed behind the doctrine. Not least of all and possibly more than all, it was of those who said unto themselves: "The end is everywhere"; that the Spirit of God has left the Church because of the evil therein. So it came about that the Grail was taken away. But before it ascended to Heaven, he who wrote the *QUESTE* saw to it that the real meaning should emerge. In the authentic state of attainment, and with a valid sign of the union in the Sacred Host between his lips, the Grail went up with Galahad. And it is thus in other stories, even in the medley of the *CONTE*. It is with the Perceval of the Didot-Modena text in a most secret place of the Hiddenness; it is with him of the *PERLESVAUS*, who went over a great sea. In other words, it is still in the heart of the elect, of those who have led the life and found the Doctrine in the Path of Union. This is the Secret of the Grail.

<sup>1</sup> Mary I. M. Bull: *A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PAPACY*, 1921, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ib.*, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* Cf. Matthew Paris. "The Sovereign Pontiff who ought to be the source of sanctity, the mirror of piety, the guardian of Justice, the defender of truth, protects such a man. Why does he take his part? To engulf the riches of England in the coffers of Rome's avarice."

And now to move one step forward, being the last point to which I can take the subject: The place of the Cup in this extension of the symbolism under the light of all its analogies, corresponds to the place of Spiritual Life; to the rest of knowledge; to the receptacle of the Graces which are above and to the channel of their communication to things which are below; but this is the equivalent *ex hypothesi* of the Arch-Natural Eucharist. In a word, it is the world not manifested, and this is the world of Adeptship, attained by Sanctity. In so far therefore as it can be said in the open day, hereof is the message of the Secret Tradition in Christian Times on the subject of the Grail Mystery. So also, under a certain transfiguration, does the Grail still appear in the Hidden Sanctuaries.

## V

## THE CONCLUSION OF THIS HOLY QUEST

**T**HERE is the transmission of records from the past, and while the worship of the heart expresses its unfailing thankfulness for the wealth of our inheritance, it knows too well also that there is a long tale of loss, of vanished and irrecoverable treasure. We meet ever and continually with casual intimations which offer evidence of these things unseen and never to be seen henceforward. It is a second kind of transmission, at once vague and haunting but a food of thought, a food of speculation; and there is a not unwarranted feeling that the faculty of imagining within us does cast from time to time some quality of light thereon. But there is also, as it seems to me, a third and very real transmission, being that of a memory of things which have never passed into writing. It is obviously the most vague of all, and the most distorted of all obviously; yet it possesses a certain office and bears a certain witness. It is represented chiefly by a deep awareness within us of meaning underlying meaning, of sense behind the sense on the external side of records. It is as if upon rare occasions the embodied mind to-day were in communion with minds of the past and in touch with that which lay unexpressed behind their written word. It is not all among us who have access to such wells of memory, and not all who possess the gift that can exercise it with wise caution.

When Thomas de Quincey certified that the Ancient Mysteries were the great imposture of the classical world, he made evident that he had no such gift; but on the other hand a thousand reveries concerning Eleusis and Samothrace, Thebes and Memphis are testimonies of the gift run wild in regions of all extravagance. It calls to be checked on every side by that which can be known otherwise, by the voice of texts and monuments. The post-Platonists proclaiming the sacred

truth of the Mysteries might open a world which would call to be explored in this connection with anxious care. It would tell us that the Orgies of Demeter and Persephone may be those of Seed-Time and Harvest, but that they are those of the soul as well. The Death and Resurrection of the God may have their hidden meanings illustrated by the decay and growth of vegetation ; but the Mystical Death and Figurative Resurrection of the soul is their real subject, is that which matters and is that also on which there is a wealth of record outside the Instituted Mysteries.

If I say with French Freemasonry that I also believe in the Resurrection of Hiram, it is because of Plato and the Successors, because also of the long line of Christian Mystics. If I say : Christ is Arisen : Amen : He is Arisen, on every Easter Morning, it is not that the flesh profiteth, though the Spirit has ever its body in all worlds of manifestation. It is because of the Risen Spirit, which unfolds the Law and the Prophets on all the ways to Emmaus and in all the upper rooms in which the mind contemplates and waits expectant on coming revelations.

The records of deep experience are with us from time immemorial ; but there are also unwritten testimonies, as if from the beginning of things, which have passed by word of mouth and have been cherished in the hearts of hearers. And no one shall say with truth that they have not filtered down through the ages, are no part of our spiritual heredity, shrined in subconscious memory and awakened in flashes therefrom. They bring us strange messages beneath the surface sense of Instituted Mysteries. They speak of bournes beyond the "perilous seas" and open the hidden word behind the song of nightingales.<sup>1</sup> They are also a voice which is not a voice but another manner of meaning in age-old lore of folk. They may speak even within Masonic Rituals, and we know too in this manner that the Books of the Dead are that which scholarship claims, yet a faith which is older than Egypt tells us also that they are Books of the Living Soul.

When we hear therefore of Secret Words pronounced at the Sacrament of the Grail, we think of that Mass which we have heard far away in the heart, but otherwise never on earth. There are others before us who may have contemplated thereon more deeply ; and we make our spiritual communion, that we may be joined with their Blessed Company. If he who spoke of Secret Words communicated by Christ to Joseph had Mass-Words in his mind, he is one of us : he has heard in his heart like us and has left a memorial behind him, lest we forget. If he who spoke of a High Priestly Succession which did not come from the Apostles but straight from the Grand Master, we—or a few among us—may recall that pregnant Invocation which is found in one of the Mystery-Books : Give unto us, O Lord, that Priesthood which comes not by the laying-on of hands. Do we not stand here as if on the threshold of that Secret Church about which Eckartshausen wrote ?

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 33.

Some later makers of Grail texts could only translate such intimations in terms of Transubstantiation on its most crudest side; but the Galahad Quest finds a way through at long last into another region.

There is thus an unexplored world behind the age-old world of Rite and Symbol; and because the vague reflections hereof are to be found therein, it is to be observed also that the literature of the Holy Grail is an eloquent witness to the depth and wonder of the Catholic Mass.<sup>1</sup> It is *par excellence* that Rite and Practice through which we can pass most easily behind the modes of symbol. And yet after all the worlds of language have been taxed, if not exhausted, I conceive that we have approximated only towards those wonders, sounding here and there with short lines and floating plummets their immeasurable deeps. The Keywords of the whole Mystery are *Sacramentum Mirabile*. It is *mirabile* indeed and *sacramentum* in all truth; and some intimations concerning it are found not only in the great testimonies of the great doctors but there and here even in little books of popular devotion, dark sayings of Paracelsus in *DE CÆNA DOMINI* and disquisitions like that of the learned Dr. Ralph Cudworth on *THE LORD'S SUPPER*. It happens that a chance word or sentence in their pages opens suddenly, outside all expectation, some gate that we have passed without thinking. Hereof therefore are gleanings from a Catholic Sacramentary, giving further sidelights on the most Catholic of all experiments, the Quest of the Grail. We open such gates successively and at least look down the vistas which expand therefrom; we travel one or other of the paths and come to Chapels by the way; we recite our *Introibo* and yet in the end are baffled: we do not go in, except among the lights and incense of an outer Sanctuary. For this reason we feel a divine and loving envy when we hear what Galahad saw after the material visions, when there was no longer any Doctrine of Transubstantiation made sensible, but only *les esperitueus choses*. So also the gracious and piteous Legend haunts us for ever; and we are aware that we have dwelt overlong in Logres and know the loss thereof.

Is it part of that path of dereliction which leads perchance in fine to the Path of Heaven? I know at least that we are led forward strangely; that all our sanity of criticism notwithstanding, and all the schools of scandal which have done their deadliest in the past to open the gates of hell in the Fold of Christ, we may take our hearts of unbelief, on a day marked red in the rubrics, into an unknown wayside Church, and the burden of heart and head will fall away for the time being when a humble Priest utters the *Hic est enim* or in the silent Presence of That which is within the Tabernacle, with the red lamp before it. The wayside Church becomes a Church of the Spirit. It may be that some of us revisit and are given other messages, whatever Sigils of foreign Mysteries are marked upon us. But having regard to the interdictions of the life of sense the great majority,

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 34.

when they receive anything, know only a substituted participation in the Life of the Union.

The Grail Mystery is a declared Pageant of the Eucharist, and in virtue of affirmed powers set forth under the veil of Consecrating Words, it comes before us in the terms and modes of a Higher Mystery. We have only to remember a few passages in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, in the PERLESVAUS and in the Quest of Galahad to understand the imputed distinction as (1) the communication in the Eucharist of the whole knowledge of the universe from *Aleph* to *Tau*; (2) the communication of the Abiding Christ in the dissolution of the veils of Bread and Wine; (3) the communication experimentally of that secret process by which the soul passes under Divine Guidance from the offices of this world to Heaven, the keynote being that the soul is taken when it asks as into the Great Transcendence. Here is the implied Question of the Galahad Legend as distinguished from the Perceval Question. There are those who are called in a sense but are not chosen, like Monseigneur Gawain. There are those who draw near to the Great Mystery but have not given up all things for it, and of these is Lancelot. There is the great cohort, like the apocalyptic multitude which no man can number—called, elected and redeemed in the lesser ways, by the Offices of the External Church—and of these is the Great Chivalry of the Round Table. There are those who go up into the Mountain of the Lord and return again, like Bors: they have received the Last Degrees; but their office is in this world. In fine, there are those who follow at a certain distance in the steep path, and of these is the transmuted Perceval of the Galahad Legend. It is in this sense that, exalted above all and more than all things rarefied into a great and high quintessence, the History of the Holy Grail becomes the Soul's History, moving through a profound symbolism of inward being, wherein we follow as we can; but the vistas are prolonged for ever, and it seems well that there is neither a beginning to the story nor a descried ending.

We find also the shadows and tokens of secret memorials which have not been declared in the external, and by the strange things which are hinted, we seem to see that the Temple of the Grail in Corbenic is not otherwise than as the three tabernacles which it was proposed to build on Mount Tabor. Among indications of this kind there are two only that I can mention. As in the Prologue to the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, we have heard that the anonymous but not unknown Hermit met on a memorable occasion with one who recognised him by certain signs which he carried, giving thus the seeming token of some Instituted Mystery in which both shared: as in the LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL we have seen that there is an account of five changes in the Grail which took place at the Altar, being five transfigurations, the last of which assumed the seeming of a Chalice, but at the same time, instead of a Chalice, there was some undeclared Mystery: so the general as well as the particular elements of the Legend in its highest form offer a



Mystery the nature of which is recognised by the mystic through certain signs that it carries on its person ; yet it is declared in part only and that which remains, namely, the greater part, is not more than suggested. It is that, I believe, which was seen by the maimed King when he looked into the Sacred Cup and beheld the secret of all things, the beginning even and the end. In this sense the five changes of the Grail are analogous—as proposed previously—to the five natures of man, as these in their turn correspond to the four aspects of the Cosmos and that which rules all things, within and from without the Cosmos. I conclude therefore that the antecedents of the Cup Legend are (1) *Calix meus quam inebrians est* ; (2) the Cup which does not pass away ; (3) the *Vas insigne electionis*. The antecedent of the Grail question is : Ask, and ye shall receive. The antecedent of the Enchantment of Britain is the swoon of the sensitive life, and that of the Adventurous Times is : I bring not peace, but a sword ; I come to cast fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it should be enkindled ? The closing of these times is taken when the High Priest turns at the altar, saying *Pax Dei tecum*. But this is the peace which passes understanding and it supervenes upon the *Mors osculi*—the mystic Thomas Vaughan's "Death of the Kiss"—after which it is exclaimed truly : "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth and for ever." It follows therefore that the formula of the Supernatural Grail is : *Panem cœlestem accipiam* ; and that of the Natural Grail is : *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie* ; and the middle term : "Man doth not live by bread alone." I should add : These three are one ; but this is in virtue of great and high transmutations which cannot be discussed here. So, after all the offices of scholarship—pursued with that patience which may wear out worlds of obstacles—it proves that there is something left over ; that this something carries on its surface the aspects of mystical life ; that hereof is our heritage ; and that we can enter and take possession.

The Books of the Holy Grail tell us of a Sanctuary within the Sanctuary of Christendom, wherein there are reserved Great Sacraments, High Symbols, Relics that are of all most holy and would be so accounted in all the external ways ; but of these things we have heard otherwise in certain Secret Schools. It follows therefore that we can lift up our eyes because there is a Morning Light which we go to meet with exultation, *portantes manipulos nostros*. We shall find the paths more easy because of our precursors, who have cleared the tangled ways and have set up landmarks and beacons, by which perchance we shall be led more straightly into our own, though in their clearing and surveying they did not all know that they were working for us.

When it is affirmed by Doctors of the Church that the Eucharist is the necessity of spiritual life, we keep our heart of recollection, awaiting that day when our daily bread shall become itself the Eucharist, no longer a mere material substitute provided in our material toil and

under the offices of which we die. If the body is communicated to the body, it is because the Spirit is imparted to the soul. *Spiritus ipse Christi animæ infunditur*, and this is the illustration of ecstasy. But in these days—as I have hinted—it works chiefly through the efficacy of a symbol, and this is why we cannot say in our hearts: *A carne nostro caro Christi ineffabile modo sentitur*, meaning *Anima sponsæ ad plenissimam in Christum transformationem sublimatur*. Hence, whether it is St. John of the Cross speaking of the Ascent of Mount Carmel or Ruysbroeck of the Hidden Stone, the discourse is always addressed to Israel in the wilderness, not in the Land of Promise. Hence also our glass of vision remains clouded, like the Sanctuary; and even the books of the mystics subsist under the law of an interdict and are expressed in the language thereof. Those of the Holy Grail are written—as if from very far away—in terms of Transubstantiation, presented thaumaturgically under all the veils of grossness, instead of the terms of the *Epiclesis* in the language of those who have been ordained with the Holy Oils of the Comforter. In other books the metaphysics of the Lover and the Beloved have been rendered in a tongue of the flesh, forgetting that it bears the same relation to the illusory correspondence of human unions that the Figurative Bread of the Eucharist bears to material nutriment. The true analogy is in the contradistinction between the elements of bodies and minds. The high analogy in literature is the Supper at the Second Table in the poem of Robert de Borron. That was a spiritual repast, where there was neither eating nor drinking. For this reason the Symbolic Fish upon the table conveyed to the Warden the title of Rich Fisher; and it is in this sense—that is to say, for the same reason—that the saints become Fishers of Men. We shall re-express the experience of the mystical life in terms that will make all things new when we understand fully what is implied by the secret words: *Co-opertus et absconditus sponsus*.

The dissolution of Doctrine in experience is the last word on the Mystery in the Galahad Quest; and this is also at need the last word of the present contribution to the understanding of Grail literature. It is the experience of St. Thomas Aquinas in his state of *contemplatio dilucida*, when on a certain immemorial morning he said his Mass, as he had said it before so often, but for this once in the noumenal part of his being. We may never meet with historical traces of a Secret Company which had high Eucharistic Doctrine and a plenary Apostolical Succession outside the pale of Rome. But we should not consult in vain the records of mystical experience between 1150 and 1225. The Albigensian message to Simon de Montfort, is a great portent of things outside all knowledge among sects of Southern France; but it may be that there are no records to cast their light thereon. There are the records, however, of that deep experience to which I have recurred so frequently: they are in a great world of thought emerging from the cloud and light of the Middle Ages into that other light of the Renaissance; and they may prove to be

enough at need. We can rest content therefore with a Mass of the High Privities, as of a great symbolism leading into valid knowledge. And beyond the Blessed Vision of Dante and the Vision of the Face of Shekinah there is the absorption of the end in God.

It is obvious that this is the limit beyond which expression suffers complete paralysis. If I say with Elias Ashmole that of what is beyond I know enough to hold my tongue but not enough to speak,<sup>1</sup> even then it is indubitable that my narrow measures are exceeded: "I know not, God knoweth". It is useless in any case to pursue the evidential questions further than they have been taken up to this point. There is nothing left unstated that is in any sense possible to adduce: those of my own Tradition will understand what remains over and what is indeed involved. I submit no claims: the day has passed long since when one man could be so much as desired to believe on the authority of another, when things so vital are implicated. I invite no verdict. I care utterly nothing for any impression which the considerations of this book may produce in academies of external thought; and in the words of one who has preceded me carrying no warrants but those of his own intimations, I shall not be "the less convinced or the more discouraged". When all the debates are over and all the canons of criticism are at length exhausted, it remains that the Quest of Galahad took that High Prince through Veils of Transubstantiation unto the Divine Unimaged Vision: I know that the Sanctuary is made void for him who has so achieved, that the curtains are parted and that it is given him to depart thence, for there is nothing left to detain him. It is of course to be understood that he might have been taken through other veils of Doctrine and of Practice, but it so happens that the Mass is of all things greatest in the time-immemorial and world-conterminous range of Sacred Rites and Doctrines.

Here then are certain exotics of the one subject offered to those who are concerned with the Grail literature as belonging to the term thereof. They will know that the imperfections of our human life are attenuated by the turning of our intellectual part towards the Blessed Zion and that, next after leading the all-hallowed life, the making of holy books to formulate the aspirations of our better self in its best moments may be counted in a man towards righteousness and help himself, as others, on the Path of Quest. It is well indeed for him whose life is dedicated to the Quest, but at least amidst the stress and terror of these our wayward times, in the heart and the inmost heart, let us keep its memory green.

(I) Faith is the implicits of the mind passing into expression formally, and knowledge is the same implicits certified by experience. It is in this sense that God recompenses those who seek Him out. The Mystery of the Holy Grail is like the sun of a great implicit rising

<sup>1</sup> Ashmole was speaking of the Hermetic Mystery in the Preface to his *THEATRUM CHEMICUM BRITANNICUM*.

in the zones of consciousness. If therefore from one point of view we are dealing with great speculations, from another we are concerned with great certainties. And Galahad did not falter.

(2) There is nothing in the world which has less to do with a process or other conventions and artifices than the ascent of a soul to light. Thus, the Quest has no formulæ.

(3) The mistake which man has made has been to go in search of his soul, which does not need finding but exploring only, entering by a certain door which is always open within him. All the doors of Corbenic were open when Lancelot came thereto, even that Sanctuary into which he could look from afar but wherein he could not enter. The chief door is inscribed: *Sapida notitia de Deo*. It is understood, however, that before the door is reached there are gates which are well guarded. So at an hour of midnight, when the moon shone clear, Lancelot paused at the postern, which opened towards the sea, and saw how two lions guarded it.

(4) It is true also that the gates are not opened easily by which the King of Glory comes in: yet we know that the King comes. The key of these gates is called *Voluntas inflammata*. This will works on the hither side, but there is another which works on the farther, and this is named *Beneplacitum termino carens*. When the gates open by the concurrence of these two powers, the King of Salem comes forth carrying Bread and Wine. Of the communication which then follows it is said: *Gustari potest quod explicari nequit*. Galahad and his fellows did taste and saw that the Lord is sweet.

(5) For the Proselytes of the Gate which is external and the Postulants at the Pronaos of the Temple, the Crucifixion took place on Calvary. For the Adepts and the Eopts, the question is not whether this is true on the plane of history but in what manner it signifies, seeing that the great event of all human history began at the foundation of the world, as it still takes place daily in the souls of those for whom the one thing needful is to know when Christ shall arise within them. It is then that those on the Quest can say with Sir Bors: "But God was ever my comfort".

(6) All that we forget is immaterial if that which we remember is vital, as for example the High Prince of Quest, who said: "Therefore I wit well when my body is dead, my soul shall be in great joy to see the Blessed Trinity every day, and the majesty of our Lord Jesu Christ"—in other words *Contemplatio perfectissima et altissima Dei*. But there is a height beyond this height.

(7) The first condition of interior progress is detachment from the lesser responsibilities, which are external to our proper interests and distract from those high and onerous burdens which we have to carry on our road upward, until such time as even the road itself—and the burdens thereto belonging—shall assume and transport us. From the greatest even to the least the missions of Knight-Errantry were followed in detachment, and those who went on the Quest carried no

*impedimenta*. So also is the great silence ordained about those who would hear the *interior Dei locutio altissimi*.

(8) The generation of God is outward and thus into the estate of man ; but the regeneration of man is inward and so into the Divine Union. The great clerks wrote the Adventures of the Grail in great books ; but there was no rehearsal of the Last Branch, the first Rubric of which would read : *De felicissima animæ cum Deo unione*.

(9) Most conventions of man concern questions of procedure, and it is so with the things which are above, for we must either proceed or perish. Monseigneur Gawain turned back, and hence he was smitten of the old wound that Lancelot gave him ; but no Knight who achieved the Quest died in arms, unless in Holy War.

(10) In the declared knowledge which behind it has the hidden knowledge, blood is the symbol of life, and this being so it can be understood after what manner the Precious Blood profiteth and the Reliquary thereof. The other name of this Reliquary is the Hidden Church. It has not been built with hands. Such are the offices of its mercy that *in examine mortis* even Gawain received his Saviour.

(11) The root from which springs the great tree of Mysticism is the old theological doctrine that God is the centre of the heart. He is by alternative the soul's centre. This is the ground of the union : *per charitatem iusti uniuntur cum Deo*. Gawain entreated Lancelot to "prayer some prayer more or lesse for my soule ;" King Arthur as he drifted in the dark barge said to Bedivere : "And yf thou here neuer more of me praye for my soule ;" but Perceval and Galahad knew that their reward was with them : they asked for no offerings, and no one wearied Heaven.

(12) In the soul's conversion there is no office of time, and this is why the greatest changes are always out of expectation. The Grail came like Angels—unawares. The *castissimus et purissimus amplexus* and the *felix osculum* are given as in the dark and suddenly. There is further nothing in the wide world so swift and so silent as the *illapsus Christi in centrum animæ*. So also it is said of Galahad that "sodenely his soule departed."

(13) The consideration of eternity arises from that of the Holy Grail, as from all literature at its highest, and if I have set it as the term of my own researches, in this respect, it is rather because it has imposed itself than because I have sought it out.

The remembrance of the one thing needful is starred over all so-called secret literatures. Their maxim is not so much that God encompasses as that God is within ; and in virtue hereof those who created them could say in their hearts what on rare occasions they said also with their lips : *Absque nube pro nobis*. I affirm on the authority of research ; on other—which is higher—authority ; on that which I have seen of the Mysteries ; and on the high intimations which are communicated to those who seek, that the Great Experiment subsists, that those exist who have pursued it, and that behind imperishable

records—good and just and holy—are found manifold traces of veiled Masters. The term of quest therein is the term of the Grail Quest, and its sacramental pageant of procedure sets forth the same process. The Path of Instituted Mysteries was never the only path, but once it may have been one of the nearest, because the mind was trained therein, firstly, in the sense of possibility and, secondly, in the direction of consciousness, so that it might be overflowed by the fulfilled experiment. It was carried on in the Secret Schools; but at this day—in so far as any survive—the great Instituted Rites are like the Rich King Fisherman, either wounded or in a condition of languishment, and it is either for the same reason, namely, that few are prepared to come forward and ask the indispensable Question, or the consciousness of the Great Experiment has closed down upon the Wardens of the Rites, and they stand guard over its memorials only. It has been pursued also in Official Churches, and they are permanent witnesses to its root-matter in the world. But they live in the outward sense, among the clouds and images: they communicate the *Signum* only and not *Signatum*; while as to this last there seems no one now to look in the deep places for its hidden virtue. The key which we must take in our hands is that God is everywhere and that He recompenses those who seek Him out. But those who are on the Quest of the Veiled Masters may save their pains of seeking them in the Master's Chair of a Craft Lodge or in the pulpit of a popular preacher: in other words they will do well to dispense with the notion of any corporate fellowship as a *sine qua non*. The truly Veiled Master is in the heart of each one of us, and the path to his throne is like the path to a Secret Church. Some say that the Pearl without Price is here, some that it is there, some that it has been taken into hiding, and some that it is withdrawn into Heaven; but its true place is with him who can testify truly: *Nunc dimittis, Domine, servum tuum secundum verbum tuum in pace*, on the one valid ground, namely: *quoniam vidit oculus meus salutare tuum*. He also has seen the Grail.

If I have not spoken my whole mind on the faded aspects and memorials of the Secret Tradition which do now repose in some of the Instituted Sanctuaries, it is because I am conscious of difficulties which cannot as yet be taken out of the way, while there are also many covenants. If therefore some voice in the cloud of listeners should intervene and say: But again, where are they—the Stewards?—I should answer, as I could answer only: I have brought back from a long journey those few typical memorials which have been interwoven here and in other books of my making, for the encouragement of men and women of my kinship, that where I have sought to go they may enter also in their time, supposing that they are called in truth. If they see at the end only the trail of the garments of some who elude them at a distant angle of the vista, they may at least confess with me that Titans have passed before and have cast their shadows behind. To whatever such quest might lead in one case or another, be it understood that in assuming the Legends of the Holy Grail as a sacred and beautiful

opportunity to speak of the Mystical Eucharist and the other Divine Emblems connected with and arising therefrom, I have put forward no personal claim. If I have dwelt in the secret places it has not been to return and testify that no others can enter; and I least of all am an authorised spokesman of Stewards behind the Veil. But that which it has been given me to do I have done faithfully, within the measure of my mind. I have classified and marshalled the evidence in Christian Mysticism, in Jewish Theosophy, in records of Spiritual Alchemy, in the Rosy Cross, and here at this long last I have borne my witness now that the Grail literature tells also the same story at the highest point of its development. Beyond these memorials, if indeed anywhere, I should look to the East, in the direction of that pure catholic Gnosticism which lies like a Pearl of great Price within the glistening shell of many creeds and systems, which is not of Marcion or Valentinus, of Cerinthus and all their cohorts, but is the deep Mystery of Experience in immemorial wells whence issues no strife of sects.

We know that in its higher grades the spirit of imagination moves through a world not manifest, and this is the World of Mystery. It is that also in which many are initiated who are called but not chosen utterly; yet it is that in which the Epopot is enthroned at last—that world in which the Grail Castle, Corbenic or Mont Salvatch, the Most Holy Temple and Secret Sanctuary are attainable at a certain point, that point being out of time and place. It is the World of Quest which is also the World of Attainment. There in fine, at the striking of a mystical hour within the holy soul, takes place that translation in which the soul ascends, carrying its Holy Grail. It is there that the Offices of all the High Degrees meet in the term of their unity, and the great systems, at which height we realise vitally what we realise now intellectually—that the perfect transmutation of Alchemy, the passage from Kingdom to Crown in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, the journey through Hades to Elysium and in Dante as their last spokesman, and finally the Quest of Galahad, are the various aspects and symbolical presentations of one subject. At this stage of the interpretation I shall not need to indicate that in the definitive adjustment even the high symbols are pretexts only: they are tokens "lest we forget"; the reason being that neither Chalice nor Paten really imparts anything. They are among the great conventions and figurations to which the soul confesses on the upward path of its progress. That which imparts or draws down is the will of the soul to receive through any and all channels, and it chooses these or those on which to fix the high intent of consecrated will. The soul which has opened up the heights of as yet unexplored consciousness within it partakes as itself a great vessel of election, while another which is still under seals may receive nothing.

Independently of corporate connections, the Mystical Quest is the highest of all Adventures, the mirror of all Knighthood, all Institutes of Chivalry. And this Quest, symbolised after another manner, is that of the Holy Grail. The old witnesses spoke of that which they knew,

though some of them knew only in part and saw through a glass darkly. We are full of "sad and strange experience," and we have not come to our rest; but it may happen that we are in a better position to understand some of the old books than they were understood by any when first drawn into language. Better even than they who wrote them in their far past do some of us know now after what manner their highest things go forth into Mystery; but of the gate they knew and of the way also. Chivalry is a Mystery of Idealism and the Grail a Mystery of Transfiguration; but when it was said to be removed from this world owing to a faithless time, it was not taken further away: some deeper veils were drawn.

And now to make an end of these pleadings: I have sought to give good account of the Holy Grail, as it was in the mind of the past and as it is to-day in our own, that I could lead up to what it might become, that is to say, how it could be realised in life as well as in high literature, because in other respects some things which are conceivable in the ideal order are those also which are; and God redeems the future as well as the past. Dilated in the shadows of the mind, as within cloud and moonlight, the Grail appears even now, and that suddenly. It abides in the memory for those who would live in its light, and it is elevated into light for those who can so keep it in a high spirit of recollection that it becomes their guide and palladium. For myself it is in virtue of many related dedications that I have allocated a great experiment in literature to a great consanguineous experiment in mystical life. I have not so much demonstrated the value of a pure hypothesis as elucidated after what manner those who are concerned with the one subject do from all points return at length thereto. As a seeker after the High Mysteries, I testify at this last that whosoever shall in any vesture offer me daily bread, I will say to him: "But what of the *panis vivus et vitalis*? What of the Supersubstantial Bread?" And if there be anyone who deals therein, under what rules soever of any Houses of Exchange, I will have him know that if he sells in the open market, even I am a buyer. So therefore the author of this book gives thanks that he has written concerning the Romance-Pageants and Sanctity as of the Catholic and Eternal Secrets of Religion. *Quod erat demonstrandum*: it is written for those alone who in the silence of the heart and in a sacred suspension of the senses have heard the Voice of the Grail, or look at least to hear on a day to come.

In the great desolation of Logres I hear also the penitent Knight Lancelot singing his twelve-month Mass. So also till he turns at the Altar, saying: *Ite, Missa est*, because the King Himself is coming in the morning tide, I will respect all the findings of scholarship concerning Quests which are not of the Grail and Cups which contain no Sacrament; but I am on the Quest of the Grail and, Master of True Life, after all the long debate, it is not so far to Thee. And even Gwalchmai saw it.



## VI

## EPILOGUE

I HAVE lived in this Temple of Images for long years of my literary life, and if I have left it from time to time, because there are other Sanctuaries, it has been ever to return at call and dwell among its Shrines and Hallows. I know also that many are on the Quest like me, looking for deeper meanings in all the ways of art ; and I as a father of the chapel, because I have been on this kind of craft and business many decades longer than all or most about me.

We have examined all the texts and have travelled thereafter the paths of comparison and contrast respecting the findings of research.<sup>1</sup> We know that the Celtic hypothesis concerning the origin of the Legend has been attenuated of recent years and is still losing ground. We know that the German version of the Mythos was contaminated with that of the Venusberg, so that it " bent and sank down in search of a shameful pasturage ". We know that another canon of criticism has sought to connect the Grail Vessel and the Lesser Hallows with the Mass of the Orthodox Church and has produced some intriguing analogies which lead us nowhere, though it is very certain that in a high symbolical sense there is a Mass-Book behind the Grail. We have found, moreover, that for those who know the texts and something also of the Instituted Mysteries there are aspects of the Grail which suggest rather strongly a veiled story of Initiation—that is to say, the admission of a Candidate into some circle of hidden knowledge. We have found finally that in such case the successful seeker of the Mystery was admitted rather within the penetralia of a Secret Church. He did not participate in a State Mystery like that which was maintained at Eleusis ; he did not share in a cultus of Vegetation Gods ; he did not enter—among things lesser compared with greater things—a Temple of Ceremonial Observance like the Eighteenth Degree of Rose Croix in High Grades of Modern Freemasonry.

If there is any text which issued from a Hidden School, Sect or Church in Christendom, it would seem to be that story of PERLESVAUS which Sebastian Evans, its translator, called the HIGH HISTORY. There is ever a Mass in the morning to follow its tales of wonder—a Holy Mass heard in some Holy Chapel, the fairest ever seen. It intimates to those who have ears that behind Official Churches and Sanctuaries there is another Holy of Holies, and that behind Masses of the Living, Masses of the Dead, Masses of Corpus Christi, Masses of High Days Holy and Masses of Ferias there is a Mass of the Holy Spirit, a Mass of the Ascended Christ and that more than laying on of hands ordains to Priesthood. Here are great awakenings and to great possibilities for those who feel that *Mysterium Fidei*, the whole Mystery of Faith, is not

<sup>1</sup> Appendix I, Note 35.

contained within the Ordinary of the Mass, whether that of Rome or Sarum, with all their variants for a Mass of Our Lady or a Mass of all the Saints. Wheresoever it is said, in ways within or without, it gives unto those who can receive the Bread of Heaven, even Wine of the Spirit. I think that such a Mass is on record in such Latin as is not found in classical dictionaries or in any *LEXICON INFIMÆ LATINITATIS*. Assuredly its secret tongue is heard only within, and in rough paragraphs, after my own poor manner, I have here and elsewhere "drawn it into Romance", the Romance of echoes and reflections, of types and images, spoken here on earth. It is written in the hearts of some who hold the story dear and "tell nought thereof to ill-understanding folk". It says to those who have ears: "Hear ye the History of the Most Holy Vessel that is called Grail".

All sacred symbols serve at need to open figurative gates and everlasting portals on the world's verge of emblems; and therefore *sanctum mirabile* can be said of each in definition. But that of the Holy Vessel, as it seems to me, is the "Master Key" of all the Holy Treasures. It gives entrance into a Master Hall and afterwards into an Inner Chapel, where *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* is chanted world without end. There is always more to follow of chants and stories.

Now the Books of the Soul are books with the meanings in them for us and for ours. Some were written within and without by those who made them, but some without only. In the last resource we give them our own meanings in either case. It is fair work and square, such as is required for the building of Spiritual Houses and such as the Overseers thereof have orders to receive. It is in this way also and only that we make them ours and live therein as in Temples.

The later Grail texts are full of Transubstantiation marvels, and these are ice-cold baths of disillusion for the spiritual mind. But it seems to me that they were the work of people who were not afraid of their symbols and who offer a path behind them to those who can take it. The first Bishop of Christendom may elevate a Host in his Arch-Natural Mass, and it may seem as a Divine Child or a Crucified Man. But at the end of the Great Quest, when Galahad attained his whole intent and hope, I have said that he beheld no outward sacramental marvels. So also Perceval at the end of the HIGH HISTORY was drawn over radiant seas to another Sanctuary where there was celebrated, I think, only a Mass of Union.

I hear new voices also after my own manner, and they are like unto Choirs of Sanctity, Golden Tongues of Tradition, saying the same thing everywhere, even from the beginning of things. There are some to keep in the heart and scarcely tell to any. They are of Enoch and walks with God, of him who was King of Salem and brought forth Bread and Wine. No savour has the sweetness thereof and no lamp the light. It rests on our knees, and we read the Book of the Grail under green leaves in sunlight. It is always a new book, full of new meanings. But there are days of open audition when it may happen that we cease from

reading, for the PERLESVAUS and GALAHAD read themselves over and over, speaking with golden tongues. And all the world about us is like that upper room in Jerusalem when the Spirit came down, to sanctify Fishers of Men, making them Rich Fishers. We begin to learn in the heart and begin in the heart to know why Pelles the King became the King-Hermit; and why, "after a brief space", it was given that Perceval should know right well the Abiding-Place of the Grail. It is certain also that when it is said, "Here endeth the story of the Most Holy Grail", this appertains only to one version, one manner of testimony. It begins ever and again after another manner, and ever there is "the Benison of our Lord to all that hear and honour it".

But the best kind of hearing is always and only within, and the honour is in life and works. There comes a day when the Secret Words are told, but not with lips and voices. There comes a day when Mass is said in the heart and after such a manner as when the Lord and Master ordained the Second Joseph. This is how the tales go on and Holy Houses are built, as it is said, "in the lands and the islands". And the transfigured Lancelot sings his twelve-month Mass in many a Hermit's hold, in crowded cities, even in the King's Palace. There is also a Holy House in a very Holy Hiddenness, which waits well and patiently through the days and the years for some who shall come in, shall ask the test question and shall not go out thereafter, unless it is on great service. It follows that there are Books of Romance to come for those who are on the Quest of the Grail; but there are also things beyond telling, which are not drawn into Romance. I am looking for another Mass-Book, even I.



APPENDICES



## APPENDIX I

### ADDITIONAL NOTES AND EXTENSIONS

#### I

#### THE BERNE PERCEVAL

(See Book I, § 3, p. 29.)

**I**T is to be understood that my knowledge of this text is derived from A. Rochat's *UEBER EINEN BISHER UNBEKANNTEN PERCHEVAL LI GALLOIS*, published at Zurich so far back as 1855 and embodying selections from a Berne MS., together with a general summary. It is a kind of Grail story in miniature, so to speak, and the complete contents can be given in a few words. I have mentioned elsewhere the thirteen introductory lines, replacing those with which Wauchier de Denain opens his sequel to the *CONTE*. Perceval is introduced in this manner, and it is said in the words of Wauchier (I, 21, 930) that he has been without food and drink for the space of two days. As in the Montpellier and several other manuscripts, he encounters a huntsman, with a pack of hounds, who will not return his salute and explains the reason. Perceval has been at the Court of the Rich Fisher but refused to ask concerning the Lance and Grail. Had he done otherwise, "this Kingdom" would have been set free, and those who are now in great sorrow would have been restored to joy. He is warned to take another path than that which he is travelling, or he will proceed at his peril. To approach the Horn which hangs at a certain portal will spell disaster, and he will not escape without battle. Perceval replies proudly that he will continue if it means death. This episode introduces Perceval's adventure at the Castle of the Horn; and the story continues, with one omission and a trivial variation, to the end of Wauchier's section. This has been epitomised already, and there is no call to recapitulate. The version ends with an extract by way of summary from the historicity account of Robert de Borron. (1) Brons is the Fisher King who married a sister of Joseph of Arimathea and became the father of Alain le Gros. (2) As a reward for his services, Pilate gave Joseph the Body of Christ, and when it was taken down from the Cross he collected the Precious Blood in the same Vessel that Jesus used for His Sacrament on Maundy Thursday. As in the *DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL*, Brons dies on the third day after Perceval's arrival at the Grail Castle, and is succeeded by Perceval. It will be observed that the Berne MS. presupposes the Quest according to the Lesser Chronicles of the Holy Grail, being that—in other words—which passes under the name of Borron. In no other text does the Fisher King die on the third day after the Quest has been accomplished; in no other is the Father of Alain le Gros the Grail King in the days of Quest; and in no other is there any allusion to the Vessel in which Christ made His Sacrament.

## II

## CONCERNING WALTER MAP

(I, § 3, p. 30.)

WALTER MAP figures expressly in various Manuscripts as author of the Galahad QUESTE. It was he who *pour l'amor del roy Henri son seignor . . . fist l'estore translater du latin en Francois*. But he had also a hand in the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, according to MS. 2455 in the BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE—cited by Hucher—the mendacious ascription stating that this text was translated from the Latin by Robert de Borron, A L'AYDE DE MAISTRE GAUTIER MAP. The vast LANCELOT and the *terminus ad quem* of all Arthurian Romance, the MORT ARTUS, passed also under his name. The GRAND SAINT GRAAL stultifies the Metrical Romance of Borron, although it is based thereon, and it is utterly certain that the latter neither translated it into Romance, nor had any part in its authorship. As regards Walter Map, when he contrived, amidst his manifold activities, to find time for writing, the medium which he chose was Latin, as DE NUGIS CURIALIUM and a sheaf of metrical compositions testify. Those who are acquainted with these are likely to reject with no uncertain voice the probability of his composing Arthurian stories, though Nutt's argument—borrowed from Birch-Hirschfeld—that time would have failed him is not *per se* convincing: the event has too often belied this hypothesis, while it is of proverbial experience that time fails the idle rather than those who work, part of whose secret is how to make time. This notwithstanding, the Map authorship of the LANCELOT and the QUESTE is on a par with the Latin originals from which he translated: personally I shall believe in the one when I can find the others. Skeat, however, in his day, influenced by the Dutch editor of the ROMAN VAN LANCELOT, took the opposite view in both respects, and even appears to have imagined a Map Latin original for Chrétien's share in the CONTE DEL GRAAL. For Malory also, in the case of the LANCELOT, there was no other name to quote, no other author able to invent and write it, "with a talent so prodigious, except Walter Map, to whom alone . . . it has been ascribed". On the score of sentiment, I could wish that these representations possessed some ground in fact; and I am therefore in full sympathy with Mr. G. M. Harper, who in 1893 endeavoured to restore Map to his traditional throne in the Arthurian past, on the ground that "it is a great satisfaction to have in the Cycle at least one author about whose life and character we possess some outside knowledge". Unfortunately he could produce only suggestive considerations in place of evidence: (1) The Archdeacon of Oxford's long sojourn in France, his intellectual eminence, and the fact that he was born just when and where he was, "make possible his having been able to know all the Legends and Romances upon which the QUESTE DEL SAINT GRAAL is based"; (2) if he kept account of them all, "he might quickly and easily have strung them together in his old age". It may be possible indeed; but there and there only the matter is likely to remain.



## III

## HARDYNG'S CHRONICLE

(I, § 3, p. 32.)

IT proves on examination that there are variants enough and to spare in this notable metrical version of the Galahad Quest. We must remember, however, that John Hardyng was born in 1378 and that his Chronicle did not apparently reach its conclusion till 1465, he being then at the age of eighty-seven. It is a mere summary account, extending from *Cap.* LXXVI to *Cap.* LXXVIII inclusive. Manifestly all the decadent versions of the Grail Quest might have been before him, as well as the "true story" passing under the name of Map. He felt at liberty, in any case, to produce manifold inventions on his own part, as the following epitome will shew. Galahad, Son of Lancelot and the daughter of Pelles, King of Venedose (North Wales), was fifteen years old when he reached Arthur's Court. He came "clene armed at Meate and obeyed the Kyng, the Quene also and estates." He took his seat in the Siege Perilous of the Round Table, which none but Joseph, who made it, had ever occupied. The authority is Mewyn, whose book testifies further that Galahad was destined to achieve the Grail. He was served by the Knights Companions, they recognising the advent of him who had been foretold by Merlin. In the course of the supper, the Sacred Vessel came, "fluttering thrice through the Hall with a great noise" and then passing away. But it was not till the next morning that Galahad and the Round Table vowed the Quest of the Grail for a full year, "never spending two nights in the same place." The King bewails their departure, as in the chief text. Galahad proceeded to Avalon, where he found a White Shield with a Cross of "gowlys" (gules), as well as a Spear and Sword. He found also a writing, according to which Joseph had lost the Shield and no one should bear it unharmed save he alone who should "ye doughteous Siege achieve." There was similar testimony concerning the Sword, which Vacyan (Nasciens) left behind at his death. After four years of questing Galahad found the Sacred Vessel in Wales. Thence he travelled to the Holy Land, where he was made King of Sarras and Duke of Arboryk, next to Egypt. His Companions were Bors and Perceval. He founded also a Knightly Order of the Seynt Graal, consisting of twelve Brethren, pledged to live chastely and to maintain the Christian Faith. At the end of long years, Perceval and Bors came to King Arthur at Caerleon on a certain Whitsunday, bringing the heart of Galahad encased with gold. He who had achieved the Grail prayed on his death-bed that the heart might be buried at Glastonbury. It was so done accordingly and here ends the Hardyng Quest—a thing without spirit or life; but it remains for one of Miss Weston's Secret Orders to trace their lineage back to the Grail Knights of Sarras, perhaps even with the Hardyng Galahad emerging as a Vegetation God. The Chronicle was edited in 1812 by H. Ellis.

## IV

## THE GRAIL TEMPLE IN THE LATER TITUREL

(II, § 6, p. 78.)

It cannot be said that the Grail Castle is described by Wolfram. We depend on a mere sketch, as the edifice appeared to Parzival when he paid his first visit. It was encompassed by a moat, approached over a draw-bridge and had the aspect of a fortress flanked by turrets of massive strength. There was a great hall which could accommodate four hundred Knights at the banquet which followed his arrival, besides innumerable servitors and the long Procession of the Grail. For the rest, we are left to construct at our will the vast dormitories involved, the armouries, store-rooms, etc., knowing only that the sleeping apartment allotted to Parzival was one of an ornate character. Of a Chapel dedicated and reserved to the Sacred Talisman we hear nothing. Altogether there seems little to warrant the magical transportation of such a "Burg" from the Pyrenees to the Realm of Prester John. Albrecht, however, not only transports but transforms. The Castle becomes a Temple built by Titurel at Salvaterra, between Navarre and Arragon, and it competes successfully with the heavy magnificence of the Priest-King's own environment, as described in his spurious letter. It has been compared with the Sophia in Byzantium and is said to have imitated its grandeur; but the TITUREL itself affirms that the pattern followed was that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. In any case, it is to be questioned whether such bewildering splendour has ever been seen on earth. The mind reels in the attempted contemplation of its Choirs, its Chapels, its Cupolas, its many-coloured marbles, its mosaics, arabesques and sculpturing of old myths, not to speak of its wealth in precious metals and treasures of jewels, in which "burning rubies" seem to have predominated. The light of the natural world entered through windows where glass was replaced by beryls, with pictures graved thereon, their outlines inlaid with stones of price. It may be added that the deeds of the *Templeisen* were represented on the walls without. After such bedizened manner does the belated TITUREL, *sub nomine* Albrecht, justify the removal of a mediæval Keep on Montsalvatch to the borders of the Fabled Paradise.

## V

## THE LAND OF SOULS

(II, § 6, p. 78.)

A CERTAIN section of Grail criticism has dwelt from time to time on the Other-World nature of the Quest; but there is only one text which will tolerate this interpretation, and then only after the Quest has finished and the Hallow-in-Chief has been removed. This is the PERLESVAUS, in which Perceval voyages at the long last to what might pass for a Land of the Departed, following the description given on the occasion of the first visit. We have seen that in this text the Grail Sanctuary itself is termed the

Castle of Souls and also Eden: it is not, however, in any hereafter, hither or further, while in fine it is emptied of its Hallows and left to decay. In *DIU CRÔNE* the Castle is a place of the dead but not that of the departed; and the Question must be asked therein before they can go in peace. In the Galahad Quest the Land of the Departed is Heaven, whither Galahad is transported at his own prayer, and the Grail is with him. The Castle of Corbenic is made void utterly, as in the *PERLESVAUS*. There is no world to come suggested by the conclusion of Manessier to the *CONTE DEL GRAAL*, nor do I think that Gerbert's substitute ending can be construed after this manner. *Mont Salvatch* most certainly carries no such suggestion. There remains only the *DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL*, in which the Castle is a Hidden House of this world and will suffer no such reading. I conclude that the notion is arbitrary throughout, unless it be in the *PERLESVAUS*; but this answers badly enough to such a construction, for Perceval is appointed the Ruler of a Secret Island and is to answer for his dealings therein. In any case there is not one of the Romances in which the Grail Castle answers to another world of folk-lore Faërie.

## VI

## PRELIMINARY MATTERS OF THE CONTE DEL GRAAL

(III, § 2, p. 107.)

IN Potvin's edition of the *CONTE DEL GRAAL*, and therefore in the *Mons*, as in other manuscripts, the contribution of Chrétien de Troyes does not begin till line 1283, that which preceded being (1) an *ÉLUCIDATION DE L'HYSTOIRE DU GRAAL*, as it is termed in the prose version printed at Paris in 1530; and (2) an opening of the Perceval story, familiar to scholarship as the *BLIOCADRANS PROLOGUE*. Both are characterised as spurious by Dr. Bruce (*Op. cit.*, II, p. 85), and he affirms further (*Ib.*, p. 86) that Chrétien's genuine Prologue is that of the Montpellier among other MSS., and consists of 68 lines containing the praises of Count Philip of Flanders, who had lent him a book embodying the Grail story and had imposed on him the task of putting it into rhyme. Readers of the spurious Prologue will probably agree with Bruce that "it is a perfectly commonplace account of how Bliocadrans, Perceval's father, was slain in a tournament and of how his wife . . . moved to the Waste Forest . . ., to bring up there in seclusion and security . . . her only child, to whom she had given birth a few days after Bliocadrans' departure for the fatal tournament", etc. Bruce states further that it exists to explain "how Perceval and his widowed Mother came to be living in the Waste Forest", as they are found when Chrétien begins his story. It fulfils this office completely, for which reason I have used it with little comment in the analysis of Chrétien's poem. No interest attaches to the invention from any extrinsic point of view. It is otherwise with the *ÉLUCIDATION*, which is at least comparable for enigmatic obscurity to Campbell's primitive version of the *LAY OF THE GREAT FOOL*, and on this account seems to have been regarded occasionally as of considerable antiquity. Nutt, for example, suggests that it embodies a genuine tradition (*Op. cit.*, p. 8). It is, however, not only post-Chrétien but also post-pseudo-

Wauchier, if it is not later than Wauchier de Denain himself. Bruce proposes that it is apparently an introduction to a planned Grail compilation, arranged in seven branches; but it is this explicitly on his own shewing and seems designed to borrow from the CONTE DEL GRAAL, while adding many variations not to be found therein. It can be summarised shortly as follows:

(1) The Secret of the Grail may be told by no man, either in prose or rhyme. (2) There were certain wells in the Land of Logres, and when wayfarers sought refreshment there issued two damsels from each of them, one bearing a golden cup and the other a gold or silver dish, holding meats, pasties and bread. (3) After this manner they gave their fair and joyous service. (4) But the evil and craven Amangons, who was apparently King of Logres or of some Principality on its threshold, ravished one of the Maidens and took away her golden cup: her companions henceforward served invisibly. (5) They were not, however, to be spared for long thereby, seeing that the King's men, having discovered the damsels, enforced and robbed them after the same manner. (6) Not only therefore did all their service cease but the rich Land of Logres was destroyed, the Kingdom was laid waste, the green things withered, the meadows wilted, the waters failed and the Court of the Rich Fisher could be found no longer. (7) The Companions of the Round Table came in the time of King Arthur and swore to destroy the kindred of those who had wrought this doom and woe. (8) What they found, however, were damsels with their armed Knights, being descendants of those whom Amangons and his Caitiffs had misused. (9) For some obscure reason, they did battle with these Knights. (10) It happened that Monseigneur Gawain encountered and overcame a certain Blihos Bliheris and sent him to Arthur's Court. (11) He was a great teller of stories and, moreover, gave good counsel, namely, that the Companions of the Round Table should go in search of the Rich Fisher, for joy would follow thereon and Logres would be restored. (12) The advice was taken, notwithstanding the fact that the Rich Fisher was skilled in the Black Art, "insomuch that a hundred times changed he his semblance in such sort that whoso should have seen him in one guise should not know him again when he shewed him as another man." (Evans, *IN QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL*, p. 105.) (13) The first who fulfilled the Quest was the young Knight Perceval li Gallois, who asked "whereof the Grail served," and also of the Silver Cross, but nothing concerning the Bleeding Lance and the Broken Sword. (14) Monseigneur Gawain was the second who found the Court and sojourned in joy thereat. (15) The custom of the Palace was this, that thrice daily for three hours there was great lamentation, with offerings of incense and burning of candles about a certain Bier, while a stream of blood ran from the Lance into a Vessel and thence into a silver channel. (16) Thereafter the Hall was filled, and he who had been seen previously clothed as a fisherman—to which the account has not referred—entered in kingly attire, and with a jewelled crown of gold. (17) When all were seated at tables, there was wine poured in great cups; the bread was set and the Grail, without servitor or seneschal, came through a certain door and provided rich messes on golden dishes. (18) This was followed by "the great miracle of all, whereunto is none other to be compared"; but of this there is no description. (19) It is affirmed that the Court was found seven times by seven Wardens; and in stories to follow it is said that each of them will tell of his finding. (20) The promised recital is thus seven and yet one, a chronicle in seven branches; but they are enumerated upside-down thus. (21) The

seventh and most pleasing is of the Lance which Longis used to pierce the King of Holy Majesty. (22) The sixth is of great toil and travail. (23) The fifth recounts the rage and loss of Huden. (24) The fourth is said darkly to be of Heaven, otherwise of the Bold Knight Mors del Calan, who came first to Glamorgan. (25) The third concerns a warrior who filled with fear the heart of Castrars ; but also of Pecorins—Son of Amangons—who had ever a wound in his forehead. (26) The second has not as yet been told in verse : it is about the sorrow of Lancelot, " there where he lost his virtue." (27) The last—otherwise, the first—is the excellent Adventure of the Shield. (28) We hear also of a Good Knight who shall thrice find the Court of the Rich Fisher, in connection with whom he who is bearing witness promises to reveal the Mystery of the Wells, " whereunto they served," why also the Grail served, with the Mystery of the Bleeding Lance and why the Broken Sword was on the Bier. Whether this business and that of the Good Knight was extrinsic to the Seven Quests must be left uncertain. (29) The finding of the Court and the Grail repeopled the Land, set the waters flowing and clad the fields and woods with verdure. (30) But later on there came forth from the wells no longer those who were cooks but a caitiff set, who built cities and strongholds, a Castle of Maidens for damsels, the Perilous Bridge and the Rich Castle Orguelleous. (31) They made war on the Round Table, riding through all the Land. (32) King Arthur strove with them and conquered in the space of four years. (33) It is testified that he who made the Book of these Branches desires that those who read shall shew forth to others whereunto the Grail served, lest the good things of that service be hidden.

It will be observed that these seven inverted Branches or Grades of Quest and Finding offer nothing descriptive as regards their subject-matter. To state, for example, that the Seventh=First Quest is concerned with the Lance of Longinus may mean that it embodies an apocryphal Legend ; but it would be nonsensical to suggest that it could be sought apart from the other Hallows, seeing that they are in one place, unless it is intended that the so-called Warden's task is to bring that Hallow to the Castle before he can see the Grail, as happened to Gawain in respect of the Sword with which the Baptist was beheaded. It is observable also that five of the seven Wardens remain anonymous.

The Branches in any case correspond to no extant Quest and are precisely like casual jottings on a plan half-formed in a writer's mind. As such I have said that they give evidence of intended derivations from Chrétien and pseudo-Wauchier, of course on the hypothesis that the *ÉLUCIDATION* is later than these sections of the *CONTE*. It is indifferent to myself whether Bruce is correct or not in his judgment on this point, and we may never know certainly. At the value of a personal feeling under such circumstances, it seems to me that the story of the Wells and their Maidens with golden cups and dishes has an antique flavour. But it is worthless for Grail purposes, so the speculation matters nothing. Miss Weston thought in her fatuity that the golden cups signified the maidenhood of which the bearers were robbed, forgetting that the Fay Women of the Wells carried also gold or silver dishes. She was beginning to develop a touch of the sex-complex when she travelled laboriously from Ritual to Romance and took many wrong turnings.

## VII

## EPISODES AND MEANINGS

(III, § 3, p. 120.)

AN ordered Allegory—as that, for example of Bunyan—shapes all its episodes towards the end in view and that which belongs thereto. There is nothing idle or extrinsic. No allegory of this kind will be found in Grail literature, even in those texts where the Quest Heroes pass from time to time through realms of similitude. This is a point of fact which calls to be recognised by those who would read a specific significance into the literature, and it is obvious that it is one of the chief difficulties which characterise the attempt. There are adventures also for the sake of adventure, because the latter is sufficient to itself. It must be recognised further in the same connection that certain texts or branches should be set aside utterly from any enterprise of experimental interpretation. THE CONTE DEL GRAAL is an instance, though we may add a mental memorandum that Gerbert's contribution suggests a purpose: it is, however, an interpolation as it stands, with a beginning which is not of his making and a conclusion that he does not reach. So far as he went, he tried to give something of moral object to Chrétien, who started the story and had none on his own part, as also possibly to the two poets who continued the work and were themselves in like case. He went to work by ignoring the two latter, so far as the sex-life of Perceval was concerned. Alternatively we have part of Gerbert's poem only, which took up the Grail theme where it was left by Chrétien and justified presumably in conclusion his reference to the Swan Knight and his lineage, as will be found further on in my text. I have passed over Perceval's doings at the Castle of the Horn seeing that they lead nowhere. There are a few other omissions, including those of "hard encounters" mentioned in my text; but things which move in any "strange glass of vision" are worth including, and for these I have sought to account.

## VIII

## GERBERT DE MONTREUIL

(III, § 5, p. 130.)

UNTIL 1922 the ordinary student, not domiciled in Paris, had to rest content like myself with the summary and extracts of Gerbert's contribution to the CONTE which appear in the sixth volume of Potvin's PERCEVAL DE GALLOIS, OU LE CONTE DU GRAAL. Presumably he was satisfied—in most cases—with the monograph of some two hundred pages and with the selections mentioned, being (1) the Marriage of Perceval; (2) the account of his combat with a Knight of the Dragon; and (3) the story of Joseph of Arimathæa and King Mordrains of Sarras, derived from the GRAND SAINT GRAAL. In the year under notice Miss Mary Williams published the first volume of her GERBERT DE MONTREUIL: LA CONTINUATION DE PERCEVAL, being No. 28 of LES CLASSIQUES FRANÇAIS DU MOYEN AGE, under the general direction of Mario Roques, editor of ROMANIA. A second volume was announced for 1923, but

its appearance was delayed during two years, when the third and last was promised in the course of 1926: unfortunately, it is not even now attainable. I conclude that the CLASSIQUES FRANÇAIS find the same difficulty over ways and means which have been met with so obviously by the Early English Text Society, not to speak of *La Société des Anciens Textes Français*, about the fortunes of which we know little in England. Hindrance is suggested by the fact that the reissue of certain out-of-print items has been long desirable, but remains to this day apparently impracticable. Miss Williams reminds us that Gerbert's so-called interpolation is known by two MSS. of the BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, in both of which—as Potvin told us more than sixty years since—it appears between the last unfinished line (34, 934) of Wauchier de Denain and the first of Manessier's completion. The lady to whom, when her task is done, we shall owe the complete text has promised us critical notes thereon; but they are reserved apparently for her third volume, and there is nothing meanwhile to detain us in her preliminary words, which are concerned with bare points of fact.

The episode of the Knight of the Dragon, who is overcome by Perceval, and to whom he preaches at great and wearisome length the practice of confession and repentance, leads up directly to the Mordrains Episode, a story which contains also a reference to Philosofine, who is the Mother of Perceval—as we have heard otherwise—in this laborious history. It is to be noted that Perceval conceives a desire to heal Mordrains, but leaves a certain Abbey without doing so, and nothing further is found concerning this particular maimed King, who can be restored only by a true and sinless Knight, in whose arms Mordrains will die. This is ignored by Manessier, though he mentions the earlier history of Evalach, before his baptism. Joseph is represented as Keeper of the Grail by Gerbert when the former reaches Britain; Philosofine carries the Sacred Dish, while another Lady, whose name does not transpire, is the Guardian of the Bleeding Lance. We are able now to check the excellent analysis which Alfred Nutt gave us so long ago and that also of Bruce, which is much inferior.

## IX

## MAJOR POINTS OF THE BORRON TEXT

(IV, § 1, p. 145.)

IT is indispensable that the problem of The Secret Words communicated in the Tower to Joseph by Christ Himself should be placed in the clearest light that is possible under all the circumstances. It has been said in my text that either they have been ignored by most scholarship of the past or identified with the institution of a forced analogy between the Mass Altar and the Holy Sepulchre, the Corporal and the Winding-sheet, the Chalice and the Grail Reliquary, the Paten and the Stone rolled before the Tomb of Christ. This description occupies ll. 901 to 913 of the JOSEPH poem. Still speaking in the person of Christ, the account goes on to certify that all those who shall behold the Grail and are numbered among believers will have joy eternal and satisfaction of heart therein. This, it will be observed, is an independent proposition, and the question of the analogy is at an end. The promise of

everlasting beatitude reaches also its term and a third consideration arises, to the effect that those who can memorise certain words shall have influence in their day and credit in the sight of God, shall not be deprived of their rights, suffer misjudgment or incur defeat in battle, if their cause be just. In modern parlance, they will have every opportunity of making the best of both worlds. That there may be no mistake in the matter, I will give again the original words.

Cil qui ces paroles pourrunt  
 Apenre et qui les retenrunt,  
 As genz serunt vertueus,  
 A Dieu assez plus gratieus ;  
 Ne pourrunt estre forjugié  
 En court, ne de leur droit trichié,  
 N'en court de bataille venchu,  
 Se bien ont leur droit retenu—ll. 921-928.

It is at this point that Robert de Borron bears witness on his own part to the fact of a great book, written by great clerks, in the absence of which he would not have dared to speak of these high matters. When the time came later on for Joseph to relinquish his Office in favour of Brons, the Voice of the Grail directed him to communicate the "Holy Words" to his successor. The account of their communication to himself was put for the first time into modern French by Paulin Paris in 1868 as follows: *Ceux qui pourront apprendre et retenir certaines paroles que je te dirai auront plus de pouvoir sur les gens, et plus de crédit près de Dieu* (ROMANS DE LA TABLE RONDE, Vol. I, p. 132). This version must be set aside, however, decisively, not only because it does not represent the original but because it proceeds to discourse of other subjects and does not commit into Joseph's charge any verbal formula which must be learnt by him or others. It follows that *ces paroles* of l. 921 are an allusion to something that has been said previously, and that to which they refer is—on the surface—the Blessed Vision, with all that follows therefrom for those who are worthy thereof. It seems thus indubitable that, as the text stands, the alleged Words have no reference to the Mass, but to the ecstasy of a personal experience and to the promised companionship of Christ.

Tout cil qui ten veissel verrunt  
 En ma compeignie serunt—ll. 916, 917.

The Vision of the Grail is thus the Vision of Christ, the Blessed Vision desired by all the Saints and that which Galahad attained at the term of Quest. But it is pointed out by Nutt among others (*Op. cit.*, p. 73) that the unique JOSEPH text is "an abridged and garbled form of the copy followed by the GRAND SAINT GRAAL." It seems to me that we are justified therefore in contrasting the poem of Robert de Borron, as it now stands, with the later prose version, which is drawn obviously from yet another codex. On reference thereto, it proves that Paulin Paris, who claimed to be rendering the Metrical Romance into modern French prose, had recourse at this point—to say nothing of others—to the old rendering in prose, which I have called the LESSER HOLY GRAIL, in comparison with LESTOIRE of the Vulgate Series. After the passage corresponding to ll. 921-928 of the Metrical Account, Robert de Borron—as rendered—continues thus on his own part. *Lors li aprant Jhésu-Crist tex paroles que jà nus conter ne retraire ne porroit, se il*



*bien feire lo voloit* (Hucher, *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 227), and so onward concerning the great book and that which is written therein, namely, *li secrez que l'en tient au grant sacrement que l'an feit sor lou Graal, c'est a dire sor lou caalice*, etc. It follows that Christ made a secret communication to Joseph, that it was a verbal formula and that it was said over the Chalice. The words are described later on (*Ib.*, pp. 272, 273) as *iceles saintimes paroles que l'en tient as secrez del Graal*. Cf. the poem at ll. 3332-3336. It appears also (Hucher, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 274) that Joseph had put the Secret Words into writing and was thus able, when the time came, to communicate them accurately to his successor Brons, as he had received them from Christ. Now, seeing that there were no words to memorise respecting the Vision of the Grail, but an unforgettable promise, I conclude that the Metrical Account is imperfect and that I am justified throughout the text in speaking of the Secret Words as communicated by Christ to Joseph. It will be seen as my work proceeds that there are other difficulties about them, and they will be dealt with when they arise. I pass now to the second of the Major Points in the first historicity text of the Holy Grail.

When the pure of heart and act were nourished in a spiritual sense at the Grail Table of Joseph, they were nourished also physically. The point is that Joseph consulted the Grail because the people were without their daily bread, or in danger of want. It looks as if Robert de Borron had heard something of the Grail as a Feeding Vessel and placed his mystical interpretation thereupon. It is to be observed, however, that the Service of the Table has no visible relation to a Church Mass, sacramental as it is after its own manner. The Elements of the Observance are the Precious Blood, contained in its Reliquary, and a Figurative Fish, laid no doubt upon a Dish. We have therefore the correspondence of the Paschal Dish and the Cup of the Eucharist. There is no Bread, but this is represented by the Fish. Now there is nothing eaten at the Table of Joseph, and yet it is connected expressly with the Table of the Last Supper. So also Christ reveals to Joseph the Eucharistic correspondence of the Grail Vessel. On the one hand therefore we have the higher side of the Mass and on the other of the Feeding Vessel. That which takes place at the Table is a Spiritual Communion, and it opens the Path of Ecstasy. It is comparable to the pregnant, if momentary, experience of a much later text, in which the Knights of the Round Table behold one another as if in a transfigured state, when the Grail passes through the Banqueting Hall of the King. We are able now to account for the Dish or Platter which is carried in most of the Grail Processions. Though it is not said that anything is laid thereon, it is a memorial of the Fish Talisman at the Second Table, as instituted by Joseph of Arimathæa and answers of course to the Paten among Eucharistic Vessels.

Among things which seem quite certain in the antiquities of table dishes, there must be registered the fact that a Grail has no correspondence with a vessel containing liquid, except the juices coming from rich meats. When therefore Robert de Borron likened his Grail to a Chalice, on the pretended authority of Christ, there was a similitude in the material nature of things, though it does not happen to be less arbitrary than some other of his analogies between things belonging to the Eucharist and those of the Holy Sepulchre. It is to be noted otherwise that the Borron Cycle is that of the Chalice—*Gresal* and so forth notwithstanding; and a Covered Chalice is a possibility because of the *Ciborium*, a chalice-like receptacle for Hosts, though I do not

know that there is any record of Eucharistic Wine being placed in such a vessel.

The Vulgate Cycle is that of the Dish in which Christ "ate the Lamb on Sher-Thursday" with His Disciples, and unless Jewish antiquities of the Christian period can tell us of a covered Paschal Dish, it is impossible that such an object could serve as a Reliquary. Notwithstanding the GRAND SAINT GRAAL, a search through the other Vulgate texts tends to suggest that the Reliquary side of the Grail Legend had almost passed from the minds of those anonymous or pseudonymous writers who gave us the later Merlins, the LANCELOT and the GALAHAD QUEST. It will be found that their concern throughout is the Body of God, as in the PERLESVAUS also, for the manifestation of a wonder side in the Eucharist, and doubtless reflecting also the growing feeling towards Communion in one kind. There is no indication at Corbenic that Reception was ever in the Element of Wine, though on one occasion there is a wavering shadow of the Intincted Host practice.

## X

## THE EARLY MERLIN

(IV, § 3, p. 155.)

It calls to be noted and remembered (1) that Robert de Borron's Metrical Romance of JOSEPH passes without a break of any kind from its original subject, leaving everything at a loose end, to the early history of that Prophet whose record, inferentially and otherwise, he claims to have; (2) that a vestige only remains of his Merlin poem; (3) that the fidelity of its prose version to the lost original can be inferred only from its fidelity to the extant fragment; (4) that, as a point of simple fact, we have no evidence before us whether the over-remaining part of the Borron text is (a) missing as lost or (b) non-existent, because its author never finished. We do not know therefore how far the EARLY MERLIN continuation represents the mind of Borron, or whether the maker of the prose rendering wrote also the addendum to the metrical JOSEPH. It follows that the pious TROUVÈRE of Hucher's characterisation may have had far other things in view than are accredited to his Prophet in the story which stands now under the name of Borron. He may never have intended that Arthur, the King who was to come, should be begotten in adultery by Uther Pendragon, with the aid of the arts of Merlin, as it may have been far also from his thought to borrow the Perceval of Chrétien for his Quest Hero.

There were two Merlins according to Giraldus Cambrensis: (1) Ambrosius, in the time of King Vortigern. He was begotten by an incubus demon and was found at Cærmadin=City of Merlin. According to the Cambrian Biography, he flourished about the middle of the fifth century and was not only a celebrated poet but well skilled in mathematics and was the reputed architect of Stonehenge. He is said also to have constructed a house or ship of glass, in which he went to sea, accompanied by the nine Cylveirdd bards. They were not heard of subsequently. It was one of the three disappearances from the Isle of Britain. This Merddin was himself one of the three chief

Christian bards of Britain, the others being Merddin Wyllt and Taliesin. According to another tradition, the Prophet and Magician was the offspring of a Welsh nun, who was a King's daughter. He was born at Caermarthen and was made King of West Wales by Vortigern.

(2) The alternative or second Merlin was born in Scotland and was named Celidonus, from the Celidonian Wood in which he prophesied. He was also called Sylvester, because when engaged in conflict he beheld a monster in the air and went mad, the result being that he sought shelter in a forest and there passed his remaining days. He belonged to the time of Arthur and is said to have prophesied more fully and explicitly than the other. His works were found by Giraldus at Nefyn after long research. According to another account he fought at Caerleon under the Arthurian banner in A.D. 542, and had the misfortune to kill his own nephew accidentally. It was this which drove him mad. He fled into the woods of Scotland, but returned subsequently to North Wales, and was buried in the Isle of Bardsey. We know already that according to one of his Legends the mother of Merlin became a saintly nun.

## XI

### THE ROUND TABLE

(IV, § 3, p. 158.)

It is matter of common knowledge among Arthurian students that the first reference to the Round Table is found in Wace's *BRUT*, the conclusion of which belongs to the year 1155. It is not mentioned by Geoffrey of Monmouth or by those who preceded him, like Nennius, and from whom in part he drew. The account of Wace is as follows :

Por les nobles barons qu'il ot  
Dont cascuns mieldre estre quidot . . .  
Fist Artus la Roonde Table.  
Dont Breton dient mainte fable.  
Illoc seoient li vassal  
Tuit chievalment et tot ingal . . .  
Nus d'als ne sa pooient vanter  
Qu'il seist plus halt de son per.

(XI, ll. 9994-1002.)

It will be seen (1) that the purpose in view was nothing more strange and great than to prevent disputes over precedence, which in those days might end in speedy slaughter ; (2) that the Round Table was founded by Arthur and none other than he. The hand of Merlin, the connection with Uther Pendragon as institutor instead of Arthur, with all the spiritual significance, its place in a series of three miraculous tables, the marvel of the Siege Perilous—so on and so forward—are the work of Robert de Borron, if we are right in assuming that the prose continuation of his poem represents its completed form.

## XII

## THE DIDOT AND MODENA TEXTS

(IV, § 4, p. 160.)

It is my intention throughout to avoid, so far as may be possible, any debate on purely textual questions, as things outside the province of my work in hand. Miss J. L. Weston has and deserves the credit due to her pains in editing the Modena PERCEVAL and in transcribing it for the press. For these reasons and others, she is entitled unquestionably to her personal feelings on the superiority of the Modena over the Firmin-Didot codex. She reflects indeed from others who had adopted this view before she entered the field on the particular subject. We shall see in a brief space the grounds upon which it is based, and they may be left to speak for themselves. At the moment I am concerned with affirming that in the Modena MS. we are on a different and lower level than that of the Didot alternative. This is settled once and for all by the Chess-Board episode and the recompense required by Perceval when and if it was carried to a successful issue. About this there is no debate possible. The proposal came to nothing at the end; but the intent was present and reduces the Perceval of the Borron trilogy to the status of him who is Wauchier's hero in the CONTE DEL GRAAL. It seems clear also that the moving spirit of the trilogy is represented better by the highest of all directions imposed on Perceval respecting his Grail Quest than by the nebulous discourse between Alain and his Son about what shall happen when the lad has grown up. It is admitted, however, that a variant of opinion may be offered on this score, though it would be unlikely to leave me less assured on my own part.

The points adduced by Miss Weston in favour of the Modena MS. are (1) that it is the earlier of the two Codices and belongs presumably to the latter part of the thirteenth century (LEGEND OF SIR PERCEVAL, Vol. II, p. 6); (2) that it is of "extreme interest and value for critical purposes" (p. 8); and (3) that it is undoubtedly superior (p. 1). I have searched up and down Miss Weston's prolonged study on the subject without finding further evidence and hope that I have missed nothing. She becomes immersed more and more deeply in affirmations and speculations of anonymous occult schools, and is thus carried far away from the comparative textual value of this and that manuscript. There is no space or need here for transferring the inquiry to antecedent or subsequent opinions of continental scholarship. So much later as 1923, Dr. Bruce, for once in a way, if not entirely for her reasons, concurs with Miss Weston's judgment.

## XIII

## THE CONSECRATION FORMULA

(V, § 1, p. 172.)

I HAVE suggested that the Words of Eucharistic Consecration used by Joseph II as First Bishop of Christendom are of no interest except for Liturgical History. For the benefit of my readers I give them as printed in

Sommer's edition of the text, s.v. LESTOIRE DEL SAINT GRAAL, p. 40' *Laiens fist Josephe le premier sacrement qui onques fust fais a cel peuple mais il lot moult tost acompli. Car il ni dist fors que le parole (variant, celes paroles) seulement que Jhesus dist a ses disciples, quant il sist a la chaine (cène) : Tenes et mangies, cest li vrais cors qui pour vous et por maintes gens sera liures a tourment. Et autre tel dist il del vin : Tenes et si (en) beues tout car cest li sans de ma novele loy li miens meismes qui por vos fu esbandus en remissions de vos pecies.* We may compare herewith the Latin of the Roman Ordinary. *Qui (id est, Dominus noster Jesus Christus) pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem in sanctas, ac venerabiles manus suas : et elevatis oculis in cælum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, bene ✠ dixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens : Accipite, et manducate ex hoc omnes. Hoc est enim Corpus meum. Simili modo postquam cœnatum est, accipiens et hunc præclarum Calicem in sanctas, ac venerabiles manus suas : item tibi gratias agens, bene ✠ dixit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens : Accipite, et bibite ex eo omnes. Hic est enim Calix Sanguinis mei, novi et æterni Testamenti : mysterium fidei : qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.* (It will be observed only that the pregnant interpolation of the words *Mysterium Fidei* between the canonical words of Institution was unknown to the First Bishop of Christendom, who had been just ordained, anointed and enthroned by Christ in *propria persona*.) *Hæc quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis.* Supposing by a bare and perilous speculation, that the Formula of Joseph II was derived from a Mass Book of the Celtic Church, it does not appear that we are serious losers by the absence of that Sacramentary.

## XIV

## HOW LANCELOT WENT TO COURT

(V, § 5, p. 201.)

THE Lady of the Lake who carried off Lancelot was she who enchanted Merlin by arts learned from himself, and her name was Vivien, commemorated as such by Tennyson in *THE IDYLLS OF THE KING*, following the *VULGATE MERLIN*, as represented in Malory's *MORTE ARTHUR*. She has learned how to produce a river at will, and the lake into which she plunges with her infant charge is obviously a work of enchantment. In the *HUTH MERLIN* it is the Prophet's apparent creation in order to conceal the house which he has erected magically at her desire ; but she is known there under another name. It is obvious that the pseudo-Robert de Borron Cycle is at variance with the alternative texts ; but even the Vulgate Cycle embodies contradictory elements. The *LANCELOT*, for example, begins by traducing Merlin (1) as a Prophet who owed all his knowledge to the evil one (*qui sot toute la sapience qui des dyables peut deschendre*, Sommer, *Op. cit.*, III, p. 19) ; and (2) was treacherous and disloyal by nature, like his father before him (*il fu de la Nature son peire dechenaus et des-loiaus*, p. 21), a black picture which is in the teeth of the *VULGATE MERLIN*. On the other hand, Tennyson misused or ignored his authorities in respect of the Lady of the Lake, whom he terms a harlot. I have pictured her love and fidelity in respect of Lancelot and his cousins, and have mentioned her exposition of the Laws of

Chivalry as the time drew near for Lancelot to leave her and enter the Life of Knighthood. When the day came that they drew towards Camelot, he was clothed in white and silver armour and mounted on a great white horse; a large retinue accompanied him, she herself included, on a white palfrey and vested in white samite, furred with ermine. The procession was met by Arthur and many of his Knights in a wood near the city; and I suppose that a young squire and postulant for the high Order of Chivalry was never before or after brought to Court in such regal guise.

## XV

## PRESTER JOHN

(VII, § 4, p. 287.)

ALL that it is needful to know on the Prester John mystification was collected by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould in his *CURIOUS MYTHS OF THE MIDDLE AGES*, published originally in 1867. The earliest reference which he found to the Kingdom of the fabulous so-called Nestorian Christian Potentate was in the *CHRONICLE* of Otto of Freisinger, under the date 1145. Baring-Gould's volumes are probably still available in popular editions, and I will offer therefore, for the convenience of readers, only a few specimens from the famous Epistle, said to have been addressed by the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" to various Christian Princes, but especially to Manuel Comnenius, Emperor of Constantinople (1143-1180). The other self-assumed titles of him who was "Priest of the Almighty Power of God and the Might of our Lord Jesus Christ", are (1) our Exaltedness, (2) our Majesty, (3) our Magnificence, (4) our Supereminence, etc. He, Presbyter Joannes, is said, moreover, to surpass all under Heaven in virtue, as well as in riches and in power. His rule extends over the three Indies and beyond, trending in another direction "towards deserted Babylon, near the Tower of Babel". He is served by seventy-two provinces—not otherwise specified—and their seventy-two Kings pay him tribute. The Amazons and Brahmins are, moreover, among his subjects. While Seven Kings wait upon him monthly, in turn "with sixty-two Dukes, two hundred and fifty-six Counts and Marquises", those who sit at table with him are twelve Archbishops on his right and twenty Bishops on his left, "besides the Patriarch of St. Thomas, the Sarmatian Protopope and the Archpope of Susa". Albrecht drew liberally from this letter in his own much later account of Prester John, as the Grail *Templeisen* and their leader found him in *propria persona*, at home in the far East. There is said to be a fountain some three-days' journey from Paradise—but in or near his Kingdom—and he who drinks thrice therefrom "will be as a man of thirty years so long as he lives". There is also an account of certain small stones called *Nudiosi*, which are found in the neighbourhood of this fountain and prevent the sight from waxing feeble or restore when it is lost. In the particular codex of the Epistle addressed *ex hypothesi* to the Emperor of Constantinople, his designs on Europe are indicated when he speaks of gifts which will be made to his expected son, namely, (1) "the great city of Rome", together with (2) all Italy, (3) Germany, (4) the two Gauls, (5) Britain and Scotland, (6) Spain, (7) "all the lands as far as the icy sea". It was not a pleasant prospect for the

easy believing world of the West at that period, more especially as his armies included man-eating giants, forty ells high, among whom were Gog and Magog. It serves, however, to shew that he who was Priest and King besides being King of Kings, was not to be regarded as in any wise a Prince of Peace. But we are told that when he went forth to war it was with "Fourteen golden and bejewelled Crosses" before him, instead of Banners.

## XVI

## FURTHER CONCERNING PRESTER JOHN

(VII, § 4, p. 287.)

THE expatiations of Julius Bartolucci will be found in his *BIBLIOTHECA MAGNA RABBINICA*, Vol. I, pp. 125 *et seq.*, published at Rome in 1675. His actual subject is a tract by Eldad Haddani, otherwise Danita of the tribe of Dan, which was circulated in Spain, *anno* 1283, concerning the Ten Tribes whom the Jews at that time believed to inhabit a region beyond the Mythical River Sabbathion, where they were held in captivity, lest they should break the Sabbath. Numerous authorities are cited for the existence of this river, chief among whom is Eldad. His tract is examined in the course of thirty folio pages, to make evident that the Jews are prone to accept fables, though their unbelieving hearts rejected the way of salvation. It happens that Sabbathion flows with stones and sand instead of water: for six days in the week it pours on without ceasing, but is still on the Day of Rest, when, however, it burns with fire, so that none can approach it. The tract, which is a tale of wonder, is presented at considerable length in Hebrew, as well as in Latin, and we are made acquainted in this manner with the story of the Lost Tribes as they flourished in the vague region termed Ethiopia, presumably at the end of the thirteenth century. Thereafter the task of Bartolucci is to shew that *Justus iste, cujus nomen ELIDAD de Tribu Dan*—as he describes himself—is a false witness of the first magnitude. It is not a difficult task, and the Second Book of Kings gives valuable help at need; but the Cistercian Hebraist is dull at best and interminable, while Eldad's Romance of the Tribes seems rather a diverting invention. An examination of authorities on the subject of the River of Stones brings Bartolucci at length to a certain Abraham Peritzul, otherwise Abraham ben Mordochai, born at Ferrara in 1525. He wrote an *ITINERARIUM MUNDI* and has a late and ridiculous allusion to Prester John, with no other object in view than to shew that there were Jews in his kingdom, as in all the wide world over. They were obviously and especially there, on the other side of the river of stone, as it happens to have been one of the boundaries of that monarch's kingdom. Bartolucci falls foul of the tract and to shew that it errs on the locality of Prester John's rule he quotes the pretended Epistle and its *fabulæ fere inauditæ*, which he proceeds to dismember at length. As regards Abraham Peritzul, he has already expended some ten previous columns upon him in the same volume.

## XVII

## THE INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(IX, § 3, p. 349.)

THE career of the Greek EPICLESIS Clause is one of the most interesting in the story of Liturgical Formulæ. It should be understood in this connection that there was not a method of Consecration which prevailed everywhere during the earlier days of the Church. The Latin Rite held, with certain variations, to the Canonical Words of Institution; but there are traces of instances when it was performed by the recitation of an *Oratio Dominica*—presumably the *Pater noster*—over the Elements, thus, by the hypothesis, converting the daily bread into the Heavenly Manna. By the hypothesis also, the EPICLESIS Clause brought down upon the Elements the Presence as well as the Influence of the Holy Spirit, and it must be admitted that this contains, ritually speaking, a most high suggestion. At the Council of Florence the Latins required the Greeks to expunge the EPICLESIS, with all forms of Invocation, and there can be no doubt that they were doctrinally and technically correct, within the agreed convention of the subject, because it seems to have been admitted on both sides that the Words of Institution produced a valid Eucharist. But the principle of Invocation endowed the Officiating Priest with an express and personal part in the Mystery of Consecrating, in the absence of which it is difficult in the logic of things to distinguish the ground on which the title of the Priesthood rests. If the Words of Institution recited over the Elements produce an authentic Eucharist *ex opere operato*, the Layman can say his own Mass. On the other hand, the power *ex hypothesi* to call down the Holy Spirit is an exclusively sacerdotal power and sets the Priest apart from the Laity. The Clause remains to this day in the Greek Church, in the Mosarabic as in other Rites, and for those who lay stress on its efficacy that Church and those Liturgies have therefore a valid Priesthood, while there is no true Mass being said in the Western World except in the Greek Church. Figuratively speaking, the Grail has been removed to the realm of Prester John. It happens, however, that the present *rapprochement* between the Orthodox and Anglican Rites has stultified the whole position. Patriarchs, Archimandrites and so forth countenance Celebrations where no EPICLESIS Clause is recited over the Elements. The words are with them therefore, but not the life thereof.

If it be said that on these considerations the Churches are impeached collectively, the conclusion may seem irresistible, and the question must be left at that for those who can deal with it. They are with us, however, and all substitutions notwithstanding in Rite and practice, there is a sense in which they offer at least a reflection of life everlasting projected on the perishable plane, and it is within them as a rule that the first work of Regeneration takes place. They prepare the ground and till the earth of humanity: they fertilise that earth after various manners, as for example by the laws of moral conduct at their value, by the spirit of the great literatures and by such sacramental consecrations as they can and do impart amidst all the confusions between *signum* and *signatum*. After these manners they sow with open hands some seeds of secret life. But the earth is hard and the earth is also unresponsive; the seed will germinate in many



directions, but it is raised above ground in comparatively few cases, and it is then only that the individual enters into the manifested life of religion. It is a question thereafter of the particular quality of the earth and the environment of the life. It is only on rare occasions that it springs up into the high light and the clear air.

The hidden life of the soul is well known to the Doctors of the soul ; but the Church—in whatsoever attenuated sense—has also its hidden life, wherein it communicates with Divine things in the higher consciousness. Official Doctrine is, however, in the same position as normal consciousness : it covers part of the field only. There is hence on both sides a certain awareness of the incommensurate, and assuredly it is for this reason that the Churches are desolate ; but such desolation is on account of that which is in hiding rather than of that which is withdrawn. The Offices are not abrogated and the Sacraments are not without their ministration up to a certain point. Perhaps indeed the desolation is not less especially in ourselves, so that it is we individually and collectively who have helped to make void the House of Doctrine. In any case, the Official Church, understood in its widest sense, can act only up to the extent of its consciousness, while the side on which it has derogated has been that of policy and conduct. We can account in this manner for that which we term its abuses and the long story of its failures. There remains notwithstanding the Spirit within its Doctrine, being the treasure which it was instituted to preserve. If it has added some things or many to the jewel-house which are of secondary and dubious value, our part is still to await with patience its awakening in the higher mind. The Greek Rite has slept over-long and the Roman Rite has had nightmares ; but the Happy Prince, who is a true Son of the House, may arrive one of these days and ask the Unspelling Question. Meanwhile, the individual man must be appraised at his highest only, so far as that highest has moved towards manifestation, and it is the same with the Churches. The lower standards are deceptive, and it is for this reason that conduct—as we understand it conventionally—is comparatively of less importance than dedication of mind : it is that which maintains the world and not that which renews it. There is also the parlous witness *à rebours* of all those unhappy sects which exist for the dissemination of a contracted symbolism under the guise of pure doctrine, thinking that the situation can be ameliorated by taking in their fairyland. The undue multiplication of symbols tends to attenuate their force by spreading it over too large a surface ; but it is not to be compared with the dismemberment of symbolism, which produces paralysis : the loss of so many limbs causes the body to decay and puts an end to the Office of the Wardens.

## XVIII

## THE CULTUS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

(X, § 2, p. 395.)

It calls to be remembered that no sect which does not pay high honour to the Blessed Mary as Mother of God could have furnished the matter of the Grail to the World of Romance. The same must be said concerning Trinitarian Doctrine, the Sacrifice of the Mass and last but not least the Practice

of Confession. It is obvious that these Doctrines and this Practice are those of Rome, whence it follows that Grail literature on the surface does not reflect, e.g., from those of Southern France, so far as we know respecting them. It is certain none the less that the thesis on Joseph II as "the first Priest that sacrificed the Body of our Lord", sets aside the Christian Apostolate and stands for another Succession, even as the alternative Cycle of Grail literature represents an alleged communication from Christ to one who was no Apostle and places Joseph of Arimathæa in a position which is superior even to that of the Beloved Disciple. Now we know that the theses concerning the First Bishop of Christendom and concerning the Secret of the Grail are root-matter of two Grail Cycles and recur expressly, as well as by implication, in the texts of those Cycles, thus forestalling a possible objection that they are casual or idle inventions of makers of Romance. On the contrary they have every appearance of a set purpose and demand explanation as such. On the other hand, the fountain text of the Secret Words transmits on the Lord's part an instruction to Peter and the other Apostles, based on the revelation to Joseph. It is Joseph, be it noted, who is thus empowered to speak as from the highest seat of authority.

## XIX

## THE GRAIL AND THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

(X, § 2, p. 395.)

It is perhaps desirable to note at its value that at a date when Grail criticism was being brought rather laboriously to birth, namely, in 1844, Jacques Matter, at the close of his *HISTOIRE CRITIQUE DU GNOSTICISME*—published at Strasbourg in three volumes—took up the subject of the Knights Templar, after having made himself acquainted previously, as he tells us, with all that was extant on both sides of the question. His investigations left him in doubt (III, 321 *et seq.*) whether (1) certain Templars were not in undesirable relations with the Mahommedans; (2) whether their theistic leanings did not produce an undue antipathy to the Priesthood, Institution, and Practices of the Church; and (3) approximated their views to sectarian Christology of the period. He was of opinion further that the Ceremonial of Reception into the Order varied with ascertained or manifested dispositions of Candidates, and in such a manner that those who resisted unorthodox suggestions were left to lag behind, while others were advanced rapidly and had the freedom of the Chapters General, which were held in secret. He believed, moreover, that the Ceremonial did involve an Act of Abjuration, but that it was a denial of Jesus Christ as God and as Redeemer, not a profession of Atheism. It involved also outrages offered to the Cross and led to the omission of the words *Hoc est corpus meum* (presumably also *Hic est enim Calix sanguinis mei*, etc.) from the Canon of the Templar Mass. As regards the alleged Templar idol, Baphomet, Matter argues that it was an image of the One Father in God, which was worshipped—as the depositions of the Templar Trial affirm—under the title of Allah, the Mahommedan name of God. Finally, the scholar of Gnosticism seems to have accepted as a fact the alleged Absolution given on various occasions by Grand Masters

and Preceptors. The formula as cited at the Trial of the Order in Spain is most unexceptional on the surface: "I pray God to pardon you your sins, as He pardoned those of St. Mary Magdalene and of the Penitent Thief on the Cross". It has the air of a pious aspiration, which the laity might use continually. It happens unfortunately, however, that the formulæ of the Roman Mass are equally conditional, being (1) *Misereatur vestri Omnipotens Deus, et dimissis peccatis vestris, perducatur vos ad vitam æternam*; and (2) *Indulgentiam, absolutionem et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum tribuat nobis omnipotens et misericors Dominus*.

His admissions, dispositions or suspicions notwithstanding, Matter ends by throwing open the whole subject to further debate. The HISTOIRE, however, marked an epoch and doubtless influenced the fashion of less responsible thought, on this as on other subjects; and it continued prospecting the realm of Faërie Speculation for long subsequently. It looked back and had a mind to go further than Abbé Grégoire in his HISTOIRE DES SECTES RELIGIEUSES, according to whom Our Saviour placed His disciples under the authority of Saint John, who never quitted the East, and from whom certain sacred teachings were handed on to his successors, the Johannine Christians, leading after many centuries to the Institution of the Knights Templar. This has been cited previously.

In this manner there was discovered a chain of evidence, passing backwards, through Spain and the Templars, to Saint John the Divine, and so to the Essenes, behind whom there was the further East, India in the minds of not a few being the asylum-in-chief of all Veridic Mysteries. Simrock himself suffered from a complex of this kind, regarding the Essenes as repositories of a Secret Doctrine, confided by Jesus to His disciples and by them communicated to Templar Priests, voided Eucharists apparently notwithstanding. There was no authority to cite in Simrock's day and nothing has emerged since.

## XX

## THE CASTLE OF MONTSÉGUR

(X, § 3. p. 398.)

A TWENTIETH-CENTURY Search for the Holy Grail was announced in the EVENING STANDARD on September 3, 1931, under circumstances which seemed at the moment rather attractive and even promising than otherwise. The announcement was that the Holy Grail is believed to be hidden in a ruined Castle in the South of France, namely, in or beneath the historic ruins of the Château de Montségur, near Foix. It signifies little that the long communication on the subject despatched from Marseilles to the Central News, under date of the previous day, was full of typical errors concerning the Grail subject, and perhaps less than little that it cited "a French poet"—not otherwise identified—according to whom the Sacred Vessel "is in the Foix Department at Montségur, last shelter of the Albigenses". The notable points of fact were (1) that M. Arnaud, a French engineer, "in charge of hydro-electric development in the Ariège department of the Midi," happens to have made a life study of the Albigenses or Catharist heretics; (2) that,

whether or not he had read the French poet, he believed the Holy Grail to have been hidden by the Catharists somewhere in the vaults beneath Montségur; from which it follows (3) that his studies had led him to find a rather surprising connection between the Church of the Holy Spirit and the Traditional Reliquary of the Precious Blood, possibly through the writings of Eugène Aroux. Having regard to the *Sacro Catino* at Genoa, the Holy Ampulla once preserved in the Church of St. Maximin du Var and the Grail Chalice at Toledo, not to speak of what was found, some twelve years ago, in "the women's quarter" at Glastonbury, one is not perhaps anxious to increase the objects which are still competing for recognition; but the report spoke also of other "important treasures" which are supposed to be hidden in the vaults that Montségur must undoubtedly have possessed in common with other historic castles, whether ruined or not. In the course of making his investigations on the spot, the account goes on to tell us that M. Arnaud discovered a thick stone wall, behind certain rocks, and that in his opinion it masks the entrance to the actual subterranean passages. It was said, in conclusion, that the work of clearing the ruins and effecting an entrance would be long and difficult but that M. Arnaud felt confident respecting his theories on the Catharists and that he was justified in pursuing the task.

So far as the press of the outside world is concerned, the subject might have remained at this point; but my friend Mr. Frank Ashton-Gwatkin, who—in addition to his knowledge of Grail literature, his interest therein and in the Sects and Legends of Southern France—is familiar with the whole Foix and Carcassonne district, paid a visit to Montségur and became personally acquainted with M. Arnaud in the midst of his operations. He learned in this manner (1) that the existence of subsurface passages and vaults beneath Montségur was a matter of common knowledge; (2) that the entrance was not masked by a stone wall but by masses of concrete, through which M. Arnaud was seeking to blast his way; (3) that he believed himself to have penetrated already within a short distance of his objective and hoped to reach it before the winter snows put an end to his work for a period; (4) that in the event of his success there was nothing before him to warrant an expectation that he might find a Grail; (5) that he was hoping rather to meet with the BIBLE CATHARE, basis of Catharist Doctrine, otherwise an esoteric version of the Fourth Gospel—not to be identified presumably with the text of that Gospel found in the Provençal New Testament preserved at the *Bibliothèque Municipale* of Lyons.

Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin found M. Arnaud living at a small farmhouse in the village of Montségur, "a man who has fallen under the spell of the Castle" and who believes that his expected discoveries of "its historical and religious secrets" will be a prelude to "the realisation of the Albigensian ideal, the Church of the Holy Spirit." But it happens unfortunately that many moons have passed and that when heard of last M. Arnaud had not reached his objective. Seeing that, with its "labyrinth of subterranean galleries and vaults", as old report has it, "the Castle extended as far below ground as above", I am sufficiently in sympathy to regard it as incredible that they will prove to contain nothing, if ever an entrance is found. Perhaps against all hope, I am hoping therefore still that the zealous endeavours of one who at this day looks for a Catharist Church of the Paraclete to rise up from its ashes, may not fail ultimately of his reward. But if he does, he has set an

example which may bear its fruit later. I owe also to the kindness of Mr. Ashton-Gwatkin the following very graphic descriptive account, which—with his permission—may fitly close this notice.

“The Castle of Montségur stands on the summit of the Pic de Montségur, one of the Northernmost peaks of the Pyrénées. The Pic forms a kind of pivot or axle-pin to a circular table-land known as the Pays d'Olmès. The most important town of this region is Lavelanet, a centre of the ‘shoddy’ industry, known in France as ‘renaissance’. Beyond Montségur rises the higher mountain of St. Barthélémy, draped with pine-forests, and when I saw it—April, 1932—covered with snow. The Pays d'Olmès, in olden times, must have been a self-contained region, accessible only with some difficulty from the cities of the plain of Languedoc, the kind of place where ancient faiths, customs, languages and loyalties lingered long after they had disappeared elsewhere. The Pic de Montségur is to this table-land as the Eiffel Tower is to Paris. It is visible from every point, the most conspicuous feature in the landscape, sheering straight up and down, a natural fortress, a natural sanctuary, not unlike the Puy de Dôme, as it rises behind Clermont Ferrand, only the landscape is much wilder and more savage, and the rock is not the cone of a volcano, but a huge pointed bastion of limestone. The Castle ruins on the summit are dwarfed by the tremendous height and depth of the precipice upon which they are built.”

## XXI

## ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

(X, § 3, p. 407.)

WHEN Origen denied in all truth and sincerity that Christian Doctrine was a secret system he made haste to determine the subsistence of an esoteric part which was not declared to the multitude, and he justified it not only by a reference to the more arcane side of Pythagorean Teaching but by the secrecy attaching to all the Mysteries. The question arises therefore whether the *disciplina arcani*, which is referred usually to the Eucharist, because to all else it must be foreign, may not be imbedded in that Tradition of St. John the Divine concerning which we have traces certainly. There may be set aside without hesitation the obvious objection that the Fourth Gospel has no Eucharistic Memorial, as also its inference, that for St. John less than for other Evangelists did the flesh profit anything. The great contention of the Gospel is that the Word became flesh, and if it fails to recite the High Office and Ceremonial of the Last Supper, it announces in the words of the Master (1) that this is a “meat which endureth unto everlasting life”; (2) that Christ is “the living bread which came down from heaven”; and (3) that “he that eateth thereof shall live for ever”. In other terms, the Doctrine concerning the Communication of Divine Substance is taught more explicitly by St. John than by the rest of the Evangelists.

The Traditions concerning the Beloved Disciple are numerous in the Christian Church, and on the thaumaturgic side they issue from the evasive intimation of his Gospel that he was to remain on earth until the Second Coming of the Saviour. From his ordeal of martyrdom he came forth there-

fore alive, according to his Legend, and so he remained, in the opinion of St. Augustine, resting as one asleep in his grave at Ephesus. St. Cyril also testifies that he never died. But it is Ephrem, I believe, who offers an explicit account of St. John's interment by his own will at the hands of his disciples, after giving them certain last instructions on the Mysteries of Faith. The grave was dug in his presence; he entered therein; it was sealed by the disciples, who returned as commanded on the day following, opened the sepulchre and found only the grave-clothes. This story represents an alternative Legend of St. John's Translation to Heaven in the flesh of his body. From the place where he had rested so briefly an oil or manna was collected and was used for healing diseases.

That which did actually survive was the Tradition of his Secret Knowledge, the implicit of which is that he who reposed on the breast of his Master did not arise and go forth without an intimate participation in the Mysteries of the Sacred Heart. Again, the Tradition has many forms; and seeing that St. Isidore of Seville in the sixth century tells how St. John not only broke and re-joined certain precious stones but transmuted the branches of a tree into golden boughs and changed pebbles into jewels, reconverting both at the end; seeing also that Adam de St. Victor commemorated one of these miracles in a prose of his period:

"Cum gemmarum partes fractas  
Solidasset," &c.,

it is not surprising that alchemists who had heard of these things adopted the belief that he was a great master of metallic transmutation—by which I speak of the material side and not of any spiritual work.

There is no need to say that this is fantasy of its period, and it is cited only as such. The legends and inventions—but it should be understood that there are many others—are mere rumours, and so being are less even than intimations, concerning a traditional influence exercised by St. John, of which—as I have said—there are traces otherwise. But it has proved impossible in the past for researches into a concealed side of Christian Doctrine to be actuated by other expectations than the discovery of obscure heresy; and it is important that we on our part should make it yet more plain to ourselves that there is rarely anything to our purpose in devious ways of doctrinal thought, nor do those who pursue such paths under the Banner of the Grail and its Quest tend to carry antecedent warrants in the likelihood of things. When I have spoken of the Johannine Tradition in previous sections it must not be understood as referring to a specific external community, such as that which has been described in the past as Johannine Christians. The information concerning them, and reproduced by one writer from another, is based upon exceedingly imperfect research; but among some of my readers, who have not entered these paths, it may remain in some vague sense. It supposed an obscure sect which can be separated at once from all that we ourselves should understand by a connection with the Disciple whom Jesus loved. Their Patriarchs or Pontiffs are said to have assumed the title of Christ, even as Parzival, with a higher warrant, took that of *Presbyter Johannes*; but the Christ of their spurious Legend is neither King nor Lord, and with an irony all unconscious he is disqualified from the beginning by their own tinkered gospel, which substitutes simple illegitimacy for the virginal and supernatural conception of the Holy Canon.

Virus of this kind suggests inoculation from sources like the SEPPHAR TOLDOSH JESHU rather than from any Christian—as, for example, a Gnostic—sect.

It must be confessed that the traditional sources concerning St. John are chiefly the apocryphal texts, and they lie, one and all, under the suspicion of heresy. Leucius—sometimes called pseudo-Luke—who is said to have been a disciple of Marcion, wrote, among other apocrypha, the ACTS OF JOHN, the particulars of which claim to be drawn from the apostle himself. Now there is, I suppose, no question that *fabulatores famosi* of this kind were not unlike Master Blihis; if for some things they depended on their invention, they drew much more from floating tradition, and it is obvious on every consideration that round no evangelist and no apostle were Legends so likely to collect as the apocalyptic seer of Patmos. We shall therefore deal cautiously with the criticism which suggests that fathers of the Church like Tertullian drew their mythical accounts of St. John from heretical texts, for it is equally and more likely that the two schools drew from a source in common. The perpetual virginity of St. John, which entitled his body to translation or assumption, on the ground that virginity is not subject to death, is a case in point. The Catholic Church did not derive the counsels of perfection from Encratites or Manichees, and St. Jerome, who tells this story, would not owe it to pseudo-Luke, though Abdias—a very different narrator—in all probability did.

We hear otherwise of an unbroken chain of Tradition hallowed by age, an Esoteric Oral Tradition, revealing “the sacred law of primeval times”, intimations concerning which are to be found in the Johannine Apocalypse. Some have referred it to antecedents of the Anti-Christ Myth, to which allusions are supposed in one of St. Paul’s Epistles; but there is a wider horizon within which the whole subject calls to be regarded anew. Several of the speculative directions in which light has been sought thereon are difficult and—so long as we do not exaggerate the evidential possibilities—unnecessary to set aside. The Essenian consanguinities suggest themselves in connection with that which could have been only a contemplative school, the repository of mystical experience which in early times lay behind external Christianity. Thebaid Solitaries, so called Penitents of the Desert, Sons of the Resurrection, Children of the Valley, Eckartshausen, Lopouhin, and too many others for simple recitation here are offered to the mind in their order as possible channels of Tradition from age into age. We can say only in our restraint that as there were so many sects with variations in doctrine it is not unreasonable to suppose that there may have been one or more in seclusion having differences by way of extension concerning that Spiritual Practice which is called the Science of the Saints.

Speaking generally of the Johannine Traditions, these represent the Apostle as a Saint of Contemplation who transmitted directly from Christ; and as it is clear by his own Gospel that he regarded the Eucharist, interpreted after a spiritual manner, as a condition of Divine Vision, we shall be prepared for the fact that there is an Eucharistic Tradition concerning him. It is said that on the threshold of Translation he took bread, blessed, broke it and gave to his disciples, exactly after the manner of his Master, but what he asked with uplifted eyes was that each of the brethren might be worthy of the Eucharist of the Lord and that, in such case, his portion might be also with theirs. It does not signify that, according to orthodox canons, this comes from a dubious source in doctrine; the Eucharistic connection was

not devised by that source, and—though it scarcely signifies for my purpose—I suppose—and it is interesting to note—that herein is the first recorded instance of communion in one kind.

The last asylum of St. John was Ephesus, which was a great house of theosophical speculations, and though the pivot and centre of the Fourth Gospel is that the Word was made flesh, that composite and wonderful text bears all the marks of being written in a Gnostic atmosphere. From that which it was intended to denounce, it has been thought to derive something in the higher part of the old eclectic dream, and as the personal influence of the writer must have been great, so also it is reasonable to think that it did not pass with him utterly away. The notion that he communicated something, and that this something remained, is so recurring, and amidst so many divided interests, that it is hard to reject it as a fiction; it is hard even to say that no Knight Templar sojourning in the East did never, in late centuries, hear strange tidings. Apart from this last, too curious dream, it will be seen that here is slender ground on which to affirm that the Secret Tradition connected more closely with the Church side of Christianity at a Johannine point of contact; but it is good to remember that not only has the last word not been said on the subject, but that we have listened here and there only to a strange rumour. I conclude that he who reported the deepest and most sacramental words which are on record from the mouth of Christ: "My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed" is our first historical witness to the Eucharistic side of a Tradition in Christian Times.

There are strange indications of sources behind the Fourth Gospel. Behind the memorials of the Gnosis there are indications also of a stage when there was no separation as yet between orthodox and heretical schools, but rather an union as if in direct experience and as if Mysteries were celebrated at a certain point of which there was the Presence of the Master. But the Presence of the Master was the term of experience in the Grail. With these words I leave the Johannine Tradition, its possible perpetuation within or behind the Church and its possible Westward transition as a quest so far unfinished for want of materials.

## XXII

### THE ANTI-ROMAN QUESTION

(X, § 3, p. 408.)

HAVING regard to the enormous machinery which was put in operation to determine the Enchantments of Britain, "the desolation which fell upon Logres" and the Adventurous Times, it is natural to look about for a causation in proportion thereto—for example, some event in history; but nothing emerges in response except a possible conspiracy or rebellion in matters of Religion. Let us approach the subject therefore apart from Southern France and begin tentatively by assuming that, for what purpose soever, the literature concealed in part but in part also put forward an attack upon the Roman Church. The first observation to make in this connection is that those who were concerned with the movement out of



which the impeachment originated must apparently have accepted the Sacraments and the body of Ecclesiastical Procedure, or the outward meaning of all extant texts is not less than mendacity. This is to be admitted *pro forma*, as there would be otherwise no working agreement possible.

Now, seeing that in one case the Keeper of the Grail is supposed to have fallen from righteousness and that—obscurely enough as regards logic in the scheme—he could only look for healing outside his own House of Doctrine, one might be disposed to conclude at first sight that the Grail Church may stand for Christianity and the Rich Fisherman for its central seat of authority. He is the Keeper of the Divine Mysteries, the possessor of the valid forms ; but he and his environment have been laid waste by the spirit of the world. Alternatively there might be involved a confession of apparent failure in respect of God's work in the world. From either point of view the literature would be concerned with the amelioration of the Latin Church by recalling it, let us say, to its higher part. The position, however, becomes involved curiously, and that at once, for the presence of the Hallows may preserve the King alive, but otherwise they cannot help him. No recitation of the putative all-powerful words can ever relieve his sickness, and the House of God is therefore—as it long remains—in mourning. Here also intervenes for our further confusion the difficulty of the unasked Question—of that Question which seems exclusive in symbolism. What purpose, in this connection, could it serve the Hereditary Keeper of the Grail that an apparent stranger should visit him and ask the meaning of the Vessel and its Pageant ? We remember the Question in Masonry, which is one of violence, doing outrage to the Law and the order and voiding the erection of a True Temple. There it is simple in symbolism and almost transparent in meaning ; but here is a Question which is necessary in some utterly mystical manner, belonging to the law and the order, and one by which the Warden is restored : it is less intelligible on this hypothesis than are many darker corners of thought. However this may be, it follows that there is a heavy cloud on the Sanctuary, and if the symbolism belongs by possibility simply to the Official Church, it has the Words of Life, but is still, after some manner, inhibited : it must be challenged before it can speak and it must communicate before it can be healed. The Quests are so far external that they involve transit from place to place, as a Pageant passes through a Temple ; but the Question is an intellectual research. The heroes of research offer no light on the subject, because Perceval at his highest does not ask in the end and the Romance of Galahad confesses to no Question. The DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL leaves the new Keeper, with all to him belonging, in final seclusion, where the evidence of things not seen is put away from the eyes of all, and it is impossible therefore that the Hidden Sanctuary should represent an Official Church. To express it in another way, the Son of the Doctrine was received into the House of the Doctrine and had the Great Secret imparted to him. Faintly and far away the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL shews how the æonian Keeper has waited in the Castle of the Soul till the natural man, who is the scion of his House, comes in and asks the Question of the Union. The natural man understands nothing and does not ask till he is driven ; but he is driven at last. As faintly and still farther away, the CONTE DEL GRAAL recites the same symbolical story, with many variations ; but as it reaches no term till a later period in time, when it is simply a reflection of other texts, and has hence no independent implicits, there is no call to

examine it in this connection. It may be noted, however, that the Prologue, which is regarded as its latest part, tells of things that exceed experience—that is to say, evidence—of sins against sacred life and of return to the House of the Father, as aspiration returns to its source. But it is difficult to connect it with any Sanctuary Doctrine. The German PARZIVAL bears witness that the House is always in the world, but here assuredly it does not symbolise the Institutes of External Religion. It has, moreover, a strange sacramental side, which seems to indicate that the Office of the Eucharist is to “give us this day our Daily Bread,” for the fulfilment of which it comes down from Heaven direct. To conclude hereon, it is obvious from the beginning that the Keepers of Mont Salvatch were a Secret Order of Chivalry, after the manner of the Templars. Albrecht’s TITUREL recites the building of the Spiritual House in beauty as a Palace of Art; but for the rest it represents the exaltation and aggrandisement of a pseudo-Roman Orthodoxy and has nothing to do therefore with a Mystery of Knowledge in the custody of a Hidden Church. The LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL lifts up a different corner of the veil, telling how one Keeper died unhealed and how the last Warden of the Mysteries was taken away, the Hallows were scattered, except the Holy Grail, which passed into the Hiddenness. There remains only the great and paramount Quest, which is that of Galahad, and it tells how the final Inheritor was removed once and for all, together with the Holy Things, as if the House of Doctrine were itself nothing and the Term of Research everything. The Great Quest was written with the highest sanctity as its actuating motive, and we can do no otherwise than accept it as representing the Grail literature in its plenary evolution. It forms, with the PERLESVAUS, the consummation of the Cycle. These Quests are Mirrors of Spiritual Chivalry, Mirrors of Perfection, Pageants of the Mystical Life, and it does not matter what was the state of the Legend prior to their appearance. They are either the teaching of the Militant Church spiritualised or of a concealed Religious Mystery in comparison with which our knowledge of Eleusis is plenary. In any case these texts offer in Romance form a presentation of the Soul’s Comedy.

So far therefore from the Grail Sanctuary representing the Latin or any other External Church, we find that the Mystery of a Sanctuary within is written through all the Romances, though it is mainly in the words of the Outer Temple, and the savour of the external incense is more noticeable in some texts than in others.

In this light we shall find the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL a little wanting in meaning and the CONTE DEL GRAAL too composite to reflect a living light of intention. As regards the German Cycle, it tells of a Knightly Conclave which is fed for ever. The PERLESVAUS empties the House of Doctrine and leaves it as a vacant sign before the face of the world. The Galahad Quest says that the world was not worthy, and leaves not only the old Temple but the dispossessed Keeper, not to speak of her who bore the Holy Grail in succession to Elaine.

Above all things, we are not dealing in the Grail literature with an Anglican conspiracy for the furtherance of any independence in matters of Religion: the scheme of the whole Mystery seems opposed to such a supposition. Nor is it feasible to affirm that the Grail writers were at work on a similar plan under a common agreement, as if all were imbued by a pan-Britannic fever. There are few consecutive documents which offer

so little trace of a concerted effort, despite the late experiment of the Vulgate grouping. Some writers manifest a very high purpose and some no purpose at all, beyond the true intent which is all for our delight in story-telling. Otherwise than by simple predilection, we shall never understand why these chose for their subject a Mystery like that of the Grail. But the rumours and implicits run through all the texts, as an echo perpetuated, and in their several degrees the stories are plain concerning them. Even the CONTE DEL GRAAL enshrines them after its own manner, in spite of a piecemeal Tradition. Apart from this text, the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL tells a plain story by interning the Warden-in-chief, with the Hallows, in that place which it never names; but it knows nothing of a House made void. The German PARZIVAL tells a plain story by leaving the Great Chivalry in the great Temple, all things completed and all things as they were at the beginning. Again there is nothing made void. The removal of the Mystery in the TITUREL and the transport of the Sacred House cannot signify more than a change of imputed location and a further withdrawal for a defined reason. The LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL tells a plain story, but it leaves the voided Castle as a public sign to the nations, taking the Keeper and the Hallows into a great distance, so far beyond all identification that it might not be in time or place. The QUEST OF GALAHAD, in fine, tells a plain story also of the voided House and its vacated offices, but it has byways of allusion from which the infinite opens.

Now, the Mystery which covers the Sanctuary is never drawn away in the Lesser Chronicles. We know only that the weight of many centuries presses heavily upon the Keeper. We may infer that the Hermit, Blaise, was taken at length into the Choirs of Heaven, according to the promise of Merlin, and is therefore in *la joie perdurable*. But we know not of any messenger who has relieved Perceval: it follows that, in eternal virginity and in utter loneliness, he is waiting till the world shall be worthy. His place is not known; he does not come out therefrom; and there is none that goes in.

But in the PERLESVAUS there is another version of the Legend, which indicates surely, although by implication only, that the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL is not the whole story; and therein it proves that Perceval is taken away, for the Red Cross Ship carries him, as the dark barge bears King Arthur. This story stands utterly apart and is very difficult to interpret, since all things fail therein. The Grail King dies, the Question is not asked, the Hallows are parted from one another, the Castle of Souls and the Gate of Paradise are left in desolation, as if a sign of wrath to the centuries, while the hands of Perceval are empty as he passes into the unseen. We learn only that he goes through a golden distance and knows that which awaits him.

I have said that there are wars and rumours of wars about Corbenic in the Galahad Quest; yet is it mostly found by grace or special licence, while it is a House of terrors and of marvels. Under these reserves, it is also a House of many visitations, nor is it therefore so utterly unknown as is that of the Lesser Chronicles. Its building is described at large, as is that of the Temple in Albrecht's TITUREL; and if its location remains a problem we are not without some materials for reconstructing the broad environment.

Let us now imagine for a moment that the Welsh or another Celtic Church was making through the medium of the Romances a last bid for

recognition. If the prevalence of the Roman Rite constituted the Enchantment and Desolation ; if the Question of the Wardens of the Mystery, on the Mystery itself manifested, may have signified the illumination of the elect respecting the faith once delivered to the Celtic Saints and now in danger of extinction ; we should have then a design adequate to the machinery and should be able to understand the magnitude of the claim in conjunction with many follies in the form of its expression ; for it seems difficult to say that, by example, the Sanctuary in Wales had a wise Church built about it. It was chaotic rather than in confusion, and in the matter of its working was almost a prolonged abuse. The suggestion is otherwise fantastic ; but British Christianity generally, and its desire for independence, centralised, let us say, in the Crown at the period of Henry II, may be held to account for a certain complexion discerned sometimes in the literature in relation to Rome and to explain why, this notwithstanding, it seems otherwise so Catholic at heart. The speculation had a certain presumption in its favour through decades of the near past, because a section of scholarship was inclined thereto ; but a study of the texts must, I think, dispose of it once and for all.

The short recension, comprised in the Lesser Chronicles, tells how a Warranted Company came Westward ; how it abode for many centuries in a Veiled Sanctuary ; how the Quest for this Sanctuary was instituted ; how it failed in the first instance but was achieved subsequently ; how the Secrets of the Sanctuary were learnt ; how he who learned them remained within the Sanctuary, and there is no story afterwards. The Metrical Romance of Borron and the LESSER HOLY GRAIL are not a Legend concerning the conversion of England but only prolegomena thereto. They leave the real intention doubtful, outside the bare fact that something would be brought into Britain which was and is unknown to the Church at large ; for the canonical Apostles were not present when his great mission was imposed on Joseph by Christ. There is nothing on the mere surface to shew that any Priesthood followed the possession of the Grail Vessel or the knowledge of the Secret Words. Yet these are Eucharistic : according to the LESSER HOLY GRAIL they are a Formula of Consecration ; whence it would seem that their possession ordained Joseph, because it is obvious that at need he could recite the Words effectually. For the rest, it is certain that Joseph and his Company carried no official Priests Westward. A lacuna in symbolical time follows, and then comes the EARLY MERLIN, shewing that the Secret Sanctuary is somewhere in Britain, that a firebrand Prophet is going about in the land, bearing the ambassadorial warrant of the Grail, and is bent upon fulfilling prophecy by instituting a Third Table for the completion of the Grail Trinity. There are no claims put forward regarding the Sanctuary, and the same statement holds for the DIDOT-MODENA PERCEVAL.

It remains that the Lesser Chronicles intimate generally the existence of a particular Eucharistic knowledge, but not of a Church demanding recognition thereon. As secrecy is the primary seal, it is obvious that the Grail Church is not an Official Church in Britain, nor do the texts contain any counter-picture, object, or character which might by possibility correspond to the Roman Obedience apart from that notion of Enchantment which, in the absence of any warrant, it is arbitrary to explain along these lines. For example, it would be madness to suggest that Moses, who was interned

in secrecy, represents the Latin Church in apostasy or rejection. It is obvious, in fine, that Robert de Borron was acquainted with no Tradition which connected Joseph of Arimathæa with Glastonbury or even with Britain. In the poem, he remains where he was or returns to Syria, as Moses the Law-giver went up the holy mountain.

The Vulgate Cycle bears the same witness, but the evidence of Transubstantiation and other matters of doctrine suggest that the major texts are typically and militantly Roman. The GRAND SAINT GRAAL tells how the same Company, strangely extended, arrived in Britain and there established, in the person of Joseph II, the beginnings of a Supreme Orthodoxy, so that nothing which came after in the name of the Gospel could abide in competition therewith. The VULGATE MERLIN, reflecting the Borron text, tells how the Prophet and Enchanter Merlin carried a strange warrant to connect his work with the Mystery of the Holy Grail; how he possessed from the beginning of his symbol the power to promise Blaise that he should be united with the Secret Assembly; how the Castle of the Grail, though not altogether hidden from the world, was encompassed with perils and difficulties, which notwithstanding there were wars or the rumour of wars about it. The GRAND SAINT GRAAL narrates the conversion of Britain by those who carried the License of Super-Apostolical Succession, the design of which may have been pan-Britannic, or conceivably the implicit of a plan of campaign against papal claims over Britain. It is at least the Legend *par excellence* which, if any, would be regarded as devised in this interest; and it would stand alone as such among the Anglo-Norman texts. The colonisation, whatever its design, conquered all Britain in all publicity. When however the later MERLIN texts enter the field, everything has passed into seclusion, and the Prophet's personation of the character of Messenger does not carry public knowledge concerning the Grail further than an echoing rumour. Outside the sacro-saintly character of ordinary Church-practice, the texts offer no ecclesiastical element but the implications which are resident in the notion of Adventurous Times and the preparation at the Royal Court for the Quest of the Sacred Vessel, the term of which is to break up the Round Table. The intermediate prose LANCELOT follows the MERLIN texts, working for the same end, and we are already at a far distance from the letter and spirit of the GRAND SAINT GRAAL. In the LONGER PROSE PERCEVAL the term is to strip the Sanctuary, but it remains a consecrated although a deserted place, and those who enter therein become thereafter men of holy lives and saints of the Official Church. The QUEST OF GALAHAD offers in the term thereof the instance of a Keeper who is dispossessed—as we have seen—without any intimation of his end. It may be said that he is treated with something almost approaching contumely. There is an apparent equivalent of an expulsion of the profane in that command for those to withdraw who are not in the Quest of the Grail. But behind this and behind the unnamed yet acknowledged Warrant of the Knights from Gaul, Ireland and Denmark, there is some Mystery concealed deeply. The latter took away from their high experience the memory of a glorious vision which could well serve as the basis of a Tradition thereafter in various parts of the world; but they had not received communication of the Last Secrets. The Hidden Life of the Holy Grail during the Arthurian period seems next after one the most wonderful of all Hidden Lives. What could King Pelles, with whom the Grail had abode for years, and it may be

for centuries, whose Daughter also had borne it through all the Secret Rites from her childhood, what could he learn from the Quest ?

I conclude therefore as regards the Vulgate Chronicles that they may offer in one text, which is the latest of all, a certain aggrandisement of British Ecclesiastical Tradition by the incorporation of a claim which belonged in its root-matter to a different concern entirely ; but the remaining Branches have little part in the scheme. The Grail Church is held in secrecy and mystery, and when the Quest of Galahad certifies that a certain Joseph, not otherwise particularised, was the first Bishop of Christendom, there seems no longer any consequence involved of the ecclesiastical order.

In the German Cycle the Grail had nothing to do with any Conversion Legend and nothing to do with Britain : that country is not entered in the PARZIVAL. The assumption of a particular affinity with the aspirations or ambitions of the House of Anjou is an irresistible inference from that portion which contains the Angevin elements ; but it is accidental and not essential to the design of the poem, and is not its inspiration but its burden. The work is to be judged wholly by other standards.

It must be agreed, I think, from this brief and literal schedule that, except by a bare and utterly speculative possibility in a single sporadic instance, we are not dealing in the Grail literature with a formal conspiracy for the furtherance of revolution in matters of Religion.

## XXIII

## THE SUMERIAN GRAIL

(XI, § 2, p. 428.)

It seems long since a new thesis on the origin of the Grail Myth has been proffered in English circles of research ; and it happens that the last contribution to this involved but talismanic problem is made in the course of an investigation which has far other objects in view. It seems to me therefore that I may deserve well of my readers if I remove the proposition from a setting in which it is likely to be buried, so far as they are concerned. Dr. L. A. Waddell, who is ex-professor of Tibetan at London University, and has been described as the foremost living authority on Lhasa and its Mysteries, has published not so long ago a monumental work on the genesis of civilisation about 3380 B.C. in the Homeland of the Aryan and Nordic Race, identified with the Sumerians, " whose vast city-ruins in Mesopotamia . . . began to be unearthed some fifty years ago, and whose treasures now enrich " the national museums of Europe and America.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Waddell's contribution to the general subject centres in his affirmed discovery that " the Sumerians were Aryans in physical type, culture, religion, language and writing." The evidence for these things, which are at issue with the views and conclusions of previous " leading Assyriologists," is to be sought not alone in the work under notice but in the earlier theses of the same author on the Phœnician origin of Britons, Scots and Anglo-Saxons ; on Indo-Sumerian seals ; and on the Aryan origin of the alphabet. At this

<sup>1</sup> THE MAKERS OF CIVILISATION IN RACE AND HISTORY, by L. A. Waddell, LL.B., C.B., C.I.E., etc.