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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STANZA XIII

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

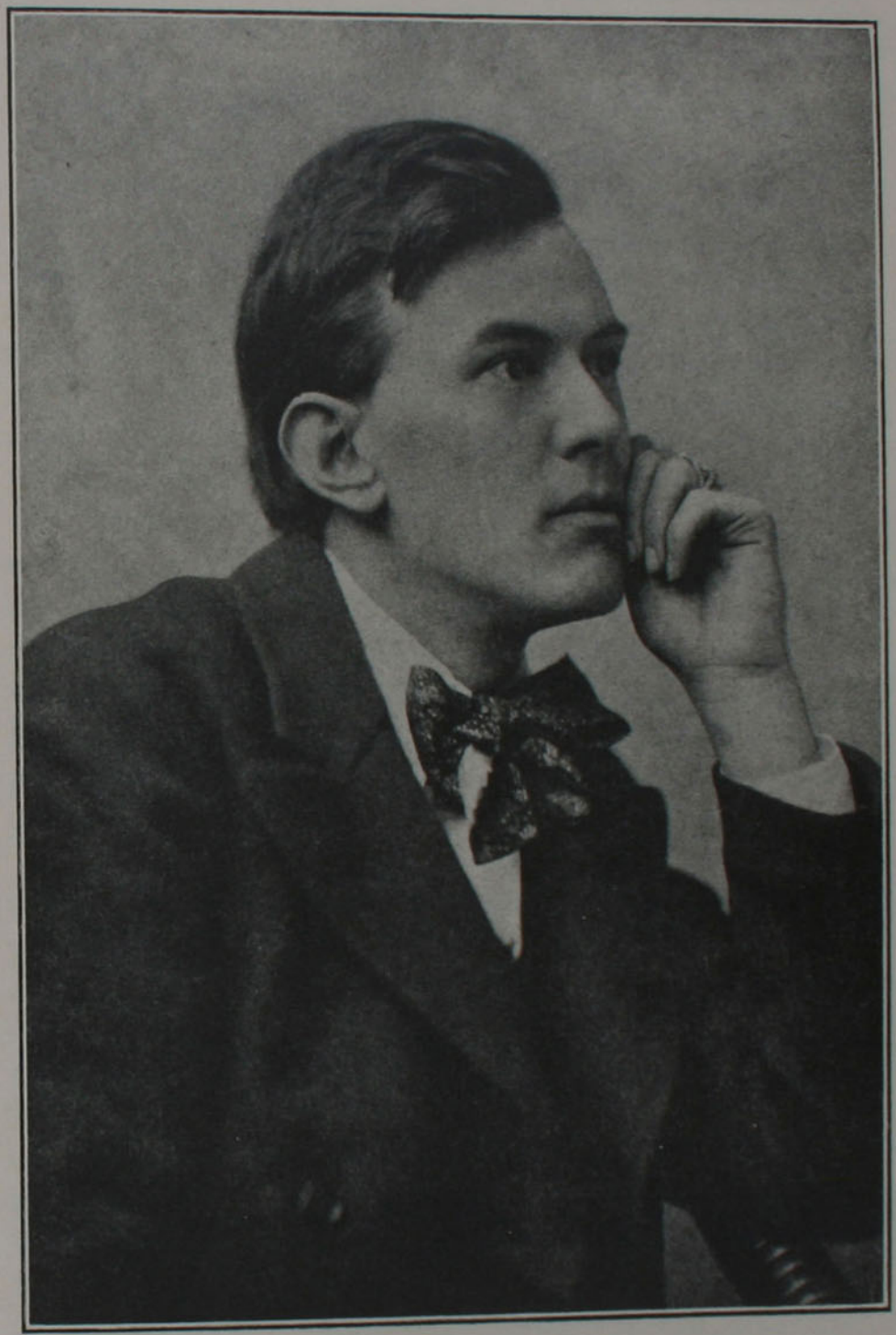
Till the Great Gate of Trinity opened me the way to freedom I had always been obsessed more or less either by physical weakness or the incubus of adolescence. I had never known what it was to be able to work freely and gladly. Now, however, I was able to give myself with absolute concentration to literature,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

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

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

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

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



ÆT. XXIII

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And I didn't.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Childe Roland to the dark tower came"

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

STANZA XIV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

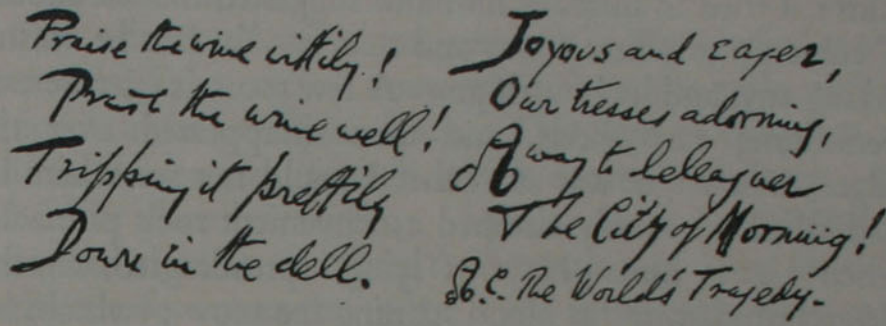
The second of these exploits—the Vuibez Séracs—constituted one of the most interesting ice climbs that I had ever done. They had not been climbed for a generation, when the glacier was in a very different condition, and were reputed impossible. Jean Maître, who was supposed to be the best guide in the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

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

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

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

STANZA XV



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STANZA XVI

You common cry of curs! whose breath I hate
As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize
As the dead carcasses of unburied men
That do corrupt my air, I banish you!
Coriolanus.

Such were some of the adventures of 1896 and 1897. My experiences all contributed to build up an original theory of mountaineering. It was not till 1898 that I discovered the identity of my own ideas with those of the great climbers. But I discovered the extremely unpleasant fact that the English Alpine Club was bitterly opposed to mountaineering—its members were incompetent, insanely jealous of their vested interests, and unthinkably unsportsmanlike. Professor Norman Collie had proposed me for the Club, and Sir Martin Conway had been kind enough to second me; but the record of climbs which I put in to qualify for admission was much too good. It was subversive of all authority. The average Alpine Clubman qualifies by paying guides to haul them up a few hackneyed peaks. They are not expected to do any new climbs whatever; and it is an outrage to the spirit of the club to do anything original. Mummery had been black-balled because he was the most famous climber in England; and, though occasionally climbing with guides before he found Collie and Hastings, had been in fact the leader of the party. The Club was, of course, afraid to give its real reasons for objecting to him. It circulated the lie that he was a boot-maker! Later on, it became a public scandal that he was not

a member of the Club, and he was weak enough to allow himself to be elected. In my case, Collie and Conway warned me that my election would be opposed, and I withdrew my name. On this, the son of a church furnisher named Tattersall, who had insinuated himself into Trinity, circulated the rumour that I had been expelled from a London Club. He hated me because I, as President of the Cambridge University Chess Club, did not see my way to allow him to become secretary. He was an excellent player, but unsuitable for conducting official correspondence with other clubs. I went to his rooms with a heavy Malacca, demanded that he should retract his falsehood or fight. He refused to do either, so I thrashed him soundly then and there. He complained to my tutor, who halled me, made a few remarks on the desuetude of the duel, changed the conversation to Ibsen, and asked me to dinner.

Mountaineering differs from other sports in one important respect. A man cannot obtain a reputation at cricket or football by hiring professionals to play for him. His achievements are checked by his averages. But hardly any one in England at that time knew anything about mountaineering. Various old fogies, who could not have climbed the simplest rocks in Cumberland, or led across an easy Alpine pass, had been personally conducted by peasants up a few mountains and written themselves up into fame. The appearance of the guideless climber was therefore a direct challenge. They tried every dirty trick to prevent the facts from leaking out. They refused to record the exploits of guideless men in the Alpine Journal. They discountenanced even their own members, they tried to ignore English rock-climbing altogether, and would have nothing to do with the Continental Alpine Clubs.

The result of this policy was to hinder the development of the sport in England. The younger men were ostracised. It was parallel to the attempts of the Church to pretend that there was no such thing as Science. The result was not dissimilar. In 1901 all the world's records, except one, were held by myself and Eckenstein. The exception was that of the greatest height attained by man. This was claimed by Matthias Zurbriggen, who was not a guide in the ordinary sense of the word, but a convict who had learnt all his climbing from Eckenstein at the request of the ne'er-do-weel's family, who didn't know what to do with him and probably hoped that he would kill himself on the mountains.

The Alpine Club even tried to fake records. One party made a great fuss over an ascent of the Dent Blanche. It was proved later that they had not been on the mountain at all, and that one at least of the party—Smith *quidam*—knew it. Again, when I arrived at the head of the Baltoro Glacier, I questioned some of my coolies who had been with the Conway Expedition of 1892 about the alleged ascent of "Pioneer Peak." The men unanimously declared that the party had only gone to the foot of the ice-fall, and had turned back from that point. Far be it from me to place any reliance on the statements of ignorant Baltis, though I never found them at fault on any other point! But it is certainly singular that they should have agreed to give an account of the expedition so different from that recorded by the party themselves. Zurbriggen, who was the guide in the case, was cross-examined by Legros, the son of the painter, and a friend of Eckenstein's. He told a very singular story about Pioneer Peak, but as he was under the influence of alcohol I suppose his statements are as unreliable as those of my coolies.

The coincidence of evidence from two doubtful sources does not necessarily strengthen either, does it?

So bitter has been the hatred of the Alpine Club for the people who have exposed its principal members as impostors, that it has actually induced the bulk of the Press to ignore expeditions of such first-rate importance as those of 1902 and 1905 to the Himalayas. Subsequent exploration has been hampered in consequence; and the manslaughter of seven porters on Everest in 1922 was directly due to ignorance of the lesson taught by the Kang Chen Janga disaster, as will be made clear in the proper place.

However, my principles have triumphed all along the line. There were no Swiss guides on Everest in 1922, and the record for altitude is held by amateurs travelling two on a rope.

Let me emphasise the fact that I am absolutely satisfied with this result. I am congenitally incapable of personal ambition and envy. My interest is in the sport itself. I care nothing for glory. In 1899, for example, I worked out a route up the Aiguille du Géant from the Montanvers. This mountain had never been climbed fairly. The ordinary way up is a matter of engineering by means of *pitons* and wire ropes. I did not keep my knowledge to myself in order to have the glory of making the First Ascent. I indicated the way up to other climbers, and was absolutely overjoyed when two Austrian amateurs made the climb. In the same way, I am perfectly satisfied at having broken down the dishonest and imbecile traditions of Badminton, and only regret that I was not in command of the 1922 Everest Expedition, because that expedition failed and cost heavily in human life. I am convinced that if I had been

there the summit would have been reached and that no one would have been killed. In the expedition to K 2, neither man nor beast was injured, and in that to Kang Chen Janga, the catastrophe was the direct result of mutinous disobedience to my orders. I do not lay claim to personal credit for this record, save in so far as I was on the way to an apprehension of the proper principles of mountain craft when I met Eckenstein, to whose instructions I am profoundly indebted.

I have never been in danger on a mountain, except through the rashness of others. Here is a typical case. I was crossing the Brêche de la Meije with a porter. About halfway down the rocky slopes (we had taken off the rope) I stopped for a few minutes for personal reasons, never imagining that the boy would get himself into trouble. When I got up he had disappeared. I shouted, and he replied. I then saw that he had done an incredibly rash action. By going on, entirely out of the way, he had crossed a narrow gully which was being constantly swept by ice from a hanging glacier. I could not leave him alone on the mountain, and I could not ask him to risk his life by returning. There was nothing for it but to repeat his indiscretion. The only way across the gully was a steep slab, polished by ice, and constantly bombarded. I had to rush it, at the gravest risk of slipping on the one hand and being smashed on the other.

It is a remarkable fact that only very exceptional men retain their normal reasoning powers in presence of mountains. Both Eckenstein and I have had constant evidence of this. It is not merely the panic of the peasant, who loses his head and calls on the saints whenever he finds himself a few yards off the beaten track or is overtaken by

bad weather. Scientifically trained minds frequently lose all sense of judgment and logic.

There is an account, hardly a century old, of a party of quite distinguished men who ascended Saddleback. They speak of precipitous cliffs and yawning gulfs, though as a matter of fact there is not a rock on the mountain which a child of three years old could call scrambling. They were, in fact, on ponies! Shelley's descriptions of Mont Blanc are comically exaggerated; his powers of observation must have been completely in abeyance.

The expression "absolutely perpendicular" ultimately became a by-word. It was used so frequently by ostensibly reliable men to describe quite gentle slopes. We used to ask engineers and other people accustomed to practical trigonometry to estimate the angle of the Matterhorn from Zermatt and from the Schwartzsee. They would give us anything from 30 degrees to 50 degrees in the first case, and from 45 degrees to 80 degrees in the second. The actual figures are 10 degrees and 15 degrees.

In 1902 Pfanll proposed to rush Chogo Ri from Askole. He thought he could get there and back in three days! In reality, it is fourteen days to the foot of the mountain, though unladen men might possibly do it in five. Mountain panic was without doubt partly accountable for the mental and moral breakdown in Guillarmod and Righi, which led them to mutiny on Kang Chen Janga. A high degree of spiritual development, a romantic temperament, and a profound knowledge based on experience of mountain conditions, are the best safeguards against the insane impulses and hysterical errors which overwhelm the average man.

During my three years at Cambridge my literary faculties

made sudden strides. The transition was brief. It is marked by my "Tale of Archais." But in "Aceldama," my first published poem of any importance, I attained, at a bound, the summit of my Parnassus. In a sense, I have never written anything better. It is absolutely characteristic. Its technical excellence is remarkable, and it is the pure expression of my Unconscious Self. I had no corresponding mental concepts at the time. It enounces a philosophy which subsequent developments have not appreciably modified. I remember my own attitude to it. It seemed to me a wilfully extravagant eccentricity. I had no idea that it was the pure water of the Dircean spring.

A certain amount of conscious aspiration is, however, evident in "Songs of the Spirit." This book is a collection of lyrics which reveal an ill-defined longing for spiritual attainment. The background is vividly coloured by observation and experience. The atmosphere of the old streets of Amsterdam, of the Colleges of Cambridge, and of the mountains, lakes, forests, and rivers, among which I wandered solitary, is evident in every stanza. The influence of my reading is almost negligible. The "wish-phantasm" of the book is principally that of a wise and holy man living in a lonely tower, master of the secrets of Nature. I had little conscious aspiration to that ideal. In practice, I was living for pleasure.

Another book of the Transition Period was "Green Alps." This was never published. I had paid Leonard Smithers to have it printed, and he told me that the printers' works had been destroyed by fire, which may or may not have been the case. It is characteristic that I accepted the situation with a shrug of the shoulders. I had a complete

set of proofs, but I had become rather ashamed of the book. I merely selected the poems which I thought really worth while for inclusion in subsequent volumes. The collection was marked by a tendency to earthly passion; and its title shows that I already regarded human love as an idea to be transcended. "Green Alps" are pleasant pastures, but I was bound for the peaks.

My essential spirituality is made manifest by yet another publication, which stands as a testimony of my præter-human innocence. The book is called "White Stains," and is commonly quoted by my admirers as evidence of my addiction to every kind of unmentionable vice. Asses! It is, indeed, technically, an obscene book, and yet the fact that I wrote it proves the purity of my heart and mind in the most extraordinary fashion.

The facts are as follows: In the course of my reading I had come across Von Krafft-Ebbing's "Psychopathia Sexualis." The professor tries to prove that sexual aberrations are the result of disease. I did not agree. I thought that I was able to understand the psychology involved; I thought that the acts were merely magical affirmations of perfectly intelligible points of view. I said to myself that I must confute the professor. I could only do this by employing the one form at my disposal: the artistic form. I therefore invented a poet who went wrong, who began with normal and innocent enthusiasms, and gradually developed various vices. He ends by being stricken with disease and madness, culminating in murder. In his poems he describes his downfall, always explaining the psychology of each act.

The conclusions of the book might therefore be approved in any Sunday School, and its metaphysics is orthodox from

the point of view of the Theologian. I wrote the book in absolute seriousness and in all innocence. It never occurred to me that a demonstration of the terrible results of misguided passion might be mistaken for pornography. Indeed, now that I do understand that vile minds think it a vile book, I recognise with grim satisfaction that "Psychopathia Sexualis" itself has attained its enormous popularity because people love to gloat over such things. Its scientific form has not protected it from abuse, any more than the artistic form of my own reply to it. But Von Krafft-Ebbing has not been blackguarded as I have. The average man cannot believe that an artist may be as serious and high-minded an observer of life as the professed man of Science.

I was to find very shortly that the most innocent personal relations could be taken by filthy minds as the basis for their malicious imagination. The story of how this came about dominates my third year at the University, as will appear. It seems as if my destiny were preparing me for my appointed work by clearing inessential factors out of my way. My one serious worldly ambition had been to become the champion of the world at Chess. I had snatched a game from Blackburne in simultaneous play some years before. I was being beaten in the Sicilian defence. The only chance was the sacrifice of a rook. I remember the grand old master coming round to my board and cocking his alcoholised eye cunningly at me. "Hullo," said he, "Morphy come to town again!" I am not coxcomb enough to think that he could not have won the game, even after my brilliancy. I believe that his colossal generosity let me win to encourage a promising youngster.

I had frequently beaten Bird at Simpson's, and when I got to Cambridge I made a savagely intense study of the

game. In my second year I was President of the University, and had beaten such first-rate amateurs as Gunston and Cole. Outside the Master Class, Atkins was my only acknowledged superior. I made mincemeat of the man who was champion of Scotland a few years later, even after I had given up the game. I spent over two hours a day in study, and more than that in practice. I was assured on all hands that another year would see me a master myself.

I had been to St. Petersburg to learn Russian for the Diplomatic Service in the long vacation of 1897, and on my way back broke the journey in Berlin to attend the Chess Congress. But I had hardly entered the room where the Masters were playing when I was seized with what may justly be described as a Mystical Experience. I seemed to be looking on at the Tournament from outside myself. I saw the Masters—one, shabby, snuffy and blear-eyed; another, in badly fitting would-be respectable shoddy; a third, a mere parody of humanity, and so on for the rest. These were the people to whose ranks I was seeking admission. "There, but for the grace of God, goes Aleister Crowley," I exclaimed to myself with disgust, and there and then I registered a vow never to play another serious game of chess. I perceived with præternatural lucidity that I had not alighted on this planet with the object of playing chess.

Aleister Crowley, by the way! I have not yet explained how I came to have changed my name. For many years I had loathed being called Alick, partly because of the unpleasant sound and sight of the word, partly because it was the name by which my mother called me. Edward did not seem to suit me, and the diminutives Ted or Ned were even less appropriate. Alexander was too long, and

Sandy suggested tow hair and freckles. I had read in some book or other that the most favourable name for becoming famous was one consisting of a dactyl followed by a spondee, as at the end of a hexameter: like "Jeremy Taylor." Aleister Crowley fulfilled these conditions, and Aleister is the Gaelic form of Alexander. To adopt it would satisfy my romantic ideals. The atrocious spelling A-L-E-I-S-T-E-R was suggested as the correct form by Cousin Gregor, who ought to have known better. In any case, A-L-A-I-S-D-A-I-R makes a very bad dactyl. For these reasons I saddled myself with my present nom-de-guerre—I can't say that I feel sure that I facilitated the process of becoming famous. I should doubtless have done so, whatever name I had chosen.

STANZA XVII

"Welcome Queen Alice with ninety times nine!" Lewis Carroll.
I have a porcelain jasmine-jar decorated with crimson — blood, Paris!
And in my garden do I lie, my garden full of clematis.
Above me sing the birds, around the rose and lilac blush and pale;
Mine is a bower of eglantine, my couch of lily and nard is.
I feed upon my jasmine-jar these eyes, this brain its beauty knows,
Its perfume roused to ecstasy by evening stain of amber eyes.

I began my last year at Cambridge with my moral decks cleared for action. I didn't know where I was going, but I was on the way. I was thus quite ready for the perception of the First Noble Truth, but also for an entirely new current to influence my life. Towards the end of the October term I met a man named Herbert Charles Jerome Pollitt. He was an M.A., ten years older than myself, and had merely come up to Cambridge to dance for the F.D.C. (Footlights Dramatic Club). I saw him only once or twice that term, but corresponded with him from abroad during the Christmas vacation. The result was the establishment of the first intimate friendship of my life.

Pollitt was rather plain than otherwise. His face was made tragic by the terrible hunger of the eyes and the bitter sadness of the mouth. He possessed one physical beauty—his hair. This was very plentiful, and he wore it rather long. It was what is called a shock. But its colour was pale gold, like spring sunshine, and its texture of the finest gossamer. The relation between us was that ideal intimacy which the Greeks considered the greatest glory of manhood and the most precious prize of life. It says much for the moral state of England that such ideas are connected

in the minds of practically every one with physical passion.

My sexual life was very intense. My relations with women were entirely satisfactory. They gave me the maximum of bodily enjoyment, and at the same time symbolized my theological notions of sin. Love was a challenge to Christianity. It was a degradation and a damnation. Swinburne had taught me the doctrine of justification by sin. Every woman that I met enabled me to affirm magically that I had defied the tyranny of the Plymouth Brethren and the Evangelicals. At the same time women were the source of romantic inspiration ; and their caresses emancipated me from the thraldom of the body. When I left them I found myself walking upon air, with my soul free to wing its way through endless empyreans, and to express its godhead in untramelled thought of transcendent sublimity, expressed in language which combined the purest aspirations with the most majestic melodies. Poems like " The Philosopher's Progress," illustrate my unconscious, and poems like " De Profundis," my conscious, reaction. But, morally and mentally, women were for me beneath contempt. They had no true moral ideals. They were bound up with their necessary preoccupation, with the function of reproduction. Their apparent aspirations were camouflage. Intellectually, of course, they did not exist. Even the few whose minds were not completely blank had them furnished with Wardour Street Chippendale. Their attainments were those of the ape and the parrot. These facts did not deter me. On the contrary, it was highly convenient that one's sexual relations should be with an animal with no consciousness beyond sex.

As to my men friends, I had never met any one of

sufficiently exalted ideals and refinement to awaken serious sympathy. Pollitt was a new species. My feeling for him was an intensely pure flame of admiration mingled with infinite pity for his spiritual disenchantment. It was infinite because it could not even imagine a goal, and dwelt wholly amid eternal things.

To him I was a mind—no more. He never manifested the slightest interest in any of my occupations. He had no sympathy with any of my ambitions, not even my poetry, except in a very peculiar way, which I have never thoroughly understood. He showed an instinctive distrust of my religious aspirations, because he realised that sooner or later they would take me out of his reach. He had himself no hope or fear of anything beyond the material world. But he never tired of the originality of my point of view; of watching the way in which my brain dealt with every subject that came under discussion.

It was the purest and noblest relation which I had ever had with anybody. I had not imagined the possibility of so divine a development. It was, in a sense, passionate, because it partook of the white heat of creative energy, and because its intensity absorbed all other emotions. But for this very reason it was impossible to conceive of it as liable to contamination by any grosser qualities. Indeed, the Universe of Sense was entirely subordinated to its sanctity. It was based upon impressions as an incandescent light upon its filament. But the world was transfigured and consumed by the ineffable intensity of the spiritual consciousness. It was so free from any impure ingredient that my friendship with Pollitt in no way interfered with the current of my life. I went on reading, writing, climbing, skating, cycling, and intriguing, as if I had never met him.

Yet his influence initiated me in certain important respects. He was a close friend of Beardsley's, and introduced me to the French and English Renaissance. In his heart was a hunger for beauty which I can only call hideous and cruel, because it was so hopeless. He totally lacked illumination in the mystical sense of the word. His outlook on life was desperate, very much like that of Des Esseintes. He suffered like Tintagiles. He could not accept any of the usual palliatives and narcotics ; he had no creative genius, no ideals ; he could not deceive himself about love, art, or religion. He merely yearned and moaned. In certain respects he annoyed me, because I was determined to make my dreams come true ; and he represented eternal dissatisfaction. In his heart was " the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched."

The school of Art and Literature to which he introduced me was thus one which I instinctively despised, even while I adored it. The intense refinement of its thought and the blazing brilliance of its technique helped me to key myself up to a pitch of artistry entirely beyond my original scope ; but I never allowed myself to fall under its dominion. I was determined to triumph, to find my way out on the other side. Baudelaire and Swinburne, at their best, succeed in celebrating the victory of the human soul over its adversaries, just as truly as Milton and Shelley. I never had a moment's doubt that I belonged to this school. To me it is a question of virility. Even James Thomson, ending with " confirmation of the old despair," somehow defeats that despair by the essential force of his genius. Keats, on the contrary, no matter how hard he endeavours to end on a note of optimism, always leaves an impression of failure.

I well know how strangely perverse this criticism must

sound, but I feel its truth in the marrow of my bones. In my own writings the tempestuous energy of my soul invariably sweeps away the wreckage of my mind. No matter to what depth I plunge, I always end with my wings beating steadily upwards towards the sun. The actual writing which releases my Unconscious, produces the effect. I inevitably end by transcending the problem of the poem, either lyrically or satirically. Turn to any page at random, and the truth of this will become apparent.

In his time at Cambridge Pollitt had been very prominent as a female impersonator and dancer. He called himself Diane de Rougy—*après* Liane de Pougy. The grossness of people who do not understand art naturally misinterpreted this æsthetic gesture and connected it with a tendency to Androgynity. I never saw the slightest symptoms of anything of the kind in him; though the subject sometimes came under discussion. But at that time it was considered criminal to admire "Lady Windermere's Fan." I have always taken the attitude of Bishop Blougram, and pay no attention to

> "the infamy scrawled broad
> About me on the church wall opposite."

I have made a point of understanding the psychology of the subject: "Nihil humani a me alienum puto."

But the conscience of the world is so guilty that it always assumes that people who investigate heresies must be heretics; just as if a doctor who studies leprosy must be a leper. Indeed, it is only recently that science has been allowed to study anything without reproach. Matter being evil, the less that we know about it the better—such was the Christian philosophy in the ages which it darkened.

Morris Travers told me that his father, an eminent physician, had been ostracised, and had lost much of his practice, for joining the Anthropological Society. Later still, Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter have been treated with the foulest injustice by ignorant and prejudiced people. My mother always believed that the "Great Eastern," the first steamship of any size to speak of, met with repeated disasters because God was jealous, as He had been of the Tower of Babel. In 1917 my cousin, Lawrence Bishop, told me that he thought that "the Lord prepared a great iceberg" for the "Titanic" in annoyance at the claim of the shipbuilders that she was unsinkable. William Whiteley had several fires, which my mother took as the repartee of the Almighty to the merchant's assumption of the title "Universal Provider," which could be properly attributed only to God.

It is the modern fashion to try to dismiss these barbarous absurdities as excrescences on Christianity, but they are of the essence of the religion. The whole theory of the Atonement implies that man can set up his own will in opposition to God's, and thereby excites Him to anger which can only be pacified by the sacrifice of His Son. It is, after all, quite as reasonable to think of God as being irritated by a shipbuilding programme as by idolatry. The tendency has, in fact, been to forget about the Atonement altogether, and to represent Jesus as a "Master" whose teachings are humanitarian and enlightened. Yet the only evidence of what he actually said is that of the Gospels, and these not only insist upon the incredible and immoral sides of Christianity, but contain actual Logia which exhibit Jesus in the character of a superstitious fanatic who taught the doctrine of eternal punishment and many others

unacceptable to modern enlightenment. General Booth and Billy Sunday preach perfectly scriptural abominations. Again, much of the teaching of Jesus which is not savage superstition is diametrically opposed to the ideas of those modern moralists who reject his supernaturalism and salvationism. The injunction "Take no thought for the morrow" is incompatible with "Preparedness," insurance, and any other practice involving foresight. The command to break off all family and social relationships is similarly unethical. The truth, of course, is that these instructions were given to a select body of men, not to the world at large. Renunciation of the world is the first step toward spiritual illumination, and in the East, from the beginning of recorded time to the present day, the Yogi, the Fakir, the Bhikkhu, and the Monk take this course, expecting that the piety of their neighbours will supply them with a means of livelihood.

It is not only illogical to pick out of the gospels the texts which happen to suit one's own prejudices and then claim Christ as the supreme teacher, but his claims to pre-eminence are barred by the fact that all the passages which are not fiendish superstition find parallels in the writings of earlier Masters. The works of Lao-Tze, the Buddhist Canon, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Talmud, and the philosophy of many of the early Greeks, to say nothing of the Sacred Books of Egypt, contain the whole of the metaphysics, theology, and ethics to which modern enlightenment can assent. It is monstrous and mischievous for liberal thinkers to call themselves Christians; their nominal adhesion delays the disruption of the infamous system which they condone. To declare oneself a follower of Jesus is not only to insult history and reason, but to

apologise for the murderers of Arius, Molinos and Cranmer, the persecutors of science, the upholders of slavery and the suppressors of all free thought and speech.

At this time I had not carried these arguments to their logical conclusion. "The Cloud on the Sanctuary" told me of a secret community of saints in possession of every spiritual grace, of the keys to the treasures of nature, and of moral emancipation such that there was no intolerance or unkindness. The members of this church lived their secret life of sanctity in the world, radiating light and love upon all that came within their scope, yet they were free from spiritual pride. They enjoyed intimate communion with the immanent divine soul of Nature. Inheritors of innocence and illumination, they were not self-seekers; and their one passion was to bring mankind into the sphere of their own sublimity, dealing with each individual as his circumstances required. To them the members of the Trinity were nearer and more real than anything else in the Universe. But they were pure ideas of incorruptible integrity. The incarnation was a Mystical or Magical Operation which took place in every man. Each was himself the Son of God who had assumed a body of flesh and blood in order to perform the work of redemption. The in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost was a sanctification resulting from the completion of the Great Work when the Self had been crucified to itself and raised again in incorruptible immortality.

I did not yet see that this conception reposed on metaphysical bases as untenable as those of orthodoxy. There was no attempt to explain the origin of evil and similar difficulties. But these things were mysteries which would be revealed to the saint as he advanced in the way of grace.

Anyhow, I was certainly not the person to cavil. The sublimity of the idea enthralled me ; it satisfied my craving for romance and poetry. I determined with my whole heart to make myself worthy to attract the notice of this mysterious Brotherhood. I yearned passionately for illumination. I could imagine nothing more exquisite than to enter into communion with these Holy Men, and to acquire the power of communicating with the angelic and divine intelligence of the Universe. I longed for perfect purity of life, for mastery of the secret forces of Nature, and for a career of devoted labour on behalf of "the Creation which groaneth and travaileth."

My poetry at this time is charged to the highest point with these aspirations. I may mention the Dedication to "Songs of the Spirit," "The Quest," "The Alchemist," "The Philosopher's Progress," "A Spring Snow Storm in Wastdale," "Succubus," "Night-fall," "The Storm," "Wheat and Wine," "Vespers," "Astrology," and "Dædalus." In the "Farewell of Paracelsus to Aprile," "The Initiation," "Isaiah," and "Power," I have expressed my ideas about the ordeals which might be expected on the Path. All these poems were published in 1898. In later volumes, "Mysteries Lyrical and Dramatic," "The Fatal Force," "The Temple of the Holy Ghost" and "Tannhäuser," these ideas are carried further in the light of my practical experience of the Path.

It may seem strange that, despite the yearning after sanctification, which is the key-note of these works, I never lost sight of what seems on the surface the incompatible idea of justification by sin. "Jezebel" and the other poems in that volume prove this point. It is as if my Unconscious were aware that every act is a sacrament, and

that the most repulsive rituals might be in some ways the most effective. The only adequate way of overcoming evil was to utilise it fully as a means of grace. Religion was for me a passionate reality of the most positive kind. Virtue is etymologically manhood. Virility, creative conception and enthusiastic execution, were the means of attainment. There could be no merit in abstention from vice. Vice indeed is *vitium,* a flaw or defect.

This attitude is not antinomianism, as the word is usually understood. When St. Paul said " All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient," he only went half way. One ought to leave no form of energy to rust. Every particle of one's personality is a necessary factor in the equation, and every impulse must be turned to account in the Great Work. I perceived, moreover, that all conventional rules of conduct were valid only in relation to environment. To take a fundamental issue : self-preservation. On the theory of reincarnation or that of immortality, there should be no more objection to dying than there is to going to sleep. In any case, I realised that my physical life was utterly valueless ; and I did not set it at a pin's fee.

I have never been afraid of carrying into effect my conclusions ; and I knew, what is more, that to fail to do so would be merely to create a conflict in myself. I had a thorough instinctive understanding of the theory of psychoanalysis. To this fact I attribute my extraordinary success in all my spiritual undertakings. From the very beginning I made a point of carrying out the instructions of one of the old Grimoires " to buy a black egg without haggling." I always understood that spiritual and material wealth were incommensurable. If I wanted a book on Magic, and it was offered me for ten times the proper price, I would buy

it on the spot, even though I knew that I had only to go round the corner to find an honest tradesman.

I did this sort of thing on purpose to affirm magically that nothing mattered except the work of the moment. It was "Take no thought for the morrow" carried out in its most literal sense. I made a point of putting God on His honour, so to speak, to supply anything I might need by demonstrating to him that I would not keep back the least imaginable fraction of my resources. I acquired this custom later on, when I had definitely discovered the direction of my destiny; but the moral basis of my attitude was already present. The first important indication of its incidence is given by the outcome of my friendship with Pollitt.

He was in residence during the Easter Term of 1898, and we saw each other almost every day. In the vacation he accompanied me to Wastdale Head, and used to walk with me over the fells, though I could never persuade him to do any rock climbing.

I was absorbed in "The Cloud on the Sanctuary," reading it again and again without being put off by the Pharisaical, priggish, and pithecanthropoid notes of its translator, Madame de Steiger. I appealed with the whole force of my will to the Adepts of the Hidden Church to prepare me as a postulant for their august company. As will be seen later, Acts of Will, performed by the proper person, never fall to the ground, impossible as it is (at present) to understand by what means the energy is transmitted.

Although Pollitt had done so much for my education by introducing me to the actual atmosphere of current æsthetic ideas, to the work of Whistler, Rops, and Beardsley, in art, and that of the so-called decadents in literature, as well as to many remote and exquisite masters of the past whom I

had ignored or misunderstood, my admiration and gratitude did not prevent me from becoming conscious of the deep-seated aversion of our souls. He had made no mistake in divining that my spiritual aspirations were hostile to his acquiescence in despair of the Universe. So I felt in my subconscious self that I must choose between my devotion to him and to the Secret Assembly of the Saints. Though he was actual and adequate, I preferred to risk all on the hazard. Human Friendship, ideal as it was in this case, was under the curse of the Universal Sorrow. I determined deliberately to give it up, notwithstanding that it was unique and adorable in its way ; that there was no reasonable hope of replacing it. This was my Act of Faith, unalloyed with the dross of Hope, and stamped with the imperial countenance of Love, to determine that I would not continue our relations.

The poignancy of this resolution was jagged and envenomed ; for he was the only person with whom I had ever enjoyed truly spiritual intercourse, and my heart was lonely, hungry, and embittered as only a poet's heart can understand. This determination developed gradually during that last May Term. He fought most desperately against my increasing preoccupation with the aspiration in which he recognised the executioner of our friendship.

Shortly after I went down, we had a last interview. I had gone down to The Bear at Maidenhead, on the quiet, to write "Jezebel." I only told one person—in strict confidence—where I was going ; but Pollitt found out that person, and forced him to tell my secret. He walked into the room shortly after dinner, to my surprise and rage—for when I am writing a poem I would show Azrael himself the door !

I told him frankly and firmly that I had given my life to religion, and that he did not fit into the scheme. I see now how imbecile I was, how hideously wrong and weak it is to reject any part of one's personality. Yet these mistakes are not mistakes at the time : one has to pass through such periods ; one must be ruthless in analysis, and complete it, before one can proceed to synthesis. He understood that I was not to be turned from my purpose, and we parted, never to meet again. I repented of my decision, my eyes having been enlightened, only a little later, but the reconciliation was not written ! My letter miscarried ; and in the autumn, when he passed me in Bond Street, I happened not to see him ; he thought I meant to cut him, and our destinies drew apart.

It has been my life-long regret, for a nobler and purer comradeship never existed on this earth, and his influence might have done much to temper my subsequent trials. Nevertheless, the fragrance of that friendship still lingers in the sanctuary of my soul. That Eucharist of the Spirit reminds me constantly that the one ingredient necessary to my æsthetic development was supplied by the Gods at the one period in my life when it could profitably be introduced into my equipment.

STANZA XVIII

'Gerald Kelly's pictures are extraordinarily grand;
Gerald Kelly's pictures are entirely done by hand.
Every little picture tells a story of its own:
Every little sitter—well, the tailoring alone!
Every little picture is according to the rules:
Gerald Kelly learnt it all in such a lot of schools.
Gerald Kelly laboured till he caught the tony trick:
Gerald K—— excuse me, I am going to be sick!'

During the May Term of 1898 I met another man who, in his own way, was interested in many of the same things as I was myself. His name was Gerald Festus Kelly. He is described in the telephone book as an artist; and the statement might have passed unchallenged indefinitely had not the Royal Academy recently elected him as an Associate. He is hardly to be blamed for this disgrace. He struggled manfully. Even at the last moment, when he felt the thunderclouds about to break over his head, he made a last desperate coup to persuade the world that he was an artist by marrying a model. But the device deceived nobody. The evidence of his pictures was too glaring. The effort, moreover, completely exhausted his power of resistance; and he received the blow with Christian resignation. It saddens me more than I can say to think of that young life which opened with such brilliant promise, gradually sinking into the slough of respectability. Of course it is not as if he had been able to paint; but to me the calamity is almost as distressing as if that possibility had ever existed. For he completely hypnotised me into thinking that he had something in him. I took his determination to become an artist as evidence of some trace of capacity, and I still hope that his years of unremitting devotion to a hopeless ambition

will earn him the right to reincarnate with some sort of soul.

We met in a somewhat romantic way. My "Aceldama" had just been issued, and was being sold privately in the University at half-a-crown. (There were only eighty-eight copies, with ten on large paper and two on vellum.) One of the mottoes in "Aceldama" is a quotation from Swinburne's "The Leper." I had not acknowledged the authorship of "Aceldama"; it was by "A Gentleman of the University of Cambridge" in imitation of one of Shelley's earlier books.

Now, there was a bookseller in the town with whom I had few dealings, for he was the most nauseatingly hypocritical specimen of the pushing tradesman that I ever set eyes on. He was entirely irreligious, and did a considerable business in the kind of book which is loathsomely described as "curious." But he was out to get the clerical and academic custom, and to this end adopted a dress and manner which would have been affected in the sweetest of young curates. Somehow or other, a copy of "Aceldama" got into his hands; he showed it to Kelly, who was so excited by the quotation from Swinburne that he found out who I was, and a meeting was arranged. His knowledge of both Art and Literature was encyclopædic, and we became very intimate, projecting collaboration in an Arthurian play, and a new magazine to take the place of "The Yellow Book" and "The Savoy," which had died with Beardsley. Nothing much came of this at the time, but the meeting had in it the germs of important developments. The critical event of the year was my meeting with Oscar Eckenstein at Wastdale Head.

Eckenstein was a man twenty years older than myself.

His business in life was mathematics and science, and his one pleasure mountaineering. He was probably the best all-round man in England, but his achievements were little known because of his almost fanatical objection to publicity. He hated self-advertising quacks like the principal members of the Alpine Club with an intensity which, legitimate as it was, was almost overdone. His detestation of every kind of humbug and false pretence was an overmastering passion. I have never met any man who upheld the highest moral ideals with such unflinching candour.

We did a few climbs together that Easter, and made a sort of provisional agreement to undertake an expedition to the Himalayas when occasion offered. He had been a member of the Conway expedition of 1892, but had quitted the party at Askole, principally on account of his disgust with its mismanagement. The separation was engineered, moreover, from the other side. For what reason has never been clearly explained. It would evidently be improper to suggest that they had made up their minds to record at least a partial success, and did not want an independent witness to their proceedings on the glacier.

One incident of that expedition is well worth mentioning. A survey was being made with instruments which lacked various essential parts, and on Eckenstein pointing out the uselessness of making observations of this kind, the reply was: "Yes, I know, but it's good enough for the Royal Geographical Society." Anything of this sort roused Eckenstein to a pitch of indescribably violent rage. I could not have had a better teacher in matters of conscience. He taught me thoroughness and accuracy in every department of the game.

To illustrate one point. I had considered myself a very good glissader, and as compared with the other people whom I met on the mountain side, even such experts as Norman Collie, I had little to learn. But Eckenstein showed me that I was not even a beginner. He made me start down assorted slopes from all sorts of positions, and to pick myself up into any other desired position ; to stop, to increase my pace, or to jump, at the word of command. Why "starting from all sorts of positions?" The idea was that one might conceivably fall on to a snow slope or have to jump to it from a great height, and it was therefore necessary to know how to deal with such situations.*

The combination was ideal. Eckenstein had all the civilised qualities, and I all the savage ones. He was a finished athlete ; his right arm, in particular, was so strong that he had only to get a couple of fingers on to a sloping ledge of an overhanging rock above his head, and he could draw himself slowly up by that alone until his right shoulder was well above those fingers. There is a climb on the east face of the Y-shaped boulder (so called because of a forked crack on the west face) near Wastdale Head Hotel which he was the only man to do, though many quite first-rate climbers tried it. Great as his strength was, he considered it as nothing, quoting a Bavarian school-master of his acquaintance, who could tear a silver florin in half with his fingers.

He was rather short and sturdily built. He did not know the meaning of the word "fatigue." He could endure the utmost hardship without turning a hair. He was absolutely reliable, either as leader or second man, and

* See "The Diary of a Drug Fiend," pp. 159-160.

this quality was based upon profound and accurate calculations. He knew his limitations to a hair's breadth. I never saw him attempt anything beyond his powers; and I never knew him in want of anything from lack of foresight.

He had a remarkable sense of direction, though inferior to my own. But his was based upon rational considerations, that is to say, he could deduce where north was from calculations connected with geology, wind, and the law of probabilities; whereas my own finer sense was purely psychical, and depended upon the subconscious registration in my brain as to the angles through which my body had turned during the day.

One point, however, is not covered by this explanation, nor can I find anything satisfactory or even plausible. For instance, one day (not having seen moonrise that month or in the district) we attempted to climb the Volcan di Colima; we had sent back our *mozos* with the camp to Zapotlan, intending to cross the mountain to the ranch of a gentleman to whom we had introductions. We had watched the volcano for a week and more, in the hope of discovering some periodicity in its eruptions, which we failed to do. We accordingly took our chance and went across the slopes until the rocks began to burn our feet through our boots. We recognised that it was hopeless to proceed.

We decided to make for the farm, and soon reached a belt of virgin jungle where the *chapparal* and fallen timber made it almost impenetrable. The trees were so thick that we could rarely see the sky. The only indication for progress was to keep on down hill. The slopes were amazingly complicated, so that at any moment we might

have been facing east, south, or west. The dust of the rotten timber almost choked and blinded us. We suffered tortures from thirst, our water supply being extremely limited. Night fell; it was impossible to see our hands in front of us. We accordingly lit a fire to keep off the jackals, and other possibilities, which we heard howling round us. We naturally began to discuss the question of direction; and I said: "The moon will rise over there," and laid down my axe as a pointer. Eckenstein independently laid down his, after a rather prolonged mental calculation. When the moon rose we found that my axe was within 5 degrees and his within 10 degrees of the correct direction. This was only one of many such tests; and I do not see in the least how I knew, especially as astronomy is one of the many subjects of which my knowledge is practically nil. In spite of innumerable nights spent under the stars, I can recognise few constellations except the Great Bear and Orion.

Besides my sense of direction on the large scale, I have a quite uncanny faculty for picking out a complicated route through rocks and ice falls. This is not simply a question of good judgment; for in any given route, seen from a distance, there may always be a passage, perhaps not twenty feet in height, which would render the whole plan abortive. This is especially the case with ice falls, where much of the route is necessarily hidden from view. Obviously, one cannot see what is on the other side of a *sêrac* whose top one has theoretically reached. Yet I have never been wrong; I have never been forced to turn back from a climb once begun.

I have also an astonishing memory for the minutest details of any ground over which I have passed. Professor

Norman Collie had this quality very highly developed, but he paid me the compliment of saying that I was much better than he was himself. This, too, was in my very early days when he was teaching me many quite rudimentary points in the technique of rock-climbing. Again, we have a question of subconscious physical memory. I am often quite unable to describe even the major landmarks of a climb which I have just done, but I recognise every pebble as I come to it if asked to retrace my steps. Efforts on my part to bring up a mountain into clear consciousness frequently create such a muddle in my mind that I almost wonder at myself. I make such grotesque mistakes that I am not far from doubting whether I have been on the mountain at all: yet my limbs possess a consciousness of their own which is infallible. I am reminded of the Shetland ponies (see Wilkie Collins' "Two Destinies") which can find their way through the most bewildering bogs and mist. This faculty is not only retrospective—I can find my way infallibly over unknown country in any weather. The only thing that stops me is the interference of my conscious mind.

I have several other savage faculties; in particular, I can smell snow and water, though for ordinary things my olfactory sense is far below the average. I cannot distinguish perfectly familiar perfumes in many cases; that is, I cannot connect them with their names.

Eckenstein and I were both exceedingly expert at describing what lay behind any mountain at which we might be looking. In his case, the knowledge was deduced scientifically; in mine, it was what one must call sheer clairvoyance. The nearest I could get to understanding his methods was judging by the glow above the ridge of

a mountain whether the other side was snow-covered, and estimating its steepness and the angle of its rocks by analogy with the corresponding faces of the mountains behind us, or similar formations elsewhere. It should hardly be necessary to point out the extraordinary practical value of these qualities in deciding one's route in unknown country.

In the actual technique of climbing, Eckenstein and I were still more complementary. It is impossible to imagine two methods more opposed. His climbing was invariably clean, orderly and intelligible ; mine can hardly be described as human. I think my early untutored efforts, emphasised by my experience on chalk, did much to form my style. His movements were a series, mine were continuous ; he used definite muscles, I used my whole body. Owing doubtless to my early ill-health, I never developed physical strength ; but I was very light, and possessed elasticity and balance to an extraordinary degree.

I remember going out on Scafell with a man named Corry. He was the ideal athlete, and had gone through a course of Sandow ; but had little experience of climbing at that time. I took him up the North Climb of Mickledoor. There is one place where, while hunting for holds, one supports oneself by an arm stretched at full length into a crack. The arm is supported by the rock, and the hand grasps a hold as satisfactory as a sword hilt. The inconceivable happened ; Corry fell off and had to be replevined by the rope. I was amazed, but said nothing. We continued the climb, and, reaching the top of the Broad Stand, took off the rope. By way of exercise, I suggested climbing a short, precipitous pitch above a sloping slab. There was no possible danger, it was within the powers of a child of six ; but Corry came off again. I was

standing on the slab, and caught him by the collar as he passed on his way to destruction.

After that, we put on the rope again and returned by descending, I think, Mickledoor Chimney. On the way down to Wastdale, he was strangely silent and embarrassed, but finally he made up his mind to ask me about it.

"Do you mind if I feel your arm?" he said. "It must be a marvel."

I complied, and he nearly fainted with surprise. My muscles were in quantity and quality like those of an Early Victorian young lady. He showed me his own arm. There could not have been a finer piece of anatomy for manly strength. He could not understand how, with everything in his favour, he had been unable to maintain his grip on the best holds in Westmoreland.

A curious parallel to this incident happened in 1902 on the expedition to Chogo Ri. We had an arrangement by which a pair of ski could be converted into a sledge for convenience in hauling baggage over snow-covered glaciers. When the doctor and I proposed to move from Camp 10 to Camp 11 we set up this sledge and packed seven loads on it. We found it quite easy to pull. This was clearly an economy of five porters, and we started two men up the slope. To our astonishment they were unable to budge it. They called for assistance; until the whole seven were on the ropes. Even so, they had great difficulty in pulling the sledge, and before they had gone a hundred yards managed to upset it into a crevasse. They settled the matter by taking two loads (between 100 and 120 pounds) each, and went off quite merrily. It is useless to have strength unless you know how to apply it.

Eckenstein recognised from the first the value of my

natural instincts for mountaineering, and also that I was one of the silliest young asses alive. Apart from the few priceless lessons that I had had from Norman Collie, I was still an amateur of the most callow type. I had no idea of system. I had achieved a good deal, it is true, by a mixture of genius and common sense; but I had no regular training, and was totally ignorant of the serious business of camp life and other branches of exploration.

We arranged to spend the summer in a tent on the Schönbühl Glacier under the Dent Blanche, primarily with the idea of fitting me for the Himalayan Expedition, and secondarily with that of climbing the east face of the Dent Blanche by a new route which he had previously attempted with Zurbriggen. They had been stopped by a formation which is exceedingly curious and rare in the Alps—slopes of very soft snow set at an unclimbable angle. He thought that my capacity for swimming up places of this sort might enable us to bag the mountain.

I hope that Eckenstein has left adequate material for a biography and made arrangements for its publication. I had always meant to handle the matter myself. But the unhappy termination of his life in phthisis and marriage, when he had hoped to spend its autumn and winter in Kashmir meditating upon the mysteries which appealed to his sublime spirit, made all such plans nugatory.

I feel it one of my highest duties to record in these memoirs as much as possible relative to this man, who, with Allan Bennett, stands apart from and above all others with whom I have been really intimate. The greatness of his spirit was not inferior to that of such giants as Rodin; he was an artist no less than if he had actually produced any monument to his mind. Only his constant man-handling by

spasmodic asthma prevented him from matching his genius by masterpieces. As it is, there is an immense amount in his life mysterious and extraordinary beyond anything I have ever known. For instance, during a number of years he was the object of repeated murderous attacks which he could only explain on the hypothesis that he was being mistaken for somebody else.

I must record one adventure, striking not only in itself, but because it is of a type which seems almost as universal as the "flying dream." It possesses the quality of the phantasmal. It strikes me as an adventure which in some form or other happens to a very large number of men; which occurs constantly in dreams and romances of the Stevensonian order. For instance, I cannot help believing that something of the kind has happened to me, though I can not say when, or remember the incidents. I have written the essence of it in "The Dream Circean"; and some phantasm of similar texture appears to me in sleep so frequently that I wonder whether its number is less than one weekly, on the average. Sometimes it perpetuates itself night after night, recognisable as itself despite immense variety of setting, and haunting my waking hours with something approaching conviction that it represents some actuality.

This story is briefly as follows. One night after being attacked in the streets of Soho, or the district between that section of Oxford Street and the Euston Road, he determined, in case of a renewed assault, to walk home by a roundabout and unfamiliar route. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Caledonian Road he thought that he was being followed—it was now late at night, and somewhat foggy. To make sure, he turned into a narrow

passage on to which opened the gardens of a row of houses, in one, and only one, of which lights were visible. The garden door of this house was open, and he dodged in to see whether the men he suspected were following. Two figures appearing at the end of the passage, he quietly closed the door behind him with the intention of entering the house, explaining his position, and asking to be allowed to leave by the front door. The house was opened by a young and beautiful woman in fashionable evening dress. She appeared of good social position, and on his explaining himself, asked him to stay to supper. He accepted. No servants appeared, but on reaching the dining-room—which was charmingly furnished and decorated with extremely good pictures, mostly Post-Impressionist I think, Monet, Sisley and the like, with sketches or etchings by Whistler, all small but admirable examples of those masters—he found a cold supper for two people was laid out. Eckenstein remained for several hours, in fact until daylight, when he left with the understanding that he would return that evening. He made no note of the address, the street being familiar to him, and his memory for numbers entirely reliable. I think that he was somehow prevented from returning the same evening; I am not quite sure on this point. But if so, he was there twenty-four hours later. He was surprised to find the house in darkness, and astounded when on further inspection he saw a notice "To Let." He knocked and rang in vain. Assuming that he must have mistaken the number, unthinkable as the supposition was, he explored the adjacent houses, but found nothing. Annoyed and intrigued, he called on the agent the next morning and visited the house. He recognised it as that of his hostess. Even the lesser discolorations of the wall

paper where the book-case and pictures had been testified to the identity of the room. The agent assured him that the house had not been occupied for three months. Eckenstein pointed to various tokens of recent occupancy. The agent refused to admit the conclusion. They explored the back part of the premises and found the French windows through which Eckenstein had entered, and the garden gate, precisely as he had left them. On inquiry it appeared that the house was vacant owing to the proprietor (a bachelor of some sixty years old, who had lived there a long while with a man and wife to keep house for him) having been ordered to the South of France for the winter. He had led a very retired life, seeing no company; the house had been furnished in early Victorian style. Only the one room where Eckenstein had had supper was unfurnished. The agent explained this by saying that the old man had taken the effects of his study with him to France, for the sake of their familiarity.

The mystery intrigued Eckenstein immensely, and he returned several times to the house. A month or so later he found the two servants had returned. The master was expected back in the spring. They denied all knowledge of any such lady as described; and there the mystery rests, save that some considerable time later Eckenstein received a letter, unsigned, in evidently disguised handwriting. It contained a few brief phrases to the effect that the writer was sorry, but it could not be helped; that there was no hope for the future, but that memory would never fade. He connected this mysterious communication with his hostess, simply because he could not imagine any other possibility.

I can offer no explanation whatever, but I believe every

word of the story; and what is most strange is that I possess an impenetrable conviction that something almost exactly the same must have happened to me. I am reminded of the one fascinating episode which redeems the once-famous but excessively stupid and sentimental novel "Called Back" from utterly abject dullness. There is also an admirable scene in one of Stevenson's best stories, "John Nicholson." A similar theme occurs in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The Sieur de Maletroit's Door," and "A Lodging for the Night." There are similar ideas in Oriental and Classical literature. The fascination of the central idea thus seems a positive obsession to certain minds.

Is it somehow symbolic of a widespread wish or fear? Is it, as in the case of the Œdipus-complex, the vestige of a racial memory—"In the beginning was the deed"? (This phrase magnificent concludes Freud's "Totem and Taboo.") Or can it be the actual memory of an event in some previous incarnation, or in some other illusion than what we call real life?

In the course of writing this story down, the impression of personal reminiscence has become steadily stronger. I now recall clearly enough that I have actually experienced not one but many such adventures, that is, as far as the spiritual essence is concerned. I have repeatedly, sometimes by accident, but more often on purpose, gone into the wrong room or the wrong house, with the deliberate intention of finding romance. More often than not, I have succeeded. As to the sequel, I have often enough failed to return; and here again sometimes the force of circumstances has been responsible, sometimes disinclination; but, most frequently of all, through the operation

of that imp of the perverse whom I blame elsewhere in this book for occasional defeats at chess. I have wished to go, I have made every preparation for going, I have perhaps reached the door, and then found myself powerless to enter. Stranger still, I have actually returned; and then, despite the strongest conscious efforts to "recapture the first fine careless rapture" of the previous visit, behaved in such a way as to make it impossible.

I have never been baffled by any such inexplicable incident as the abandonment of the room, though I have sometimes failed to find the expected girl.

Talking the whole matter over with my guide, philosopher, and friend, Frater O.P.V., he finds the whole story extraordinarily gripping. He finds the situation nodal for the spirit of romance. An extraordinary number of vital threads on "nerves" of romance.

He attaches great significance to the failure of Eckenstein to keep the appointment. It seems to him as if the whole business were a sort of magical ordeal, that Eckenstein should have been awake to the miraculous character of the adventure, and kept his appointment though Hell itself yawned between him and the house. The main test is his realisation that the incident is high Magick, that if he fail to grasp its importance, to understand that unless he return that night the way will shut for ever. He suggests that by failing to appreciate the opportunity at its full value he had somehow missed the supreme chance of his life, as if the "wrong house" were the gateway to another world, an inn, so to speak, on the outskirts of the City of God. In recent years I have been constantly alert and on the look-out for something of the kind. Whenever my plans are disarranged by a number of apparently trivial and

accidental circumstances, I look eagerly for the possibility that the situation to which they lead may prove the opening scene in some gigantic drama. Numerous episodes in these Memoirs illustrate this thesis. One might even say that the whole book is a demonstration of how the accumulation and consequence of large numbers of apparently disconnected facts have culminated in bringing "the time and the place, and the loved one all together."

Eckenstein's parents had escaped from Germany in '48, or thereabouts, as political exiles, or so I imagine; I do not remember any details. But he was educated at Bonn, and knew Bloody Bill intimately. This luckless despot was at that time a young man of extraordinary promise, taking himself with the utmost seriousness as realising the gigantic responsibilities of his inheritance. He was intensely eager to fit himself to do his best for Germany. He was openminded and encouraged Eckenstein's endeavours to introduce eight-oared rowing into the University, and used his influence to obtain permission for officers to lay by their swords when playing tennis.

One incident amuses me greatly. Students were exempt from the general law, and could not be punished for any act which was not mentioned by name in the statutes. The brighter spirits would then accordingly search the statutes for gaps. It was, for instance, "strengstens verboten" to tie night-watchmen to lightning conductors during thunderstorms. Eckenstein and his friends waited accordingly for the absence of thunderstorms, and then proceeded to tie up the watchmen.

He was as thoroughly anglicised as possible. The chief mark of the old Adam was a tendency to professional dogmatism. When he felt he was right, he was almost

offensively right; and on any point which seemed to him settled, the coefficient of his mental elasticity was zero. He could not imagine the interference of broad principles with the detailed results of research. The phrase "general principles" enraged him. He insisted on each case being analysed by itself as it arose. This is all right, but it is possible to overdo it. There are many circumstances which elude analysis, yet are perfectly clear if examined in the light of the fundamental structure of the human organism. For all that, he was exactly the man that I needed to correct my tendency to take things for granted, to be content with approximations, to jump at conclusions, and generally to think casually and loosely. Besides this, my experience of his moral and intellectual habits was of the greatest service to me, or rather to England, when it was up to me to outwit Hugo Münsterberg.

Eckenstein's moral code was higher and nobler than that of any other man I have met. On numerous points I cannot agree; for some of his ideas are based on the sin complex. I cannot imagine where he got it from, he with his rationalistic mind from which he excluded all the assumptions of established religion. But he certainly had the idea that virtue was incompatible with enjoyment. He refused to admit that writing poetry was work, though he admired and loved it intensely. I think his argument must have been that if a man enjoys what he is doing, he should not expect extra remuneration.

Eckenstein shared the idiosyncracies of certain very great men in history. He could not endure kittens. He did not mind grown-up cats. The feeling was quite irrational, and conferred mysterious powers! for he could detect the presence of a kitten by means of some sense peculiar to

himself. We used to tease him about it in the manner of the young, who never understand that anything may be serious to another person which is not so to them. One Easter the hotel was overcrowded ; and five of us, including Eckenstein and myself, were sleeping in the barn. One of Eckenstein's greatest friends was Mrs. Bryant, whose beautiful death between Chamonix and the Montanvers in 1922 was the crown of a noble life. She had brought her niece, Miss Nichols, who to intrepidity on rocks added playfulness in less austere surroundings. I formally accuse her of putting a kitten under Eckenstein's pillow in the barn while we were in the smoking-room after dinner. If it had been a cobra Eckenstein could not have been more upset !

He had also an idiosyncracy about artificial scent. One day my wife and a friend came home from shopping. They had called at the chemist's who had sprayed them with " Shem-el-nessim." We saw them coming, and went to the door to receive them. Eckenstein made one rush—like a bull—for the window of the sitting-room, flung it open, and spent the next quarter of an hour leaning out and gasping for breath.

Eckenstein was a great connoisseur of puzzles. It is extremely useful, by the way, to be able to occupy the mind in such ways when one has not the conveniences or inclination for one's regular work, and there is much time to kill in a hotel or a tent in bad weather. Personally, I have found chess, solitaire, and triple-dummy bridge or skat as good as anything.

Eckenstein was a recognised authority on what is known as Kirkwood's schoolgirl problem, but we used to work at all sorts of things, from problems connected with Mersenne's

numbers and Fermat's Binary Theorem to the purely frivolous attempt to represent any given number by the use of the number four, four times—neither more nor less, relating them by any of the accepted symbols of mathematical operations. Thus :

$$18 = 4\,(4 \cdot 4) + \cdot 4$$
$$38 = \lfloor 4 + \cdot\tfrac{4}{4} + 4$$
$$106 = 4\,\lfloor 4 + \cdot\tfrac{4}{4}$$
$$128 = 4^4 \div 4 - \sqrt{4}$$

This has been done up to about 170, with the exception of the number 113, and thence to 300 or thereabouts with only a few gaps. I solved 113 with the assistance of Frater Ψ and the use of a subfactorial, but Eckenstein would not admit the use of this symbol as fair.

He was also interested in puzzles involving material apparatus, one of which seems worth mention. He was in Mysore, and a travelling conjuror sold him a whole bundle of more or less ingenious tricks. One of these consisted simply of two pieces of wood ; one a board with a hole in it, the other shaped somewhat like a dumb bell, the ends being much too big to go through the hole. Eckenstein said that he was almost ready to swear that he saw the man take them up separately, and rapidly put them together, in which condition he had them, and was never able to take them apart. He explored the surface minutely for signs of complexity of structure, but without success. I never saw the toy, he having sent it to Mr. W. W. Rouse Ball, a great authority on such matters, but also baffled in this case.

We were naturally always interested in any problems concerned with the working out of a difficult route, and here his probity on one occasion made him the victim of an unscrupulous child of Shaitan. The villain appeared in the guise of an old and valued friend, saying : "Is it

possible to reach Q from P (mentioning two places in London) without passing a public house?" Eckenstein accordingly took his walks in that direction, and after endless trouble discovered a roundabout way which fulfilled the condition. Communicating the joyful news, his friend replied: "Good for you! Here's something else. Can you get to the Horseshoe, Tottenham Court Road, from here without passing a public house?" I do not know how many pairs of Alpine boots Eckenstein wore out on the problem, before asking his friend, "Can it be done?" A telegram assured him that it could. More boots went the way of all leather, and then he gave it up. "It's perfectly easy," said the false friend, "*don't* pass them—go in!"

(The psychologist will observe that this atrocious piece of misplaced humour was made possible by the earlier problem having been genuine, difficult and interesting, thus guaranteeing the spoof.)

One of his favourite amusements was to calculate the possibility of some published description of a phenomenon. For instance, in the novel "She" there is a "rocking stone" about which there are sufficient data in the book to enable an expert to say whether it was possible in nature. He decided that it was, but only on the assumption that it was a cone balanced on its apex.

I suppose that every form of navigation possesses its peculiar dangers. I remember Eckenstein telling me of an adventure he once had with Legros. One might be tempted to think that very little harm could come to a barge in a dock on the Thames, bar being cut down by a torpedo ram. But the facts are otherwise. It was the first time that either of them had been in charge of this species

of craft, which they had to manœuvre in order to inspect a wharf which required some slight repair. The gallant little wave-waltzer displaced 120 tons and was called the "Betsy Anne."

They boarded the barge without difficulty, but to get her going was another matter. The fellow-countrymen of Cook, Drake and Nelson were not behindhand with wise advice couched in language of frankness and fancy. They learned that the way to make a barge go was to walk up and down the broad flat gunwale with a pole. She was certainly very hard to start; but it got easier as she gathered way. They entered into the spirit of the sport, and began to run up and down with their poles, exciting each other to emulation with cheerful laughter. Pride filled their souls as they observed that their rapid mastery of the awkward craft was appreciated on shore, as the lusty cheering testified. It encouraged them to mightier efforts, and before long they must have been making well over two miles an hour. Then Eckenstein's quick ear asked him whether the shouting on shore was so wholly the expression of unstinted admiration as he had supposed. He paid greater attention, and thought he detected yells of coarse ridicule mingled with violent objurgation. He thought he heard a word at the conclusion of a string of extremely emphatic epithets which might easily have been mistaken for "Fool!" At this point Legros stopped poling, said shortly and unmistakeably "Hell!" and pointed to the wharf, which, as previously stated, stood in need of some trifling repairs. It was now not more than fifty yards away, and seemed to them to be charging them with the determination of an angry elephant. They realised the danger, and shouted for advice. The answer was, in essence, "Dive!" It was, of course,

hopeless to attempt to check or even to deflect the Betsy Anne. They dived, and a moment later heard the rending crash of the collision, and were nearly brained by baulks of falling timber. "Well," said Eckenstein, as they drove home to change their muddy garments, "we've done a good morning's work, anyhow. That wharf is no longer in need of trifling repairs." Both it and the Betsy Anne kept the neighbourhood in matchwood for the next two years. Oh! for a modern Cowper to immortalise the maritime John Gilpin!

When Eckenstein first called on Harriman he found him in a private office with drawing instruments, studying a map. Presently Harriman explained that he was planning a new railroad, his method being to find some spot as far as possible from human habitation. He would mark this as the terminal and connect it with the nearest big centre, so as to take in a few small isolated settlements. The idea was to buy a belt of land through which the road might run. He would then induce people to go out to the end of the line and start something. In course of time intermediate settlements would follow, and the road would make its bit by selling its land for building and cultivation. He explained that this was, in essence, the method by which the country had been developed. I have always taken this into account in connection with the accusations against the railroad magnates. It seems to me that their imagination, intelligence, and pluck deserved ample reward.

Eckenstein had a number of stories about the railways whose calculations he made, some of which seem to me worthy of permanent record. The first may be called "The story of the Lost Truck." This was an element of an ordinary freight train. For over six months it was sought

for all over the United States, and was ultimately found on a siding thousands of miles away from its destination. I do not remember how the original mistake arose, but I have a vague idea there was some confusion between Washington, D.C. and Washington on the Pacific Coast. The consignment was important and valuable, and no effort was spared to find it. Eckenstein, knowing the details of the management of railways, found it almost incredible that it should have eluded search for six whole months.

Another very surprising incident is that of the famous accident at Grantham. It was the duty of no less than five people to stop the train, yet not one of them did so. The circumstances precluded any possibility of mistake. The signal for shutting off steam could not possibly be missed, but the train ran on full speed through a station where it was scheduled to stop, and met with disaster shortly afterwards. In my novel, "Moon Child," I have used this incident with a slight adaptation. Eckenstein used to use this story as an argument against automatic coupling, and other purely mechanical devices for securing safety which are so angrily demanded by ignorant asses like Bernard Shaw (as he would say, with no lack of emphasis—but another noun). The decision of the railways has nothing to do with the inhuman greed and callousness of railway shareholders and directors. Eckenstein's attitude was that any conceivable automatism may go wrong, and therefore its existence may be actually mischievous as diminishing the sense of responsibility of the men in charge of the train. A similar argument applies to the Court of Criminal Appeal. Juries have been much more ready to hang men since they have had that phantom to relieve them of their sense of responsibility.

I cannot help thinking, on the whole, with Eckenstein. The general tendency to rely on mechanism to abolish the necessity for the use of the higher faculties in man is tending to brutalise him.

Eckenstein's favourite story is that of the most complicated collision that ever occurred in the history of railways. It was, I think, in Germany. It took place in an important junction at some distance from any station. A train ran from the branch on to the main line into the middle of another train which should not have been there. Two other trains then piled themselves up on the débris. The reason for the failure of the Block System is rather curious and elaborate. I distrust my memory too deeply to attempt to explain it, but the original cause of the accident sticks in my mind as illustrating how an event, trivial to the point of insignificance, may, by a concatenation of highly improbable incidents, culminate into the most colossal catastrophe.

The driver of the first train had failed to replace a worn washer in one of his gauges. The matter was not urgent, and involved no danger of any sort. He was replaced by another man at a station shortly before the accident, and the new driver had no reason to suspect any irregularity; because, by a chance that would not happen once in a hundred years, the washer stuck instead of moving. This rendered possible, though to the last degree unlikely, the misreading of his steam pressure. But the result was that he found himself at a standstill when he thought he had full power. Here again the accident was quite trifling in itself, but, as things were, it chanced that he found himself stuck at the exact point where the branch line cut in. Moreover, he had just passed the signal, so that the train behind him

supposed the line to be clear. The times were such that the proximity of the trains took place within a period of two minutes.

The point of the whole story is that half a dozen or more extremely unlikely accidents, none of them dangerous in itself, or even taken all together, found a combination of places and times such that the totality of the circumstances resulted in the disaster. If the first train had stopped fifty yards before or after where it did, nothing would have gone wrong. If one of the trains had been half a minute earlier or later, nothing would have gone wrong. Everything occurs as if the most ingenious constructor of chess problems that ever lived, had been given absolute power over an immensely varied and complex set of energies, and been requested to produce the most improbable checkmate imaginable.

This story is of peculiar interest to me as furnishing a comparison of the events of my own life in relation to the Book of the Law. It supports my scepticism as no other facts within my knowledge ever begin to do. I ask myself whether, after all, it is not conceivable that the immense number of facts which point to intelligent control of very various energies, which claim to be so, could not be in reality an accident in the true sense of the word like this collision. The degree of improbability is, at least, of the same order.

One last story. This, by the way, has been used by Conan Doyle as the basis of one of his stupid and dull yarns, "The Lost Special." It was somewhere in the West of America. A train started from A to go to B, a distance of some fifty miles. There were no junctions on the line and few stations. The line was a comparatively new

one, but it had been shortened considerably a few months before the incident by the building of an important bridge which enabled them to cut off a long detour. The train started in threatening weather, which became a terrific blizzard. Telegraphic communication was temporarily interrupted. It was, therefore, some time before the alarm was given that the train had not arrived at B. There was nothing surprising in this. It had evidently been held up by the snow. But with the lapse of time the situation began to appear alarming, as the line traversed wild country and the train was not supplied with provisions. A snow-plough was sent out from B, but the drifts were so heavy that the line was not clear until the fourth day. When the rescue party arrived at A the rescuers supposed that the original animal had simply made its way back there. The authorities at A, however, denied all knowledge of the train. But, said the rescuers, we have come through from B and seen no signs of it. The situation was absurd. The only theory tenable was that the train had run off the line, and got hidden behind a bank of snow. There was, however, no place on the line where anything of the sort could have happened. When the train was ultimately found, the officials and the passengers had no suspicion of what was wrong. They supposed merely that the line in front of them and behind was blocked with snow drifts. The solution is almost inconceivably improbable. The train had run off the line, and by one chance in countless billions had found itself on the abandoned permanent way, and travelled a considerable distance along it before being brought up by the snow drifts.

STANZA XIX

1. The Book of Concealed Mystery is the book of the equilibrium of balance.
2. For before there was equilibrium, countenance beheld not countenance.
3. And the kings of old time were dead, and their crowns were found no more; and the earth was desolate.
4. Until that head desired by all desires appeared and communicated the vestments of honour.
5. This equilibrium hangeth in that region which is negatively existent in the Ancient One.
6. Thus were those powers equiponderated which were not yet in perceptible existence. — Siphra DTZNIOUTHA.

We had one or two other people with us, in particular a man named Paley Gardner, who had been with Eckenstein at Wastdale in Easter. He was a man of giant strength, but could not be taught to climb the simplest rocks. He always tried to pull the mountain down to him instead of pulling himself up to it! He was one of the best fellows that ever walked, and had led an extraordinary life of which he was too silent and too shy to speak. But he loosened up to some extent in camp; and two of his adventures are so remarkable that I feel they ought to be rescued from oblivion.

He was a rich man, but on one occasion found himself stranded in Sydney, and too lazy to wire for money. At this juncture he met a man who offered to take him trading in the Islands. They got a schooner, a crew, and some stores; set off; sold their stuff; and started home. Then small-pox broke out on board, and every man died but Paley, who sailed the schooner, single-handed, seven days back to Sydney.

On another occasion he found himself at Lima during the battle; if you can call it a battle when every one thought it the best bet to shoot any one he saw as a matter of general principle. Paley, being a man of peace, took up a position

on a remote wall with the idea of shooting anyone that approached in case of his proving unfriendly. However, the first person that arrived was obviously an Englishman. They recognised each other, and proceeded to concert measures for escape.

The newcomer, a doctor with long experience of South America, suggested that if they could only cross a broad belt of country inhabited by particularly malignant Indian tribes, and the Andes, they could reach the head waters of the Amazon and canoe down to Iquitos, where they would be in clover, as the Doctor was a close friend of Dom Somebody, a powerful Minister or other high official. They started off on this insane programme, and carried it out (after innumerable adventures) with success. Arriving at Iquitos, ragged and penniless, but confident that the Minister's friendship would put them on a good wicket at once, they sought the local authorities—and learnt that their friend had been hanged a few days before, and that any one who knew him might expect a similar solution to his troubles!

The two Englishmen were thrown into prison, but broke out and bolted down river. The hue and cry was raised; but, just as their pursuers were closing in on them, they managed to steal a fishing smack, with which they put out into the open Atlantic. Luckily, a few days later, when they were on the brink of starvation, they fell in with an English steamer bound for Liverpool. The Captain picked them up and took them home in triumph.

The weather made it impossible to do any serious climbing; but I learnt a great deal about the work of a camp at high altitudes, from the management of transport to cooking; in fact, my chief claim to fame is, perhaps, my

"glacier curry." It was very amusing to see these strong men, inured to every danger and hardship, dash out of the tent after one mouthful and wallow in the snow, snapping at it like mad dogs. They admitted, however, that it was very good as curry, and I should endeavour to introduce it into London restaurants if there were only a glacier. Perhaps, some day, after a heavy snowfall——

I had been led, in the course of my reading, to "The Kabbalah Unveiled," by S. L. Mathers. I didn't understand a word of it, but it fascinated me all the more for that reason, and it was my constant study on the glacier. My health was not good during this summer, and I had gone down to Zermatt for a rest. One night in the Beer-hall I started to lay down the law on alchemy, which I nowise understood. But it was a pretty safe subject on which to spread myself, and I trust that I impressed the group of men with my vast learning. However, my destiny was in ambush. One of the party, named Julian L. Baker, was an analytical chemist. He took me aside when the group broke up and walked back to the hotel with me. He was himself a real practical alchemist—I don't know whether he had been fooled by my magpie display of erudition. He may simply have deduced that a boy, however vain and foolish, who had taken so much pains to read up the subject, might have a really honest interest after all; and he took me seriously. He had accomplished some remarkable work in alchemy. For one thing, he had prepared "fixed mercury"; that is to say, the pure metal in some form that was solid at ordinary temperatures.

As for me, I made no mistake. I felt that the moment of opportunity was come. I had sent out the S.O.S. call for a Master during that Easter at Wastdale Head; and

here was a man who was either one himself or could put me in touch with one. It struck me as more than a coincidence that I should have been led to meet him partly through my ill-health and partly through my fatuous vanity. That night I resolved to renew my acquaintance with Baker in the morning, and tackle him seriously about the intricate question which lay close about my heart.

The morrow dawned. At breakfast I inquired for Baker. He had left the hotel ; no one knew where he had gone. I telegraphed all over the valley. He was located at the Gorner Grat. I sped up the mountain to find him. Again he had gone. I rushed back. In vain I hunted him through the hotels and at the railway station. At last I got a report that an Englishman corresponding to his description had started to walk down the valley to Brigue. I hurled myself headlong in pursuit. This time I was rewarded. I caught up with him some ten miles below Zermatt. I told him of my search for the Secret Sanctuary of the Saints, and convinced him of my desperate earnestness. He hinted that he knew of an Assembly which might be that for which I was looking. He spoke of a Sacrament where the Elements were four instead of two. This meant nothing to me ; but I felt that I was on the right track. I got him to promise to meet me in London. He added : "I will introduce you to a man who is much more of a Magician than I am."

To sum the matter in brief, he kept his word. The Secret Assembly materialised as the "Hermetic Order of the G.·. D.·.," and the Magician as one George Cecil Jones.

During the whole summer, the weather got steadily worse, and my health took the same course. I found myself

obliged to leave the camp and go to London to see doctors. I took rooms in a hotel in London, attended to the necessary medical treatment, and spent my time writing poetry. The play "Jephthah" was my principal work at this period. It shows a certain advance in bigness of conception; and has this notable merit, that I began to realise the possibility of objective treatment of a theme. Previous to this, my lyrics had been more or less successful expressions of the Ego; and I had made few attempts to draw characters who were not more than Freudian wish-phantasms—I mean by this that they were either projections of myself as I fancied myself or aspired to be; otherwise, images of women that I desired to love. When I say "to love," I doubt whether the verb meant anything more than "to find myself through." But in "Jephthah," weak as the play is, I was really taking an interest in other people. The characters are not wholly corrupted by self-portraiture, I stuck to the Hebrew legend accurately enough, merely introducing a certain amount of Qabalistic knowledge.

The passionate dedication to Swinburne is significant of my literary hero-worship. With this play were published (in 1899) a number of lyrics entitled "Mysteries, Lyrical and Dramatic." The shallow critic hastily assumed that the influence of Swinburne was paramount in my style, but on re-reading the volume I do not think that the accusation is particularly justifiable. There are plenty of other authors who might more reasonably be served with an affiliation summons. Indeed, criticism in England amounts to this: that if a new writer manifests any sense of rhythm, he is classed as an imitator of Swinburne; if any capacity for thought, of Browning.

I remember one curious incident in connection with

this volume. I had a set of paged-proofs in my pocket one evening, when I went to call on W. B. Yeats. I had never thought much of his work ; it seemed to me to lack virility. I have given an extended criticism of it in "The Equinox" (Vol. I, No. II, Page 307.) However, at that time I should have been glad to have a kindly word from an elder man. I showed him the proofs accordingly, and he glanced through them. He forced himself to utter a few polite conventionalities, but I could see what the truth of the matter was.

I had by this time become fairly expert in clairvoyance, clairaudience and clairsentience. But it would have been a very dull person indeed who failed to recognise the black, bilious rage that shook him to the soul. I instance this as a proof that Yeats was a genuine poet at heart, for a mere charlatan would have known that he had no cause to fear an authentic poet. What hurt him was the knowledge of his own incomparable inferiority.

I saw little of him and George Moore. I have always been nauseated by pretentiousness ; and the Celtic revival, so-called, had all the mincing, posturing qualities of the literary Plymouth Brother. They pretended to think it an unpardonable crime not to speak Irish, though they could not speak it themselves ; and they worked in their mealy-mouthed way towards the galvanisation of the political, ethnological and literary corpse of the Irish nation. Ireland has been badly treated, we all know ; but her only salvation lay in forgetting her nonsense. What is the use of setting up a scarecrow provincialism, in re-establishing a barbarous and fantastic language which is as dead as Gothic, and cannot boast sufficient literature to hold the attention of any but a few cloistered scholars—at the price of cutting Ireland

off from the main stream of civilisation? We see already that the country has slunk into the slough of anarchy. When the Kilkenny cats have finished shooting each other from behind hedges, the depopulated island will necessarily fall into the hands of practical colonists, who will be content to dwell peaceably together and communicate with the world in a living language.

Like Byron, Shelley, Swinburne, and Tennyson, I left the University without taking a degree. It has been better so; I have accepted no honour from her; she has had much from me.

I wanted the spirit of the University, and I passed my examinations in order to be able to imbibe it without interference from the authorities, but I saw no sense in paying fifteen guineas for the privilege of wearing a long black gown more cumbersome than the short blue one, and paying thirteen and fourpence instead of six and eightpence if I were caught smoking in it. I had no intention of becoming a parson or a schoolmaster; to write "B.A." after my name would have been a decided waste of ink.

I felt that my career was already marked out for me. Sir Richard Burton was my hero and Eckenstein his modern representative, as far as my external life was concerned. A Baccalaureate would not assist me noticeably in the Himalayas or the Sahara. As for my literary career, academic distinction would be a positive disgrace. And with regard to my spiritual life, which I already felt to be the deepest thing in me, the approbation of the Faculty was beneath troubling to despise. I have always objected to incurring positive disgrace. I see no sense in violating conventions, still less in breaking laws. To do so only gives one unnecessary trouble.

On the other hand, it is impossible to make positive progress by means of institutions which lead to one becoming a Lord Chancellor, an Archbishop, an Admiral, or some other flower of futility. I had got from Cambridge what I wanted: the intellectual and moral freedom, the spirit of initiative and self-reliance; but perhaps, above all, the indefinable tone of the University. The difference between Cambridge and Oxford is that the former makes you the equal of anybody alive; the latter leaves you in the invidious position of being his superior.

NOTE ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

One of the most significant points in the English character is thrown into relief by the contemplation of Oxford and Cambridge. I should be very puzzled to have to say what that point is, but the data are unmistakeable. The superficial likeness between the Universities is very clear, yet their fundamental spiritual difference can only be described as "a great gulf fixed." Contrast this with America, where even long experience does not enable one to distinguish at a glance between men from the four principal universities, or even to detect, in most cases, the influence of any university training soever, as we understand the idea. But to mistake an Oxford for a Cambridge man is impossible, and the converse exceedingly rare.

I hope it is not altogether the blindness of filial affection that inclines me to suggest that the essential difference depends upon the greater freedom of the more famous university. Oxford makes a very definite effort to turn out a definite type of man, and even his ingrained sense that he is not as other men operates finally as a limitation.

At Cambridge the ambitions and aspirations of any given undergraduate are much less clearly cut, and are of wider scope than those of his equivalent on the Isis. It seems to me no mere accident that Cambridge was able to tolerate Milton, Byron, Tennyson, and myself without turning a hair, while Oxford inevitably excreted Shelley and Swinburne. *Per contra*, she suited Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde perfectly. Had they been at Cambridge, the nonsense would have been knocked out of them. They would have had to succeed or fail entirely on their own virtues; whereas, as things were, the Oxford atmosphere and the Oxford manner shielded them from the rude blasts of all-round criticism.

These ideas receive some support from a consideration of the relations normally obtaining between undergraduates and dons. On the Granta we are no doubt *in statu pupillari;* the Oxonian is *in statu quo pupillari.* He is taught, trained, and, if necessary, trounced, to respect the principle of authority. It is really fair to say that no Cambridge man would ever dream of adducing authority in the course of an argument. He might indeed bring forward a great name on his side, but never without being ready to support it with the heavy artillery of patent proof. No fame is fixed with us as it is with them. The spirit of criticism never sleeps.

We see accordingly much stricter discipline with them than with us. We tend to trust the good sense and good will of the fluffiest fresher. Our dons never get nervous lest a rag should go too far, and we never betrayed their trust, at least not till quite recently. Since my time the tone of both universities has been lowered. Before 1900 a rag capable of scaring the women students would have been unthinkable.

Tyranny always trembles, and I remember only too well the wave of sympathy which swept through Cambridge at the news that the Oxford authorities, panic-stricken at some projected demonstration, had actually imported mounted police from London. Our own dons would have cut their throats rather than do anything so disgraceful; but if they had, we should have pounded those police into pulp.

This particular contrast is manifest to both universities. Whenever the subject comes up, anecdote answers anecdote to the point. The psychology extends to the individual. Our conception of the ideal proctor is very different to theirs. In my second year one proctor effected some capture by watching his victim from the darkness of a doorway. The story went round, and within a week dishonour met its due. The dirty dog was ducked in the Cam. Nor were the avengers sent down. On the contrary, the proctor was obliged to burn his bands. Such conduct was practically unprecedented.

The typical tale is this. The grounds of Downing College are surrounded by a long low wall. One dark windy night a passing proctor saw his cap, caught by a gust, soar gracefully over the rampart. His bulldogs climbed the wall and retrieved it. But the cap was not their only prize. They dragged with them a most discomfited undergraduate, and a companion who was open to criticism from the point of view of the University regulations. But the proctor simply thanked the man for bringing back his cap, and apologised for disturbing him. He refused to take advantage of an accident.

One very instructive incident concerns that brilliant Shakespeare scholar and lecturer Louis Umfraville Wilkinson. One summer night he came into college at

Oxford a little lively with liquor. His wit had made the evening memorable, and he went on to his rooms without curbing his conversation, which happened to deal with the defects of the Dean in various directions. Fortune favoured him—I balance the books in perspective!—the Dean's window was open, and the reprobate heard to his horror that one at least of his flock failed to estimate his eminence at the same exalted rate as he did himself. He actually brought a formal charge of blasphemy against Wilkinson, pressed it to the utmost, and succeeded in getting him sent down.

Wilkinson shrugged his shoulders, came over to us, and entered his name at John's. Now comes an infamy almost incredible. The Dean pursued his revenge. He wrote a long, bitter, violent letter to Wilkinson's tutor, giving an account of the affair at Oxford, and urging—in such language that it was more like a command than a threat—that Wilkinson be forthwith kicked out of Cambridge. The tutor sent for the offender, and the following dialogue ensued:

"I believe you know Mr. So-and-So, Mr. Wilkinson."

"I have that honour, sir."

"Dean of Blank, Oxford, I understand."

"That is so, sir."

"I have a letter from him, which I propose to read to you."

"Thank you, sir."

The tutor read through the letter, made no comment, asked no questions. He tore it slowly in pieces and threw them into the fire.

"May I hope that you will be with us at breakfast to-morrow?"

"Thank you, sir."

"Good morning, Mr. Wilkinson."

"Good morning, sir."

I confess that it seems to me that the method of Oxford in such matters errs in two different directions. On the one hand, the undergraduate is treated as an irresponsible infant, to be dragooned into decency; and, on the other, punished with a sternness which postulates that he is as accountable for his actions as a fully adult man, with comprehensive knowledge of the ways of the world. The result is to hinder his development, by withholding experience from him, and at the same time to punish his inexperience by making a mere mistake ruinous. The system tends to atrophy his ethical development by insisting on a narrow and inelastic code, while encouraging moral cowardice and unfitting him to face the facts which so presumptuously force themselves into notice as soon as the College conventions are done with.

Cambridge realises that (within very wide limits) the more experience a man has, the better is he equipped to make his way in the world. We think it wiser to let men find out for themselves what dangers lie ahead, and pay the penalty of imprudence while recovery is comparatively easy. Better learn how to fall before the bones become brittle.

Another advantage of our idea of the relationship between long gowns and short is that, even if at the cost of some superficial respect, it is possible to establish more intimate communion in a spirit of comradeship between the old and the young. The intellectual gain is obvious; but perhaps even more valuable is the moral profit. To draw a hard and fast line between pupil and teacher limits both. Mis-

understanding leads to mistrust, mistrust to enmity. It is better to realise the identity of interests.

I became aware of my feeling on this point quite suddenly. The impression is the more intense. One night there had been a regular rag. I forget what about, but we built a big bonfire in the middle of the market-place, and otherwise spread ourselves. Things began with no definite pulse of passion discernible, but as the evening advanced, we found ourselves somehow or other at odds with the townees. I think we must have resented their attempt to participate in the general gaiety. Sporadic free fights sprang up here and there, but nothing really serious. On the whole we gave and took in good temper. Just before twelve o'clock I turned to go home. Just beyond the tobacconist's—Bacon, celebrated by Calverley in his overrated ode—swirled a swarm of townees shouting and swearing in a way that struck me as ugly. It was no affair of mine, and I did not want to be late. But even as I changed my course to avoid the mob I saw that their game was to reinforce half a dozen roughs who were surrounding a doorway, and hustling one of the proctors. My immediate impulse was to gloat upon the evil that had befallen my natural enemy, for until that moment my absurd shyness had prevented me from realising my relations with the authorities. I had timidly accepted the conventional chaff, but now almost before that first thought was formulated my inmost instincts sprang into consciousness. I shouted to the few scattered gownsmen that were still in the square, and hurled myself headlong to the rescue of my detested tyrant. He was pretty well under the weather, warding off feebly the brutal blows that the cowardly cads rained on his face. His cap was gone, and his gown was in shreds. His bulldogs had been

handled still more roughly. I suppose the townees saw them as traitors to the cause, hirelings of the aristocracy. They had been knocked clean down, and were being battered by the boots of the mob. We must have been about a dozen, not more, and we had to fight off forty. It was the first time that I had ever had to face the animal anger, unreasoned and uncontrolled, of a mass of men whose individual intelligences, such as they were, had been for the moment completely swamped by the savage instinct to stamp on anything that seemed to them sensitive.

Fate familiarised me with this psychology in another form. It breaks out every time any man speaks or acts so as to awaken the frantic fear which is inherent in all but the rarest individuals, that anything new is a monstrous menace. For the first time I observed the extraordinary fact that in such situations one's time-sense runs at two very different rates. The part of one's mind that is concerned with one's actions races riotously with their rhythm. Another part stands aloof, observing, analysing, imperturbable; a train of thought which might, in normal circumstances, occupy an hour reduced to a few minutes, and seeming slow at that.

The roughs were, to all intents and purposes, insane. They neither knew nor cared whether they ended by murder. And yet I have no idea why we mastered them easily enough. We had neither arms nor discipline. We were younger, certainly weaker, man for man, and we lacked the force which fury lends to its victims. I found myself puzzling it out, and the only conclusion was that, whatever science may say, there is such a thing as moral superiority, a spiritual strength independent of material or calculable conditions.

The fight went on for twenty minutes or so, and ended

queerly enough. The mob thinned out, melted away at its outskirts, and the front rank men became aware of the fact simultaneously without any more reason than had marked their entire proceedings. They took to their heels and ran like rabbits.

It was half-past twelve before I got home. I took a tub, and found I was black and blue. Of course my breach of the rule about midnight was duly reported. I was halled, and explained why I had been late. The proctor whom we had convoyed to Christ's had not taken our names, and I have no reason to think that he knew me. But my tutor asked no questions. He took my story for true ; in fact, he treated me simply as another gentleman. That could not have happened at Oxford.

STANZA XX

"The Voice of my Higher Soul said unto me: Let me walk the path of Darkness: peradventure thus shall I attain to Light. I am the only Being in the Abyss of Darkness: from the Darkness came I forth, from the silence of a primal Sleep! And the Voice of Ages answered unto my soul: I am He who formulateth in Darkness, but the Darkness apprehendeth it not.

Neophyte Ritual of G.·. D.·.

Nothing gives such a mean idea of the intelligence of mankind than that it should ever have accepted for a moment the imbecile illusion of "free will"; for there can be very few men indeed, in any generation, who have at any time in their lives sufficient apparent liberty of action to induce them to dally with it. Of these few, I was one. When I left Cambridge, I had acquired no particular ties. I was already The Spirit of Solitude in embryo. Practically, too, my father having been the younger son of a younger son, I had not even a territorial bond. On the other hand, I had a large fortune entirely at my own disposal; there was no external constraint upon me to do one thing rather than another. And yet, of course, my career was absolutely determined. The events of my life up to that point, if they had been intelligently interpreted, would have afforded ample indications of the future. I was white-hot on three points; climbing, poetry and Magick.

On my return from Switzerland in 1898, I had nowhere in particular to go. There was no reason why I should settle down in any special place. I simply took a room in the Cecil, at that remote period a first-class hostelry, and busied myself with writing on the one hand, and following up the Magical clues on the other. *Jephthah,* and most of

the other poems which appear in that volume, were written about this period. It is a kind of backwater in my life. I seem to have been marking time. For this reason, no doubt, I was the more ready to be swept away by the first definite current. It was not long before it caught me.

I had a number of conversations with Julian Baker, who kept his promise to introduce me to "a man who was a much greater Magician than he was himself." This was a Weshman, named George Cecil Jones. He possessed a fiery but unstable temper, was the son of a suicide, and bore a striking resemblance to many conventional representations of Jesus Christ. His spirit was both ardent and subtle. He was very widely read in Magick; and, being by profession an analytical chemist, was able to investigate the subject in a scientific spirit. As soon as I found that he really understood the matter I went down to Basingstoke, where he lived, and more or less sat in his pocket. It was not long before I found out exactly where my destiny lay. The majority of old Magical Rituals are either purposely unintelligible or actually puerile nonsense.* Those which are straightforward and workable are, as a rule, better adapted to the ambitions of love-sick agricultural labourers than to those of educated people with a serious purpose. But there is one startling exception to this rule. It is the Book of the Sacred Magick of Abramelin the Mage.

This book is written in an exalted style. It is perfectly coherent; it does not demand fantastic minutiæ of ritual or even the calculations customary. There is nothing to insult the intelligence. On the contrary, the operation proposed is of sublime simplicity. The method is in entire

* Some are doubtless survivals of various forms of Nature-Religion: but the majority are adaptations of Catholic or Jewish traditions to the ambitions, cupidities, envies, jealousies, and animal instincts of the most ignorant and primitive type of peasant.

accordance with this. There are, it is true, certain prescriptions to be observed, but these really amount to little more than injunctions to observe decency in the performance of so august an operation. One must have a house where proper precautions against disturbance can be taken; this being arranged, there is really nothing to do but to aspire with increasing fervour and concentration, for six months, towards the obtaining of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Once He has appeared, it is then necessary, first, to call forth the Four Great Princes of the Evil of the World; next, their eight sub-princes; and, lastly, the three hundred and sixteen servitors of these. A number of talismans, previously prepared, are thus charged with the power of these spirits. By applying the proper talismans, you can get practically anything you want.

It cannot be denied that the majesty and philosophical irreproachability of the book are sensibly diminished by the addition of these things to the invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel. I should have preferred it without them. There is, however, a reason. Anyone who reaches a new world must conform with all the conditions of it. It is true, of course, that the hierarchy of evil appears somewhat repugnant to science. It is in fact very hard to explain what we mean by saying that we invoke Paimon; but, to go a little deeper, the same remark applies to Mr. Smith next door. We do not know who Mr. Smith is, or what is his place in nature, or how to account for him. We cannot even be sure that he exists. Yet, in practice, we call Smith by that name, and he comes. By the proper means, we can induce him to do for us those things which are consonant with his nature and powers. The whole

question is, therefore, one of practice ; and by this standard we find that there is no particular reason for quarrelling with the conventional nomenclature.

At this time I had not worked out any such apology for the theories of transcendentalism. I took everything as it came, and submitted it to the test of experience. As it happened, I had no reason at any time to doubt the reality of the Magical Universe. I began my practical work with Astral Visions, and found to my surprise that after half a dozen experiments I was better than my teacher.

In these days I took my Magick very much *au pied de la lettre*. I knew, of course, that Magick had fallen into desuetude chiefly because people would follow the prescribed course of action, and get no result.

An exquisitely amusing incident bearing on this point is as follows : Gerald Kelly, Ivor Back, and one or two other ardent spirits, inspired by my success, decided to do Magick themselves. They hired and furnished a room at Cambridge for the purpose, and proceeded to evoke various spirits. Nothing happened. At last one of the greatly daring extended his little finger outside the circle. He was not " slain or paralysed as if blasted by the lightning flash," and thence concluded that Magick was all rubbish. I offer this example of logic to the Museum of Human Imbecility, in the principal city of the Astral Plane.

I understood perfectly well that Back and Kelly, having no capacity for Magick, were bound to fail either to evoke a spirit or to get themselves blasted. If one does not understand anything about electricity, one cannot construct a dynamo ; and having so failed, one cannot get oneself electrocuted.

But I suppose that their failure and my success was mostly a matter of personal genius, just as Burns with hardly

any literary apparatus could write poetry, and Tennyson, with any amount, could not.

My success itself helped to blind me to the nature of the conditions of achievement. It never occurred to me that the problem of Magick contained metaphysical elements.

Consider my performance one evening at Eastbourne. Having waited for the lowest possible tide so as to be as remote as might be from the bandstand, I made a circle and built an altar of stones by the edge of the sea. I burned my incense, performed my evolutions, and made heaven hideous with my enchantments. All this in order to invoke the Undines. I hoped, and more or less expected, to have one come out of the foam, and attach herself to my person. I had as yet no notion that this programme might be accomplished far more easily.

There are thus two main types of mistake; one in spirit, and one in technique. Most aspirants to Magick commit both. I soon learned that the physical conditions of a Magical phenomenon were like those of any other; but even when this misunderstanding is removed, success depends upon one's ability to awaken the creative genius which is the inalienable heirloom of every son of man, but which few indeed are able to assimilate to their conscious existence, or even, in 99 cases out of 100, to detect.

The only Undine that appeared was a policeman, who approached near enough to observe a fantastically-garbed figure, dancing and howling in the moonlight "on the silvery, silvery, silvery sands"; howling, whistling, bellowing, and braying forth the barbarous names of evocation which have in the sacred rites a power ineffable, around a furiously flaming bonfire whose sparks were whirled by the wind all over the beach.

The basis of the delusion is that there is a real apodeictic correlation between the various elements of the operation, such as the formal manifestation of the spirit, his name and sigil, the form of the temple, weapons, gestures, and incantations. These facts prevent one from suspecting the real subtlety involved in the hypothesis. This is so profound that it seems almost true to say that even the crudest Magick eludes consciousness altogether, so that when one is able to do it, one does it without conscious comprehension, very much as one makes a good stroke at cricket or billiards. One cannot give an intellectual explanation of the rough working involved, as one can explain the steps in the solution of a quadratic equation. In other words Magick in this sense is rather an art than a science.

Jones realised at once that I had a tremendous natural capacity for Magick, and my every action proved that I intended to devote myself to it "without keeping back the least imaginable thing." He suggested that I should join the Body of which he was an Adept; known, to a few of the more enlightened seekers, as the Hermetic Order of the G.·. D.·. A short account of this Order is necessary. Most of the facts concerning it are given here and there in the Equinox; but the story is so lengthy and complex that it would require a volume to itself. Briefly, however, the facts are as follows:

Some time in the seventies or eighties, a cipher manuscript was found on a bookstall by a Dr. Woodman, a colleague in Magical study of Dr. W. Wynn Westcott. It was beyond their powers to decipher it, though Mrs. Emery (Miss Florence Farr) told me that a child could have done so. They called in a man named Samuel Liddell Mathers, a scholar and Magician of considerable

eminence. The manuscript yielded to his scrutiny. It contained, among minor matters, the rubric of certain rituals of initiation, and the true attribution of the Tarot Trumps. This attribution had been sought vainly for centuries. It cleared up a host of Qabalistic difficulties, in the same way as Einstein's admirers claim that his equations have done in mathematics and physics. The manuscript gave the name and address of an adept Sapiens Dominabitur Astris, a Fraülein Sprengel, living in Germany, with an invitation to write to her if further knowledge was required. Dr. Westcott wrote ; and S.D.A. gave him and his two colleagues a charter authorising them to establish an Order in England. This was done. Soon after, S.D.A. died. In reply to a letter addressed to her, came an intimation from one of her colleagues that they had never approved her policy in permitting open-temple work in England, but had refrained from active opposition from personal respect for her. The writer ended by saying that England must expect no more assistance from Germany ; enough knowledge had been granted to enable any English adept to form a Magical Link with the Secret Chiefs. Such competence would evidently establish a right to renewed relations.

Dr. Woodman had died, and Mathers forced Dr. Westcott to retire from active leadership of the Order. Mathers, however, was not trusted. He, therefore, announced to the most advanced adepts that he had himself made the Magical Link with the Secret Chiefs ; and, at an interview with three of them in the Bois de Boulogne, had been confirmed in the supreme and sole authority as the Visible Head of the Order. The Adepts entrusted with this information were required to sign a pledge of personal obedience to Mathers as a condition of advancement in

the Order. Nevertheless, dissatisfaction continued. The advancement did not arrive. They suspected that Mathers had no more knowledge to give; and he retorted that, however that might be, he wasn't going to waste it on such hopeless duffers. Both positions have much to recommend them to discriminating sympathy.

These petty squabbles apart, a big thing had happened. Mathers had discovered the manuscript of Abramelin in the Library of the Arsenal in Paris, and begun to translate it. He found himself harassed and opposed on all sides. In those days there was practically no public way of getting about Paris at all. Mathers lived at Auteuil, a long way from the Arsenal, and met with so many bicycle accidents that he was driven to go on foot. (There is always occult opposition to the publication of any important documents. It took me over three years to get my "Goetia" through the press, and over two years in the case of 777. This is one of the facts whose cumulative effect makes it impossible to doubt the existence of spiritual forces). Other misfortunes of every kind overwhelmed Mathers. He was an expert Magician, and had become accustomed to use "The Greater Key of Solomon" with excellent effect. He did not realise that "Abramelin" was an altogether bigger proposition. It was like a man, accustomed to handle gunpowder, suddenly supplied with dynamite without being aware of the difference. He worried through, and got Abramelin published; but he perished in the process. He became the prey of the malignant forces of the book, lost his integrity, and was cast out of the Order of which he had been the visible head.

This debâcle had not yet taken place at the time of my first initiation, November 18th, 1898.

I took the Order with absolute seriousness. I was not even put off by the fact of its ceremonies taking place at Mark Mason's Hall. I remember asking Baker whether people often died during the ceremony. I had no idea that it was a flat formality, and that the members were for the most part muddled middle-class mediocrities. I saw myself entering the Hidden Church of the Holy Grail. This state of my soul served me well. My initiation was in fact a sacrament.

The rituals have been printed in the Equinox, Vol. I, Nos. 2 and 3. There is no question that those of Neophyte and Adept are the genuine rituals of initiation, for they contain the true formulæ. The proof is that they can be made to work by those who understand and know how to apply them. Shallow critics argue that because the average untrained man cannot evoke a spirit, the ritual which purports to enable him to do so must be at fault. He does not reflect that an electroscope would be useless in the hands of a savage. Indubitably, Magick is one of the subtlest and most difficult of the sciences and arts. There is more opportunity for errors of comprehension, judgment and practice, than in any other branch of physics. It is above all needful for the student to be armed with scientific knowledge, sympathetic apprehension, and common sense. My training in mathematics and chemistry supplied me with the first of these qualities; my poetic affinities and wide reading with the second; while, for the third, I suppose I have to thank my practical ancestors.

Being thus able to appreciate the inmost intention of my initiation, I was able to stand the shock of the events immediately subsequent. I was introduced to an abject assemblage of nonentities; the members of the Order were

as vulgar and commonplace as any other set of average people. Jones and Baker themselves were the only members with any semblance of scientific education, until, a few months later, I met Allan Bennett, a mind pure, piercing, and profound beyond any other in my experience. There was one literary light, W. B. Yeats, a lank dishevelled Demonologist who might have taken more pains with his personal appearance without incurring the reproach of dandyism; and one charming and intelligent woman, Mrs. Emery, for whom I always felt an affectionate respect tempered by a feeling of compassion that her abilities were so inferior to her aspirations. The rest of the Order possessed no individuality; they were utterly undistinguished either for energy or capacity. There is not one of them to-day who has made any mark in the world.

At my initiation, I could have believed that these adepts deliberately masked their majesty; but there was no mistaking the character of the "Knowledge-lecture" in which I had to be examined to entitle me to pass to the next grade. I had been most solemnly sworn to inviolable secrecy. The slightest breach of my oath meant that I should incur "a deadly and hostile current of will, set in motion by the Greatly Honoured Chiefs of the Second Order, by the which I should fall slain or paralysed, as if blasted by the lightning flash." And now I was entrusted with some of these devastating though priceless secrets. They consisted of the Hebrew Alphabet, the names of the planets with their attribution to the days of the week, and the ten Sephiroth of the Qabalah. I had known it all for months; and, obviously, any school-boy in the lower Fourth could memorise the whole lecture in twenty-four hours.

I see to-day that my intellectual snobbery was shallow and stupid. It is vitally necessary to drill the aspirant in the ground-work. He must be absolutely familiar with the terminology and theory of Magick from a strictly intellectual standpoint. I still think, however, that this course of study should precede initiation, and that it should not be mixed up with it. Consider the analogy of poetry. One could, to a certain extent, teach a man to write poetry, by offering to his soul a set of spiritual and emotional experiences, but his technique must be based on the study of grammar and so on, which have no essential relation with art.

Talking over these matters with Jones and Baker, I found them quite in sympathy with my point of view ; but they insisted, rightly enough, that I was not in a position to judge the circumstances. I must first reach the Second Order.

Accordingly, I took the grade of Zelator in December, of Theoricus in January, and of Practicus in February. One could not proceed to Philosophus for three months, so I did not take that grade till May. The Philosophus cannot proceed to the Second Order in less than seven months ; also, he must be specially invited.

In the spring of 1899, at some ceremony or other, I was aware of the presence of a tremendous spiritual and Magical force. It seemed to me to proceed from a man sitting in the East, a man I had not seen before, but whom I knew must be Very Honoured Frater Iehi Aour, called among men Allan Bennett. The fame of this man as a Magician was already immense. He was esteemed second only to Mathers himself ; and was, perhaps, even more feared.

After the ceremony we went into the outer room to

unrobe. I was secretly anxious to be introduced to this formidable Chief. To my amazement he came straight to me, looked into my eyes, and said in penetrating and, as it seemed, almost menacing tones: "Little Brother, you have been meddling with the Goetia!" (Goetia means "howling"; but is the technical word employed to cover all the operations of that Magick which deals with gross, malignant, or unenlightened forces). I told him, rather timidly, that I had not been doing anything of the sort. "In that case," he returned, "the Goetia has been meddling with you." The conversation went no further. I returned home in a somewhat chastened spirit; and, having found out where Iehi Aour lived, I determined to call on him the following day.

I should have explained that, on deciding to join the Order, I had taken a flat at 67 and 69 Chancery Lane.* I had already determined to perform the Operation of Abramelin, but Jones had advised me to go through my initiation first. However, I began to busy myself with the preparations. Abramelin warns us that our families will object strenuously to our undertaking the Operation. I resolved, therefore, to cut myself off absolutely from mine. So, as I had to live in London, I took the flat under the name of Count Vladimir Svareff. As Jones remarked later, a wiser man would have called himself Smith. But I was still obsessed with romanticism, while my summer in St. Petersburg had made me in love with Russia. There was another motive behind this—a legitimate one. I

* My innocence after three years at Cambridge may be gauged by my conduct in the matter of choosing a residence. I understood it as a fixed principle of prudence. "When in a difficulty consult your lawyer." Knowing nothing whatever about renting apartments, I was in a difficulty. I therefore consulted my lawyer, and took the first place he suggested. He, of course, never gave a thought to my convenience or the appropriateness of the district. He saw and took the chance of obliging a business acquaintance.

wanted to increase my knowledge of mankind. I knew how people treated a young man from Cambridge. I had thoroughly appreciated the servility of tradesmen, though I was too generous and too ignorant to realise the extent of their dishonesty and rapacity. Now I wanted to see how people would behave to a Russian nobleman. I may say here that I have repeatedly used this method of disguise—it has been amazingly useful in multiplying my points of view about humanity. Even the most broad-minded people are necessarily narrow in this one respect. They may know how all sorts of people treat them, but they cannot know, except at second hand, how those same people treat others.

To return to Allan Bennett. I found him staying with V. H. Frater Aequo Animo* in a tiny tenement in Southwark or Lambeth—I forget which. It was a mean, grim, horror. Æ.A., whose name was Charles Rosher, was a widely travelled Jack-of-all-trades. He had invented a patent water-closet, and been court painter to the Sultan of Morocco. He wrote some of the worst poetry I have ever read. He was a jolly-all-round sportsman with an excellent heart, and the cheery courage which comes from knocking about in the world, and being knocked about by it. If his talents had been less varied, he might have made a success of almost anything.

* I ultimately conjectured : Equi Animo : " with the soul of a horse."

STANZA XXI

"Nine times I kissed my love in her sleep—
So, nine times dead before the night is done
Even as Styx nine times embraces Hell."
Aleister Crowley (for Laura H.)
"Novem continuas fatabimus." Catullus

Allan Bennett was four years older than myself. His father, an engineer, had died when he was a boy; his mother had brought him up as a strict Catholic. He suffered acutely from spasmodic asthma. His cycle of life was to take opium for about a month, when the effect wore off, so that he had to inject morphine. After a month of this he had to switch to cocaine, which he took till he began to "see things," and was then reduced to chloroform. I have seen him in bed for a week, only recovering consciousness sufficiently to reach for the bottle and sponge. Asthma being a sthenic disease, he was then too weak to have it any more, so he would gradually convalesce until, after a few weeks of freedom, the spasms would begin once more, and he would be forced to renew the cycle of drugs.

No doubt, this constant suffering affected his attitude to life. He revolted against being an animal; he regarded the pleasures of living (and, above all, those of physical love) as diabolical illusions devised by the enemy of mankind in order to trick souls into accepting the curse of existence. I cannot forbear quoting one most remarkable incident. When he was about sixteen, the conversation in the laboratory where he was working turned upon childbirth. What he heard disgusted him. He became

furiously angry, and said that children were brought to earth by angels. The other students laughed at him, and tried in vain to convince him. He maintained their theory to be a bestial blasphemy. The next day one of the boys turned up with an illustrated manual of obstetrics. He could no longer doubt the facts. But his reaction was this: "Did the Omnipotent God whom he had been taught to worship devise so revolting and degrading a method of perpetuating the species? Then this God must be a Devil, delighting in loathesomeness." To him the existence of God was disproved from that moment.

He had, however, already some experience of an unseen world. As a little boy, having overheard some gossip among superstitious servants, he had gone into the back garden, and invoked the Devil by reciting the Lord's Prayer backwards. Something happened which frightened him.

Having now rejected Catholicism, he took up Magick, and at once attained extraordinary success. He used to carry a "lustre"—a long glass prism with a neck and a pointed knob such as adorned old-fashioned chandeliers. He used this as a wand. One day, a party of Theosophists were chatting sceptically about the power of the "blasting rod." Allan promptly produced his, and blasted one of them. It took fourteen hours to restore the incredulous individual to the use of his mind and his muscles.

Allan Bennett was tall, but his sickness had already produced a stoop. His head, crowned with a shock of wild black hair, was intensely noble; the brows, both wide and lofty, overhung indomitable piercing eyes. The face would have been handsome had it not been for the haggardness and pallor due to his almost continuous suffering.

ALLAN BENNETT—BHIKKHU ANANDA METTEYA

Despite his ill-health, he was a tremendous worker. His knowledge of science, especially electricity, was vast, accurate, and profound. In addition, he had studied the Hindoo and Buddhist scriptures, not only as a scholar, but with the insight that comes from inborn sympathetic understanding.

I did not fully realise the colossal stature of that sacred spirit; but I was instantly aware that this man could teach me more in a month than anyone else in five years. He was living in great discomfort and penury. I offered him the hospitality of my flat. I have always felt that since the Occult sciences nourish so many charlatans, it should be one's prime point of honour not to make money in any way connected with them. The amateur status above all! Hospitality is, however, always allowable. But I was careful never to go beyond the strict letter of the word.

Iehi Aour came to stay with me, and under his tuition I made rapid progress. He showed me where to get knowledge, how to criticise it, and how to apply it. We also worked together at ceremonial Magick; evoking spirits, consecrating talismans, and so on.

I must relate one episode, as throwing light upon my Magical accomplishments and my ethical standards. Jones and I had come to the conclusion that Allan would die unless he went to live in a warmer climate. However, he was penniless, and we would not finance him for the reasons given above. Instead, Jones and I evoked to visible appearance the Spirit Buer, of the Goetia, whose function is to heal the sick. We were partially successful; a helmeted head and the left leg being distinctly solid, though the rest of the figure was cloudy and vague. But the operation was in fact a success in the following manner. It is instructive

to narrate this as showing the indirect and natural means by which the Will attains its object.

I am constrained to a seeming digression. Many authors insist on the importance of absolute chastity in the aspirant. For some months I had been disregarding this injunction with a seductive siren whose husband was a Colonel in India. Little by little I overcame my passion for her, and we parted. She wrote to me frequently and tried to shake my resolution, but I stood firm. Shortly after the evocation of Buer, she wrote, begging me to call at her hotel. I cannot remember how it came into my mind to do what I did, but I went to see her. She begged me to come back to her, and offered to do anything I wanted. I said to her : "You're making a mess of your life by your selfishness. I will give you a chance to do an absolutely unfettered act. Give me a hundred pounds, I won't tell you whom it's for, except that it's not for myself. I have private reasons for not using my own money in this matter. If you give me this, it must be without hoping or expecting anything in return." She gave me the money—it paid Allan's passage to Ceylon, and saved to humanity one of the most valuable lives of our generation.

So much for Buer. As for the lady, she came to see me some time later, and I saw that I was myself acting selfishly in setting my spiritual welfare above her happiness. She had made a generous gesture ; I could do no less. She agreed not to stand in the way of my performing the Operation of Abramelin, but begged me to give her a living memory of our love. I agreed, and the sequel will be told in its place.

During all this time, magical phenomena were of constant occurrence. I had two temples in my flat ; one white, the

walls being lined with six huge mirrors, each six feet by eight; the other black,* a mere cupboard, in which stood an altar supported by the figure of a negro standing on his hands. The presiding genius of this place was a human skeleton, which I fed from time to time with blood, small birds, and the like. The idea was to give it life, but I never got further than causing the bones to become covered with a viscous slime. In the Equinox, Vol. I, No. 1. is a story, "At the Fork of the Roads," which is in every detail a true account of one episode of this period. Will Bute is W. B. Yeats,† Hypatia Gay is Althoea Gyles, the publisher is Leonard Smithers.

The Demons connected with Abramelin do not wait to be evoked; they come unsought. One night Jones and I went out to dinner. I noticed on leaving the white Temple that the latch of its Yale lock had not caught. Accordingly, I pulled the door to, and tested it. As we went out, we noticed semi-solid shadows on the stairs; the whole atmosphere was vibrating with the forces which we had been using. (We were trying to condense them into sensible images.) When we came back, nothing had been disturbed in the flat; but the temple door was wide open, the furniture disarranged, and some of the symbols flung about in the room. We restored order, and then observed that semi-materialised beings were marching around the main room in almost unending procession.

When I finally left the flat for Scotland, it was found that the mirrors were too big to take out except by way of the black Temple. This had, of course, been completely

* Iehi Aour never had anything to do with this; and I but little: the object of establishing it was probably to satisfy my instinct about equilibrium.

† The identification is conjectural, depending solely on the admissions of Miss Gyles.

dismantled before the workmen arrived. But the atmosphere remained, and two of them were put out of action for several hours. It was almost a weekly experience, by the way, to hear of casual callers fainting or being seized with dizziness, cramp, or apoplexy on the staircase. It was a long time before those rooms were re-let. People felt instinctively the presence of something uncanny. Similarly, later on, when I gave up my rooms in Victoria Street, a pushing charlatan thought to better himself by taking them. With this object he went to see them. A few seconds later he was leaping headlong down the five flights of stairs, screaming in terror. He had just sufficient genuine sensitiveness to feel the forces, without possessing the knowledge, courage, and will required to turn them to account, or even to endure their impact.

STANZA XXII

"yonder mountains
Blue-grey, and highland airs of heaven,
and moving fountains!
Aleister Crowley, Magus of Boleskine.

Apart from my daily work, my chief preoccupation was to prepare for the Operation of the Sacred Magick.

The first essential is a house in a more or less secluded situation. There should be a door opening to the North from the room of which you make your Oratory. Outside this door, you construct a terrace covered with fine river sand. This ends in a "lodge" where the spirits may congregate. It would appear the simplest thing in the world for a man with £40,000, who is ready to spend every penny of it on the achievement of his purpose, to find a suitable house in a very few weeks. But a Magical house is as hard to find as a Magical book to publish. I scoured the country in vain. Not till the end of August, 1899, did I find an estate which suited me. This was the Manor of Boleskine and Abertarff, on the South-East side of Loch Ness, half-way between Inverfarigaig and Foyers. By paying twice as much as it was worth, I got it, gave up my flat, and settled down at once to get everything in order for the great Operation, which one is told to begin at Easter.

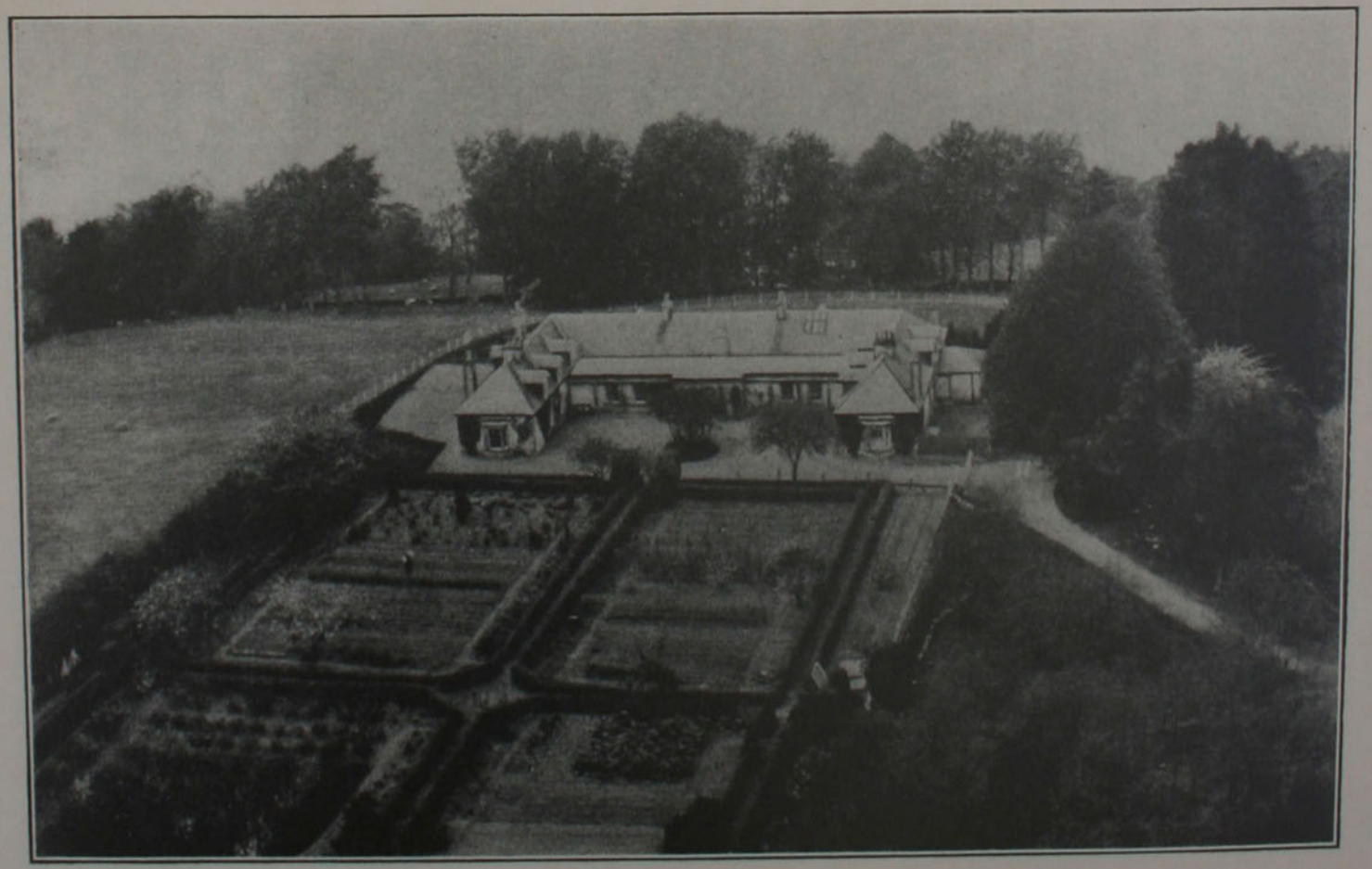
The house is a long low building. I set apart the south-western half for my work. The largest room has a bow window, and here I made my door and constructed the

terrace and lodge. Inside the room I set up my Oratory proper. This was a wooden structure, lined in part with the big mirrors which I brought from London.

On first arriving at Boleskine, I innocently frightened some excellent people by my habit of taking long walks over the moors. One morning I found a large stone jar at my front door. It was not an infernal machine ; it was illicit whisky—a mute, yet eloquent appeal, not to give away illicit stills that I might happen to stumble across in my rambles. I needed no bribe. I am a free trader in every sense of the word. I have no sympathy with any regulations which interfere with the natural activities of human beings. I believe that they aggravate whatever trouble they are intended to prevent ; and they create the greatest plague of humanity, officialdom, and encourage underhand conduct on both sides, furtiveness and espionage. Any law which tends to destroy manly qualities is a bad law, however necessary it may seem on the surface. The tendency of most modern legislation is to bind Gulliver with packthread. I have never broken the law myself, because the things I happen to want are so utterly different from those desired by men in general, that no occasion has ever risen.

But I observe with regret that humanity is being compelled to turn its attention from its proper business by having to comply with innumerable petty formalities.

Salmon fishing on Loch Ness should be remembered by people who are praying for " those in peril on the deep." It is a dull year when nobody is drowned. The loch is large enough to get up a regular sea ; and the hills are so arranged that the wind can come down in all sorts of unsuspected ways. The most violent storms often arise



BOLESKINE HOUSE

without five minutes' warning. In addition, there is one section of the loch (north-east of Boleskine, on the same side) where the shore for some two miles is a rocky precipice just too high above the water to be climbable, even if one could get a footing.

It is useless fishing in settled fine weather; one wants it overcast, neither too hot nor too cold, neither windy nor quite calm—unsettled weather, in a word. One morning I got into a salmon which subsequently turned the scale at 44 pounds. He was terrifically game, and really much too heavy for my tackle. Again and again he ran out the line, and we only held him by rowing for all we were worth in his direction. It was nearly two hours before we got him into the boat.

The excitement over, I observed that a sleet was driving heavily and that the Loch was white with foam. Also that we were off a lee-shore, and that shore about the middle of the precipice. We could do nothing but pull for life in the teeth of the gale, which increased in violence every moment. We were both already tired out. Despite every effort, we were forced, foot by foot, towards the rocks. By great luck, there is one gap in those infernal little cliffs. But the boat was not under control. However, we had to risk it, and managed to get ashore without being smashed, to beach the boat, and walk home. That was the worst of it.

But I was often caught on the wrong side of the Loch. So near, and yet so far! There was the house a mile away, and there was I with thirty miles to make to get there. I have never heard of the steamers being wrecked, but that is perhaps because they are wrecks already.

I took Lady Etheldreda to Scotland with me. I have

had many dogs in my time; but she was *sui generis*. I had trained her to follow me on the mountains, and she was not only an admirable rock climber but an uncannily prophetic tracker. For instance, I would leave her at the foot of a precipice beyond her powers and, after a climb, descend another precipice to another valley, often in mists so thick that I could not see ten yards in any direction. But I would invariably find her at the foot of the rocks after making a detour of perhaps ten miles across unknown country.

These qualities had their defects. She became an amateur of sheep. It was straightforward sport. She never mangled a sheep, she killed it neatly with a single bite, and went off to the next. She had no illusions about the ethics of her proceedings, and she brought superlative cunning into service. She never touched a sheep within ten miles of Boleskine; she never visited the same district twice running; she was even at pains to prepare an alibi. Of course, she was always careful to remove every trace of blood. That was elementary. But she would sham sickness the morning after the kill, and she would bring various objects into her kennel, as if to say, "Well, if you want to know how I have been passing the time, there you are!" She also realised that her extraordinary speed and endurance would help her to clear herself. On one occasion she killed not less than forty miles there and back from Boleskine. No one except her master, whom she trusted not to give her away, could suspect that she had covered so much ground—to say nothing of the shikar itself—in the course of the night. She was unsuspected for months—even weeks of watching failed to identify her, and if she had not been such a magnificent animal she might have escaped altogether. But her

size and beauty were unmistakeable. The evidence began to be too strong to pooh-pooh, and I had to send her back to London.

Boleskine is in the winter an excellent centre of *ski-laüfing*. There is little snow in the valley itself, but on the moors behind Strath Errick are tracts of elevated country, extending for many miles. The slopes are for the most part gentle, and I have found the snow in first-rate condition as late as the end of March.

On off days at Wastdale Head, it was one of our amusements to throw the boomerang. Eckenstein had long been interested in it, and constructed numerous new patterns, each with its own peculiar flight. As luck would have it, Walker of Trinity came to the Dale. He had earned a fellowship by an essay on the Mathematics of the Boomerang. The theoretical man and the practical put their heads together ; and we constructed some extraordinary weapons. One of them could be thrown half a mile, even by me, who cannot throw a cricket ball fifty yards. Another, instead of returning to the thrower, went straight from the hand and undulated up and down like a switchback, seven or eight times, before coming to the ground. A third shot out straight, skimming the ground for a hundred yards or so, stopped as suddenly as if it had hit a wall, rose, spinning in the air to the height of some fifty feet, whence it settled down in a slowly widening spiral. Obviously, these researches bore on the problem of flying. Eckenstein and I, in fact, proposed to work at it. The idea was that we should cut an alley through the woods on that part of my property which bordered Loch Ness. We were to construct a chute, and start down it on a bicycle fitted with movable wings. There was to be a steam launch on the

Loch to pick us up at the end of the flight. We were, in fact, proposing to do what has now, in 1922, proved so successful. But the scheme never went further than the construction of the boathouse for the launch. My wanderings are to blame.

The harmless necessary cat sheds those epithets in the Highlands. The most domesticated tabby becomes intoxicated by the air of freedom (so one hypothesis suggests) and begins to run wild. It takes to the woods, and lives on rabbits and birds. Its conscience tells it that it is violating the game laws; man becomes its enemy. It accordingly flees at one's approach, though sometimes it becomes mad with fear and will attack a stranger, unprovoked, and fight to the death.

Much to my disgust, commercialism thrust its ugly head into my neighbourhood. The British Aluminium Company proposed to exploit the water power of the valley above Foyers. The Falls of Foyers are one of the few natural glories of the British Isles; why not use them to turn an honest penny?

"I sate upon the mossy promontory
Where the cascade cleft not his mother rock,
But swept in whirlwind lightning foam and glory,
Vast circling with unwearying luminous shock
To lure and lock
Marvellous eddies in its wild caress;
And there the solemn echoes caught the stress,
The strain of that impassive tide,
Shook it and flung it high and wide,
Till all the air took fire from that melodious roar;
All the mute mountains heard,
Bowed, laughed aloud, concurred,
And passed the word along, the signal of wide war.

All earth took up the sound,
And, being in one tune securely bound,
Even as a star became the soul of silence most profound.

" Thus there, the centre of that death that darkened,
I sat and listened, if God's voice should break
And pierce the hollow of my ear that hearkened,
Lest God should speak and find me not awake—
For his own sake.
No voice, no song might pierce or penetrate
That enviable universal state.
The sun and moon beheld, stood still.
Only the spirit's axis, will,
Considered its own soul and sought a deadlier deep,
And in its monotone mood
Of supreme solitude
Was neither glad nor sad because it did not sleep ;
But with calm eyes abode
Patient, its leisure the galactic load,
Abode alone, nor even rejoiced to know that it was God."

Money-grubbing does its best to blaspheme and destroy nature. It is useless to oppose the baseness of humanity ; if one touches pitch one runs the risk of being defiled. I am perfectly content to know that the vileness of civilisation is rapidly destroying itself ; that it stinks in my nostrils tells me that it is rotting, and my consolation is in the words of Lord Dunsany. In the meantime, the water was to be wasted in producing wealth—the most dangerous of narcotic drugs. It creates a morbid craving—which it never satisfies after the first flush of intoxication.

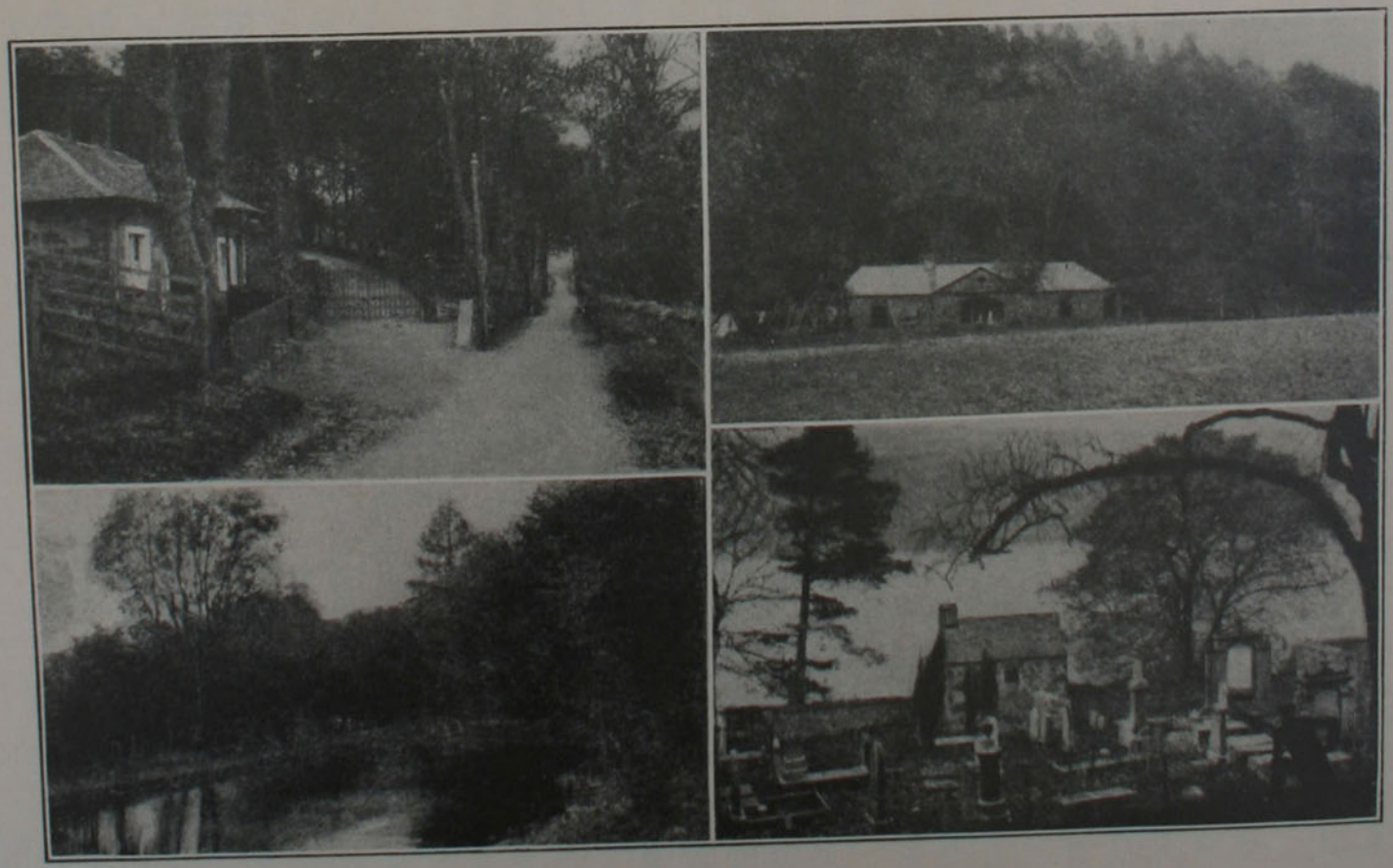
Now the furnaces of the British Aluminium Company cost a great deal to light. It was, therefore, impossible to extinguish them every Saturday evening. The people of the neighbourhood learnt this fact with unfeigned horror.

Such wickedness was inconceivable! But besides that, it was sheer madness. Did not those people in Glasgow understand that God did not permit such things to happen with impunity? So on the first Saturday night the people betook themselves to points of vantage on the surrounding hills in order to see the Works destroyed by the Divine Wrath. No explanation has ever been offered why it did not come off!

The lady previously mentioned was now made happy as a result of the fortnight we had spent together in Paris. I therefore thought it my duty to take care of her until the following spring. The fulfilment of her hopes would end my responsibility before the beginning of my Operation.

I had asked Jones to come and stay with me during the six months, in view of the dangers and interference already experienced at the mere threat to perform it. It was obviously the part of prudence to have, if possible, an initiate on the spot. It is also very awkward for a man absorbed in intense magical effort to have to communicate with the external world about the business of every-day life. Jones did not see his way to come, so I asked Rosher, who consented. But before he had been there a month he found the strain intolerable. I came down to breakfast one morning; no Rosher. I asked the butler why he was absent. The man replied, in surprise at my ignorance, that Mr. Rosher had taken the early morning boat to Inverness. There was no word of explanation; I never saw him or heard of him for many years; and, when we met, though absolutely friendly and even intimate, we never referred to the matter.

One day I came back from shooting rabbits on the hill and found a Catholic priest in my study. He had come



VIEWS OF BOLESKINE

THE BRIDGE
THE TROUT LAKE
THE STABLES
THE CEMETERY

to tell me that my lodgekeeper, a total abstainer for twenty years, had been raving drunk for three days and had tried to kill his wife and children.

I got an old Cambridge acquaintance to take Rosher's place; but he too began to show symptoms of panic fear. Meanwhile, other storms were brewing. The members of the London Temple, jealous of my rapid progress in the Order, had refused to initiate me to the Second Order in London, though the Chief himself had invited me. He, therefore, asked me to come to Paris, where he would himself confer the Grade. I went; and, on my return, ten days later, found that my protégée had also taken fright, fled to London, and hidden herself.

Beside these comparatively explicable effects on human minds, there were numberless physical phenomena for which it is hard to account. While I was preparing the talismans, squares of vellum inscribed in Indian ink, a task which I undertook in the sunniest room in the house, I had to use artificial light even on the brightest days. It was a darkness which might almost be felt. The lodge and terrace, moreover, soon became peopled with shadowy shapes, sufficiently substantial, as a rule, to be almost opaque. I say shapes; and yet the truth is, that they were not shapes properly speaking. The phenomenon is hard to describe. It was as if the faculty of vision suffered some interference; as if the objects of vision were not properly objects at all. It was as if they belonged to an order of matter which affected the sight without informing it.

By the exercise of dour determination, I succeeded in getting everything ready in good time to begin the work proper at Easter. It is unfortunate that in these days I had no idea of the value of a Magical Record from the historical

standpoint. I find few dates, nor have I troubled to set down even such startling occurrences as are related above. I was dead set on attainment. Anything which appeared to me out of the direct road to the goal was merely a nuisance, a hindrance, and a distraction. Apart from my memory, therefore, the chief sources of information about my life at this period are poems, rituals, and records of visions.

I was very busily at work with the Muse. My "Appeal to the American Republic" was begotten of a pleasant journey with two Americans from Geneva to Paris. The poem is still popular, though from time to time one has to change "The lying *Russian* cloke his traitor head" to "*Prussian*," and so on. "Carmen Sæculare" was actually the result of a more or less prophetic vision. Some of its forecasts have turned out wonderfully well, though the century is yet young; others await fulfilment—but I do not propose to linger on merely to obtain so morbid a satisfaction!

"The Fatal Force," written in the spring of 1899, possesses one feature of remarkable interest. The idea of the play is that a high priestess, resenting the necessity of male co-operation in maternity, should marry her own son and, subsequently, the son of that union, so as to produce an individual who would be seven-eighths herself; the advantage being that he would thus inherit as much of her power and wisdom as possible. I supposed this idea to be original; but I discovered later that Eliphas Levi mentions this formula as having been used by the ancient Magicians of Persia with this very intention. That was one of the facts which led me to the discovery that in my last incarnation I was Eliphas Levi.

"The Mother's Tragedy" seems to have been influenced by Ibsen, with a touch of Bulwer Lytton.

In "The Temple of the Holy Ghost," however, the reader may trace the progress of my soul's development. A few of the poems in this book are comparatively normal. One can see the extent of my debt to various predecessors, especially Baudelaire. But while there is a certain delight in dalliance with demoniac Delilahs, there is a steady advance towards the utmost spiritual purity. In "The Athanor," the invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel reveals my true aspirations; while in "The Mountain Christ," "The Rosicrucian," and others, it is evident that my ambition was not to become superior to the rest of mankind, except in order that I might redeem them.

I quote:

"The Oath of the Beginning.

"I, Perdurabo, Frater Ordinis Rosæ Rubeæ et Aureæ Crucis, a Lord of the Paths in the Portal of the Vault of the Adepts, a $5^\circ = 6^\circ$ of the Order of the Golden Dawn; and an humble servant of the Christ of God; do this day spiritually bind myself anew:

"By the Sword of Vengeance:

"By the Powers of the Elements:

"By the Cross of Suffering:

"That I will devote myself to the Great Work: the obtaining of Communion with my own Higher and Divine Genius (called the Guardian Angel) by means of the prescribed course; and that I will use my Power so obtained unto the Redemption of the Universe.

"So help me the Lord of the Universe and mine own Higher Soul!"

This idea is further expanded in the obligation which I took in respect of the Operation. The influence of my initiation into the Second Order is manifest. While I remained in the Outer Order, I had not definitely realised the fact that I was bound up with the welfare of humanity, and could only satisfy my aspiration by becoming a perfect instrument for the regeneration of the world. I quote once more :

" The Obligation of the Operation.

" I, Perdurabo, in the Presence of the Lord of the Universe, and of all Powers Divine and Angelic, do spiritually bind myself, even as I am now physically bound unto the Cross of Suffering.

" (1) To unite my consciousness with the divine, as I may be permitted and aided by the Gods Who live for ever, The Æons of Infinite years ; that, being lost in the Limitless Light, it may find Itself : to the Regeneration of the Race, either of man or as the Will of God shall be. And I submit myself utterly to the Will Divine.

" (2) To follow out with courage, modesty, loving-kindness, and perseverance, the course prescribed by Abramelin The Mage ; as far as in me lies, unto the attainment of this end.

" (3) To despise utterly the things and the opinions of this world lest they hinder me in doing this.

" (4) To use my powers only to the Spiritual well-being of all with whom I may be brought in contact.

" (5) To give no place to Evil : and to make eternal war against the Forces of Evil : until even they be redeemed unto the Light.

" (6) To harmonize my own spirit so that Equilibrium may lead me to the East; and that my Human Consciousness shall allow no usurpation of its rule by the Automatic.

" (7) To conquer the temptations.

" (8) To banish the illusions.

" (9) To put my whole trust in the Only and Omnipotent Lord God: as it is written, 'Blessed are they that put their trust in Him.'

" (10) To uplift the Cross of Sacrifice and Suffering; and to cause my Light so to shine before men that they may glorify my Father which is in Heaven.

" Furthermore, I most solemnly promise and swear: to acquire this Holy Science in the manner prescribed in the Book of Abramelin, without omitting the least imaginable thing of its contents; not to gloss or comment in any way on that which may be or may not be, not to use this Sacred Science to offend the Great God, nor to work ill unto my neighbour: to communicate it to no living person, unless by long practice and conversation I shall know him thoroughly, well examining whether such an one really intendeth to work for the Good or for the Evil. I will punctually observe, in granting it, the same fashion which was used by Abramelin to Abraham. Otherwise, let him who receiveth it draw no fruit therefrom. I will keep myself as from a Scorpion from selling this Science. Let this Science remain in me and in my generation as long as it shall please the Most High.

" As all these points I generally and severally swear to observe under the awful penalty of the displeasure

of God, and of Him to whose Knowledge and Conversation I do most ardently aspire.
" So help me the Lord of the Universe, and my own Higher Soul ! "*

During this period I continued the practice of visions of and voyages upon divers Spiritual planes. It seems worth while to record a few of these. They afford a clear indication of my progress at this time.

In bed, I invoked the Fire angels and spirits on the tablet, with names, etc., and the 6th Key. I then (as Harpocrates) entered my crystal. An angel, meeting me, told me, among other things, that they (of the tablets) were *at war with the angels of the* 30 *Aethyrs, to prevent the squaring of the circle.* I went with him unto the abodes of Fire, but must have fallen asleep, or nearly so. Anyhow, I regained consciousness in a very singular state, half consciousness being there, and half here. I recovered and banished the Spirits, but was burning all over, and tossed restlessly about—very sleepy, but consumed of Fire ! Only repeated careful assumption of Harpocrates' godform enabled me to regain my normal state. I had a long dream of a woman eloping, whom I helped, and after, of a man stealing my Rose Cross jewel from a dressing-table in an hotel. I caught him and found him a man weak beyond the natural (I could bend or flatten him at will),† and then the dream seemed to lose coherence. . . . I carried him about and found a hair-

* Some of the above phrases are prescribed by Abramelin itself ; others are adapted from my $5^\circ=6^\circ$ documents.

† This incident was once quoted by one of my critics as illustrative of the absurdity of Magick —as if Magick were responsible for the irrationality of dreams !

brush to beat him, etc. etc. Query: Was I totally obsessed?

Invoking the angels of Earth, I obtained wonderful effect. The angel, my guide, treated me with great contempt, and was very rude and truthful. He showed me divers things. In the centre of the earth is formulated the Rose and Cross. Now the Rose is the Absolute Self-Sacrifice, the merging of *all* in the O (Negative), the Universal Principle of generation through change (*not* merely the feminine), and the Universal Light "Khabs." The Cross is the Extension or Pekht principle. Now I should have learned more; but my attention wandered. This closes the four elemental visions: prosecuted, alas! with what weakness, fatuity, and folly!

I . . . in the afternoon shut myself up, and went on a journey. . . .

I went with a very personal guide:* and beheld (after some lesser things) our Master as he sat by the Well with the Woman of Samaria. Now the five husbands were five great religions which had defiled the purity of the Virgin of the World: and "he whom thou now hast" was materialism (or modern thought).

Other scenes also I saw in His Life: and behold I also was crucified! Now did I go backwards in time even unto Berashith, the Beginning, and was permitted to see marvellous things.

First the Abyss of the Water: on which I, even I, brooded amid other dusky flames as Shin upon Maim, held by my Genius. And I beheld the victory of

* This horrible phrase was not my own: I must not be judged by it.

Râ upon Apophis and the First of the Golden Dawns! Yea: and monsters, faces half-formed, arose: but they subsisted not.

And the firmament was.

Again the Chaos and the Death!

Then *Ath* Hashamaim ve *ath* h-aretz. There is a whirling, intertwining infinitude of nebulæ, many concentric systems, each system non-concentric to any other, yet *all* concentric to the whole. As I went backwards in time they grew faster and faster, and less and less material. (P.S.—This is a scientific hypothesis, directly contrary to that of Anna Kingsford.) And at last are whirling wheels of light; yet through them *waved* a thrill of an intenser invisible light in a direction perpendicular to the tangents. I asked to go yet farther back; and behold! I am floating on my back—cast down: in a wind of Light flashing down upon me from the immeasurable Above. (This Light is of a bluish silver tinge.) And I saw that Face, lost above me in the height inscrutable; a face of absolute beauty. And I saw as it were as a Lamb slain in the Glamour of Those Eyes. Thus was I made pure; for there, what impurity could live? I was told that not many had been so far back: none farther: those who *could* go farther would not, since that would have reabsorbed them into the Beginning, and that must not be to him who hath sworn to uplift the Standard of Sacrifice and Sorrow, which is strength. (I forgot the Angels in the Planetary Whirl. They regarded me with curiosity: and were totally unable to comprehend my explanation that I was a Man, returning in time to behold the Beginning of Things.)

> Now was I able to stand in my Sephiroth: and the Crown of Twelve Stars was upon my head! I then went into the centre of the earth (I suppose) and stood upon the top of an high mountain. The many dragons and guardians I was able to overpower by *authority*. Now the mount was of glistening Whiteness, exceeding white as snow: yet dead and unluminous. And I beheld a vision, even like unto that of the Universal Mercury; and I learnt that I myself was Sulphur and unmercurial. Now having attained the Mercurialising of my Sulphur I was able (in my vision) to fecundate the mountain (of Salt). And it was instantly transmuted into gold. What came ye out into the wilderness for to see? No: into living, glowing, molten Light: the Light that redeemeth the material World! So I returned; having difficulty to find the earth (?). But I called on S.R.M.D. and V.N.R., who were glad to see me; and returned into the body: to waste the night in gibing at a foolish medico.

My actions continually testify that I naturally possessed what is after all the most essential asset for a Magician, in singular perfection. It came natural to me to despise and reject utterly, without a second's hesitation or regret, anything soever that stood in the way of my purpose. Equally, I could hold that purpose itself as nothing in comparison with the greater purpose of the Order to which I was pledged.

Early in 1900 I applied to the Second Order in London for the documents to which my initiation in Paris entitled me. They were refused in terms which made it clear that

the London body was in open revolt against the Chief, though afraid to declare its intentions. I went to London and discussed the matter with Jones, Baker and Mrs. Emery. Jones saw clearly enough that if Mathers were not the head of the Order and the trusted representative of the Secret Chiefs, there was no Order at all. Baker's position was that Mathers was behaving badly ; he was sick of the whole business. Mrs. Emery, the nominal representative of the Chief, was trying to find a diplomatic solution. Her attitude was most serious and earnest, and she was greatly distressed by her dilemma. She had thought it best to resign quietly, but received a reply of the most staggering character. The letter is dated February 16th, 1900, and I quote the last two paragraphs in full.

> " Now, with regard to the Second Order, it would be with the *very greatest regret* both from my personal regard for you, as well as from the Occult standpoint, that I should receive your Resignation as my Representative in the Second Order in London ; but I cannot let you form a combination to make a schism therein with the idea of working secretly or avowedly under " Sapere Aude " under the mistaken impression that he received an Epitome of the School of the Second Order work from G. H. Soror, " Sapiens Dominabitur Astris." For this forces me to tell you plainly (and, understand me well, I can prove to the hilt every word which I here say and more, and were I confronted with S.A., I should say the same) though for the sake of the Order, and for the circumstance that it would mean so deadly a blow to S.A.'s reputation, I entreat you to keep this secret from the

Order, for the present, at least, though you are at perfect liberty to show *him* this if you think fit, *after mature consideration*.

"He has NEVER been at *any time* either in personal or written communication with the Secret Chiefs of the Order, he having *either himself forged* or *procured to be forged* the professed correspondence between him and them, and my tongue having been tied all these years by a Previous Oath of Secrecy to him, demanded by him, from me, before showing me what he had either done or caused to be done or both. You must comprehend from what little I say here the *extreme gravity* of such a matter, and again I ask you, both for his sake, and that of the Order, not to force me to go further into the subject."

This letter struck at the very heart of the moral basis of her conduct. It put her in the position of having initiated people, for years, on false pretences. She could not drop out and say no more about it. The matter had to be thrashed out.

My own attitude was unhampered by any ethical considerations. I had seen a good deal of Mathers personally. He was unquestionably a Magician of extraordinary attainment. He was a scholar and a gentleman. He had that habit of authority which inspires confidence because it never doubts itself. A man who makes such claims as he did cannot be judged by conventional codes and canons. Ordinary morality is only for ordinary people. For example, assume a Prime Minister who has private information that somebody has discovered, and is cultivating, a new germ by means of which he intends to destroy the

nation. To pass a "Short Act" would be to give the alarm, and precipitate the disaster. It would be his duty to over-ride the law and put his foot upon the mischief. Then again, the whole of Mathers' conduct might have been in the nature of a test. It might have been his way of asking the Adepts whether they had the power of concentrating on the spiritual situation, of giving up for ever all their prejudices.

Anyhow, as far as I was concerned, Mathers was my only link with the Secret Chiefs to whom I was pledged. I wrote to him offering to place myself and my fortune unreservedly at his disposal; if that meant giving up the Abramelin Operation for the present, all right.

The result of this offer was recorded as follows:

> D.D.C.F. accepts my services, therefore do I rejoice that my sacrifice is accepted. Therefore do I again postpone the Operation of Abramelin the Mage, having by God's Grace formulated even in this a new link with the Higher, and gained a new weapon against the Great Princes of the Evil of the World. Amen.

I went to Paris, discussed the situation with Mathers, and formulated the following proposal for dealing with the refractory "temple."

> I. The Second Order to be summoned at various times during two or three days. They to find, on being admitted one by one, a masked man in authority and a scribe. These questions, etc. pass, after pledge of secrecy concerning interview.

A. Are you convinced of the truth of the doctrines and knowledge received in the grade of $5^\circ = 6^\circ$? Yes or No?

If yes (1) Then their origin can spring from a pure source only?

If no (2) I degrade you to be a Lord of the Paths in the Portal in the Vault of the Adepts.

B. If he reply "yes," the masked man continues: Are you satisfied with the logic of this statement? Do you solemnly promise to cease these unseemly disputes as to the headship of this Order? I for my part can assure you from my own knowledge that D.D.C.F. is really a $7^\circ = 4^\circ$.

If yes (3) Then you will sign this paper; it contains a solemn reaffirmation of your obligation as a $5^\circ = 6^\circ$ slightly expanded, and a pledge to support heartily the new regulations.

If no (4) I expel you from this Order.

II. The practice of masks is to be introduced. Each member will know only the member who introduced him.

Severe tests of the candidate's moral excellence, courage, earnestness, humility, refusal to do wrong, to be inserted in the Portal or $5^\circ = 6^\circ$ ritual.

III. Outer Order to be summoned. Similar regulations to be announced to them. New pledges required that they will not communicate the identity of anybody they happen to have known to any new member.

IV. Vault to be reconsecrated.

This was accepted, and I crossed to London to carry it out. I find an entry in my little book of Magical Rituals which reveals my state of mind.

> April 12th, 1900.
> I, Perdurabo, as the Temporary Envoy Plenipotentiary of Deo Duce Comite Ferro & thus the Third from the Secret Chiefs of the Order of the Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold, do deliberately invoke all laws, all powers Divine, demanding that I, even I, be chosen to do such a work as he has done, at all costs to myself. And I record this holy aspiration in the Presence of the Divine Light, that it may stand as my witness.
> In Sæcula Sæculorum. Amen!

A further complication had suddenly arisen. In Mathers' fatal letter to Mrs. Emery, he wrote that Sapiens Dominabitur Astris was not dead after all; but in Paris, working with him at that very moment. But when I arrived in Paris, Mathers had been rudely undeceived. The woman who claimed to be Sapiens had bolted, with such property of his as she could lay hands on. That such a man could have been so imposed upon seems incredible. But he told me that she certainly possessed knowledge which only Sapiens had, and also that she had told him every detail of a very private conversation which he had once had with Mme. Blavatsky at Denmark Hill. In the upshot, she proved to be one Mme. Horos. In the following year she was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for outrages on young girls. She had in some way used the rituals of the Order which she had stolen from Mathers to entice them to their doom.

My arrival in London as the envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Mathers, put the cat among the chickens. My identity was very soon discovered, and a typhoon began to rage in the teacup. The rebels resorted to all sorts of lawless and violent acts, and spread the most stupidly scandalous stories, not only about me, but about the few others who remained loyal to Mathers. They did not even scruple to slander a young girl of perfect purity, by imputing to her an improper intimacy with me. It was especially dastardly, as she was engaged to be married. To this day I cannot understand how people like W. B. Yeats should not have repressed such methods in the sternest way, and insisted that the fight be fought with fair weapons. They had seized the furniture of the temple and the vault. I applied to a police magistrate for it to be handed over. On the hearing of the summons we were amazed to find Mr. Gill, K.C., one of the most famous men at the bar, briefed to appear in a police court to squabble over a few pounds worth of paraphernalia! The money was furnished by Miss Horniman, daughter of the Mazawattee tea man, and later of Manchester Theatre fame. She had been expelled by Mathers some time previously.

I knew enough of campaigning to decline joining battle against such heavy artillery as Mr. Gill. Luckily, the value of the property had been sworn at a sum beyond the limit with which a police magistrate can deal. The summons was therefore withdrawn, and Mr. Gill kept his eloquence and his fee to himself. There was in reality nothing worth fighting for. The rebel camp broke up in anarchy. They issued various hysterical manifestos, distinguished by confusion of thought, inaccuracy of statement, personal malice, empty bombast, and ignorance of

English. One error is worth rescuing from oblivion. "Nothing in the above resolutions shall *e*ffect our connection with the Rosicrucian Order." The poor darlings meant *a*ffect.

They went on squabbling amongst themselves for a few months, and then had the sense to give up playing at Magick. Their only survivor is Arthur Edward Waite, who still pretends to carry on the business, though he has substituted a pompous, turgid rigmarole of bombastic platitudes for the Neophyte ritual, so that the last spark of interest is extinct for ever. Mathers, of course, carried on; but he had fallen. The Secret Chiefs cast him off; he fell into deplorable abjection; even his scholarship deserted him. He published nothing new, and lived in sodden intoxication till death put an end to his long misery. He was a great man in his way. May he have expiated his errors and resumed his labours, with the advantage of experience!

Summer was now at hand, and the Wanderlust reasserted itself in me. There was no point in my going back to Boleskine till the following Easter. As it happened, Mathers—to whom I returned to report progress—had two guests, members of the Order. They had just come back from Mexico. The fancy took me to go there. I wanted in particular to climb the great volcanoes. So, late in June, 1900, I sailed for New York.

END OF VOLUME I

THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY VOLUME ONE

printed for the Mandrake Press
at the Botolph Printing Works
Kingsway London