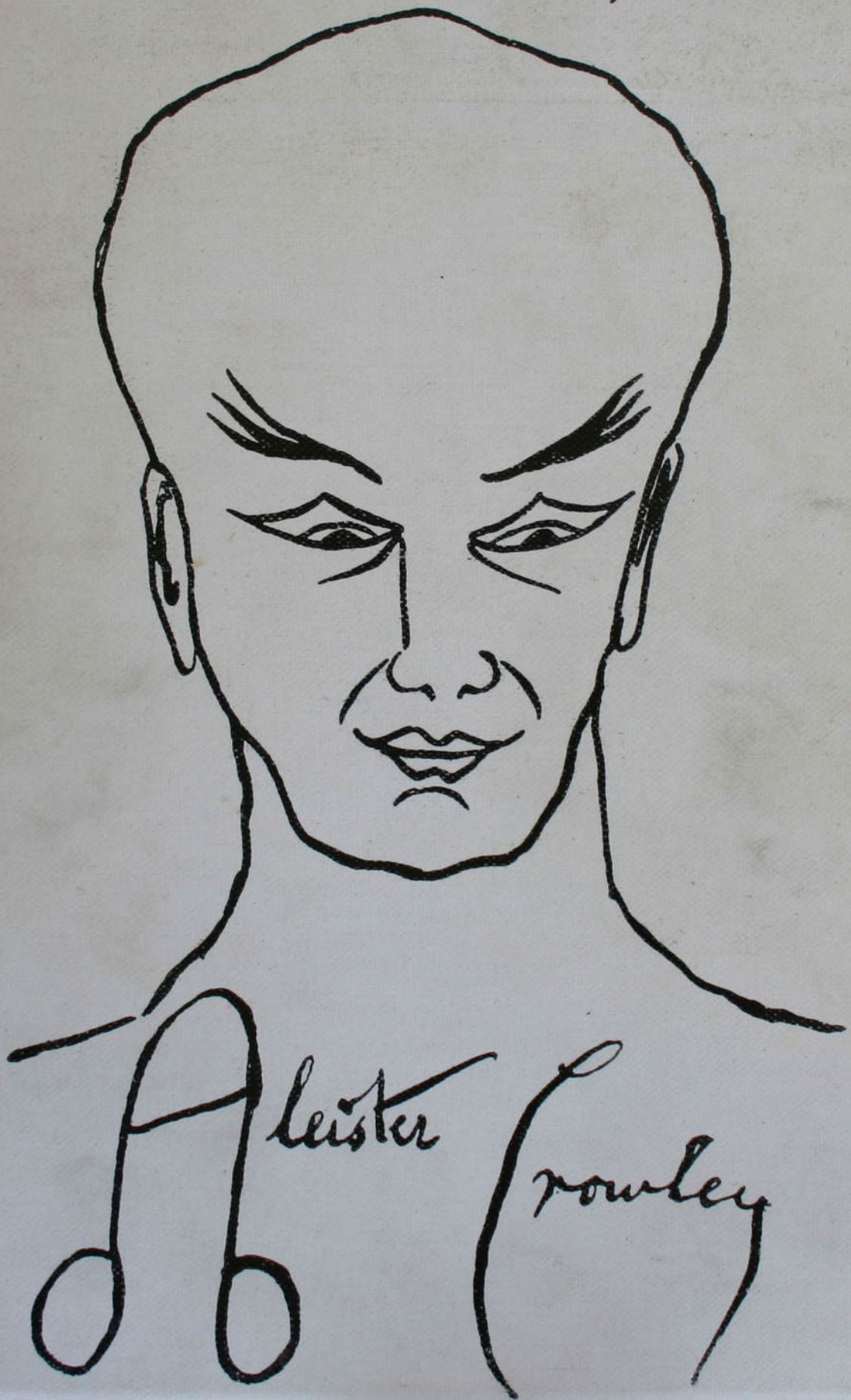
The Confessions of



THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

II

With pipe, poshtin, and purity.

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

An Autohagiography

Subsequently re-Antichristened

THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

Volume Two

London 1929
THE MANDRAKE PRESS
41 Museum Street W.C.1

MARSYAS : Not from the Valley shalt thou test
The eggs that line the eagle's nest!
Climb, with thy life at stake, the ice,
The sheer wall of the precipice!
Master the cornice, gain the breach,
And learn what next the ridge can teach!
Yet—not the ridge itself may speak
The secret of the final peak.

OLYMPAS : All ridges join at last.

MARSYAS : Admitted,
O thou astute and subtle-witted!
Yet one—loose, jagged, clad in mist!
Another—firm, smooth, loved and kissed
By the soft sun!

* * * * *

MARSYAS : . . . Seek the sacramental snow,
Where like an high priest I may stand
With acolytes on every hand,
The lesser peaks—my will withdrawn
To invoke the dayspring from the dawn,
Changing that rosy smoke of light
To a pure crystalline white ;
Through the mist of mind, as draws
A dancer round her limbs the gauze,
Clothe light, and show the virgin Sun
A lemon-pale medallion!
Thence leap we leashless to the goal,
Stainless star-rapture of the soul.

(*from* AHA.)

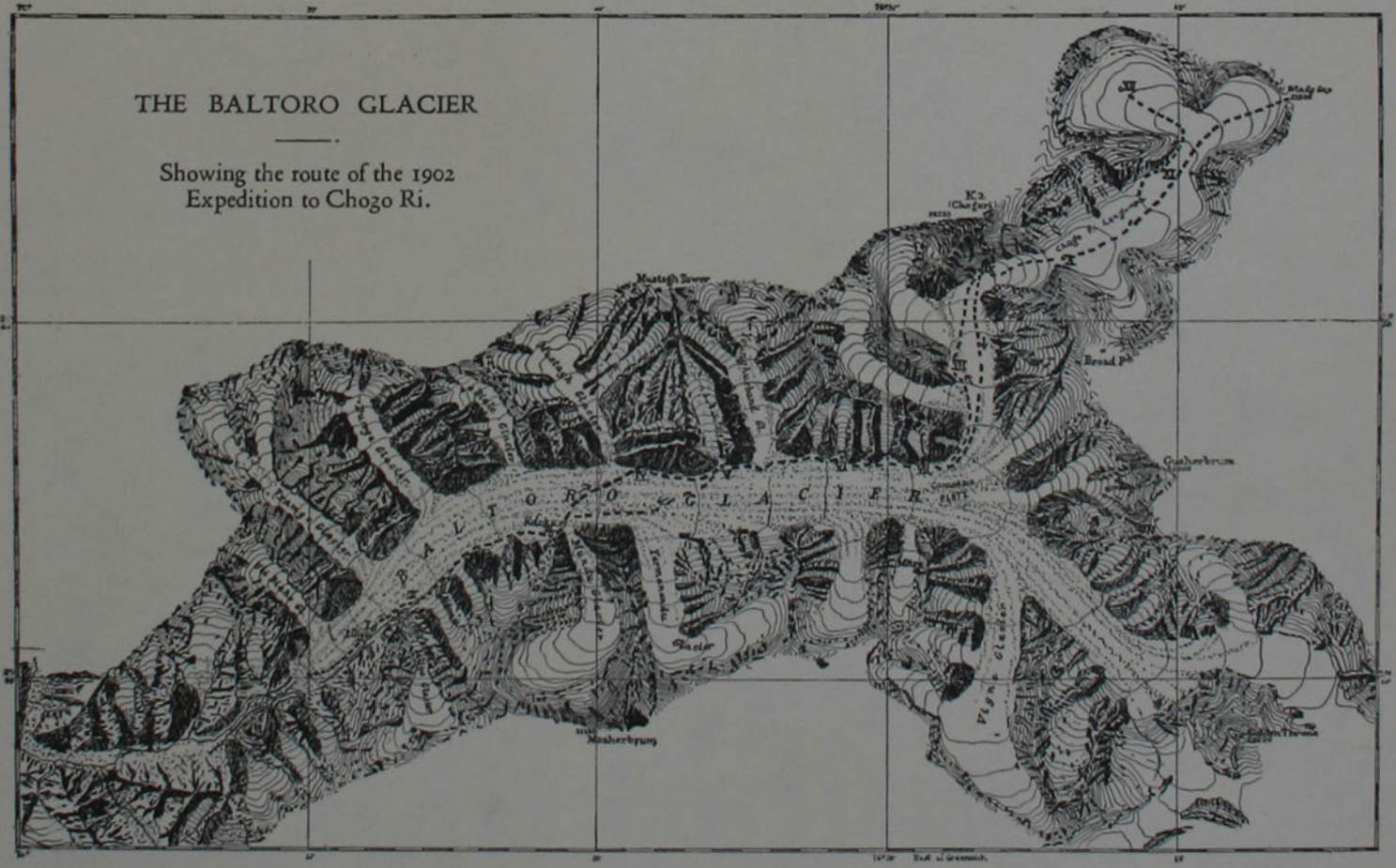
DEDICATION OF VOLUME TWO

To Three Immortal Memories

RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON
the perfect pioneer of spiritual and physical adventure

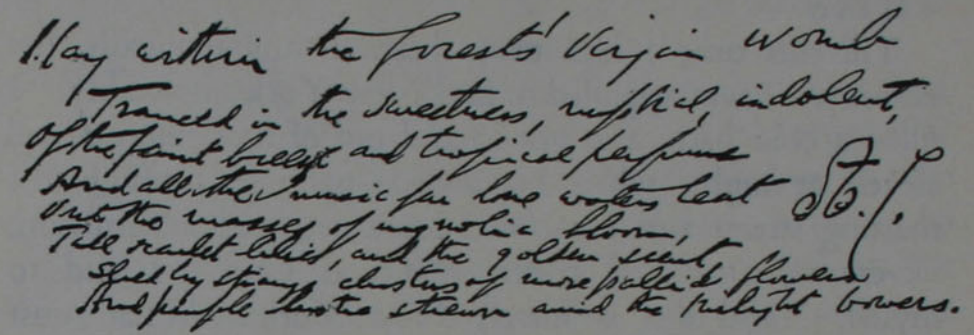
OSCAR ECKENSTEIN
who trained me to follow the trail

ALLAN BENNETT
who did what he could



This map is a rough copy of that drawn from our data, and published in Guillarmod's book. Knowles thinks it worse even than Conway's map ; but he was ever an optimist !

STANZA XXIII



I think it was on the 6th of July that I reached New York. In those days one was not bored by people who had never seen a real skyline boasting of the outrage since perpetrated by the insects. A mountain sky-line is nearly always noble and beautiful, being the result of natural forces acting uniformly and in conformity with law. Thus, though it is not designed, it is the embodiment of the principles which are inherent in Design. New York, on the other hand, has been thrown up by a series of disconnected accidents.

The vanity of the natives led them therefore to concentrate their enthusiasm on a rejected statue of Commerce intended for the Suez Canal. This they had purchased at secondhand and grandiloquently labelled "Liberty enlightening the World." They had been prophetic enough to put it on an island with its back to the mainland.

But, in those days, the spirit of Liberty was still intensely alive in the United States. The least sensitive visitor was bound to become aware of it in a few hours. There was no genteel servility. Nobody interfered with anyone else's business, or permitted busybodies to meddle with his. The people seemed prosperous and contented; they had not yet

been forbidden to amuse themselves when the day's work was over.

Till this time I had never been in any reputedly hot country. I was appalled to find New York intolerable. I filled a cold bath, and got in and out of it at intervals till eleven at night, when I crawled, panting, through the roasting streets and consumed ice-water, iced watermelon, ice-cream, and iced coffee. "Good God," I said to myself, "and this is merely New York! What must Mexico be like!" I supposed that I was experiencing normal conditions, whereas in point of fact I had landed at the climax of a heat wave which killed about a hundred people a day while it lasted. I should have discovered the truth if I had looked at a newspaper; but I did not read them. I had already learnt that even the finest mind is bound to perish if it suffers the infection of journalism. It is not merely that one defiles the mind by inflicting upon it slipshod and inaccurate English, shallow, commonplace, vulgar, hasty and prejudiced thought, and deliberate dissipation. Apart from these positive pollutions, there is the negative effect. To read a newspaper is to refrain from reading something worth while. The natural laziness of the mind tempts one to eschew authors who demand a continuous effort of intelligence. The first discipline of education must therefore be to refuse resolutely to feed the mind with canned chatter.

People tell me that they must read the papers so as to know what is going on. In the first place, they could hardly find a worse guide. Most of what is printed turns out to be false, sooner or later. Even when there is no deliberate deception, the account must, from the nature of the case, be presented without adequate reflection, and must seem to

possess an importance which time shows to be absurdly exaggerated; or vice versa. No event can be fairly judged without background and perspective.

I only stayed in New York two or three days, and then travelled direct to Mexico City. It was my first experience of a really long journey by train. The psychology is very curious. Journeys of more than half an hour begin to be tedious. Edinburgh to Inverness: I used to feel on the verge of insanity before I had got half way. But after two or three days in the train one becomes acclimatised.

The city of Mexico began by irritating me intensely. The hotel had no organised service; they didn't seem to care whether one got anything to eat or not. In fact, in the whole city, there was only one restaurant where one could get anything outside the regular local dishes. Nobody bothers about eating. The same applies to drinking, as far as the palate is concerned. People ate to satisfy hunger, and drank to get drunk. There were no fine vintages; the principal drinks were pulque, which is the fermented sap of the aloe; mescal, tequila, and aguardiente; the last being a general term applicable to any distilled spirit. In those days I was practically an abstainer, and as I had a fastidious daintiness which made me dislike trying experiments, I never even sampled any of these drinks.

It is a very curious trait. I used to refuse, sometimes under embarrassing pressure, to taste things whose appearance or whose name displeased me. I would not eat jam, even as a child, because it looked messy. I must have been nearly forty before I would touch salad. It seems absurd. I was very fond of lobster mayonnaise; but lobster salad, never! I dislike the combination of consonants. The word suggests something indefinite. It gives the effect of

French poetry, where the absence of accentuation emasculates the rhythm.

I found myself spiritually at home with Mexicans. They despise industry and commerce. They had Diaz to do their political thinking for them, and damned well he did it. Their hearts are set on bull fighting, cock fighting, gambling, and lechery. Their spirit is brave and buoyant; it has not been poisoned by hypocrisy and the struggle for life.

I hired part of a house overlooking the Alameda, a magnificent park intended for pleasure and protected from the police. I engaged a young Indian girl to look after me, and settled down to steady work at Magick. I had an introduction to an old man named Don Jesus Medina, a descendant of the great duke of Armada fame, and one of the highest chiefs of Scottish Rite Free-Masonry. My Qabalistic knowledge being already profound by current standards, he thought me worthy of the highest initiation in his power to confer; special powers were obtained in view of my limited sojourn, and I was pushed rapidly through and admitted to the thirty-third and last degree before I left the country.

I had also a certain amount of latitude granted by Mathers to initiate suitable people *in partibus*. I, therefore, established an entirely new Order of my own, called L.I.L.: the "Lamp of the Invisible Light." Don Jesus became its first High Priest. In the Order L.I.L., the letters L.P.D. are the monograms of the mysteries. An explanation of these letters is given by Dumas in the prologue of his "Memoirs to a Physician," and Eliphas Levi discusses them at some length. I, however, remembered them directly from my incarnation as Cagliostro. It would be improper to

communicate their significance to the profane, but I may say that the political interpretation given by Dumas is superficial, and the ethical suggestions of Levi puerile and perverse; or, more correctly, intentionally misleading. They conceal a number of magical formulæ of minor importance but major practical value, and the curious should conduct such research as they feel impelled to make in the light of the Qabalah. Their numerical values, Yetziratic attributions, and the arcana of the Atus of Tahuti, supply an adequate clue to such intelligences as are enlightened by sympathy and sincerity.

The general idea was to have an ever-burning lamp in a temple furnished with talismans appropriate to the elemental, planetary, and zodiacal forces of nature. Daily invocations were to be performed with the object of making the light itself a consecrated centre or focus of spiritual energy. This light would then radiate and automatically enlighten such minds as were ready to receive it.

Even to-day, the experiment seems to me interesting, and the conception sublime. I am rather sorry that I lost touch with Don Jesus; I should like very much to know how it turned out.

I devoted practically my whole time to this and other Magical Work. I devised a Ritual of Self-Initiation (See Eqx. I, 3, p. 269), the essential feature of which is the working up of spiritual enthusiasm by means of a Magical Dance. This dance contained the secret gestures of my grade, combined with the corresponding words. I used to set my Will against the tendency to giddiness, and thus postpone as long as possible the final physical intoxication. In this way I lost consciousness at a moment when I was wholly absorbed in aspiration. Thus, instead of falling into dull

darkness, I emerged into a lucid state, in which I was purged of personality and all sensory or intellectual impressions. I became the vehicle of the Divine Forces invoked, and so experienced Godhead. My results were satisfactory so far as they went; but they did not aid my personal progress very much, since I had not formulated an intellectual link between the divine and human consciousness.

I worked also at acquiring the power of invisibility. (See Eqx. I, 3, p. 272 for the Ritual.) I reached a point when my physical reflection in a mirror became faint and flickering. It gave very much the effect of the interrupted images of the cinematograph in its early days. But the real secret of invisibility is not concerned with the laws of optics at all; the trick is to prevent people noticing you when they would normally do so. In this I was quite successful. For example, I was able to take a walk in the street in a golden crown and a scarlet robe without attracting attention.

Most interesting of all, perhaps, is a Magical practice which I devised, ostensibly to deal with the dilemma propounded by the Sphinx: "The postulant to Magick must be morally perfect." It may be that I felt instinctively that my pious predecessors were wrong in demanding the suppression of manhood and imposing arbitrary codes of conduct. (I know now, of course, that their instructions have been misunderstood; every element in one's molecule must be developed to the utmost and applied to the service of one's True Will.) I suppose I have to thank Stevenson for the idea, which was this. As a member of the Second Order, I wore a certain jewelled ornament of gold upon my heart. I arranged that when I had it on, I was to permit no thought, word, or action, save such as pertained directly

to my Magical Aspirations. When I took it off I was, on the contrary, to permit no such things ; I was to be utterly uninitiate. It was Jekyll and Hyde, but with the two personalities balanced and complete in themselves. I found this practice of very great service. It was in fact essentially a beginning of systematic control of thought. The method is now incorporated in the instructions of the A.·.A.·. (See Liber Jugorum.)

Mexico proved a glorious galloping-ground for my Pegasus. The magnificent mountain air, the splendour of the sun, the flamboyant beauty of the flowers, the intoxicating intimacy of leaping, fearless love which flamed in every face, made my mind a racing rhythm of rapture.

Yet my principal achievement had its roots in Europe. At one of Mathers' semi-public ceremonies, I had met a member of the Order, an American prima donna. She took me by storm, and we became engaged. The marriage could not take place immediately, as she had to get rid of some husband that she had left lying about in Texas. But I heard her sing Venus in "Tannhäuser" at Covent Garden ; and she courteously insisted on my sampling the goods with which she proposed to endow me. The romance of an intrigue with so famous an artist excited my imagination. One afternoon, in Mexico, I picked up a woman who attracted me by the insatiable intensity of passion that blazed from her evil inscrutable eyes, and tortured her worn face into a whirlpool of seductive sin. I passed some hours with her in her slum ; and, walking home, found myself still so unappeased—*lassatus, sed non satiatus*—that my fever developed a delirium whose images assumed the form of Wagner's opera. I went home, and sat down at once to write my own poetical and Magical version of the story. I

neither slept nor ate till it was finished—sixty-seven hours later. I had not been aware of the flight of time. I could not understand why it was afternoon ; I thought that I had merely written all night. This play marks the climax of the first period of my poetry.

It is definitely an allegory of initiation, as I understood it at that time. As in Wagner's plot, Venus represents animal, and Elizabeth so-called pure, love. But my Tannhäuser is as dissatisfied with the latter as with the former. He leaves the Horsel at the call of the idea of the divine principle of love, which cannot be satisfied by any person, however noble. His attainment is to discard all earthly ties ; he is in love with Isis-Urania.

The play shows more perception of the true character of initiation than I consciously possessed. My conception was analogous to the catastrophic theory of creation. I figured my process as a series of crises. Of course crises do occur ; but, generally speaking, one advances insensibly. The invoked forces penetrate subtly into every cell, and modify them intimately without one's being aware of the process.

During the summer I wanted to travel in the interior. I went down to Iguala, bought an orange pony,* and rode slowly back to the city, taking things as they came. In all my travels I have hardly ever "seen the sights." Nothing is so disappointing. My plan is simply to live in any new city the ordinary life of the people. I wander about, and presently come unexpectedly upon one of the wonders of

* This remarkable animal had a trick of turning somersaults backwards of which he was inordinately proud. As soon as he raised his head and forefeet, I used to knock him back to the horizontal with a riding-crop. But in Mexico City he became impossible, and I raffled him off. The agent found him difficult to ride, and got a famous jockey to show off his paces. But after being thrown a few times—in a principal street of the city, that jockey had his faith in "El Diablo" restored, and went off muttering prayers and curses. I have never heard of any sequel.

the world. In this way one gets the thrill which those who have sold their souls to Baedeker miss. Imagine the delight of discovering the Coliseum or the Taj Mahal for oneself, at a moment, perhaps, when one's mind was preoccupied with commonplace ideas! I may have missed a few masterpieces, but not many; and people who go to see them on purpose miss them all altogether.

The maximum of romance and pleasure is to be found in Mexico, even in the quite small provincial towns. There is always some sort of Alameda, a well-wooded square more or less in the middle of the town with seats in any number, and a bandstand where a band plays every night without any swank, because people like music. It is never too hot; there is usually a pleasant breeze, enough to stir the leaves and not enough to disturb and annoy. It is full of men and women; all seem young and all are charming, spontaneous, and ready to make any desired kind of love.

In fact, they are making it continually in their hearts, and only wait opportunity to suit the word and action to the thought. Nor does opportunity lag. There are no practical difficulties. Indoors and out Nature and Art combine to invite Cupid to pay every kind of visit, passionate, permanent, transitory, trivial. The caprice of the moment is the sole arbiter of the event. The idea of worry is unknown. "Take no thought for the morrow" is the first principle of human relations, especially in regard to all such matters. Love is the business of life, but it is all profit and no loss. There is no false shame, no contamination by ideas of commerce, and material matters in general. There is no humbug about purity, uplift, idealism, or any such nonsense. I cannot hope to express the exquisite pleasure of freedom. One's spontaneity was not destroyed

by anticipations of all sorts of difficulty in finding a friend of any desired type, obstacles in the way of consummating the impulse, and unpleasantness in the aftermath. The problem of sex, which has reduced Anglo-Saxon nations to hysteria and insanity, has been solved in Mexico by the co-operation of climate and cordiality. Even Catholicism has lost most of its malignancy in Mexico. Clergy and laity unite, spiritually and somatically, with gay ardour. The Virgin is here actually the *fille-mère* which the gospels really represent, for all our blustering denial of the obvious facts. Of course, the priest likes a little gratification for his complaisance, but that is a very human trait, and as he is neither greedy, malicious, nor hypocritical, the charity which he enjoys is given freely in the friendliest spirit.

This was because he had Diaz 33° to keep him in order. After Diaz' death, the priests got gay on a bellyful of—the Host (?) like the world famous Sparrow, and had to be curbed seriously, as history relates.

My first night out of Iguala was a mysterious delight. I had lost my way in a sugar plantation, and it was getting dark when I came to a railway in course of construction. I followed this, hoping to find a town, but night fell, sudden and black; so I tethered my horse and lay down to sleep in my poncho by the light of a fire, to make which I borrowed some loose material left by the engineers. Dawn was just breaking when I was awakened from sleep by that subtle sense of danger which protects sleeping wayfarers. In the dim light I saw three heads peering at me over the embankment. I fired my revolver in the air; the heads disappeared; I turned over and went to sleep again instantly for several hours.

My second night was otherwise amusing. I struck a

pioneer camp, where a wooden hut had been thrown together. Two Chinamen were running an eating-house. I sat down to dinner with two of the engineers. They spotted the new chum, and began to scare me with tales of scorpions and fever. Before serving dinner, one of the Chinese came in with a saucepan of boiling water, and went round the room tipping it into the cavities formed by the crossing of the timbers of the hut. As often as not, a scalded scorpion fell out. I went to bed that night with my mind full of a particularly unpleasant trick of my reptilian brothers. They have a habit of dropping from the roof on to one's bed. This is quite without malice, but one stirs in one's sleep at the touch. They are alarmed, and strike. This didn't happen; but in the morning I found my legs so swollen from mosquito bites that I could not get my boots on. The result was my first acquaintance with malaria, which attacked me very severely shortly after I got back to the city. My ride was full of very varied adventure. The incident that stands out is this :

Crossing a hillside, I saw a Mexican some thirty yards below the track, apparently asleep in the sun. I thought I would warn him of his danger, and rode over. He must have been dead three weeks, for he had been completely mummified. Neither the coyotes nor the turkey-buzzards will touch a dead Mexican. His flesh has been too thoroughly impregnated with chillies and other pungent condiments. They make short work of any other meat. I remember riding out from Zapotlan to lunch with some friends on their ranch. I fell in with a string of mules bound for the Pacific coast. As I passed, a mule dropped from exhaustion. The men transferred his pack and left him to die. Returning after lunch, some three hours

later, I found the bones of the mule picked clean and dry.

One can always tell a Mexican by his peculiar habit of blowing through his cigarette before lighting it. The reason for this is that the government cigarettes are rolled by convicts, who are allowed what they consider an inadequate amount of tobacco daily for their own use. They therefore increase their supply by mixing dust with the tobacco handed out to them every morning for their work, and one therefore has to blow it out.

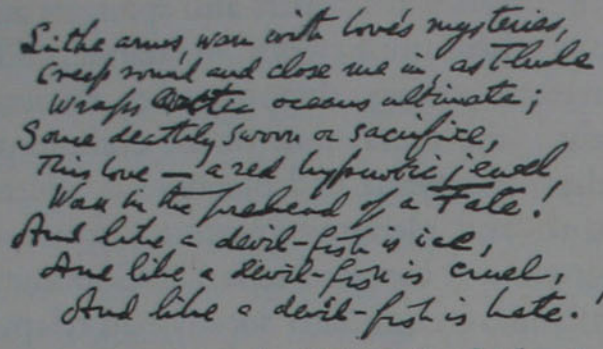
It is said, I know not how truly, that a Mexican town, in a corner near the Rio Grande, was, in the course of the revolution and counter-revolution of the contending vultures in 1917, cut off for a time from all communication with the rest of the country. Presumably everyone buried whatever cash he happened to have. At least it vanished rapidly and strangely. The city gasped. What the devil was to be done? Being folk of sense, they soon collected their wits and said: "All right. It's no good crying for the moon. We've got to go on exchanging wealth. We'll simply barter on credit and strike a weekly balance.

> If anyone fancies he's got a soft thing—
> If we haven't got pesos we've plenty of string."

The result was surprising. Business went on pretty well as in the past, with this remarkable difference: the motive for cheating and hoarding and gambling was gone. One could, of course, amass a fortune on the balance sheet of the town council; but it would be hard to cash in. So nobody troubled to outwit his neighbour or plot his ruin. They contented themselves with aiming at comfort and ease.

Old enemies became fast friends ; the usurers turned their hands to productive purposes ; the loafers and spongers and gamblers realised that they must work or starve. The whole town prospered ; poverty disappeared ; financial anxiety ceased to exist ; the moral tone of the community became almost angelic. Everyone had plenty to do, plenty to eat, plenty of leisure, and plenty of pleasure. Everyone was happy. Of course it was too good to last. Communications were restored, and a month later society had relapsed into a dog-fight for dollars.

STANZA XXIV



Lying sick in the Hotel Iturbide, I was attended by an American doctor named Parsons, with whom I struck up a warm friendship. He was certainly a "live wire." The Faculty had just devised a new source of income by inventing appendicitis. Parsons heard of this, and wired to the States for a partner who could perform the operation. He then proceeded to advise immediate operation every time one of his many wealthy patients had a stomach-ache. At a thousand Mexican dollars a time, it did not take many months to pile up a fortune.

The English Colony in Mexico City was disliked and despised. The Consul was habitually constipated, and the Vice-Consul habitually drunk. It is a curious fact that all over the world these qualities never vary. A wide field is open to philosophical speculation.

I came to frequent the American Colony and Club. I remember being introduced to a new but already popular and respected member; "Meet Mr. Tewkesbury," and, in a loud whisper, "*Thorne,* you know, who got away from Chi with a quarter of a million plunks." At this club I met some really charming ranchers, who invited me to stay with them and convalesce. Their place was near Guanajato, a great centre for silver mines. Guanajato

possessed an unique curiosity: some eccentric millionaire had built a theatre, sparing no expense to make it the most gorgeous building of its kind in the world. The stalls, for instance, were upholstered in real velvet, embroidered with real gold thread. For some reason, I think because the President had declined to open it, the owner felt himself insulted and kept it shut up. It was never opened at all except as a show place for visitors like myself, and finally was somehow burnt to the ground.

Mexico City was full of American professional gamblers and confidence men. I saw a good deal of two of these; a lank grey Yankee named McKee and his genial jackal Wilson, or some such name. After a few days' acquaintance Wilson approached me with the following proposal. It appeared that the manager of a mine near St. Luis Potosi had stolen a quantity of gold dust. He had got scared, and dared not bolt. Wilson thought that if we offered him a thousand dollars, each putting up half, he would be willing to hand over the compromising sacks, value five thousand or so. Not for nothing had I read the works of "Pitcher of The Pink 'Un," and other authorities on the gentle art of parting a fool and his money. I joyfully accepted Wilson's proposal. "Bring your five hundred right along," I said, "and I'll go and put the job through. I know you're too busy to leave the city." He agreed, and returned an hour later, not with the cash, but with his partner. They apologised profusely for mistaking me for a mug. "Look here," said McKee, "the innocence of your face is a fortune. I know a rich man here who is crazy on gambling. You shall rook him at Brazilian Poker. (In this game one backs one's hand as in ordinary poker, but the hands are of two cards with the option of taking a

third, as in Baccarat). We'll signal you what he holds. With your face, he'll never get wise to the stunt."

The psychology of these people really interested me. They had no experience of the kind of man who knows all the tricks but refuses to cheat. Their world was composed entirely of sharps and flats. It is the typical American conception; the use of knowledge is to get ahead of the other fellow, and the question of fairness depends on the chance of detection. We see this even in amateur sport. The one idea is to win. Knowledge for its own sake, pleasure for its own sake, seem to the American mere frivolity. "Life is real, life is earnest." One of themselves told me recently that the American ideal is attainment, while that of Europe is enjoyment. There is much truth in this, and the reason is that in Europe we have already attained everything, and discovered that nothing is worth while. Unless we live in the present, we do not live at all.

Mexico was full of gambling houses, and I used to play a great deal. The chief game was Monte, in which the dealer exposes two cards; the punter can back which he pleases; bets being placed, the dealer skins the pack, and the first card which duplicates one of the two exposed cards wins for it. The bank's percentage is that if the first card skinned decides (is "in the door," as they say), it only pays three-quarters of the stake.

The son of one of the prominent members of the old G.D. went to the bad and became a professional crook. Him I once frequented to study the psychology of hawk and pigeon.

First let me insist that the knave is always a fool. Prosperity is a function of biological success, and (facts being facts) the habit of lying begets credulity. My friend never

profited except now and then for a few lucky weeks, though he scooped in that time enough to keep a man with a grain of good sense for the rest of his life.

The confidence trick is protean, but in all its forms the essence is to get the victim off his guard. Observe how this fact confirms my general theory that surrender of the will to the guidance of the emotions is destructive of judgment. The first act in every trick is what is called the "come on" or the "build up." Its crudest form is proving to a stranger that you trust him by asking him to go away for five minutes with your watch and money. From this has been developed an amazing structure of subtle strategy. The shrewdest bankers have been looted for tens of thousands. The general plan is to bring about, in an apparently natural way, a series of incidents in which the chief of the confederates shows to advantage. His victim is induced to admire his keen sense of honour, his generosity, fairness, integrity, and so on in various emergencies. When the swindler feels sure that his victim trusts him implicitly, he proceeds to the next act. A scheme is suggested by which they shall both make a fortune, and in one of a million ways a situation is brought about in which it is hard for the victim to avoid putting up his cash. He could hardly show suspicion, even if he felt it, without giving outrageous offence for which he could produce no excuse. His common decency is concerned, and at the same time a strong appeal made to his interests. He produces the goods—and hears no more of the matter.

I could give the details of half a hundred schemes of this sort. Their ingenuity extorts my intellectual admiration, and yet there is always a fundamental flaw that, in the hands of such men, a million melts more quickly than a

thousand would with anyone else. In every swell bar and hotel one can see plenty such—all well dressed and well groomed, laughing and joking, and throwing their money about, and all the time 90 per cent. feel a sinking at the pit of the stomach as the thought hammers persistently at the back of their brains, "How shall I pay my bill?" at the best; and, overshadowing lesser worries, "What about when my luck turns?" "When will my own confidence in the imbecility of my fellow men be enlightened by their robbing me of the stake I risked, my liberty?"

A delicious ride by electric tram from the city brings one to Tacubaya, a luxurious pleasure resort with a big casino. The play is at long tables stacked with thousands of silver dollars. One night I noticed the electric chandelier beginning to swing. Crashing sounds came from without. Suddenly the lights went out! It was an earthquake. Attendants rushed in with lighted candles. It could hardly have been dark for two minutes; but the room was almost empty, and most of the cash had vanished.

I had been playing a modified martingale with happier results than my stupidity deserved. But, one night, luck ran against me, and my stake had increased to the limit allowed by the house. There was a slight delay—I think some one had called for a fresh pack of cards—I found myself walking nervously up and down. Somewhat as had happened in the Chess Congress at Berlin, I had a vision of myself from somewhere outside. "Look at that young fool," I seemed to be saying; "that stake he has there is about a month's income." The cards were dealt. I had won, but "in the door," so that I only got 75 per cent. I picked up my winnings, walked out, and have never gambled again; except once at Monte Carlo for the fun

of the thing, some years later. I made it a rule to take £5 to the Casino and quit, when it was gone, for the day. As luck would have it, on the fourth day I kept on winning. I had an appointment for lunch. Remembering this, I suddenly awoke to the fact that I had won over £350. That was good enough for me. After lunch I packed up and escaped to Nice, with a vow never again to set foot in the Principality.

All this time I had not forgotten my project of climbing the mountains of Mexico. Somehow, my Indian girl knew that I was keen on them ; and one day she called me up to the roof of the house and pointed out two snow-capped peaks. As I have already said, my judgment of heights and distances was surprisingly accurate. Mexico being about seven thousand feet above the sea, I judged these peaks to be from eleven to twelve thousand, and their distance from the city some eight to ten miles. I proposed to myself to stroll out and climb them one day. "From their summits," I said to myself, "I may be able to see the big mountains eighty miles away." The scheme miscarried. I was looking at the big mountains themselves ! I had made no allowance for the clearness of the air. People whose experience is confined to Europe have no means of judging correctly. As I found later, the Himalayas are to Mexican peaks as these are to the Alps. In North India one sees a mountain apparently within a day's march, yet four days later that mountain will hardly have changed its apparent size and distance.

I do not know why I made no attempts on the peaks. Perhaps it was from an obscure feeling of comradeship. I preferred to wait till Eckenstein joined me, which he was to do towards the end of the year.

STANZA XXV

Like a lion asleep in his fastness,
Or a warrior leant on his spear,
The hill stands up in the vastness,
And the stars grow strangely near
G.C. The Hills (to Oscar Eckenstein)

Meanwhile my Magical condition was making me curiously uncomfortable. I was succeeding beyond all my expectations. In the dry pure air of Mexico, with its spiritual energy unexhausted and uncontaminated as it is in cities, it was astonishingly easy to produce satisfactory results. But my very success somehow disheartened me. I was getting what I thought I wanted, and the Attainment itself taught me that I wanted something entirely different. What that might be it did not say. My distress became acute; and, as I had done at the beginning, I sent out an urgent call for help from the Masters. It must have been heard at once, for little over a fortnight later I got a long letter from Fra. V.N. Though I had not written to him, he gave me the very word that I needed. It restored my courage and my confidence. I continued my work with deeper and truer understanding. I began to perceive the real implications of what I was doing. In particular, I gained an entirely new grip of the Qabalah.

One of my results demands detailed record, because it proved later to be one of the foundations of the Great Work of my life. The word Abracadabra is familiar to everyone. Why should it possess such a reputation? Eliphas Levi's explanations left me cold. I began to suspect that it must

be a corruption of some true "word of power." I investigated it by means of the Qabalah. I restored its true spelling. Analysis showed it to be indeed the essential formula of the Great Work. It showed how to unite the Macrocosm with the Microcosm. I, therefore, adopted this word and its numerical value, 418, as the quintessentialised expression of the proper way to conduct all major Magical Operations.

This discovery was only one of many. Before Allan Bennett left for Ceylon, he gave me most of his Magical note books. One of these contained the beginnings of a Qabalistic dictionary in which various sacred words were entered, not alphabetically, but according to their numerical value. I must explain that the fundamental idea of the Qabalah is that the Universe may be regarded as an elaboration of the numbers from 0 to 10, arranged in a certain geometrical design, and connected by twenty-two "paths." The problem is to acquire perfect comprehension of the essential nature of these numbers. Every phenomenon, every idea, may be referred to one or more numbers. Each is thus, so to say, a particular modification of the pure idea. Sacred words which add up to any number should be eloquent commentaries on one of its aspects. Thus the number 13 proves to be, as it were, an essay on the number 1. The words "Unity" and "Love" both add up to 13. These ideas are therefore qualities of 1. Now, 26 combines the idea of duality, which is the condition of manifestation or consciousness, with this 13; and we find, accordingly, that 26 is the value of the name Jehovah. From this we see Him as the Demiourgos, the manifestation in form of the primordial *One*.

For many years I worked on these lines continually,

adding to Allan's nucleus, and ultimately making a systematic compilation. The resulting book was published in the Equinox, Volume I, Number 8. It is the only dictionary of the Qabalah in existence that can claim any degree of completeness. Since its publication, of course, new knowledge has come to light, and I hope to issue a revised edition in course of time. As it stands, however, it is the essential book of reference for the student. It can never be complete ; for one thing, every student must create his own Qabalah. My conception, for instance, of the number 6 will not be identical with yours. The difference between you and me is, in fact, just this ; you are capable of perceiving one set of aspects of absolute reality, I another. The higher our attainment, the more closely will our points of view coalesce, just as a great English and a great French historian will have more ideas in common about Napoleon Bonaparte than a Devonshire and a Provençal peasant. But there will always be more in any being than any man can know.

My Magical work was pushed into the background by the arrival of Eckenstein. He openly jeered at me for wasting my time on such rubbish. He being brutally outspoken, and I shy and sensitive, I naturally avoided creating opportunities for him to indulge his coarse ribaldry on a subject which to me was supremely sacred. Occasionally, however, I would take advantage of his unintelligence by talking to him in terms which I knew he would not understand. I find that it relieves my mind and helps me to clarify my thoughts if I inflict my jargon on some harmless stranger haphazard. As will be told in due course, Eckenstein and I made a very thorough exploration of the mountains of Mexico. During this time, my Magical

distress again increased. I could not relieve it by the narcotic of preparing and performing actual ceremonies, of silencing the voice of the demons by absorption in active work. It was while we were preparing our expedition to Colima that I broke out one evening and told Eckenstein my troubles, as I had done often enough before with no result beyond an insult or a sneer. Balaam could not have been more surprised when his ass began to prophesy than I was when, at the end of my outburst, Eckenstein turned on me and gave me the worst quarter of an hour of my life. He summed up my Magical situation, and told me that my troubles were due to my inability to control my thoughts. He said: "Give up your Magick, with all its romantic fascinations and deceitful delights. Promise to do this for a time, and I will teach you how to master your mind." He spoke with the absolute authority which comes from profound and perfect knowledge. And, as I sat and listened, I found my faith fixed by the force of facts. I wondered and worshipped. I thought of Easter '98, when I wandered in Wastdale in despair, and cried to the Universe for someone to teach me the truth, when my imagination was impotent to forge the least link with any helper. Yet at that very hour, sitting and smoking by the fire opposite me, or roped to me on a precipice, was the very man I needed, had I but had the intuition to divine his presence!

I agreed at once to his proposals, and he taught me the principles of concentration. I was to practice visualising simple objects; and when I had succeeded in keeping these fairly steady, to try moving objects, such as a pendulum. The first difficulty is to overcome the tendency of an object to change its shape, size, position, colour, and so on.

With moving objects, the trouble is that they try to behave in an erratic manner. The pendulum wants to change its rate, the extent of its swing, or the plane in which it travels.

There were also practices in which I had to imagine certain sounds, scents, tastes, and tactile sensations. Having covered this ground-work to his satisfaction, he allowed me to begin to visualise human figures. He told me that the human figure acts differently from any other object. "No one has ever managed to keep absolutely still." There is also a definite test of success in this practice. The image should resolve itself into two; a smaller and a larger superimposed. It is said that by this means one can investigate the character of the person of whom one is thinking. The image assumes a symbolic form, significant of its owner's moral and intellectual qualities.

I practised these things with great assiduity; in fact, Eckenstein put the brake on. One must not overstrain the mind. Under his careful tuition, I obtained great success. There is no doubt that these months of steady scientific work, unspoiled by my romantic fancies, laid the basis of a sound Magical and Mystic technique. Eckenstein evidently understood what I was later to learn from the Book of the Law: "For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect."

During this time we were busy with expeditions. Eckenstein had already been to the Himalayas (in 1892); he wanted to complete my education by experience of mountains higher than the Alps, and travel in rough country among primitive people. We began by establishing a camp on Iztaccihuatl, at about 14,000 feet. We remained there for a matter of three weeks, and climbed this, the most beautiful mountain in Mexico, from every possible

side. In so doing, we incidentally broke several world's records.

Our difficulties were in some ways severe. The canned food procurable in Mexico City was of inferior quality, and many years old at that. Eckenstein was constantly ill with diarrhœa, and I was not much better. Finally food gave out altogether, and our last three days we had literally nothing but champagne and Danish butter. We didn't care much; we had done what we had set out to do. Besides, I had learnt a great deal about camp life, the fine points of glissading, and the use of Steigeisen. In 1899, at the Montanvers, I had already found that his mechanically perfect "claws" worked miracles. We had shown a young man from Oxford, Dr. T. G. Longstaff, of what they were capable. Eckenstein would walk on a measured slope of over 70° of hard black ice without cutting a step. On slopes up to 50° he could simply stroll about. Nor could Longstaff pull him off by the rope.

On the grand scale, too, I had proved their possibilities. One day, Eckenstein being ill, I had arranged to go with Longstaff and his two guides over the Col du Géant. Not feeling very fit myself, I thought I would start an hour ahead of the others. Having inspected the ice-fall, I found a way straight up. When I was about half way through the séracs, I heard Longstaff's guides yelling blue murder. I had taken the "wrong" way. Their route involved a détour of a mile or more. I took no notice of their friendly anxiety, and reached the top a long way in advance. When they arrived, they explained that what I had done was impossible. To carry on the joke, when we got back I offered 150 francs to any party that would repeat the climb by my route. Nobody did so.

It is really astonishing and distressing that (after all these years of proof that men with proper claws are to men without them as a rifleman to an archer) English climbers are still quite ignorant of what claws can do, or how to use them. In Mr. Harold Raeburn's book he argues amiably against them. He admits that one can walk up hard snow at easy angles without steps, but fears to do so lest, returning later in the day, he should find the snow soft, and then where would he be without a staircase? He seems to have no idea that the supreme use of claws is on ice, and that the harder the ice the surer the hold. Yet Mr. Raeburn pits himself against Everest, where claws would convert the most perilous passages into promenades, and ice slopes whose length and steepness make step-cutting impracticable into serenely simple staircases. The policy of boycotting Eckenstein and his school, of deliberately ignoring the achievements of Continental climbers, to say nothing of my own expeditions, has preserved the privilege and prestige of the English Alpine Club. Ignorance and incompetence are unassailable. Ridicule does not reach the realms of secure snobbery. The mountains themselves vainly maim and murder the meddlers; they merely clamour all the more conceitedly to be considered heroes. It is one of the most curious characteristics of the English that they set such store by courage as to esteem a man the more highly the more blindly he blunders into disaster. We thought it rather unfair to take cover against Boer marksmanship; we are still proud of being unprepared in the Great War. We doubt whether Science is sportsmanlike; and so it is thought rotten bad form to point out how mismanagement smashed Scott's expedition. No gentleman criticises the conduct of the campaign of Gallipoli.

In March, 1922, I heard of the composition and projects of the Everest Expedition. I wrote an article predicting failure and disaster, giving my reasons, and showing how to avoid the smash. No one would print it. I was told it was not the thing to "crab" these gallant gentlemen. No. But should my prophecies come true, then was the time to explain why. What I had foretold came to pass precisely as I had predicted it. But I was still unable to get a hearing. Why add to the tribulations of these heroes by showing up their stupidity? Besides, England had failed—better not talk about it at all.

On Iztaccihuatl, on off days, we had a lot of practice with rifles and revolvers. At that altitude and in that clear air one's shooting becomes superb. We found we could do at a hundred yards better than we had ever done before at twenty-five. We used to knock the bottoms out of bottles, end-on, without breaking the necks. In Mexico we used to make rather a point of practising with firearms whenever we struck a new district. A reputation for expertness is the best protection against local marauders.

For instance. We once fell in with a party of railway engineers, one short. The absentee had strolled out after dinner to enjoy the cool of the air. He was found in the morning naked, with a *machete* wound in the back. He had been treacherously murdered for the value of a suit worth, at the outside, five shillings.

When we returned to Amecameca, we went at once to pay our respects to the Jefe Politico, to ask him to dinner to celebrate our triumph. He had been very kind and useful in helping us to make various arrangements. When he saw us he assumed an air of sympathetic melancholy. We wondered what it could mean. By degrees he brought

himself to break to us gently the terrible news. Queen Victoria was dead! To the amazement of the worthy mayor, we broke into shouts of joy and an impromptu war dance.

I think this incident rather important. In reading Mr. Lytton Strachey's "Eminent Victorians," and still more his "Life of Queen Victoria," as also in discussing periods with the younger generation, I find total failure to appreciate the attitude of artists and advanced thinkers who remember her Jubilee. They cannot realise that to us Victoria was sheer suffocation. While she lived it would be impossible to take a single step in any direction. She was a huge and heavy fog; we could not see, we could not breathe. Under her, England had advanced automatically to prosperity. Science too had surged up from sporadic spurts into a system. And yet, somehow or other, the spirit of her age had killed everything we cared for. Smug, sleek, superficial, servile, snobbish, sentimental shopkeeping had spread everywhere. Even Darwinism had become respectable. Even Bradlaugh had been accepted. James Thomson had been starved and classed with the classics. Swinburne had been whacked and washed and brushed and turned into a model boy. The Church of England had collapsed under the combined assault of Rationalism and Rome; yet, deprived of its religious element, and torn from its historical justification, it persisted placidly. The Soul of England was stagnant, stupified! Nothing remained for which a man might be willing either to live or to die. Huxley, Manning, Booth, Blavatsky, Ray Lankester—it mattered nothing what they said and did, all were equally stifled in shapeless sacks, stowed away indistinguishably, their voices mingled in the murmur of polite society.

It is hard to say why Queen Victoria should have seemed the symbol of this extraordinary state of suspended animation. Yet there was something in her physical appearance and her moral character which pointed to her as the perfect image of this inhibiting idea. The new generation, seeing their predecessors in perspective, perceive the individual qualities of each. There is nothing to tell them that in those days each one of us seethed with impotent rage at our doom. We were all damned with faint praise. Sir Richard Burton was toned down into a famous traveller and translator; Gordon sentimentalised into a warrior saint; Hardy was accepted as the Homer of Wessex; Meredith patted on the back as the Modern Ovid. It was impossible to dynamite the morass of mediocrity. Progress was impossible. The most revolutionary proposals, the most blasphemous theories, lost their sting. A Sovereign of Suet, a Parliament of Putty, an Aristocracy of Alabaster, an Intelligentzia of India-rubber, a Proletariat of Pulp; it was impossible to shape such material. The strongest impression was blunted by the inertia of the viscous glue which resisted nothing, but resumed its formlessness as soon as the immediate impulse of the impact was spent.

England had become a Hausfrau's idea of heaven, and the empire an eternal Earl's Court Exhibition. This was the real reason why people who loved England, like Tom Broadbent in "John Bull's Other Island," used to indulge in spasms of glee whenever we happened to have a corporal's file ambushed by some horde of savages.*

Our next expedition was to the Colima district. The mountain is here divided into two very distinct sections; one is snow-clad, the other one of the most frequently

* P.S.—And in 1929 I find myself rather regretting those "spacious days"!

active volcanoes in the world. Going over the shoulder of the Nevado, we emerged from a forest to get our first view of the Volcan, some twelve miles away. As we watched, an eruption occurred. The wind was blowing towards us, and the next thing we knew was that falling ashes were burning little holes in our clothes. We began to suspect that the ascent might be troublesome. We settled the Nevado straight off. The climbing is of little interest, and no difficulty. Then we camped on a spur for a week, and took turns, day and night, to watch the behaviour of the volcano. The inspection was disappointing; we could not discover any periodicity in the explosions; we could simply take our chance. We started accordingly; but, finding our feet beginning to burn through our boots, decided to retire gracefully.

Our third objective was Toluca. Here we had two delightful days. For some reason or other we had not brought the tent, and slept in the crater in our ponchos. In the morning I found myself about three inches thick in hoarfrost. On the first day we climbed what was apparently the highest summit. (The formation is that of the rim of an enormous crater.) When we got there we found that another point a long way off was higher. The next morning Eckenstein was sick, and I had to go alone. There was some difficult rock climbing on the wall which led to the ridge. But once there, the summit was easily reached. There are many magnificent teeth, which I climbed conscientiously; a most exhilarating exercise. I traversed some distance till I found a gap on the other ridge from which I could run down to the crater. We went down to the plateau the same day, and returned to the city.

On this excursion we met a man who said he had seen

with his own eyes the famous Phantom City. This yarn has for me a peculiar fascination. I am not sure that I do not believe that in some sense it is true, though it would be hard to say in exactly what sense. I heard the story at least a dozen times ; twice first-hand from serious informants. The story varies but slightly, and only in unimportant details.

Its general tenor is this : A man on horseback, sometimes a solitary prospector, sometimes a member of a party temporarily separated from the rest, but always alone, loses his way in hilly wooded country. (The district varies considerably with the narrator, but as a rule is somewhere within a couple of hundred miles of Mexico City, the direction being between north-west and south-west.) The horseman is eager to find a way out of the forest, so that he may take his bearings. It is getting late ; he does not want to camp out if he can help it. At last he sees the trees thinning out ; he hurries forward and finds himself on the brink of the hillside. At this moment darkness falls suddenly. It is impossible to proceed. Then he sees on the hillside opposite, possibly two or three miles distant, a city gleaming white. It is not a large city by modern standards, but it is an important city. For its size, it is very bravely built. The architecture does not suggest a modern city ; I have heard it described as " like an Arabian Nights city," " like an old Greek city," " like an Aztec city." The traveller proposes to himself to visit it in the morning. But when he wakes there is no trace of it. There is not even any distinguishing character about the hillside where he saw it which might have suggested the idea of a city to a tired man. In some cases lights are seen in the city ; occasionally there is even the sound of revelry.

Talking of liars! We suddenly discovered that we were regarded in that light ourselves. I suppose it is the abject ignorance and narrow outlook of ordinary people that makes them sceptical about anything out of the common. However, that may be, a paragraph appeared in the Mexican Herald which indirectly threw doubt on our expeditions. It was particularly pointless; we had published nothing, made no claims, behaved in fact exactly as we should have done in the Alps. But Eckenstein was annoyed at the impertinence, and proposed to take summary vengeance. He accordingly went down to the low bar frequented by the peccant reporter, bought him a few drinks, congratulated him on his literary style, and politely regretted that he should have been led into error by ignorance of his subject.

The reporter was far from sure that the conversation would not suddenly end by a bullet being put through him, for Eckenstein always looked a very formidable customer; but he found himself charmingly invited to come with us and climb Popocatapetl, so as to acquire first-hand knowledge of mountains and the men who climb them. He gaily and gratefully accepted this insidious proposition. We rode merrily up to the sulphur ranch, where intending climbers stay the night. The next morning the fun began. One of the world's records which we had left in tatters was that for pace uphill at great heights. Long before we got to the lowest point of the rim of the crater our sceptical friend found that he couldn't go another yard—he had to turn back. We assured him that the case was common, but could easily be met by the use of the rope. So we tied him securely to the middle; Eckenstein set a fierce pace up hill, while I assisted his tugging by prodding the recalcitrant reporter with my axe. He exhausted the gamut of

supplication. We replied only by cheerful and encouraging exhortations, and by increased efforts. We never checked our rush till we stood on the summit. It was probably the first time that it had ever been climbed in an unbroken sprint. Our victim was by this time convinced that we could climb mountains. And he was certainly the sorriest sight!

Even on the descent, his troubles were not over. Most of the lower slopes are covered with fine loose ash, abominable to ascend but a joy to glissade. Our friend, between the fear of God, the fear of Death, and the fear of Us, had lost all mastery of his emotions. We had taken the rope off and shot down the slopes to show him how to do it, but he was in mortal terror. The feeling that the ground was slipping under his feet drove him almost insane. I hardly know how he got down to us at last, except that on those loose slopes he could hardly help it. Having put our man through the mill, we became seriously friendly. He took his lesson like a good sportsman, and made his apologies in the Mexican Herald, by writing a long account of his adventure in the style of the then famous Mr. Dooley.

Eckenstein and I lived in an American apartment house, from the roof of which one could see a great distance down a principal thoroughfare.

Eckenstein used to lure people to discuss eyesight, and mention that mine was miraculous for distant objects. It would be arranged for me to drop in at this stage, accidentally on purpose, and then Eckenstein would offer to prove his tall stories on the spot. So we would go up to the roof with field glasses, and I would describe distant objects in great detail, read names on shops a quarter of a mile off, etc., etc. The victim would check this through the field

glasses, confirming my accuracy. No one ever suspected that this stunt had been prepared by my using the field glasses, and learning the scenery by heart!

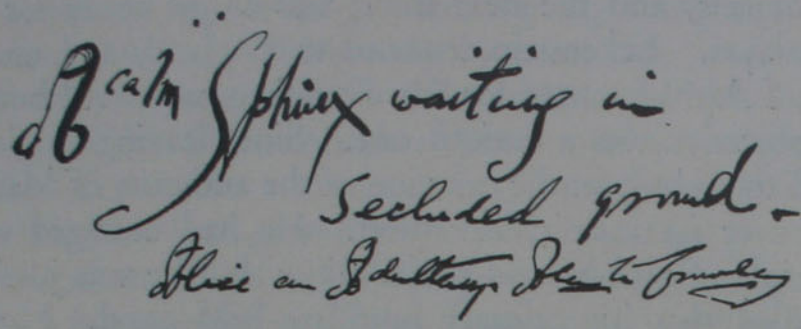
I should have mentioned a short excursion which I took to Vera Cruz. My ostensible object was to see some cases of yellow fever. As a matter of fact, I was horribly afraid of the disease. So I picked an occasion when the port had shown a clean bill of health for the previous three weeks. I had an introduction to a local doctor, and told him how sorry I was not to be able to see any cases. "Well, well," said he, "come round to the hospital to-morrow morning anyhow—some points may be of interest." And then I found any amount of Yellow Jack, mendaciously diagnosed as malaria, typhoid, etc., in the hope of throwing dust in the eyes of the United States inspectors, and getting them to remove the Quarantine.

The journey from Vera Cruz back to the city is to my mind the finest in the world from the point of view of spectacular effect; the second best is from the Ganges up to Darjiling. For the first forty miles one runs through tropical jungle, then the track suddenly begins to mount and wind its way among the sub-alpine gorges, with the whole eighteen thousand feet of Citlaltepetl towering above. The scenery continually changes in character as one ascends, and then quite suddenly one comes out on the plateau, a level vastness almost desert save from cactus and aloe, with the two cones of Iztaccihuatl and Popocatapetl sticking out of it.

We had intended to finish our programme by climbing Citlaltepetl; but there were difficulties about mules, and none about the mountain. We were too bored to trouble to climb it. Somehow or other, the current of our enthu-

siasm had become exhausted. We had achieved all our real objects, and the next thing was to get ready for the Himalayas. Eckenstein returned to England, and on the 20th of April I started for San Francisco, westward bound. My objective was a curious one. Since leaving England, I had thought over the question of the authority of Mathers with ever increasing discomfort. He had outraged every principle of probity and probability; but he was justified, provided that his primary postulate held good. I could think of only one way of putting him to the test. It concerned an episode at which Allan Bennett was present. Allan, and he alone, could confirm the account which Mathers had given me. If he did so, Mathers was vindicated; if not, it was fatal to his claims. It seems absurd to travel 8,000 miles to ask one question—a childish question into the bargain!—but that was what I did. The sequel will be told in the proper place.

STANZA XXVI



I broke the journey at El Paso. Coming straight from the quiet civilisation of Mexico it was a terrible shock to find myself in touch with the coarse and brutal barbarism of Texas. There are many unpleasant sides of life which cannot be avoided without shirking reality altogether ; but in the United States they were naked and horrible. The lust of money raged stark without the softening influences of courtesy. Drunkenness was stripped of good-fellowship ; the sisterhood of sin presented no deceptive attractions. The most idealistic innocent could not have been under a moment's illusion—they were stalled like cattle in rows of wooden shanties ; and they carried on their business with fierce commercial candour. All those little graces of life which make bought kisses tolerable to those sensitive people who are willing to be fooled, were absent.

I strolled across to Juarez to kiss My Girl good-bye. O Mexico, my heart still throbs and burns whenever memory brings you to my mind! For many other countries I have more admiration and respect, but none of them rivals your fascination. Your climate, your customs, your people, your strange landscapes of dreamlike enchantment rekindle my boyhood.

Outside Juarez was a labour camp. Public works of

some sort were in progress—at least such progress as we find in Mexico! Hundreds of men were loafing about at their eternal cigarettes and tossing various liquefactions of hell-fire down their chilli-armoured gullets. Most of the groups were squatting round a soiled poncho, on which were scattered coins and greasy cards. I stood and watched one party of three. The swearing, jabbering and quarrelling were incessant here, as all over the camp. Nothing struck me as abnormal. Then, like a flash of forked lightning, one of the men flung himself across the poncho and twisted his fingers in the hair of the man opposite. (Astounding recklessness to let it grow so long!) He thrust his thumbs into the corners of his enemy's eyes, as he writhed and kicked on top of him, the momentum of his spring having bowled the other on to his back. The man's eyes were torn from their sockets in a second, and his assailant, disengaging himself by a violent jerk from his victim's clutch, made off like an arrow across country to the frontier. The shrieks of the mutilated man were answered by universal uproar. Some followed on foot, others ran to their bronchos, but the great majority maintained an attitude of philosophical indifference. It was no business of theirs, except so far as it might remind them to visit the barber.

I went on to San Francisco. The city is famous in history for the earthquake of 1906; and for having starved Stevenson, who has described it admirably in "The Wrecker."

It was a glorified El Paso, a madhouse of frenzied money-making and frenzied pleasure-seeking, with none of the corners chipped off. It is beautifully situated, and the air reminds one curiously of Edinburgh. At that time it possessed a real interest and glory—its Chinatown. During

the week I was there, I spent most of my time in that quarter. It was the first time that I had come into contact with the Chinese spirit in bulk; and, though these exiles were naturally the least attractive specimens of the race, I realised instantly their spiritual superiority to the Anglo-Saxon, and my own deep-seated affinity to their point of view. The Chinaman is not obsessed by the delusion that the profits and pleasures of life are really valuable. He gets all the more out of them because he knows their worthlessness, and is consequently immune from the disappointment which inevitably embitters those who seek to lay up treasure on earth. A man must really be a very dull brute if, attaining all his ambitions, he finds satisfaction. The Eastern, from Lao-tze and the Buddha to Zoroaster and Ecclesiastes, feels in his very bones the futility of earthly existence. It is the first postulate of his philosophy.

California got on my nerves. Life in all its forms grew rank and gross, without a touch of subtlety. I embodied this feeling in a sonnet:

> "... gross and great
> Her varied fruits and flowers alike create
> Glories most unimaginable ...
> ... yet this is sore,
> A stain; not one of these is delicate."

For some time, I had been contemplating a lyric poem in which everything in the world should be celebrated in detail. It was a crazy notion—one of those fantastic follies which is impossible in nature—a species of literary "squaring the circle." I doubt whether it was a genuine impulse. Its motive was the vanity and vulgarity of attempting something big. It was the American passion

for tall buildings and record processions in another form. It was probably my reaction to the spiritual atmosphere of California. In any case, the worst happened. I began it! The best plan will be to describe what happened, and get it over.

It was not finished till the middle of 1904. Book I is in form a gigantic Greek ode. It celebrates all the forces of Nature and the children of time. Orpheus invokes them in turn; and they reply. Book II describes the winning of Eurydice by Orpheus. It is entirely a monologue by him. My literary insanity is well indicated by my proposal to insert a five-act play, "The Argonauts," afterwards published separately, as an incident in his wooing! Book III describes the visit of Orpheus to Hades; and contains the invocations of the necessary deities, with their replies. Book IV relates the death of Orpheus. Unwieldy as the poem is, it contains some of my best lyrics. Further, even conceding that the entire effort was a fiasco, it must be admitted that the task of writing it was an excellent discipline; it taught me a great deal about technique, and its very awkwardness warned me what to avoid.

On May 1st I find in my diary the following words: "I solemnly began anew the operations of the Great Work." I had mapped out for myself a definite programme which was to combine what I had learnt from Eckenstein with the methods of the Order. For instance: I had extracted the Magical Formula of the Ritual of Neophyte, and applied it to a Ceremony of Self-Initiation. I now simplified this, and got rid of the necessity of the physical temple by expressing it in a series of seven mental operations.

Other practices were the "assumption of God-forms"; by concentrated imagination of oneself in the symbolic shape of any God, one should be able to identify oneself with the idea which He represents. Then there was meditation on simple symbols with the idea of penetrating to their secret meaning. I was also to keep up my practices of astral visions and "rising on the planes," in particular the special official method of invoking Adonai-ha-Aretz. I was also to continue the work Eckenstein had taught me, on his lines. As to more Magical matters, I proposed to continue the evocation of elemental forces to visible appearance, to make various talismans and charge them with spiritual energy by means of meditation, and to continue the building up of my (so-called) astral body until it was sufficiently material to be perceptible to the ordinary physical senses of people whom I should visit in this shape. There will be found in my Magical Record numerous accounts of this last experiment.

In the autumn of '98 my friend, J. L. Baker, whom I hastened to see in London on my return from the Alps, took me on my first astral journey. The details of the method are given in full in Equinox I, 2 (Liber O). I may here outline them thus:

Imagine an image of yourself, standing in front of you. Transfer your consciousness to it. Rise upward. Invoke the forces desired by the prescribed methods. Observe their appearance. Test their authenticity. Enter into conversation with them. Travel under their guidance to the particular part of the Universe which you desire to explore. Return to earth. Cause the Body of Light to coincide spatially with the physical. Reconnect them, using the sign of Harpocrates. Resume normal conscious-

ness. Record the experience. Test its value by the critical methods advocated in the Equinox.

After only a few such journeys I found myself much stronger on the wing than my tutor. He was always getting into trouble. Demoniac forms would threaten the circle. He tired easily. He often placed confidence in lying spirits. In fact, his goodwill exceeded his ability. It all came as natural to me as swimming does to a duck. I picked up all the technical tricks of the trade almost by instinct; such as enable one to detect imposition on the instant, to banish disturbing elements, to penetrate the veils and pacify the warders of the secret sanctuaries; and to assure the accuracy of the information obtained, by methods the precision of which precludes the possibility of coincidence.

I soon found it necessary to develop the Body of Light. I explored such remote, exalted, and well-guarded adyta that the necessary invocations and sacraments required more energy than was at the disposal of the Body of Light which normally separates from its physical envelope. I infused a more intense and dynamic substance into it. The result was that I soon built up a body so powerful that it was clearly visible to the physical vision of all but the grossest types of humanity. It also acquired an independence of my conscious will which enabled it to travel on its own initiative without my knowledge. Strange tales began to circulate, some doubtless true, others probably coloured, and, of course, not a few baseless inventions.

As a type of the first class, let me quote the following: G. H. Frater S.R.M.D., had asked me to visit him in Paris. He expected me in the afternoon. My train was late; I was tired and dirty. I postponed my call

till the following day. To my surprise, my host and hostess did not greet me quite as I expected. In the course of our talk they made allusions which were quite unintelligible. At last we became aware that we were talking at cross-purposes. The crash came when Soror Vestigia insisted, "But you said so yourself at tea!" I couldn't remember that I had ever been there to tea. On my one previous visit I had lunched one day, and dined the next, but no more. "At tea!" I echoed, bewildered. "Yes, at tea!" she repeated. "Surely you remember. It was only yesterday." We compared times. I was then dozing in the train from Calais. It then came out that I had called quite normally, though I seemed tired and dazed. I had stayed about an hour. Nothing had led them to suspect that I was not physically present.

Of the third class, I remember chiefly that my sister Fidelis was cursed with a horrible mother, a sixth-rate singer, a first-rate snob, with dewlaps and a paunch; a match-maker, mischief-maker, maudlin and muddle-headed. The ghastly hag put it all round London and New York that I had entered her daughter's room at night in my Body of Light. I don't know whether she went beyond the vile suggestion. Even had the tale been true, which Fidelis disdainfully denied, the woman must have been as witless as she was worthless to splash her own daughter with such ditch-water.

All the same, I feel grateful. Her stupid lie put it into my head to make the experiment in question, though of course with the knowledge and approval of the girl. The result is recorded in a subsequent chapter.

When I began to develop this power consciously, I obtained considerable success. At the time of this journey

I had arranged to visit a Sister of the Order who lived in Hong Kong; at prearranged times, so that she might be looking out for me. Several of these visits turned out well. She saw and heard me; and on comparing notes, we found that our reports of the conversation agreed. But I was not able to act on "matter." I used to try to knock things off the mantelpiece, but in vain. On the other hand, when I reached Hong Kong, I recognised the place perfectly, and picked out her house on the hillside, though I had never seen so much as a photograph.

These numerous practices were assigned to a regular schedule. Five different periods of the day were to be devoted to one or the other.

On May 3rd I left for Honolulu on the Nippon Maru, arriving on the 9th. A strange destiny lay in ambush for me among the palms.

The poetical side of me is annoyed to this day when I think of it. I ought to have followed the ideal of Gauguin. It was absurd to have got so far only to fall in love with a white woman. I know now that white women introduce the idea of impurity into love in one way or another. There is something either vicious or intellectual about them. Love should be a strictly physiological matter, with just that amount of natural emotion that goes with it. But then, such simple happiness is not for me.

Anyhow, I decided to spend a month on Waikiki Beach. I had a vague idea of getting a hut and a native girl, and devoting myself to poetry of the most wholesome kind with corresponding Magick. However, at the hotel was an exquisitely beautiful American woman of Scottish origin. She was ten years older than myself, and had a boy with her just entering into his teens. She was married to a lawyer

in the States, and had come to Hawaii to escape hay fever.

I went on with my magical and other work ; in particular, I invented a practice which has proved very useful. Its object is to prevent mosquitoes from biting one. The method is : to love them. One reminds oneself that the mosquito has as much right to his dinner as a man has. It is difficult to get the exact shade of feeling, and more so to feel it. One begins by lying defenceless against the enemy and sternly repressing the impulse to wave, to slap, and to scratch. After a little perseverance, one finds that the bites no longer become inflamed ; and this preliminary success is soon followed by complete protection. They will not bite one at all.

But my horizon gradually filled with romantic love, and other occupations faded little by little. The woman was herself entirely worthless from the point of view of the poet. Only very exceptional characters are capable of producing the positive effect ; but it is just such women as Alice who inspire masterpieces, for they do not interfere with one's work. Passionately as I was in love, and crazily as I was behaving in consequence, I was still able to make daily notes of the progress of the affair with the detached cynicism of a third party. I took her with me to Japan,* but there was not enough in her character to count "the world well lost for love." Exactly fifty days after I had met her she beat it back to her "provider" ; and I understood immediately why my subconsciousness had insisted on my scribbling the details of our liaison in my diary.

The departure of Alice inspired me to write the story of

* On the "America Manu." There were many ladies on board : the wife of a railway magnate, the Consul's daughter, and so on. In reality, they were all whores destined for various brothels in Japan or Shanghai, where American ladies fetch absurd prices.

our love in a sonnet-sequence. Each day was to immortalise its events in poetry. This again was one of my characteristically crude ideas, yet the result was surprisingly good—much better, perhaps, than I ever thought, or think now. No less a critic than Marcel Schwob called it "a little masterpiece." And many other people of taste and judgment have professed themselves in love with it. Possibly the simplicity of its realism, its sincere and shame-free expression of every facet of my mind, constitute real merit. It is certainly true that most people find much of my work hard to read. The intensity of my passion, the profundity of my introspection, and my addiction to obscure allusions, demand of the reader serious study, that he may grasp my meaning; and subsequent re-reading after my thought has been assimilated; until, no intellectual obstacle interrupting, he may be carried away by the current of my music, and swept by it into the ocean of ecstasy which I myself reached when I wrote the poem. I am aware that few modern readers are capable of settling down deliberately to decipher me. And those who are may for that very reason be incapable of the orgiastic frenzy. Scholarship and passion rarely go together. But my Muse is the daughter of Hermes and the mistress of Dionysus.

I saw comparatively little of Japan. I did not understand the people at all, and therefore did not like them very much. Their aristocracy was somehow at odds with mine. I resented their racial arrogance. I compared them unfavourably with the Chinese. Like the English, they possess the insular qualities and defects. They are not Asiatic, exactly as we are not European.

My most interesting impression was Kamakura. The Daibutsu, colossal amid his gardens of iris, with no canopy

but the sky, does really produce a sense of his universality; it does remind one of the grandeur and solidity of his teaching; of the reasonableness of his methods of attainment, the impersonal peace which is their reward; and of the boundless scope of his philosophy, independent as it is of all arbitrary assumptions, parochial points of view, sordid appeals, and soul-stupefying superstitions.

Already there had arisen in me the aspiration to attain to states whose very possibility I did not suspect; already I was aware, in the abyss of my heart, secret and silent, that I was Alastor, the wanderer in the wilderness, the Spirit of Solitude. For Kamakura, calmly certain of its soul-searching accents, called to me to abide in the security of its shadow, there to toil even as the Buddha had done, that I might come to the perfect Illumination, and thereby being made free from all the fetters of Falsehood, bring to Mankind the Word of Wisdom and Magic that hath might to enlighten their eyes, to heal their hearts, and to bring them to a stage of spiritual evolution such that their poets could no longer lament, as I:

> "Nothing is stranger to men
> Than silence, and wisdom, and kindness."

I inquired as to the possibility of settling down in one of the neighbouring monasteries; but somehow my instinct opposed my intention. The Inmost knew that my destiny lay elsewhere. The Lords of Initiation cared nothing for my poetic fancies and my romantic ideals. They had ordained that I should pass through every kind of hardship at the hands of Nature, suffer all sorrow and shame that life can inflict. Their messenger must be tested by every ordeal—not by those that he himself might choose. The

boy who, asked to discuss some point of doctrine in the Epistles, replied: "Far be it from me to presume to parley with St. Paul: let me rather give a list of the Kings of Israel and Judah!" (the only thing he knew), probably became a Cabinet minister; but similar adroitness does not avail the aspirant to adeptship. The Masters test every link in turn, infallibly and inexorably; it is up to you to temper your steel to stand the strain; for one flaw means failure, and you have to forge it all afresh in the fires of Fate, retrieve in a new incarnation the lost opportunity of the old.

I turned then sadly from Daibutsu, as I had turned from love, ambition, and ease, my spirit silently acquiescing in the arcane arbitrament of the mysterious Daimon who drove me darkly onward; how I knew not, whither I knew not, but only this, that he was irresistible as inscrutable, yet no less trustworthy than titanic.

Alas! The failure of Alice to reach the summit of Love! Thence are the valleys of virtue, the rivers of respectability, and the sheepfolds of society seen dim and dull in the distance, bestially beneath our sparkling snows, our shoreless sky, our sacred sun and sentinel stars.

Alice had broken my boy's heart; she had taught me what women were worth. For her I had surrendered my single-minded devotion to my spiritual Quest; I had sold my soul to the Devil for sixpence, and the coin was counterfeit.

True, One of me knew all along the augury of the adventure; but then, all the worse! For if Alice had been a real danger, might not I have damned myself for her, as many a knight for Venus of the Hollow Hill, as many a saint for Lilith, Lady of the Lake of Fire? Yet no: the answer came, august and austere, from mine Angel, that

I had passed the Ordeal. I had proved that no passion, however pure and powerful, could enslave me. The caresses of no Calypso could chain me in her courts, the cup of no Circe corrupt my chastity, the song of no Siren seduce me to suicide, the wiles of no Vivien ensnare my simplicity, and bind me in the hollow oak of Broceliande.

I had intoxicated myself utterly with Alice; I had invested her with all the insignia that my imagination could invent. Yet, loving her with all my heart and soul, she had not seduced me from my service. I knew—and They who put her on my Path knew also—that I was immune. I might dally with Delilah as much as I liked, and never risk the scissors. Love, who binds other Samsons, blinds them, and sets them to serve the Philistines, to be their scorn and sport, would be to me my Light, and lead me in the way of Liberty. The secret of my Strength was this, that Love would always stand a shining symbol of my Truth, that I loved spiritually the Soul of Mankind. Therefore each woman, be she chaste or wanton, faithful or false, inspiring me to scale the summits of Song or whispering me to wallow in the swamps of Sin, would be to me no more than a symbol in whose particular virtue my Love could find the Bread and Wine of its universal Eucharist.

Time has confirmed this claim: I have loved many women, and been loved. But I have never wavered from my Work; and always a moment has come when the woman had to choose between comradeship and catastrophe. For in truth, there was no Aleister Crowley to love; there was only a Word for the utterance of which a human form had been fashioned. So the Foolish Virgins, finding that Love and Vanity could not live together, gave up a Man

for a Mirror ; but the Wise, knowing that man is mortal, gave up the World for the Work, and thereby cheated satiety, disillusionment and Death.

Yet, so fearful was I at this time that I had failed, and shown myself unfit to accomplish the terrific Tasks, to undertake which must be, as I was warned by some secret sense, the only honour I could accept from the High Gods, that I continued my journey to Ceylon in a mood not only contrite but confused. The calm soft loveliness of the Inland Sea brought no peace to my spirit ; indeed, it made scarcely any impression upon my æsthetic sense. The sordid scramble of the Foreign Settlement of Shanghai stirred my scorn without rousing me from my stupefaction. In spite of the subtle passion to assimilate China which had taken possession of me in San Francisco, I could not so much as indulge in a saunter through the Native City. I wanted to reach Hong Kong, and tell my troubles to my Sister Fidelis. She would understand, judge, encourage, and advise, none better. In the days of the G . ˙ . D . ˙ . *debâcle*, her purity, her fearlessness, her loyalty, her scorn of all dishonourable device and deed, her single-heartedness, her eager and ecstatic aspiration : these had made sweet those struggles against the stupid, selfish sectaries with their petty pique, their treacherous trickeries, their slanders and squabbles.

Ah me ! the Gods were at their grim game ; they had another dagger ready to slip between my ribs. Fidelis was now a married woman. She was still playing at Magick, as another might play at Bridge. But her true life was dresses, dinners and dances ; and her thoughts were taken up by her husband and her lover. (In hot countries, white men being relaxed by the climate, European women,

over-stimulated for the same reason, almost inevitably practise polyandry.)

And she had won the first prize at a fancy dress Ball by appearing in her Adept's robes and regalia!

No hope here, then! Nay, nor elsewhere! I saw clearly enough that the Gods meant me to work out my own puzzles without human help. I must stand alone. Well and good, so be it! I had the sense to accept the Ordeal as a compliment. The umbilical cord was cut: I was an independent Being, with his own way to make in the World.

On the boat from Yokohama to Shanghai were two American spinsters of the faded variety, with parchment skin due to dryness of climate and devotion to virtue and cocktails. Hearing that I was interested in literature, hope revived. They told me their favourite poet was Rossetti. I was tactless enough to ask which of his poems they had read and preferred, but it did not run to that. It was sufficiently daring to have heard of Rossetti. Only absolute shamelessness would read him. Somewhat abashed, they informed me that a colleague was travelling on this boat, no less than Thomas Hardy. Naturally I jumped and begged an introduction.

Thomas Hardy was a tall, dignified, venerable figure, with a patriarchal beard and manner equally courteous and authoritative. I had not known he was a clergyman—as his costume assured me. After a little conversation, I began to surmise dimly that there was something wrong, and might have said something tactless if he had not volunteered an account of his literary career, and been quite unaware of the existence of the Mayor of Casterbridge. He was the *great* Thomas Hardy, the only and original bird,

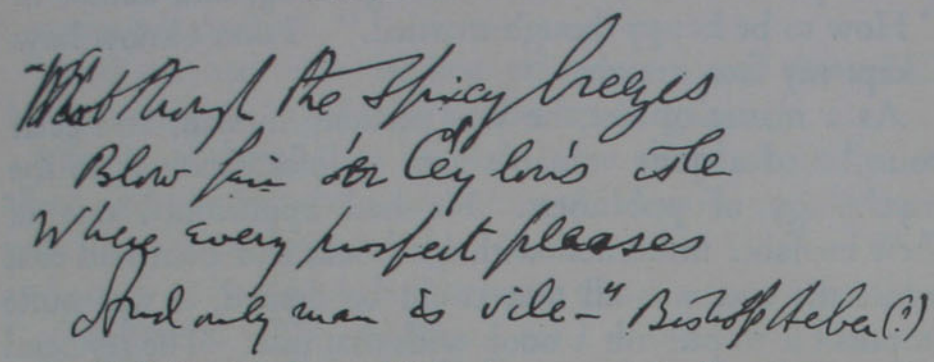
the chaplain to the Forces at Hong Kong, and author of "How to be happy though married." I don't know how I kept my face straight.

As a matter of fact, he was perfectly human, and even contributed a quite valuable item of information as to the psychology of publishers. He had approached one of these ineffable imbeciles* with his book, and been told that while the text was all that could be desired, it was quite impossible to publish a book with that title. The reverend gentleman had the good sense to reply, "You blasted jackass—God damn your soul to Hell! (or words to that effect). Do anything you like with the book, but leave the title alone!" He cowed them, and they complied, with the result that the book sold by hundreds of thousands.

* "Present Company Always Excepted."

** [WE ARE NOT SO SURE.]

STANZA XXVII



I sailed for Ceylon, chiefly because I had said I would go, certainly not in the hope of assistance from Allan. Perhaps because I had found my feet, he was, as will appear, allowed to guide them in what seemed at first sight a new Path. I had got to learn that all roads lead to Rome. It is proper, more, it is prudent, more yet, it is educative, for the aspirant to pursue all possible Ways to Wisdom. Thus he broadens the base of his Pyramid, thus he diminishes the probability of missing the method which happens to suit him best, thus he insures against the obsession that the goat-track of his own success is the One Highway for all men, and thus he discounts the disappointment of discovering that he is not the Utter, the Unique, when it becomes plain that Magick, Mysticism, and Mathematics are triplets, and that the Himalayan Brotherhood is to be found in Brixton.

I say little of Singapore; I say enough when I say that its curries, with their vast partitioned platter of curious condiments to lackey them, speak for themselves. They sting like serpents, stimulate like strychnine; they are subtle and sensual like Chinese courtesans, sublime and sacred, inscrutably inspiring and unintelligibly illuminating, like Cambodian carvings.

ALLAN BENNETT IN CEYLON

Of Penang I will observe only that its one perfect product is the "Penang Lawyer." But I should like to hear of any other city which can say the same!

As to Colombo, I love it and loathe it with nicely balanced enthusiasm. Its climate is chronic; its architecture is an unhappy accident; its natives are nasty, the men with long hair cooped up by a comb, smelling of fish, the women with waists bulging black between coat and skirt, greasy with coco-nut oil, and both chewing betel and spitting it out till their teeth ooze with red and the streets look like shambles; its English are exhausted and enervated. The Eurasians are anæmic abortions; the Burghers —Dutch half-castes—stolid squareheads; the Portuguese piebalds sly sneaks, vicious, venal, vermiform villains. The Tamils are black but not comely. The riff-raff of rascality endemic in all ports is here exceptionally repulsive. The high-water-mark of social tone, moral elevation, manners and refinement, is attained by the Japanese ladies-of-pleasure.

In the matter of religion, the Hindus are (as everywhere else) servile, shallow, cowardly and hypocritical; though being mostly Shaivites, adoring frankly the power of Procreation and Destruction, they are less loathsome than Vishnavites, who cringe before a fetish who promises them Preservation, and (as Krishna) claims to be the Original of which Christ is a copy.

The Christians are, of course, obscene outcasts from even the traditional tolerance of their clan; they have accepted Jesus with the promise of a job, and gag conscience with assurance of Atonement, or chloroform superstitious terrors by ruminating on Redemption. The Buddhists are sodden with their surfeit of indigestible philosophy, and feebly flaunt a fluttering formula of which the meaning is

forgotten ; the debauchery of devil-dances, the pointless profession of Pansil (the Five Precepts of the Buddha), the ceremonial coddling of shrines as old maids coddle cats, voluble veneration and rigmarole religion : such is the threadbare tinsel which they throw over the nakedness of their idleness, immorality, and imbecility.

Indians plausibly maintain that some God got all the worst devils into Ceylon, and then cut it off from the continent by the Straits.

But then, how rich, how soft, how peaceful is Colombo ! One feels that one need never do anything any more. It invites one to dream deliciously of deciduous joys—and insists, with velvet hand, light and bright as a butterfly's wing, on the eyelids. The palms, the flowers, the swooning song of the surf, the dim and delicate atmosphere heavy with sensuous scents, the idle irresponsible people, purring with placid pleasure ; they seem musicians in an orchestra, playing a Nocturne by some oriental Chopin unconscious of disquieting realities.

But more, Colombo is the " place where four winds meet," the cross-roads of the civilised world. Westward lies Europe, the energetic stripling, who thought to bear the world on his shoulders, but could not co-ordinate his own muscles. Northward lies India, like a woman weary of bearing, a widow holding to her ancient habits without hope. Southward, Australia, topsy-turvy as our childhood's wisdom warned us, sprawls its awkward adolescence, and embarrasses its elders by its unconscious absurdity. Lastly, look Eastward ! There lies China ; there is the only civilisation that has looked Time in the face without a blush ; an atheism with good manners. There broods the old wise man, he who has conquered life without the aid of

death, who may survive these strenuous youths, and even the worn barren widow mumbling meaningless memories in her toothless mouth.

In Colombo this world-problem solves itself; for the Indian toils, without ambition or object, from sheer habit; the European bosses things, with self-importance and bravado; the Australian lumbers in and out, loutishly, hoping not to be seen; and China, silent and absent, conveys majestically patriarchal reproof by simply ignoring the impertinence. Slightly as I had brushed against the yellow silken robes of China in the press of jostling cultures, its virtue had so entered into me that the positive and aggressive aspects of Colombo, tumultuously troubling though they were, failed to command my full attention. As you vainly ply an opium-smoker who craves his pipe with wine, with woman, and with song, so the insolent insistence of the actualities of Colombo merely annoyed me; I was intensely aware of one thing only, the absence of the colossal calm and common sense of China.

Experience has taught me that imponderables are all-important; when science declares that it can concern itself only with that which can be measured, it classes itself with the child that counts on its fingers, and brands Shakespeare and Shelley as Charlatans. I am not ashamed of such company; let me say then that the silent stress of my contact with the fringe of Chinese civilisation operated in me the cure of my accursed European anxiety about my conduct. It is at least the fact that I met Allan with absolute *sang-froid*. I felt no need of confession. I had no sense of shame or inferiority. I had no favour to ask. I had perfect confidence in myself. We were interested in

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the same Quest, that was all ; it was natural that we should exchange views.

Behold then ! Allan, though the pupil of a Shaivite Guru, was already at heart a Buddhist ; and the miracle about Buddha, from the ethnological standpoint, is that an Aryan, by dint of sheer psychological acumen, should have come so near to understanding the Chinese mind. The fundamental weakness of Buddhism is that it fails to attain the Indifference of Lao-tze. Buddha wails for Nibbana as the sole refuge from Sorrow ; Lao-tze despises Sorrow as casually as he despises Happiness, and is content to react equably to every possible impression.

Must I digress to excuse Allan Bennett, the noblest and the gentlest soul that I have ever known ? Surely the immanence of physical agony, the continual anguish of the cross on which he has been nailed for more than fifty years, he not complaining, he not submitting, he not demanding release, but working inexorably and inexpugnably at his appointed Task—surely the unremitting stroke of that fell fact must have avenged itself for its foiled malice by fashioning his conception of the Universe in the same form as seemed omnivalent to the Buddha, who could not estimate the influence of his vain desolating years of idle luxury, and the abortive atonement of his random reaction to angry asceticism.

Allan never knew joy ; he disdained and distrusted pleasure from the womb. Is it strange that he should have been unable to conceive life as aught but ineluctable and fatuous evil ? For myself, I saw pleasure as puerile, sorrow as senile ; I was ready, when mine hour should arrive, to accept either amicably or dismiss both disdainfully.

Meanwhile, I was simply an adept—wandering round

the world in the way adepts have—bent on picking up any pearls that proved their pedigrees from honest oysters, and were guaranteed rejected by swine.

So, when I saw Allan, I put my question, referred to above, and got my answer.

The official record is subjoined.

D.D.C.F., Mathers, had told me a certain incident which had taken place between himself and Bennett as follows :

> " He and I.A. had disagreed upon an obscure point in theology, thereby formulating the accursed Dyad, thereby enabling the Abramelin demons to assume material form : one in his own shape, another in that of I.A. Now, the demon that looked like I.A. had a revolver, and threatened to shoot him (D.D.C.F.), while the demon that resembled himself was equally anxious to shoot I.A. Fortunately, before the demons could fire, V.N.R. (Mrs. Mathers) came into the room, thus formulating the symbol of the Blessed Trinity.
>
> " Frater I.A.'s account was less of a strain upon P.'s faculties of belief. They had had, he said, an argument about the God Shiva, the Destroyer, whom I.A. worshipped because, if one repeated his name often enough, Shiva would one day open his eye and destroy the Universe, and whom D.D.C.F. feared and hated because He would one day open His eye and destroy D.D.C.F. I.A. closed the argument by assuming the position Padmasana and repeating the Mantra : ' Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.' D.D.C.F., angrier than ever, sought the sideboard, but soon returned, only to find Frater I.A. still

muttering: 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.' 'Will you stop blaspheming?' cried D.D.C.F.; but the holy man only said: 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.' 'If you don't stop I will shoot you!' said D.D.C.F., drawing a revolver from his pocket and levelling it at I.A.'s head; but I.A., being concentrated, took no notice, and continued to mutter: 'Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.'

"Whether overawed by the majesty of the saint, or interrupted by the entry of a third person, I.A. no longer remembered, but D.D.C.F. never pulled the trigger."

Mathers thus disposed of, to business!

What of the Great Work? Did it become absurd with Mathers? No more than Everest ceases to attract when the Alpine Club caps incompetence with manslaughter!

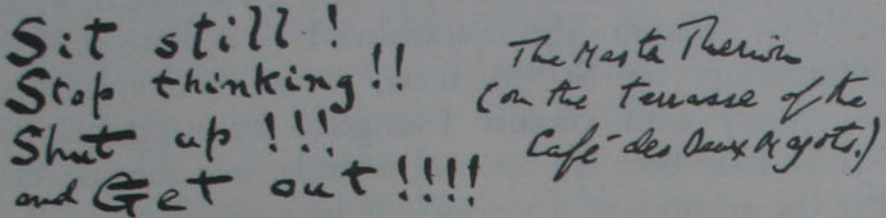
We simply dismissed from our minds the whole question of the G.·.D.·., and restated the problem on First Principles.

In this situation, I had the advantage of wider reading and more varied experience than Allan; he, that of more intensive training, and especially of his recent initiation into Asiatic arcana under the ægis of Shri Parananda, Solicitor-General of Ceylon (as Aramis was a musketeer) *per interim*, and a Yogi *cap-à-pied*. I had learnt modesty from Eckenstein's engineering epithets and Mexican mountains; so I shut up—as Doris Gomez once immortally observed, at the conclusion of a prolonged and uninterrupted harangue "If you've got anything more to say, shut up!"—and concentrated on learning the least lemma of his lore instead of inflicting on him my own Intimations of Immortality.

He expressed the Elements of Yoga. I said: "Your health will improve in a climate less addicted to damp and damnability: come to Kandy; we'll get a bungalow, and get busy. Damn Shri Parananda! Let him excel his Commentary on St. Matthew, where he explains the discrepancy with another Evangelist by suggesting that "Jesus rode both an ass and a mule, one foot on each, after the manner of a circus", if he can. You shall get ready to take the Yellow Robe while you train me to triumph over Tanha, and attain Asana, and perform Pranayama, and practice Pratyhara, and do Dharana, and demand Dhyana, and swat Samadhi, all same No. 1 top-side Master Patanjali, heap holy pidgin!"

An appeal couched in such chastely correct yet politely passionate phraseology could not fail to bury its barb in the Bull's Eye. Allan "prayed permission to quit the presence" of the pious Parananda, whose arrogance and meanness he equated with his scholarship and sanctity. We sampled Kandy—which has delights (permit the pun for the advertisement!) unsuspected by "Mary Elizabeth." We took a furnished bungalow called "Marlborough" (God knows why!) on the hills, by a stream, with waterfall complete, overlooking the lake, the temple, and an amateur attempt at an hotel. We hired a hopeless headman, who sub-hired sleepy and sinister servants, and dismissed all these damnable details from our minds, devoting ourselves with diabolical determination and saintly simplicity to the search for a spiritual solution to the material muddle. Our sojourn, short as it was by worldly reckoning, proved to be pregnant with events of internal import. The tyrant Time took his first wound in Kandy.

STANZA XXVIII



Allan's adventures in Ceylon had been varied. His first idea had been to take the Yellow Robe ; that is, to become a member of the Buddhist Sangha. These men are not priests or monks, as we understand the words ; it is hard for European minds to understand the conditions of their life. They have renounced the world, and live as mendicants ; but it may be stated roughly that the rules of their Order, which are very complex and often seem irrational or frivolous, are all devised in the interest of a single ideal. Each rule meets some probable contingency. But in every case the object is to enable the Bhikkhu to carry out his programme of spiritual development. There are no superstitious terrors, no propitiatory practices ; the whole object is to enable a man to free himself from the fetters of desire which hamper his actions, and (incidentally) produce the phantasms which we call phenomena. In Buddhism, the Universe is conceived as an illusion, created by ignorant cravings. It is, in fact, a dream as defined by Freud's hypothesis.

Allan was already at heart a Buddhist. The more he studied the Tripitika, " the three baskets of the law "—waste paper baskets I used to call them—the more he was attracted, but he was fearfully disappointed by the degeneracy

of the Singalese Bhikkhus. With rare exceptions, they were ignorant, idle, immoral, and dishonest. At Anuradhapura, the sacred ruined city, their conduct is so openly scandalous as to have given rise to a proverb : " A Bhikkhu is made, not born—except at Anuradhapura." Allan had been offered the post of Treasurer to a famous monastery outside Colombo, for the avowed reason that they could not trust any one of themselves. Considering that a Bhikkhu is not allowed to touch money at all, this was rather the limit.

The Solicitor-General of Ceylon, the Hon. P. Ramanathan, engaged Allan as private tutor to his younger sons. This gentleman was a man of charming personality, wide culture, and profound religious knowledge. He was eminent as a Yogi of the Shaivite sect of Hindus (he was a Tamil of high caste) and had written commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and John, interpreting the sayings of Christ as instructions in Yoga. It is indeed a fact that one of the characters who have been pieced together to compose the figure of " Jesus " was a Yogi. His injunctions to abandon family ties, to make no provision for the future, and so on, are typical.

From this man, Allan learnt a great deal of the Theory and Practice of Yoga. When he was about eighteen, Allan had accidentally stumbled into the trance called Shivadarshana, in which the Universe, having been perceived in its totality as a single phenomenon, independent of space and time, is then annihilated. This experience had determined the whole course of his life. His one object was to get back into that state. Shri Parananda showed him a rational practical method of achieving this. Yet Allan was not wholly in sympathy with his teacher, who, despite his great spiritual experience, had not succeeded in

snapping the shackles of dogma, and whose practice seemed in some respects at variance with his principles. Allan was almost puritanically strict. He had been offered a position as manager of a coconut plantation, but refused it on learning that his duties would involve giving orders for the destruction of vermin. He had not sufficient breadth of view to see that any kind of life implies acquiescence in, and therefore responsibility for, murder ; by eating rice one becomes the accomplice of the agriculturist in destroying life.

His health was vastly improved. In the Red Sea his asthma completely disappeared, and he had thrown overboard his entire apparatus of drugs. But the enervating climate of Colombo sapped his energies. He had little hesitation in accepting my proposal to go and live at Kandy and devote ourselves to Yoga.

At " Marlborough " we found the conditions for work very favourable. The first step was to get rid of all other preoccupations. I revised *Tannhäuser*, wrote an introduction, typed it all out, and sent it to the Press. I put aside *Orpheus*, and left *Alice, an Adultery* to ripen. I did not think much of it ; and would not publish it until time had ratified it.

One of my principal inhibitions at this period was due to the apparent antinomy between the normal satisfaction of bodily appetites and the obvious conditions of success. I did not solve this completely until my attainment of the Grade of a Master of the Temple in 1909, when at last I realised that every thought, word, and act might be pressed into the service of the soul : more, that it must be if the soul were ever to be free. I " mixed up the planes " for many years to some extent, though never as badly as most mystics do.

During this retirement I was fortunate in being under the constant vigilant supervision of Allan Bennett, whose experience enabled him to detect the first onset of disturbing ideas. For instance, the revising and typing of *Tannhäuser* were quite sufficient to distract my mind from meditation, and would even upset me in such apparently disconnected matters as Prânayâmâ. It is easy to understand that a heavy meal will interfere with one's ability to control one's respiration ; but one is inclined to laugh at the Hindu theory that it can be affected by such things as casual conversation. None the less, they are right. Apart from one's normal reactions, these practices make one supersensitive. I was not confining myself to any rigid diet ; and I remember that at a certain period the idea of food became utterly revolting. It is doubtless a question of nervous hyperæsthesia ; as is well known, over-indulgence in alcohol and certain other drugs tends to destroy the appetite. Inexperienced practitioners, insufficiently grounded in physiology and philosophy, may perhaps be excused (though of course reproved) for misunderstanding the import of the phenomena. One is inclined to say : " Now that I am becoming holy, I find that I dislike the idea of eating : Argal, eating is unholy ; and it will help me to become still holier if I resolutely suppress the squeals of appetite." Such, I believe, is the basis of much of the fantastic morality which has muddled mystical teaching throughout history. I do not think that straightforward *à priori* considerations would have carried unquestioning conviction in the absence of apparent confirmation of their hypotheses.

This " confusion of the planes " is in my opinion the chief cause of failure to attain. It is constantly cropping up in all sorts of connections. The aspirant must be armed

with the Magical Sword, dividing asunder the joints of the marrow of every observation that he makes. A single unanalysed idea is liable to obsess him and send him astray : "It may be for years and it may be for ever." He must never weary of assigning its exact limitations to every phenomenon. History, by the way, is full of examples of this error in major matters. Consider only how the idea that epidemics, the failure of the crops, and military misfortune were due to the wrath of God, prevented the development of science, agriculture, and the art of war. Last spring, 1922, there was a drought in Sicily. The priests made a mighty Poojah and prayed for rain. The rain came, and did more harm than the drought ; then the drought took hold again and lasted all the summer, either in spite of the intercessions of Cybele, or whatever they call her nowadays, or because she was not to be propitiated by the adulterated sacrifices with which her modern ministers pretend that they can cozen her.

I attribute my own success in Mysticism and Magick, and the much greater success that I have been able to secure for my successors, almost entirely to my scientific training. It enabled me to determine the actual physiological and psychological conditions of attainment. My experience as a teacher enables me to simplify more and more as each fresh case comes under my notice. I can put my finger more quickly and surely on the spot with every waxing moon. I achieved in eleven years what hardly anyone before had done in forty, and it cannot be explained by individual genius, for I have been able to take men with hardly a scrap even of talent and teach them what took me eleven years in seven or eight for the firstcomers, in five or six for their successors, and so on till, at the present moment,

I feel able to promise any man or woman of average ability who has the germ of genuine aspiration, the essence of attainment within eight seasons. Of course it depends on each postulant to determine the details. Some departments of Occult Science lie outside the scope of particular people ; each one must fill in for himself his personal programme. But the supreme emancipation is the same in essence for all, and for the first time in history it has been possible to present this free from confusion, so that people can concentrate from the very beginning of their training on the one thing that matters.

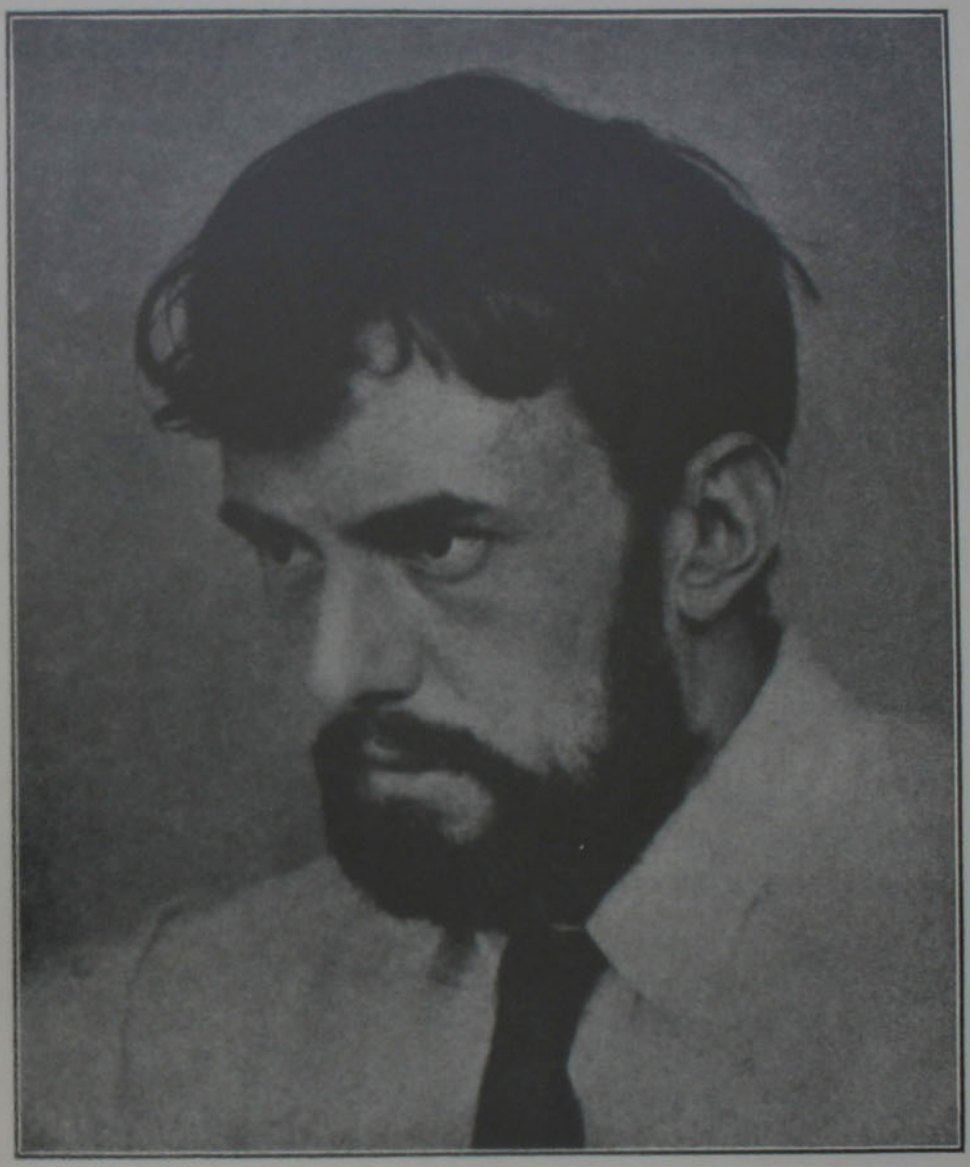
Our life was delightfully simple. Allan taught me the principles of Yoga ; fundamentally, there is only one. The problem is how to stop thinking ; for the theory is that the mind is a mechanism for dealing symbolically with impressions ; its construction is such that one is tempted to take these symbols for reality. Conscious thought, therefore, is fundamentally false, and prevents one from perceiving reality. The numerous practices of Yoga are simply dodges to help one to acquire the knack of slowing down the current of thought and ultimately stopping it altogether. This fact has not been realised by the Yogis themselves. Religious doctrines and sentimental or ethical considerations have obscured the truth. I believe I am entitled to the credit of being the first man to understand the true bearings of the question.

I was led to this discovery chiefly through studying Comparative Mysticism. For instance ; a Catholic repeats Ave Maria rapidly and continuously ; the rhythm inhibits the intellectual process. The result is an ecstatic vision of Mary. The Hindu repeats Aum Hari Aum, in the same way, and gets a vision of Vishnu. But I

noticed that the characteristics of both visions were identical save for the sectarian terminology in which the memory recorded them. I argued that process and result were identical. It was a physiological phenomenon, and the apparent divergence was due to the inability of the mind to express the event except by using the language of worship which was familiar.

Extended study and repeated experiment have confirmed this conviction. I have thus been able to simplify the process of spiritual development by eliminating all dogmatic accretions. To get into a trance is of the same order of phenomena as to get drunk. It does not depend on creed. Virtue is only necessary in so far as it favours success ; just as certain diets, neither right nor wrong in themselves, are indicated for the athlete or the diabetic. I am proud of having made it possible for my pupils to achieve in months what previously required as many years. Also, of having saved the successful from the devastating delusion that the intellectual image of their experience is an universal truth.

This error has wrought more mischief in the past than any other. Mohammed's conviction that his visions were of imperative importance to " Salvation " made him a fanatic. Almost all religious tyranny springs from intellectual narrowness. The spiritual energy derived from the high trances makes the seer a formidable force ; and unless he be aware that his interpretation is due only to the exaggeration of his own tendencies of thought, he will seek to impose it on others, and so delude his disciples, pervert their minds, and prevent their development. He can do good only in one way, that is, by publishing the methods by which he attained illumination : in other words, by adding his experience to the sum of scientific knowledge.



CEYLON, SEPTEMBER, 1901 EV

I have myself striven strenuously to do this, always endeavouring to make it clear that my results are of value only to myself, and that even my methods may need modification in every case, just as each poet, golfer, and barrister must acquire a style peculiar to his idiosyncrasies.

Yoga, properly understood, is thus a simple scientific system, of attaining a definite psychological state. Consider its Eight Branches! Yama and Niyama, "Control" and "Super-control," give rules for preventing the mind from being disturbed by moral emotions and passions, such as anger, fear, greed, lust and the like.

Asana, "position," is the art of sitting perfectly still, so that the body can no longer send messages to the mind. Pranayama, "control of breath-force," consists in learning to breathe as slowly, deeply, and regularly as possible. The slightest mental irritation or excitement always makes one breathe quickly and unevenly; thus one is able to detect any disturbance of calm by observing this system. Also, by forcibly controlling the breath one can banish such ideas. Also, one reduces to a minimum the consciousness that one is breathing.

One may remark at this point that such precaution seems absurd; but until one begins to try to keep the mind from wandering, one has no conception of the way in which the minutest modifications of thought, impressions which are normally transitory or unperceived, form the starting point for Odysseys of distraction. It may be several minutes before one wakes up to the fact that one's wits have gone wool-gathering.

Pratyahara is introspection. One obtains the power of analysing an apparently simple thought or impression into its elements. One can, for example, teach oneself to feel

separately the numberless impressions connected with the act of crooking one's fingers. This is a revelation in itself; so simple a muscular movement is found to contain an epic of deliciously exciting incidents. The idea is, of course, not to enjoy such pleasures, subtle and exquisite as they are; but by analysing thoughts and impressions to detect their prodromal symptoms and nip them in the bud. Also, to understand and estimate them by detailed examination. One important result of this is to appreciate the unimportance and equivalence of all thoughts, very much as modern chemistry has put an end to the medieval nonsense about the sacredness of some compounds and the wickedness of others. Another is to give one a clear and comprehensive view of the elements of the Universe as a whole.

Dharana, concentration, is now easier to practice. One has learnt what interruptions to expect, and how to prevent them. We, therefore, make a definite attack on the multiplicity of thoughts by fixing the mind on one. In my Book 4, Part I, I have copied from my diary at this period an attempt at classification of invading ideas. I am very proud of this apparently simple observation, and it will aid the reader to understand my work in Kandy if I insert it.

> *Breaks* are classed as follows:
>
> *Firstly*, physical sensations. These should have been overcome by Asana.
>
> *Secondly*, breaks that seem to be dictated by events immediately preceding the meditation. Their activity becomes tremendous. Only by this practice does one understand how much is really observed by the senses without the mind becoming conscious of it.

Thirdly, there is a class of breaks partaking of the nature of reverie or "day-dreams." These are very insidious—one may go on for a long time without realising that one has wandered at all.

Fourthly, we get a very high class of break, which is a sort of aberration of the control itself. You think, "How well I am doing it!" or perhaps that it would be rather a good idea if you were on a desert island, or if you were in a sound-proof house, or if you were sitting by a waterfall. But these are only trifling variations from the vigilance itself.

A fifth class of breaks seems to have no discoverable source in the mind. Such may even take the form of actual hallucination, usually auditory. Of course, such hallucinations are infrequent, and are recognised for what they are; otherwise the student had better see his doctor. The usual kind consists of odd sentences or fragments of sentences, which are heard quite distinctly in a recognisable human voice, not the student's own voice, or that of any one he knows. A similar phenomenon is observed by wireless operators, who call such messages "atmospherics."

There is *a further kind of break, which is the desired result itself*. It must be dealt with later in detail.

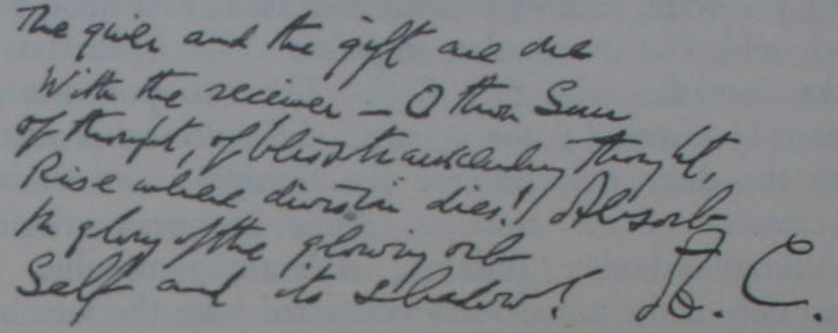
Dhyana is the name of the first trance. By trance I mean a state of consciousness definitely distinct from the normal. Its characteristic is that whereas in normal consciousness two things are always present—the percipient and the perceived—in Dhyana these two have become one. At first this union usually takes place with explosive violence. There are many other characteristics; in particular, time

and space are abolished. This, however, occurs with almost equal completeness in certain states of normal abstract thought.

The attainment of this trance is likely to upset the whole moral balance of the student. He often attributes an exaggerated importance to the imperfect ideas which represent his memory of what happened. He cannot possibly remember the thing itself, because his mind lacks the machinery of translating it into normal thought. These ideas are naturally his pet delusions. They seem to him to have become armed with supreme spiritual sanction, so he may become a fanatic or a megalomaniac. In my system the pupil is taught to analyse all ideas and abolish them by philosophical scepticism before he is allowed to undertake the practices which lead to Dhyana.

Samadhi, "Union with the Lord," is the general term for the final trance, or rather, series of trances. It differs from Dhyana in this way: Dhyana is partial, Samadhi is universal. In the first Samadhi, the Universe is perceived as a unity. In the second that unity is annihilated. There are, however, many other Samadhis, and in any case the quality of the trance will depend upon the extent of the Universe which enters into it. One must really be a profound philosopher with a definite intellectual conception of the Universe as an organic whole, based on the co-ordination of immense knowledge, before one can expect really satisfactory results. The Samadhi of an ignorant and shallow thinker who has failed to co-ordinate his conceptions of the cosmos will not be worth very much.

STANZA XXIX



The general idea of Eastern religions is that any manifestation of Being is necessarily imperfect, since it is not the sum of all truth. (For, if it were, it would not be distinguishable from any other manifestation). Hence, its nature is evil, and its effect on the mind to create sorrow. Their idea is to destroy all thought as being false and painful. Their idea is liberation from the illusion of existence. The effect of Samadhi is firstly to produce the bliss which comes from the relief from pain. Later, this bliss disappears, and one attains perfect indifference.

But we need not go so far into their philosophy, or accept it. Thanks partly to William James's "Varieties of Religious Experience," I got the idea of employing the methods of Yoga to produce genius at will. James points out that various religious teachers attained their power to influence mankind in what is essentially the same way; that is, by getting into Samadhi. The trance gives supreme spiritual energy and absolute self-confidence; it removes the normal inhibitions to action. I proposed then that any man should use this power to develop his faculties and inspire his ambitions by directing the effects of the trance into the channel of his career. This idea at once connects Mysticism with Magick; for one of the principal oper-

ations of Magick is to invoke the God appropriate to the thing you want, identify yourself with Him, and flood your work with His immaculate impulse. This is, in fact, to make Samadhi with that God. The two processes are essentially identical; the apparent difference arises merely from the distinction between the European and Asiatic conceptions of the cosmos. Most European religion, including orthodox Judaism, is anthropomorphic, an expansion of the moral ideas connected with the members of a family. Asiatic religions,* even when superficially Theistic, always imply an impersonal universe. One idealises human forces; the other, the forces of Nature.

The diary describing my practices has been printed in the Equinox, Vol. I, No. 4. It is very fortunate that it should have been kept in such detail, for it is matter for surprise that such progress should have been made in so short a time. But I started with several great advantages: youth, indomitable determination to devote every energy to the work, a technical training under Eckenstein, and the constant presence of one to whom I could immediately submit any issue that might arise.

It is unnecessary to describe in detail the results of these practices. Some of them, interesting and perhaps important in themselves, do not mean much to the layman. It will be well, nevertheless, to indicate some of the major phenomena.

One soon obtains an entirely new conception of one's own mind. Till one has practised, one has no idea of the actual contents. The fact is that the uninitiate is aware only of the solutions of his mental equations; he is not conscious of the rough working. Further, he does not

* Including the oldest Greek religion in its best aspects.

feel the actual impression made by each individual impact upon the mind. He totally mistakes its character, which is, in reality, arbitrary and imperative. The first analysis shows it as out of relation with its predecessors and successors. Later on, one discovers the subconscious links which join the elements. This process of subdivision seems as if it might be continued indefinitely.

I will try and make matters clearer by an illustration. The normal man looking from the top of the Jungfrau sees Monta Rosa, the Matterhorn, the Dent Blanche, and other high peaks, all the way to Mont Blanc, sticking up out of the morning mists. They appear to him isolated phenomena. The mists clear, and he becomes aware that these peaks are the summits of a range; they are joined by a ridge rising to lesser peaks and falling to passes. But these secondary irregularities are themselves based on smaller ones, and even on a level glacier one finds that the surface is not uniform; each separate crystal of snow may be further examined, and we find even in it an arrangement of elements salient and re-entrant, which is comparable to the original macroscopic view. Acquaintance with this phenomenon leads one to inquire into the ultimate nature of the atoms of thought. Each atom assumes an importance equal to that of the others. One's sense of values is completely destroyed.

There is also the problem: how is it that one's idea of a horse, for example, should be composed of a set of ideas, none of which have any apparent relation with it, exactly as the word horse itself is composed of the letters h-o-r-s-e, none of which, by itself, suggests a horse, or part of one, in any way? Similarly, a lump of sugar is not merely a mass of homogeneous crystals, but each crystal is composed of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen, elements which in them-

selves possess none of the characteristic qualities of sugar. One perceives that mental and physical phenomena share this irrationality.

It will be seen from the above remarks that a very superficial investigation of thought leads inevitably to the most revolutionary consequences. At this time, however, I was not sufficiently advanced to perceive the full implications of these discoveries. My record contents itself with noting the mere symptoms produced by the practices. Even before leaving Colombo, I had heard the astral bell, to which so much factitious importance has been given. I had also purified what are called the Nadi. My complexion became strangely clear; my voice had lost the harsh *timbre* natural to it; my appearance had become calm; my eyes unusually bright; and I was constantly conscious of what is called the Nada, which is a sound the character of which varies considerably, but in my case most frequently resembled the twittering of nightingales.

Pranayama produced, firstly, a peculiar kind of perspiration; secondly, an automatic rigidity of the muscles; and thirdly, the very curious phenomenon of causing the body, while still absolutely rigid, to take little hops in various directions. It seems as if one were somehow raised, possibly an inch from the ground, and deposited very gently a short distance away.

I saw a very striking case of this at Kandy. When Allan was meditating, it was my duty to bring his food very quietly (from time to time) into the room adjoining that where he was working. One day he missed two successive meals, and I thought I ought to look into his room to see if all was well. I must explain that I have known only two European women and three European men who could

sit in the attitude called Padmasana, which is that usually seen in seated images of the Buddha. Of these men, Allan was one. He could knot his legs so well that, putting his hands on the ground, he could swing his body to and fro in the air between them. When I looked into his room I found him, not seated on his meditation mat, which was in the centre of the room at the end farthest from the window, but in a distant corner ten or twelve feet off, still in his knotted position, resting on his head and right shoulder, exactly like an image overturned. I set him right way up, and he came out of his trance. He was quite unconscious that anything unusual had happened. But he had evidently been thrown there by the mysterious forces generated by Pranayama.

There is no doubt whatever about this phenomenon ; it is quite common. But the Yogis claim that the lateral motion is due to lack of balance, and that if one were in perfect equilibrium one would rise directly in the air. I have never seen any case of levitation, and hesitate to say that it has happened to me, though I have actually been seen by others on several occasions apparently poised in the air. For the first three phenomena I have found no difficulty in devising quite simple physiological explanations. But I can form no theory as to how the practice could counteract the force of gravitation, and I am unregenerate enough to allow this to make me sceptical about the occurrence of levitation. Yet, after all, the stars are suspended in space. There is no *à priori* reason why the forces which prevent them rushing together should not come into operation in respect of the earth and the body.

Again, you can prevent things from biting you by certain breathing exercises. Hold the breath in such a

way that the body becomes spasmodically rigid, and insects cannot pierce the skin. Near my bungalow at Kandy was a waterfall with a pool. Allan Bennett used to feed the leeches every morning. At any moment he could stop the leech, though already fastened to his wrist, by this breathing trick. We would put our hands together into the water ; his would come out free, mine with a dozen leeches on it. At such moments I would bitterly remark that a coyote will not eat a dead Mexican ; but it failed to annoy him.

On the shores of the lake stands a charmingly situated hotel. We used occasionally to go down there for a meal. It is some distance by road, so I used to take the short cut through the jungle. One day I had run down the hill at the top of my speed in my mountain boots, followed by a breathless servant. He arrived at the hotel ten minutes later with a dead cobra, 4 feet 8 inches in length. I had come down with my heel right on his neck, and never noticed it !

Asana was for a long time extremely painful. It sometimes cost me five minutes acute agony to straighten my limbs at the end of the practice. But success came at last. Quite suddenly I lost consciousness of my body. The effect was that of relief from long-continued suffering. Until that moment I had thought of my Asana as the one really painful position. This idea was reversed ; it became the only position in which I was free from bodily discomfort. To this day, though shamefully out of practice, I am able to obtain the benefit of a long rest by assuming the position for a few minutes.

The Phenomena of concentration are very varied and curious. For instance, the suppression of one's normal thoughts leads to their being replaced, not only by their

elements, as explained above, but by long forgotten memories of childhood. There are also what I have called "atmospherics." For instance, a voice is suddenly heard, "And if you're passing, won't you?" or "And not take the first step on virtue's giddy road." One of the entries on September 6th is worth quoting verbatim:

10.45-10.55 P.M. P.M. Dharana on tip of nose. I obtained a clear understanding of the unreality of that nose. This persists. An hour later whilst breathing on my arm as I was asleep, I said to myself: "What is this hot breath from?" I was forced to *think* before I could answer "my nose." Then I pinched myself and remembered at once; but again breathing, the same thing happened again. Therefore the "Dharanization" of my nose dividualizes Me and My Nose, affects my nose, disproves my nose, abolishes, annihilates and expunges my nose.

I was very alarmed one day to find that I had completely lost the object of concentration. I could not think what I wished to find or where to find it. I naturally thought something was very wrong. Here was an occasion when Allan's experience proved invaluable. Without it, I might have been frightened into giving up the practice. But he told me the result was good, showing that I was approaching the state of what is called "neighbourhood-concentration."

Another experience was this: I found myself at one

and the same moment conscious of external things in the background after the object of my concentration had vanished, and also conscious that I was *not* conscious of these things. To the normal mind this is of course sheer contradiction, but Buddhist psychology mentions this peculiar state. The higher faculties of the intelligence are not subject to the same laws as the lower.

I continually increased the number of hours which I devoted to my work. On October 2nd, to my amazement, I was successful in reaching the state of Dhyana. The experience was repeated on the following day. I quote the record verbatim :

> " After some eight hours' discipline by Pranayama arose ' The Golden Dawn.'
>
> " While meditating, suddenly I became conscious of a shoreless space of darkness and a glow of crimson athwart it. Deepening and brightening, scarred by dull bars of slate-blue cloud, arose the Dawn of Dawns. In splendour not of earth and its mean sun, blood-red, rayless, adamant, it rose, it rose ! Carried out of myself, I asked not ' Who is the witness ? ' absorbed utterly in contemplation of so stupendous and so marvellous a fact. For there was no doubt, no change, no wavering ; infinitely more real than aught ' physical ' is the Golden Dawn of this Eternal Sun ! But ere the Orb of Glory rose clear of its banks of blackness—alas my soul !—that Light Ineffable was withdrawn beneath the falling veil of darkness, and in purples and greys glorious beyond imaging, sad beyond conceiving, faded the superb Herald of the Day. But mine eyes have seen it ! And this, then, is Dhyana !

With it, yet all but unremarked, came a melody as of the sweet-souled Vina."

Next day :

"Again, by the Grace Ineffable of Bhavani to the meanest of Her devotees, arose the Splendour of the Inner Sun. As bidden by my Guru, I saluted the Dawn with Pranava. This, as I foresaw, retained the Dhyanic Consciousness. The Disk grew golden; rose clear of all its clouds, flinging great fleecy cumuli of rose and gold, fiery with light, into the æthyr of space. Hollow it seemed and rayless as the Sun in Sagittarius, yet incomparably brighter: but rising clear of cloud, it began to revolve, to coruscate, to throw off streamers of jetted fire! (This from a hill-top I beheld, dark as of a dying world. Covered with black decayed wet peaty wood, a few pines stood stricken, unutterably alone.) (Note. This is a mere thought-form induced by misunderstanding the instruction of Mâitrânanda Swami as to observing the phenomenon.) But behind the glory of its coruscations seemed to shape an idea, less solid than a shadow! an Idea of some Human-seeming Form! Now grew doubt and thought in P's miserable mind; and the one Wave grew many waves and all was lost! Alas! Alas! for P! And Glory Eternal unto Her, She the twin-Breasted that hath encroached even upon the other half of the Destroyer! 'OM Namo Bhâvaniya OM.'"

The result of this attainment was what I should least have

expected. I was not encouraged to proceed ; it seemed as if I had used up the accumulated energy of years. I found it impossible to force myself to continue. It was nearly two years before I resumed any regular practice.

The immediate current being thus exhausted, we decided to go on a pilgrimage to the ruined sacred cities of Buddhism. Allan had become more and more convinced that he ought to take the Yellow Robe. The Phenomena of Dhyana and Samadhi had ceased to exercise their first fascination. It seemed to him that they were insidious obstacles to true spiritual progress ; that their occurrence, in reality, broke up the control of the mind which he was trying to establish, and prevented him from reaching the ultimate truth which he sought. He had the strength of mind to resist the appeal of even these intense spiritual joys. Like physical love, they persuade their dupe to put up with the essential evil of existence.

As for myself, I had become impatient with the whole business. Dhyana had washed my brain completely out. I went on this pilgrimage in an entirely worldly frame of mind. My interests were in æsthetic, historical and ethnological matters, and in incidents of travel amid new scenes. I even took a somewhat demoniac delight in sceptical and scurrilous comment upon current events for the sheer joy of shocking Allan, and even in horrifying him by occasional excursions after big game. I may as well go back a little in time and record my general impressions of Ceylon as a man of the world, in connected sequence.

I was as full of romantic folly about the Wisdom of the East, and the splendours and luxuries of Asia, as I had been about Jacobites. But already I had learnt to use my eyes ; prejudices had somehow lost their power to persuade.

My experience of the Order probably counted for a good deal in this. At the same time, I did not swing from one extreme to the other. "Blessed are they that expect nothing; for they shall not be disappointed!" I was in no danger of judging the Principles of Buddhism by the practices of Buddhists. I worked out the logical consequences of any philosophy without reference to the criticisms of history. The Buddhism of Ceylon is based on the canon of their Scriptures. But the customs of the people have been for the most part adapted to the new religion; very much as Paganism persisted unchanged, except as to terminology, when it was camouflaged by Christianity; just as the Ass of Priapus became the ass of the Nativity; as Jupiter became Jehovah; Isis, Mary; and so on; as the crown of Osiris developed into the Papal Tiara; as the feasts of corn and wine were resumed in the Eucharist, so did the old rites of fetish and ancestor-worship continue under new names. The old Demonology was adapted to Buddhist theories.

The primitive instincts of people are ineradicable; their passions and fears always find approximately the same expression, despite the efforts of philosophers and religious reformers. So I was neither surprised nor shocked (as was the more ingenuous Allan) at the devil-dances and similar superstitious practices which pretended to a part in the pure rational and straightforward spirituality of Buddhism. The very simplicity and savagery of these practices were pleasing. The enthusiasm was sincere; there was no hypocrisy, no humbug, no sanctimoniousness, no protestations of virtue or assumptions of superiority.

The supreme glory of Kandy is an alleged tooth of the Buddha. It is enclosed in seven concentric caskets, some of which are enormously valuable and beautiful. Gold

and jewels are nothing accounted of. Some years before my visit, one of these caskets had been stolen. The King of Siam provided a new one at the cost of an incredible number of lakhs of rupees. He made a journey to Kandy with his retinue in great pomp to make the presentation in person, and the priests refused to allow him to see the tooth! It was a magnificent piece of impudence—and of policy. My own Unpretentious Holiness met with better fortune. Allan and I were permitted to be present at the annual inspection by the trustees. I believe the tooth to be that of a dog or crocodile, but though I got an excellent view at close quarters, I am not anatomist enough to be positive. I am, however, quite certain that it is not a human tooth.

Homage is paid to this relic every year at a ceremony called the Perahera. I was not impressed by the sanctity of the proceedings; but as a spectacle it is certainly gorgeous. The very wildness and lack of appropriateness add to its charm. The processions to which we are accustomed in Europe and America are all so cleverly thought out that the effect is merely to irritate. The Perahera is a gigantic jollification; they bring out all their elephants, dancers, monks, officials, drums, horns, torches—anything that makes a blaze or a noise, and let them all loose at once. The effect is of impromptu excitement. Poor, serious, single-minded Allan, with his whole soul set on alleviating the sufferings of humanity and helping them to reach a higher plane of existence, was saddened and disillusioned.

One incident was somewhat scandalously amusing. He was doing his best to enter into the spirit of the thing, and called my attention to the "strains of wild oriental music." I knew better. I had read Herrick's poem about the

young lady who left a glove in the royal presence, and remembered that Lady Clara de Vere de Vere has certain physiological properties in common with the elephant. Poor Allan was absolutely horrified when he realised his mistake.

The scene was wild and somewhat sinister. The darkness, the palms, the mountainous background, the silent lake below, the impenetrable canopy of space, studded with secretive and significant stars, formed a stupendous setting for the savage noise and blaze of the ceremony. One half-saw huge shadowy shapes moving mysteriously in the torchlight, and the air vibrated violently with the jubilant rage of riotous religious excitement. It communicated a sort of magnificent madness to the mind. One didn't know what it meant, or if it meant anything particular. One was not hampered by knowledge ; one could let oneself go. One felt a tense, tremendous impulse to do something demoniac. Yet one had no idea what. It put one's nerves on the rack. It was almost a torture to feel so intensely, and desire so deliriously, such unintelligible irritations. Hours passed in this intoxicating excitement. One can understand perfectly the popular enthusiasm. It was the release of the subconscious desires of the original animal. To a civilised mind, accordingly, the impression was charged with a certain disquietude partaking of the nature of terror without understanding why ; one felt the presence of forces which appal because one feels their power, recognises their existence in oneself. They are the things one has tried to forget, and persuaded oneself that they are in fact forgotten. They are the voices of ancestral appetite. It is the roar of the mob in the ears of the educated : but as for any definite religious impression, the Perahera had

nothing to say. It was no more Buddhism than the carnival at Nice is Christianity. ΙΩ ΠΑΝ!

But the matter does not end here. Official science, which can always be relied upon to discover at last what everybody has always known, has just proclaimed the fact that certain states of mind possess the property of performing what used to be called miracles, and that such states may be evoked by the constant repetition of formulæ and similar practices. The whole of Eastern ceremonies, from the evolutions of dancing girls to the austerities of ascetics, have all been devised with the intention of inducing the right medium for the right sort of subconsciousness to rise, move, and appear.

Zodacare, eca, od zodameranu! Odo kikalé Qaa! Zodoreje, lapé Zodiredo Noco Mada, Hoathahé IAIDA!

STANZA XXX

"Your Indian Yogis fall
Back to the planet after all....."
—"No Yogi shot his Chandra so."
Ascension Day A.C.

We came into contact, on one occasion, with the relations between the people and the government. The British official in Ceylon is a very different person from his Indian colleague. He is not "heaven-born" in the same consecrated and ineluctable way. He has failed to convince himself of his superiority to mere created beings; so his airs of authority do not become him. He feels himself a bit of an upstart. Ceylon is full of half-castes, Dutch, English, and Portuguese, and the white man feels himself somehow compromised by their presence. They remind him of his poor relations, and make him feel as the inhabitants of Dayton, Tennessee, and some others do in a monkey-house. A similar situation exists in the Southern states of America, where the pure whites are outnumbered by the negroes, and where a large population of mixed blood provides the logical link. In South Africa, again, we find the same situation; and the practical result is that the white man, feeling his footing insecure, dares not tolerate the native as he can in India, where the relations between the population and the conquering invader are understood by both parties. The Singalese government is inclined to be snappish.

One evening Allan and I were meditating, as usual.

The servants were absent for some reason ; some marauder took the opportunity to break in and steal my cash box. I am ashamed to say that I was stupid enough to report the incident to the police. A day or two later an alleged inspector appeared, made various inquiries, and went off. He took with him my pocket compass, under the impression that it was my watch ! This time, of course, we could identify the thief, who had been playing this game all over the island. He was caught and put in the dock ; but escaped conviction on some technicality. But I remember the incident acutely on account of the conversation I had with the Magistrate, who explained that the man might be flogged for this offence. He spoke of the punishment with a shudder—it was terrible to witness ; but his tones displayed intense sadistic pleasure at the idea. It was my first glimpse of the bestial instincts of the average respectable and cultured Englishman. I had not really believed what I had read in Kraft-Ebbing about perverse pleasures of this sort ; I could not understand cruelty.

Is it Gorky who tells us that the universal characteristic of the Russian is to delight in the infliction of pain for its own sake, in the absence of any comparatively intelligible basis like anger and hatred ? He describes how men's mouths are filled with gunpowder and exploded, how women's breasts are pierced, ropes inserted, and the victim left to hang from the ceiling. These things are done exactly as English children sometimes torture animals. He says that the whole of his life has been poisoned by realising the existence of this instinct, which seemed to him a fatal objection to any possible justification of the Universe. I cannot follow him so far. I can understand that every possible combination of qualities may exist somewhere, and

that I have no right even to assume that my own detestation of such things proves them to be unjustifiable.

I really rather agree with "Greenland's Icy Mountains," though I object to accenting Ceylon on the penultimate. But certainly every prospect is remarkably pleasing, and, as far as I saw, every man is vile. There seems to be something in the climate of the island that stupefies the finer parts of a man if he lives there too long. The flavour of the tea seemed to me somehow symbolic. I remember one day pleading with the local shopkeeper to find me some Chinese tea. It chanced that the owner of a neighbouring plantation was in the shop. He butted in, remarking superciliously that he could put in the China flavour for me. "Yes," I said, "but can you take out the Ceylon flavour?"

Before leaving Eckenstein, I had agreed to consider the question of an Himalayan Expedition, to Chogo Ri, marked "K2" on the Indian Survey, 28,250 feet, the second highest mountain in the world. I decided not to go; wishing to devote myself exclusively to spiritual progress. I wrote to this effect; but when I told Allan that I had done so, I found, to my surprise, that he thought I ought to go for Eckenstein's sake. It was the same problem as that about Abramelin and the Order. And I chose in the same way. I wired Eckenstein that I would go.

One of the results of this was that I began to grow a beard. Eckenstein had put me up to a lot of the points of conduct that should be observed in travelling among Mohammedans, and I practised these conscientiously. For instance, I taught myself never to touch my face with my left hand. I found this practice tend to make my mind constantly vigilant. Later, I developed the idea into Liber

Jugorum, which is one of the most important elements in the preliminary training for the A.·. A.·. But the Singalese, knowing nothing of our motives, could only conclude that Sahibs with beards must be Boer prisoners. The same ridiculous mistake was made even by the whites at Rawal Pindi, when the Expedition arrived, though we were mixing freely with them, and half our party talking English slang.

The fact is that the vast majority of people are absolutely impervious to facts. Test the average man by asking him to listen to a simple sentence which contains one word with associations to excite his prejudices, fears, or passions—he will fail to understand what you have said, and reply by expressing his emotional reaction to the critical word. It was long before I understood this fact of psychology. Even to this day, it surprises me that there should be minds which are unable to accept any impression equably and critically. I have heard many great orators. The effect has nearly always been to make me wonder how they have the nerve to put forward such flimsy falsehoods.

The excursion to the Buried Cities was an education in itself. The first impression was of the shocking callousness with which the coach horses were treated. There was not a single one along the whole route which was even moderately sound. I began to set its right value upon the first precept of Buddha: Not to take life. Ass!

At Dambulla is one of the most extraordinary works of human skill, energy, and enthusiasm in the world. The temple is a cave in the rock, of vast extent but with a very small opening. How could the many statues of the Buddha which filled the cave have got there? It was the camel and the needle's eye again. But what had been done was to

cut away the rock of the cave itself, leaving the statues. So gigantic a conception and so admirable an execution extort one's whole-hearted praise. Nothing so drives home the fact of modern degeneracy as this: not only are the Singalese of to-day utterly incapable of creative work, but they are so far fallen that they have piously smeared this superb statuary with thick coats of gamboge so lavishly that the delicacy of the modelling is entirely concealed.

The rock Sigiri is very startling. It sticks up out of the level jungle without apology. It is supposed to be unclimbable save by the artificial gallery which was built of old when a city flourished on the summit. We hung about for some days, as I wanted to walk round the rock and try and find a way up. But the scheme was impracticable. One could not cut one's way through so many miles of thick jungle, and if one did one would have to be a monkey to be sure of getting a view.

The only incident was that I came across my first buffalo. In the course of a ramble, I had come out upon a clearing in the forest where there was a shallow lake. A bull with two cows arrived simultaneously from the other side, in quest of a drink. In those days I carried a Mauser .303. I got within a hundred yards before he took alarm. As he raised his head I aimed and fired. The cartridge failed to explode, and the bull thundered past me before I could reload. If he had been charging—good night! I took the lesson to heart, and always carried a double-barrelled rifle ever after. Apart from the extra time needed to lower a single-barrelled rifle and manipulate the lever, which might well cause a fatal delay, there is more than a possibility of a cartridge jamming, which would leave one entirely unarmed.

We jogged on wearily to Anuradapura. The discomforts of the coach were great, and the monotony of the view desolating. It was all an endless flat tangle of vegetation. It was delightful to perceive, about sunset, a number of hills in the distance. Their graceful wooded slopes enchanted the eye. And this is the wonder of this journey, for in the morning I found that these were not hills at all, but ruined Dagobas, which time had fledged with forestry!

To me these cities appear incomparably greater as monuments than even those of Egypt. They are not so sympathetic spiritually; they lack the appeal of geometry and æsthetics which makes the land of Khem my spiritual fatherland. But one has to grant the Gargantuan grandeur of the old Singalese civilisation. Their idea, even of so pedestrian a project as a tank, was simply colossal. They thought in acres where others think in square yards. One of the pagodas has for its lowest terrace—I think it is about a mile in circumference—a ring of stone elephants little short of life size. Most of the ornamentation has perished, but the loss does not really matter. The point of the place is the prodigious piety which erected these useless enormities merely as memorials to the Master.

Frankly, I was fed up with marvels. All subjects bore me alike after a short time; they cease to stimulate. I was thoroughly pleased to find myself at last in India. The psychological change from Ceylon is very sudden, startling and complete. What is there about an island which differentiates it so absolutely from the adjoining mainland? No amount of similarity of race, customs and culture gets rid of insularity. The moment one sets foot in India, one becomes aware of the stability of its civilisation.

I spent some weeks wandering through the southern

provinces. I cannot forbear mentioning one charming incident. At some station or other, I was about to take the train. A white man with a long white beard came down the whole length of the train in the blazing sun to my carriage. He had seen that I was strange to the country, and asked if he could be of any service. (Unless one knows the ropes, one has to put up with a lot of petty discomforts.) The man was Colonel Olcott. It was the first act of kindly thoughtfulness that I had ever known a Theosophist perform—and the last. For many years.

The rock temples of Madura are probably the finest in India, perhaps in the world. There seems no limit. Corridor after corridor extends its majestic sculptures, carved monoliths, with august austerity. They are the more impressive that the faith which created them is as vital to-day, as when India was at the height of its political power. My experiences of Yoga stood me in good stead. I knew, of course, that the average European would not be permitted to visit the most interesting parts of the Temple, and I thought I would see what I could do to take a leaf out of Burton's book. So I disposed of my European belongings, and took up my position outside a village nearby, with a loincloth and a begging bowl. The villagers knew, of course, that I was an Englishman, and watched me suspiciously for some time from the edge of the jungle. But as soon as they found that I was really expert in Yoga, they lost no time in making friends. One man in particular spoke English well and was himself a great authority on Yoga. He introduced me to the writings of Sabapati Swami, whose instructions are clear and excellent, and his method eminently practical. My friend introduced me to the authorities at the big Temple at Madura, and I was

allowed to enter some of the secret shrines, in one of which I sacrificed a goat to Bhavani.

The fact is that Buddhism had got on my nerves. I preferred the Ego-centric psychology of Hinduism—naturally enough, since the fundamental consciousness of the average European is sympathetic. Our very speech almost compels us to think of the Universe in this way. Ethically, too, Hinduism appealed to me ; it seemed positive ; its injunctions seemed to lead somewhere. Buddhism repelled me by its abhorrence of action, its insistence upon the idea of sorrow as inherent in all things in themselves. Hinduism at least admits the existence of joy ; the only trouble is that happiness is unstable. In practice, again, Buddhism suited Allan, whose only idea of pleasure was relief from the perpetual pain which pursued him ; whereas I, with the world at my feet, was out to do something definite and even to take delight in the buffetings of fortune. I enjoyed this adventure immensely ; I felt myself all kinds of a fine fellow for penetrating these sinister sanctuaries.

To a young wizard waltzing round the world, some of the early impressions of the India whose philosophy and religion he has learnt to reverence so profoundly are a shade disconcerting. I could not help feeling the degradation of the woman who swept out the dak-bungalow at Madura. She was a grotesque hag at thirty. I had seen nothing of the kind in Mexico, or, indeed, anywhere else before or since, till I struck the back-blocks of the United States of America. But in her time she had been a woman of great wealth, for I could have put my hand and arm clean through the lobe of her ear. She must at one time have worn enormously heavy ear-rings.

Her attitude gave me a peculiar little shiver. To sweep

the floor, which she did with a short-handled brush, she bent entirely from the hips, being straight above and below. It somehow gave me the impression of a broken stick. And then I was reminded of the queen's spaniel in Zadig. For in the dust of the floor were two tiny trails made by her sagging breasts as they swung idly out of her cotton cloth.

I had made a point from the beginning of making sure that my life as A Wanderer of the Waste should not cut me off from my family, the great men of the past. I got India paper editions of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Browning; and, in default of India paper, the best editions of Atalanta in Calydon, Poems and Ballads (First Series), Shelley, Keats, and The Qabalah Unveiled. I caused all these to be bound in vellum, with ties. William Morris had re-introduced this type of binding in the hope of giving a mediæval flavour to his publications. I adopted it as being the best protection for books against the elements. I carried these volumes everywhere, and even when my alleged waterproof rücksack was soaked through, my masterpieces remained intact.

Let this explain why I should have been absorbed in Browning's "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Day" at Tuticorin. I was criticising it in the light of my experience in Dhyana, and the result was to give me the idea of answering Browning's apology for Christianity by what was essentially a parody of his title and his style. My poem was to be called "Ascension Day and Pentecost."

I wrote "Ascension Day" at Madura on November 16th and "Pentecost" the day after; but my original idea gradually expanded. I elaborated the two poems from time to time, added "Berashith"—of which more anon—and finally "Science and Buddhism," an essay on these

subjects inspired by a comparative study of what I had learnt from Allan Bennett and the writings of Thomas Henry Huxley. These four elements made up the volume finally published under the title "The Sword of Song."

One of the great sights of South India is the great Temple of the Shivalingam. I spent a good deal of time in its courts meditating on the mystery of Phallic worship. Apologists ordinarily base their defence on a denial that the lingam is worshipped as such. They claim correctly enough that it is merely the symbol of the supreme creative spiritual force of the Most High. It is perfectly true, none the less, that barren women circumambulate it in the hope of becoming fruitful. I accepted this sublimation gladly, because I had not yet been healed of the wound of Amfortas: I had not got rid of the shame of sex. My instinct told me that Blake was right in saying: "The lust of the goat is the glory of God." But I lacked the courage to admit it. The result of my training had been to obsess me with the hideously foul idea that inflicts such misery on Western minds and curses life with civil war. Europeans cannot face the facts frankly; they cannot escape from their animal appetite, yet suffer the tortures of fear and shame even while gratifying it. As Freud has now shown, this devastating complex is not merely responsible for most of the social and domestic misery of Europe and America, but exposes the individual to neurosis. It is hardly too much to say that our lives are blasted by conscience. We resort to suppression, and the germs create an abscess.

The Hindu is of course a slave to his superstitions about sin even more than most nominal Christians, for the simple reason that he is absolutely serious about the welfare of his soul. I remember coming across a tribe which did not use

tobacco. I offered them some, and they refused. I supposed it was forbidden by their religion, but they told me no. It was, however, not commanded by their religion ; they could therefore see no object in doing it. The Hindu attitude towards sin, absurd as it is, compares favourably with ours ; because, though afraid of it, they have not reached our own state of panic which makes us the prey of the most fantastic superstitions and perversions of Truth. I have found it practically impossible to convince middle-class Anglo-Saxons of facts which anyone would think were bound to be known. They take refuge in angry denial. It seems to them that if they once admit the most elementary and obvious propositions, they are bound to fall headlong into a bottomless pit of bestiality. Where, in fact, they always are.

STANZA XXXI

Specks of the wheel are the nights and the days,
Fast as they fall from me, lost in the haze,
Soluted to softness of silvery greys.
Aleister Crowley.

In course of time I arrived at Madras, which is sleepy, sticky and provincial. On one of my steamship journeys I had met a delightful man named Harry Lambe, who had invited me to come and stay with him in Calcutta. It fitted in ideally, and I booked my passage by the steamer Dupleix. It would have been more natural to go by train ; but part of my plan in wandering about the world was to put myself in unpleasant situations on purpose, provided that they were new. This small French boat offered an adventure.

A storm was raging ; the Dupleix was some days late, and when she arrived, it was too rough for her to come into the harbour. I had to row out to her in an open boat. I had dismissed my servant, and was the only passenger from shore. I note the fact as showing that I had in a sense broken with the past ; the point will appear in a few paragraphs.

The voyage was atrocious ; the ship stank of oil, partly from the engines, partly from the cooking, and partly from the crew. The storm continued unabated. We passed close to the lightship off the mouth of the Hughli, in thick sea fog ; the people on the lightship are often five weeks or more without being able to communicate with the rest of the world. But we got a pilot on board

somehow, and once in the river itself the weather cleared.

The Hughli is reputed the most difficult and dangerous navigation in the world, and its pilots are the best paid men afloat. Ours allowed me to spend part of the time with him on the bridge, and put me up to the ropes. The sand-banks are constantly shifting; even the shores alter from day to day; the river suddenly chops off a large chunk of corner or throws up a false bank. A large staff of men is therefore constantly engaged in sounding for the channel and putting up new signposts on the banks. The chart of the river has to be revised every day. Even so, the channel is narrow and tortuous. The course of the ship reminded me of the most elaborate Continental figure-skating.

Lambe was at the wharf to meet me, and drove me off to his house, a large building in a compound, as gardens surrounded by a wall are called in India. It was a colony of four men, with one of whom, Edward Thornton, I soon struck up an intimacy based on implicit sympathy in the matter of philosophical speculation.

Before I had been in the house three days, a curious incident occurred. I am always absent-minded. A current of thought flows through the back of my brain quite independent of what I am consciously doing. I might even say that the above statement is incorrect. Most of the time I am more conscious of what I am thinking than of what I am saying and doing. Now there was an animated conversation at dinner about the absurdity of the native mind; the curious ideas that they got into their heads; and I "awoke" to hear some one say, as an illustration of this thesis, that the servants of the house were very excited by my arrival because I had penetrated into the Temple at

Madura and sacrificed a goat. I had said nothing to my friends about my interest in Magick and religion, and they were much astonished when I told them that their servants were right. I explained how I had cut communications at Madras, and wanted to know how the servants could possibly have found out the facts.

This led to conversation about the "native telegraph." It is an established fact that the Bazaars get accurate information of events ahead of electricity. Mouth-to-mouth communication does not explain it. For instance, the death of an officer in a frontier skirmish in some place isolated from India by long stretches of uninhabited country, has been reported in Bombay before the field telegraph has transmitted the news.

But I was already sufficiently advanced in practical Magick to understand how this could be done. On one occasion I wanted to prepare a Ritual which involved the use of certain words which I did not know. I travelled in my astral body to see a brother of the Order whom I knew to be in possession of the required information, 8,000 miles and more away, and obtained it at once.

My first business at Calcutta was to learn Hindustani and Balti, in order to be an efficient interpreter on the Expedition to Chogo Ri. As regards the latter, I had to content myself with the grammar, and failed to learn much. Fortunately, we managed without it; but it was easy to get a Munshi to teach me Hindustani, and I spent most of my time in acquiring that language.

The "native telegraph" now reappeared in a different form. Somehow or other my Munshi got it into his head that I was a Magician. This was very curious, as I had done practically no Magick since landing in Ceylon, and

certainly had not talked about it at all. The "Sword of Song" bears witness to the completeness with which I had abandoned Magick. I had not in the least lost my faith in its efficacy: I regarded it very much as I regarded rock-climbing. I could not doubt that I was the best rock-climber of my generation, but I knew that my abilities in that respect would not help me to climb Chogo Ri any more than my ability at billiards would help me to understand Dostoevsky. Similarly, my Magical attainment had no bearing on my Quest. Of course I was wrong. I had simply failed to understand the possibilities of Magick. I had not realised that it was the practical side of spiritual progress. Ultimately, my Magick proved more far-reaching in importance than my Mysticism, as will appear in due course.

My Munshi must have possessed some secret source of information about me. His attitude towards me expressed not merely the servility of the conquered race; it added the childlike timidity of primitive people in presence of Occult Omnipotence. Having ingratiated himself by all the arts of the courtier, he plucked up courage to request me to kill his aunt. I am ashamed to say that I dissolved in laughter. I no longer remember how I kept my face; how I broke it to him gently that I killed strangers only on such considerations as the uninitiated could not possibly comprehend. I still laugh to remember the shamefaced shyness of his request and the pained humiliation with which he received my refusal. He had the courage (a week or so later) to ask me to soften the hearts of the examiners towards his brother, who was entered for the B.A. examination; when I refused, he asked me to prophesy the result. I told him that his brother would fail, which he did. I claim no

credit for second sight ; I had based my judgment on the reflection that if his brother required Magical assistance in order to pass, he knew that his intellectual attainments were inadequate.

When I wasn't working I went racing. I had never been to a race course in England. I cannot force myself to pretend interest in a game of which I do not know the rules. Like all commercialised amusements, racing is essentially crooked. But in Calcutta it was less trouble to go than to stay away. I took advantage of the circumstances to test my theories. One particular horse had arrived in Calcutta with a great reputation. Everybody backed it, and it lost race after race. I waited till it had become so discredited that I could get long odds against it in an important race, and then backed it to win, which it did. It was merely a question of following the psychology of the swindlers. They had pulled it till it was worth while to let it win.

I had little real pleasure in rattling the *rupis* in my pocket. My cynical disgust with the corrupt pettiness of humanity, far from being assuaged by the consciousness of my ability to outmanœuvre it, saddened me. I loved mankind ; I wanted everybody to be an enthusiastic aspirant to the Absolute. I expected everybody to be as sensitive about honour as I was myself. My disillusionment drove me more and more to determine that the only thing worth doing was to save humanity from the horror of its own ignorant heartlessness. But I was still innocent to the point of imbecility. I had not analysed human conduct : I did not understand in the least the springs of human action. Its blind bestiality was a puzzle which appalled me, yet I could not even begin to estimate its elements.

Allan Bennett had made up his mind to take the Yellow

Robe—not in Ceylon, where the sodden corruption of the Sangha sickened his sincerity, but in Burmah, where the Bhikkhus could at least boast fidelity to the principles of the Buddha, and whose virtuous lives vindicated their good faith. He had gone to Akyab on the western coast of Burmah, and was living in a monastery called Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung. I thought I would drop in on him and pass the time of day; and proposed to combine with this act of fraternity the adventure of crossing the Arakan hills, the range which forms the water-shed between the valley of the Irrawadi and the sea. This journey, very short in measured miles, is reputed so deadly that it has only been accomplished by very few men. These left most of their party to moulder in the mountains, and themselves died within a few days of completing the crossing. I have always had this peculiar passion for putting myself in poisonous perils. Its source is presumably my congenital masochism, and the "Travellers' Tales" of Paley Gardner had determined its form of expression.

Edward Thornton decided to join me on this expedition. We sailed for Rangun on the 21st of January. During the whole of my stay in Calcutta I had been intermittently ill with malaria. I had been reading Deussen's exposition of Vedanta, and found it utterly unsatisfactory. Yet Vedanta is the fine flower of Hinduism, the sole solution of the problems presented by the crude animism of the Vedas. "And if these things are done in the green tree——?" I was being forced, without knowing it, towards Buddhism; my wish to see Allan again was doubtless due to this dilemma rather than to any instincts of friendship. As significant of the state of my soul, vague yet vehement, I may quote certain entries in my diary: thus:

"Jan. 13. Early morning walk — deep meditation. Developed a sort of inverted Manichæism. Nature as evil and fatal force developing within itself (unwittingly) a suicidal Will called Buddha or Christ.

"Jan. 15. It is a fallacy that the Absolute must be the All-Good, etc. There is *not* an Intelligence directing Law—line of least resistance. Its own selfishness has not even the wit to prevent Buddha arising. We cannot call Nature *evil*. 'Fatal' is the exact word. Necessity implies stupidity—this the chief attribute of Nature. As to 'Supreme Intelligence,' consider how many billion years were required to develop even so low a thing as emotion."

The Rangun River remains one of the deepest impressions of my life. It reminded me of the Neva, though Petrograd is immensely more important. But there is the same terrifying breadth of torrent, much more rapid and turbulent than one expects from the limitless levels through which it rushes; one gets the idea of sterile, heartless passion in the midst of a wilderness, and somehow or other this seems obscenely unnatural. One instinctively associates vehemence with detailed result; and when one sees such stupendous forces running to waste, one is subconsciously reminded of the essence of human tragedy, the callousness of Nature about our craving to reap the reward of our efforts. One has to be a philosopher to endure the consciousness of waste, and something more than a philosopher to admire the spendthrift splendour of the Universe.

The glory of Rangun is, of course, the Shwe Dagon pagoda. It is gilded and gigantic, and the effect is curiously annoying, for very much the same reason as the river is appalling. But it enables one to understand the soul of Asia. At the base of the Dagoba is a vast circular platform, ringed with shops, mostly dedicated to commercial piety, and cumbered with devotees, beggars, and monsters. It is the rendezvous of the ragged, the diseased, and the deformed, charity to whom is supposed to confer "merit." Merit means insurance against reincarnation in undesirable conditions. Among Buddhists, generally speaking, good deeds are always done with some such objects. A rich woman who is childless will plaster an existing Dagoba with gold-leaf, or build a new one, in the hope of becoming fruitful.

The method by which this Magick is supposed to operate is somewhat obscure. There is no question of propitiating an offended Deity in canonical Buddhism; but in point of fact, it is probable that the custom is a survival of pre-Buddhistic fetishism. There are innumerable traces of the old demonology in the practical life of the people. Buddhism did not succeed in supplanting prevailing superstitions any more than did Christianity or Islam. The fact is that the instincts of ignorant people invariably find expression in some form of witchcraft. It matters little what the metaphysician or the moralist may inculcate; the animal sticks to his subconscious ideas.

On a litter in the shadow of the pagoda lay a boy of about fourteen years. He suffered from hydrocephalus. An enormous head, horrifyingly inane, surmounted a shrivelled body, too feeble even to support it. There indeed was a manifest symbol of the Universe as conceived by the

Buddha! Senseless suffering proves that Nature has no purpose or pity. The existence of a single item of this kind in the inventory demonstrates the theorem. As I gazed on the child, I began to understand that all the syllogisms of Optimism were enthymemes. Every teleology depends on the error of generalising from a few selected phenomena. The boy impressed me more than the pagoda. One was the freak of misfortune; the other the considered climax of colossal care. Yet both were transitory and trivial toys of time. I went back to Rangun profoundly penetrated by the insight which enabled the Buddha to attain understanding of the import of the cosmos.

Ever since leaving Ceylon I had been almost constantly down with malaria. In Rangun the fever assumed a remittent form: I lived on quinine and iced champagne. The persistence of the disease brought me to a state in which I no longer struggled to recover my ordinary health. I lived on a low level, without desire even to die. I began to understand the psychology of Allan. My mind was abnormally clear: I was cleansed of the contamination of desire. Nothing was worth wishing for; I did not even complain of suffering. This state of mind is a useful experience. Something very similar can be induced artificially by fasting.

I recovered quite suddenly, though the cachexia continued. I was quite well, but felt extraordinarily weak. The curious thing about malaria is that one seems to lack strength to lift a finger, and yet one can do the day's work with astonishing endurance. One makes up one's mind that one can't be any worse, and one's muscles are freed from the inhibition of fatigue just as they are if one anæsthetises oneself with cocaine. I have walked thirty-five miles

in sweltering heat through the most difficult jungle, carrying a heavy rifle, when I simply had not the strength to swallow my breakfast. One learns to live on a level of invalidism. Most Europeans accustomed to the tropics acquire this aptitude ; they go on, year after year, apathetically carrying out their routine. They have got beyond disappointment and ambition.

I remember visiting a forest officer up-country in Ceylon. We dined with him on the eternal monotony of chicken under various disguises, and canned meats. Everything tastes alike. He had no conversation ; he tried to entertain us by turning on a worn-out gramophone, as he had done to relieve his evenings ever since the instrument was invented. He was an old man and could have retired on his pension two years earlier, but he had lost all interest in life. What was the sense of his going to England ? He had no friends, no family, no future ! He had become part of the jungle. The psychology is common to all but men of rare intelligence and energy. They cling childishly to the skirts of civilisation by drearily dressing for their dreary dinner ; but everything becomes formal and meaningless. Unable to force an answer from the Sphinx of their surroundings, they are petrified into its stony silence, which yet does not share its sublimity because it has neither shape nor soul.

In order to cross the Arakans to Akyab, we obtained various credentials from the authorities, especially a letter to the Forest Commissioner of the district that he might provide us with elephants. We engaged a servant, a man from Madras, whose name was Peter. The first question one asks of a servant in India is : his religion ? Peter amused us by replying that he was " a free man, a Roman Catholic." Outside subscribers to missionary societies,

every one is aware what is implied by the term "Native Christians." Any one who is such an absolute scoundrel as to exceed the very wide latitude of his environment, who makes himself intolerable to his family, friends, and neighbours, cuts the painter and "finds Jesus." Conversion is a certificate of incorrigible rascality. We should not have taken a Christian if we could have found any one else who spoke English or Hindustani. The inconceivable pettiness of the thefts of Peter was to me a revelation of the possibilities of human degradation. It was combined with such cowardice of conscience that one could understand easily why the 'native Christian' invariably calls on his death-bed for the minister of his original religion.

STANZA XXXII

"See yon solitary star!
What a world of gladness wraps
Round it! Unimagined gulfs!
Let it be! Content thy eye
With the voyage of things that are!"
Rabindranath Tagore.

On the 25th of January we left Rangun for Prome. Arrived at Prome, we immediately went on board the steam ferry "Amherst." It is a five hours' journey to Thayetmyo, where we arrived in the heat of the day, after a very pleasant journey, thanks partly to the beauty of the scenery, but perhaps more to the geniality of the Captain. We got three bullock carts for our transport, and started the next morning, stopping at Natha for lunch after a pleasant journey of ten miles. After lunch we went off to Kyoukghyi.

The next day we resumed our journey; I walked most of the way and shot some partridges and pigeons for lunch, which we took at Leh-Joung; this is not a bungalow, but a village. We went on in the afternoon to Yegyanzin, where we had the good fortune to meet Garr, the Forest Commissioner of the District, and his assistant Hopwood. Unfortunately he was unable to give me any elephants, as they were all in use; but told me I ought to have no difficulty in getting coolies and probably ponies if I required them. We combined forces and had quite a nice dinner together. One does not realise how nice Englishmen really are until one meets them in out-of-the-way places. Sometimes not even then.

The following day we went off again and arrived at Mindon at 2.30 p.m. The road had become very bad; and, in the springless bullock-cart, travelling was by no means pleasant. In fact, after two or three big jolts we agreed to take turns to look out, and to give warning if a particularly frightful jolt seemed imminent. But for all our precautions, I was badly let in on one occasion. The road had become level, and appeared to be the same for the next 200 yards, so I turned back to light a pipe. Without a word of warning the driver swung round his oxen off the road into an adjoining paddy field, at least three feet below, and we got the nastiest shaking of our lives. The last seven miles were particularly irritating, as there was little or no shade, and it was out of the question to relieve oneself by walking for more than a short distance.

On arrival at Mindon, we summoned the headman and told him to get men for the cross-country journey to Kyoukpyu. He seemed to think it would be rather difficult, and was evidently not at all pleased with his orders, but he went off to obey them, and in the meanwhile sent round the village shikari so that I might go out after buffalo the next day. I accordingly started at 6.45 next morning.

It soon began to get hot, and a double .577 is not the kind of toy one wants to carry on a fifteen mile tramp. As a matter of fact, I probably did nearer twenty miles than fifteen, as I was going eight hours with very little rest. We went up and down hills repeatedly, but the wild buffalo was shy, and, as a matter of fact, I did not the whole day see anything whatever shootable, except some small birds which I took home for dinner. In the afternoon we went off bathing together in a delightful pool directly under the

hill on which the bungalow was situated. I took down the shot gun with the intention of killing a big paddy bird which we saw from the bank. These birds are valuable on account of the aigrette. I fired, but my shot did not seem to hurt him, and he flew off. I resigned the gun to the Burmese boy, and had just finished my bath when the impudent beast came back. I hastily signalled for the gun ; and putting on a topi and a towel round my waist proceeded to stalk him across the ford. I must have presented the most ridiculous spectacle. Thornton said he had not laughed so much for years, and I daresay that the paddy bird laughed too ; but I got the best laugh in the end, for after about ten minutes' infinite pains I got a close shot at him, which put an end to his career. That evening we tried to eat roast parrots, but it was a total failure. I am told, however, that parrot pie is quite a good dish ; well, I don't like parrot, so there will be all the more for those who do.

The next day I was naturally feeling very tired ; but in the afternoon I summoned enough energy to go for a short stroll. I was very anxious to show Thornton a beautiful view of a hillside and river, which I had come across on my way home. We set out, he being armed with a sketch book and a kukri, which he would always carry about with him, though I could never understand the reason ; if I had been anticipating the day's events, I should not have troubled to inquire. At the edge of the hill weariness overtook me ; I sat down, pointing to him a tiny path down the hill slope which he was to pursue. He was rather a long time returning, and I was just about to follow in search when I heard his cooey ; in a couple of minutes he rejoined me. I was rather surprised to see that his kukri

was covered with blood. I said: "I knew you would fall over something one day. Where have you cut yourself?" He explained that he had not cut himself, but that an animal had tried to dispute the path with him, and that he had hit it on the head, whereon the animal had rolled down the steep slopes towards the river. I could not make out from his description what kind of an animal it could possibly be, but, on examining the tracks I saw them to be those of a nearly full-grown leopard. We did not retrieve the body, though it must have been mortally wounded, otherwise Thornton would hardly have escaped so easily.

The headman now returned, and told us that he could not give us coolies to cross the Arakan Hills, nobody had ever been there, and it was very dangerous, and every one who went there died, and all that sort of thing. But he could give us men to go about twenty miles, and no doubt we should be able to get more coolies there. I thought there was more than a little doubt; and, taking one thing with another, decided it would be best to give up the idea and go instead back to the Irrawaddy down the Mindon Chong; we consequently hired a boat of the dug-out type, about 35 feet long and just broad enough for two men to pass; over the middle of the boat was the usual awning. The next morning we started down the stream, always through the most delightful country and among charming people.

All the villages in this part of the country are strongly fortified with palisades of sharpened bamboos. The voyage down the river was exceedingly pleasant and the shooting delightful. One could sit on the stern of the boat and pot away all day at everything, from snipe to heron. Our

Burmese boys and the kites had great rivalry in retrieving the game. The kites seemed to know that they would not be shot at. I had another slight attack of fever in the afternoon, but nothing to speak of. We tied up at Sakade for the night. There was no dak-bungalow near, and one does not sleep in a Burmese village unless necessity compels. And yet—

By palm and pagoda enchaunted o'ershadowed, I lie in the light
Of stars that are bright beyond suns that all poets have vaunted
In the deep-breathing amorous bosom of forests of Amazon might,
By palm and pagoda enchaunted.

By spells that are murmured, and rays of my soul strongly flung, never daunted ;
By gesture and tracery traced with a wand dappled white,
I summon the spirits of earth from the gloom they for ages have haunted.

O woman of deep red skin ! Carved hair like the teak ! O delight
Of my soul in the hollows of earth—how my spirit hath taunted . . .
Away ! I am here, I am laid to the breast of the earth in the dusk of the night,
By palm and pagoda enchaunted.

This poem was inspired by an actual experience. The effects of my continued bouts of fever had been to make me spiritually sensitive. The jungle spoke to me of the world which lies behind material manifestation. I perceived directly that every phenomenon, from the ripple of the river to the fragrance of the flowers, is the language by which the subtle souls of nature speak to our senses. That night we were tied up under a teak tree, and as I lay awake with my eyes fixed ecstatically on its grace and vigour, I found myself in the embraces of the Nat or elemental spirit

of the tree. It was a woman vigorous and intense, of passion and purity so marvellous that she abides with me after these many years as few indeed of her human colleagues. I passed a sleepless night in a continuous sublimity of love.

The early hours of the morning, in winter, are bitterly cold, and the river is covered to a height of several feet with a dense white mist which does not disappear till well after sunrise.

I kept very quiet the next day, for repeated attacks of fever had begun to interfere with my digestive apparatus. Just at nightfall two deer came down to drink at the river side. It was rather dark for a shot, and the deer could hardly be distinguished from the surrounding foliage, but the men very cleverly and silently held the boat, and I let fly. The result was better than I expected. I hit exactly where I had aimed at, and the deer dropped like a stone. Needless to say we had a first-class dinner. We slept at Singoun that night. There were a great many jungle fires during this day and the next. The next morning we started again early, and I resumed my bird shooting. On the first day I had several times missed a Brahman duck and was somewhat anxious to retrieve my reputation. Quite early in the morning I got a very fair shot at one; it shook its wings in derision and flew off, landing again 100 yards or so down stream. We floated down, and I had another shot with the same result; for the next shot I went on shore and deliberately stalked the animal from behind the low bank, and got a sitting shot at about ten yards. The disgusted bird looked around indignantly, and flew solemnly down stream. I, even more disgusted, got back to the boat, but the bird was a little too clever this time; for he made a wide circle and

came flying back right overhead. I let fly from below, and it fell with a flop into the river. The fact is that these birds are so well protected that it is quite useless to shoot at them when the breast is not exposed, unless a lucky pellet should find its way to the brain. So on the next occasion, having noticed that when disturbed they always went down stream, I went some distance below them, and sent two boys to frighten them from above. The result was an excellent right and left, and I consoled myself for my previous fiascos. We stopped the night at Toun Myong.

After a delightful night we went off the next morning and got to Kama on the Irrawaddy, whence we signalled the steamboat which took us back to Prome, where we stopped that night. The next day we spent in visiting the Pagoda, Thornton doing some sketching and I writing a couple of Buddhist poems. We went off in the evening for Rangun. The next day we drove about the town but did little else; and on Monday we paid off Peter. The principle on which I had dealt with this man was to give him money in lump sums as he wanted it, and to call him to give an account of all he had spent. He made out that we owed him 37 rupees by this said account. I made a few trifling corrections; reducing the balance in his favour, and including the wages due to him (which he had not reckoned), to 2 rupees 4 annas. He was very indignant, and was going to complain to everyone from the Lieutenant-Governor to the hotel-keeper. I think he was rather staggered when I told him that, as he had been a very good servant in other respects, I would give him as backsheesh the bottle of champagne and the three tins which he had already stolen. He appeared very surprised at my

having detected this theft. Whereby hangs a tale. On leaving Rangun I gave him a list of all the provisions, with the instructions that when he took anything from the store he was to bring the list to me and have that thing crossed off. On the second day the list was missing ; he, of course, swore that I had not given it back to him. I had kept a duplicate list, which I took very good care not to show.

That evening I was again down with fever, and found myself unable to take any food whatever. I called in the local medico, who fed me on iced champagne, and the next day I was pretty well again. Thornton in the meanwhile had gone off to Mandalay. I was very sorry not to be able to go on there with him, but my time was too short : I did not know when I might be summoned to join Eckenstein to go off to Kashmir.

On the 12th of February I went on board the "Komilla" for Akyab, where Allan was now living. In the course of the day the sea air completely restored me to health. On the 13th we were off Sandaway, which did not appear fascinating. On the next day we put in at Kyoukpyu, which I had so vainly hoped to reach overland. It has a most delightful bay and beach, its general appearance recalling the South Sea Islands ; but the place is a den of malaria. We had no time to land, as the Captain was anxious to get into Akyab the same night. We raced through the Straits, and cast anchor there about 8 o'clock—just in time.

I went ashore with the second officer, and proceeded in my usual casual manner to try to find Allan in the dark. The job was easier than I anticipated. The first man I spoke to greeted me as if I had been his long-lost brother, and took me off in his own carriage to the Monastery

(the name of which is Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung) where I found Allan, whom I now saw for the first time as a Buddhist monk. The effect was to make him appear of gigantic height, as compared to the diminutive Burmese, but otherwise there was very little change. The old gentleness was still there.

I ought to have mentioned (when talking of Ceylon) the delightful story of his adventure with a krait. Going out for a solitary walk one day with no better weapon than an umbrella, he met a krait sunning himself in the middle of the road. Most men would have either killed the krait with the umbrella or avoided its dangerous neighbourhood. Allan did neither ; he went up to the deadly little reptile and loaded him with reproaches. He showed him how selfish it was to sit in the road where some one might pass, and accidentally tread on him. "For I am sure," said Allan, "that were anyone to interfere with you, your temper is not sufficiently under control to prevent you striking him. Let us see now!" he continued, and deliberately stirred the beast up with his umbrella. The krait raised itself and struck several times viciously, but fortunately at the umbrella only. Wounded to the heart by this display of passion and anger, and with tears running down his cheeks, at least metaphorically speaking, he exhorted the snake to avoid anger, as it would the most deadly pestilence, explained the four noble truths, the three characteristics, the five precepts, the ten fetters of the soul ; and expatiated on the doctrine of Karma and all the paraphernalia of Buddhism for at least ten minutes by the clock. When he found the snake was sufficiently impressed he nodded pleasantly and went off with a "Good-day, brother krait!"

Some men would take this anecdote as illustrating fearlessness ; but the true spring is to be found in compassion. Allan was perfectly serious when he preached to the snake, though he was possibly a better man of science than a good many of the stuck-up young idiots who nowadays lay claim to the title. I have here distinguished between fearlessness and compassion ; but in their highest form they are surely identical ; even pseudo-Christ hit the mark when he observed " Perfect love casteth out fear."

They managed to give me some sort of a shakedown, and I slept very pleasantly at the monastery. The next morning I went off to breakfast on board to say good-bye to the Captain, who had shown me great kindness, and afterwards took my luggage and went to Dr. Moung Tha Nu, the Resident Medical Officer, who welcomed me heartily, and offered me hospitality during my stay in Akyab.

He was Allan's chief Dayaka ; and very kindly and wisely did he provide for him. I walked back with Allan to the Temple and commenced discussing all sorts of things, but continuous conversation was quite impossible, for people of all sorts trooped in incessantly to pay their respects to the European Bhikkhu. They prostrated themselves at his feet, and clung to them with reverence and affection. They brought him all sorts of presents. He was more like Pasha Bailey Ben than any other character in history.

> " They brought him onions strung on ropes,
> And cold boiled beef, and telescopes,"

at any rate gifts equally varied and not much more useful.

The Doctor looked in in the afternoon and took me back with him to dinner. Allan was inclined to suffer with his old asthma, as it is the Buddhist custom (*non sine causâ*) to go out of doors at six every morning, and it is very cold till some time after dawn. I wish sanctity was not so incompatible with sanity and sanitation!

The next day after breakfast Allan came to the Doctor's house to avoid worshippers, but a few of them found him out after all, and produced buttered eggs, newspapers, marmalade, brazil nuts, bicarbonate of potash, and works on Buddhism from their ample robes. We were able, however, to talk of Buddhism and our plans for extending it to Europe, most of the day. The next four days were occupied in the same way.

STANZA XXXIII

"Only Nothing is,
And Nothing is an universe of bliss."
Clouds without Water A. C.

While at Akyab I wrote "Ahab," which, with a few other poems, was published as a companion to "Jezabel." I had also, at odd times, continued "Orpheus" and "The Argonauts." The latter play is really five separate plays of the Greek pattern. The effect of my journey is very manifest. I had entirely neglected the obvious astronomical symbolism of the Golden Fleece, and had introduced a number of Hindu ideas, both about Magick and about philosophy. To illustrate the voyage, I included lyrics descriptive of actual observations of Vera Cruz, Waikiki Beach, Hong Kong, and other places which had excited me.

The best thing in Book III of "Orpheus," which occupied this period, is, perhaps, the invocation to Hecate, which I recited at Akyab with full magical intention. The Goddess appeared in the form of Bhavani. The fact made more concrete my perception of the essential identity of all religions. Sinai and Olympus, Mount Kailasha and Mount Meru, differed from each other as do the Dent Blanche, Monte Silvio, and the Steinbockhorn. It is the same mountain seen from different sides and named by different people. It encouraged me to continue my studies in the Qabalah, which claims to reduce all possible ideas

to combinations of comparatively few originals, the ten numbers, in fact; these ten numbers themselves being of course inter-related.

From the beginning I had wanted to use my poetical gift to write magical invocations. Hymns to various gods and goddesses may be found scattered through my works; but in Book III of "Orpheus," Persephone is invoked directly by commemorating her adventures. I developed this much further in Book IV of "Orpheus." The idea was put into my mind by Euripides, whose Bacchæ I had been reading at odd times, having picked up a copy at a second-hand book store in San Francisco. When I had first read it, for academic purposes, I had entirely failed to realise that the play was an invocation of Dionysus. I now began to see that by commemorating the story of the God one might identify oneself with him, and thus constitute a subtler, stronger, and more complete invocation of him than by any direct address. I might even go so far as to say that the form of the latter implies the consciousness of duality, and therefore tends to inhibit identification.

My predeliction is due to the fact that I am primarily a lyric poet. My deepest natural tendency is to exalt my soul by what I may call straightforward intoxication. Thus Shelley and Swinburne come more natural to me than Æschylus and Shakespeare, who intoxicate the reader by transporting him to their wonderland.

Sunday the 23rd I went aboard S.S. "Kapurthala" to return to Calcutta. The next day we anchored outside Chittagong, a most uninteresting place. I was too lazy to land. Two days later I got back to Calcutta. Getting my mail, I busied myself in preparing for the great journey. It was now definitely settled that our expedition should meet at

Rawal Pindi. I only took one day off, when I went to Sodpur snipe-shooting with a friend of Thornton's, with whom I was now staying, Lambe having gone off to Australia.

I have inserted the record of this short excursion somewhat at length. Most of it is taken from an account written up when it was still fresh in my mind. It should give an idea of the daily detail of such journeys, and enable the reader to clothe with flesh the skeleton of my subsequent wanderings.

On the 7th of March I left for Benares, and saw the usual sights—temples, Yogis, and dancing girls. I had become very cynical and *blasé* about all these things, which only a few months before would have roused me to ecstasies of wonder. But I now made a wry mouth at the sour sub-flavour of everything. My conversation with Allan about Buddhism, and my own meditations, had disenchanted me. Everything was recognised automatically as illusion, calculated to fetter the soul if one allowed it to fool one.

On the 12th I reached Agra. My entry about the Taj Mahal is interesting.

> "Saw Taj. A dream of beauty, with appallingly evil things dwelling therein. I actually had to use H.P.K. formula! (This means that I assumed the God-form of Harpocrates to prevent the invasion of my aura by objectionable ideas.) The building soon palls, the evil aura is apparent, and disgust succeeds. But the central hall is like a magic circle, of strained aura, like after the banishing."

The æsthetic criticism needs revision. I do not think

the building beautiful ; the conception is too exquisite for the scale of the execution. The effect is that of an etching twenty feet by thirty.

This reminds me of a puzzle that perplexed me many years later in Washington, D.C. I could not understand why the obelisk was so atrociously ugly. " How can even the Americans," I said to myself, " go wrong over so absolutely simple a form ? " I asked the sculptor, Paul Bartlett, who cleared up the difficulty, simply and shortly : " An obelisk is a monolith."

It is one of the fundamental qualities of men who understand a subject perfectly to be able to sweep away the most elaborate illusions by appeal to bed-rock fact. I remember how Frank Harris once enlightened me about imitation pearls. One knows how cleverly the manufacturers of these things present their case so as to deceive the very elect. But Frank Harris said : " A pearl is a stone." And the whole fantastic fabric of falsehood crumbled at the touch !

I cannot omit to mention one atrocity at Agra. Some prurient English curator had indulged his foul instincts by whitewashing a magnificent fresco in the palace because it was " improper." In other words, he was so leprously lascivious that anything which reminded him of reproduction produced a frenzied spasm of sensuality in his soul. However, his vandalism still cried out against him. The beautiful wall which he had made as blank as his intelligence still reminded him of his rottenness. He had no resource but to whitewash all the other walls, in order to secure artistic uniformity !

After all, it is perhaps the best thing to do ; having bowdlerised Shakespeare and edited the Bible so as to remove all reference to any kind of sin, it is hardly worth

while to preserve the remains. There are only two courses open to logic ; one can either accept the Universe as it is, face every fact frankly and fearlessly, and make one's soul immune to the influence of any invasion ; or abolish the whole thing by administering soporifics to the spirit. After all, the virtues which are dearest to degenerate Europeans imply the existence of those very things which they are most concerned to deny. The pious pretence that evil does not exist only makes it vague, enormous, and menacing. Its overshadowing formlessness obsesses the mind. The way to beat an enemy is to define him clearly, to analyse and measure him. Once an idea is intelligently grasped, it ceases to threaten the mind with the Terrors of the Unknown.

I went on to Delhi on the 16th. The best thing here is the Turkish Bath, where the process of purification is completed by charming ladies. On the 18th I wrote about *Orpheus*, "The accursed Book III utterly finished. Oh Book IV!" On the 19th I went and saw the fort with "Major Graham, a prize fool from South Africa." The entry demands emendation. He wasn't a major ; his name wasn't Graham ; he had never been to South Africa ; and he was anything but a fool! His idea was to represent himself as in charge of some Boer prisoners, and obtain credit and cash by various misrepresentations.

The 20th and 21st were great days in my life. I wrote an essay which I originally gave the title "Crowleymas Day" and published under the title "Berashith" in Paris by itself, incorporating it subsequently in "The Sword of Song." The general idea is to eliminate the idea of infinity from our conception of the cosmos. It also shows the essential identity of Manichæism (Christianity),

Vedantism, and Buddhism. Instead of explaining the Universe as modifications of a Unity, which itself needs explaining, I regard it as NOTHING, conceived as (illusory) pairs of contradictories. What we call a thought does not really exist at all by itself. It is merely half of nothing. I know that there are practical difficulties in accepting this, though it gets rid so nicely of *à priori* obstacles. However, the essay is packed with ideas, nearly all of which have proved extremely fertile, and it represents fairly enough the criticism of my genius upon the varied ideas which I had gathered since I first came to Asia.

During the whole time, I had been studying the original scriptures of Hinduism and Buddhism very thoroughly. Besides this, I had discussed every aspect of religion and philosophy with immensely varied types of thinker. From men of such spiritual and scholarly attainment as Allan Bennett, the Hon. P. Ramanathan, Prince Jinawaravansa, Paramaguru Swami, Shri Swami Swayam Prakashanand Maithala, to such excremental exponents of error as theosophists, missionaries, and even members of the Salvation Army. Gathering all these shreds together, I had preferred to call the pattern Buddhism. The scientific agnosticism, rational psychology, and freedom from superstitious or emotional appeals, decided me in its favour. There were, of course, two vast gaps in my line. I knew little and understood less of Chinese thought, and was almost equally ignorant of Islam with its Sufi superstructure.

It was dramatically fit that I should have devoted these two days to this essay ; for on the second I received a wire from Eckenstein. I had a day to spare before proceeding to Rawal Pindi, which I spent at Oakley shooting magar. Here is the story :—

"Maiden, the proprietor of the Hotel, came with me and provided a most admirable tiffin. I lent him my Mauser, and relied myself upon the .577. After getting permission from the engineer in charge of the Canal Works, we put off in a small boat and rowed up the stream. Very soon we saw a fine big crocodile on the banks; but as they are very suspicious beasts and slide into the water at anyone's approach, we determined to try a long shot. I crawled into the bow of the boat, and while the natives held the boat steady, loosed off at about 130 yards. The shot was either a very good one or a very lucky one, for the magar was certainly mortally wounded by it. We rowed rapidly up to the beast to find him lashing about in a couple of feet of water and bleeding profusely. I had almost certainly shot him through the heart. Unfortunately, this is of very little use with these reptiles. We got up as close as the natives could be persuaded to go. There certainly was some risk if we had gone quite close in, but we ought to have ventured near enough to drive a boat-hook into the mud between him and the deep water. But they could not be persuaded to do this, and there was no time for argument. Maiden sat up in the middle of the boat and fired about fifteen Mauser cartridges into the struggling crocodile, which I think was a proceeding of doubtful utility. He persuaded me, however, to fire a couple more cartridges myself, which I did, right down the beast's throat. The second shot, however, very nearly led to a catastrophe, as the boat was not at all steady, and the recoil of the heavy express sent me an awful cropper backwards on to the gunwale of the boat. Luckily no harm came of it. I was now more anxious than ever to get hold of the beast or to pin him with the boat-hook,

though his struggles were gradually ceasing, but nothing we could do was any good ; little by little he slid off the shallow into the deep water and sank. After hunting about for twenty minutes we gave the affair up as a bad job.

Rowing slowly up the stream, we soon caught sight of another fine beast, though not quite so big as the one we lost. I took, however, an extraordinarily careful shot at it, and had the good luck to smash its spine. Every one thought I had missed, but I swore that was impossible. Certainly the beast did not move as we rowed towards it. I sent the natives on to the bank, and after an infinite display of funk they ventured to catch hold of its tail ; of course it had been shot stone dead. We got the body on board and rowed back to tiffin."

On Sunday, March 23rd, I took the Mail for Pindi. As luck would have it, the car reserved for the expedition was on the train. So I jumped in and was introduced to my four new comrades.

The Chogo Ri expedition had begun.

STANZA XXXIV

The youth who bore through snow and ice
A banner with the strange device —
"Excelsior" Longfellow
Sorry to disappoint the reader, but O.E.
forgot to bring that banner — A.C.

Agreement between Oscar Eckenstein and Aleister Crowley

1. By O.E.'s letter of Sept. 20th and cable of Oct. 3rd he agrees to A.C.'s proposal by cable and letter of August 23rd that they should together climb a mountain higher than any previously ascended by man: both agree to use their utmost endeavours in every respect to achieve this result.

(On August 23rd A.C. placed £500 at the disposal of O.E.; on Oct. 10th he added another £500 in case of emergency, for this purpose. O.E. is empowered to employ part of this latter sum (or all if absolutely necessary) to arrange by insurance for Dr. Karl Blodig to join us. It is, however, understood that Dr. Blodig's status as an amateur shall be rigidly respected.)

2. This agreement only to be cancelled by death, serious illness, or vital affairs of one of the parties.

3. O.E. agrees to take all responsibility of preparing the expedition in England, to have authority to accept a 3rd or 4th member of the party, should such a one be willing to pay his full share of the expenses, and he shall be responsible for the safe arrival of the party and baggage in place and date provided by him.

THE CHOGO RI PARTY

Left to right: Wesseley, Eckenstein, Guillarmod, Crowley, Pfannl, Knowles
(Just like G. K. Rex to keep his hat on!)

4. On accomplishment of (3) "the leader" will then assume entire control of, and responsibility for, the expedition, until the return of the party to civilization. "The leader" shall be either O.E. or A.C., as they may subsequently agree, and no other person.

"The leader" must give his orders in writing if requested. (N.B. This should always be done if separation of the party is involved.) "The leader" shall have the right to consult any member of the party, who must consider his difficulty with judicial care, and return a serious answer, in writing if requested. Should any dispute arise, a council may be called to sit under parliamentary usage, "the leader" to be chairman, unless his own conduct be in question. In the latter case, a chairman to be selected. A majority vote to decide. "The leader" to have a casting vote in case of equality. "The leader's" orders shall be otherwise without appeal, and shall be obeyed cheerfully and to the best of ability: except that:— no member of the party is to be obliged anywhere to risk his life, his own judgment to be the arbiter as to whether such and such an order involves danger, whether from men, starvation, animals, or other causes.

5. All members of the party pledge themselves to have nothing whatever to do with women in any way that is possibly avoidable: not to purchase any article without O.E.'s knowledge and consent; not to interfere in any way whatever with native prejudices and beliefs.

This clause shall take effect from the accomplishment of (3).

6. Any dispute arising under this agreement shall be subjected to arbitration in the usual way, and shall not be subject to appeal at law or otherwise.

7. Should a third, fourth, or fifth man join the party, he shall sign this agreement before he is definitely accepted.

Witness our hands.

At Kandy, Oct. 12, 1901.

The Expedition was composed of six members. Thanks to the Alpine Club, there was no Englishman of mountaineering ability and experience available. We had, however a Trinity man named Knowles, aged 22, which is far too young for work of this kind, which requires endurance. He knew practically nothing of mountains, but he had common sense enough to do what Eckenstein told him; and as it was, he proved invaluable in Srinagar and even on the actual journey. He was a source rather of strength than of weakness. Then there was an Austrian Judge named Pfannl, reputed the best rock climber in Austria and his regular climbing companion Wessely. They had no experience beyond the Alps, and proved utterly unable to make allowances for the difference of scale. Pfannl was also obsessed with the idea of getting into athletic condition, and had begun to train directly he stepped on the boat at Trieste. Foreseeing trouble, I kept part of my diary in a Magical cipher. I find an entry dated March 31st, 1902:—

> "This is called the Misadventure of Pfannl. Mountain Sigma. On the Finsteraarhorn after traversing Schreckhorn directly from R.R. journey, Pfannl had to be carried down from the Concordia Hut. Again, on the Géant, he collapsed from food, etc. The whole moral of this is: "If Pfannl collapses, it will be complete. He is sure to overtrain."

The Austrians were totally unable to understand the workings of the native mind, as appeared very soon. It was a great mistake to bring them. The sixth member of the party was a Swiss ex-Army doctor named Guillarmod, who looked and behaved like Tartarin de Tarascon. He knew as little of mountains as he did of medicine, and proved a great source of weakness, though his delightful geniality helped both the psychology of the party and our relations with the natives. He was our comic relief, and did much to make things more tolerable for all of us. For all that, I think we should have done better to take none of the foreigners.* Our numbers made us unwieldy; and the question of international jealousy contributed indirectly to our failure, as will be explained later.

We left Pindi for Tret on the 29th of March. We had had to repack our baggage, which weighed over three tons, for convenience of transport by Ekkas. These are contraptions which suggest a hansom cab with the back knocked out and the driver on the floor, as it might have been conceived by the man who invented the coracle. Even one European finds it impossible to get a comfortable seat or stretch his legs, and a second constitutes outrageous overcrowding. A party of eight to ten natives, on the other hand, finds itself at ease.

Our adventures began with startling suddenness. I woke up in the dak-bungalow at Tret the next morning to find a dignified young gentleman sitting at my bedside. I wondered if I had been ill without knowing it, for his face expressed the sympathetic concern of Luke Fildes's "doctor." Not at all; he was a police inspector who had

* This was done in stark violation of Clause 3. Knowles and I paid the whole expenses of these undesirable aliens.

arrived by Tonga, a two-horsed rattle-trap which is used by people in what passes for a hurry in these parts of the world. All he knew was that we mustn't start—"his not to reason why." I said he had better talk to the leader of the expedition, Mr. Eckenstein. He assumed an awed expression, as if I had said something not quite nice. Knowles and I, who were sharing the same room, proceeded to dress with elegant leisure and bore our bewilderment to Eckenstein.

At this point a telegram arrived, from which we inferred that the Indian Empire was somewhat imperilled by our conduct. At ten o'clock there arrived no less a person than the Deputy Commissioner of Rawal Pindi; one of those strong, silent men, with whom Mr. Henry Seton Merriman has made us familiar. He summoned me to his august presence. I (obviously) referred him once more to Eckenstein, but he jibbed—his orders were that the rest of us could do as we liked; but Eckenstein would not be allowed to enter Kashmir. We asked why. At a this time the Book of the Law not having yet been given to mankind, he was unable to reply, "Enough of Because, be he damned for a dog"; but we understood him as uttering "words to that effect" in his strong silent way. We finally induced him to face Eckenstein; who, with his usual aplomb, put the poor man into a dilemma at once. He wanted to know whether he was or was not arrested. "Heaven forbid," said the D.C., "that any such idea should enter my pure mind." "All right, then," said Eckenstein; "I shall go on." Oh no—the orders were strict. After interminable passages of verbal fencing, it was agreed that I should assume command of the expedition and carry on, while Eckenstein returned to Pindi

with the Deputy Commissioner, and took up the matter with the superior authority.

To sum this episode, Eckenstein chased the culprits all around North India, and finally cornered George Nathaniel Curzon at the psychological moment when our pathetic cables to Lord George Hamilton at the India Office had brought the power of Blighty to bear on the naughty nabobs. The "superior person" saved his face by authorising Eckenstein to rejoin the party on guarantees for his good conduct subscribed by Knowles and myself!

We never learnt, and I do not know to this day, the *dessous des cartes*. Eckenstein insistently professed himself in utter ignorance of the reasons which had induced the authorities to take their high-handed and futile action. Needless to say, we could not but connect it with Eckenstein's quarrel with Conway in 1892. We pumped the bigwigs of Kashmir, and we sifted the rumours of the Bazar, but beyond learning that Eckenstein was a Prussian spy and a cold-blooded murderer, we obtained little information of importance. Eckenstein was the noblest man that I have ever known. His integrity was absolute, and his sympathetic understanding of the native character supreme. I remain unrepentant in my opinion that the incident was the result of the unmanly jealousy and petty intrigue of the insects who envied him, complicated by official muddle.

Temporarily deprived of our leader, we went on wearily to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, which we reached on the 14th of April. Several incidents on the road demonstrated the extraordinary importance which the government attached to Eckenstein. Though everything had been arranged, there were all sorts of excitement at the frontier,

and telegrams and spies were bustling about. It reminded me of the turmoil in an ant-heap which has been disturbed.

On the fifth day we had our first and last trouble with natives. It is part of the Indian character to put every new Englishman through an examination in force of character. The key of power with all the inhabitants in the India Peninsula is justice. And this is about the only thing one can say which really does apply pretty well the same to their infinite diversity. God help the traveller who punishes his servants unjustly! His lack of judgment shows them a weak point of which they can take advantage to avenge themselves in a thousand ways. On the other hand, one is even more despised if one fails to visit intentional misbehaviour with the full penalty of the law.

I was far from well. Various symptoms of malaria kept on cropping up, and I was in constant pain with pityriasis versicolor, which is a form of the so-called dhobi itch (a dhobi is a laundryman). One puts on clothes which seem spotlessly clean, but they contain the spores of a fungus which grows in the axilla and the groin. This got worse and worse. I was idiot enough to put myself in the hands of the doctor. I had the superstitious belief that his medical degree meant something. I suffered perpetually from the irritation, increased by walking and riding till I got on the glacier away from the doctor, when I painted it with iodine, a supersubtle device which had never occurred to him, and cured it in twenty-four hours.

On the fourth day the ekka drivers conspired cautiously to delay us. On the fifth they appointed a delegate to give us hell. (The arrangement was that Knowles and I should bring up the rear of the procession to prevent any ekkas from straggling.) This man kept on making

unnecessary repairs in his harness, and finally managed to lock his wheel in that of another ekka which happened to meet us. He was delighted to find that I made no complaint, and he thought that he was going to get away with it. His ekka and ours arrived in camp more than an hour after the rest of the party. But the moment we were visible I jumped down, fixed my left hand in his beard (itself a blood insult), dragged him from his ekka, and lammed into him with my belt in view of the whole camp —apparently without any provocation.

The psychology is instructive. I knew that the man's misbehaviour was a put-up job; in beating him, I was establishing the morale of the whole expedition. Their subtle minds understood perfectly the essential justice of my action, and applauded my perspicuity and determination. The result was that I never had the slightest difficulties with natives in India ever afterwards, and was able to practice perfect tolerance of genuine accidents. I had forced them to respect us, which, with an Indian, is the first step to acquiring his love. And the men soon showed themselves willing to risk their lives, as they ignorantly thought they were being asked to do, in order to please us. Younghusband's expedition to Yarkand cost seventeen coolies their lives, and our men were convinced that the object of our expedition was to make a new pass to that city. Nothing I could say would persuade them otherwise. They came and told me that they knew they were going to die on the journey, and they were quite willing to do it. They were almost disappointed when I sent them back from Camp 10!

Had I failed to understand the psychology of the ekka driver, we should have been nagged to death by pin-pricks. On the way back, crossing the Deosai plateau,

we fell in with an English Lieutenant who, after a fruitless shikar after ibex, had been worried into illness and was being deliberately worried to death by his servants, who kept on misunderstanding his orders "accidentally on purpose." They had found out his weak spot, and had no mercy. The first business of any traveller in any part of the world is to establish his moral superiority. He has to be uniformly calm, cheerful, just, perspicacious, indulgent and inexorable. He must decline to be swindled out of the fraction of a farthing. If he once gives way, he is done for.

I remember in my journey across China refusing to buy a few eggs when we were actually in sore need of them, because I could not agree with the owner on the price. The sum in dispute was much less than a ha'penny, and it was almost a matter of life and death to me ; but if I had given in, I should never have been able to buy an egg for the rest of the journey. The traveller must always remember that his method of striking a match is accurately reported for hundreds of miles in every direction. England conquered India by understanding the minds of the inhabitants, by establishing her own standards of conduct as arbitrary, and contemptuously permitting the native to retain his own wherever they did not conflict with the service of the conqueror. England is losing India by consenting to admit the existence of the conquered races ; by consenting to argue ; by trying to find a value for incommensurables. Indian civilisation is far superior to our own, and to enter into open competition is to invoke defeat. We won India by matching our irrational, bigoted, brutal manhood against their etiolated culture.

We cannot even plead that we have lacked a prophet.

The genius of Rudyard Kipling, however æsthetically abominable, has divined the secrets of destiny with cloudless clarity. His stories and his sermons are equally informed by the brainless yet unanswerable argument based on intuitive cognition of the critical facts. India can be governed, as history proves, by any alien autocracy with sufficient moral courage to dismiss Hindu subtlety as barbaric, and go its own way regardless of reason. But India has always conquered its invaders by initiating them. No sooner does the Sahib suspect that he is not Almighty God than the attributes of Jehovah cease to arm him with unreasonable omnipotence. Our rule in India has perished because we have allowed ourselves to consider the question of Divine Right. The proverb says that the Gods themselves cannot contend with stupidity, and the stupidity of the Sahib in the days of Nicholson reduced India to impotence. But we allowed the intellectual Bengali to invade England and caress our housemaids in the precincts of the Earl's Court Exhibition. He returned to Calcutta, an outcast indeed from his own social system, but yet a conqueror of English fashions and femininity. We admitted his claim to compete with us, and our prestige perished exactly as did that of the Church when Luther asserted the right of private judgment.

I am not responsible* for the fact that the Universe is constructed in defiance of the principles of reason. I see perfectly that the crude conceptions of European culture are intellectually contemptible; but if we are to enter into relations of any kind with the East, we must either behave like little children in the presence of age and wisdom, or we must be brutal bosses. The soldiers who slew

* P.S.—Well, I am not so sure.

Archimedes had only one alternative—to sit at his feet and learn geometry, and thank him when he rapped them over the knuckles. We must therefore choose between shutting up fourteen thousand sipahis in a compound and blowing them to pieces with grapeshot in cold blood, like Havelock, and sprawling to kiss their slippers like European students of Yoga. Our attempt to compromise between incompatible civilisations can only end in our confessing the impotence of our own.

We see, even in England itself, how the abdication of Norman arrogance has led to the abrogation of all standards of superiority, so that the man who wishes to govern England to-day is obliged to conform with the dishonest devices and servile stratagems of democracy. Government demands virtue; in its etymological sense of manliness. In modern England, courage, truthfulness, and determination are at a discount. A leader can only lead by drugging the populace. When Beaconsfield (wasn't it?) said: "We must educate our masters," he formulated the creed of Communism; for it is impossible to educate the people. I myself, despite my public school and University, despite a life devoted to continual travel and study of social, political, economic and historical facts, am only too well aware of my abject incompetence to provide a remedy for the least of the diseases which have come to actual issue. I only know that one must abdicate one's intelligence and submit to rule-of-thumb government. The best master is a go-as-you-please generous gentleman who settles everything by rude common sense. Our modern pretence at scientific government, based on theories and statistics, possesses all the irremediable inadequacies of purblind pedantry. My wanderings have shown me that individual happiness and

prosperity flourished most freely in Mexico under the autocracy of Diaz, Russia under that of the Tsar, India and Egypt under that of England, and China when the Son of Heaven exercised supreme and unquestioned sway.

The last quarter of a century has swamped all these. The world is seething with the dissatisfaction that springs from insecurity. Men can adapt themselves to pretty well any conditions, but when they do not know from one day to another whether some fundamental principle may not be abolished in the interests of progress, they no longer know where they are. They tend to adopt the principles of the man who flits from one place to another, grabbing portable property and dodging creditors and policemen. Civilisation has become a hysterical scramble for momentary material advantage. Thrift is senseless when one is threatened with a levy on capital. Investment is insane when gilt-edged securities may lose two-thirds of their value for no assignable reason. Suppose two brothers inherited ten thousand pounds apiece in 1900: one keeps his gold in a bag and spends £400 a year; the other buys Consols and lives on a little over £200 of the income without touching his capital. To-day* the spendthrift would be worth more than his prudent brother. Marriage is a detestable institution, but the facilities for divorce (introduced ostensibly in the interests of the woman) have cut away the economic ground from under her feet.

I have little use for Rudyard Kipling, especially in his latter days of senile schoolboyishness, aggravated by his addiction to the Hydroxide of the second of the Paraffin radicles. But his general attitude about India obtains my

* Condensed from an article written in 1917 in New York. Luckily my own paper refused to publish it!

adhesion. We conquered the Peninsula by sheer moral superiority. Our unity, our self-respect, our courage, honesty, and sense of justice, awakened the wonder, commanded the admiration, and enforced the obedience of those who either lacked those qualities altogether, possessed some of them and felt the lack of the others, or had, actually or traditionally, sufficient of them to make them the criteria of right and ability to govern. As elsewhere observed, our modern acquiescence in the rationally irrefutable argument that the colour of a man's skin does not prevent him from being competent in any given respect, has knocked the foundations from underneath the structure of our authority.

But still more fatal has been our imbecile weakness in allowing India to become aware that we are not wholly divine. When the French saw Joan of Arc bleed from a slight wound, the tradition of her invulnerability and their superstitious reverence for her as supernaturally protected, vanished, and her ruin became certain. The heel of Achilles of the Sahib has been the Memsahib. It was atrocious folly to allow Indians to come to England to study, to mix freely with our women, often to marry or seduce them. But we might have survived that scandal. The returned students, having forfeited caste, had forfeited credit. We could have dismissed their accounts of England as the bluster of rascals ; and, besides, these students were as insignificant in number as in authority with their own people.

But we did worse. In the name of religion and morality (as usual !) we committed a political blunder, which was also a social crime, by permitting and even encouraging white women to go out to India.

To begin with, they cannot stand the climate, which

compels them to live lives whose inevitable tendency is to relax the moral fibre. Thus even high-class memsahibs sometimes have themselves bathed by their beras. The excuse is that any sexual irregularity with such inferior animals is unthinkable. But "a man's a man for a' that." Incidentally, the heat increases the female lasciviousness as it decreases the male. White women are thus subject to continual nervous irritation of which they often fail to suspect the character. Besides, the healthiest of them is usually more or less ailing in various minor respects. They are usually short-tempered from this and other causes, and any species of lack of self-control has a fatal effect on the attitude of the native.

Apart from this, it seems to him incredibly shameless on our part that our women should appear in public at all; that they should do so unguarded and unveiled appears the climax of immodesty. Some Englishmen are fatuous enough to suppose that they have explained quite nicely to the satisfaction of Indians—whose point of view in these matters is practically identical from Tuticorin to Peshawar, and Chittagong to Karachi; it being an imperative necessity imposed by the climate, irrespective of creeds and social conditions—that our customs are compatible with correct conduct and even common decency. Such self-delusion marks the utmost limit of bad psychology. India could be kept in order, even now, to its own salvation and our great credit and profit, if we would eliminate the European women and tradesmen, the competition-wallah, and the haw-haw officer, and entrust the government of the country to a body of sworn "samurai" vowed like the Jesuits to chastity and obedience, together with either poverty or a type of splendour in which there should be no

element of personal pride or indulgence, but only prestige. Like the Jesuits, too, these men should be sworn never to return to Europe as long as they lived. The capacity of such men to govern would be guaranteed by the fact of their having volunteered to accept such conditions. They would enjoy universal respect and absolute trust. They would require no army to enforce their authority. All the best elements of India would spontaneously unite to support it. One further condition. They would have to be guaranteed against the interference of any ignorant and indifferent House of Commons. The stupid callousness of the India Office is as much to be dreaded as the silly sentimentalism of sympathisers with "national aspirations," "the brotherhood of man," and all such bunkum.

In India the rules of Caste assured the poorest peasant a livelihood of sorts, bar famine and plague, and the future of his children was as certain as sunrise. In Anglo-Saxon civilisation no one has any guarantee against economic earthquakes, and the future of his family is pure gambling. Such is the price of what we call progress. We cannot even assign a meaning to the word; because no one has any idea of where we are going. The most stupid and tyrannical system ever devised is better than our present position, provided it be stable. We are in a nightmare in which we cannot calculate the result of any action.

It was an affectation of poetry and romance in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries to let itself go about the Vale of 'Cashmere': "Whom, not having seen, we adore." The descriptions are as vague as they are voluptuous. In reality Kashmir has very positive and definite qualities, and they have certainly never been suggested by the polite dithyrambs of its distant devotees.

Technically, of course, it is principally the valley of the Jhelum. But the country does not impress one as being a valley at all : it is a well-watered plateau, ringed by mountains, with a narrow gap through which the river empties itself. Its height is from six thousand to eight thousand feet above the sea. The climate in spring and summer resembles that of Mexico combined with that of Switzerland. The air is clear and exhilarating, yet an atmosphere of peace tempts the wayfarer to pass away the time in the delights of Love-in-Idleness. In winter the snows transform it to a fascinating fairyland, rather like northern Europe with the addition of sunlight.

Srinagar is an ancient and admirable city. Many of the buildings are of wood. It is interesting to notice that the bridges are built on the principle of the cantilever, which most people believe to be a miracle of modern science ; but the idea of the Forth Bridge antedates Alexander the Great.

The flowers and trees of Kashmir are very varied. Their rich splendour is superb. There are many lakes with floating gardens, and on the river are houseboats in which many Europeans spend the summer. It is a life of *dolce far niente* of which the Thames could only offer a feeble imitation, and Venice itself but a hectic parody.

There is plenty of shooting in the valley, from bears, deer, wild sheep and wild goats, to pigeons. I went out occasionally after the bigger game, though I prefer low country shooting. I hate climbing hills unless they are really difficult, as I hate everything which only goes half-way. There is not much fun, either, in pigeon shooting. One does it less for pleasure than for profit, and the pigeon is certainly welcome up country as an alternative to athletic mutton and chicken.