STANZA XXXV

Dragging behind us beautiful weary limbs,
We turned snow-blinded eyes toward the pass
— — — and laid us down.
At last to sleep. Aleister Crowley

Knowles and I were kept very busy from the 5th to the 22nd of April. Everything had to be repacked in kiltas. These are baskets shaped either like wide-mouthed vases or like cabin trunks, and covered with raw hide to protect them from rough usage and bad weather. Our limit weight was 53 pounds. As a beast of burden, a mule is less efficient than a man, and a man than a woman. In Kashmir, however, one does not use women as coolies. The people are Mohammedans governed by a ruling caste of Hindus. This leads to complications; for one thing, though the river is full of mahsir, one is not allowed to fish for them, because one of them had swallowed the soul of the Maharaja in his youth! Another inconvenience is that one cannot get beef to eat, for Kashmir is theoretically an independent state. The Mohammedan has, of course, no objection to beef; it is the Hindu who prohibits it.

A curious misfortune overtook a native in this connection. His little farm was on the banks of the Indus. During the winter two landslides cut him off completely from his neighbours. The mountain path could not be repaired until the spring. He saved himself from starvation by killing his cow. For this offence he barely escaped the penalty of death.*

* Later. Poor Sir Hari Singh paid dearly in 1923 for eating sirloin of beef! As bad as Jonathan and the honey!

We added to our stores by buying a large quantity of local products which it would have been more trouble to bring from England. In some cases this was a mistake. The matches procurable in Kashmir compare only too unfavourably with the worst products of France at its worst period. It was a champion box if it contained half a dozen matches which lit without argument. When we got to the glacier, we used to spend much of our time on sunny days in trying to dry them on convenient rocks.

The general bandobast of the expedition was open to a good deal of criticism. One of Eckenstein's few failings was his faith in professorial science. Because the German soldier thrives on Erb-suppe and the British on "Bovril-bacon-rations," he expected us to do the same, with the result that much of our provisions was quite uneatable. The general plan was to pack kiltas with supplies for one day for twelve men. We had thirty-six of these. In other kiltas were packed additional supplies to supplement what we could procure from the villages which we passed. Eckenstein was curiously obstinate about some details. I was certain that our supply of sugar was very inadequate, but he opposed bitterly my proposal to add to it. I insisted on laying in an extra eighty pounds. Most of this was stolen by the Pathan contingent of servants and sold to the villagers on the journey. The result was that in the latter part of the expedition we suffered from sugar starvation, one of the most dreadful tortures that I have ever undergone.

Eckenstein rejoined us on April 22nd, and we started six days later. We had met with extreme kindness on the part of everybody in the valley, and the assistance given by the government was invaluable. From start to finish there was not a single unpleasant incident, and I shall always

remember with the warmest gratitude and affection the hospitality of the English residents.

We had a small Staff Major of Pathans, very handsome and fierce. The idea of taking them seems to have been to use their prestige with the Kashmiri who, while extraordinarily brave in face of inanimate dangers, are hopelessly timid in presence of a fighting race. I do not think these men were of much assistance at any time, and they ultimately had to be sacked and sent back, not only for their thieving but for their overbearing manner towards the people of the district.

Next came our staff of personal servants, headed by Salama Tantra, who was in all respects an admirable servant, so much so that I brought him from Kashmir in 1905 and took him with me across China. His subordinates were all good men in their way, and we had no trouble with them.

Our transport as far as Askole, the last village, depended on local coolies or ponies, 150 of one or fifty of the other. Occasionally the same set would make two or three marches with us, but as a rule they were changed every day. Except on one or two occasions when the ignorance and bad manners of the Austrians led to misunderstanding, everything went smoothly.

The *naïveté* of the natives was sometimes very amusing. The regular rate of pay was fourpence a day, and this princely profusion induced the inhabitants of distant side valleys to make sometimes as much as six days' march in each direction from their homes to some point on our route. They would then dissimulate themselves among the crowd of coolies and present themselves to the paymaster. Their injured bewilderment on discovering that we only paid

SALAMA TANTRA SHIKARI

Who accompanied me to Chogo Ri, Kangchenjanga, and on the walk across China

wages on presentation of a slip of paper with the coolie's name and number, and the safe arrival of the corresponding kilta, was really pitiful. But even more impressive is the original fact of their willingness to make so many days' journey in the hope of acquiring fourpence without working for it.

Another incident has peculiar value as throwing light on the genesis of stories of miraculous healings. Our custom was to have the doctor establish a temporary clinic at every halting place, where he would attend to tooth-drawing, tapping for dropsy, and such simple matters. I remember one man with a fang which stuck out completely through his cheek, leaving a jagged ulcer all round it. It was obviously impossible to undertake any cases of illness other than those requiring simple operations. Invariably, therefore, the cure was effected by the use of instruments, which were spread out on a blanket, while everybody looked on. Nevertheless, on our return, the sick from distant valleys having congregated to meet us, the first patient protested when the doctor produced his forceps. "Oh no," said he. "I want to be cured like the others; put your hand on my head and make me well!"

The journey to the foot of Chogo Ri divides itself naturally into three main sections; six marches bring one to the foot of the Zoji La, the pass which divides Kashmir from Baltistan; twenty-one marches bring one to the foot of the Baltoro Glacier; the rest is on the ice. As long as one is in Kashmir the travelling is comparatively easy, the marches reasonably short, and the halting places comfortable. The scenery is exhilaratingly grand and beautiful, and the climate perfect. The whole thing may best be described as an exaggeration of all that is best and loveliest

in the Alps, plus the enchantment of Asiatic atmosphere.

Travellers to Chogo Ri are limited as to season by the fact that the Zoji La is impassible for coolies before a certain date, which varies little from year to year. We thought ourselves lucky to manage to cross so early in May as the 4th. In the autumn (again) it closes early, so that if one fails to get back to Kashmir before the snow blocks the pass, one is practically compelled to winter in Baltistan.

A great fuss has been made about the actual difficulties and dangers of crossing the pass, but it is merely a long snow trudge. Pfannl and Wessely, who were always boiling over to exhibit their prowess, went up to the Col to prospect. They reported on returning (a) that they could not see anything, (b) that the pass was very steep on the other side, and (c) that the other side was free from snow. On the following day we learnt that the first of these statements may have been correct; the other two enlarged my horizon as to the possibilities of inaccuracy.

The slopes leading to the pass are uniformly easy, and the reputed danger from avalanches exists only for people without any knowledge of snow. The doctor, however, gave us an idea of what we might expect from him. To this day I cannot understand how his misadventure failed to warn me. Just before reaching the top of the pass, he started to walk across a frozen lake. As he says: "Confiant dans la solidité de la glace, je m'aventure un peu trop, lorsque, tout à coup, je fais un plongeon, intempestif à cette heure matinale . . . " !!

My duty was to see that the caravans crossed the comparatively short section of the pass which the men dreaded. So I spent most of the morning rushing backwards and

forwards, encouraging one, exhorting another, and giving a hand to a third. I had no reason to suppose that the reconnaissance of the Austrians was radically wrong. By the time the last man had come safely through the critical section, I was already tired ; and when I started to follow, I found to my dismay that the Matayun side of the pass, instead of being steep, was at a very low gradient indeed ; and, so far from being free from snow, was covered deeply. The day being well advanced, the going was softer and more slushy all the time. Even the tracks made by the coolies had not made the way decently walkable. Faint with exhaustion, I dragged myself into camp at five o'clock at night, after a thirteen hours' trudge during which I had hardly sat down.

My eyes, too, were inflamed. In the Alps, I had found myself able to go all day in bright sunshine without dark goggles and be none the worse. In Mexico I became uncomfortable after an hour or two, and had to put on my glasses. But in the Himalayas, even at low altitudes (the Zoji La is about 5,000 metres), snow blindness is a real menace. When I got to the upper glacier, I found that ten minutes without goggles even under a clouded sky determined an attack.

I was too exhausted even to eat until I had drunk half a bottle of champagne, after which I slept like a log. The next morning I started late—eight o'clock. The march, like that of the previous day, was fifteen miles, but only took six hours instead of thirteen, and would have been much less save for the soft snow of the earlier stages. There was no anxiety about the coolies, so that I had ample leisure to meditate on the extraordinary change of scenery on the far side of the Zoji. Nowhere else in the world have I found

any similarly sudden and complete antithesis. Right up to Baltal, trees and flowers abound. On the other side of the pass is an astonishing abomination of desolation. Thence all the way to Skardu there is literally no scrap of vegetation, scarce even sparse rough grass ; except where mountain torrents join the Indus. At such places, the natives have carried out an elaborate scheme of irrigation. The land is fashioned into terraces fertilised by a system of channels ; and in these artificial fields they cultivate their crops, including apricots. In some places there are as many as five harvests a year. From a distance these oases appear very striking. The first impression is of a criss-cross formed by the line of trees and the terraces. These villages glow with ineffable gladness. The marches, though often quite short in actual mileage on the map, are (generally speaking) quite severe. Eckenstein had observed humorously that from the top of the Zoji La it would be down hill all the way to Skardu, bar local irregularities. The piquancy of the remark lies in the fact that the total descent is less than ten thousand feet, and that the average daily " local irregularity " approximates to double that amount. It is sometimes infuriating. One day, at the end (as I thought) of a long march, I caught sight of the goal not half a mile away, both it and I being close to the river. But a rocky buttress gratuitously juts into the stream, and the track makes a little detour of some three thousand feet in height to pass it.

Apart from the mere fatigue of these marches, they are made detestable by the utter monotony and ugliness of the landscape. The mountains are huge hideous heaps of shapeless drab. There is hardly one noble contour ; there is no rest for the eye ; there is no inspiration and no interest—

nothing but a gnawing desire to be done with the day's dreary dragging. In addition to this there is a good deal of actual discomfort. The glare of the sun is very distressing, and either it, or its reflection from the hot arid rocks, is scorching. At the same time it often happens that a bitterly biting wind is blowing. It seems to eat into one's very bones with harsh cold. One does not know what to do about clothes. On one side one is roasted ; on the other frozen. It is easy to understand how the heart leaps whenever the eye falls upon the distant green lattice of a grove, and even how eagerly the eye looks for geological indication of the probability of one appearing. It is an additional annoyance that the mere distance one has travelled tells one so little as to what remains to be done, for the reasons given above.

On some of these marches we were able to get ponies, though the Austrians disdained such effeminacy. The Indian hill pony compares very unfavourably with the Mexican. He is neither so swift, so strong, nor so sure-footed. More often than not, too, he is in bad condition, and sometimes actually lame. The best of them stumble at almost every other step, though it is said that they never lose their footing completely. I could never rid myself altogether of nervousness. The road is officially the highway to Skardu and Yarkand, but it rarely amounts to more than a rough and narrow mountain track, scarce better than the paths to Alpine Club huts, at their worst. Some stages, indeed, are altogether impracticable for ponies, either because the track crosses a ravine by a rope bridge, or because actually too steep for them to climb. The road is never dangerous from the point-of-view of the pedestrian, but it looks so to a man on horseback ; for in a great many

places its loose stones lie on the edge of what is a precipice for all practical purposes.

At Hardas we were entertained by a magnificent but dirty Rajah, who took me for a native. One noticed with amusement that a great many of the people whom public opinion at home classes as niggers were very much lighter in colour than any of our party.

At Tolti we found another Rajah equally urbane. Travel in the East is essential to any sort of understanding of the Bible. The equivalent of the word King is constantly used to describe men who may be anything from absolute monarchs over hundreds of thousands of people, to country squires or even headmen of a tribe of gypsies.

We reached Skardu on the 14th of May, and put in four days making arrangements for the next stage of the journey. We could no longer depend on finding enough coolies, the villages beyond Shigar being poorly populated.

We took much credit to ourselves, by the way, and gave more to the efficiency of government officials, that we had come through from Srinagar without a day's halt, we the largest party of Europeans to have made the journey.

Central Asia, by the way, is the home of Polo, which is played to this day with the utmost enthusiasm. Needless to say, the game is free from the swanking exclusiveness of the European variety. I was never able to discover any particular rules. One simply rides into the *mêlée* with any kind of a stick one happens to have, and smites the ball with more vigour than intention. If one feels that one's side is too strong for the others, one simply changes over. The local Rajah and the poorest farmer of the district meet in the game with the noble equality of " chivalry " in the true sense, the *esprit de corps* of horsemen.

The exhilaration of the game is extraordinary. Played as it is, it is free from the lust of result which has spoilt practically all sports and games in Europe. Strange that in my old age I should suddenly find myself acquiescing in the absurdity which angered me so when a boy, Champney's plan of playing cricket without scoring runs. After all, the madman was right. It would be far finer to play the game for the sake of enjoying the free exercise of one's enthusiasm. True it is, scoring does lead to post-mortem controversies which are not in the spirit of sport. Climbing itself is being very much spoilt by the attitude of the Alpine Club in insisting that the achievement, not the enjoyment, is the important thing. It has led to their virulent, dishonest, envious intrigues against guideless climbing and climbers. This is the American spirit, to count and compare instead of being content with spiritual satisfaction. This is what is meant by the Scripture "The love of money is the root of all evil."

This spirit is at the root of all modern attempts at standardisation of attainment, and it leads directly to every kind of foul play, falsehood, cheating and controversy. Consider merely American football and baseball; the drilling of the teams to carry out a series of evolutions designated by a string of ciphers. Again, what of the intrigues to attain the transfer of professional players, to say nothing of the possible selling of matches to syndicates of gamblers? Sport of all kinds has tended to become spectacular and gladiatorial, even in games like lawn tennis, which was originally the very incarnation of social amenity. It is the same story everywhere; see boxing, in which a man may get more for half an hour's battery than any dozen University Professors receive for a lifetime of devoted labour on behalf of the race.

The root of the mischief is the spirit of taking life too seriously. It is really almost expected of the man who happens to run over to Philadelphia from New York for a day, that he should forthwith write an encyclopædic history of the Quakers.

It is hard to prophesy the issue of this tendency, but one can see already that the chivalry of sport is following that of arms into oblivion.

STANZA XXXVI

Up the hills and down the dales
And over the hills to Skardu,
Where nobody looks like the Prince of Wales,
And nobody bothers any Order!
R. L. (ex tempore, with malice, and after J. Keats.)

Skardu, 2,228 metres above sea-level, is the capital of Baltistan, and contains some 20,000 inhabitants. The mountains here seem to have conspired to stop suddenly so as to allow a large level plateau. The Indus spreads out almost as if to form a lake. The town is large and scattered; it is in fact less a town than a conglomeration of small farms. After our long and tedious march, we could enjoy to the full the sensation of the peace and beatitude which fill this smiling isolated valley.

We stayed at the Dak-baghla, which stood some thirty yards back from a delicious stream of clear water. One evening, just after sunset, a young man appeared carrying on his shoulders his brother, who had been working in a quarry. A falling rock had struck the inside of his leg just below the knee, and laid it open to the bone as far as the ankle. The doctor needed plenty of running water. So we took the patient down to the stream, and held Alpine lanterns while the doctor operated. The leg was in a shocking mess, and we suggested chloroform. The doctor said "No—the boy will faint with the pain in a few seconds," and he went on washing out the dirt and snipping away loose pieces of flesh, and ultimately stitching up the whole fourteen inches of wound. The game went on for

an hour and a half. But the boy never lost consciousness, and never moaned or so much as murmured. We heard nothing from him except a perfectly calm request, about half way through the job, for a drink of water.

I did not content myself with admiring the lad's stoicism. His conduct made me suspect that the Mongolian (the Baltis are Mongols) has a very different nervous system from our own. I understood Chinese ideas of torture from this and similar facts, and began to correlate these physiological reactions with the psychology and philosophy of the race. It helped me to see that what we call ultimate truth is in reality no more than a statement of the internal relations of the Universe which we perceive. One may say, indeed, that a unicellular organism would be absolutely justified in explaining the Universe in terms of his own experience; that he could indeed by no possibility do anything else, and that the sole valid criticism which could be applied to his cosmology would be based on facts neither known nor knowable to him. Apply this argument to our actual ideas: any religion must rest on revelation, and cannot be proved by reason or experience. It is at once necessary and impudent to claim the exercise of faith. From this it follows that religion must always be repugnant to reason, and its upholders must be prepared to be called charlatans.

There is, however, one issue from this dilemma. It is possible to base a religion, not on theory and results, but on practice and methods. It is honest and hopeful to progress on admitted principles towards the development of each individual mind, and thus to advance towards the Absolute by means of the consciously willed evolution of the faculty of apprehension. Such is in fact the idea underlying initiation. It constitutes the absolute justification of the

Path of the Wise as indicated by the Adepts, whether of the Magical or Mystical schools. For Yoga offers humanity an organ of intelligence superior to intellect, yet co-ordinate with it, and Magick serves to arouse spiritual energies which, while confirming those of the mind, bring them to their culmination.

One afternoon was made notable by a storm of wind. Fine sand was blown up from the bed of the Indus to a height of over three thousand feet, completely obscuring the mountains. (I have seen something similar in Cumberland. One night a terrific storm broke over the West Coast; of sufficient velocity to push a number of trucks from a siding into a London & North Western train, wrecking it. The bough, as thick as my thigh, of a tree forty yards from the hotel was blown through my window on to the bed where I lay asleep, without waking me. In the morning the rain had stopped; but the wind continued with increased violence. Every stone wall in the neighbourhood had been thrown to the ground. The waterfalls exposed to the wind had been blown back so that the pitches over which they normally fell were practically dry. The water of the lake was swept up in vast clouds across the face of Scafell, completely hiding the mountain.)

While making our new arrangements we lounged about, fished, and climbed odd rocks which tempted us. On May 19th we crossed the Indus by the ferry and followed a delightful road, for the most part level and wooded, to Shigar. The Shigar valley is strangely unlike that of the Indus, and is out of keeping with one's natural ideas of mountain streams. The river winds through a broad flat wilderness of stones.

The village of Shigar resembles an oasis in the Sahara,

as I discovered some years later when I made my bow to the latter. There is indescribable fascination about these clusters of quiet houses in their groves of green ; but there is a serpent in every Eden, and there was a missionary in Shigar. We asked the fool to dinner. He had been there seven years, as had also his predecessor, and between them they had not made a single convert. Christianity can never make any impression on a Mohammedan. The anthropomorphic and anthropotheistic ideas connected with the " Incarnation " shock people whose conception of God, irrational though it be, is at least sublime. " God hath neither equal, son, nor companion. Nothing shall stand before His face." The ethical implications of the " Atonement " are equally repulsive to the Moslem. As Ibsen said : " Your God is an old man whom you cheat." Mohammedanism teaches a man to respect himself; his relation with his supposed creator is direct ; he cannot escape the penalty of his sins by paying the priest, or by persuading himself that everything has been arranged for him by a transaction of the most stupid injustice. Buddhism, in a totally different way, shares this conformity with common decency, and it is only the lowest caste of Hindu which really convinces itself that sacrifices and servility suffice for salvation. Where Islam and Christianity meet in open competition, as in some parts of Africa, it is found that only the lowest type of negro, such as is accustomed to arrange matters with conscience by hanging a rag on a piece of stick, accepts Christianity. Any one with a trace of self-respect disdains the slavish superstitions which we compel the Archbishop of Canterbury to subscribe, but can readily accept the simplicity of Islam as a stage beyond Fetishism.

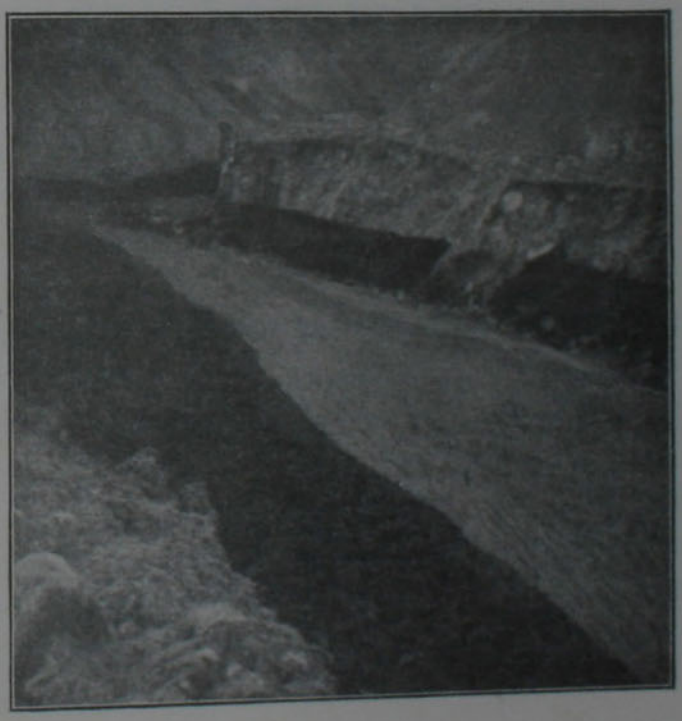
The march from Shigar to Askole is extremely varied and beautiful. For three marches one ascends the Shigar valley. The river was extraordinarily low, and could be crossed. In August, 1892, Eckenstein, though furnished with a rope, had been unable to cross one of the tributary streams—of which there must be more than one hundred. The explanation is (of course) that the snows had not begun to melt.

On one march we had to walk along the smooth round stones of the river bed for several miles. The track became impossible for horses. We crossed a pari (a buttress which juts into the stream and has to be climbed in consequence) over twelve hundred feet high. The next day we came to Ghomboro. The character of the country had completely changed once more. We had got back to the conditions of the valley of the Upper Indus. Ghomboro is a delightful village of apricot orchards. Below the terraces roars the water of the Bralduh Nala, a terrific torrent pent between narrow cliffs. The most striking impression of the entire journey is the variety of the physical geography. It is as if nature had conspired to afford one the maximum of new sensations. Nowhere else in the world have I observed such apparent discontinuity, such wealth of unexpected phenomena tumbling over each other to claim astonishment and admiration.

There are no Dak-baghlas in these remote districts; so we were living in our tents. We dined in the open air under the apricots, while by our side one of the local elders exuded over five litres of serum. He had been carried down by his adherents in the last stages of dropsy; but after contributing his quota to the volume of the Bralduh, he walked cheerfully to his house without assistance, as he had not done for many months.

Goitre is very common in this valley, and I hoped to learn something about its ætiology. As in the case of cancer, many attempts have been made to generalise from insufficient facts. One of the great arguments about goitre involves the Lötschenthal, where the people at the bottom of the valley could marry strangers from the Rhone Valley, and those at the top go over the Petersgrat and do their courting in Lauterbrunnen. Those in the middle were more inbred. It was accordingly observed that goitre was more common among them. The Bralduh Nala completely upset any such theory, for while there was the same narrowness and isolation, the same limestone water, and similar conditions all along, the goitre varies from village to village in an absolutely irregular way.

The whole Nala is full of interest. It is a regular showplace for the weirdest phenomena. About an hour and a half above Ghomboro is a tributary Nala, with only a trickle of water but swept by intermittent flushes of mud. Its crossing presented a certain problem. I had to post a man to give warning when a torrent was on the way. I myself went down into the bed of the torrent, which was very steep and slimy, and hacked good steps for the coolies. If one had slipped, or been caught by a gush of mud, there would have been no saving him. It took about an hour and a half for the caravan to cross. Half an hour later, we came to a second obstacle of this sort, but it was very different in character. It was a level expanse of mud, very broad. The torrent had caked to a reasonable consistency under the banks, but there was a central section forty to fifty yards wide of very lively-moving stuff. The Tehsildar of Skardu had sent up a gang of men to throw great stones into the stream for several days, for the mud moves very slowly.



1. THE TORRENT OF MUD
2. THE RIVER OF MUD

By this means, they had managed to make a sort of temporary bridge, the most quickly moving part of the stream in the centre being negotiated by the laying of a plank between stones. Our own men, of course, supplemented the efforts of their colleagues, each man bringing a stone as large as he could carry and dropping it into the most suitable place he could see. Having helped the men over the first torrent, I had automatically become rear guard, and the bulk of the men had gone gaily over the second and more formidable obstacle when I arrived. They had got it into excellent condition, and I strolled over as if it had been stepping stones across the Wharfe or the Lynn, and I was going to meet my girl!

The next entertainment is a rope bridge. The "ropes" in question are composed of twigs. There are three main ropes, one to walk on and two to hold. The relations between the three are secured by a trellis of smaller twigs. They are a little terrifying at first sight, it is only fair to admit; but one cannot help thinking that Sir Martin Conway was almost too considerate of the nervousness of others when he insisted on roping Zurbriggen on one side of him and Bruce on the other before pirouetting lightly across.

The day following, another rope bridge brought us back to the right bank of the Bralduh, where another phenomenon of astonishing beauty lay in wait. The extremely narrow gorge through which the Bralduh rushes for so many miles had suddenly broadened out. We were in a wide smiling valley ringed with mountains which, gigantic as they were, seemed to confess by the comparative mediocrity of their structure that they were second rate. The valley is wholly bare of verdure except for plantations, as throughout

Baltistan. The first thing to meet our eyes was what, suppose we had landed in the country of Brobdignag, only more so, might have been the lace handkerchief of a Super-Glumdalclitch left out to dry. It was a glittering veil of brilliance on the hillside ; but closer inspection, instead of destroying the illusion, made one exclaim with increased enthusiasm.

The curtain had been formed by crystalline deposits from a hot spring (38.3 degrees centigrade). The incrustation is exquisitely white and exquisitely geometrical in every detail. The burden of the cynicism of my six and twenty years fell from me like a dream. I trod the shining slopes : they rustled under my feet rather as snow does in certain conditions. (The sound is strangely exhilarating.) It is a voluptuous flattery like the murmurous applause of a refined multitude, with the instinctive ecstatic reverence of a man conscious of his unworthiness entering Paradise. At the top of the curtain is the basin from which it proceeds, the largest of several similar formations. It is some 31 feet in diameter, an almost perfect circle. The depth in the middle is little over 2 feet. It is a bath for Venus herself.

I had to summon my consciousness of Godhead before venturing to invade it. The water streams delicately with sulphurous emanations, yet the odour is subtly delicious. Knowles, the Doctor, and I spent more than an hour and a half reposing in its velvet warmth, in the intoxicatingly dry mountain air, caressed by the splendour of the sun. I experienced all the ecstasy of the pilgrim who has come to the end of his hardships. I felt as if I had been washed clean of all the fatigues of the journey. In point of fact, I had arrived, despite myself, at perfect physical condition. I had realised from the first that the proper preparation for

1. THE HOT SPRING
2. ROPE BRIDGE ABOVE PAKORAH

a journey of this sort is to get as fat as possible before starting, and stay as fat as possible as long as possible. I was now in the condition in which Pfannl had been at Srinagar. I could have gone forty-eight hours without turning a hair.

Pfannl himself was still in excellent form, but he had used up a lot of his reserve force, though he showed no signs of having done so. He was thirty-one, and should have possessed much more endurance than I. People in general have very erroneous ideas about age. For rock climbing or lyric poetry one is doubtless best in one's twenties. For a Himalayan expedition or dramatic composition, it is better to be forty than thirty. Eckenstein at forty-three, despite his congenital tendency to respiratory troubles, was by no means too old ; and Knowles, twenty years younger, was emphatically too young. Guillarmod, at thirty-three, and Wessely, at thirty-one, suffered less than any of us.

In Wessely's case this was mostly because he had not imagination enough to be ill. None of us had ever seen such a perfect pig. He was very greedy and very myopic. In order to eat, he would bend his head over his plate and, using his knife and fork like the blades of a paddle wheel, would churn the food into his mouth with a rapid rotatory motion. There was always some going up, and always some going down, until he deposited his well-sucked instruments of nutrition on a perfectly clean plate, and asked for more. It was the most disgusting sight that I have ever seen. Explorers are not squeamish ; but we had to turn our heads away when Wessely started to eat. I admit and deplore my human weakness. All forms of genius should be admired and studied, and Wessely was a world's champion.

My first experience of gluttony was at Tonbridge. One of my best friends was the fat boy of the House. (He was a nephew of the Adams who discovered Neptune.) One day he was sent £2, and proceeded to the tuck-shop, where one could buy a very generously estimated ice-cream for sixpence. We thought to share in the bounty; but Adams said No with truly Roman fortitude, and tortured us by consuming the whole four-score ice-creams himself.

At Cambridge one of my most intimate friends was a man named Parez of Emanuel, and in him I recognised a supreme trencherman. One Saturday I had been held up at Hitchin, my racing roadster having sprung a leak. I got back to Cambridge too late to order brunch from the kitchens, so on Sunday morning there was nothing for it but to go round to Parez and see if he could feed me. To my joy, I found him reading and smoking by the side of a table spread with a brunch for six, conceived in a spirit of Gargantuan hospitality. I invited myself, of course; but to my surprise Parez declined, saying that there was hardly enough for the party as it was. "Hang it," said I, "for God's sake let me stay; perhaps one of them won't turn up." My host agreed, remarking that the born-out-of-wedlock offenders against the Criminal Law Amendment Act were late. After a couple of games of chess, something reminded him that he had forgotten to send out any invitations! We finished that brunch, and I swear to God I didn't eat more than one and a half or one and three-quarters myself.

Later I asked him to dinner in London. He began with two large fried soles to his own cheek, and went on with a porterhouse steak. I forget the rest. But, compared with Wessely, he was Succi! When Wessely reached Rdokass

on the return journey, the servants asked permission to celebrate by killing two sheep of the flock which we had taken there ; they would, of course, cook the best part of the meat for the Sahibs. Pfannl could eat nothing, and Guillarmod very little, but in a short time the servants repeated their request. Wessely had devoured practically the whole two sheep. Of course the mountain variety is not a Southdown. It probably does not weigh more than the average four months lamb in Sussex. But even so Wessely's exploit is pretty good.

On my own arrival at Rdokass, I made rather a beast of myself. I had been starving on canned food for nearly two months, and that half-warm, half-cooked fresh mutton made me practically insane. I was suffering the agonies of sugar-starvation plus the effects of a recurrence of malaria, so that vomiting and diarrhœa were continuous. But never in my whole life have I tasted anything like that mutton. I gorged myself to the gullet, was violently sick, and ordered a fresh dinner.

> " I am more an antique Roman than a Dane,
> There's yet some mutton left."

I may mention in this place that experience has convinced me of the truth of the Hindu theories about Prana. Apart from the chemical and physiological transactions involved in eating, one is nourished directly, by what one must call, however one may hate to do so, the vital principle in food. We had already found on Iztaccihuatl that canned food ten years old failed to nourish anything like as well as stuff recently tinned. We derived much more energy from fresh-killed mutton, cooked before rigor mortis had set in,

than from ordinary butcher's meat. I ultimately learnt that I could make myself actually drunk on half a dozen oysters chewed in the manner of the Yogis.

One of the practices of Hatha Yoga consists in learning to reverse the peristaltic action of the alimentary canal at will, so that one can make oneself sick quietly without spasmodic action. What they do is to swallow a number of yards of tarband, and eject it again by training the necessary muscles. They then apply these principles to their rice and, after allowing it to remain in the stomach for a short time, quietly reject it. This rice, though unchanged in appearance, contains no nourishment, so that a dog who ate it would starve. The object of the Yogi is to relieve his body of the responsibility of dealing with the elements of the food which do not contribute to sustenance. One is forced to suspect the existence of some subtle principle attached to organic substances which gradually disappears after death, rapidly at first, and then with increasing slowness, so that the process is not complete perhaps for years. It is like the elimination of impurities from alcohol, the first distillation gets rid of most of them, but there is a residuum carried over which requires repeated fractionation.

STANZA XXXVII

"It ain't the 'untin'; it's the 'eavy, 'eavy 'ammer on the 'ard 'ard roads what 'urts the 'orse's 'oofs."

From the hot spring one goes gently along the valley to Askole. The whole march is short, easy, and delightful. It only occupied five hours, of which at least three were spent at the rope bridge and in the pool.

The entire journey had been extraordinarily favourable. We had had very little bad weather, the coolies had behaved admirably, there had been no accidents and no sickness, except for my own dermatological trouble. At Askole, however, several of the servants were slightly indisposed for a couple of days.

We spent ten days in this village. Beyond this point there are no supplies of any sort. It was therefore necessary to establish a depot of food for the men higher up. The difficulty in travelling in uninhabited countries is that a man who eats (say) two pounds a day, and carries sixty pounds can carry nothing except his own food on a journey of thirty marches. Our problem was how to get about one hundred and ten loads deposited at a distance representing (there and back) not less than twenty marches. We bought every pound of everything eatable in the valley, and employed every man available. This meant (roughly) three men to carry one load, one for the load itself, the other two for the food of the three. Even with the

advance depots, the task strained the resources of the valley.

There was one trifling conflict of opinion between myself and Eckenstein at Askole. It was arranged that our valises should not exceed forty pounds on the Glacier, though many of the loads exceeded fifty. I could not get my belongings within the limit. Eckenstein wanted me to leave behind my library. His theory of travelling in wild countries was that one should temporarily become an absolute savage ; but my experience had already shown me that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. I attributed the almost universal mental and moral instability of Europeans engaged in exploring to their lack of proper intellectual relaxation far more than to any irritations and hardships inseparable from physical conditions. Conrad's "An Outpost of Progress" and Kipling's story of the lighthouse keeper who went mad, are outstanding examples of the psychological processes which are likely to occur. Perfectly good friends become ready to kill each other over a lump of sugar. I won't say that I couldn't have stood the Baltoro Glacier in the absence of Milton and the rest ; but it is at least the case that Pfannl went actually mad, that Wessely brooded on food to the point of stealing it, and that Eckenstein and Knowles* both lost their heads over the cholera scare ! Thus the only man beside myself to retain perfect mental balance was the Doctor, who kept his mind constantly occupied by observations in natural history, photography, writing articles for the Swiss newspapers, keeping an elaborate journal for the purposes of his

* The latter under the powerful influence of the Chief—otherwise he would not have turned a hair.

1. GUSHERBRUM
2. PREHISTORIC MORAINE

book on the Expedition, and spending the rest of his spare time in playing chess with me.

Eckenstein made himself quite unpleasant to me, which was utterly out of his character ; and, by itself, evidence of the strain on his temper caused by the Austrian idiocies and vanities. I wasted no words. I merely shrugged my shoulders and said : either I took my books with me, or I left the Expedition. Needless to say, I carried my point. It may strike some people that I was a little *outre-cuidant* about it ; but I take matters like this very seriously. I would rather bear physical starvation than intellectual starvation, any day of the week. It is one of the most frightful consequences of increasing age that one finds fewer and fewer of one's contemporaries worth talking to. One is forced more and more to seek society either with the great masters of the past or with discarnate intelligences.

Pfannl and Wessely had become rather a nuisance. They complained of Eckenstein's discipline, and made themselves notably unpleasant. We rather encouraged them to go off all day and make heroic ascents. But their proposal to take three days' provisions in their rucksacks and go off and climb K2 was negatived. It is really astonishing that so many days of travel had taught them nothing about the scale of the mountains. One cannot measure them by feet and miles. I myself cannot quite see how it is that the difference comes in. But there is no doubt of the fact. It is quite useless to talk of climbing a mountain whose summit is 5,000 feet above the starting point, as one could do if one were in the Alps. For one thing, however perfect may be one's physical condition, the effect of marching day after day is to make it somehow impossible to make an extra

effort. I suppose it is the difference between the 100 yards and the 3 miles at Queens. But apart from this, there seems to be some subtle factor which determines the limit of the day's work. But if I could not explain, at least I thoroughly appreciated, the conditions.

Another difficulty made it clear that the foreigners in the Expedition were simply dead weight. Knowles himself, docile, cheerful, and phlegmatic, could not give much active assistance. In view of the character of the Glacier, the party could no longer travel as a unit after leaving *terra firma*. Only Eckenstein and I spoke Hindustani; only Eckenstein or I could be trusted to lead. The Austrians were always making heroic gestures, and Guillarmod finally demonstrated his incapacity by wandering out one day and getting crag-fast in a perfectly easy place. His misadventure would have been a blow to our prestige had not the natives already accepted him as Tartarin. Our arrangements were therefore settled for us by circumstances. Eckenstein's power of organisation was unique. There was no choice but to leave him at Paiyu to dispatch relays of food. I was thus the only possible leader, and I had to go alone because the Austrians were inseparable, and it was better for Knowles and the doctor to be as near Eckenstein as possible. We accordingly started in four sections; I, with a picked body of coolies, the Austrians a day later, Knowles and the doctor twenty-four hours behind him, and Eckenstein as soon as I had carried out my objective of reconnoitring the mountain and establishing a Main Camp at its foot. I could not but feel that Eckenstein had shown bad judgment in collecting so unwieldy a party. I believe to this day that if he, I, and Knowles had been alone, we should have diminished our difficulties by

60 per cent., and perhaps walked up the mountain before the weather broke.

Thanks to our rapid march from Srinagar, we were a fortnight ahead of our programme. We were afraid of getting to the mountain too early in the season ; but from what I now know of the climate, we should have done much better to rush through and tackle the mountain before the breaking of the monsoon in India.

Another ill effect of including the foreign element was this. Eckenstein, somewhat forgetful of the principles of selfless concentration which are essential to the performance of any Great Work, made a point of admitting the existence of the possibility of international jealousy. He therefore forbade me to cross the Bergschrund before the whole party had arrived at the Main Camp, which it was my business to establish at the foot of the mountain proper. I wish I had remembered about Nelson's blind eye. When I arrived at Camp 10 on the level glacier above the icefall underneath the south-eastern slopes of Chogo Ri, I could have gone on without any difficulty up those slopes to the well-marked shoulder immediately beneath the final pyramid, and had I done so, I have no doubt whatever that we could have made a successful dash for the summit.

I started on June 5th for Korophon, going as slowly as I could. The march occupied over forty-eight hours. The march crosses the Biafo Glacier ; and there I had my first real taste of certain conditions peculiar to the Himalayas. There is a violent alternation of heat and cold between night and day. The maximum shade temperature, rarely less than 25° centigrade, often touched 30° and sometimes climbed close to 40°, whereas the minimum

was hardly ever above zero, even at Askole, and on the glacier reached anything from —10° to —30°. The result is that a few minutes of sunshine produces revolutionary results. A thick hard crust of snow disappears almost instantaneously, and leaves one floundering in a mass of seething crystals. Rocks perched on ice become very hot in an incredibly short time, and break loose from the ice on which they are poised, in a way which takes men of merely Alpine experience by surprise. My Mexican Expedition proved invaluable in enabling me to foresee these phenomena. But the first warning was given on this march when two enormous stones which, anywhere else, would have stayed where they were for years, fell about 20 yards in front of me and the advance guard !

When I say Korophon, it must not be imagined that it means anything more than a mark on the map. It is distinguishable only by a cubical block of granite about 20 feet high, under the two overhanging sides of which a little wall has been built by the shepherds who occasionally lead their flocks so far afield. One wonders why ; for even at Korophon itself, the vegetation is extremely sparse and scrubby.

The next day I went on to Bardumal, at the foot of the spur. There are actually a few trees at this place. On this march one has to cross the Punmah, a broad and shallow stream which I found easy enough to ford. The alternative—to which we were reduced on our return—is to trudge about six miles up stream to a rope bridge and down the other bank. It may be that the low barometric pressure affects the velocity of running water, for streams seem much swifter than one would expect from the slope. The current carries down round stones in the most dangerous

way. When Knowles tried to ford this river on the way back, though the water was barely knee-deep, he was swept away at once, and would have been drowned or battered to death in a few seconds if he had not been promptly pulled back by the rope which he had prudently put on. As it was, he received two violent blows from stones, one of which nearly snapped his thigh and the other his spine. On looking at the photographs of this stream, it seems positively ridiculous to associate the slightest danger with crossing them.

The following day we went on to Paiyu, a dreary march of some five hours, enlivened only by the feelings that we were getting somewhere. The narrowness of the valleys and the steepness of the spurs of the great range prevent one getting any view of the high peaks. On this day's march we had our first glimpse of a giant, the Mustagh Tower, and the sublimity of the sight made up for the monotony of the march.

There are many phenomena of extraordinary interest, had we not been surfeited with things stupendous and strange. At one part of this journey, we were literally walking for hours on garnets. Another marvel is a range of stratified eruptive rocks which stand out brilliantly black against the greys and browns of the background. Near Paiyu there is a regular range of mountains composed of consolidated glacial mud. Again, there is a row of pinnacles capped by enormous boulders on the principle of glacier tables. They have been weathered into slender tapering cones ; the stone at the top has protected them from being washed down evenly.

Paiyu is an open plateau boasting at least three trees. We were to remain a day here to build a stone house to

protect our supplies, and to do the repacking necessary for my advance guard.

In the course of this work, the trouble with our Pathan servants came to a head. We had had several complaints of their arrogance and overbearing behaviour towards the natives, and now we found that they had stolen some fowls from our travelling farmyard, which included, by the way, fifteen sheep and thirty goats. We also discovered that they had stolen and sold practically the whole of our reserve sugar. There was nothing to do but to sack them, which we did.

Out of this arose an incident which I shall always remember with peculiar delight. I was able to play Haroun Al-Raschid, and administer poetic oriental justice. We had furnished the malefactors with magnificent new coats for the journey. One of the men, not content with this, had bullied and cheated one of the Kashmiri servants out of his torn rags, and insisted on disrobing his victim that he might bear away the spoils on his departure. To all intents and purposes, the man was left with nothing to wear. He complained to me. I heard the case with grave attention ; I had to admit that by native justice the clothes belonged to the marauder, who grinned and triumphed and redoubled his insults to his discomfited dupe. "But wait," said I. "Hassan's coat certainly belongs to you, but the coat *you* are wearing belongs to *me!*" So I made him take it off, and clothed the unfortunate Hassan in its splendours, while the villain of the piece had to go off down the valley (where a nice prison was waiting for him) clad in the wretched rags, much too small for him, amid the joy of the entire caravan at seeing the biter bit.

This episode is very instructive. One of the best ways of endearing oneself to the Eastern mind is to show ingenuity in doing essential justice in accordance with legal formality. The instinct which makes us sympathise with Arsène Lupin, Raffles, and Co. is universal. Unfortunately, in the West, we have lost the idea of the just despot. Our judges seem to derive cynical amusement from contemplating the absurdities and abominations which result from formal fidelity to the law. We have lost sight of the fact that law is essentially no more than a generalised statement of prevailing customs. This is so true that it is fair to say that abstract ideas of justice have little to do with primitive legislation; the idea is only to enforce compliance with current conventions.

But nowadays, legislation has broken its banks. It has become a thing in itself, and has arrogated to itself the right of revolutionising the habits of the people in utter indifference to their wishes, but in accordance with abstract ideals which take no account of existing conditions. "Prohibition" is of course the most outrageous example of this inhuman tyranny. But all such aberrations from common sense defeat themselves in the long run. The Law of Moses was entirely intelligible to the least of the Children of Israel; but to-day not even the greatest judges can pretend to know what the law is until the case at issue has been thrashed out, and the decision established as a precedent.

The most honest man cannot always be sure that he is not violating some statute. This is even more appallingly and Gilbertianly true in the United States, where federal laws, state laws, municipal laws and police regulations clash their contradictory complexities at every turn. "Ignorance

of the law excuses no man." But it leads him to take his chance of a peril which he cannot but ignore, and thus the law falls into disrespect and ultimately into desuetude. In the meantime, small gangs take advantage of their special knowledge to blackmail certain sections of the community by technical persecution. We see the censorship, the licensing laws, the inland revenue laws, and even certain commercial and criminal laws arbitrarily invoked against people who have no idea that they are doing wrong in doing exactly as their neighbours do.

STANZA XXXVIII

"Aloft, alone!"

alfred austin / Jubilee Ode.

I left Paiyu with about twenty coolies on the 9th of June. A very short distance brings one to the snout of the glacier, black, greasy, and nearly 500 feet high at the lowest point. The Bralduh rushes from a cavern very repulsively. A great many phenomena observed on this expedition impress one with a kind of horror. I used to think it utterly absurd in books of travel to see moral qualities associated with nature. At this period of my life, above all, I should have scouted any such idea ; but, through the glasses of memory, one can analyse oneself beyond one's protestations. This muddy torrent issuing from its vast black source certainly created an ugly impression. The reason may be that stopping, as I naturally did, to have a good look at it, the presence of that vast body of ice produced a slight physical chill which I promptly translated into emotional terms, and attributed wrongly to what I saw instead of to what I felt. There is also probably a strong Freudian element ; the cold, black muddiness of the water and its relentless turmoil, its unstaunchability, so to speak, may suggest the flowing of blood from a wound, or some such disease as nephritis. The general symbol, again, goes unpleasantly with the ideas of ice and grit ; the general tone of the blackness of the débris is peculiarly unsympathetic.

There was no difficulty in finding a way up the snout. I knew that the first camp, Liligo, was on the left bank, so moved over in that direction. (German professors two hundred years hence are requested not to confuse the name of this *parau* with the "little-go" at Cambridge, though both are alike first stages on a lonely climb leading to nowhere.)

The glacier was a complete revelation to me. The difference in scale had merely multiplied one's difficulty accordingly in previous matters; but here they become more formidable in a geometrical progression with a big *f*. In Switzerland one does not see many moraines over 100 feet high. Here they run to 1,000 or 1,500. There are something like twenty tributary glaciers feeding the Baltoro. Each of these contributes at least three moraines. The glacier being about thirty miles long, and rarely more than two wide, it is distinctly a congested district! The competing moraines jostle each other unscrupulously. One would hardly know that one was on ice at all for the first ten miles; there is hardly a bare patch. But the close competition tends to form many steep slopes; and this means that the sides of most of the moraines are covered with rocks which, even when they are of enormous size, are in extremely unstable equilibrium. Again, the pressure and temperature combine to loosen the bands of rock and ice. The general result is that the passage of a party rearranges that section of the glacier much more radically than would be the case in the Alps. The task of picking one's way is very arduous; and there is a good deal of luck about it, for there is no means of telling whether one may not at any moment be cut off by an obstacle. For example—the rivulets which flow openly through

1. EARTH PINNACLES
2. MASHERBRUM

small channels on Swiss glaciers may here be torrents rushing through cuttings in the ice anything up to 100 feet broad and deep. In the Alps, I remember few such places where I could not step across easily, and those few were always within a bit of a jump.

One's eyesight does not help one much to find the way. The view is always cut off; even by climbing to the top of a moraine one gets little practical information. The muddle is essentially meaningless to the mountaineer. It is quite rare to be able to mark down a comparatively level passage of a couple of hundred yards which might be worth while making for. Each line of moraine has to be crossed in the serious spirit of a pioneer looking for a pass across a range. The instability of the surface means a constant tendency to slip, so that the journey is morally tedious and physically wearisome beyond belief. The compensation is the majesty of the surrounding mountains. Nowhere else in the world does there exist anything like the same diversity of form. The effect is enhanced by the recognition that practically every peak is unclimbable by our present standards. Men accustomed to mountains instinctively reconnoitre everything they see, and in this district one is constantly being astonished at the completeness of the defences of even quite insignificant peaks.

Above the camp at Liligo are most formidable precipices of rotten rock. In some places they actually overhang; and one wonders how they manage to stay there at all, especially in view of the rapidly disintegrating action of the weather.

The next day I went on to Rhobutse; a very short march, but I did not want to tire the men, and this was the only good camping place for some distance. There was a great

deal of snow and rain in the early part of the day, though it cleared up in the afternoon. Just after sunset, however, a very violent wind sprang up. On the 11th, I went on to Rdokass, a much longer march in distance. But the going on the glacier had become much easier. I found some comparatively level stretches.

The natives were extremely good in every way; their character compares favourably with that of any race I have ever seen. We never heard of them coming to blows or even to really high words. Imagine the difference with European peasants! Some of their customs are worth mentioning. For one thing, they never take off their clothes all their lives. A baby is wrapped in a rag; presently a second round the first, and so on. But they never remove the innermost layer; it is allowed to disintegrate by itself. The richer a man becomes, the more clothes he is able to buy, so that the headmen of a village are like rolls of cloth.

Their method of preparing their food on the glacier is ingenious. Having made a fire, they get a stone as nearly round as possible and heat it thoroughly through. Round this they smear their paste of flour and water, twisting the whole into their shawls. By the time they have arrived in camp the paste is baked through and still hot.

One cannot wash on the glacier—nay, not so much as one's hands. The extreme dryness of the atmosphere removes all the natural grease of the skin, which becomes so brittle that the touch of water causes it to peel off, leaving a horribly painful, and practically unhealable, wound. I let my hands get as greasy and as dirty as I could to protect them. When thus coated, it is safe to leave them in contact with water, provided it is not for too long and there

is no rubbing. One can indeed put one's hands into boiling water, for at these low barometric pressures water boils easily. At Rdokass, for example, water boils at 87°.4, corresponding to 13,904 feet; higher up, it is of course less.

In spite of not washing, one does not get at all dirty. After my bath on May 25th, I abstained until August 19th —eighty-five days—but I found myself absolutely clean except my hands and face. The only inconvenience was lice. These insects live inexpugnably in the seams of one's clothes. It is useless to try to dislodge them, because every time one gets near a Balti, the supply is renewed.

Rdokass remains to this day in my memory as a veritable Beulah. It is a broad grassy ledge on the rocks 200 or 300 feet above the glacier. There are superb views in every direction. But there is "something about the place" beyond that; the atmosphere of restfulness is paramount. There was here quite a lot of grass; even some flowers. I accordingly sent word to bring our flocks along. It was the last oasis of any account, and in fact the only place of its kind that we found on the whole glacier. The day after, I crossed the glacier to Lhungka. It was a very nervous business picking one's way across the moraines, especially as I had to build stone men to guide the other parties, and I had only the vaguest ideas as to what point on the other bank of the glacier to make for. I climbed a high point in the middle and took compass observations, as I could now see Masherbrum (25,660) and Gusherbrum (26,630). These peaks are the most spectacular of the whole range; the one a stupendous wedge of brilliantly lighted rock and ice; the other a dim luminous cone. It had this appearance because of its orientation. We never

saw it in full light ; because at sunset, when it would have been illuminated, it happened always to be cloudy.

My compass observations distressed me extremely. I was trying to reconcile nature with Conway's map ; and my difficulties were scarcely less than those which disturbed the peace of Victorian Theologians. The natives made it worse ; for Conway had named the glaciers on their information, and what they told me was in some respects quite different.

At Lhungka I built a shelter for the coolies, a low stone wall behind which they could lie in case of violent wind. It would of course have been impossible to take tents for them ; but as a matter of fact they did not complain of cold at any time. The thermometer did not register more than 5° centigrade of frost till after June 18th.

The next day I went on to Ghore, where I found a delightful camping ground of fine level sand. (On our return, by the way, this was completely flooded.)

From Ghore to Biange is another long march, but less monotonous. The views are increasingly superb, and the solitude was producing its beneficent results. The utterly disproportionate minuteness of man purges him of his smug belief in himself as the final cause of Nature. The effect is to produce not humiliation but humility, and this feeling is only the threshold of a selflessness which restores the balance by identifying one with the Universe of which one's physical basis is so imperceptibly insignificant a fraction.

From Biange one can see Mitre Peak across the glacier. Although a relatively minor summit (7,500 metres), its architecture is incomparable. The name is inevitable. From this point of view the double horn could not

1. MITRE PEAK FROM CAMP VIII
2. DAWN ON CHOGO RI FROM CAMP VIII

fail to suggest the title. (I had myself indulged in a little nomenclature, calling a mountain crowned by three square-cut towers of rock "Three Castles.")

The next day a short march took me to Doksam. I was now almost at the head of the Baltoro Glacier (15,518 feet). In nearly thirty miles of march I had only made 400 feet of ascent. But here I was on the floor of a glacier at a height close to that of Mont Blanc. In front of me the glacier widened out; three major and several minor glaciers coalesced. I was irresistibly reminded of the Concordia Platz in the Oberland, and named the plateau in affectionate remembrance.

Once again the astounding variety of nature in this district impressed itself upon my mind. One would have said that it was theoretically impossible to combine so many types of mountain. The obvious exception to the otherwise invariable rule of practical inaccessibility was the Golden Throne, a minor point of which Conway claims to have climbed. I was very disgusted at the bad taste of some of the coolies who had been with him in saying that he had never been on the mountain at all, but turned back at the foot of the icefall. How could such common creatures presume to decide a delicate scientific question of this sort?

My camp at Doksam was pitched on the borders of a good-sized lake between the mountains and the glacier, which at this point presents a wall of ice well over 1,000 feet high. The position is consequently comparatively sheltered, and in its way very agreeable. The presence of still water lends it the charm of utter peace, and the absence of the vermin which desecrate the crust of the earth so objectionably in other places is rendered even more agreeable by the

jolly courageous children who were my comrades and my friends. I went out reconnoitering for three hours in the middle of the day, and got a very clear idea of the situation. A sudden snowstorm of a rather severe type swept the camp for an hour; but at four o'clock the weather again cleared. "To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new"—except that there were neither woods nor pastures! "We were the first that ever burst into that silent sea"—except that there wasn't any sea! The poets are really very thoughtless to leave their heir without an appropriate quotation!

On the 16th of June I marched for a little over four hours where man had never yet trodden. It proved to be the easiest going yet. The eternal moraine was less in evidence; we were able to walk over admirable snow most of the way. Once more, though, I have to record a unique phenomenon totally out of keeping with the rest. At the corner of the Baltoro Glacier and its northern affluent, the Chogo Lungma, as I named it, one has to cross a scree of pure white marble. Eckenstein, who arrived at this point in a snowstorm, found it very distressing. He told me that it was impossible to pick footholds; the entire surface was a blinding glare. Camp 8 (16,592) is situated at the foot of a subsidiary spur descending from the ridge of which Chogo Ri is the climax. I was now in full view of the mountain itself, bar clouds; and, my first duty being to reconnoitre the mountain, I spent all day and all night watching it through my glasses, sketch-book in hand. The clouds shifted sufficiently to enable me to make a piecemeal picture, and I came to the conclusion that while the south face, perhaps possible theoretically, meant a complicated climb with no half-way house, there should

CHOGO RI FROM NEAR CAMP 8

be no difficulty in walking up the snow slopes on the east-south-east to the snowy shoulder below the final rock pyramid. I sent back word accordingly, and went on much encouraged. There was still no difficulty of any kind; the snow was excellent; but after three and a half hours, I decided to stop at Camp 9 (17,332) directly under the south face of the mountain. Above this camp the glacier becomes comparatively steep, and I did not wish to take a chance of getting my coolies into trouble. They had amused me very much, by the way, at Camp 8 before starting, by coming and telling me that of course they didn't believe me when I said I would send them back as soon as they got to the eastern foot of Chogo Ri. They knew quite well that I only said it to lure them on; they knew that I meant to make them cross to Yarkand; they knew that they would die to a man; but they didn't mind, it was Kismet, and they wanted me to know that they would gladly die because I had been so nice to them. When I sent them home from Camp 10 they could hardly believe their ears, and their delight at being reprieved was pathetically charming.

Modern writers have made a great deal of fun of the Golden Age; they have been at great pains to prove that primitive man is a bloodthirsty savage. The Balti gives them the lie. These men were all innocence, all honesty, all good faith, all loyalty, all human kindness. They were absolutely courageous and cheerful, even in face of what they supposed to be certain death of a most uncomfortable kind. They had no disquietude about death and no distaste for life. They were simple-minded and merry. It was impossible not to love them, and not to contrast them with the dirty despicable insects whose squabbles and

crimes make civilisation itself the greatest of all crimes, and whose ignorance (for all their boasting) is actually darker and deeper and more deadly than that of these children.

From Camp 9 there is a rapid rise of 1,400 feet to Camp 10 (18,733). I was a little doubtful as to how the pabu of the men would behave. Pabu are a kind of footgear which reminds one of a gouty man. Straw or rags are wrapped round the feet by thongs of raw hide. Their softness enables the wearer to get excellent hold on moraine, and they protect the feet from cold very effectively. The question was whether they would not slip on the hard snow. I was consequently very careful to pick the easiest way, and to scrape large steps when necessary. I took the first few men up on a rope, explaining the use of it, and told them how to keep their eyes skinned for concealed crevasses. They were highly intelligent; picked up the trick of everything without argument or complaint, and made no mistakes.

I ought to mention their ingenious defence against snow blindness. They wear their hair rather long, and they make a plaited fringe to hang down over their eyes like a curtain. The device does not sound very effective; but it seems to work. It is at least a fact that we did not have a single case. On Kangchenjunga, where this plan is not known, a number of the men were seriously affected.

I was blamed subsequently for my selection of Camp 10 as Main Camp. Eckenstein thought that I might have chosen a more sheltered position. But there were no such positions in the neighbourhood, and it was quite useless to go further away from the foot of the slopes which it was my intention to climb. Furthermore, during my ten days on the glacier, I had experienced all sorts of weather, and

none of it had given the slightest ground for supposing that we were likely to meet any conditions which would make Camp 10 other than a desirable country residence for a gentleman in failing health. My principal preoccupation, moreover, was to keep out of the way of avalanches and falling stones. I had already seen enough of the apparently arbitrary conduct which one might expect from them ; I thought it best therefore to choose a level spot in the middle of the glacier.

Even as it was, there was an avalanche on the 10th of July which snowed both on Camp 10 and Camp 11. Avalanches at this altitude—and in this latitude—differ (nevertheless) from those on lower peaks. Snow does not melt at all unless subjected to pressure. It evaporates without melting. It never forms a compact mass with a hard crust as it does in the Alps. I have seen 10 feet of freshly fallen snow disappear completely in the course of an hour's sunshine. Extraordinary as it sounds, despite the perpetual bad weather which we experienced, the snow on the lower glacier (between Camps 9 and 7) had completely disappeared in August, while that on the upper glacier had very much increased.

As a result of these conditions, a first rate avalanche may never reach the foot of the slope down which it starts ; it may evaporate almost entirely en route. One of our photographs shows an avalanche actually in the process of falling. It would have overwhelmed the photographer under Alpine conditions.

I must admit to a certain heaviness of heart in obeying my instructions and sending back the men. It was so obviously right to take them up the slopes to the shoulder, and establish the Camp at a point whence Chogo Ri could

STANZA XXXIX

"Squashed Flies", that stand as in each yeoman's stead,
Packed tight with vitamins and calories!
Give us this day, O Lord, our daily bread,
"Squashed Flies!"

Rudel: unfinished, but gratefully dedicated to H. P.

The 28th was fine, and we held a darbar. It was decided that, Eckenstein being ill, Pfannl, Guillarmod and I should start up the mountain. Eckenstein voted for the doctor, *qua* doctor, in case of one of us being ill. It shows how easy he thought the slopes.

Wessely was very offensive in his resentment at not being included in the party. It was an intolerably bad piece of sportsmanship. Pfannl tended to take his side, and the pair made so much unpleasantness that we were soon reduced to the expedient of getting them out of the way as much as possible.

We got everything ready; but next morning the wind was so high that we could not start. Even while drinking our chocolate in the cooking tent, we nearly got frost-bitten. After sunrise, the wind dropped; but it was too late to start. Eckenstein and Knowles were both ill, but the rest of us went on ski nearly to the pass at the top of the glacier. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the wind started again, and once again loosened my tent. This time snow came driving up the valley.

We had a spare tent for the use of the few natives whom we kept with us. I had gone out to try to refix my taber-nacle at sunset—and there was a Balti out in the snow

praying with his face towards Mecca! The religion of the Mohammedan, unlike that of the Christian, is positive. It is not based on fear, but on the actual sense of the relations of man and God. I laugh to think of the well-fed, idle, and ignorant missionary at Shigar trying to convert men of this stamp. Their simplicity sees through Christian sophistication at a glance; and, their sense of ethics being outraged as well as their sense of reverence, it is easy to understand that the only converts from Mohammedanism are absolutely conscienceless scoundrels who wish to live on the scarcely camouflaged subsidies of missions.

The next day found me completely snow-blind. The pain is not so much severe as irritating. The feeling is as of having red hot sand at the back of one's eyes. One keeps on blinking with the idea of removing it, and of course it won't be removed. During my "ski-läufing" I had religiously worn goggles. My condition was due entirely to pottering about the camp for a few minutes in the snowstorm, fixing my tent. I got all right again in a couple of days. The weather was moderate on June 30th and July 1st. But from July 2nd to 6th was a continuous snowstorm. There was no remittance day or night. It was this which made Camp 10 unpopular.

We got rid of the Austrians on July 1st by sending them to Camp 11 at the corner of the north-east ridge of Chogo Ri. At this point the glacier divides into two large snow basins. One leads to the pass which I have named Windy Gap (21,500) on whose north-west is the mountain at the head of the valley, which I called Staircase Peak, from the well-marked and regular indentations of its eastern ridge. The other is apparently a kind of blind alley, its circus of rocks seems to have no definite break. It is difficult to be

sure of this, for when I saw it it was always a cauldron of whirling mists of snow.

Pfannl and Wessely had reported that the north-east ridge of K2 was climbable, and on Monday the 7th, which was fine, it was decided to try to ascend the mountain by that route. So Main Camp was to be moved to Camp 11. I was rather ill, but protested. The proposed route was in fact absurd. Camp 11 was much farther from the summit than Camp 10, and the proposal was to reach the shoulder by following a long and deeply indented ridge the wall of which is on the Chogo Lungma side, a sheer precipice of avalanche-swept slopes, except at the point which I had originally picked out.

However, I was overruled. The doctor and I prepared to leave on the 8th. It was on this occasion that we discovered the incapacity of the natives to pull a sledge. It is about three hours march to Camp 11. The going was not bad, though I was still rather sick. The weather was again very bad. The 9th found me much better, and the weather was good enough to go out. I went a considerable distance up the slopes of the mountain. There is some conflict in opinion as to the height reached by various members of the party. Eckenstein was fanatically determined never to exaggerate any exploit. We made a very great number of boiling-point-determinations of the heights of our camps ; but even these are subject to various sources of error. Camp 11 is roughly 20,000 feet ; but I suspect it to be a little higher. I estimated my climbing at 21,500 feet at the time ; but this was mostly out of respect for Eckenstein. I was his most devoted disciple ; I would not have given him any chance to reproach me my making a statement which might afterwards prove an exaggeration.

But my real opinion is that I reached something over 22,000 feet. I could see clearly over Windy Gap ; I must have been well above it. I would not depend on the readings of Aneroids in any circumstances. We had taken three instruments specially constructed ; they only began to register at 15,000 feet and went to 30,000. But comparisons of the three showed—usually—that no two were alike.

In the evening I was very ill indeed ; indigestion, fever, shivering. In order to breathe I had to use my whole muscular strength. I was also on the point of vomiting, and remained in this condition nearly all the night. In the morning I was a little better ; my breathing had become normal ; but I had a great deal of pain and felt very ill and weak. The weather was splendid. Wessely and Guillarmod were encouraged to repeat my climb of the previous day ; but from their report it is not clear whether or no they got farther than I did. I lay in the sunlight and rested. I noticed strange sights ; a fly, a butterfly, some crows, and an insect which I thought was a bee, but I could not be sure. All visited the camp. Later the camp was covered with the snow from a big avalanche from Chogo Ri. It stripped the whole wall of the north-east ridge ; that is, it was about four miles broad.

Eckenstein and Knowles came up on the 11th. Another fine day. I was still very ill ; my temperature 39°.4 Centigrade. I did not at all realise the cause at first, simple as it was. The true explanation was very far-fetched in the actual sense of the word. My symptoms became unmistakeable before long, and I had to admit that I was suffering from malaria. The hardships of the journey had removed my physiological protection, and the bug started to buzz

about. I was thus the proud possessor of another world's record : the only man who had had malaria at over 20,000 feet ! Incidentally, I was also the only poet at that altitude. I have always been very amused at Shelley's boast that he had " trodden the glaciers of the Alps "—the Mer de Glace and the Glacier des Boissons ! But I was actually writing poetry in these camps. *Better* poetry.

Like the man who committed suicide when he learnt that he was unable to move his upper jaw, I had been annoyed by reading somewhere that it was impossible to find a rime to " silver." I spent my spare time in thinking up all the most impossible words in the language, finding rimes for them—good rimes, not mere assonances—and introducing them into *Ascension Day* and *Pentecost.* In that poem will therefore be found rimes for refuge, reverence, country, virgin, courtesan, Euripides, Aristophanes, Æschylus, Aischulos, Sophocles, Aristobulos, Alcibiades, fortress, unfashionable, sandwich, perorate, silver, bishop (eight rimes for this word), Sidney (three rimes for this), maniac, Leviticus, Cornelius, Abramelin, Brahmacharya, Kismet, Winchester, Christ Church, Worship, Chesterton, Srotápatti (two rimes to this), Balliol, and so on.

I have mentioned hardships. It may be interesting to mention the nature of these. The first and greatest was malaise, which was mostly due to lack of food and exercise. The latter complaint seems rather ridiculous ; but it is an absolute fact. One must not bring damp things into the tent ; if one does, it practically destroys the efficacy of one's protection against cold. One must therefore stay cooped up in one's tent as long as the weather is bad. I was in charge of the kitchen, and had to go out in all sorts of weather ; but that was hardly exercise. I often found that

by the time I had filled and lighted the stoves and got the snow melted, I could not stand the cold any longer. I had to rush back to my sleeping-bag and warm up while someone else prepared the food.

We kept warm with kangri, of a sort, when things got too bad. We had brought up a number of Japanese instras, but they would not burn; there was not enough oxygen. The cartridges could however be used if left loose in empty biscuit tins. For a similar reason pipe-smoking was impossible; the only way to do it was to relight the pipe from the flame of the candle at each puff. We had a few cigars, and we could smoke these quite comfortably. (It appears that the altitude is not wholly responsible for this. At greater heights on Kangchenjunga I smoked my pipe as comfortably as at sea level.)

This same is true about food. We found it difficult to eat anything but what may be called delicacies from the standpoint of people in our position. I felt a certain distaste for food. I had to be "tempted" like an invalid or a fastidious child. It became obvious that Eckenstein's German army theories of nutrition were inapplicable to Himalayan exploration.

We suffered little from cold in the acute way, but rather from a chronic effect. The problem of cold has not been scientifically stated by any explorer so far as I know. It is this: The normal temperature of the body is 37° C. If therefore the temperature of the air is 30° one has to make up the difference by the heat disengaged by the combustion of food. If the temperature is 23° one requires theoretically twice as much food, if 15° three times as much, if 8° four times as much, if 1° five times as much, if −6° six times as much, if

−13° seven times as much, if −30° eight times as much. These temperatures are very much less hot and less cold than those actually experienced. The maximum and minimum thermometers proved altogether unreliable; and the observations on the chart refer to more or less arbitrary times. Other thermometers showed temperatures of over 40° and under −30° Centigrade. Unfortunately, simple arithmetic is not the only consideration. The digestive apparatus is calculated for dealing with an amount of food corresponding to, I don't know what temperature, but we might say at a guess 1°. If the average temperature is less than this, it means that you have to eat more than you can digest; and that means a gradual accumulation of troubles.

One can, of course, economise one's heat to some extent by diminishing the radiation; that is, by wearing non-conducting clothes, also by supplying artificial heat from kangris and so on. (The kangri, by the way, is a Kashmiri device. It is a pot of copper or iron in which charcoal is burnt. The natives put it under their blankets and squat on it. It is alleged that this habit explains the great frequency of cancer of the testicles or scrotum in the country. The analogy is with "chimney-sweep's cancer.")

After cancelling out all the excrescences of the equation, the situation amounts to this: that you cannot live permanently in conditions unsuited to your organism. It is pitiful to have to make statements of this kind, seeing that it is no more than a recapitulation of the main proposition of Darwin and Spencer. But the average explorer (for some inexplicable reason) seems absolutely incapable of applying common sense, experience, or the teaching of science to the vital problems with which he is posed. Here

in 1922, after all our experience, we have the members of the Everest Expedition drivelling about acclimatisation, as if science did not exist. Norman Collie told me plainly in 1896 on his return from the Mummery Expedition to Nanga Parbat, that the only chance of getting up a big mountain was to rush it. I knew Collie for a man of science, and for a man of sense and experience. I trusted his information absolutely, and I governed myself accordingly.

The only thing to do is to lay in a stock of energy, get rid of all your fat at the exact moment when you have a chance to climb the mountain, and jump back out of its reach, so to speak, before it can take its revenge. To talk of acclimatisation is to adopt the psychology of the man who trained his horse gradually to live on a single straw a day, and would have revolutionised our system of nutrition, if the balky brute had not been aggravating enough to die on his hands. If you want to acclimatise yourself to mountain conditions, you can go and live a bit higher than the hillmen of Tibet. If you do this for fifteen generations or so, your descendants will acquire a thorax like a beer barrel and a heart capable of doing three times the work that it can at present. If you then get incarnated in your clan, you can lay siege to Chogo Ri with a reasonable prospect of success. As the little hymn says,

> " Patience and perseverance
> Made a Bishop of His Reverence."

This programme is however hardly acceptable to Western minds, so little penetrated with Einstein's ideas that everything has to be done in a hurry. We may therefore leave

"acclimatisation" to the mentally defective heroes of the Everest Expeditions of 1921 and 1922. Collie was right in saying that one is living on one's capital on prolonged mountain expeditions. My experience enables me to add that it is not only a question of mountains. Any kind of prolonged hardship gradually wears one down. Again I repeat, it is pitiful to have to insist on such obvious truths. The low vitality of the working classes, the national deterioration caused by the privations of wartime, scream their warning. Any one on earth except a member of the English Alpine Club would take it to heart.

When I went to Kangchenjunga three years later I had got everything down to a fine point. I trained at Darjeeling by feeding up as much as possible (the diet at the Drum Druid Hotel was slow starvation), by having myself massaged by an "educated" Bengali who was a Seventh Day Adventist and stole £10. I arrived at 21,000 feet in absolutely perfect condition only three weeks out from the base, and suffered absolutely none of the conditions which were pulling us slowly to pieces on Chogo Ri, except Wessely who, like the brute beast that he was, seemed insensible to the influence of hardship, and was keeping himself in comfort by stealing the supplies of the expedition surreptitiously.

We were all suffering more or less. Knowles had lost 33 of his 186 pounds; the doctor some 20 of his 167 since leaving Askole. A man with galloping consumption could hardly do better. Our hæmoglobin had diminished by 20 per cent. Eckenstein was suffering from various complicated pulmonary troubles; Knowles and the doctor were repeatedly down with influenza; as for myself, the recrudescence of my malaria, which began with a violent

liver chill on the 27th of July and lasted till the end of the month, kept my temperature at 39°.3 or thereabouts. Pfannl, the great athlete, had a story of his own. (Coming soon.)

Owing to the fact that snow at these altitudes evaporates without melting, it disappears from the neighbourhood of a tent, leaving a pinnacle where it is protected by the canvas. Thus, at the end of a five days' snowstorm one would find oneself perched on a plateau some feet above the rest of the glacier. (This illustrates the formation of glacier tables.) It was necessary, whatever the weather might be, to shift the tent, as otherwise the weight of the snow on the sloping sides, and the general strain, would tear the canvas. We have a photograph of the plateau from which our tents had been removed after five days of snowstorm. In the middle of the square patch of hard snow relegated by pressure, are two deep depressions like rude graves. These represent the ice melted by the warmth of our bodies through a double groundsheet of Willesden Canvas, the canvas of the Roberts valise, and the thick cork mattress.

Pfannl and Wessely had become completely intolerable, and we encouraged them to go off to Camp 12 (estimated at about 21,000 feet) on the 13th. The weather showed its usual readiness to cook up a storm. On the 14th I describe it as $(x.o.p.)^{n+1}$. A chit (note) arrived saying that Pfannl was ill. On the 15th the weather cleared in the afternoon; but I could see that it meant further mischief. My diary notes that I ate a meal this day. I must have been pretty bad previously to make such an entry; for my diary, whatever its other defects, is a supreme model of the Laconic style.

Another chit told us that Pfannl was worse. The doctor

went up to Camp 12 to look after him. Nemesis had come to town. Athletic training, as understood by athletes, is a violation of the first principles of nature. Wilkie Collins, in "Man and Wife," had told me about it. A little old woman is provoked to personal conflict by the Pride of England, and it ends by his collapsing. The same thing had happened to Pfannl. They had the utmost difficulty to get him down to Camp 11. This misadventure lost us our last chance of making a dash for K2. There was one series of two fine days, the second of which could have been used by Knowles and myself if we had not been obliged to superintend the caravan of invalids. From the 16th to the 19th was an almost continuous snowstorm. Pfannl was suffering from œdema of both lungs, and his mind was gone.

A pathetic incident sticks in my mind. He sent for me to come to his tent, and told me that these dull brutes could not understand him, but that I, as a poet, would be able to enter into his feelings. He then said that there were three of him; two of them were all right; but the third was a mountain with a dagger, and he was afraid that it would stab him. I did not at that time realise the significance of the delusion. To-day it is obvious that the fear and fascination of the hills had got mixed up with that of the phallus, thus determining the character of the symbol. As things were, I could merely report that he was insane, and the doctor continued the treatment of keeping him continuously under morphia.

STANZA XL

There was a King of France with forty thousand men.
He marched them up a hill, and
marched them down again.
Amen.

The 20th was fine; and we constructed a sledge on which Pfannl could be taken down to Rdokass. Wessely was to stay with him permanently, and the doctor to return as soon as he had settled him on that Alp. He left on the 21st, which was fine; but Eckenstein and I were both ill again towards evening. On the 22nd it once more commenced to *graupen*, and threatened worse. The 23rd was equally bad. Towards evening we perceived a strange phenomenon. We wondered at first if it could be a bear. Certainly some animal was approaching the camp on all fours. In the gathering dusk even our field glasses left us uncertain, especially as the irregularities of the glacier hid it at frequent intervals.

But when it came close, we realised that it was the doctor. His face was steaming with sweat, and expressed an agony of fear. Eckenstein was not sympathetic. He merely said: "Where's your coolie?" Guillarmod explained that he had left that specimen of the Creator's handiwork in a crevasse. Eckenstein uttered a single violent objurgation which opened new vistas on the depth of his feelings. I did not waste even one word—I was putting my boots on. Before Guillarmod had fairly crawled into his tent, Eckenstein and I were skimming over the snow on our ski with

a coiled rope. (In my haste I forgot to take my goggles, which cost me another two days of snow blindness.)

I got down to the crevasse ahead of Eckenstein, but he shouted to me to wait. Here was a chance to show me in practice what he had always claimed in theory: how easily a man could be pulled out, using only one hand. The man was quite calm; but had given up hope, and was committing his soul to Allah. I expect he was mostly worried about the direction of Mecca. We had no need of the coiled rope; the doctor had untied himself from his own rope and left it lying on the snow! The cowardice, incompetence, and imbecility of his proceedings remain to-day as incomprehensible as they were then.

[I accuse myself of having minimised these things. I should never have agreed to take him on my next expedition, but I liked the man personally so much that I instinctively made every allowance for him, and unquestionably he was suffering no less than the rest of us. I have a fatal weakness for believing the best about everybody. In face of the plainest evidence, I cannot believe in the existence of dishonesty and malice, and I always try to build with rotten material. I always imagine that I have merely to point out an error for it to be energetically eliminated, and I am constantly lost in mild surprise when the inevitable occurs. Here is a description by himself of one of his bad days.

> "Pour moi, je reste couché, atteint d'une attaque d'influenza plus forte que je n'en ai jamais eu: la fièvre n'est pas très intense, mais mes amygdales sont si tuméfiées et douloureuses que j'ai beaucoup de peine à respirer; le moindre moucement produit un

accès de suffocation ; impossible de dormir ; des douleurs lancinantes et des frissons me torturent horriblement."]

Eckenstein, punctiliously putting his left hand behind his back, pulled the coolie out with his right, though entirely unaided by the man himself. He had made up his mind to die, and rather resented our interference!

On the 26th my eyes were better, and I felt quite well on the morning of the 27th. I had discovered that Wessely, before he left the camp, had stolen the bulk of our emergency rations, which consisted mostly of selbst-kocher which contained delicacies dear to the Czech palate. We decided to court-martial him at Rdokass, and I wrote the speech for the prosecution* on the morning of the 27th. In the afternoon I got a violent liver chill and was utterly prostrated for the rest of the day. There was much vomiting.

The storm, after a short break, became more violent than ever. On the 28th my fever and the storm continued unabated. On the 29th the storm continued without abatement, and so did my fever. Vomiting again complicated things. On the 30th it cleared in the afternoon, and my fever broke in sleep and perspiration. The night was very cold and the morrow fine until the evening, when snow began to fall, gently indeed, but with inexorable cruelty. I was well on the 1st of August, but the snowstorm had developed extraordinary violence. A man came up from the valley with khabar (news) that cholera had closed the right bank of the Bralduh Nala. It looked as though our retreat had been cut off.

* It began, after Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis: "C.O.N.—Fi donc!—saved by T. R. A. Contra Herr Doctor Victor Wessely."

On the 2nd the storm raged without letting up for a moment. I had really made up my mind, ever since it had been decided to give up the idea of climbing the mountain direct from Camp 10, and from my instinctive judgment of weather, that the expedition had failed in its main objective, and I was not in the least interested in killing myself gradually against my judgment. I was absolutely satisfied with the results of my original reconnaissance of Chogo Ri, and the Archangel Gabriel could not have convinced me that we were likely to succeed in forcing a ridge over three miles long of the most desperate character.

I have also an instinct about weather. I know when it breaks for good. I cannot explain it; but there is an absolutely definite difference in what one feels in two apparently similar storms. One will blow itself out in preparation for a cloudless fortnight, and the other will be the prelude to more Wagner. I was also perfectly convinced that Collie's ideas were correct. We had exhausted our vital capital; we were none of us fit to climb anything. In particular, we lacked the fine flower of vitality: the spiritual energy and enthusiasm. I doubt whether even a fortnight's fine weather would have restored us to the proper condition for an attempt on a mountain.

On August 3rd the storm was still going strong; but we packed and went down on the 4th to Camp 9, stopping at Camp 10, where many of our kiltas were still stored, to pick out anything that was worth taking home (which we calculated as anything worth over half a crown a pound) and anything which we immediately wanted, especially sugar, of which we were already in sore need. On the 5th we lay idle in medium weather, while the coolies brought

down from Camp 10 the goods which we had selected, and on the 6th we went to Camp 7.

The condition of the lower glacier was astonishing. Despite all these weeks of snowstorm, it had been stripped of every vestige of snow, whereas on coming up we had walked on smooth slopes. We found dry glacier, most of which was baby séracs up to 15 feet high, sharp, slim needles of ice which were of course impossible to negotiate. We simply had to dodge them. I was constantly ill with fever, diarrhœa, and vomiting, and only recovered when I got to Ghomboro. The symptoms were literally continuous. Every few hundred yards I had to stop, go through it, and go on.

On the 7th we rested at Camp 7. It was fine and the temperature in my tent was 37° ; but the high peaks were " smoking their pipes " so that a violent wind must have been blowing up there ; and as the morning advanced, the clouds gathered. However, I took a chance ; and washed. It is a curiously refreshing sensation. I sometimes wonder why people do not indulge in it more often. On the 8th we went to Camp 6. My indiscreet debauch with water had added a cold in the head to my other miseries. Again a fine morning degenerated into thick weather. We rested on the 9th and went to Camp 5 on the 10th. It was cloudy all day and in the afternoon we had a violent storm of rain. On the 11th we went to Rdokass direct by short cut, passing over a very beautiful scree whose stones were iridescent ; every colour of the spectrum glistened on their rain-washed surfaces.

On the 12th we held a darbar and expelled Wessely from the Expedition. Pfannl decided to go with him. Pfannl was now more or less well again, but he would never be

able to climb mountains in the future. It poured with rain all day and the following, which I spent in bed. On the 14th we went to Camp 1. It took me ten hours ; the last part of the march was very bad, the enormous increase of water having made some sections of the march impossible by the route previously taken. I was well enough to eat. The weather was fairly fine, bar one or two snowstorms ; but it snowed all night.

On the 15th I went to Paiyu. Before leaving the glacier I had another attack of fever and was obliged to lie down for three hours. The weather had become quite chronic. There were glimpses of sun ; but for the most part we had clouds and rain. I should remark (by the way) that people who live in cities have quite different standards of bad weather from open-air folk. When one is living in a tent, one discovers that it is very rare indeed to experience twenty hours of continuous bad weather. There is nearly always a period of the day when one can get at least an hour or two which is fairly decent. The townsman's observations are confined to a small section of the day. The weather on the Baltoro Glacier may therefore be judged as quite exceptionally abominable.

I have had very bad luck (on the whole) with my weather on mountains. Even in Mexico, we had a fortnight of cold and wet which had no parallel in the memory of man, and caused the stoves in the city to be sold out in the first forty-eight hours. Then I was once at Wastdale Head for forty-three days when it rained quite continuously except on one morning and one afternoon. On the other hand, during the nine days I was at Akyab it once stopped raining for nearly twenty minutes. I ought to have taken the exact time : but I thought the end of the world had

come, so that it never occurred to me to look at my watch till it began again.

I had been altogether sixty-eight days on the glacier, two days longer than any other member of the party. It was another world's record; and, as far as I know, stands to this hour. I hope I may be allowed to die in peace with it. It would be a sorry ambition in anyone to grasp my laurels, and I can assure him that to refrain will bring its own reward. Of these sixty-eight days, eight only were fine, and of these no three were consecutive. Of course some days were of mixed character. But in no case have I classed as bad weather any days which would be considered in the Alps fine enough to go out on an average second-rate peak.

An almost unbelievable impression insisted on stamping itself on my reluctant mind. Eckenstein and Knowles were really upset by the reports of the cholera in the Bralduh Nala. It is true that by all accounts it was pretty bad. One report said that a hundred men had died. For some reason I treated the whole thing with scepticism; and when I passed through Askole I certainly saw no signs of agitation or mourning. The only precaution I took was to prevent my men coming in contact with the villagers.

But Eckenstein and Knowles would not pass through the village at all. They decided to return to Shigar by the Skoro La, which is a pass avoiding the big bend formed by the Bralduh Nala and the Shigar Rivers. It is just about as many days march, and is decidedly harder on the men. So the doctor and I went round by the valley. At Ghomboro we found fresh apricots, and after a final go of indigestion caused by surfeit of fresh mulberries and melons at Shigar my health cleared up with astonishing

rapidity. Within a week I was in perfectly good form again, and convinced more than ever that mountains as such have precious little to do with mountain sickness.

I noticed later that Sir Richard Burton, from even his small experience, remarked that he did not believe that the symptoms were due to altitude but to indigestion. Burton was always my hero, and the best thing about him is his amazing common sense. In one place, for instance, he refers to influenza as "that dreadful low fever called influenza": which is exactly the truth. When one compares with this description the buckets full of pseudo-scientific bilge of modern medicine, one's disgust makes one long for the level heads and clear eyes of such men as Burton.

The descent to the valley offered little new to the eye. The broad Mud Nala had caked dry; but before doing so it had overflowed to an extra hundred yards or so in breadth in one place. The Narrow Nala was still wet, but not so deep in mud. At Dasso we found fresh apples; and at our next camp, just beyond Yuno, fresh peaches. This last march was very severe, over nine hours across blazing sand without a square foot of shelter anywhere. On the following day a new experience was in store. We were able to travel by Zak.

The Zak is a local variety of raft; to a framework of crossed bamboos are bound a number of goat skins. Our raft had twenty-four: six one way and four the other. As these goat skins all leak, one has to find a landing place every twenty minutes or so, and this is not always easy. The great danger is that one may stick on a submerged rock. It would be quite impossible to get off, and quite impossible to get ashore, though one might be only six feet from the

bank. At each corner is a man with a long bamboo pole to fend off rocks. But otherwise little can be done to direct one's course or even to steer sufficiently to prevent the Zak turning round and round. I was reminded of Ben Gunn's Coracle in "Treasure Island." The behaviour of a Zak on a sea confirms the analogy, for at one place the river was traversed by rows of waves 5 or 6 feet high.

It seemed inconceivable that we should not be swamped. We kept our places by wedging our feet between the bamboos and holding on to them with our hands. The current is appallingly swift. We had begun our "adventure by water" in crossing the Yuno, for we were on the wrong side of the river, and a man had had to be sent down from far above to arrange for the raft to take us over. (Until one actually goes travelling in a country of this sort, one can form no idea whatever of the frequency of utterly insuperable obstacles. It was not our fault, for instance, that we were on the wrong side of the river, for the other bank involved a detour of some three days.

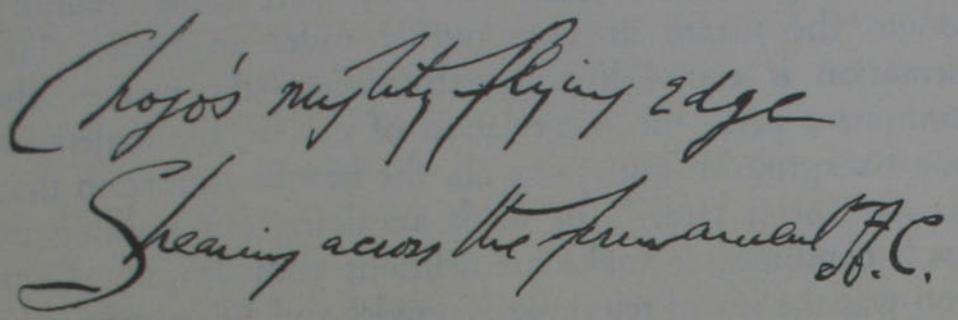
It required more than one voyage to cross the river. It could not have been crossed at all but for the fact that it is divided into seven streams, only one of which could not be forded. Naturally, a passage was chosen where the current was least formidable. But for all that we were swept down about three-quarters of a mile in order to cross less than 200 yards. In order to regain its starting point for the next journey the Zak had to be carried up stream a couple of miles. So much for mere crossing. But the next day we were only three hours and ten minutes actual going to Shigar, which in the ordinary way is three long marches.

The pace of the current varies enormously. Sometimes

1. THE ZAK
2. BROAD PEAK FROM CAMP IO

we were kept half an hour at a time spinning about amid contending eddies; sometimes we were flung violently down the stream at over twenty miles an hour. The sensation is extraordinarily exhilarating—the motion, the imminent peril, the intoxication of the air, the majesty of the background, but above all, the beatific realisation that, as the doctor said, "the roads are doing our walking for us," combined to make me delirious with delight. Great too was the joy of rejoining Knowles and Eckenstein, who had now recovered their equanimity. We all went down to Skardu in two hours on a big Zak. There we found fresh ripe grapes, potatoes, and green corn. Our joy was unconfined; youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm!

STANZA XLI



There are two ways of returning from Skardu to Srinagar; one the way we had come, the other across the Deosai Plateau. This is a high tableland from 14,000 to 17,000 feet, crossed by four principal rivers. It has a devilish reputation for inhospitality. The rivers, in particular, play the prank of inducing you to cross one or two of them, and then coming down in spate, holding you up indefinitely and starving you out. I wanted to go back by that way; but Eckenstein's memories were too painful. We decided to travel separately—he with Knowles, and I with the doctor. (After we had started, he changed his mind and followed us.) On the 26th of August I had a final go of fever and lay in bed till the afternoon, after which I got up and saw to the bandobast for the journey. The next day we started for Pinderbal, about five hours on horseback—a very pleasant ride up a steep Nala. The only incident was that my pony had been reading the Old Testament, and proceeded to vary his pleasures by bolting under a tree so that I was caught in its branches like Absalom, while he went on his cheerful way, neighing merrily. We camped under a huge boulder; and as I sat by the fire after dinner reposing delightfully with a pipe, a very characteristic incident occurred.

A shapeless mass was moving down the slopes. It resolved itself into a man who must have been nearer 70 than 60 years old, carrying a sack, much bigger than himself, of what proved to be dried apricots. I greeted him affectionately and offered him some tobacco. He squatted opposite me and began to chat. When he said "dried apricots" I had to summon all my philosophy to prevent raising my eyebrows slightly, for this was indeed carrying coals to Newcastle. Baltistan consists exclusively of rocks, streams, and dried apricots. The last named are its principal export.

A moment—and I understood! The poor old man had been unable to cross the plateau and was returning home to die! I expressed my sympathy and offered help. Oh no, not at all! He had carried his sack all the way to Srinagar; but finding on arrival that the price of his produce had gone down by a fraction of a penny a pound, he refused to sell and was bringing the stuff back. The sack itself looked fabulous, so I got out the "butcher's terror" and found that it weighed 410 pounds. The whole business struck me as extraordinarily sublime. I dashed the old boy five rupees. This made him wild with happiness, and restored his debilitated conviction in the existence of a Supreme Being who put in most of His time in caring for His faithful.

The next day, about four hours ride took us to the top of the Pass, from which we had a magnificent view of the plain of Skardu and the Indus backed by the great mountains, while in front of us lay the Deosai, an absolutely treeless wilderness of comparatively level country framed by minor peaks. It gives a unique impression of desolation. I have never seen its equal in this respect elsewhere. Yet

the march was very pleasant with many lovely flowers and streams. The weather was delightful and the going good.

The next day we went to Kranub (Kalapani is another name for it) in less than six hours in a cold wind under a threatening sky. After camping, the rain poured down in torrents. On the 30th we came down from the plateau in eight hours to Burzil, where there was a Dak Baghla. It rained continually till the last hour, so that we missed the distant view; but the foreground told us of the complete change of the character of the country.

Burzil is on the Gilgit road. This "road" (which is a good mule path) was absolutely crowded with every beast of burden available: men, mules, bullocks, asses, horses, camels—all desperately bent on supplying the small garrison for the winter before the snow closed the passes. Gilgit being on the Indian side of the Pamirs and the country to the north very much more difficult than to the south, I was highly amused by the chronic anxiety of the government that Russia would invade India by this route. I doubt whether the combined resources of both governments would suffice to bring over half a dozen regiments. We are always hearing about the Invasion of Alexander the Great; but his expedition is not to the point. Since his time climatic conditions all over the world have changed very considerably. I shall have more to say on this point when I come to deal with the Sahara. For the present I content myself with observing that in the time of the Macedonian Empire the country was probably much more fertile. This is sufficiently proved by the traces of past civilisations, quite apart from the general evidence as to the physical phenomena which are in progress on our planet.

We descended the Burzil Valley, a gorge of amazing

beauty and colouring, with gorgeous trees to "fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep." At Pashwari it has already begun to open, and at Gurais, a broad calm stream winds slowly through a broad level valley. As I rode slowly down the track to this camp I heard a sudden shout behind me. "Hat Jao!" (get out of the way!); a moment later a gigantic English major brushed past me muttering curses. I laughed into my beard. It was amusing to be taken for a native!

At Gurais I found Ernest Radcliffe, assistant Forest Commissioner of Kashmir, in camp. I already knew him well; he received me with open arms, and gave me the hot bath of my life, with lunch and dinner to follow. At dinner I met the galloping major, who did not recognise me when he found me sitting, clothed, and in my right mind, and was extremely embarrassed when he realised his unintentional rudeness of the morning.

At Gurais are a big suspension bridge and the remains of a very large old fortress. On the 2nd we went to Gurai, and on the 3rd to Tragobal. The road here crosses a pass some 10,000 feet high. It is a magnificent ride through the wildest yet richest forest and mountain scenery. Some of the trees are enormous, and one obtains intoxicating views of the valley framed by their dark splendour. Few men know what a view can be. The European idea is to go, preferably by train, to some high place and obtain a panorama. To me, even the noblest panoramas are somewhat monotonous. Their boundlessness diminishes their æsthetic value. To see distant prospects to the best advantage one needs a foreground. In rock-climbing and travelling through mountain forests one sees nature in perfection. At every turn, the foreground picks out special bits of the back-

ground for attention, so that there is a constant succession of varying pictures. The eye is no longer bewildered by being asked to take in too much at once ; and the effect of the distance is immensely heightened by contrasts with the foreground.

Soon after crossing the Pass, the Vale of Kashmir with the Wular Lake bursts upon the view. Once again, the character of the scenery had undergone a complete transformation. We rode down joyously to Bandipur in four hours. The mosquitoes on this part of the lake should have been repeatedly exposed in "Truth." Their reputation stinks in the country. So we chartered a Dunga (which is a variety of house-boat employed when any considerable distance has to be covered) and crossed the lake to Baramula. The crossing should have taken five hours ; it took twelve.

We lazed a day among the delights of comparative comfort, marred only by the return of my malaria. But on the 6th I drove in a tonga to Srinagar, 132 days after leaving it. The expedition to Chogo Ri was over.

CHOGO RI; FROM ABOVE CAMP DESPAIR

STANZA XLII

The Quarter bleats no palinode:
Goat it may be, no woolly lamb.
Faithmetic assuage your wrath
Should Cambridge wit write Quarter "fourth"
Ra Shai & the Garter, Appendix

After about a week in Srinagar, I accepted an invitation to stay with Radcliffe at his headquarters at Baramula, to go shooting. I travelled by Dunga in order to see a little more of native life and character, which I was able to do more freely now that my responsibility of the expedition was at an end. I passed two wonderful days of perfect joy on river and lake. I realised the whole of Kubla Khan, including the parts that Coleridge forgot. I understood the exclamation of the Persian poet:

> "If on earth is a heaven of bliss,
> It is this, it is this, it is this."

Radcliffe and I went shooting bears occasionally, but I could not get up much enthusiasm. I was still suffering from occasional bouts of fever; and besides, was oppressed with a certain lassitude. I felt admirably well, but disinclined for necessary exertion. The strain of the journey was making itself felt. I wanted to lounge about and indulge in short strolls in the shade, to eat and drink at my ease, and to sleep "lazily, lazily, drowsily, drowsily, in the noonday sun." I had arranged to go on a more serious expedition with Radcliffe; but he was called away by

a telegram, and I decided to wander slowly back to Blighty.

I left Baramula on September 21st, reached Pindi on the 24th, and after a day or two in Delhi and Ajmir, reached Bombay on the last day of the month. I had meant to investigate Jaipur and the abandoned city which was deserted in the heyday of its splendour at an hour's notice on the advice of an astrologer. (He prophesied, observe, that it would become like "the courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep," and so it did!) But my power to feel had been definitely dulled by the expedition. Hardship and sickness had temporarily exhausted my vitality.

A queer token of this, and the only one. My beard was at this time a mixture of red and black in almost equal proportions. I shaved to go to Europe; and when I let it grow again, all the red hairs had become perfectly white.

I left Bombay on the 4th of October, by the poor old "Egypt," wrecked off Ushant in 1922. On the boat was a young officer returning to England on leave, to get married. It was a romantic story, and for the satisfactory accomplishment of his plan a plain gold ring which he wore on the fourth finger of his left hand was of the last importance. He removed it from his finger to read the inscription on the inside. Just as he put it back, a passing steward touched his elbow, and the ring fell to the deck. It would have gone quite safely into the scuppers, but the owner and the steward, stooping excitedly to retrieve it, collided. One of them snatched the ring; it slipped from his fingers, and went overboard. The young man's distress was pitiful to see. "I daren't face her without it," he kept on moaning, with the tears streaming down his face. We did the best

we could by drawing up a signed statement explaining how the accident occurred.

We forgot all about the matter in the course of the voyage, and when we arrived at Aden even the youth himself had recovered his spirits. To pass the time, we proposed fishing for sharks in the harbour, and after about an hour we got a fine fish aboard. It was immediately cut up; but search as we would, we could find no trace of the ring.

I reached Aden on the 9th. It must be a perfectly ghastly place to live in. As I was to land in Egypt, I had to be quarantined for a day at Moses' Wells, regulation being that one must be eleven days out from Bombay, in case of plague. Moses' Wells is the most hateful place I have ever been in, with the possible exception of Gibraltar. I note in my diary that the food was "beastly, and abominable, and absurdly dear." If I remember correctly, it was cooked by a Greek and served by an Armenian. Volumes could not say more.

I arrived in Cairo on the 14th, and was transported to the seventh heaven. I lived at Shepheard's Hotel till Guy Fawkes' Day, wallowing in the flesh pots. I would not even go out to see the Pyramids. I wasn't going to have forty centuries look down on me. Confound their impudence! I could not even bother to study Islam from the religious point of view, but I undertook a course of Ethnology which remains in my mind as the one study where the roses have no thorns. I got a typist and dictated an account of my various wanderings in my better moments, but most of the time I was earnestly pursuing my researches in the Fish Market.

My mind began, moreover, to flow back into its accustomed channels. For one thing, I came to the conclusion

that "the most permanent poetry is perhaps love-songs for real country folk—about trout and love." And I began to write a set of lyrics to be called "The Lover's Alphabet." This was to consist of twenty-six poems, associating a girl's name with a flower with the same initial from A to Z. One of my regular pedantic absurdities! Needless to say, it broke down. The débris is printed in my *Collected Works*, Vol. III, pp. 58 seq. I was also vaguely revising *Orpheus* and the other literary lumber of the past year and a half.

I had been doing a certain amount of practical magick off and on, even during the expedition; but this too had dropped off since my return to civilisation. As to Yoga, I was still completely dead. I had become dull to the trance of Sorrow itself. I had no doubts as to the efficacy of magick or the advantages of mysticism. I simply couldn't be bothered with them. I was not under any illusions about the value of worldly pleasures; it was simply that I did not possess the energy to live any other kind of life.

I cannot understand why people imagine that those who retire from the world are lazy. It is far easier to swim with the stream, to refresh one's mind continually by letting it move from one distraction to another. This is so true that one might almost assert that the idlest monks are in reality more energetic than the busiest business man. This does not apply so much to Catholic monks, for their routine exercises dull the edge of whatever minds they possess; and not at all to missionaries, who live bourgeois lives diversified by pleasurable outbursts of vanity. But it applies to the orientals, from Japan to Morocco.

One might go further, and say that, apart from religion altogether, the oriental lives a much more intense mental

life than Europeans or Americans ; that is, provided it has been aroused from brutish stupor by education. For the western uses his education to take the edge off his mind. He allows it to wander among business and family details, and putrefies it by reading newspapers. In the East, an active mind cannot go sprawling over the shallows. It is compelled by its relatively limited intellectual furniture to cut itself a constantly deepening course. Thus it occurs that very few people indeed, outside Asia and Africa, are aware of the existence of any of the higher states of mind. They imagine that consciousness connotes a single level of sanity ; that is, that it consists in the mechanical movement of its elements in response to the varied stimuli of the senses. There is a tendency to regard even such comparatively slight variation as the reflective habit of the man of science and the philosopher as being abnormal and in a sense unhealthy. They are the subjects of vulgar ridicule.

In sheer spiritual lassitude, I left Egypt homeward bound. During my absence from England I had kept up a sort of irregular correspondence with Gerald Kelly, who had by this time started to try to learn to paint, and who had a studio in the rue Campagne Première in the Montparnasse Quarter of Paris. I gladly accepted his invitation to stay with him there. It had already been branded on my forehead that I was the Spirit of Solitude, the Wanderer of the Waste, Alastor ; for while I entered with absolutely spontaneous enthusiasm into the artistic atmosphere of Paris, I was always subconsciously aware that here I had no continuing city.

I began to pick out the old threads of my life. Despite the evidence of Allan Bennett as to the integrity of Mathers, the premisses of my original syllogism as to his authority

were not impaired. His original achievements proved beyond doubt that he had been at one time the representative of the Secret Chiefs; that he had either been temporarily obsessed or had permanently fallen.

On leaving for Mexico, I had asked him to take care of a dressing-case, a bag, and a few valuable books which I did not want to be bothered with. I called on him and asked for their return. I was received as in good standing, yet a certain constraint and embarrassment were apparent. He handed over my books, but explained that as he was just moving into a new house on the Butte Montmartre (where I found him in the appropriate turmoil), he could not lay his hands on my bags for a few days. I have never seen them since. One of them was an almost new 50 guinea dressing-case.

I drew my own conclusions. What had happened to me was so much like what had happened to so many other people. But I still saw no reason for throwing over my allegiance. The best policy was to remain inactive; such as Mathers was, he was the only authority in the Order until definitely superseded by the Secret Chiefs.

I had, however, little doubt that he had fallen through rashly invoking the forces of the Book of the Magick of Abramelin the Mage. I thought I would try the testimony of an independent observer. Among the English colony of Montparnasse was a youth named Haweis, son of the once celebrated H. R. Haweis of "Music and Morals." He had been to Peterhouse, and was now studying art, in which he has since achieved a certain delicate eminence. He went to see Mathers, and came back very bored with a pompous disquisition on the Ancient Gods of Mexico.

The charlatan was apparent ; Mathers had got his information from the very people who had induced me to go out to Mexico. He was exploiting Omne Ignotum pro Magnifico like the veriest quack. At this moment I came into magical contact with his forces. The story has been told admirably, if somewhat floridly, by Capt. (now Major-General) J. F. C. Fuller. I can hardly do better than quote his account.

" Gerald Kelly showed considerable perturbation of mind, and on being asked by Frater P. what was exercising him, Gerald Kelly replied, ' Come and free Miss Q. from the wiles of Mrs. M.' Being asked who Mrs. M. was, Gerald Kelly answered that she was a vampire and a sorceress who was modelling a sphinx with the intention of one day endowing it with life so that it might carry out her evil wishes ; and that her victim was Miss Q. P. wishing to ease his friend's mind asked Gerald Kelly to take him to Miss Q.'s address, at which Mrs. M. was then living. This Gerald Kelly did.

" Miss Q., after an interview, asked P. to tea to meet Mrs. M. After introduction, she left the room to make tea—the White Magick and the Black were left face to face.

" On the mantelpiece stood a bronze head of Balzac, and P., taking it down, seated himself in a chair by the fire and looked at it.

" Presently a strange dreamy feeling seemed to come over him, and something velvet-soft and soothing and withal lecherous moved across his hand. Suddenly looking up he saw that Mrs. M. had noiselessly quitted her seat and was bending over him ; her hair was scattered in a mass of curls over her shoulders, and the tips of her fingers were touching the back of his hand.

"No longer was she the middle-aged woman, worn with strange lusts; but a young woman of bewitching beauty.

"At once recognising the power of her sorcery, and knowing that if he even so much as contemplated her Gorgon head, all the power of his magick would be petrified, and that he would become but a puppet in her hands, but a toy to be played with and when broken cast aside, he quietly rose as if nothing unusual had occurred; and placing the bust on the mantelpiece turned towards her and commenced with her a magical conversation; that is to say a conversation which outwardly had but the appearance of the politest small talk, but which inwardly lacerated her evil heart, and burnt into her black bowels as if each word had been a drop of some corrosive acid.

"She writhed back from him, and then again approached him even more beautiful than she had been before. She was battling for her life now, and no longer for the blood of another victim. If she lost, hell yawned before her, the hell that every once-beautiful woman who is approaching middle age, sees before her; the hell of lost beauty, of decreptitude, of wrinkles and fat. The odour of man seemed to fill her whole subtle form with a feline agility, with a beauty irresistible. One step nearer and then she sprang at Frater P. and with an obscene word sought to press her scarlet lips to his.

"As she did so Frater P. caught her and holding her at arm's length smote the sorceress with her own current of evil, just as a would-be murderer is sometimes killed with the very weapon with which he has attacked his victim.

"A blue-greenish light seemed to play round the head of the vampire, and then the flaxen hair turned the colour

of muddy snow, and the fair skin wrinkled, and those eyes, that had turned so many happy lives to stone, dulled, and became as pewter dappled with the dregs of wine. The girl of twenty had gone; before him stood a hag of sixty, bent, decrepit, debauched. With dribbling curses she hobbled from the room.

"As Frater P. left the house, for some time he turned over in his mind these strange happenings, and was not long in coming to the opinion that Mrs. M. was not working alone, and that behind her probably were forces far greater than she. She was but the puppet of others, the slave that would catch the kids and the lambs that were to be served upon her master's table. Could P. prove this? Could he discover who her masters were? The task was a difficult one; it either meant months of work, which P. could not afford to give, or the mere chance of a lucky stroke which P. set aside as unworthy the attempt.

"That evening, whilst relating the story to his friend Gerald Kelly, he asked him if he knew any reliable clairvoyant. Gerald Kelly replied that he did, and that there was such a person at that very time in Paris known as The Sibyl, his own 'belle amie.' That night they called on her; and from her P. discovered, for he led her in the spirit, the following remarkable facts.

"The vision at first was of little importance, then by degrees the seer was led to a house which P. recognised as that in which D.D.C.F. lived. He entered one of the rooms, which he also at once recognised; but, curious to say, instead of finding D.D.C.F. and V.N.R. there, he found Theo and Mrs. Horos. Mr. Horos (M.S.R.) incarnated in the body of V.N.R. and Mrs. Horos (S.V.A.) in that of D.D.C.F. Their bodies were in prison; but their

spirits were in the house of the fallen chief of the Golden Dawn.

"At first Frater P. was seized with horror at the sight, he knew not whether to direct a hostile current of will against D.D.C.F. and V.N.R., supposing them to be guilty of cherishing within their bodies the spirits of two disincarnated vampires, or perhaps Abramelin demons under the assumed forms of S.V.A. and M.S.R., or to warn D.D.C.F.; supposing him to be innocent, as he perhaps was, of so black and evil an offence. But, as he hesitated, a voice entered the body of the Sibyl and bade him leave matters alone, which he did. Not yet was the cup full."

This story is typical of my magical state of the time. I was behaving like a Master of Magick, but had no interest in my further progress. I had returned to Europe with a sort of feeling at the back of my mind that I might as well resume the Abramelin operation, and yet the *débâcle* of Mathers somehow put me off; besides which, I was a pretty thorough-going Buddhist. My essay "Science and Buddhism" makes this clear. I published a small private edition of "Berashith" in Paris; but my spiritual state was in reality very enfeebled. I am beginning to suspect myself of swelled head with all its cohort of ills. I'm afraid I thought myself rather a little lion on the strength of my journey, and the big people in the artistic world in France accepted me quite naturally as a colleague.

In England there is no such social atmosphere. Artists and writers are either isolated or members of petty cliques. It is impossible to do so much as give a dinner to a distinguished man without upsetting the ant-heap, and arousing the most insanely violent and personal jealousy. A writer

who respects himself in England is bound to become a solitary like Hardy and Conrad; the greatness of his art debars him utterly from taking the smallest part in the artistic affairs of the moment. In a way, this is not to his disadvantage, for the supreme genius does not need specialised human society; he is at home in the slums or on the countryside. The *salon* stifles him. The social intercourse between artists in France tends to civilise them, to bring them to a common level; and thus, though the average of good writers is far higher than in England, we can show more men of supreme attainment; we can even make a pretty shrewd guess who the masters are even during their lifetime, for we instinctively persecute them.

Any spark of individuality is in England an outrage on decency. We pick out Sir Richard Burton, James Thomson, John Davidson, Ernest Dowson, and heaven knows how many others, for abuse, slander, ostracism, starvation, or imprisonment. In our anxiety to do justice, we even annoy perfectly harmless people. At one time Alfred Tennyson was scoffed at as "incomprehensible." Holman Hunt was denounced by Charles Dickens as an obscene painter, and his prosecution and imprisonment demanded. "*Jude the Obscure*" was nicknamed "*Jude the Obscene.*" Swinburne was denounced as "the poet of the trough and the sty," and his publisher withdrew the first series of Poems and Ballads in panic. Rosetti and Morris came in for an equal share of abuse, and we all remember the denunciations of Ibsen, Meredith, Nietzsche, Maeterlinck, Tolstoi, in fact, of every man—also Bernard Shaw—without exception whose name is still in our memories.

In France one attains eminence by a less gratuitous Golgotha. Men of art and letters are respected and

honoured by each other and by the public. Their final position in history is quietly assigned by time. It is only in very exceptional circumstances that a great man is awarded the distinction of a Calvary. Of course, Zola went through the mill ; but only because he had butted into politics by his "*J'accuse*" ; he was only denounced as obscene because any stick is good enough to beat a dog with.

But, as luck would have it, I had arrived in Paris on an occasion which history in France can hardly duplicate ; Rodin was being attacked for his statue of Balzac. I was introduced to Rodin, and at once fell in love with the superb old man and his colossal work. I still think his Balzac the most interesting and important thing he did. It was a new idea in sculpture. Before Rodin there had been certain attempts to convey spiritual truth by plastic methods ; but they were always limited by the supposed necessity of "representing" what people call "nature." The soul was to be the servant of the eye. One could only suggest the relations of a great man with the universe by surrounding a more or less photographic portrait of him with the apparatus of his life-work. Nelson was painted with a background of three deckers and a telescope under his arm ; Wren with a pair of compasses in front of St. Paul's.

Rodin told me how he had conceived his Balzac. He had armed himself with all the documents ; and they had reduced him to despair. (Let me say at once that Rodin was not a man, but a God. He had no intellect in the true sense of the word ; he was a Virility, so superabundant that it constantly overflowed into the creation of vibrating visions. Naively enough, I haunted him in order to extract first-hand information about art from the fountain head.

I have never met anyone—white, black, brown, yellow, pink, or spot-blue—who was so completely ignorant of Art as Auguste Rodin! At his best he would stammer out that nature was the great teacher, or some equally puerile platitude. (The books on Art attributed to him are of course the compilations of journalists.)

He was seized with a sort of rage of destruction, abandoned his pathetically pedantic programme. Filled with the sublime synthesis of the data which had failed to convey a concrete impression to his mind, he set to work, and produced the existing Balzac. This consequently bore no relation to the incidents of Balzac's personal appearance at any given period. These things are only veils. Shakespeare would still have been Shakespeare if someone had thrown sulphuric acid in his face. The real Balzac is the writer of the "*Comédie Humaine*"; and what Rodin has done is to suggest this spiritual abstraction through the medium of form.

Most people do not realise the power which genius possesses of comprehending the essence of a subject without the need of learning it laboriously. A master in one art is at home in any other, without having necessarily practised it or studied its technicalities. I am reminded of the scene in Rodin's studio which I described in a sonnet. Some bright spirit had brought his fiddle, and we were all bewitched. Rodin suddenly smiled and waved his hand towards "Pan et Syrinx." I followed the gesture: the bars just played were identical with the curve of the jaw of the girl. The power to perceive such identities of essence beneath a difference of material manifestation is the inevitable token of mastery. Anyone who understands (not merely knows) one subject will also understand any

other, whether he also knows it or not. Thus: suppose there had also been present a great gardener, a great geologist, and a great mathematician. If they did not understand and approve that signal of Rodin's, I should refuse to admit that they were real masters, even of their own subjects. For I regard it as an infallible test of a master of any art or science that he should recognise intuitively (Neschamically) the silent truth, one and indivisible, behind all diversities of expression.

I find by experience that any man well learned in a subject, but whose understanding of it falls short of the mastery I have described, will profoundly resent this doctrine. It minimises the dignity of his laborious studies, and in the end accuses him of inferior attainment. The more sophisticated victim can usually put up an apparently non-emotional defence in the form of a scepticism as to the facts, a scepticism whose obstinate irrationality is plain to an outside observer, but seems to the victim himself a simple defence of what he feels to be truth. This type of Freudian self-protection is often entirely passion-proof even against direct accusation of intellectual pride and jealousy. It relies on the ability of the mind to confuse, when hard-pressed, the essence of a subject with its accidents. Nothing but a very pure aspiration to Truth—and experience (often humiliating) of such reactions—is of much use against this particular kind of bondage.

While other defenders of Rodin were apologising for him in detail I brushed aside the nonsense—"a plague o' both your houses!"—and wrote a sonnet, which is, in its way, to conventional criticism exactly what that Balzac was. It was translated into French by Marcel Schwob and made considerable stir in Paris. Even at this length of time, I

attach a certain importance to it. For one thing, it marks a new stage in my own art.

BALZAC

Giant, with iron secrecies ennighted,
Cloaked, Balzac stands and sees. Immense disdain,
Egyptian silence, mastery of pain,
Gargantuan laughter, shake or still the ignited
Stature of the Master, vivid. Far, affrighted,
The stunned air shudders on the skin. In vain
The Master of " La Comédie Humaine "
Shadows the deep-set eyes, genius-lighted.

Epithalamia, birth-songs, epitaphs,
Are written in the mystery of his lips.
Sad wisdom, scornful shame, grand agony
In the coffin-folds of the cloak, scarred mountains, lie,
And pity hides i' th' heart. Grim knowledge grips
The essential manhood. Balzac stands, and laughs.

The upshot was that Rodin invited me to come and stay with him at Meudon. The idea was that I should give a poetic interpretation of all his masterpieces. I produced a number of poems, many of which I published at the time in the Weekly Critical Review, an attempt to establish an artistic entente cordiale. The entire series constitutes my " Rodin in Rime." This book is illustrated by seven of ten lithographs of sketches which Rodin gave me for the purpose.

STANZA XLIII

Let me die in a ditch,
Damnably drunk,
Or kissing a punk,
Or in bed with a bitch!

Summa Spes.

Any other man but myself would have made a ladder to fame out of the successes of this winter. I had no such idea. I had been thoroughly disillusioned, not only by the original Trance of Sorrow which had struck me between wind and water in 1897, but by the experience of my travels. The natives of Hawaii were not worrying about Sophocles ; Chogo Ri would be there when the last echo of Napoleon's glory had died away. I was more than ever convinced that to take an interest in the affairs of this world, one must turn one's back on truth. Buddhism might be right or wrong in saying that nothing is worth while ; but anyhow there could be no doubt that the conventional standards of value were simply comic. If anything were worth while, it could only be discovered by turning one's back resolutely on temporal things.

In accordance with Eckenstein's puritanical ideas of propriety, no communications about the expedition had been made to the newspapers. Ultimately, in the sheer interests of Science, a paragraph had been permitted to appear in *The Times*. It contained thirty-two lines and seventeen mis-statements of fact! I myself had been interviewed by a French journalist, and the report of my remarks bore no discoverable relation with them. I am

perhaps unduly sensitive about such stupidities. I ought perhaps to rely on time to sweep away the rubbish into the dustbin of oblivion and set the Truth upon Her throne; but yet, the evidence of History smiles grimly. What do we really know of the rights and wrongs of the struggle between Rome and Carthage? What do we know even of Buddhism and Christianity but that the most authentic accounts of their origins are intrinsically absurd? "What is truth?" said Jesting Pilate. But, personally, I fail to see the joke.

I went through life at this time with a kind of cynical bonhomie; nothing was really any particular good, so I might as well do what was expected of me. I wrote even of Buddhism with a certain detached disenchantment, as may be seen by reference to my *Summa Spes,* which I published separately (twelve copies contain the portrait of me by Haweis and Coles, subsequently reproduced in Vol. II of the vellum edition of my Collected Works) and sent to some of my friends in Paris on my departure for England.

After Rodin, the most important of these friends was Marcel Schwob. Eugène Carrière I met only once. He had just recovered from an operation for cancer of the throat, and I remember principally his remark, calm to the point of casual indifference, "If it comes back, I shall kill myself." Fritz Thäulow I saw several times. He was rather a new type to me; a jolly, bearded senior on whom life had left no scars. He believed in his art and in his family; enjoyed everything, worried about nothing—it was not at all one's idea of a great artist. I had already got it into my mind that the life of the artist must be a sequence of pungent pangs either of pleasure or pain; that his nature obliged him to regard commonplace circumstances rather as the

average man regards deep sleep. But Thäulow lived every line of his life; he had somehow attained that supreme philosophy which contemplates all things alike with cheerful calm.

Marcel Schwob excited my unbounded admiration. He was admittedly the finest French scholar of English. His style glittered with the superb simplicity and silken satire which compels me to regard Anatole France as his pupil. He had translated Hamlet and Macbeth for Sarah Bernhardt with astonishing spiritual fidelity to the soul of Shakespeare. His "Vies Imaginaires" might have served as the model for "Le Puits de Sainte Claire," and his "Ile des Diurnales" is as brilliantly bitter as anything that Swift ever wrote. He lived on the Ile St. Louis, in a delightful flat, rich with the suggestion of the East (emphasised by a Chinese servant he had picked up after the Exhibition of 1900), yet he suffered as few men suffer.

Part of his crucifixion was rather ridiculous. It was suspected that he was more or less a Jew, and he was constantly aware that he did not enjoy the position in French literature to which his genius entitled him. His wife was one of the most beautiful women on whom I had ever laid eyes; an exquisite siren with a smile that left La Gioconda standing, and a voice which would have burst the ropes that bound Ulysses to his mast. But she had been an actress, and this Duchess and that Countess did not call. It galled. The real tragedy of the man was that he was tortured by chronic constipation. It killed him soon after. Even after all these years I glow with boyish pleasure to recall his gracious, unassuming acquiescence in my impertinent existence, and his acknowledgment of my "Alice, an Adultery" as "a little masterpiece."

My sonnet on Rodin begins "Here is a man," which Marcel Schwob very properly translated, "Un homme." I took the draft to Rodin's studio. One of the men present was highly indignant. "Who is this Marcel Schwob," he exclaimed, "to pretend to translate from this English? The veriest schoolboy would know that 'Here is a man' should be turned into 'Voici un homme.'"

This is the sort of thing one meets at every turn. The man was perfectly friendly, well educated, and familiar with literature; yet he was capable of such supreme stupidity. The moral is that when an acknowledged master does something that seems at first sight peculiar, the proper attitude is one of reverent eagerness to understand the meaning of his action. This critic made an ass of himself by lack of imagination. He should have known that "Voici un homme" would have sprung instantly into Schwob's mind as the obvious and adequate rendering. His rejection of it argues deep consideration; and the man might have learnt a valuable lesson by putting himself in Schwob's place, trying to follow the workings of his mind, and finally discovering the considerations which determine his judgment. I quote this case rather than grosser examples which I recall, because it is so simple and non-controversial, yet involves such important principles. Schwob's version stands before a background of the history of literature. It would be easy to write a long and interesting essay on the factors of the problem.

Occasionally he came to see Kelly in his studio. His conversation was full of the most intensely interesting, because impersonally intimate, details about men of letters. He told us at first hand the tragedy of Meredith's life, the mystery of his birth, and his father's attempts to establish a

marriage which would have entitled him to a place in the peerage; the romance of "Vittoria"; and the intrigue of "Diana of the Crossways." He traced the influence of the Master's locomotor ataxia upon his life, his character, and his creatures. He explained how the long years of suffering had deformed Meredith's disposition, and led him to disgrace himself by refusing to head the petition for Oscar Wilde's release.

He told us too the true story of "Salome." The character of Wilde was simple. He was a perfectly normal man; but, like so many Irish, suffered acutely from being a snob. In Dublin, Sir William Wilde was somebody in Society; but when Oscar reached Oxford, he discovered that a medical knighthood, so far from being a distinction, was little better than a badge of servility. A Family even of commoners could afford to sneer at his acceptance of a trumpery honour at the hands of a Hanoverian hausfrau. Wilde could not bear to be despised by brainless dukes, so he had sought hegemony in the Hierarchy by the only means available, as a socially sensitive swineherd might aspire to the papacy. He determined to become the High Priest of the cult which already conferred a kind of aristocracy upon the undergraduate, though it had not yet been organised and boosted. That was the result of his "martyrdom," which accounts for most of the loathsome creatures that jostle one too frequently in 1929. "The Law is a Hass"!

Wilde had denied his nature in the interests of social ambition, and the success of his scheme drove him to adopt every affectation as a sign of superiority. Outside the English system of caste, he might have been a contented cornchandler. Within it, he found himself obliged to

affect to be sexually stirred by Maeterlinck, Flaubert, Gustave Moreau, and even the most sacred character of Scripture. He degraded the Sphinx by representing her as a sexual monster. He interpreted the relations between Christ and John, between Paul and Timothy, in the light of his own perverse imagination.

When I say perverse, I do not mean to use the word in the psychopathic sense. Wilde's only perversity was that he was not true to himself. Without knowing it, he had adopted the standards of the English middle classes, and thought to become distinguished by the simple process of outraging them. As one is said to be able to invoke the Devil by reciting the Lord's Prayer backwards, so Wilde thought to set up a new morality by reciting George R. Sims backwards. He naïvely accepted the cockney idea that Paris is a very wicked place, and proposed to petrify the Puritans by writing a play in French. His difficulty was that his French was that of a schoolboy turned tourist; so he struggled to write "Salome" on the pretence that he was sexually excited by the "Temptation of St. Anthony," Moreau's pictures in the Luxembourg, and the style of "Pellèas and Melisande." But the performance was pitiful; and it was Marcel Schwob who re-wrote his puerile dialogue in French.

At one of Marcel Schwob's afternoons I met Arnold Bennett, very ill at ease to find himself in Paris in polite society. He must have had a perfectly lovely time; everything was alike a source of innocent wonder. He was very much pleased by the generous measure of respect which he received on all hands simply for being a novelist. His speech and his appearance attracted no insult from literary circles in Paris.

At the time I had only read one of his books—" The Grand Babylon Hotel " ; which I thought, and still think, somewhere near his high-water mark. I told him how much I admired it, and was surprised to find that I had apparently said the wrong thing. But Kelly explained that he took himself seriously as a serious novelist, on the strength of having compiled some books of reference on life in Shropshire or Staffordshire or some such place. I don't know which is which, thank God ; I do not understand the system of classification or indexing, so I cannot turn up the symptoms of a dying Doultonware-artist if I want to. But then I don't.

Marcel Schwob gave me an introduction to William Ernest Henley, who invited me to lunch with him in his house near Woking. My sonnet on Rodin's bust of Henley describes the man and the interview rather than the sculpture.

" Cloistered seclusion of the galleried pines
Is mine to-day ; these groves are fit for Pan—
O rich with Bacchus frenzy and his wine's
Atonement for the infinite woes of man !
. . . . .
And here his mighty and reverend high-priest
Bade me good cheer, an eager acolyte,
Poured the high wine, unveiled the mystic feast ;
. . .

Roast lamb and an excellent Chablis which had been sent to him by Lord Northcliffe—thus does the poet transfigure conceptions apparently commonplace.

I was much touched by Henley's kindness in inviting me. I have never lost the child-like humility which

characterises all truly great men. Modesty is its parody. I had to wait some little while before he came down. When he did so, he was obviously suffering severe physical distress. Like Marcel Schwob himself, he was a martyr to constipation. He told me that the first half of every day was a long and painful struggle to overcome the devastating agony of his body. Only three weeks later he died. He was engaged in various tremendous literary tasks, and yet he could give up a day to welcome a young and unknown writer!

I could not pretend to myself that so great a man could feel any real interest in me. It never occurred to me that he might have read anything of mine, and thought it promising. I took, and take, his action for sheer human kindness. I probably behaved with my usual *gaucherie*. The presence of anyone whom I really respect always awakes my congenital shyness, always overawes me. Henley's famous poem (which Frank Harris regards as "the bombast of Antient Pistol") appealed intensely to my deepest feeling about man's place in the universe; that he is a Titan overwhelmed by the gods but not surrendering. And the form of the poem is superb. It is in line with all the great English expressions of the essential English spirit, a certain blindness, brutality, and arrogance, no doubt, as in Rule Britannia, Boadicea, The Garb of Old Gaul, The British Grenadiers, Hearts of Oak, Toll for the Brave, Ye Mariners of England, *et hoc genus omne;* but with all that, indomitable courage to be, to do, and to suffer as fate may demand.

I never thought much of the rest of Henley's verse, distinguished as it is for vigour and depth of observation. It simply does not come within my definition of poetry, which

is this : A poem is a series of words so arranged that the combination of meaning, rhythm, and rime produces the definitely magical effect of exalting the soul to divine ecstasy. Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Machen share this view. Henley's poem conforms with this criterion.

I told him what I was doing about Rodin. His view was that the sonnet had been worked out, and he advised me to try the Shakespearian sonnet or quatorzain. I immediately attempted the form in the train that evening, and produced the quatorzain on himself from which I have quoted above. I recognised at once that the quatorzain was in fact much better suited to my rugged sincerity than the suavity of the Italian form, so I composed a number of poems in the new mode. In fact, I fell in love with it. I invented improvements by the introduction of anapæsts wherever the storm of the metre might be maddened to Typhoon by so doing, and it may be that history will yet say that *Clouds without Water*, a story told in quatorzains, as *Alice* in sonnets, is my supreme lyrical masterpiece.

At least I have not died without the joy of knowing that no less a lover of literature than the world-famous Shakespearian lecturer, Dr. Louis Umfraville Wilkinson, has dared to confess publicly that *Clouds without Water* is "the most tremendous and the most real love-poem since Shakespeare's sonnets" in the famous essay "A Plea for Better Morals." But I anticipate. *Clouds without Water* came four years later. I am still sitting sleepily in the twilight in Europe ; after my day's labour three years long, in the blazing sun of the great world.

I spent many of my evenings at a little restaurant called the "Chat Blanc" in the rue d'Odessa, where was "an

upper room furnished" and consecrated informally to a sort of international clique of writers, painters, sculptors, students and their friends. It has been described with accurate vigour in the introduction to *Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden*. I quote the passage.

"His evenings were spent in that witty and high-thinking informal club that met nightly at the restaurant Au Chien Rouge, whose members are so honoured in the world of Art. There he met C—— the brilliant but debauched sculptor, caustic of wit, though genial to his friends; N——, the great painter, whose royal sense of light made his canvases into a harmonious dream: he also the sweet friend of Bacchus, who filled him with a glow and melody of colour and thought. There too, were D—— and L——, the one poet and philosopher, the other painter and —I fear—pæderast. Twins in thought, the two were invincible in argument as they were supreme in their respective arts. Often have I sat, a privileged listener, while D——'s cold acumen, and L——'s superb indignation, expressed in fiery swords of speech, would drive some luckless driveller from the room. Or at times they would hold down their victim, a bird fascinated by a snake, while they pitilessly exposed his follies to the delighted crowd. Again, a third, pompous and self-confident, would be led on by them, seemingly in full sympathy, to make an exhibition of himself, visible and hideous to all eyes but his own. L—— his eager face like a silver moon starting from a thundercloud, his hair, would pierce the very soul of the debate, and kindle it with magick joy or freeze it with scorn implacable. D——, his expression noble and commanding, yet sly, as if ever ready to laugh at the intricacies of his own intellect, sat next him, his deep and wondrous eyes lit with strange

light, while with words like burning flames of steel he shore asunder the sophistries of one, and the complacencies of another. They were feared, these two! There also did he meet the well-known ethicist, I——, fair as a boy, with boy's gold locks curling about his Grecian head; I——, the pure and subtle-minded student, whose lively humour and sparkling sarcasm were as froth upon the deep and terrible waters of his polished irony. It was a pity that he drank. There the great surgeon and true gentlemen, in spite of his exaggerated respect for the memory of Queen Victoria, J——, would join in with his ripe and generous wit. Handsome as a god, with yet a spice of devil's laughter lurking there, he would sit and enjoy the treasures of the conversation, adding at the proper interval his own rich quota of scholarly jest.

"Needless to say, so brilliant a galaxy attracted all the false lights of the time. T——, the braggart, the mediocre painter, the lusty soi-disant maquereau of marchionesses, would seek admission (which was in theory denied to none). But the cutting wit of C—— drove him headlong, as if by the Cherubin, from the Gates of the Garden of Eden. G——, the famous society painter, came one night, and was literally hounded out of the room by a swift and pitiless attack on the part of D—— and the young ethicist. A bullet-headed Yankee, rashly supporting him, shared the same fate, and ever after sat in solitary disgrace downstairs, like a whipped hound outside its master's door. A fool reveals himself, though he talk but of greasing gimlets, in such a fierce light as beat upon the Chien Rouge. Nor could any fool live long in that light. It turned him inside out; it revealed him even to himself as a leper and an outcast; and he could not stand it.

"In such a circle humbug could not live. Men of high intellectual distinction, passing through Paris, were constant visitors at the Chien Rouge. As guests they were treated with high honour; but woe to the best of them if some chance word let fall led D—— or L—— to suspect that he had a weak spot somewhere. When this happened, nothing could save him: he was rent and cast to the carrion beasts for a prey.

"How often have I seen some literary or pictorial Pentheus, impious and self-sufficient as he, disguise himself (with a tremor of fear) in his noblest artistic attire, as the foolish king in the *Bassara* of the Mænads!

"How often have I seen Dionysus—or some god—discover the cheat and give him over to those high-priests of dialectic, D—— and L——, to be ravaged and stripped amid the gleeful shrieks of the wit-intoxicated crowd! But once the victim was upon the altar, once he rose from his chair, then what a silence fell! Frozen with the icy contempt of the assembly, the wretch would slink down the room with a scared grin on his face, and not until he had faced that cruel ordeal, more terrible (even to a callous fool) than an actual whipping would have been, not until the door had closed behind him would the silence break as someone exclaimed 'My God, what a worm!' and led the conversation to some more savoury subject.

"On the other hand there was B——, a popular painter, upon whom the whole Dog pounced as one man, to destroy him.

"But when they saw that his popular painting was not he, that he had a true heart and an honest ambition, how quickly were the swords beaten into absinthes, and the spears into *tournedos!*

"S——, again, with a face like a portrait by Rembrandt, a man of no great intellect, but making no pretence thereto, how he was loved for his jolly humour, his broad smile, his inimitable stories!

"Yet it must not be supposed that the average man, however sincere, had much of a welcome there. Without intention to wound, he was yet hurt—the arrows of wit shot over his head, and he could never feel at home.

"I am perhaps the one exception. Without a ghost of talent, even in my own profession—medicine—I had no claim whatever to the hospitality of the Dog. But being perfectly unobtrusive, I dare say I was easy to tolerate, perhaps even of the same value as a background is to a picture, a mere patch of neutral colour, yet serving to harmonize the whole. Certainly nothing but my silence saved me. The remark a few pages back about Hall Caine and Meredith would have caused my instant execution, by the most painful, if the least prolonged, of deaths.

"Ay! no society, since men gathered together, was ever so easy to approach, to seat oneself among, to slip away from, or to be hurled in derision from their midst!

"Dreaded as they were by the Charlatan, no set of men could have been more closely knit, more genial, more fraternal. United by a bond of mutual respect, even where they differed—of mutual respect, I say, by no means of mutual admiration, for it was the sincere artistry that they adored, not the technical skill of achievement—they formed a noble and harmonious group, the like of which has perhaps never yet been seen."*

Another description may be found in the opening

* C. Paul Bartlett, N. J. W. Morrice, D. Crowley, L. Kelly, I. Heward Bell, J. Ivor Back, T. One Kite, G ?, B. Penrhyn Stanlaws, S. One Roct.

chapters of W. S. Maugham's "The Magician." The reader will wonder how this gentleman could have got there, but here my tale is tangled. Gerald Kelly's elder sister, Rose, had been for some years the widow of a Major Skerrett, and one of her best friends was a woman as beautiful and fascinating as herself, who was the wife of an English solicitor connected with the British Embassy, named Maugham. W.S. was this man's younger brother. Maugham claimed to have ambitions to become a man of letters, and his incapacity was so obvious that I am afraid we were cruel enough to make him the butt of our wit when he visited the Chat Blanc.

There is this excuse for us, that his earliest work was vamped over, his plagiarisms was beyond belief for impudence. When—to parody the outburst of the heavy-mother in Wilde's "Importance of Being Ernest"—he "contracted an alliance with a Tabloid, and married into a Pill-Box," we thought that all was over. But no! he went around the world, and set to work with his powers of observation to help an imagination which had by now become original and vigorous. He turned out some first-class work; and, what is in some ways better, work on the right side. He castigates the herd of many swine feeding which we call Society—as it is now late to drive their devils back into the Jews, where they are terribly congested.

But in 1902 we were right to chivy him!

It had leaked out that our luckless victim had taken a medical degree, and J. W. Morrice* used to torment the

* This amiable and worthy colonist occupied a studio on the Quai des Grands Augustins (now, I suppose, called Quai Maréchal Fous-le-Camp), most conveniently situated over the apartment of an excellent midwife: though I never heard that he had occasion to avail himself of her services.

poor fellow, whose distress was accentuated by his being a confirmed stammerer, by ringing the changes on this disgraceful episode of his career. Morrice was invariably mellow drunk all day and all night. He would look up from his crème de menthe and œufs sur le plat, clear his throat, and tell Maugham with grave importance that he would like to consult him on a matter concerning the welfare of art and artists. "What would you do if——" and after repeating himself in a hundred ways so as to prolong the rigmarole to the utmost, he would wind up by confessing to the premonitory symptoms of some comic and repulsive malady. It was really needlessly cruel, for, bar his pretensions to literature, there is not an ounce of harm in Maugham, any more than there is in a packet of sterilised cotton wool. Even the pretence is after all a perfectly harmless affectation.

But Maugham suffered terribly under the lash of universal contempt, and did his best to revenge himself by drawing portraits, as unpleasant as petty spite could make them, of some of his tormentors. His literary method, when it transcends plain scissors and paste, is the shirt-cuff method of Arnold Bennett. I must thank him for recording some of my actual repartees. The man he most hated was Roderic O'Conor. This man was intimate with Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Cézanne. In my opinion history will class him near them as a painter. I do not think he has many superiors in Art alive to-day. But very few people have seen his pictures. His contempt for the world goes beyond that of Balzac and Baudelaire. He cannot be bothered to give a show. He will turn rudely from his door a friendly journalist bent on making him famous and rich. Also, he is a cad.

To O'Conor, Maugham was not even funny. He was like a bed-bug, on which a sensitive man refuses to stamp because of the smell and the squashiness. I have never felt thus. To me the least of human beings, nay, less than they, have a place in my heart. "Everything that lives is holy." I can hardly bring myself to resent even the vilest and most offensive creatures. I have never been able to bear malice; I have never been able to understand how other people can do so. When I have been attacked, I have always looked at the matter impersonally. When I am publicly accused of stealing the towers of Notre Dame, I enjoy the joke thoroughly. I can't believe that anything can hurt me. It would hurt my pride to admit it, I suppose. When a newspaper prints three columns, identifying me with Jack the Ripper, it never occurs to me that any one in his senses would believe such rubbish. I imagine that my integrity is universally patent as sunrise; I can't realise that I shall suffer in the estimation of anyone, or that (say) it will interfere with the sale of my books.

I have never been able to analyse this mental attitude at all adequately, but part of it certainly derives from the fact that I have never lost my innocence. I sometimes wonder whether it may not prove a defect in my philosophical system that I am unable to believe in the existence of evil. There is of course the appearance of evil due to ignorance, bad judgment, and so on; but my major premiss is "Every man and every woman is a star"; and I always conceive the problem of progress as depending merely on enlightenment. I do not believe in original sin except in this sense that "The word of Sin is Restriction"; and our normal conscious selves are inevitably restricted by the

categories of space, time, and causality, which are essential conditions of the manifestation of separate individualities. But I cannot get it into my head that any single human being can be really hostile to another. I regard all such passions as the symptoms of a definite deformity of nature produced by its inadequacy to deal with its environment. Just as a stick appears bent when thrust partly under water, so does a man's will apparently deviate when the refractive index of his environment deceives his vision.

I do not know whether it is fair to say that I am callous, whether the long torture of my patient silent struggle against the tyrants of my boyhood case-hardened me against the world. I do not know how far the habit of concentration and the peculiar selective action of my memory has deadened my sensibilities, for I am as indifferent to most impressions as the holiest hermit could desire. I have become almost incapable of registering conscious impressions unless they pass the censor as having legitimate business with me. Of course a not dissimilar state of abstractedness is common enough in men whose lives are devoted to study, by the time they are fifty ; but in me these tendencies were already bearing fruit long before I was thirty.

The Montparnasse Quarter was of course full of people who took their trumpery love affairs very seriously. But the English colony was riddled with English hypocrisy. I remember giving the manuscript of "Alice" to Kelly and a girl named Sybil Muggins* to read, and they agreed that no really nice woman would have kissed a man so early as the thirteenth day of his wooing. I must confess to having been taken a little aback, especially as Sybil Muggins was Haweis's mistress. A few days back,

* Query "Meugins."

moreover, Haweis having gone to Brussels for a week, she switched over to Kelly. What dreadful days those were! They worked themselves up into such a state that Kelly actually proposed to marry Sybil, and his sister bustled over post haste to prevent it by threatening that his allowance would be stopped if he did anything so foolish.

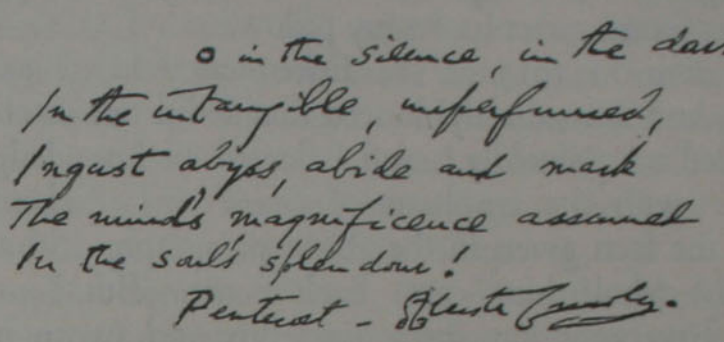
I had of course no sympathy whatever for the fatuity of the young people, but I have always felt with Shelley that parental tyranny is the most indefensible kind.

> "I was brought up in the other service; but I knew from the first that the Devil was my natural master and captain and friend. I saw that he was in the right, and that the world cringed to his conqueror only through fear. I prayed secretly to him; and he comforted me, and saved me from having my spirit broken in this house of children's tears. I promised him my soul, and swore an oath that I would stand up for him in this world and stand by him in the next. (*Solemnly*) That promise and that oath made a man of me. From this day this house is his home; and no child shall cry in it; this hearth is his altar; and no soul shall ever cower over it in the dark evenings and be afraid." (G. B. Shaw, *The Devil's Disciple.*)

I offered to make Kelly an allowance equal to what he was receiving, which rather took the wind out of the sails of the old wooden three-deckers in Camberwell Vicarage. The gesture was sufficient. The threat was withdrawn; Gerald on his side had cooled off sufficiently to see the folly of throwing himself away on a half-caste.

To me the joke was obvious. I could already love without attachment so far as physical desire was concerned. There are one or two small errors in my subsequent life, and they are due to my failure to extend this principle to other types of attachment. I have tried to set myself up against fate and save those who were predestined to be lost, to keep on trusting people after I knew perfectly well that they were false; and I have paid heavily for my chivalry and generosity. I still think these defects in some way preferable to sterner sense and virtue, and yet I know that I am wrong from every point of view. It does not do ultimate good to any one concerned to shut one's eyes to the facts or to try to dodge one's creditors.

STANZA XLIV



I must give an instance or two of the astounding character of my memory. It is absolutely first rate wherever my true interests are concerned, and also first rate in a very different sense, in eliminating other things so as not to overload the mind. But——

I think it was on returning to Boleskine from Paris after taking the Grade of $5° = 6°$ that I asked Eckenstein to join me for the ski-laüfing and salmon. We left London together in a sleeper. I had £150 in bank notes in my pocket book, which I put under my pillow. In the morning I dressed hurriedly, still half asleep, and left the book behind. I discovered the loss a few minutes later, and shrugged my shoulders. I have always had a conviction that it is utterly useless to look for anything that has once been lost. I made up my mind immediately to forget about it; I take it as a matter of fact that anyone who has found anything would steal it; yet equally as a matter of course that it should be returned to me by the finder as simply as one would hand a lady the fan she had dropped, with no question of honesty or reward. But Eckenstein insisted on my going back to the station immediately. We saw the station master, and got permission to walk up the tracks—quite a long distance, hardly less than a quarter of a mile—to

the siding where the sleeper had been shunted. The pocket book was found intact under my pillow.

Some time in 1913 or '14 Eckenstein referred to this incident, and immediately noticed that I did not catch on. He tackled me pointedly; and I denied all knowledge of the affair with the emphasis of St. Peter! Eckenstein repeated the facts given in the above paragraph, and as he did so the whole thing came back to me. But I would certainly have gone into the witness-box and sworn point blank that no such thing had ever happened. Every detail was and is perfect in my memory. At this moment I can see the car, the siding, the general appearance of the maze of lines, the lowering grey weather, the tumbled bed, the cleaner who had just begun his work. I remember thrusting my hand under the pillow and the exact state of emotion at finding the book, relief mingled with mild surprise and a strong sense of shame at having made such a fool of myself in the presence of Eckenstein.

But the entire packet had been sealed up and stowed away at the back of the safe, in accordance with the routine of the office never to allow the mind to feed upon thoughts connected with money. I know that this seems far-fetched, and many people will find it entirely unintelligible; but it is the fact. The ultimate secret of my life is that I really live up to my principles. I decide that it is disgraceful to allow financial considerations to dictate my conduct; but instead of allowing this to remain a pious opinion, I am at pains to invent a regular technique for dismissing them.

Another incident. In returning to Zapotlan we had ridden 120 miles in the broiling sun. I had outridden O.E., who was amazed and irritated at my power to endure

heat and thirst. I became alarmed when I found he was nowhere to be seen, and rode back a good many miles, managing (as luck would have it) to miss him in the one small patch of woodland which diversified the desert. When I reached Zapotlan I had to be lifted off my horse. We were to start the next morning, as we were in rather a hurry to get back to Mexico City.

I woke before six o'clock, and found the whole place in darkness. I opened the big gateway, fed the horses, saddled them, and then, finding that nobody was stirring, thought I would lie down on my bed for a minute or so till breakfast was ready. I went to sleep. Eckenstein had some difficulty in arousing me.

The point of the story is this : that I had done nothing of the sort. Eckenstein proved to me (and a difficult task he had) that I had never wakened at all, and that the whole of my early morning's activities were a mere wish-phantasm ; being too sleepy to do my duty, I dreamt that I had done so.

This last incident is very typical. Not once nor twice in my fair island story have I found myself in honest doubt which, believe me, is worth half the creeds, as to whether any given incident took place in sleep or waking. It may be thought that my accounts of various magical incidents are under suspicion ; but being aware of my peculiarities, I have naturally been at great pains to eliminate any such source of error. Eckenstein's proof that I was dreaming depended on the physical evidence of the closed doorway and the unsaddled horses. It is of course easy to reply that I may have been asleep the second time as well as the first ! And of course there is no answer to that any more than there is to the argument that we are all part of the Red

King's Dream, as Lewis Carroll puts the fable of Kwang-Tze. (Kwang-Tze once said to his disciples on awakening: "Just now I was dreaming that I was a butterfly: but is it so, or am I a butterfly dreaming that it is Kwang-Tze?")

To return to the wicked city of Paris. J. W. Morrice, as a painter, does not possess the sternly intense passion of O'Conor. His vision lacks the blazing brilliance of beauties which imposes itself on the beholder in O'Conor's best work. Morrice is a *homo unius tabulæ*. He has only seen one thing in his life—it is the rosy dream which Venus and Bacchus bestow upon their favourites. His pictures swim in a mist of rich soft delicate colour which heightens the effect of the character of his draughtsmanship; and that suggests the same qualities by means of a different system of hieroglyphics.

The most prominent member of the Chat Blanc symposia, after these, was Paul Bartlett. I found him brilliant and good natured; and his caustic speech gave a spice to his geniality. I thought very highly of his work; but he might have gone much further had it not been for the social and artistic success which acts as a soporific on all artists whose vigilance is unequal to the strain. It is hard indeed for the strongest of us to be ungracious to our admirers. Neglect and poverty, moreover, injure a man's art if they continue for more than a certain number of years. It is best for a man if he begins to taste success in the early forties; but he must have begun with "the thwackings," as Meredith so profoundly sets forth in that superb magical apologue "The Shaving of Shagpat"; and he should have learnt their lesson that the applause of mankind is as contemptible as its abuse. "Just so many asinine hee-

haws," as Browning said. The artist must live continually in such intense intimacy with the God-head that he is not to be disturbed either by starvation or success.

There were of course a number of fleas on the Chat Blanc ; men whose association with art was a sort of superstition, men who bored us and yet were as difficult to get rid of as the lumber that accumulates in a house. But sometimes a stranger would introduce a new note of genuine amusement.

One day one of the Americans introduced the "great American artist, Penrhyn Stanlaws." His name was Stanley Adamson, and his birthplace Dundee. He had begun life in the traditional manner of the Great by holding horses' heads and earning dimes. Somehow or other, while quite a youth, he had sprung into popular favour, and was already earning £2,000 a year or more by dashing off a succession of spidery scrawls representing fluffy American flappers in various attitudes. He had come to Paris to study art seriously.

I was delighted with him. He was Pinkerton of "The Wrecker," with every *t* crossed and every *i* dotted. His innocent earnestness, without any root to it, his infatuation for "uplift," his total ignorance of the morality of the Artist, his crude prejudices based upon Sunday School, his attitude to everything assumed in blissful unconsciousness of a background ; this was all perfectly charming. He had all the fascination of a new penny toy.

Now, at this time, Gerald Kelly was in his Whistler-Velasquez period. Kelly's mind is in no way creative or even critical in the true sense of the word. He was a scholar. He would convince himself by elaborate argument that So-and-So was the greatest of all artists ; and he would then endeavour to discover the secrets of the master in the

spirit of the analytical chemist, and proceed to paint with the most pitiful perseverance in the style of his latest hero. I possess sketches by Kelly which I defy the world to distinguish from Beardsley, Rossetti, Morris, G. F. Watts, etc. Robbie Ross once told me of a man who collected fans by Charles Conder. He had twenty-three when he died; four of them Conders, five doubtful, but the remaining fourteen genuine Kellys.

At this particular moment he was aiming at the "low tone" of Whistler and Velasquez, and his method was to keep on darkening his palette. Ultimately he would use paint the colour of Thames mud for the high light on the cheek of a blonde. He once picked out an old canvas to paint over, and had gone some distance before he discovered that it was his favourite portrait of the Hon. Eileen Grey. His knowledge of art was encyclopædic; and he laid down the law with more unction and emphasis than anyone else I have ever heard. He took Stanlaws under his wing, and started to teach him to paint.

Stanlaws possessed the characteristic American faculty of doing anything and everything easily; of scoring superficial success. One day I called on him and found a large easel in his studio on which stood a vast canvas—evidently by Kelly. I congratulated him on his acquisition. He replied, rather huffily, that he had painted it himself. And the cream of the jest is that this hasty imitation of Kelly's imitations of Velasquez was accepted in the Salon on the strength of Stanlaws' American reputation!

I gradually sickened of the atmosphere of Paris. It was all too easy. I flitted restlessly to London and back, and found no rest for the sole of my foot. I had even got engaged to be married, but returning after a week in London

I was partly too shy to resume relations with my fiancée, and partly awake to the fact that we had drifted under the lee shore of matrimony out of sheer lack of moral energy. This lady claims notice principally as the model for several poems, notably (in Rosa Mundi and other Love Songs) "The Kiss," "Eileen," and the poems numbered 14, 15, 16, 18, 21 to 28. She was also the "Star" in "The Star and the Garter," which I wrote at this time; and the three women connected with the "Garter" were an English lady with a passion for ether, an acrobat and model whom I called my boot-button girl because her face was "round and hard and small and pretty," and thirdly Nina Olivier. Nina is described in the poem itself and also in several lyrics, notably "The Rondel"—"You laughing little light of wickedness." My adoration of Nina made her the most famous girl in the Quarter for a dozen years and more. She figures, by the way, in my "Ordeal of Ida Pendragon."

"The Star and the Garter" contains some of my best lyrics, and is also important as marking a new step in my poetic path. I had mastered form better than I had ever done before; I had welded lyrics into a continuous opus with an integral purpose, without artificiality, such as to some extent mars "Orpheus" and even "Alice." I spent two days writing the poem; but I do not consider it a waste of time.

Some time later I added an appendix of a very obscure kind. The people of our circle, from Kathleen Bruce (since Lady Scott and Mrs. Hilton Young) to Sybil Muggins and Hener-Skene (later, accompanist to Isadora Duncan) are satirised. Their names are introduced by means of puns or allusions, and every line is loaded with

cryptic criticism. Gerald and I, as educated men, were frightfully fed up with the presumption and poses of the average ass—male or female—of the Quarter.

One incident became immortal. I wrote in "The Sword of Song" that I "read Levi and the Cryptic Coptic," and lent the manuscript to my fiancée, who was sitting for Gerald Kelly. During the pose she asked him what Coptic meant. "The language spoken by the ancient Copts," replied Kelly, and redoubled his æsthetic ardours. A long pause—then she asked, "What does cryptic mean?" "The language spoken by the ancient Crypts," roared the *rapin*, and abandoned hope of humanity.

Another affectation of the women art students was to claim to be treated exactly as if they were men in every respect. Gerald, always eager to oblige, addressed one of his models as Old Fellow, to her great satisfaction. Then he excused himself for a momentary absence in the terms which he would have used to another man. On his return, the lady had recovered her "sex and character," and had bolted. Woman can only mix with men on equal terms when she adopts his morality lock, stock, and barrel, and ceases to set an extravagant artificial value on her animal functions. The most high-principled woman (alleged) insists on the supreme value of an asset which is notoriously of no value whatever in itself.

"The Star and the Garter" deals frankly with this problem, among others. As far as sexual charm is concerned, it is only reasonable to expect the expert to be more satisfactory than the new chum; and even, class for class, the professional than the amateur. The desire for exclusive possession is one of the most idiotic and bestial pieces of

vanity in human psychology. But love can exist between man and woman entirely independent of any sexual relations between them. The condition of this love is that both parties should have completely mastered their sexual natures; for otherwise their mutual relations may be interrupted by the growlings of the caged animal. Men and women are not free to love decently until they have analysed themselves completely, and swept away every trace of mystery from sex; and this means the acquisition of a profound philosophical theory based on wide reading of anthropology and enlightened practice.

My travels had doubtless done much to open my eyes. I had already studied the characteristics of fifty-seven separate races, a number which I subsequently increased to eighty or ninety, when it became difficult to define the word "race." My ethnological results are not particularly striking; but the course of the research certainly helped to make it clear that no proposition could be judged as right or wrong, or even as true or false. It is always possible to derive a point of view from the circumstances of its holder.

> "The wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Khatmandu,
> And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban."

Every conceivable moral principle is held somewhere by somebody; and it is the ineluctable conclusion from that somebody's premisses. His circumstances are unique; and so are his hereditary tendencies, his environment, his training, and the character of his mental processes. Whether we hold free will or determinism, we equally ratify every type of opinion and conduct.

I had not at this time consciously reached this freedom.

I was still a romantic, still seeking true love. Observe a curious analogy to the time when I invoked the Adepts, with one actually by my side; so now, invoking True Love, there lurked unsuspected in my circle the woman destined to satisfy my aspirations; and just as in aspiring to the Path of the Wise I had not realised the nature of that Path, so also I did not understand what the words True Love might mean.

> "True love with black inchauntments filled,
> Its hellish rout of shrieks and groans,
> Its vials of poison death-distilled,
> Its rattling chains and skeletons."

I made comparatively few notes of this period—November, 1902, to April, 1903. It seems rather strange that I should have been able to get such an epitome of life into so short a period; at least I reached old age. I went back to Boleskine almost as a ghost might retire to his tomb at cock-crow. In May I wrote a very clear résumé of my progress. It will be as well to quote it.

"In the year 1899 I came to Boleskine House and put everything in order with the object of carrying out the Operation of Abramelin the Mage.

"I had studied Ceremonial Magic, and had obtained remarkable success.

"My gods were those of Egypt, interpreted on lines closely akin to those of Greece.

"In Philosophy I was a Realist of the Qabalistic School.

"In 1900 I left England for Mexico, and later the Far East, Ceylon, India, Burma, Baltistan, Egypt and France. It is idle here to detail the corresponding progress of my

thought; and passing through a stage of Hinduism, I had discarded all Deities as unimportant, and in Philosophy was an uncompromising Nominalist. I had arrived at what I may describe as the position of an orthodox Buddhist; but with the following reservations.

"(1) I cannot deny that certain phenomena do accompany the use of certain rituals; I only deny the usefulness of such methods to the White Adept.

"(2) I consider Hindu methods of meditation as possibly useful to the beginner, and should not therefore recommend them to be discarded at once.

"With regard to my advancement, the redemption of the Cosmos, etc. etc. I leave for ever the 'Blossom and Fruit' Theory, and appear in the character of an Inquirer on strictly scientific lines.

"This is unhappily calculated to damp the enthusiasm; but as I so carefully of old, for the magical path, excluded from my life all other interests, that life has now no particular meaning; and the Path of Research, on the only lines I can now approve of, remains the one Path possible for me to tread."

(By the Blossom and Fruit theory, I mean the existence of a body of initiates pledged to devote themselves to the redemption of mankind.)

It sounds as if I had become a bit of a prig. I expect a good deal of my attitude was due to exhausted vitality. Chogo Ri was perhaps still taking his revenge.

I had picked out Boleskine for its loneliness. Lord Lovat and Mrs. Fraser-Tytler, my nearest neighbours, were eight miles away, while Grant of Glenmoriston was on the other side of Loch Ness. Besides, Boleskine was already the centre of a thousand legends.

Even before I came there there was a fine crop of the regular Highland superstitions.

"(The howl of a bull-dog, exactly like the crying of a child, is heard far off.)

George. All right. It's only that damned dog of M'Alister's. He does it every night.

Fenella. He sees the ghost of old Lord Lovat.

George. Old Lord Lovat?

Fenella. Yes; they beheaded him after the '45. He rolls his head up and down the corridors.

George. Pleasant pastime!

Fenella. What else is a man to do?

George. What's that tapping?

(He stops to listen.)

Fenella. Go on! It's only the old woman.

George. What old woman?

Fenella. Her son was a lunatic. They let him out cured, as they thought. His mother came up here with him to lay flowers on his father's grave; and he caught her legs and smashed her brains against the wall.

George. Oh damn it!

Fenella. You baby! So, ever since, she comes from time to time to try and pick up her brains off the wall."

I certainly used to hear the "rolling of the head," but when I put in a billiard table, the old gentleman preferred it to the corridor, and confined his amusements to the gun-room. Even before that, he had always stopped at the Pylon of the corridor which marked off from the rest of the house the wing which was consecrated to Abramelin. I have never discovered any explanation of these noises. We

used to listen at the door of the gun room, and the head would roll merrily up and down the table with untiring energy. The moment we opened the door the noise would stop; but there would be no visible cause.

During my absence, the reputation of the house had become more formidable than ever before. I have little doubt that the Abramelin devils, whatever they are, used the place as convenient headquarters, and put in some of their spare time in terrifying the natives. No one would pass the house after dark. Folk got into the habit of going round through Strath Errick, a detour of several miles. There were a great many definite legends; but I made rather a point of refraining from making a collection. I was completely committed to rationalism, and the occurrence of miracles was a nuisance. I should have liked to deny the reality of the whole Abramelin business, but the phenomena were just as patent as the stones of the house.

I lived the life of the ordinary Scottish laird in a dull mechanical way, and drifted into beginning meditation on Buddhist lines; rather because I had nothing better to do than for any more positive reason. The record of the period from June 16 to July 13 is curiously dull. One notices chiefly the lack of driving force, and the complete disappearance of any enthusiasm.

I had completed "The Sword of Song" before I left Paris, and left it to be printed with Philippe Renouard, one of the best men in Paris. I intended to issue it privately. I had no longer any ideas about the "best publisher." I felt in a dull way that it was a sort of duty to make my work accessible to humanity; but I had no idea of reaping profit or fame thereby.

STANZA XLV

Hence our joints ache, and life is out of joint.
All ways we turn we stumble over corpses,
Slip in the slime, and sicken at the stench
Of English widow, wanton, wife and wench
The God and the Girl.

On the 13th of July I went to Edinburgh, partly to renew my stock of wines and partly to pick up some kind of companion-housekeeper, but ostensibly to meet Gerald Kelly who was due to spend the summer at Strathpeffer. His sister Rose was engaged to a man named Howell, who was coming from America to marry her in a few weeks.

I engaged a companion-housekeeper easily enough. What a man wants is a woman whom he can take down from the shelves when required, and who can be trusted to stay on them when not. It is true that a woman is much more amusing when she possesses individuality and initiative, but it is the basest kind of sensuality to wish to be amused. The ideal woman should prevent a man from being amused or disturbed in any way, whether by his own passions or the incidents of everyday life. I forget the surname of the lady whom I chose to fill this important position. Let her stand in history by the unassuming title of "Red-headed Arabella." It was arranged that she should come and take up her duties towards the middle of August. I only stayed two or three days in Edinburgh, and having attended to the matter of wine and woman, completed the triad by writing "The God-Eater."

This short play is singularly unsatisfactory as a work of

art, but extremely significant as a piece of Autohagiography. The explanatory note in my Collected Works is itself obscure.

> " The idea of this obscure and fantastic play is as follows :—
>
> " By a glorious act human misery is secured (History of Christianity).
>
> " Hence, appreciation of the personality of Jesus is no excuse for being a Christian.
>
> " Inversely, by a vile and irrational series of acts human happiness is secured (Story of the play).
>
> " Hence, attacks on the Mystics of History need not cause us to condemn Mysticism.
>
> " Also, the Knowledge of Good and Evil is a Tree whose fruit Man has not yet tasted : so that the Devil cheated Eve indeed ; or (more probably) Eve cheated Adam. Unless (most probable of all) God cheated the Devil, and the fruit was a common apple after all. (*Cf.* H. Maudsley, ' Life in Mind and Conduct.') "

The influence of The Golden Bough and the Spencerian philosophers whom I was reading is apparent. In the last paragraphs, too, is evidence that I still clung to Shelley's dream of a regenerated humanity. There is a touch of the influence of a man named L. C. R. Duncombe Jewell, the eldest son of a Plymouth Brother at Streatham, who had " gone to the bad " by becoming a Roman Catholic. I had asked him to spend a week at Boleskine, and he had managed somehow or other to settle down there as my factor. I suppose he saved me trouble in one way or another, and was some sort of companion. He called himself Ludovic Cameron, being a passionate Jacobite and having a Cameron somewhere in his family tree. He

was very keen on the Celtic revival, and wanted to unite the five Celtic nations in an empire. In this political project he had not wholly succeeded : but he had got as far as designing a flag. And, oh so ugly!

All this seemed childish to me, but no more so than Imperialism, and it had the advantage of being rather charming and entirely harmless. It is strange to look back on myself at 27, completely persuaded of the truth of the most extravagant claims of Mysticism and Magick, yet completely disillusioned with regard to the Universe. I was inclined to minimise my activity in every respect. The importation of Red-headed Arabella had only one motive—to arrange my life so as to reduce the elements of disturbance to the lowest possible point.

It may seem a little strange that I did not follow the example of Allan Bennett and take the Yellow Robe. But I had not been favourably impressed by the conditions of Buddhist monasteries. It was no doubt true that the regulations laid down by the Buddha for the conduct of Bhikkhus were intended to help them to free their minds from disturbance ; but they were no longer interpreted in that light by the Bhikkhus themselves, except by an infinitesimal minority, who, like Allan, really understood the machinery of the business.

Nor did I agree that the Buddha was altogether right. I thought it a great mistake to interfere with physiological processes. I was perfectly aware that greed, lust, and hatred were the enemies of peace ; but I was also aware that forcing oneself to abstain from food, love, and society could only result in diverting the natural appetites into abnormal channels. St. Anthony attributed an exaggerated importance to sex. I was convinced that the repression of

natural instincts was an insult to nature and a short cut to moral deformity. I already saw that the only proper course of action was to order one's life in accordance with its conditions.

The plan to pursue was to comply with physiological propriety, but to keep each appetite in its place, to prevent it from invading the sphere of the whole consciousness. In practice, I proposed to live an absolutely normal life, but without attaching undue importance to any element of it. I intended to enjoy my dinner, whether it was salmon and Château Yquem '78, or cold mutton and a glass of milk. I had found by experience that the minimum of disturbance was secured in this way. The agony of sugar-starvation on the Baltoro Glacier had showed me that to try to repress a natural appetite is merely to invite it to obsess one.

I expected then to settle down slowly into a routine of scientific research on the lines philosophically indicated by Spencer, Huxley, and the Buddha, while morally I followed the Rosicrucian principle of complying with the customs of the country through which I was travelling.

The condition of my soul is clearly indicated by my output. The fount of lyric poetry had run completely dry. I had not touched the unfinished Orpheus ; I wrote nothing new. I no longer aspired to become the redeemer of humanity. I doubt whether I should have been able to attach any meaning to any such words. After returning from Edinburgh, I do not seem even to have kept a record, and I remember nothing about my doings. July is however the date of an essay " The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magick " which I prefaced to my edition of " The Gœtia." I had employed Mathers to translate the text of " The Lesser Key of Solomon the King " of which

"The Gœtia" is the first section. He got no further; after the events of 1900, he had simply collapsed morally. I added a translation of the conjurations into the Enochian or Angelic language; edited and annotated the text, prefixed a "Preliminary Invocation," a prefatory note (? printed date) a Magical Square intended to prevent improper use of the book, and ultimately, an Invocation of Typhon, when the First Magical War of the Æon of Horus was declared.

This essay throws a very clear light upon my position. I could not deny the facts of Ceremonial Magick. It is impossible to explain why a dog squeals when you hit him with a stick; but we do not therefore deny that this happens, or at least that there is some impression of some such kind somewhere. I was in precisely the position of those philosophers who were driven to the theory of casuality, and said that there was no cause why an apple should fall; it was simply a matter of coincidence that God should happen to will that it should touch the ground after willing that it should be detached from the bough. The facts of Magick appear quite natural if one accepts the explanation officially put forward without enquiring too closely.

This theory, roughly speaking, is that of Milton or Dante. There is even some excuse for saying it is the Catholic Tradition *à rebours*; that tradition is of course the development and degradation of various animistic cults. Magical facts were explained by the intervention of spiritual beings. One spiritual being, myself, throws a stone. That is how it happens that the stone has changed its position. Another spiritual being, Zeus, is annoyed; that explains how such and such a house is struck by lightning. All facts are of the same order, and their interpretation must be uniform.

Now, I had dismissed the whole theory of spiritual Hierarchies as repugnant to reason ; thus I was left with a set of phenomena on my hands which cried aloud for explanation, exactly like the man who noticed that rubbed amber attracted certain light objects. In this essay, I endeavoured to show how it was that Magical Operations were effective. My collection of facts was at that time comparatively small, and I had not yet analysed and classified them properly. But the essay shows that I was on the right track. My interpretation conformed with the mechanical theory of Victorian physics.

The sequel shows my development on the same lines as the rest of modern science. The materialists had to include the connotation of " spirit " in their definition of " matter." One of my difficulties was that my senses told me that the archangel Gabriel existed, exactly as they told me that Ernst Haeckel existed ; in fact, rather more so. I had accepted Haeckel on mere hearsay. Why should I doubt Isis, whom I had seen, heard, touched ; yet admit Ray Lankester, whom I hadn't ? Already I was compelled to resolve all phenomena equally into unknowable impressions. I did not realise how arbitrary it was to explain Taphtath-arath as a set of impressions somehow imagined by my mind as the result of a particular process of intoxication. It was long before I understood that all explanations of the Universe are ultimately interchangeable like the geometries of Euclid, Riemann, and Lobatchewsky.

So much for July. But early in August, Gerald Kelly wrote suggesting that I should join his party at Strathpeffer. I had nothing better to do. Red-headed Arabella was still in Edinburgh ; I was being bored to death, either by my meditation or by my inability to rouse

myself to the point of doing any. So I packed a bag and went over.

The party consisted principally of Kelly's mother, who worthily preserved the conditions of Tennysonian dignity; Rose, who was in a curious state of excitement, which I either failed to observe at all, or attributed to the high spirits of unthinking youth; and one or two more or less chance acquaintances, including an elderly solicitor named Hill, who was in love with Rose, and struck me as perhaps the tamest and dullest specimen of humanity that I had ever met. Gerald was playing golf, which at that time was rather daring; not quite the thing you would confess to your friends in London. I had no clubs, and he played mostly with Hill. Thus it happened that at lunch on the 11th of August Rose and I got into conversation. There is something in my character which makes people confide in me. I think the bottom of it is my chastity. They instinctively understand that I have no personal axe to grind; that I shall display a wise benevolence and incorruptible justice, being detached from every form of desire.

So Rose confessed to me that she was in great trouble, as we wandered out over the links to walk the last few holes with Kelly and Hill.

She told me that she was being forced into the marriage with Howell by her family. She had been carrying on an intrigue with a married man named Frank Summers. This had got to the ears of her family because, being hard up for money, she had told her mother that she was pregnant, and got £40 from her for the purpose of having an illegal operation. Naturally, this led to enquiries; and though the pregnancy was merely an ingenious pretext, and the operation consisted of dinners and dresses, the Kellys

were determined to prevent further raids on their purse and their prestige, by insisting on her remarriage.

The story awakened my Shelleyan indignation. We sat down on the links in silence while I thought out the situation. The solution was perfectly simple. "Don't upset yourself about such a trifle," said I, and told her something of my spiritual state and my plans for the future. "All you have to do," I said, "is to marry me. I will go back to Boleskine, and you need never hear of me again—unless," I added with romantic grandiloquence, "I can be of any further assistance to you. That will knock your marriage with Howell on the head; you will be responsible for your conduct, not to your family, but to me (as in the case of an Indian dancing girl married to a dagger or a pipal-tree); and you can go and live in the flat which Mr. Summers proposes to take for you, without interference."

It really seems absurd that I should have been so ignorant of the elements of psychology; but I genuinely imagined that this fantastic programme was possible. It certainly satisfied all theoretical requirements! But like other Utopian dreamers from Sir Thomas Browne to Karl Marx, I omitted to take into consideration one insignificant element in the problem—the existence of the mysterious force called human nature.

Rose jumped at my suggestion. We agreed to tell Gerald as soon as he appeared, which was thoughtless, as it might easily have put him off his game, and to get married at the earliest possible moment. Gerald finished the course in 4, 3, 4, 4, bogey being 17 for that part of the course. He took our announcement as a harmless joke.

I went to the local authorities about the practical programme; but they were like Baal on a celebrated occasion. The only available Deity was the Parish Sexton; and, after

all, could anything have been more appropriate? He told me that I could have the banns published and get married in three weeks. That wouldn't do at all; it would give Howell time to arrive from America and put pressure on the Kellys. I asked him if there was not some less drawn-out form of execution. "Well," he said, after scratching his head, "you can be expoased on a boorrrd along o' yer young 'ooman, for a week." Not in vain had I been studying the Golden Bough, but I had no idea that these obscene forms of torture still lingered—even in the Scottish Highlands. "Come, come," I said, "there must be a simpler and quicker way to get married than that." Surely, I said to myself, all that stuff about Gretna Green must have some basis in fact. He shook his head sorrowfully, a discomfortable motion which I checked by slipping him a half-crown. He then admitted that it was only necessary to go to the Sheriff of the County and declare the intention to get married, in which case the marriage would take place there and then. "There and then?" I echoed in a hollow voice, for I had the instinctive feeling natural to a young man, that he is somehow or other putting his foot in it, that he is invoking unknown Gods. "Then and there," he answered heavily, and the syllables fell as if he had been throwing the sods upon my coffin.

Armed with this satisfactory information, I returned to the hotel and had a short conference with my betrothed. We were to get up in time to catch the first train to Dingwall, call on the Sheriff, and get it over before breakfast. We carried out this design. We had to go quietly for fear of awakening Gerald. The idea was that he might interfere, though I had no reason for supposing that he would do so. But apparently she had.

STANZA XLVI

Rose of the World!
Red glory of the secret heart of Love;
Red flame, rose-red, most subtly curled
Into its own infinite flower, all flowers above!
Rosa Mundi.

So we stole out in the dim grey of the morning. I remember her furtive passage under his window, and how I murmured

> " Wake Duncan with thy knocking ?
> I would thou could'st."

recalling—too late!—the theatrical superstition that it is very unlucky to quote Macbeth at the beginning of an enterprise.

We jogged along in the little train in a state of curious constraint. Of course our relations *were* rather peculiar, when all was said and done. Anyhow, there was nothing to say. Rose was a charming woman, but far from an intellectual companion. Her brother's friends being for the most part addicted to art or literature, it was her custom to carry a volume of Browning in her dressing-case, and she would ask people to fetch it for her, which impressed them. She didn't have to read it. Again, whenever a conversation flagged, she would remark thoughtfully :

> " Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art ! "

'Twas all she knew. However, I wasn't going to have to

live with her. All I had to do was to emancipate her. So there was no reason for trying to talk to her.

We reached Dingwall in the cold damp dawn; we disinterred the Sheriff's address from a sleepy policeman, and arrived at his house only to be told by a dishevelled maid that we couldn't get at him till 8 or 9 or 10 o'clock. I was piqued. The hint of obstacles roused me. I wasn't going to elope, whatever my reasons might be, and make a mess of it. I demanded the address of a lawyer, and excavated him. He promised to be at his office at 8 o'clock. With that we had to be content. There was no reason for apprehension. It wasn't likely that our disappearance would be discovered until breakfast-time. We repaired to the hotel, and ate and drank something in a state of suppressed nervous excitement. I confess to having been ashamed of myself. There I was, accoutred cap-à-pie from my bonnet to my claymore, and I had nothing at stake; and yet I was nervous! We were at the lawyer's on the stroke of 8, where we discovered that the Sheriff was a mere flourish, and that all we had to do was to consent to being married, and declare that we regarded ourselves as man and wife. A faint disgust at the prose of the proceedings induced me to elaborate them by taking out my dirk and kissing it, as a pledge of my faith. I never thought of kissing *her!*

It then transpired that the Sheriff had to have his little whack, after all, no less than an Armenian pimp. The marriage had to be registered in his office. We were completely at a loose end. I was to go back to Boleskine, of course, but there were some hours before the train started. She was to go back to Strathpeffer: but—at this moment, Gerald Kelly burst into the room, his pale face drawn with insane passion. He was probably annoyed at his stupidity

in not having realised that the announcement of our engagement, nineteen hours earlier, had been serious. On learning that we were already married, he aimed a violent blow at me. It missed me by about a yard. I am ashamed to say that I could not repress a quiet smile. If he had not been out of his mind, his action would have been truly courageous, for compared with me he was a shrimp ; and while I was one of the most athletic men in the country, his strength had been impaired by his sedentary stupor and loose living in Paris.

When he felt better, we decided to carry out the original programme. I went off to Boleskine, and she went back to Strathpeffer. I have frequently noticed that interference with my plans ensures their being carried out with exactitude.

In the meantime, however, Mr. Hill had arrived, panting like a parsnip robbed of its prey. He bleated out, after a brief invocation to the Woolsack, that the marriage was illegal and must be broken. Also may, might, would, could, should, and other auxiliary verbs. I yawned gracefully and left them to fight it out.

Rose stuck to her guns like the game little bitch she was. Mr. Hill made the discovery that he had not made the law, and Mrs. Kelly and Gerald that they had not made mankind. So the next move in the game was that I despatched Ludovic Cameron as embassador. It was the supreme moment in his life ! I was rather annoyed at being dragged into such a crazy controversy, and heartily wished to hear no more of the matter, but I had to dree my wierd.

It was arranged that Rose and I should go to the Sheriff and register our marriage, as we risked fine and imprisonment if we omitted to do so. We were then to drive together to

a wayside station, where we could take our own decision as to our future proceedings. Dingwall and Strathpeffer were of course seething with scandal. There were probably as many separate stories as there were inhabitants ; and the appearance of the Laird and his Bride on the platform of Dingwall might have been the signal for a demonstration to eclipse the Diamond Jubilee and the Relief of Mafeking.

So I returned to Strathpeffer, annoyed but amiable, had an interview with Mrs. Kelly, who played the part of the Aged Queen Bent Down By Sorrow to admiration, while I said all the necessary nonsense. We then repaired to the Sheriff's and were induced to swear the most formidable oaths ; about nothing in particular, but they apparently gratified the official instinct and filled the official coffer. Duncombe Jewell excelled himself. The ordinary oath was not for him. He produced a formula the majesty of which literally inhibited the normal functions of our minds. It was the finest piece of ritualistic rigmarole that I have ever heard in my life.

At the Sheriff's door we found the vehicle which was to take us to the wayside station. Rose and I got in, feeling as if we had been through a mangle ; but the sense of humour came most opportunely to our rescue. The vehicle chanced to resemble a prison van, and the circumstance tickled our imagination and helped to break down our embarrassment. But it was a frightfully long drive to the wayside station, and a frightfully long wait when we got there. I don't know whether it was part of the arrangement or not that we should take tickets to the end of the line, some place on the west coast of Scotland, the name of which I have entirely forgotten. But we did. We sat opposite to each other in an empty first class carriage.

I only remember one scrap of conversation, and I do not remember what it was except that it was a sort of little joke. We were enjoying a species of triumph at having "got away with it," but we were in exquisite embarrassment as to what to do—at least, I was. I have reason to suspect that Rose did not share my pathetic puerility. It never occurred to me that the programme I had planned had been in any way altered. Had we not carried it out with the most punctilious precision?

We arrived at our destination a little before dinner time. My embarrassment reached an acute point. It was simply impossible for me to register at the hotel. I confess to the most abject cowardice. I made some excuse and left Rose to confront a clerk, while I went to look at the sea and wish it weren't too cold to drown myself. I returned to find that she had booked a double room. I thought it was hardly playing the game; but I couldn't be rude to a lady, and at the worst, it was only a matter of a day or so. I could decently dispatch her from Boleskine to the embraces of Mr. Summers and proceed to

> "Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff."

It possibly crossed my mind that all these alarums and excursions were alien to Arahatship, that marriage was a nuisance to a man whose mind was set on success in Mahasatipatthana, and that the problems raised by Rose would be sent to sleep by Red-headed Arabella.

In any case, there was nothing for it but to behave like a gentleman. So we drank a lot of champagne for dinner.

We had been married on August 12th, and could give God glory for his good gift of grouse, and then—what's champagne for, anyhow? Rose retired immediately after dinner; I sat in the smoking-room and pole-axed a stranger by making mysterious remarks until he thought I was mad, and fled. I had some more champagne and remembered that I was a poet. I got some paper and wrote the following rondel. Damn it, I had to play up to my partner!

"Rose on the breast of the world of spring,
I press my breast against thy bloom;
My subtle life drawn out to thee; to thee
its moods and meanings cling.
I pass from change and thought to peace,
woven on love's incredible loom,
Rose on the breast of the world of spring!

How shall the heart dissolved in joy take
form and harmony and sing?
How shall the ecstacy of light fall back to
music's magic gloom?
O China rose without a thorn, O honey-bee
without a sting!

The scent of all thy beauty burns upon the
wind. The deep perfume
Of our own love is hidden in our hearts,
the invulnerable ring.
No man shall know. I bear thee down unto
the tomb, beyond the tomb,
Rose on the breast of the world of spring!"

I went upstairs.

I began to suspect the truth, that my absolute indifference

MY FIRST WIFE

to Rose, combined with my perfectly casual willingness to marry her in order to do her a service, as one might offer a stranger one's place in an omnibus, had purged her heart of its passion for the fat sensuality of Frank Summers, and hurled her head over heels in love with me.

We arrived at Boleskine, where I learnt that Red-headed Arabella was due to arrive at Inverness the following day. I blush to say that I didn't know quite what to do about it, and confided in Duncombe-Jewell. He rose to the occasion, and went to Inverness to head her off. It may seem incredible; but my reaction was one of sheer annoyance. I had no feeling for Red-headed Arabella; in point of fact, I had picked her for that very reason, and I was perfectly ready to relieve Rose from the tyranny of her family. But it was really asking rather too much when I had to upset my arrangements. I had not even yet suspected the truth that the fine flight of Rose's rapture was carrying me away on its wings. Her love for me was evoking my love for her, and I had rather made a point of contracting out of any such complications. I was prepared to propitiate physiology, but only on condition that the domain of psychology suffered no interference.

However, there I was, married to one of the most beautiful and fascinating women in the world. The love between us grew to the utmost possibilities of passion without my suspecting it. The Kellys had acquiesced in the *fait accompli*. The last little splutter was a letter from the Rev. Frederick Festus demanding that I should settle £10,000 on Rose. I might have done so had it not been for his pompous statement that the daughters of his house never married without a settlement. Considering that the very one whom I married myself had had no settlement at

her first marriage, the lie was a little blatant, even for a clergyman. I replied with appropriate decision; they abandoned the idea that I could be bullied, as they were accustomed to bully timid and servile people who could be bounced. I have never understood the quality of bluster with which some people seem to get right through the world. It must be so humiliating to be "called." I much prefer to put forward my weakness to induce the attack of the malicious, while I am lying in ambush with an overwhelming reinforcement.

The honeymoon was uninterrupted beatitude. Once, in the first three weeks or so, Rose took some trifling liberty; I recognised the symptoms, and turned her up and spanked her. She henceforth added the qualities of perfect wife to those of perfect mistress. Women, like all moral inferiors, behave well only when treated with firmness, kindness, and justice. They are always on the look-out to detect wavering or irritation in the master; and their one hope is to have a genuine grievance to hug.

When trouble is not suppressed permanently by a little friendly punishment, it is a sign that the virtue has gone out of the master. When the suffragette went from worse to worse and made severity itself inhuman and useless, it did not prove in the least that woman had altered from the days of the jungle, but that industrialism and piety had sapped the virtue of the male. Rome did not fall because the Germans and the Gauls had in any way improved; they were just the same, and could be beaten by the same tactics and weapons as in the earliest centuries. But Christianity had eaten the heart out of Rome. The manly virtues and the corresponding womanly virtues, one of which is recognition of the relation between the sexes, had

been corrupted by slave-morality. The England of Victoria, by bringing up the best stock in the country in the most favourable physical conditions, and teaching the boys from the start that they were brought into the world in order to rule it, produced a class of men who were like Old Testament heroes. (Under George III we had a rehearsal. Can it be that long prosperous reigns favour the production of such men? We had another crop under Elizabeth, when the restoration of the Abbeys to the people of England gave a chance to the development of a daring and dominant breed.) But the influences which are commonly called civilising attenuate the aristocratic spirit.

The existence of a common scold is a definite system of imminent death in any community. The Indian renegades, from Lajpat Rai to Gandhi, are merely evidence that the Sahib has given place to the competition-wala. India has not progressed in the last thousand years, and will not in the next thousand. The biological impulse is expended. India was nature's attempt to construct a nation of diverse elements by welding them in a religious and moral system. It might have succeeded had it been secure against invasion. But while India has always conquered her conquerors (imposing, for example, the caste system on the English), the invaders interfered with the process of growth, and diverted the national trend from unity.

A nation lives by its architecture; when it comes to consciousness of its soul, it feels that it has to build a house for that soul to live in. Such buildings must be utterly useless; the soul will not live in a Woolworth Building—that is inhabited by the unclean spirit whose name is Legion, and that is the evidence that America, with all its material

prosperity, has no soul. Nor is a man rich while he confines his purchases to things which are useful.

The love of my wife had made me the richest man on earth, and developed my human soul to its full stature. I could afford to build a temple to Love, and that of course had to be stupendous, useless, and immortal. I made one disconcerting discovery, though not till long afterwards; this: that erotic poetry does not spring from supreme satisfaction. Indeed, my life was a perfect lyric, and left no surplus energy to overflow into words. I wrote nothing. The temple had to be, as I have said, and I could only think of constructing a long beautiful objectless journey. As soon as the summer showed signs of waning, we started on a hypertrophied honeymoon. We pretended to ourselves that we were going big-game shooting in Ceylon and to pay a visit to Allan at Rangun (where he had now removed from Akyab), but the real object was to adorn the celebration of our love by setting it in a thousand suave and sparkling backgrounds. As my poetry had petered out, so had my Magick and my meditation. I let them go without a pang. I was supremely happy; love filled the universe; there was no room for anything else.

I had not kept a diary. Day followed day, each a fresh facet of the Diamond of Delight. All I remember is that we made our preparations in London, trying and buying guns, giving dinners, and so on. We dazzled Paris for a day or two, but not without one severe shock.

Rose and I were walking towards the Pont Alexandre III when I met Vestigia, as we always called Mrs. Mathers. I had not seen her for a long time, and we started an animated conversation. I noticed nothing peculiar. I do not live in the world of phenomena: I only visit it at rare

intervals. I had forgotten Rose's existence. When Vestigia had gone, I realised that I had not introduced her to my wife. She did not ask me who it was. I told her. "Oh," said she, "I thought it was some model that you knew in the old days."

The words came as a terrific shock. Vestigia had been our ideal of refinement, purity, spirituality and the rest. And then my mind informed me of what my eyes had seen, that Vestigia was painted thickly to the eyes—did I say painted? I mean plastered. Where the camouflage stopped, there was a neck which could not have been washed for months. I learnt later that Mathers, falling upon evil times, had forced his wife to pose naked in one of the Montmartre shows which are put on for the benefit of ignorant and prurient people, especially provincials and English, and that even that was not the worst of it.

Then we swooped down on Marseilles, perched on the terrace of Bertolini's at Naples and picked up a few crumbs. Our first breathing-place was Cairo. It was one of the extravagances of our passion that suggested our spending a night together in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid. It was the gesture of the male showing off his plumage. I wanted my wife to see what a great Magician I was. We went, accordingly, after dinner, with candles. More from habit than anything else, as I imagine, I had with me a small note book of Japanese Vellum in which were written my principal invocations, etc. Among these was a copy of the Preliminary Invocation of the Gœtia.

We reached the King's Chamber after dismissing the servants at the foot of the Grand Gallery. By the light of a single candle placed on the edge of the coffer I began to read the invocation. But as I went on I noticed that I

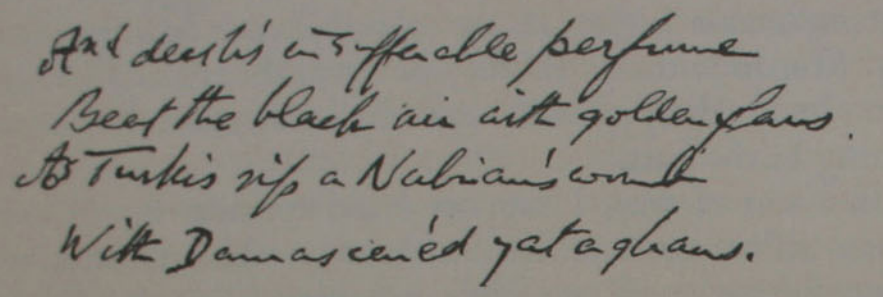
was no longer stooping to hold the page near the light. I was standing erect. Yet the manuscript was not less but more legible. Looking about me, I saw that the King's Chamber was glowing with a soft light which I immediately recognised as the astral light. I have been accustomed to describe the colour as ultra-violet, from its resemblance to those rays in the spectrum—which I happen to be able to distinguish. The range varies, but is quite noticeably beyond that visible to the normal human eye. The colour is not unlike that of an arc lamp ; it is definitely less coloured than the light of a mercury lamp. If I had to affix a conventional label, I should probably say pale lilac. But the quality of the light is much more striking than the colour. Here the word phosphorescence occurs to the mind. It is one of the mysteries of physics that the total light of the sky is very much greater than can be accounted for by the luminous bodies in the heavens. There are various theories, but I personally believe that the force now called radio-activity which we know to be possessed in some degree by every particle of matter, is responsible. Our eyes are affected with the impression of light by forces which are not in themselves recognised as luminous.

However, back to facts. The King's Chamber was aglow as if with the brightest tropical moonlight. The pitiful dirty yellow flame of the candle was like a blasphemy, and I put it out. The astral light remained during the whole of the invocation and for some time afterwards, though it lessened in intensity as we composed ourselves to sleep. For the rest, the floor of the King's Chamber is particularly uncompromising. In sleeping out on rocks, one can always accommodate oneself more or less to the

local irregularities, but the King's Chamber reminded me of " Brand " ; and I must confess to having passed a very uncomfortable night. I fear me dalliance had corrupted my Roman virtue. In the morning the astral light had completely disappeared, and the only sound was the flitting of the bats.

In a sort of way, I suppose I did consider myself rather a fine fellow to have been able to produce so striking a phenomenon with so little trouble. But it did not encourage me to go on with Magick. My wife was all in all.

STANZA XLVII



We must have had some vague idea of exploring the little known parts of China, for we had certainly intended to visit Allan in Rangun. It was probably at Colombo that Rose made up her mind that she was pregnant; for I remember that our shooting expedition in Hambantota, in the South-Eastern province of Ceylon, was *faute de mieux*. We thought we had better get back to Boleskine for the event; and yet we had to justify our journey by some definite accomplishment. So we left Colombo for Galle and thence up country. It is strange that I fail entirely to remember how we got to the jungle. But rough notes tell me that it was by coach, and that we left the base village in four bullock carts on Monday the 14th of December. I quote my entry of January 1st, 1904 (some lines are carefully erased. I cannot tell why, or imagine what I had written).

> "Jan. 1.
>
> "Began badly: missed deer and hare. So annoyed. Yet the omen is that the year is well for works of Love & Union; ill for those of Hate. Be mine of Love!"

This entry does not sound as if I were still wholly lunatic

in the rays of the honeymoon. The explanation is that the mere fact of getting back to camp life reawakened in me the old ambitions and interests. It may be part of my feeling for ritual that to put on certain types of clothes is to transform my state of mind. However lazy I may be, I have merely to change trousers for knickerbockers to feel athletic at once. There is also the point that I make a profession of virtue when reminded of certain dates, just as a totally irreligious man might go to church at Christmas. The subsequent entries give no hint that my mind was really turning to its ancient Masters. The sole entries concern sport and camp life ; and they are very meagre.

I have never been able to enjoy reading chronicles of slaughter, and I do not propose to inflict any such on the world. They are as monotonous and conventional as those of mountaineering. Sportsmen and climbers follow the fashion with frightful fidelity. Norman Collie wrote the only book on mountains which possesses any literary merit. Mummery's is good because he really had something to say, but his style shows the influence of Collie. Owen Glynne Jones produced a patent plagiarism of Mummery's style ; and when it came to the Brothers Abraham, the bottom was reached. And what a bottom ! In fact, two.

Of the older writers, Leslie Stephen is the only one worth mentioning, and to him mountaineering was of secondary interest. Tales of hunting, shooting, and fishing are equally tedious. They are only tolerable in fiction such as Mr. Jorrocks and the Pickwick Papers. Travellers having wider interests are more readable. Sir Richard Burton is a supreme master ; the greatest that ever took pen. He has not one dull paragraph. Cameron

and Mary Kingsley must not be forgotten for a *proxime accessit*.

Certain incidents of this shoot are worth passing notice. Rose had an attack of fever on the 7th of January. For the first time since my marriage I had a moment to spare from celebrations of Hymen. I sat at my camp table in my Col. Elliot's chair and wrote the poem "Rosa Mundi," the first for many months. I sing to her, recall the incidents of the birth of our love, hint at the prospect of its harvest, and weave the whole of the facts into a glowing tapestry of rapture. It was a new rhythm, a new rime. It marks a notable advance on any previous work for sustained sublimity.

Physically and morally, Rose exercised on every man she met a fascination which I have never seen anywhere else, not a fraction of it. She was like a character in a romantic novel, a Helen of Troy or a Cleopatra; yet, while more passionate, unhurtful. She was essentially a good woman. Her love sounded every abyss of lust, soared to every splendour of the Empyræan. Eckenstein adored her. When I published this poem, which I did privately under the pseudonym of D. H. Carr, from feelings of delicacy, Eckenstein was actually shocked. He did not care much for my poetry as a rule; but he thought Rosa Mundi the greatest love-lyric in the language. (As a cold fact, its only rival is Epipsychidion.) But he held it too sacred to issue. "It ought," he said, "to have been found among his papers after his death."

I can understand the sentiment of this view, but cannot share it. I wanted to make humanity holier and happier by putting into their hands the key of my own success.

And in my diary there is no allusion to the poem. (It

may in fact have been written during an earlier illness of Rose—on December 15th—but I don't think so, because I connect the inspiration with eating buffalo steak, and on the earlier date I was only eating snipe). I have only noted "Rose ill, one bloody birdling, bread arrived in P.M."

I am not by any means a mighty hunter before the Lord, but I am certainly very fond of big game shooting. I thoroughly enjoy the life which goes with it, and I like the high moments of excitement and danger; they atone for the tedium of the stalk. I have no use whatever for the *battue*, even if it is a matter of bears and tigers. As for grouse and pheasants, my pleasure in the exercise of my skill is marred by the subconscious feeling that I am dependent on others for my sport. Moreover, the element of combat is missing. I can get a great deal of amusement out of rough shooting for the pot; but artificiality of any kind is the very devil in sport. I do not even care for shooting from a *machan*. I like to be just one of the jungle folk and challenge any fellow animal I meet. I suppose that, logically, I should disdain the use of weapons. I never did.

My most amusing adventures have been always when I strolled alone into the jungle without trackers or bearers, met a boar, a bear, or a buffalo by chance or the exercise of native wit, and conquered him in single fight. My native servants used to be horrified at my proceedings, very much as orthodox mountaineers have been at my solitary climbs. They did not doubt my prowess with the rifle; they respected it because they understood it. But they had been accustomed to white men relying on them for light and leading, and they made sure that I should be hopelessly lost without them in the jungle. Perhaps the chief part of my

pleasure consisted in the problems presented by having to find my way home, very likely in the dark, after having pursued some quarry by a devious route, by virtue of my sense of direction, especially as impenetrable undergrowth, uncrossable patches of water, or marshes, may complicate matters very seriously.

The most dangerous animal in Ceylon (there are no tigers, and if there were, the statement would stand) is the buffalo. One can distinguish a wild from a tame buffalo by his psychology. If he is wild, he runs away ; if he is tame, he charges you. Yet these fanatical partisans of "Asia for the Asiatics" permit themselves to be ridden, cursed, and bullied by brats not six years old. The buffalo is always savage, and always intelligent enough to know who has wounded him. He is also infinitely courageous and vindictive. Many tigers will turn tail even when slightly but painfully wounded. But the buffalo never gives in morally or physically, and shows almost human powers of strategy and tactics in his vendetta. His vitality is incredible ; the gaur (a not dissimilar species) which killed Capt. Sayers in Burmah, had seventeen bullets from heavy rifles in him while he was goring and trampling the aggressor. The other Englishmen present could do nothing to save him.

One evening I shot a sambhur ; the great stag (miscalled elk) of Ceylon. He was standing some 300 yards away, across a small lagoon. He went off like a streak of lightning. It was impossible to follow him, and I thought I had missed him. But two days later I came on him by accident, twenty-five miles from where I had shot him. My bullet had penetrated the lungs and grazed the heart. I cannot help thinking that there is something in the apparently

absurd contention of certain Mystics that life does not depend wholly on the integrity of the physiological apparatus, but on the will to live. I have dropped the most powerful animals stone dead with a single shot in the right place ; but if that first shot happens not to kill him outright, he is so inflamed with fury that you can riddle him with bullets in the most vital spots without further disabling him. I know it sounds like utter nonsense, but I have seen it again and again. The sambhur above mentioned is only one case.

One day I was told of an exceptionally fine wild buffalo bull who was so lost to all principles of propriety that he used to come down every evening to enjoy a herd of tame cows. I felt that I could never face Exeter Hall* in the future if I allowed this sort of thing to go on. The only sign of grace in this bull was that he had a guilty conscience, and departed for the Ewigkeit at the first hint of human proximity. The cows were accustomed to feed in a wide flat country. It was impossible to approach them in the open. I crawled out to the edge of the jungle and lay low, hoping that they would come near enough for a shot. They did. But I misjudged the range ; and my bullet, by the most curious luck, pierced the near fore hoof of the bull. He made off indignantly for the jungle at a point some three or four hundred yards from my ambush.

Ten minutes later " I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," and looked around me " with a wild surmise." I knew where I had hit him by the way he limped, and that he was no more put out of action than Battling Siki, if I had trod on his pet corn. I knew that a buffalo bull can conceal himself in the Ceylon jungle as effectively as a bug in a

* At that time headquarters of Evangelicalism.

barracks, and I knew that he was perfectly informed of my character and intention. I knew that I was nervous by the way I gripped my rifle (my principal battery, by the way, was a 10-bore Paradox with lead and also steel core bullets, and a .577 Express, both double barrelled). As I stood, I realised for the first time the responsibility of the white man. I had to exhibit perfect *aplomb*. No sign of the bull!

Presently, the trackers found the trail. My bullet having pierced his hoof, there was no blood. The only signs of his passage were bruised and broken twigs, and occasional footprints. We came up with him pretty soon. He was standing stock still, listening for his life, with his back turned to us. I was not 30 yards away, and I aimed at the bull's eye—pardon the introduction of a euphemism from Ancient Egypt. It is the most effective shot possible. If your bullet rises, it will smash the spine; otherwise it must pass through the soft vital parts. But the bull merely bolted. I could not even fire my second barrel. Again and again we came up with him. The track was easy to follow. He was bleeding profusely and going slowly. Again and again I fired, but he always got away. Nothing seemed to cripple him, though one would have thought that he must have been more hole than bull by this time.

At last he turned at a small clearing. As I came out from the thick jungle, I saw him not 10 yards away. He lowered his head to charge. My bullet struck him again in the Ajna Cakkra, if a bull has such a thing; anyway, in the middle of the forehead just above the eyes. This time he dropped. It was my nineteenth bullet, and only the first had failed to strike him in a vital spot.

Talking of being charged: the one beast I really fear is the leopard. The tiger gives one a chance, but the *Chita*

is like an arrow ; he is practically invisible as a mark, and one feels that it is impossible either to stop him or get out of his way. He is hard enough to see at any time ; but end on in dim thick undergrowth, he is the limit. I feel, too, that his anger is mean and ignoble, and I have never been able to oppose this type of attack. I can respect the rage of the tiger, but the hatred of the leopard is somehow servile and venomous. The bear is a deadly enemy if he gets to grips, and he is nearly as hard to kill as the buffalo. One feels, too, rather sorry to kill a bear ; one can never forget that he is at heart a friendly fluffy comfortable brute.

The wild boar, which one may shoot in Ceylon, as pig-sticking is impossible owing to the nature of the country, is a furious and dangerous quarry, but it gives one a peculiar satisfaction to out him, to stand

> " Right in the wild way of the coming curse
> Rock-rooted fair with fierce and fastened lips,
> Clear eyes, and springing muscle and shortening limb—
> With chin aslant indrawn to a tightening throat,
> Grave, and with gathered sinews like a God,"

and biff him

> " Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide
> Under the last rib, sheer through bulk and bone
> Deep in——"

and see

> " The blind bulk of the immeasurable beast
> . . . . bristling with intolerable hair "

lying in front of one, and feel that one has done a good turn to Venus.

One of my boars, by the way, gave me a lesson in

literature. I came across his body two days after the battle, and it hit me in the eye—to say nothing of the nose—with Baudelaire's " Charogne."

" Beside the path, an infamous foul carrion,
Stones for its couch a fitting sheet.

Its legs stretched in the air, like wanton whores
Burning with lust, and reeking venom sweated,
Laid open, carelessly and cynically, the doors
Of belly rank with exhalations fœtid.

Upon this rottenness the sun shone deadly straight
As if to cook it to a turn,
And give back to great Nature hundred-fold the debt
That, joining it together, she did earn.

The sky beheld this carcase most superb outspread
As spreads a flower, itself, whose taint
Stank so supremely strong, that on the grass your head
You thought to lay, in sudden faint.

The flies swarmed numberless on this putrescent belly,
Whence issued a battalion
Of larvæ, black, that flowed, a sluggish liquid jelly,
Along this living carrion.

All this was falling, rising as the eager seas,
Or heaving with strange crepitation——"

There was an utterly unspeakable fascination in watching the waves of maggots. The surface undulated with the peculiar rhythm of the ocean.

To Baudelaire, as we know, a similar sight suggested his " Inamorata." I was presumably too blindly in love with Rose to see the resemblance ; the main impression on my mind was more impersonally philosophical. I thought of

the 13th key of the Tarot, of the sign of Scorpio, the invincible persistence of life perpetuating itself by means of that very putrefaction which seems to shallow minds the star witness against it. Here were vermin feeding on corruption, yet the effect was of lambent vibrations of white brilliance, disporting themselves in the sunlight—here, quit! Am I a sportsman describing his heroic feats, or am I not?

The elephant, "the half reasoner with the hand," is in an entirely different category from any other animal. I felt much more like a murderer when potting a hathi than when it is a monkey, though I perfectly understood the emotion of the average Englishman in this conjuncture. Nor is the elephant easy to shoot. The odds against hitting him in the vital spot are very great; and strange as it may sound, in country like Hambantota, he is very difficult to see at all. In the whole province there are really very few trees of notable stature, yet the undergrowth (including smaller trees) is so thick and so high that it is rarely possible to see an animal even when one is close to him. I remember once being so near to an elephant that I could have prodded him with a salmon rod; but I could not see one inch of all his acres. He was feeding on small twigs; I could hear every gentle snap; I could hear his breathing; I could smell him. If he had taken it into his head to turn or if the wind had shifted, my number would have been up. He could have trampled his way to and over me without an effort, while I could not have forced my way to him in five minutes. He went off quietly, and I never had a chance for a shot.

One elephant whose track I followed took the camp of a Frenchman in his morning stroll. The man's wife had taken him out to Ceylon to keep him away from alcohol,

but Prohibition forgot the proverb "Out of the frying-pan into the fire." The elephant got him before I got the elephant.

One of our most beautiful camps was in a sort of dak baghla near the shores of a superb lake. Open on its principal arc, the further shore merged into marshes. In the shallow waters at the edge grew magnificent trees whose branches were festooned with legions of flying foxes, as they call the species of bat whose breast is furred with marvellous red and white. I thought I would kill a few dozen, and make my wife a toque and myself a waistcoat. We went out in a boat not unlike a clumsy variety of punt to catch them in their sleep. They keep no guard; but at the first gunshot they awake, and the air literally becomes dark with their multitude. One has merely to fire into the mass. One of the bats, wounded, fell right on my wife and frightened her. It may have been 30 seconds before I could detach her from his claws. I thought nothing of the matter; but it is possible that her condition aggravated the impression. Our beds in the baghla were furnished with four stout uprights and a frame for mosquito curtains. I suppose in so remote a district they had been made of unusually strong poles. I was awakened in the dead of night by the squeal of a dying bat.

I remember debating whether I was in fact awake or not, whether the noise, which was horribly persistent, might not be part of a dream evoked by the events of the day. I even called to Rose to resolve my doubts. She did not answer. I lighted the candle. She was not there. My alarm completed my awakening. The bat squalled hideously. I looked up. I could not see any bat. But there was Rose, stark naked, hanging to the frame with

arms and legs, insanely yawling. It was quite a job to pull her down. She clung to the frame desperately, still squealing. She refused utterly to respond to the accents of the human voice. When I got her down at last, she clawed and scratched and bit and spat and squealed, exactly as the dying bat had done to her. It was quite a long time before I got her back to her human consciousness.

It was the finest case of obsession that I had ever had the good fortune to observe. Of course it is easy to explain that in her hypersensitive condition the incident of the day had reproduced itself in a dream. She had identified herself with her assailant, and mimicked his behaviour. But surely, if there be anything in Sir William Hamilton's Law of Parsimony, it is much simpler to say that the spirit of the bat had entered into her.

(As I revise these pages for the press, I find myself constantly annoyed by having to try to find long roundabout "rational" explanations for all the wonders I have seen and heard. It is silly, too, now that we are getting clear at last of the obsession of Victorian cocksure materialism—Science disguised as a fat hausfrau !)

STANZA XLVIII

Or trousers, petticoats, or tights
Hide what makes honest men turn sodomites.
The Colt and the Gal.

Life in the jungle has many incidents of a more frequent and less amusing type. One night, also in a baghla, I got up to get Rose her medicine. I had left the candle on the table some distance from the beds, which was foolish. On lighting it, I discovered without enthusiasm that between me and the bed was a krait some 18 inches long—and I had walked barefoot over him! A krait can kill you in a very few minutes, though not without producing symptoms of the utmost interest to any serious student of nature. I was entirely helpless; I was reduced to the ignominious expedient of getting on the table and calling to the servants outside to bring a lamp, precaution, and *force majeure*.

Animals are not the only danger of this district. There are many dangerous diseases, especially tetanus. While I was in Calcutta, an acquaintance of mine, walking home from the theatre, slipped and saved himself by putting his hands to the ground. He scratched himself slightly, and died within three days.

There are also terrible thorns. My head tracker came to me one day with one in his foot. The end was protruding, and I imagined that I should have no difficulty in pulling it out with forceps. But the thorn was soft as pith.

I had to cut open the man's sole along the whole length of the thorn, 7 3/4 inches. His skin was as tough as raw-hide, the epidermis a quarter of an inch thick. The thorn had not reached the dermis. It seemed miraculous that it should have penetrated a hide that came near to turn the edge of my surgical knife.

The heaviest weapon and the truest eye and hand may sometimes fail to account for the smallest of God's creatures. I could not understand why my 10-bore Paradox seemed so ineffective against small birds. One day I came across a rat-snake, 19 feet long, and said, "This time I will bruise your head and I bet you don't bruise my heel." I was within a few yards of him, and fired several times. He moved off with leisurely disgust; he could not imagine what my game could be. Why had I disturbed his sleep? I followed, protesting with further drum-fire. He moved lazily beyond the barrage. I am a patient man; but the conduct of this snake insulted and humiliated me. One of the men, his sensitive oriental spirit doubtless observing my distress, went forward and knocked him on the head with a stick. Theoretically, he should have been as full of holes as a lace fichu; but there wasn't a mark on him. It dawned slowly upon my mind that there must be something wrong with my cartridges. When we got to camp, I put up the lid of an old box and fired at it from 10 yards, in order to test the penetration of the shot. The pellets did not mark the board; they bounced back and hit me in the face. I reserved my remarks for my return to Colombo.

This event took place on the 16th of January. My headman had swindled me outrageously; but there was no remedy. There is no remedy for anything in Ceylon.

The whole island is an infamy. It is impossible to get twelve Singalese to agree on any subject whatever, so a majority decision determines the verdict of a jury of seven! Justice is usually done, because it really is the case that the man with the more money is less often wrong than his opponent.

A very curious episode sticks in my memory. General Sir Hector MacDonald was born in a croft on the hillside facing Boleskine across Loch Ness. I consequently took, unasked, an almost paternal interest in his career.

I dropped into the Hotel Regina in Paris one day to lunch. At the next table, also alone, was Sir Hector MacDonald. He recognised me and invited me to join him. He seemed unnaturally relieved; but his conversation showed that he was suffering acute mental distress. He told me that he was on his way to the East. Of course I avoided admitting that I knew his object, which was to defend himself against charges of sexual irregularity brought against him in Ceylon.

The next morning I was amazed to read, in the New York Herald, an outrageously outspoken account of the affair.* On the heels of this came the news that MacDonald had shot himself in the Regina. He was a great simple lion-hearted man with the spirit of a child; with all his experience in the Army, he still took the word honour seriously, and the open scandal of the accusation had struck down his standard.

One incredible detail must be told. The Hotel communicated at once with the British Embassy, and the Attaché who went down to see the body told Gerald Kelly

* People said: the revenge of a Ceylon Big Bug, whom MacDonald had ordered off the field at some Jamboree when he had turned up in mufti.

that MacDonald's pockets were stuffed with obscene photographs! Enquiry showed that he had gone out and bought them that very morning, apparently with no other purpose. The psychology is appallingly obscure. Was his motive to convey some subtly offensive insult to the Puritans whose prurience had destroyed him?

So much is in part hearsay and conjecture. What follows is wholly fact. I was sitting at lunch in the Grand Oriental Hotel at Colombo when a procession filed into the room. I have never seen anything quite like it. It was utterly out of the picture. It was composed of genuine antiques with shaking hands, stooping shoulders, slobbering jaws from which hung long white goatish beards, and bleared red eyes that blinked even in the twilight of the luncheon as if the very idea of sunlight was an infernal terror.

I called on the Khansamah to tell me if I was suffering from delirium tremens. He told me no; what I saw was really there, and it was some kind of committee from Scotland, and that was all he knew. After lunch I discovered that the Great Heart of Scotland refused to admit that any member of the Kirk could have acquiesced in the amenities of the Anglican Clergy. The elders had therefore sent out a committee to vindicate the innocence of MacDonald. I could no less in courtesy than make them feel more at home in Ceylon by revealing myself as an Inverness Laird. They opened their hearts to me; they were already discouraged. They told me that the prosecution had the affidavits of no less than seventy-seven native witnesses. "Ah well," I said. "You don't know much of Ceylon. If there were seven times seventy-seven, I wouldn't swing a cat on their dying oaths. The

more unanimous they are, the more it is certain that they have been bribed to lie." I am really glad to think I cheered the old boys up; and I hope that they succeeded in fixing their hero with a halo, though I never heard what happened.

I always hated Colombo. My diary reads "Weariness. Dentist." "More weariness and more dentist." "Throat XOP." "Doctor." "Oh sabbé pi dukkham." "Colombo more and more loathsome. Went up to Kandy."

Kandy cured my symptoms instantly. The most dreadful thing about Colombo was that two English ladies had descended upon the Galle Face Hotel. They would have seemed extravagant at Monte Carlo; in Ceylon the heavily painted faces, the over-tended dyed false hair, the garish flashy dresses, the loud harsh foolish gabble, the insolent ogling, was an outrage. The daughter wore a brooch of what may have been diamonds. It was about five inches across, and the design was a coronet and the name Mabel. I have never seen anything in such abominable taste, and anyhow, I wouldn't call a trained flea Mabel, if I respected it.

The intensity of my repulsion makes me suspect that I wanted to make love to her, and was annoyed that I was already in love. The Gospels do not tell us whether the man who possessed the pearl of great price ever had moments of regret at having given up imitation jewellery. One always subconsciously connects notoriously vile women who flaunt their heartless and sexless seduction with the possibility of some supremely perverse pleasure in nastiness. However, my surface reaction was to shake the dust of Colombo from my feet, and to spend my two days in Kandy in writing "Why Jesus Wept."

The title is a direct allusion to the ladies in question. I prefaced the play with five dedications to (1) Christ, (2) Lady Scott, (3) My Friends (Jinawaravansa, whom I had met once more in Galle, and myself), (4) my unborn child, and (5) Mr. G. K. Chesterton. (He had written a long congratulatory criticism of my "Soul of Osiris.") The idea of the play is to show a romantic boy and girl ambushed and ruined by male and female vampires. It is an allegory of the corrupting influence of society, and the moral is given in the final passage :

> "I much prefer—that is, mere I—
> Solitude to Society.
> And that is why I sit and spoil
> So much clean paper with such toil
> By Kandy Lake in far Ceylon.
> I have my old pyjamas on :
> I shake my soles from Britain's dust ;
> I shall not go there till I must ;
> And when I must!—I hold my nose.
> Farewell, you filthy-minded people!
> I know a stable from a steeple.
> Farewell, my decent-minded friends!
> I know arc lights from candle-ends.
> Farewell—a poet begs your alms,
> Will walk awhile among the palms,
> An honest love, a loyal kiss,
> Can show him better worlds than this ;
> Nor will he come again to yours
> While he knows champak-stars from sewers."

(This play has been analysed in such detail by Capt. J. F. C. Fuller in "The Star from the West" that it would be impertinent of me to discuss it further.)

Rose now felt fairly certain that she was pregnant. But it was not this alone that decided us to turn our faces to the West. We still intended to go to Rangun, and apparently there was absolutely nothing to stop us. But we couldn't go, any more than if it had been the moon. Throughout my life I have repeatedly found that destiny is an absolutely definite and inexorable ruler. Physical ability and moral determination count for nothing. It is impossible to perform the simplest act when the Gods say "No." I have no idea how they bring pressure to bear on such occasions; I only know that it is irresistible. One may be wholeheartedly eager to do something which is as easy as falling off a log; and yet it is impossible.

We left Colombo for Aden, Suez, and Port Said on January 28th, intending to see a little of the season in Cairo, of which we had the most delightful memories, and then to sail for England, Home, and Beauty. I had not the slightest idea that I was on the brink of the only event of my life which has made it worth living.

The voyage was as uneventful as most similar voyages are. The one item of interest is that one of our fellow passengers was Dr. Henry Maudsley. This man, besides being one of the three greatest alienists in England, was a profound philosopher of the school which went rather further than Spencer in the direction of mechanical automatism. He fitted in exactly. He was the very man I wanted. We talked about Dhyana. I was quite sure that the attainment of this state, and *à fortiori* of Samadhi, meant that they remove the inhibitions which repress the manifestations of genius, or (practically the same thing in other words) enable one to tap the energy of the Universe.

Now, Samadhi, whatever it is, is at least a state of mind exactly as are deep thought, anger, sleep, intoxication, and melancholia. Very good. Any state of mind is accompanied by corresponding states of the body. Lesions of the substance of the brain, disturbances of the blood supply, and so on, are observed in apparently necessary relation to these spiritual states. Furthermore, we already know that certain spiritual or mental conditions may be induced by acting on physico- and chemico-physiological conditions. For instance, we can make a man hilarious, angry, or what not by giving him whiskey. We can induce sleep by administering such drugs as Veronal. We can even give him the courage of anæsthesia (if we want him to go over the top) by means of ether, cocaine and so on. We can produce fantastic dreams by hashish, hallucinations of colour by Anhalonium Lewinii; we can even make him "see stars" by the use of a sandbag. Why then should we not be able to devise some pharmaceutical, electrical, or surgical method of inducing Samadhi; create genius as simply as we do other kinds of specific excitement? Morphine makes men holy and happy in a negative way; why should there not be some drug which will produce the positive equivalent?

The Mystic gasps with horror, but we really can't worry about him. It is he that is blaspheming nature by postulating discontinuity in Her processes. Admit that Samadhi is *sui generis*, and back comes the whole discarded humbug of the supernatural. I was back at the old bench exploring the pharmacopæia for the means of grace, as I had done with Allan long ago; but I had come back to the problem armed in the panoply of the positive natural philosophy of modern science. Huxley had vindicated the alchemists.

There was nothing impossible or immoral about the Stone of the Wise and the Elixir of Life. Maudsley—rather to my surprise—agreed with all these propositions, but could not suggest any plausible line of research.

I have made rather a point of mentioning these conversations, because they show that in February, 1904, I was an absolutely sceptical rationalistic thinker. The point is that the events of March and April were not in the normal course of the life of a consistent mystic and magician. There was no tendency on my part to accept "divine" interference in my affairs. There was, on the contrary, the bitterest opposition from me. I even went so far as to make unintelligible and false additions to my diary, with the deliberate intention of confusing the record, and perhaps even of making people think me untrustworthy in this stupendous circumstance.

But the Gods beat me all round. They took care that the event should not depend on my good-will; should be beyond the power of my ill-will to thwart. More yet; they have made it evident that they purposely smashed my career as mystic and magician in the very hour of my success, when the world was at my feet, in order that they might the more utterly demonstrate their power to use me for their own purposes.

We landed at Port Said on Monday, February the 8th, and went to Cairo on the following day. It was part of the plan of the Gods that my romantic passion and pride, the intoxicated infatuation of my hymeneal happiness, should have induced me to play a puerile part on the world's stage. I had called myself Count Svareff and Aleister MacGregor for quite definite and legitimate reasons; but I had never made a deliberate fool of myself

by assuming an absurd alias. I was not for a moment deceived by my own pretext that I wanted to study Mohammedism, and in particular the mysticism of the Fakir, the Darwesh, and the Sufi, from within, when I proposed to pass myself off in Egypt for a Persian prince with a beautiful English wife. I wanted to swagger about in a turban with a diamond aigrette and sweeping silken robes or a coat of cloth of gold, with a jewelled talwar by my side, and two gorgeous runners to clear the way for my carriage through the streets of Cairo.

There was no doubt a certain brooding of the Holy Spirit of Magick upon the still waters of my soul; but there is little evidence of its operation. I have never lost sight of the fact that I was in some sense or other The Beast 666. There is a mocking reference to it in "Ascension Day," lines 98 to 111. "The Sword of Song" bears the sub-title "Called by Christians the Book of the Beast." The wrapper of the original edition has on the front a square of nine 6s. and the back another square of sixteen Hebrew letters, being a (very clumsy) transliteration of my name so that its numerical value should be 666. When I went to Russia to learn the language for the Diplomatic Service, my mother half believed that I had "gone to see Gog and Magog" (who were supposed to be Russian giants) in order to arrange the date of the Battle of Armageddon.

In a way, my mother was insane, in the sense that all people are who have water-tight compartments to the brain, and hold with equal passion incompatible ideas, and hold them apart lest their meeting should destroy both. One might say that we are all insane in this sense; for,

ultimately, any two ideas are incompatible. Nay, more, any one idea is incompatible with itself, for it contains in itself its own contradiction. (The proof of this thesis will be given in the proper place.)

But my mother believed that I was actually the Anti-christ of the Apocalypse and also her poor lost erring son who might yet repent and be redeemed by the Precious Blood.

I conclude my allusion to 666 :—

> "Ho! I adopt the number. Look
> At the quaint wrapper of this book!
> I will deserve it if I can :
> It is the number of a Man."

I had thus dismissed my mystical fancies about the number ; I accepted it for purely moral reasons and on purely rationalistic grounds. I wanted to be a man in the sense in which the word is used by Swinburne in his "Hymn of Man."

Having to choose a Persian name, I made it Chioa Khan (pronounced Hiwa Kahn) being the Hebrew for The Beast. (Khan is one of the numerous honorifics common in Asia.) I had no conscious magical intention in doing so. (Let me here mention that I usually called my wife Ouarda, one of the many Arabic words for Rose.)

As to my study of Islam, I got a Sheikh to teach me Arabic and the practices of ablution, prayer and so on, so that at some future time I might pass for a Moslem among themselves. I had it in my mind to repeat Burton's journey to Mecca sooner or later. I learnt a number of

chapters of the Qu'ran by heart. I never went to Mecca, it seemed rather *vieux jeu*, but my ability to fraternise fully with Mohammedans has proved of infinite use in many ways.

My Sheikh was profoundly versed in the mysticism and magic of Islam, and discovering that I was an Initiate, had no hesitation in providing me with books and manuscripts on the Arabic Qabalah. These formed the basis of my comparative studies. I was able to fit them in with similar doctrines and other religions; the correlation is given in my "*777*."

From this man I learnt also many of the secrets of the Sidi Aissawa; how to run a stiletto through one's cheek without drawing blood, lick red-hot swords, eat live scorpions, etc. (Some of these feats are common conjurors' tricks, some depend on scientific curiosities, but some are genuine magick; that is, the scientific explanation is not generally known. More of this later.)

I was quite fixed in scepticism, as I have always been, but also in so-called rationalism, and I prosecuted these studies in a strictly scholarly spirit. I worked very hard at them and made great progress accordingly; but my true life was still the honeymoon, slightly diluted by the ordinary pleasures of sport and society. I relapsed into golf after some fourteen years total abstinence; took a few lessons from the Pro at the Turf Club, and found that my St. Andrew's swing and the canniness inculcated by Andrew Kirkcaldy made a fine basis for playing a fairly decent game. We went to Helwan on February 19th; and I played nearly every day, filled with a passionate ambition to become amateur champion. I had picked up my old form so rapidly that I imagined myself a heaven-born golfer.

But the game held its own. I never even got to Scratch.

I did a certain amount of pigeon-shooting at odd times. I had practiced a good deal with clay pigeons at Boleskine, and become a really first-class shot. I was also quite good at wild pigeons ; but for some reason, trapped pigeons were quite beyond me. I dare not boast that I am even second-rate.

One day I joined a party of three to shoot quail, which I recall on account of a singular accident. I was in the middle of the line. A bird got up and flew between me and the man on my right ; but I withheld my fire for fear of hitting him. We swung round again ; another bird came in the same direction and suddenly dodged and passed on the right. The end man fired. There was a howl. I, having turned to watch the bird, saw the accident clearly. A native had risen from the ground at the moment of the shot. My friend swore that he had not seen him, and I had not seen him myself until I heard him. There was no cover. It seems incredible that my friend at least should not have seen him, for he must have only just missed walking over him, the man being slightly behind our line when the shot was fired. And he was so close to the gun that the shot had not begun to scatter when it struck him. It had cut a clean narrow groove in the man's shaved scalp, not even laying bare the bone.

I mention this incident, not only on account of its extraordinary features, but to compare it with the " horrors of Denshawai." The spirit of the natives was entirely friendly. Our administration of Egypt was characterised by paternal firmness ; everyone was in the right, everyone

respected himself and others ; no one complained. Yet, within three years, our prestige had been completely destroyed by the Intelligentsia of England—everyone was in the wrong, no one respected himself or anyone else, and everyone complained.

I have dwelt on the character of my life at this time in order to emphasise that the Event to be recorded in the next volume was an absolute bolt from the blue.

END OF VOLUME II

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ERRATA NOTE TO VOL. II.

Some of the smaller illustrations in this volume are reproduced *in reverse* from left to right, being taken from stereoscopic slides. This should be noted particularly in the picture of Chogo Ri opposite p. 180, where the slope of the mountain is shown on the wrong side.