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BOOK IXCHAPTER ONE

AB - UL - DIZ

That fertile passage through Paris on my return from Chogo Ri which had already borne so much fruit in my life, had still some seed - which now came to harvest. I have mentioned Nina Olivier, whom I loved so well and sang so passionately. In my sunlight she had blossomed into La Dame de Montparno, the Queen of the Quarter. But I have not mentioned an obscure prig whom I will call Monet-Knott, whom I had met through my fiancée, the "Star" to Nina's "Garter." This brainless and conceited youth had become accompanist to the greatest dancer of her generation. Let me call her Lavinia King. She, first and never equalled, had understood and demonstrated the art of dancing as a complete language of the affections of the mind and heart. Knott and Nina, as already recorded, had contracted a liaison. I met Knott for the second time when I was introduced to Fenella Lovell and wrote The Ghouls, as previously related. I saw a fair amount of him in the next few weeks; so that, running across him in London on October 11th, he took me after supper to the Savoy to meet Miss King.¹

1. This incident and its sequel are described in The Net, Chapter One.

A boisterous party was in progress. The dancer's lifelong friend, whom I will call by the name she afterwards adopted, Soror Virakam, was celebrating her birthday. This lady, a magnificent specimen of mingled Irish and Italian blood, possessed a most powerful personality and a terrific magnetism which instantly attracted my own. I forgot everything. I sat on the floor like a Chinese God, exchanging electricity with her.

After some weeks' preliminary skirmishing, we joined battle along the whole front; that is to say, I crossed to Paris, where she had a flat, and carried her off to Switzerland to spend the winter skating. Arrived at Interlaken, we found that Murren was not open, so we went on to St. Moritz, breaking the journey at Zurich. This town is so hideous and depressing that we felt that our only chance of living through the night was to get superbly drunk, which we did.....

(Let me emphasize that this wild adventure had not the remotest connection with Magick. Virakam was utterly ignorant of the subject. She had hardly so much as a smattering of Christian Science. She had never attended a séance, or played Planchette.)

.....Lassati sed non Satiati by midnight, I expected

to sleep; but was aroused by Virakam being apparently seized with a violent attack of hysteria, in which she poured forth a frantic torrent of senseless hallucination. I was irritated and tried to calm her. But she insisted that her experience was real; that she bore an important message to me from some invisible individual. Such nonsense increased my irritation. But - after about an hour of it - my jaw fell with astonishment. I became suddenly aware of a coherence in her ravings, and further that they were couched in my own language of symbols. My attention being thus awakened, I listened to what she was saying. A few minutes convinced me that she was actually in communication with some Intelligence who had a message for me.

Let me briefly explain the grounds for this belief. I have already set forth, in connection with the Cairo Working, some of the safeguards which I habitually employ. Virakam's vision contained elements perfectly familiar to me. This was clear proof that the man in her vision, whom she called Ab-ul-Diz, was acquainted with my system of hieroglyphics, literal and numerical, and also with some incidents in my Magical career. Virakam herself certainly knew nothing of any of these. Ab-ul-Diz told us to call

him a week later, when he would give further information. We arrived at St. Moritz and engaged a suite in the Palace Hotel.

My first surprise was to find that I had brought with me exactly those Magical Weapons which were suitable for the work proposed, and no others. But a yet more startling circumstance was to come. For the purposes of the Cairo Working, Ouarda and I had bought two abbai; one, scarlet, for me; one, blue, for her. I had brought mine to St. Moritz; the other was of course in the possession of Ouarda. Imagine my amazement when Virakam produced from her trunk a blue abbaï so like Ouarda's that the only differences were minute details of the gold embroidery! The suggestion was that the Secret Chiefs, having chosen Ouarda as Their messenger, could not use anyone else until she had become irrevocably disqualified by insanity. Not till now could her place be taken by another; and that Virakam should possess a duplicate of her Magical Robe seemed a strong argument that she had been consecrated by Them to take the place of her unhappy predecessor.

She was very unsatisfactory as a clairvoyant; she resented these precautions. She was a quick-tempered and impulsive woman, always eager to act with reckless enthusiasm.

My cold scepticism no doubt prevented her from doing her best. Ab-ul-Diz himself constantly demanded that I should show "faith," and warned me that I was wrecking my chances by my attitude. I prevailed upon him, however, to give adequate proof of his existence and his claim to speak with authority. The main purport of his message was to instruct me to write a book on my system of Mysticism and Magick, to be called "Book 4", and told me that by means of this book, I should prevail against public neglect. I saw no objection to writing such a book; on quite rational grounds, it was a proper course of action. I therefore agreed to do so. But Ab-ul-Diz was determined to dictate the conditions in which the book should be written; and this was a difficult matter. He wanted us to travel to an appropriate place. On this point I was not wholly satisfied with the result of my cross-examination. I know now that I was much to blame throughout. I was not honest either with him, myself, or Virakam. I allowed material considerations to influence me, and I clung - oh triple fool! - to my sentimental obligations towards Laylah.

We finally decided to do what he asked, though part of my objection was founded on his refusal to give us

absolutely definite instructions. However, we crossed the Passes in a sleigh to Chiavenna, whence we took the train to Milan. In this city we had a final conversation with Ab-ul-Diz. I had exhausted his patience, as he mine, and he told us that he would not visit us any more. He gave us his final instructions. We were to go to Rome and beyond Rome, though he refused to name the exact spot. We were to take a villa and there write Book 4. I asked him how we might recognize the right villa. I forget what answer he gave through her, but for the first time he flashed a message directly into my own consciousness. "You will recognize it beyond the possibility of doubt or err," he told me. With this, a picture came into my mind of a hill-side on which were a house and garden marked by two tall Persian Nuts.

The next day we went on to Rome. Owing to my own Ananias-like attempt to "keep back part of the price," my relations with Virakam had become strained. We reached Naples after two or three quarrelsome days in Rome and began house-hunting. I imagined that we should find dozens of suitable places to choose from, but we spent day after day scouring the city and suburbs in an automobile, without

finding a single place to let that corresponded in the smallest degree with our ideas.

Virakam's brat - a most god-forsaken lout - was to join us for the Christmas holidays, and on the day he was due to arrive we motored out as a forlorn hope to Posilippo before meeting him at the station at 4 o'clock or thereabouts. But the previous night Virakam had a dream in which she saw the desired villa with absolute clearness. (I had been careful to say nothing to her about the Persian Nuts, so as to have a weapon against her in case she insisted that such and such a place was the one intended.)

After a fruitless search we turned our automobile towards Naples, along the crest of Posilippo. At one point there is a small side lane scarcely negotiable by motor, and indeed hardly perceptible, as it branches from the main road so as to form an acute-angled "Y" with the foot towards Naples. But Virakam sprang excitedly to her feet, and told the chauffeur to drive down it. I was astonished, she being hysterically anxious to meet the train, and our time being already almost too short. But she swore passionately that the villa was down that lane. The road became constantly rougher and narrower. After some time, it came out

on the open slope; a low stone parapet on the left protecting it. Again she sprang to her feet. "There," she cried, pointing with her finger, "is the Villa I saw in my dream!" I looked. No villa was visible. I said so. She had to agree; yet stuck to her point that she saw it. I subsequently returned to that spot and found that a short section of wall, perhaps 15 feet of narrow edge of masonry, is just perceptible through a gap in the vegetation.

We drove on; we came to a tiny piazza, on one side of which was a church. "That is the square and the church," she exclaimed, "that I saw in my dream!"

We drove on. The lane became narrower, rougher, and steeper. Little more than 100 yards ahead it was completely "up," blocked with heaps of broken stone. The chauffeur protested that he would be able neither to turn the car nor to back it up to the square. Virakam, in a violent rage, insisted on proceeding. I shrugged my shoulders. I had got accustomed to these typhoons.

We drove on a few yards. Then the chauffeur made up his mind to revolt, and stopped the car. On the left was a wide open gate through which we could see a gang of workmen engaged in pretending to repair a ramshackle villa. Virakam

called the foreman and asked in broken Italian if the place was to let. He told her no; it was under repair. With crazy confidence she dragged him within and forced him to show her over the house. I sat in resigned disgust, not deigning to follow. Then my eyes suddenly saw down the garden, two trees close together. I stooped. Their tops appeared. They were Persian Nuts! The stupid coincidence angered me, and yet some irresistible instinct compelled me to take out my note book and pencil and jot down the name written over the gate - Villa Caldarazzo. Idly, I added up the letters - . Their sun struck me like a bullet in my brain. It was 418, the number of the Magical Formula of the Aeon, a numerical hieroglyph of the Great Work. - Ab-ul-Diz had made no mistake. My recognition of the right place was not to depend on a mere matter of trees, which might be found almost anywhere. Recognition beyond all possibility of doubt was what he promised. He had been as good as his word.

I was entirely overwhelmed. I jumped out of the car and ran up to the house. I found Virakam in the main room. The instant I entered I understood that it was entirely suited for a temple. The walls were decorated with crude frescoes

which somehow suggested the exact atmosphere proper to the Work. The very shape of the room seemed somehow significant. Further, it seemed as if it were filled with a peculiar emanation. This impression must not be dismissed as sheer fancy. Few men but are sufficiently sensitive to distinguish the spiritual aura of certain buildings. It is impossible not to feel reverence in certain cathedrals and temples. The most ordinary dwelling-houses often possess an atmosphere of their own; some depress, some cheer; some disgust, others strike chill to the heart.

Virakam of course was entirely certain that this was the villa for us. Against this was the positive statement of the people in charge that it was not to be let. We refused to accept this assertion. We took the name and address of the owner, dug him out, and found him willing to give us immediate possession at a small rent. We went in on the following day, and settled down almost at once to consecrate the Temple and begin the book.

The idea was as follows. I was to dictate; Virakam to transcribe, and if at any point there appeared the slightest obscurity - obscurity from the point of view of the entirely ignorant and not particularly intelligent

reader; in a word, the average lower class man in the street - I was to recast my thoughts in plainer language. By this means we hoped to write a book well within the compass of the understanding of even the simplest-minded seeker after Spiritual enlightenment.

Part One of Book 4 expounds the principles and practice of Mysticism in simple scientific terms, stripped of all sectarian accretion, superstitious enthusiasms, or other extraneous matter. It proved completely successful in this sense.

Part Two deals with the principles and practice of Magick. I explained the real meaning and modus operandi of all the apparatus and technique of Magick. Here, however, I partially failed. I was stupid enough to assume that my readers were already acquainted with the chief classics of Magick. I consequently described each weapon, explained it and gave instructions for its use, without making it clear why it should be necessary at all. Part Two is therefore an wholly admirable treatise only for one who has already mastered the ground work and gained some experience of the practice of the art.

The Number 4 being the formula of the book, it was of

course to consist of four parts. I carried out this idea by expressing the nature of the tetrad, not only by the name and plan of the book, but by issuing it in the shape of a square four inches by four, and pricing each part as a function of 4. Part One was published at 4 groats. Part two at 4 tanners, Part Three was to cost 4 "Lloyd George groats" (at this time the demagogue was offering the workman ninepence for fourpence, by means of an insurance swindle intended to ensnare him more completely than ever.) Part Four, 4 shillings. Part Three was to deal with the practice of Magick, and Part Four, of the Book of the Law with its history and the Comment; the volume in fact, indicated in the book itself, Chapter III-Verse 39.

The programme was cut short. The secret contest between the Will of Virūkām and my own broke into open hostility. A serious quarrel led to her dashing off to Paris. She repented almost before she arrived, and telegraphed me to rejoin her, which I did, and we went together to London. There, however, an intrigue resulted in her hastily marrying a Turkish adventurer who proceeded to beat her, and, a little later, to desert her. Her hysteria became chronic and

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uncontrollable; she took to furious bouts of drinking which culminated in delirium tremens.

The partial failure of our partnership was to some extent, without doubt, my own fault. I was not wholehearted, and I refused to live by faith rather than by sight. I cannot reproach myself for this; for that, I have no excuse. I may nevertheless express a doubt as to whether full success was in any case possible. Her own masterless passions could hardly have allowed her to pass unscathed through the ordeals which are always imposed upon those who undertake tasks of this importance.

S The upshot has been that, although I dictated Part Three to Laylah in the spring of 1912, I felt that it was not sufficiently perfect to be published. From time to time I revised it; but it remained unsatisfactory until in 1921 I took it in hand seriously, practically rewrote it, and expanded it into a vast volume, a really complete treatise on every branch of Magick. Part Four is still incomplete. I feel that I cannot publish the Comment on the Book of the Law until I am absolutely satisfied with it, and there is still much work to be done.

My winter wandering was so wholly taken up with Virakam that there was no adventure of interest to recount, with

one exception. In Naples we had a sitting with the famous Eusapia Palladino.

"But for ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain
The Catholic Wop is peculiar -
Which the same I am free to explain."

Her claim to extraordinary powers rests entirely on the famous report of Messrs. Feilding, Baggalay and Carrington. Feilding I knew personally very well. I had cross-examined him repeatedly about her without shaking his testimony. I met Baggalay once or twice, and his evidence corroborated Feilding's. When I came to know Carrington later, I found myself unable to attach serious credit to anything he said, and it certainly seemed suspicious that he should have acted as impressario to Eusapia shortly afterwards, and exploited her in the United States.

S Besides this, I had analyzed carefully the printed reports of the sittings. I could find no loop-hole; until one day my precious memory came to the rescue. It told me what is not by any means apparent on a straightforward reading, that in one of the Séances, I think Number 6, no phenomena occurred in the cabinet. Somewhere else in the book, quite disconnectedly, we find that during this séance there was no table in the cabinet. "Aha!" said I, "so when the

trumpets and tambourines and so on are really out of her reach (never mind whether her arms are under control or not!) she cannot sound them." It may seem arbitrary and unjust; but to me that one fact knocked away the props from the whole structure.

I had had sittings with many celebrated mediums, and never seen any phenomenon which impressed me in the least as being caused by Occult forces. (It is to be remembered that I have seen so many phenomena of absolutely indubitable authenticity in the course of my Magical work, that I am predisposed to expect such things to happen.)

S. In sitting with Eusapia, my main objects were (1) to get an idea of the atmosphere, so as to visualize more clearly the events recorded in the famous report, and (2) to criticize my own evidence. The question had suggested itself: "Feilding and the rest are clever, wary, experienced and critical, but even so, can I be sure that when they describe what occurs they are dependable witnesses?" As luck would have it, my single séance threw a glaring light on this point.

Eusapia was sitting at the end of a table with her back to the Cabinet. Virakam was on her right, I on her

left. It was my business to make sure that she did not kick, and to keep hold of her left wrist. After a short time the fun began in the customary manner by the curtain of the cabinet bulging, and finally falling across Eusapia's left arm and my right. I could thus see into the Cabinet; that is, into the corner of the room, by turning my head. Now, Eusapia was supposed to have a third arm, an astral arm, with which she could do her deadly deeds. My attention was attracted to the Cabinet by seeing a shadowy arm moving about in it. My intellectual faculties were completely alert. I reasoned as follows: "The arm which I see is a left arm, not a right arm. It cannot therefore be Eusapia's left arm, because I am holding her left wrist with my right hand." Almost before I had completed this syllogism, the arm disappeared from the Cabinet; at the same moment I felt Eusapia replace her left wrist in my hand, which had not informed me that she had removed it.

It is a small premise on which to found an universal proposition, and yet I do so without serious hesitation. I dare not for a moment compare myself with such expert investigators as Feilding and the rest. Still, I have some experience. I am not entirely an ass, and I certainly know

a great deal about psychology, for one thing, and the unreliability of sensory impressions for another. Ex pede Herculem. If I, such as I am, cannot be relied upon to say whether I am or am not holding a woman's wrist, is it not possible that even experts, admittedly excited by the rapidity with which one startling phenomenon succeeds another, may deceive themselves as to the conditions of the control? It seems to me extremely significant that Feilding has never obtained a Cabinet phenomenon with any medium when he has interposed netting between the man and the curtain.

Feilding invited me to some of the séances of the then famous medium Caracini, who had been turning Rome upside down by turning tables upside down, teaching grand pianos the turkey-trot and materializing muttonchops. I was inclined at first to believe that there was some slight element of genuineness in the man for the simple reason that he failed to bring off anything at all in my presence. The trumpery elementals that amuse themselves at the expense of the spiritist type of imbecile keep very clear of magicians. (Readers of Eliphas Levi will remember the D.D. Home was panic-stricken at the approach of the Adept.)

After two hours of watchful waiting Feilding suggested trying for cabinet-phenomenon. The cabinet was, as usual, a corner of the room with a cloth pinned across, behind this being a table furnished with trumpets, tambourines, and similar baitful bogies. At the suggestion Caracini sprang from his seat and extended his hands towards the upper part of the curtain. I required no further information. There was nothing suspicious in his act but the psychology was final. There was an association in his mind between cabinet-phenomena and physical manipulation.

I take this opportunity of pointing out that no cabinet phenomena of any sort have ever taken place when netting has been placed between the curtain and the medium. We can hardly conceive of any type of force capable of blowing trumpets, impressing wax, etc., which would be interested by netting, except that normal to humanity.

May I further remark that, in our generation, no professional medium has ever produced evidential phenomena of any kind with the exception of Eusapia Palladino, Mrs. Piper, Eva C., (if she can be classed as professional) and Bert Reece. I have dealt already with Eusapia. I never met Mrs. Piper, but her record somehow fails to impress me as remarkable. Eva C. is still sub judice, and I will now

deal with Bert Reece, after permitting myself the single observation that spiritists who talk about the cumulative value of their evidence have only four doubtful integers to add to an interminable string of zeroes.

I met Bert Reece in London just before the war of 1914. His claim to fame was based on two items:-

(1) If you put your hand on his head you could sometimes feel a throbbing, which of course, proves beyond all possibility of doubt, the immortality of the soul.

In this calculation I have adopted the official American standard of proof.

(2) He was able to read and answer questions which had been previously written on slips of paper in his absence (presumed) folded up and distributed in various pockets. Having answered the first question a paper was handed to him; he then answered the second and so on. This modus operandi suggests that he relies for success on some variation of the trick known as "the one after," though I personally believe that he changes his methods as much as he can. It seems perfectly obvious in any case that a trick of some sort is being worked.

The real point of interest is that Hereward Carrington, who boasts that he has explained every single "sealed letter-reading" that has come under his notice admits failure to explain this case, and he has assured me personally that he is completely baffled and inclined to believe that some occult power is at work.

Bert Reece is an Americanized German or Polish Jew from Posen. He was, I suppose, at this time about sixty years old. He commanded enormous fees for consultations. Many of the biggest business men in the States acted habitually on his advice. My own interest was limited to the curiosity aroused by Carrington's statement.

I went to see him at the Savoy Hotel in London. His personality is delightful and he received me with charming courtesy. He then asked me to write five questions on five slips of paper as usual, fold them, and put them in separate pockets. I said that I could not possibly think of troubling him to that extent. I should be perfectly convinced if he would read a word of three letters already in my pocket. (I had put the word TIN inside the back of my watch.) He of course refused the test, and I knew where I was. However to humour him, and incidentally to observe his method, I did as he asked. Some of my questions were such that he

was unlikely to know the answer. Others concerned the Qabalah. In one case I did not know the answer myself; but if he was really in touch with a high intelligence he could find out, and I could check his correctness by the method elsewhere explained.

He read my questions correctly, but failed to answer any of them. Before answering the first he made a number of suspicious movements that inclined me to think that he manages to pick one's pocket of the first slip after which, of course, the "one-after" method proceeds merrily.

I called on him in New York early in 1915 with the idea of trying him out by offering him a share of the proceeds of persuading one of my friends to invest in a certain financial scheme. (Needless to say, my friend was a party to the plan.) Reece agreed without hesitation. I simply told him to answer the questions in such a way as to persuade the enquirer of certain facts. As luck would have it the test was even more conclusive than I had arranged for. In one of the questions a certain man's name occurred. According to my arrangement with Reece, he should have answered that this man was not to be trusted. The name bears a distant resemblance to my own. He jumped to the conclusion that I was meant, and praised the man up to the skies.

There was still one more sitting. He was to do his utmost to persuade his consultant to adopt a certain course of action. He tried every trick for the best part of an hour, without producing the slightest result. The atmosphere was one of cold disgust, mixed with a certain contemptuous pity. At the same time, one could not but understand that, given the original sine qua non, he could lead his client by the nose into the most absurd actions. This prima materia of the work need not be the pure gold of confidence. It is quite sufficient if the client is morally and mentally unstable from fear, credulity, anxiety, desire or even natural uncertainty - this last being, of course, an evident condition of any serious consultation whatever. Give him something to work on and little by little one is bound to fall into his line of thought, after which it is child's play to turn every incident to advantage. The client will come away from the consultation convinced of the supernatural powers of the charlatan.

From the beginning of my investigation of so-called psychical research, I felt sure from mere consideration of the conditions of the problem that the adhesion of so many prominent men of science to spiritism must be explained by

psychological facts. This saved me a great deal of time. The first key that I tried, fitted the lock.

I noted immediately that the scientific men concerned were in some cases, though not in all, indisputably trustworthy as observers. They were capable of detecting fraud and of devising methods to exclude it. I was faced with the alternative of accepting the hypothesis of spiritism, which revolts my scientific spirit and is repudiated, by my instinct as an initiate, for a foul blasphemy and profanation, or I must find some reason for supposing that a number of men reputed trustworthy observers are for some reason rendered suddenly incompetent.

S I have said a number of prominent men of science, but in point of fact very few of them have any sort of claim to rank in the first flight. However, such as they are, it is certainly curious that their first leanings towards spiritism become manifest on their reaching an age when the sexual power begins to decline.

I submit the following explanation of the psychological process of conversion in these cases.

1. The failure of the sexual energy turns their attention to death.
2. The inexpugnable fear of death demands the resort to some spiritual soporific.

3. Their scientific training makes it impossible for them to take refuge in any superstitious religion.
- 3a. They probably lack the Pagan courage to accept the situation philosophically, their moral integrity having been injured in childhood by their Christian upbringing. (Spiritism has utterly failed to corrupt Islam with its manly attitude towards the Universe.
4. They seek consolation in some theory of immortality which promises to verify its theses by scientific evidence such as they are accustomed to accept.
5. They approach their first séances with a subconscious will-to-believe of great intensity.
6. They are sufficiently aware of this attitude to make a point of exaggerating their scepticism to themselves; that is, they affirm their scepticism with an emphasis the more passionate in proportion as they hope, at the bottom of their hearts, to find sufficient evidence to shake it.
7. They satisfy their consciences by making a great display of their acuteness in detecting fraud, actual or possible, and thereby excuse themselves for adding, as if by afterthought, "obviously there are a few minor points whose explanation is not immediately obvious."
8. They concentrate their attention on these unexplained points until they fill the entire point of view.
9. What with overstrained attention, Freudian forgetfulness, and the illusions of desire, they quiet their consciences sufficiently to assert the genuineness of some few of the phenomena, preferably those which are, so to speak, the thin end of the wedge and are explicable on hypotheses not fundamentally repugnant to the main body of scientific truth.

10. The critical attitude of their colleagues excites the usual reaction and rouses them to defend vigorously propositions originally put forward tentatively under every reserve.
11. Feeling their sand-castle crumbling with each wave of the purifying salt water of criticism, they shovel fresh sand to the support of the threatened edifice. In their haste and eagerness they abandon all pretence of examining the quality of the material and no longer distinguish between the qualities of evidence.
12. It is now quite easy for mediums to persuade them that they are chosen captains of a crusade. Even when they continue their original methods of testing the genuineness of phenomena, the mediums have become familiar with their methods and found out how to circumvent them. In the words of Browning:

"So off we push

So much for the so-called scientific contingent.

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Browning's "Sludge - the Medium" is to me the deepest and completest psychological study ever written. I only wish it could be matched by a parallel exposure of the half-hidden perversities and trickeries of the scientific mind.

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As to the possibilities of people's psychology leading them astray, may I tell a couple of stories from my own experience; one to show how failure of a man's memory to record an apparently trivial detail, totally disconnected with the point at issue, may prepare the ground for a first-class miracle; the other to demonstrate not only the practical impossibility of detecting or preventing absolute amateur trickery, but of how the very perfection of the precautions against it may occasionally make possible a fraud which would have been baffled by much less adequate safeguards? I quote from an argument that even undoubted cases of such events as the appearance of a person at the moment of his death to a distant friend may be attributed to coincidence.

S The point is that the failures are unrecorded. Take "pure chance" roulette for instance. Scientifically, any given run (say 500 on the red) is no more and no less remarkable than any other given run, say RBBBBBBBBBBBBB, etc., to 500 coups. But the one is acclaimed a miracle, the other goes unremarked.

Now in the missions of seances in the last sixty years the "evidential" records can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

and it is not antecedently so very improbable that pure chance might dictate correct answers in so small a proportion of cases.

Further, the spirits have thrown upon science the task of proving a universal negative.

If Sir Oliver Lodge, or Professor Münsterberg, or Lord Cholly Cauliflower, or Mr. Upthepole comes to me with a tale of unicorns in Piccadilly, I merely humour him. Münsterberg

at least, might be dangerous.

But I should not investigate his statement, and I certainly should not claim to be able to disprove it on a priori grounds.

Even in the 'evidential' cases, there is so much room for a mixture of fraud, telepathy, chance, and hysteria, and humanity is so clever at stopping chinks with putty and then leaving the door open, that we must continue to suspend judgment.

An amusing case occurred some years ago at Cambridge. I offered to reproduce roughly the performance of the Zancigs (which was then puzzling the foolish in London) without preparation. A stranger to me offered to act as my 'medium.'

The conditions were these. The ten small cards of a suit were laid on the floor; one was to be touched in the medium's absence and in my presence. The medium was to return and say which it was. The rest of the company were to prevent me from communicating if they could.

Well, they tried everything. In a minute's interview I arranged a button-touching code with my medium, and as each new restriction was put on me I managed to invent a new code. Shifting my pipe, coughing, arranging books, winking, altering the position of my fingers, etc. etc., all were provided against. Then I obtained a second confederate. Ultimately the grand skeptic of all devised the following test just as I had passed the note to my medium, "If I can't manage any of the old ways, I'll try and write down the number and put it on the mantle-piece."

And this was the test.

The medium was to be taken from Whewell's Court (where we were) over to the Great Court of Trinity - well out of hearing. I was to be left alone with the sceptic, who by this time suspected everybody of being a confederate. He was to touch the card in my presence and then take me away in the opposite direction. The medium was then (at a given time) to return and tell the card. Now it happened that in the course of the general argument about fairness, which I encouraged to enable myself to plot unnoticed in the confusion of talk, that I stipulated for my sceptic to write down the number that he had touched, to avoid dispute. This he agreed to do; he was allowed to hide it as he chose.

I gave up all hope but in bringing off the 9 to 1 chance of my medium's being right. The sceptic kept both eyes on me all the time; if I stirred a finger, he was up in arms.

I did keep my back to the mantle-piece, but there was no way of writing down the number.

But it was just at that point that my sceptic's magnificent brain broke down. He had correctly argued everything so far; but then his brain said, "It is important that Crowley shall not know where I hide the paper with the number on it: I must hide it somewhere where he cannot see."

So instead of slipping it into one of the hundreds of books on the shelves, he hid it behind my back, i.e. on the mantle-piece, where it was duly found!

I must tell just one other story to the point. It throws possibly some light on one or two of the 'miracles' which Blavatsky performed in order to disgust the more foolish of her followers.

In June 1906 I was at Margate (God help me!), and asked my friend Jones to lend me a copy of Abramelin.

"Sorry!" said he. "I lent it to So-and-so, and it has not been returned."

He forgot this conversation; I remembered it.

Staying at his house six months later, I was alone one morning and found the book, which 'he knew for a fact' to be in London sixty miles away. It was hidden by the panel of a glass-fronted bookcase.

I hid it in the stuffing of a music-stool, led the conversation at lunch-time to "apports," got my host to suggest my doing this very thing which he was sure I could not do, and, in the evening, did it.

If I had been a cheat, could I have produced better evidence? My host would have sworn that the book was in London in a house unknown to me, whose occupants were unknown to me. He is a man of science and of most accurate and balanced judgment. One little lapse of memory; he forgot that he had told me that the book was not in his shelves; another little lapse of memory; he forgot where the book was; and there is your miracle!"

The spring of 1912 found me once more hovering between London and Paris. I wrote a few first-rate lyrics, a few more or less important essays, such as "Energized Enthusiasm," but on the whole, the virtue had gone out of me as far as big conceptions and elaborate executions were concerned.

The campaign of 1911 had exhausted my heavy ammunition for the time being.

None the less, I could point to one solid achievement on the large scale, as I must consider it, although it is composed of more or less disconnected elements. I refer to The Book of Lies. In this there are 93 chapters: we count as a chapter the two pages filled respectively with a note of interrogation and a mark of exclamation. The other chapters contain sometimes a single word, more frequently from half a dozen to twenty phrases, occasionally anything up to a dozen paragraphs. The subject of each chapter is determined more or less definitely by the Qabalistic import of its number. Thus, Chapter 25 gives a revised ritual of the Pentagram; 72 is a rondel with the refrain "Shemhamphorash," the Divine name of 72 letters; 77 Laylah, whose name adds to that number; and 80, the number of the letter Pé, referred to Mars, a panegyric upon War.

Sometimes the text is serious and straightforward, sometimes its obscure oracles demand deep knowledge of the Qabalah for interpretation, others contain obscure allusions, play upon words, secrets expressed in cryptogram, double or triple meanings which must be combined in order to appreciate the full flavour; others again are subtly ironical or

cynical. At first sight the book is a jumble of nonsense intended to insult the reader. It requires infinite study, sympathy, intuition, and initiation. Given these, I do not hesitate to claim that in none other of my writings have I given so profound and comprehensive an exposition of my philosophy on every plane. I deal with the inmost impulses of the soul and through the whole course of consciousness down to the reactions of the most superficial states of mind.

I consider this book so important as a compendium of the contents of my consciousness, that I beg leave to illustrate the above points.

"Mind is a disease of semen" asserts a theory of the relations between the conscious and subconscious, whose main thesis is that the True Ego lurks silent in the quiescence of physical form, whereas the conscious self is no more than the murmur of its moods whenever its supremacy is challenged by environment. In Chapter 37, thought is compared to the darkness of a lunar and spiritual ecstasy to that of a solar eclipse. Both shadows are rare accidents in a universe of light. Again "In the Wind of the mind arises the turbulence called I. It breaks; down shower the barren thoughts. All life is choked." Elsewhere, deep spiritual

wisdom is evoked by tea at Rumpelmayer's, dinner at Lapérouse, breakfast at the Smoking Dog, a walk in the forest, or the dealings of the Master with his disciples.

Let me further brag that even uninstructed souls have found enlightenment and ecstasy in these mysterious mutterings.

One brilliant boy wrote in "Poetry and Drama" as follows:

"Creation and destruction of Gods has been for centuries mankind's favourite religious mania and philosophical exercise. 'The Book of Lies' is a witty, instructive, and wholly admirable collection of paradoxes, in themselves contradictory, summing up and illustrating various experiments in God-making. Frater Perdurabo, however, has not written a philosophical or mystical treatise; on the contrary, his book leaves one with a feeling of intense exhilaration and clearheadedness. The book cannot be judged by the mere reading of excerpts; nor can it be read straight through. Indeed, if one is really desirous to appreciate its subtleties, this should not be attempted before 12 p.m. To be carried about and discussed at leisure, to annoy, repel, stimulate, puzzle and interest, are evidently some of its functions. Stupendously idiotic and amazingly clever, it is at the same time the quintessence of paradox and simplicity itself; yet when all this is said one is still far from the core, for just when one thinks to have discovered it, one finds that many obvious beauties of thought and expression have been overlooked, others misinterpreted. Sometimes one is even doubtful if the author himself could translate into definite terms the exact meaning of his aphorisms and paradoxes without detracting from the value of the book as an artistic expression of his personality. This is, however, an individual appreciation. 'The Book of Lies' will therefore be interpreted differently by each reader

and judged accordingly."

The best short story, as some think, that I have ever written belongs to 1912; "The Testament of Magdalen Blair." The idea was based on a suggestion of Allan Bennett's made in 1899, and fallow in my mind ever since. It was this. Since thoughts are the accompaniments of modifications of the cerebral tissue, what thoughts must be concomitants of its putrification? It is certainly as ghastly an idea as any man could wish for on a fine summer morning. I thought I would use it to make people's flesh creep. My difficulty was how to acquaint other people with the thoughts of a dead man. So I made him a man of science and provided him with a wife, a student at Newnhaum, endowed with extraordinary sensibility which she develops into thought reading. She and her husband make a series of experiments and thus develop her faculty to perfection. He gets Bright's Disease and dies, while she records what he thinks during delirium, coma, and finally death.

I managed to make the story sound fairly plausible and let myself go magnificently in the matter of horror. I read it aloud to a house party on Christmas Eve; in the morning they all looked as if they had not recovered from a long and dangerous illness. I found myself extremely disliked!

Encouraged by this, I decided to offer the story to The English Review; but (for various reasons) sent it in as from another hand. I got a friend of mine to enclose it with a letter to say that it was the work of her daughter at Cambridge. (The story ends, by the way, with the widow, unable to endure the horror of knowing what was in store for her and the rest of humanity, urging everybody to blow out their brains with dynamite as the most practical method of minimizing the agony. She is then put in an asylum, where she demonstrates the genuineness of her claim to report accurately what people are thinking but fails to impress the English doctor though implored by the most eminent German Professor in that department of Science to allow her to work with him.) The Editor wrote to my friend that he would like to publish the story, but required proof of its literal truth.

I cannot comment upon such incidents. I have never been able to understand the psychology of such crass stupidity as I have found almost universal among editors and publishers. I can understand any man considering any piece of literature worthless, or thinking it a supreme masterpiece. Hume's remarks on the "unhappy barbarism" of Shakespeare, and Shelley's delusion that Leigh Hunt was a poet, are perfectly

intelligible to me; but I am completely baffled by such mental operations as here indicated. Another instance will be found in connection with my story "The Stratagem" on a subsequent page.

A third symptom of the disease of the same individual is as follows. I had written the following Poem!

To A New Born Child

I consider this one of my best lyrics, for fluency, perfection of technique, simplicity and power of language, and depth of idea. The editor protested that it was rather rough luck on a kid to predict such misfortunes for it. In other words, he had not the remotest idea what the poem was about. Considering that this particular editor is quite justly reputed to be far and away the best man in England in the matter of appreciating first-class work, it is perfectly incomprehensible to me that he should be such an

arrant blockhead.

Most of my time in 1912 was taken up by the O. T. O. The Order was a great success, and ceremonies of Initiation were of almost daily occurrence. I was also very busy helping Laylah in her career. The problem was not easy. I soon discovered that it was not in her to undergo the dreary remorseless drudgery demanded by ambition to the classical concert platform. Striking too as her success had been in the Rites of Eleusis, it soon became clear that its source was the impulse of my personality. I could invoke the Gods into her; I could not teach her to invoke them herself.

The truth of the matter was that her art was a secondary consideration with her. Secretly, she herself was probably unconscious of it. She was obsessed by the fear of poverty, the Oedipus-complex wish for a 'secure future,' snobbish ambition to improve her social standing. As soon as she passed the age of 30 and came into contact with the atmosphere of America, the spiritual and even the romantic sides of her character wasted away. She rushed desperately from one prospect of prosperity to another, only to find herself despised and duped by the men she was trying to deceive. At last she dropped to the depth of despair, and in her

drowning struggles lost her last link with life and love. She became a traitor and a thief; and bolted with her spoils to hide herself, like Fafnir, from the very eye of heaven.

I failed to divine the essential hopelessness of helping her. I idealized her; I robed her in the royal vestures of romance. The power and passion of her playing inspired me. Her beauty, physical and moral, bewitched me. I failed to realize to what extent these qualities depend upon circumstances; but it was clear by the beginning of 1912 that she could never get much higher than leading the Ladies' Band in the Waltz Dream as she had been doing. The best hope was to find something equally within her powers which would yet give her the opportunity to make an individual impression. I therefore suggested that she should combine fiddling with dancing. My idea was, of course, to find a new Art-Form. But of this she was not capable. She failed to understand my idea.

I acquiesced. I turned my thoughts to making a popular success for her. We collected six assistant fiddlers, strung together a jumble of jingles and set them to a riot of motion; dressed the septette in coloured rags, called them "The Ragged Rag-Time Girls" and took London by storm. It

was a sickening business; but it brought me into contact with a class of society to which I had been altogether a stranger; from the coarse Jew Agent to the brutal producer and vulgar performer - all alike in their absolute absorption in money-making, all equally ignorant of and contemptuous of art in itself, all equally mean, cowardly, callous, and unscrupulous in everything that touched "the Show." However good-natured, refined, or noble by nature, the instant that business came in at the door every decent instinct bolted out of the window.

It was an astonishing and most interesting study, this tragic tyranny of the metier over its slaves. It is the same (no doubt) even in other professions. Whatever the lawyer may be in private life, he leaves it all behind when he enters his office. The most honest and generous banker will unblushingly carry out the most cruel swindle, and so on for the rest. But rarely is the separation between Jekyll and Hyde so complete as in Music Hall circles. Other professions always attempt to conceal the facts by conventions of courtesy, specious apologies, or what not. In Vaudeville, there is no attempt to camouflage; no one pretends that the business is other than utterly beastly. Is it possible that the habit of grease-paint teaches those who use it to despise

deception? Do they learn to look upon life as necessarily garnished by trickeries so gross that the intention to deceive seems imbecile except where the public is concerned?

However that may be, I learnt a good many lessons which might prevent most poets from making fools of themselves. I learnt the crudeness, the harshness, the rottenness, and the ugliness of life as I had never imagined it to be. It is perhaps because the vowed intention of the business is to present beauty, hint love, and give pleasure that it seems so impossible to conceal from themselves the cynical contrast between the appearance and the actuality. Down to a certain point prostitution can cover its limbs and veil its face, but when the contrast is too constantly present, shame can no longer soothe itself by shame; it finds relief from its pain in cynical effrontery. I have never been so sorry for any class of people as I am for the vaudeville artist. They join the profession in almost every case on account of an original impulse to express themselves beautifully, joyfully, and wittily. The disillusion must be terrible; the sense of prostitution utterly intolerable.

Laylah had spend some weeks in New York with "Two Little Brides," I have given her introductions to various correspondents of mine in the city; people interested in my

work. One of these demands attention, both for her own sake as one of the most remarkable characters I have ever known and for the influence of her intervention on my affairs.

Her name was Vittoria Cremers. She claimed to be the bastard of a wealthy English Jew, and to have married a knavish Austrian Baron. She was an intimate friend of Mabel Collins, authoress of "The Blossom and the Fruit," the novel which had left so deep a mark upon my early ideas about Magick. In 1912 she was in her fifties. Her face was stern and square, with terribly intense eyes from which glared an expression of indescribable pain and hopeless horror. Her hair was bobbed and dirty white, her dress severely masculine save the single concession of a short straight skirt. Her figure was sturdy, and her gait determined though awkward. Laylah found her in a miserable room on 176th Street or thereabouts. Pitifully poor, she had not been able to buy '777,' and had therefore worked week after week copying in the Astor Library. She impressed Laylah as an earnest seeker and a practical business woman. She professed the utmost devotion to me, and proposed to come to England and put the Work of the Order on a sound basis. I thought the idea excellent, paid her passage to England, and established her as manageress.

possible exit save to the street; and the policeman saw no signs of the assassin, though he was patrolling outside, expressly on the lookout.

Miss Collins' friend took great interest in these murders. He discussed them with her and Cremers on several occasions. He gave them imitations of how the murderer might have accomplished his task without arousing the suspicion of his victims until the last moment. Cremers objected that his escape must have been a risky matter, because of his habit of devouring certain portions of the ladies before leaving them. What about the blood on his collar and shirt? The lecturer demonstrated that any gentleman in evening dress had merely to turn up the collar of a light overcoat to conceal any traces of his supper.

Time passed! Mabel tired of her friend, but did not dare to get rid of him because he had a packet of compromising letters written by her. Cremers offered to steal these from him. In the man's bedroom was a tin uniform case which he kept under the bed to which he attached it by cords. Neither of the women had ever seen this open, and Cremers suspected that he kept these letters in it. She got him out of the way for a day by a forged telegram, entered the room, untied the cords, and drew the box from under the bed. To

her surprise it was very light, as if empty. She proceeded nevertheless to pick the lock and open it. There were no letters; there was nothing in the box, but seven white evening dress ties, all stiff and black with clotted blood!

Her other favourite story is more to the point. At the critical moment of her mission, Madame Blavatsky had been most foully betrayed by Mabel Collins with the help, according to the stratagems, and at the instigation, of Cremers, who not only justified, but boasted of, her conduct.

It may be matter for surprise that I was not warned of the woman's character by this confession. But I have one invariable rule in dealing with those that come to me for training, and that is: to pay no attention whatever to their relations with myself, but to advise them according to the principles of the A.: A.:, as if we lived in different planets. For instance, if a man tells me he is a thief, I refuse on principle to lock up my spoons; I use the information solely as a key to his character, and tell him that in robbing others he is really robbing himself by violating the principle which protects him from theft. I trusted Cremers absolutely, though I knew this -

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and even that she had, at one time, been the paid spy of some black-mailing Vigilance Society in America, which, under cover of moral indignation, forged false evidence against convenient candidates, implicating them in the White Slave Traffic, extracting hush money, or prosecuting when the victim was not worth despoiling or refused to pay up, and sometimes by way of "making an example," in order to frighten the next batch whose blood they proposed to suck.

I left a book of signed cheques in her charge; I allowed her access to my private papers. I gave no sign that I saw how she was corrupting the loyalty of Laylah and making mischief all round. Presently, at the end of 1913, she got influenza. I went to visit her unexpectedly; there, on the table by her bed, was a memorandum showing unmistakably that she had embezzled large sums of money by fraudulent manipulation of the aforesaid cheques. I failed to conceal from her that I had seen and understood, but I continued to act towards her with unvarying kindness and continued to trust her absolutely. It was too much for her! She had hated me from the first, as she had hated Blavatsky, and vowed to ruin me as she had ruined my great predecessor;

and now, when she had robbed me and betrayed me at every turn, I had not turned a hair. The consciousness that her hate was impotent was too much for her to endure. She developed an attack of meningitis and was violently insane for six weeks, at the end of which time she melted away to hide her shame in Walves, where she supposed sensibly enough that she would find sympathetic society in thieves and traitors after her own heart. I understand in fact that she is still there.

During this whole period up to the outbreak of the War, my work gradually increased and consolidated. I must mention the visit of my representative in South Africa, Frater Semper Paratus. This brother possessed the most remarkable magical faculties, within a certain limited scope. It was natural for him to bring into action those forces which impinge directly upon the material world. For instance, his ability to perform divination by means of Geomancy (which presumes the action of Intelligences of a gross type) has no parallel in my experience. Let me illustrate what I mean.

By profession Frater Semper Paratus was a chartered accountant. He would be called in to audit the finances of some firm. He would find himself confronted by an over

whelming mass of documents. "It means three weeks' work" he would say to himself, "to discover the location of the error." Instead of exploring the mass of material at random, he would set up a series of geomantic figures, and after less than an hour's work, would take up the volume geomantically indicated, and put his finger at once upon the origin of the confusion.

On another occasion, he bethought himself that, living as he did in Johannesburg, surrounded by gold and diamonds, he might as well use geomancy to discover a deposit for his own benefit. Indifferent as to whether he found gold or diamonds, he thought to include both by framing his question to cover "Mineral Wealth." He was directed to ride out from the city by a given compass bearing. He did so. He found no indication of what he sought. He had given up hope and determined to return when he saw a range of low hills before him. He decided to push on and see if anything was visible from their summit. No, the plain stretched away without promise. A marshy flat with pools of stagnant water dotted about it. At this moment of complete disappointment, he noticed that his pony was thirsty. He therefore rode down to the nearest pool to let him drink. The animal refused the water, so he dismounted

to find out the reason. The taste told him at once that he had discovered an immensely rich deposit of alkali. His geomancy had not misled him; he had found mineral wealth. He proceeded to exploit his discovery, and would have become a millionaire in short order had he not met with the opposition of Brunner, Mond.

On the other hand, his clairvoyance was hopelessly bad, so that he could not pass the examination for the Grade of Zelator of A.: A.: though in other points entitled to a much higher degree. One of his principal objects in visiting England was to ask me personally to get him over the stile.

I did so. At the very first trial I enabled him to use his astral eyesight. Our joint work developed, and we resolved to make a series of investigations of "The Watch Towers of the Elements," beginning with that of Fire. The question arose: "Why does the instruction tell us to rise vertically in the astral body for a great distance before penetrating the symbol under examination?" I said, "It seems to me a mere superstition connected with the idea that Heaven is above and Hell beneath one." To clear up this point, we decided to enter the Watch Tower directly, without rising. Our visions, occupying three successive days

showed no abnormal features. But - and here one cannot help feeling that Semper Paratus's faculty of making connection with forces in close contact with the material plane is involved - no less than five fires broke out in the studio during that period. On the third night, Semper Paratus decided to walk home to the house of the friends with whom he was staying in Hampstead. It was late at night when he approached; but his attention was at once attracted by smoke issuing from the house. He gave the alarm, and the fire was quickly got under. The mysterious and significant point about the incident is that the fire had got started in the one place in a house where there is no rational explanation for an outbreak - in the coal cellar!

One further illustration of the peculiar qualities of this Brother. I had advised him to evoke the forces of Fire and Air on return to South Africa, they being naturally plentiful in that part of the world. He began with the fiery part of Fire, which includes lightning. When he began his ceremony there was no indication of electrical disturbance; but in a few minutes a storm gathered and his temple was struck.

Another brother similarly evoking the forces of Water,

the cistern of his house burst during the ceremony and flooded it.

Similar incidents constantly occur to those Magicians whose forces tend to manifest in concrete expression. But such men are rare. In my own case, though many similar phenomena have occurred, as already recorded, I regard them as due to defects of insulation. They warn me to take pains to perfect my circle.

The art of producing phenomena at Will is a totally different question. The simplest, most rational, and most direct method had been known to me since the summer of 1911; but for some reason, I had never practised it systematically or recorded my results methodically. I believe this to have been due to an instinctive reluctance in respect of the nature of the method. It was not until 1st January, 1914 that I made it my principal engine.

BOOK IXChapter II

S

I think it proper to devote an entire chapter to the subject of my relations with Freemasonry. I have mentioned that I had obtained the 33^o in Mexico City. It did not add much of importance to my knowledge of the Mysteries; but I had heard that Freemasonry was a Universal Brotherhood, and expected to be welcomed all over the world by all brethren.

I was brought up with a considerable shock within the next few months, when, chancing to discuss the subject with some broken-down gambler or sporting-house tout - I forget exactly - I found that he would not 'recognize' me! There was some trivial difference in one of the grips or some other totally meaningless formality. A measureless contempt for the whole mummary curled my lip. I squared the matter (as already related) by having myself initiated in Lodge Number 343 "Anglo-Saxon" in Paris. What that led to I have recounted elsewhere, and now quote.

"I happened to know that the Chaplain of the British Embassy in Z--- was Past Grand Organist of a certain English province. He proposed me, found me a seconder, and I was duly initiated, passed and raised. I was warmly welcomed by numerous English and American visitors to our Lodge; for Z--- is a very great city.
"I returned to England some time later, after

'passing the chair' in my Lodge, and wishing to join the Royal Arch, called on its venerable secretary.

"I presented my credentials. 'O Thou Great Architect of the Universe' the old man sobbed out in rage, 'why dost Thou not wither this impudent imposter with Thy fire from heaven? Sir, begone! You are not a Mason at all! As all the world knows, the people in Z--- are atheists, and live with other men's wives.'"

I thought this a little hard on my Reverend Father in God my proposer; and I noted that, of course, every single English or American visitor to our Lodge in Z----- stood in peril of instant and irrevocable expulsion on detection. So I said nothing, but walked to another room in Freemasons' Hall over his head, and took my seat as a Past Master in one of the oldest and most eminent Lodges in London!

Kindly note, furthermore, that when each of those wicked visitors returned to their own Lodges after their crime, they automatically excommunicated the whole thereof; and as visiting is very common, it may well be doubted whether, on their own showing, there is a single "lust, lawful and regular Mason" left alive on the earth!

By the end of 1910, thanks to my relations with the Grand Hierophant 97^o of the Rite of Memphis (a post held after his death by Dr. Gerard Encausse ("Papus"), Theodor

Reuss "(Merlin)", and myself) - Theodor Reuss, Sheikh Quilliam (representing our link with the Freemasonry of Islam), and certain highly placed brethren in France, Italy, England, Eastern Europe and America, whose names I am unwilling to disclose since they would get into trouble with their herds if it were known that they had ever possessed a scrap of common sense - I was now a sort of universal Inspector-General of the various rites, charged with the secret mission of reporting on the possibility of reconstructing the entire edifice, which was universally recognized by all its more intelligent members as threatened with the gravest danger.

I must briefly explain the circumstances.

- (a) There is a great multiplicity of rites.
- (b) There is a great multiplicity of jurisdictions.
- (c) Even where rite and jurisdiction is identical, there are certain national jealousies and other causes of divergence.
- (d) The progress of feminism has threatened the Craft. (The meaning of the 3^o having been totally lost, orthodox Freemasons are unable to explain why women cannot become Master Masons. They cannot. I, the fiercest of feminists, say so.) Co-Masonry, under Mrs. Besant, whose hysterical

vanity compels her to claim any high-sounding title that she happens to hear, the Le Droit Humain in France, and similar movements almost everywhere, were bringing Masonry into contempt by their sheer silliness. They were so obviously exactly as good as real Freemasons.

(e) The history of Freemasonry has become more obscure as the light of research has fallen on the subject. The meaning of Masonry has either been completely forgotten or has never existed at all, except insofar as any particular rite might be a cloak for political or even worse intrigue.

(f) It has become impossible for people living in modern conditions to devote adequate time even to learning the merest formalities.

(g) The complete lack of understanding which is now practically universal has made men enquire why in God's name they should cherish such pretentious pedantries?

A few anecdotes will illustrate the situation for the average non-Mason.

1. A certain rite in England derives its authority from a document which is as notoriously a forgery as Pigott ever penned. The heads of this gang wished to break, in

the most shameless and rascally manner, an agreement made some years previously with John Yarker. Yarker pointed out that their only real authority was derived from their agreement with him, since he, working under a genuine charter, had "healed" their breach with antiquity by recognizing them. They replied that they relied on the forged document. He said that he would cut away the ground from under their feet by publishing the proofs that their charter was worthless. They then said that they knew as well as he did that the document was forged; but they didn't care, because they had induced the Prince of Wales to join them!

2. Several of the main rites of English Masonry are not recognized by each other, and some of these are not even tolerated (that is, if a member of A joins B, or even discusses Freemasonry with a member of B, he becomes liable to immediate expulsion); yet a certain Royal Duke was actually the head of two incompatible rites.

3. There is no uniformity with regard to toleration. Thus A and B sometimes recognize each other, but, while A recognizes C, B does not, so that a member of B and a member of C might find themselves meeting in a Lodge of A,

and thereby automatically excommunicate each other.

4. English Craft Masons do not permit religious, political or commercial motives to enter into Freemasonry, yet they are in official relationship with certain Masonic bodies whose sole raison d'etre is anti-clericalism, political intrigue or mutual trade benefit.

5. The Scottish Rite, the Degrees of Knight Templar, Knight of Malta and others, in England are definitely Christian, e.g. the point of one degree is the identification of prophet, priest, and king, three in one, the Trinity of the Royal Arch, with Christ; and in the Rose Croix degree, Christ is recognized as the 'corner stone' of earlier symbolism. But in America, the Christian elements have been removed so that wealthy Jews may reach the summit of Masonry.

6. I once attended a lodge whose Master was one of the two local bankers. He used his influence to get business for his bank. The other banker promptly obtained a charter from some "clandestine" body, and started an opposition. In this district, the clandestine lodges greatly outnumbered the orthodox.

7. I have visited Craft Lodges and Royal Arch

Chapters in Fraternal Accord in England, where the 'raising' and 'exaltation' were carried out in shirt sleeves, while cigars were smoked and the legs conveniently disposed on other chairs, and only employed to kick the candidate as he went round.

8. At one ceremony in America, the officers being 33° Masons, recognized by the orthodox Scottish Rite in England, there were two candidates, both Jews. They were hoodwinked and introduced into opposite ends of a tube through which they were instructed to make their way. In the middle of the tube was a live sow.

9. In Detroit, a member of the 32° was threatened by certain 33°'s with expulsion unless he complied with their views as to his domestic life. The matter was one with which they had no right to meddle on any conceivable theory of human relations.

10. In some parts of America, financial and social pressure is put upon people to compel them to take the 32°. It is common to boycott men in trade or business for refusing to give unfair advantages to their fellow-Masons.

11. A 33° Mason, of many years standing, holding high office in the Supreme Grand Council, who had joined in

Chapters in Fraternal Accord in England, where the 'raising' and 'exaltation' were carried out in shirt sleeves, while cigars were smoked and the legs conveniently disposed on other chairs, and only employed to kick the candidate as he went round.

8. At one ceremony in America, the officers being 33° Masons, recognized by the orthodox Scottish Rite in England, there were two candidates, both Jews. They were hoodwinked and introduced into opposite ends of a tube through which they were instructed to make their way. In the middle of the tube was a live sow.

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11. A 33° Mason, of many years standing, holding high office in the Supreme Grand Council, who had joined in

order to obtain the traditional secret knowledge, told me that he had never learnt anything from any of the degrees. The only peculiarity in this case is that he should have expected anything of the sort - or wanted it!

12. With hardly an exception, the "secrets" of Freemasonry are strictly arbitrary. Let me explain what I mean. If I am given the combination of a safe, I expect to be able to open it by the use of the word. If I can do so, it proves that that is the correct word. The secrets of Freemasonry disclose no mysteries; they do not do what they profess to do; they are meaningless conventions.

13. With the rarest exceptions, Freemasons make no attempt to keep their obligations so far as the moral principles inculcated are concerned. For instance, the Master Mason is sworn to respect the chastity of the wife, sister and daughter of his Brother. Those who do so, probably respect the chastity of any woman irrespective of her male connections.

14. Freemasons, generally, but especially in England and America, resent any attempt to take Masonry seriously. I may quote an essay by a Past Grand Master. It appeared

in the English Review for August, 1922. It sets forth the initiated view. The question is: Why does a man become a Mason?

"We ought to cross off the pettier human motives first: love of vanity, of mystery, of display, of make-believe; but the average man in England becomes a Mason for as serious a reason as he becomes a Church member or a Theosophist; and the average man is usually most abominably disillusioned.

"He may join the Craft with some idea of fellowship, because it is a tradition in his family to do so, or because he hopes to find in the Secret of the Mysteries something which he does not find in any of the exoteric forms of religion.

"How is it that the same Order satisfies - more or less - aspirations so diverse?

"We are brought at last face to face with the fundamental problem of the Masonic historian - the origin of the whole business.

"Without any hesitation at all, one may confess that on this critical question nothing is certainly known. It is true, indeed, that the Craft Lodges in England were originally Hanoverian Clubs, as the Scottish Lodges were Jacobite Clubs, and the Egyptian Lodges of Cagliostro revolutionary Clubs.

"But that no more explains the Origin of Freemasonry than the fact 'Many Spaniards are Roman Catholics' explains why the priest says and does certain things rather than others in the Mass.

"Now here is the tremendous question: we can admit all Mr. Yarker's contentions, and more, as to the connection of Masonic and quasi-Masonic Rites with the old customs of initiating people into the Trade Guilds; but why should such a matter be hedged about with so severe a wardenship, and why should the Central Sacrament partake of so awful and so unearthly a character?

"As Freemasonry has been 'exposed' every few

minutes for the last century or so, and as any layman can walk into a Masonic shop and buy the complete Rituals for a few pence, the only omissions being of no importance to our present point, it would be imbecile to pretend that the nature of the ceremonies of Craft Masonry is in any sense a "mystery."

"There is, therefore, no reason for refraining from the plain statement that, to anyone who understands the rudiments of Symbolism, the Master's Degree is identical with the Mass. This is in fact the real reason for the Papal Anathema; for Freemasonry asserts that every man is himself the living, slain and re-arisen Christ in his own person.

"It is true that not one Mason in ten thousand in England is aware of this fact; but he has only to remember his "raising" to realize the fundamental truth of the statement.

"Well may Catholic and Freemason alike stand appalled at the stupendous blasphemy which is implied, as they ignorantly think, not knowing themselves of the stuff and substance of the Supreme Self, each for himself alike no less than Very God of Very God:

"But suppose that the sublimity of this conception is accepted, the identity admitted; what sudden overwhelming billow from the past blasts their beatitude? What but the words with which Freud concludes "Totem and Taboo"; In the beginning was the Deed!

"For the 'sacrifice of the Innocent' celebrated alike in the Lodge and in Cathedral is this identical Murder of the Master of the Fellow-Craftsmen, that is of the rather by his Sons, when the ape-system of the "Father-horde" was replaced by the tribal system which developed into the 'military clan!'"

These statements are undeniable, yet it may be doubted whether there are five hundred Freemasons of all the Rites put together who would assent to them, or even refrain from

objecting to them as bitterly as the average man in Victorian times disliked being told of his kinship with the other primates, and as his children and grandchildren are annoyed when Science demonstrates that their religions are survivals of Savage superstitions and their dreams determined by bestial instincts.

15. The W.M. of an exclusive English Lodge told me that he had learnt his part by saying it over to his wife in bed, justifying himself for this apparent breach of his obligation by remarking, with a laugh, that the secrets were lost, and that therefore he could not betray them however much he wanted to.

Faced with these, and similar difficulties, I gladly accepted the task laid upon me by the most intelligent Freemasons of the world, united as they were by their sincerity, understanding and good will, though divided by sectarian squabbles about jurisdiction.

My first object was to answer the question "What is Freemasonry?" I collated the Rituals and their secrets, much as I had done the religions of the world, with their magical and mystical bases. As in that case, I decided to neglect what it too often actually was. It would be

absurd to judge Protestantism by the political acts of Henry VIII. In the same way, I could not judge Masonry by the fact that it had denounced the Concordat. I proposed to define Freemasonry as a system of communicating Truth - religious, philosophical, magical and mystical; and indicating the proper means of developing human faculty by means of a peculiar language whose alphabet is the symbolism of ritual. Universal Brotherhood and the greater moral principles, independent of personal, racial, climatic and other prejudices, naturally formed a background which would assure individual security and social stability for each and all.

The question then arose "What truths should be communicated and by what means promulgated?" My first object was to eliminate from the hundreds of rituals at my disposal all exoteric elements. Many degrees contain statements (usually inaccurate) of matters well known to modern school boys, though they may have been important when the rituals were written. I may mention one degree in which the candidate is portentously informed that there are other religions in the world besides Christianity, and that there is some truth in all of them. Their tenets are

explained in many cases with egregious error. The description of Buddha as a God is typical. I saw no point in overloading the system with superfluous information.

Another essential point was to reduce the unwieldy mass of material to a compact and coherent system. I thought that everything worth preserving could and should be presented in not more than a dozen ceremonies, and that it should be brought well within the capacity of any officer to learn by heart his part during the leisure time at his disposal, in a month at most.

The eighteenth-century Rosicrucians, so-called, in Austria, had already endeavoured to unite various branches of Continental Freemasonry and its superstructures; in the nineteenth century, principally owing to the energy and ability of a wealthy iron master named Karl Kellner, had attempted a reconstruction and consolidation of traditional truth. A body was formed under the name O.T.O. (Order Templi Orientis), which purported to achieve this result. It purported to communicate the secrets, not only of Freemasonry (with its Rites of 3°, 7°, 33°, 90°, 97° etc) but of the Gnostic Catholic Church, the Martinists, the Sat Bhai, the Rosicrucians, the Knights of the Holy Ghost

and so on, in nine degrees, with a tenth of an honorary character to distinguish the "Supreme and Holy King" of the Order in each country where it was established. Chief of these Kings is the O.H.O. (Outer Head of the Order, or Frater Superior), who is an absolute autocrat. This position was at this time occupied by Theodor Reuss, the Supreme and Holy King of Germany, who resigned the office in 1922 in my favour.

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The O. H. O. puts the rituals of this Order at my disposal. I found them of the utmost value as to the central secret, but otherwise very inferior. They were dramatically worthless, but the prose was unequal, they lacked philosophical unity, their information was incomplete and unsystematic. Their general idea was, however, of the right kind; and I was able to take them as a model.

The main objects of the instruction were two. It was firstly necessary to explain the universe and the relations of human life therewith. Secondly, to instruct every man how best to adapt his life to the cosmos and to develop his faculties to the utmost advantage. I accordingly constructed a series of rituals, Minerval, Man, Magician, Master-Magician, Perfect Magician, and Perfect Initiate, which should illustrate the course of human life in its largest philosophical aspect. I begin by showing the object of the pure soul, "One, individual and eternal", in determining to formulate itself consciously, or, as I may say, to understand itself.

It chooses to enter into relations with the solar system. It incarnates. I explain the significance of birth and the conditions established by the process. I next show how it may best carry out its object in the Eucharist of life. It partakes, so to speak, of its own Godhead in every action, but

especially through the typical sacrament of marriage, understood as the voluntary union of itself with each element of its environment. I then proceed to the climax of its career in death, and show how this sacrament both consecrates (or, rather, sets its seal upon) the previous procedure and gives a meaning thereto, just as the auditing of an account enables the merchant to see his year's transactions in perspective.

In the next ceremony I show how the individual, released by death from the obsession of personality, resumes relations with the truth of the Universe. Reality bursts upon him in a blaze of adorable light; he is able to appreciate its splendour as he could not previously do, since his incarnation has enabled him to establish particular relations between the elements of eternity.

Finally, the cycle is closed by the re-absorption of all individuality into infinity. It ends in absolute annihilation which, as has been shown elsewhere in this book, may in reality be regarded either as an exact equivalent for all other terms soever, or (by postulating the category of time) as forming the starting-point for new adventure of the same kind.

It will be clear from the above that the philosophical perfection of this system of initiation leaves nothing to be

desired. We may write Q.E.D. The practical problem remains. We have already decided to incarnate, and our birth certificates are with our bankers. We do not have to worry about these matters, and we cannot alter them if we would; Death, and what follows death, are equally certain, and equally able to take care of themselves. Our sole preoccupation is how best to make use of our lives.

Now the O.T.O. is in possession of one supreme secret. The whole of its system at the time when I became an initiate of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis (IX^o) was directed towards communicating to its members, by progressively plain hints, this all-important instruction. I personally believe that if this secret, which is a scientific secret, were perfectly understood, as it is not even by me after more than twelve years almost constant study and experiment, there would be nothing which the human imagination can conceive that could not be realized in practice.

By this I mean such things as this: that if it were desired to have an element of atomic weight six times that of Uranium that element could be produced. If it were desired to devise an instrument by which the furthest stars or the electrons could be brought within the range of every one of our senses, that instrument could be invented. Or

that, if we wished to develop senses through which we could appreciate all those qualities of matter which at present we observe indirectly by means of apparatus, the necessary nervous structure would appear. I make these remarks with absolute confidence, for even the insignificant approaches that I have been able to make towards the sanctuaries of this secret have shown me that the relations between phenomena are indefinitely more complex than the wildest philosophers have ever imagined, and that the old proverb "Where there's a will there's a way" needs no caveat.

I cannot forebear to quote from Prof. A. S. Eddington, Plumian Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy, Cambridge:

"Here is a paradox beyond even the imagination of Dean Swift. Gulliver regarded the Lilliputians as a race of dwarfs; and the Lilliputians regarded Gulliver as a giant. That is natural. If the Lilliputians had appeared dwarfs to Gulliver, and Gulliver had appeared a dwarf to the Lilliputians - but no! that is too absurd for fiction, and is an idea only to be found in the sober pages of science."

The injunctions of the sages, from Pythagoras, Zoroaster and Lao-Tze, to the Qabalistic Jew who write the ritual of the Royal Arch, and the sentimental snob who composed those of the Craft Degrees, are either directed to indicating the best conditions for applying this secret, or are mere waste

of words. Realizing this, it was comparatively simple for me to edit Masonic ethics and esotericism. I had simply to refer everything to this single sublime standard. I therefore answered the question "How should a young man mend his way?" in a series of rituals in which the candidate is instructed in the value of discretion, loyalty, independence, truthfulness, courage, self-control, indifference to circumstance, impartiality, scepticism, and other virtues, and at the same time assisted to discover for himself the nature of this secret, the proper object of its employment and the best means for insuring success in its use. The first of these degrees is the V^O, in which the secret is presented in a pageant; while he is also instructed in the essential elements of the history of the world, considered from the standpoint of his present state of evolution and in his proper relation to society in general with reference to the same.

The degree of Knight Hermetic Philosopher follows, in which his intellectual and moral attitude is further defined. In the VI^O, his position having been thus made precise, he is shown how to consecrate himself to the particular Great Work which he came to earth in order to perform. In the VII^O, which is tripartite, he is first

taught the principle of equilibrium as extended to all possible moral ideas; secondly, to all possible intellectual ideas; and lastly, he is shown how basing all his actions on this impregnable rock of justice, he may so direct his life as to undertake his Great Work with the fullest responsibility and in absolute freedom from all possibility of interferences.

In the VIII^o, the secret is once more manifested to him, more clearly than before; and he is instructed in how to train himself to use it by certain preliminary practices involving acquaintance with some of those subtler energies which have hitherto, for the most part, eluded the observation and control of profane science.

In the IX^o, which is never conferred upon any one who has not already divined from previous indications the nature of the secret, it is explained to him fully. The conclusions of previous experiments are placed at his service. The idea is that each new initiate should continue the work of his predecessor, so that eventually the inexhaustible resources of the secret may be within the reach of the youngest initiate; for at present, we are compelled to admit that the superstitious reverence which has encompassed it in past ages, and the complexity of

the conditions which modify its use, place us in much the same position as the electricians of a generation ago in respect of their science. We are assured of the immensity of the force at our disposal; we perceive the extent of the empire which it offers us, but we do not thoroughly understand even our successes, and are uncertain how to proceed in order to generate the energy most efficiently or to apply it most accurately to our purposes.

The X^O , as in the old system, is merely honorary, but recent researches into the mysteries of the IX^O have compelled me to add an XI^O , to illustrate a scientific idea which has been evolved by the results of recent experiments.

In the reconstituted O. T. O. there are therefore six degrees in which is conveyed a comprehensive conception of the cosmos and our relation therewith, and a similar number to deal with our duty to ourselves and our fellows, the development of our own faculties of every order, and the general advancement and advantage of mankind.

Wherever Free Masonry and allied systems contribute to these themes, their information has been incorporated in such a way as not to infringe the privileges, puerile

as they often seem which have been associated hitherto with initiation. Where they merely perpetuate trivialities, superstitions and prejudices, they have been neglected.

I claim for my system that it satisfies all possible requirements of true Free Masonry. It offers a rational basis for Universal Brotherhood and for Universal religion. It puts forward a scientific statement which is a summary of all that is at present known about the universe by means of a simple, yet sublime symbolism, artistically arranged. It also enables each man to discover for himself his personal destiny, indicates the moral and intellectual qualities which he requires in order to fulfil it freely, and finally puts in his hands an unimaginably powerful weapon which he may use to develop in himself every faculty which he may need in his work.

My original draft of these rituals has required modification in numerous details as research made clearer, deeper, and wider the truth which they comprehended; and also, as experience showed, the possibilities of misunderstanding on one hand, and of improved presentation on the other. Great practical progress was made until the work was suspended by the outbreak of the war in 1914.

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One of my original difficulties was to restore the existing rituals to their perfection. There were innumerable corruptions due to ignorance of Hebrew and the like, on the part of the unworthy successors of the founders. To take a gross example.

The word Jeheshua, spelt in Hebrew in the 18^o of the Scottish Rite, was habitually spelt with a Resh instead of a Vau. So brutal a blunder is conclusive proof that the modern Sovereign Princes of Rose Croix attach no meaning whatever to the name of Jesus - which they profess to adore more intelligently than the mob because it represents the descent of the Holy Spirit into the midst of that tremendous name of God which only occurs in their ritual because of its power to annihilate the universe if pronounced correctly. ¹

The intelligence of the average Mason may be gauged by the following quotation from the R.A.M. degree. The twentieth Century! - and such stuff is solemnly offered as instruction to grown men!

1. The ignorance of Masons is quite boundless. In the Red Cross of Rome and Constantine Degree, for example, we read, "Lord God of Sabbath."

No one knows the difference between ShBTh and TzBATH!!

"Some have doubted whether the Ark was capable of containing two of every sort of creature, with provisions necessary for their support for a whole year; for so long and more did Noah stop in that Ark. But on a careful inquiry it has been found that only about 100 different sorts of beasts, and not 200 birds, are known, the greater part of them are of no bulk, and many exceedingly small, and it has been said all the creatures in the Ark would not take up the room of 500 horses. After 4,000 years human ingenuity cannot now contrive any proportions better adapted than that of the Ark for the purpose it was intended for. A Dutch Merchant, 200 years ago, built a ship answering in its respective dimensions to those of the Ark; its length being 120 feet, breadth 20 feet, depth 12 feet; while building, this vessel was laughed at, but afterwards it was found that it held one-third more, and sailed better than any other merchant vessel of the time.

Thus we have a collateral proof no way inconsiderable that the Spirit of God, from whom cometh all understanding, directed Noah in that manner."

Again, the central secret of a Master Mason is in a Word which is lost. This fact has induced various and ingenious persons to invent ceremonies in which it is found (in some more or less remarkable manner) amid the acclamations of the assembled populace, and proclaimed in pomp to the admiring multitude. The only drawback is that these Words do not work. It apparently never occurred to these ingenuous artisans to test it. It is useless to label a brick "This is the keystone of the Royal Arch" unless the arch stands when it is put in place.

Much of Free Masonry is connected with the Hebrew

Qabalah. My knowledge of this science enabled me to analyze the Secret Words of the various degrees. I soon found myself able to correct many of the corruptions which had crept in, and there was no doubt that my conclusions were not mere conjectures, since they made coherent good sense out of disconnected nonsense. (I am naturally unable to publish any of these discoveries; but I am always ready to communicate them to enquiring brothers. When I have done so, my arguments have been found cogent and convincing.)

I supposed myself to have reached the summit of success when I restored the Secret Word of the Royal Arch. In this case, tradition had preserved the Word almost intact. It required only a trifling change to reveal it in all its radiant royalty. And yet my success only left me with a sense of deeper annoyance at my complete failure to deal with the abject anti-climax of the III^o with its lamentable excuses for having made a fool of the candidate, its pretentious promises, and its pitiful performance.

As I lay one night sleepless, in meditation, bitter and eager, upon this mystery, I was suddenly stabbed to the soul by a suggestion so simple, yet so stupendous, that I was struck into shuddering silence for I know not

how long before I could bring myself to switch on the electric light and snatch my note book. At the first trial the solution sprang like sunlight in my spirit. I remained all that night in an ecstasy of awe and adoration. I had discovered the lost Word!

The obvious line of criticism is this: How can you be sure that the Word which you have discovered is really the lost Word after all?

This may be made clear by an illustration. On the apron of the 18° I find IHShRH in Hebrew Characters. I find that this word means nothing; the context suggests that it may be an error for IHShVH, Yeheshuah or Jesus; but how do I know that this word and not another has power to make man triumphant over matter, to harmonize and sanctify the blind forces of the Universe? Thus: I know that IHVH represents the four elements; that 4 is a number symbolizing limitation. It is the square of 2, the only number which cannot be formed harmoniously into a "Magic Square". (Two represents the Dyad, the original Error). I know also that the letter Shin represents a triune essence, the fire of the Spirit, and in particular Ruach Elohim, the Spirit of the Gods, because these two words have the numerical value of 300, which

is also that of Shin itself.

I thus interpret the word Yeheshuah as the descent of the Holy Spirit into the balanced forces of matter, and the name Yeheshuah is therefore that of a man made divine by the descent of the Holy Spirit into his heart, exactly as the name George means a farmer. This exegetical method is not a modern invention. When Jehovah selected a family to be the father of Israel, he changed the name ABHM (243) Father of Elevation, into ABHIM (243) Father of a multitude; and by way of compensation changed SRI (510) Nobility, to SRH (505), Princess. There are several other similar stories in the Bible. A change of name is considered to indicate a change of nature. Further, each name is not arbitrary; it is a definite description of the nature of the object to which it is attached. By a similar process, I am certain of my results in the matter of the Lost Word, for the Found Word fulfils the conditions of the situation; and furthermore, throws light on the obscure symbolism of the entire ritual.

I am thus in a position to do for the contending sects of Free Masonry what the Alexandrians did for those of Paganism. Unfortunately, the men who asked me to undertake this task are either dead or too old to take active

measures, and so far there is no one to replace them. Worse, the general coarsening of manners which always follows a great war has embittered the rival jurisdictions, and deprived Free Masonry altogether of those elements of high-minded enthusiasms with regard to the great problems of Society which still stirred even its most degenerate sections half a century ago, when Hargrave Jennings, Godfrey Higgins, Gerald Massey, Kenneth MacKenzie, John Yarker, Theodor Reuss, Wynn Westcott, and others, were still seeking Truth in its traditions and endeavouring to erect a temple of Concord in which men of all creeds and races might worship in amity.

I attempted to make the appeal of the new system universal by combining it with a practical system of fraternal intercourse and mutual benefit. I formulated a scheme of insurance against all the accidents of life; the details are given in the Official Instructions and Essays published in Equinox III, I; and to set the example I transferred the whole of my property to trustees for the Order. The general idea is this; that every man should enjoy his possessions and the full fruits of his labours exactly as he does under the ordinary individualistic system, but the pooling of such possessions by

economy of administration, etc., leaves a surplus which can be used for the general purposes of the Order. I wished to introduce the benefits of co-operation without interfering with the individual absoluteness of the elements of the combination.

The plan promised excellently. The working expenses of the Order were almost negligibly small. We were therefore able to allow members to borrow in case of necessity, up to the total amount of their fees and subscriptions; to give them a month's holiday for less than a week would have cost an outsider; to save them all medical, legal, and similar expenses; to solve the problem of rent, and so on. We offered all the fabled advantages of Socialism without in any way interfering with individual dignity and independence.

S I can hardly be blamed for the catastrophe which has temporarily suspended the work. During the War the Grand Treasurer became insane. His character changed completely. He developed a form of persecution-mania, in which his oldest and best friends seemed to him to be conspiring against him. Abetted by a dishonest solicitor, he alienated the whole of the property of the Order with extraordinary thoroughness. He actually destroyed a

great part of the library; he falsified the figures; and after opposing all sorts of delays to the demand for his account, he actually made away with my very under-clothing. My only remaining resources were some £20,000 worth of books which he could not touch without paying the sum of £350 or so, which was due to the people with whom they were stored. I paid this amount in 1921, and the warehouseman then refused to hand over the books or to pay me the balance owing to me on their own statement. They trusted to be able to steal them, having heard that I was unable to find the money necessary to sue them.

I thus found myself after the war entirely penniless and without clothes, except for some of my Highland costumes which had been sent for repair to a tailor just before the outbreak of hostilities and had remained safely in storage. I do not regret these events, except that I grieve over the calamity to my brother. I believe it to have been part of the plan of the Gods that I should be compelled to face the world entirely without other than moral resources. Such is certainly a supreme test of the essential strength of any economic proposal.

The system has justified itself astonishingly even in these unheard-of difficulties; I have been able to

establish a branch of the Order with entire leisure to work at high pressure at its own objects, without internal friction or economic collapse, although the income is derived exclusively from casual windfalls. If we were able to carry out the full principles of the system, we should already be so prosperous as to be able to devote ourselves exclusively to extending the advantages of the scheme to the world at large.

With regard to the original purposes of the Order, there can be no doubt that the reduction of the cumbersome mass of Masonic and similar matters to a simple intelligible and workable system enables people to enjoy the full advantages of initiations which, in the old days, were too multiple to be conferred even on those who devoted a disproportionate amount of their lives to the subject. The central secret of Free Masonry which was lost, and is found, is in daily use by initiates of our Order. Scientific facts are accumulating rapidly; and it is certain that within a short time we shall be able to dispose of a force more powerful than electricity and capable of more extended application, with the same certainty. Our qualitative results are unquestionable. The lack of quantitative methods, which has for so many centuries prevented the systematic

application of our knowledge, will soon be supplied.

I may say that the secret of the O. T. O., besides what has been mentioned above, has proved to all intents and purposes the simplification and concentration of the whole of my Magical knowledge. All my old methods have been unified in this new method. It does not exactly replace them, but it interprets them. It has also enabled me to construct a uniform type of engine for accomplishing anything that I will.

My association with Free Masonry was therefore destined to be more fertile than almost any other study, and that in a way despite itself. A word should be pertinent with regard to the question of secrecy. It has become difficult for me to take this matter very seriously. Knowing what the secret actually is, I cannot attach much importance to artificial mysteries. It is true that some of the so-called secrets are significant, but as a rule they are so only to those who already know what the secret is. Again, though the secret itself is of such tremendous import, and though it is so simple that I could disclose it and the principal rules for turning it to the best advantage, in a short paragraph, I might do so without doing much harm. For it cannot be used indiscriminately.

Much fun has been made of the Alchemists for insisting that the Great Work, an ostensibly chemical process, can only be performed by Adepts who fear and love God, and who practise chastity and numerous other virtues. But there is more common sense in such statements than meets the eye. A drunken debauchee cannot perform delicate manipulations in chemistry or physics; and the force with which the secret is concerned, while as material as the Becquerel emanations, is subtler than any yet known. To play great golf or great billiards, to observe delicate reactions, or to conduct recondite mathematical researches, demands more than physical superiorities. Even the theological requirements of Alchemy had meaning in those days. An Elizabethan who was not "at peace with God" was likely to be agitated and thereby unfitted for work demanding freedom from emotional distraction. I have found in practice that the secret of the O.T.O. cannot be used unworthily.

It is interesting in this connection to recall how it came into my possession. It had occurred to me to write a book "THE BOOK OF LIES, WHICH IS ALSO FALSE CALLED B R E A K S, THE WANDERINGS OR FALSIFICATIONS OF THE ONE THOUGHT OF FRATER PERDURABO WHICH THOUGHT IS ITSELF UNTRUE."

Each of its 93 chapters was to expound some profound Magical Dogma in an epigrammatic and sometimes humorous form. The Qabalistic value of the number of each chapter was to determine its subject. I wrote one or more daily at lunch or dinner by the aid of the God Dionysus. One of these chapters bothered me. I could not write it. I invoked Dionysus with peculiar fervour, but still without success. I went off in desperation to "change my luck," by doing something entirely contrary to my inclinations. In the midst of my disgust, the spirit came upon me, and I scribbled the chapter down by the light of a farthing dip. When I read it over, I was as discontented as before, but I stuck it into the book in a sort of anger at myself as a deliberate act of spite towards my readers.

Shortly after publication, the O. H. O. came to me. (At that time I did not realize that there was anything in the O. T. O. beyond a convenient compendium of the more important truths of Free Masonry.) He said that since I was acquainted with the supreme secret of the Order, I must be allowed the IX^o and obligated in regard to it. I protested that I knew no such secret. He said "But you have printed it in the plainest language." I said that I could not have done so because I did not know it.

He went to the bookshelves and, taking out a copy of The Book of Lies, pointed to a passage in the despised chapter. It instantly flashed upon me. The entire symbolism, not only of Free Masonry but of many other traditions, blazed upon my spiritual vision. From that moment the O.T.O. assumed its proper importance in my mind. I understood that I held in my hands the key to the future progress of humanity. I applied myself at once to learn all that he could teach me, finding to my extreme surprise that this was little enough. He fully understood the importance of the matter, and he was a man of considerable scientific attainment in many respects; yet he had never made a systematic study of the subject, and had not even applied his knowledge to his purposes, except in rare emergencies. As soon as I was assured by experience that the new force was in fact capable of accomplishing the theoretically predicable results, I devoted practically the whole of my spare time to a course of experiments.

I may conclude this chapter with the general remark that I believe that my proposals for reconstituting Free Masonry on the lines above laid down, should prove critically important. Civilization is crumbling under our eyes, and I believe that the best chance of saving what little is worth

saving, and re-building the Temple of the Holy Ghost on plans, and with material and workmanship, which shall be free from the errors of the former, lies with the O. T. O.

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