

BOOK XI

CHAPTER I

“The Vision of the Fire” is a vision of the world under every form in the world, with the world as life, fate, the One, or the Many, who are united in THE URN. There remains therefore (as far as the imagery) in the world “nothing but a pile of dust”. In a recurrent vision the world is to be foreseen, and the figure is that this dust is the “white ash”, which ash is prepared in order to accomplish completely the annihilation of creation, but the general idea is that the earthly or material part of the world is destroyed. That which has passed through fire, and is therefore, in a sense, of the nature of fire, the urn is endowed with a symbol expressive of the nature of the ashes which remain. The ashes is thus, of course, not a common ordinary ashen; but represents a sublimation of

The title of this chapter requires a detailed explanation. In "The Vision and the Voice", the attainment of the grade of Master of the Temple was symbolized by the Adept pouring every drop of his blood, that is his whole individual life, into the Cup of the Scarlet Woman, who represents Universal Impersonal Life. There remains therefore (to pursue the imagery) of the Adept "nothing but a little pile of dust". In a subsequent vision the Grade of Magus is foreshadowed; and the figure is that this dust is burnt into "a white ash", which ash is preserved in an Urn. It is difficult to convey the appropriateness of this symbolism, but the general idea is that the earthly or receptive part of the Master is destroyed. That which remains has passed through fire; and is therefore, in a sense, of the nature of fire. The Urn is engraved with a word or symbol expressive of the nature of the being whose ash is therein. The Magus is thus, of course, not a person in any ordinary sense; he represents a certain nature or

idea. To put it otherwise, we may say, the Magus is a Word. He is the Logos of the Aeon which he brings to pass.¹

The above is obscure. I perceive and deplore the fact. The idea may be more intelligible, examined in the light of history. Gautama Buddha was a Magus. His word or 'natta; that is, the whole of his system, which revolutionized the thought of Asia, may be considered as based upon and consecrated in that one Word, which is his denial of the existence of the Atman or "Soul" of Hindu philosophy.

Later, Mohammed also partially overturned an age by uttering his Word, Allah. But to us, practically, the most important case of the kind is that connected with such "Gods" as Dionysus, Osiris, Baldur, Marsyas, Adonis, Jesus, and other deifications of the unknown Magus concerned. The Old Pagan worship of the Mother-idea was superseded by the word IAO or its equivalents, which asserted the formula of the Dying God, and male the Male, dying to himself in the act of love, the engineer of the continued life of the race. This revolution cut at the root of all previous custom. Matriarchy vanished; self-sacrifice became the Cardinal

1. Cf. Rabelais: the final secret is in the Bottle inscribed TRING.

idea. To put it otherwise, we may say, the Magus is a Word. He is the Logos of the Aeon which he brings to pass.¹

The above is obscure. I perceive and deplore the fact. The idea may be more intelligible, examined in the light of history. Gautama Buddha was a Magus. His word was Anatta; that is, the whole of his system, which revolutionized the thought of Asia, may be considered as based upon and consecrated in that one Word, which is his denial of the existence of the Atman or "Soul" of Hindu philosophy.

Later, Mohammed also partially overturned an age by uttering his Word, Allah. But to us, practically, the most important case of the kind is that connected with such "Gods" as Dionysus, Osiris, Baldur, Marsyas, Adonis, Jesus, and other deifications of the unknown Magus concerned. The Old Pagan worship of the Mother-idea was superseded by the word IAO or its equivalents, which asserted the formula of the Dying God, and made the Male, dying to himself in the act of love, the engineer of the continued life of the race. This revolution cut at the root of all previous custom. Matriarchy vanished; self-sacrifice became the Cardinal

1. Cf. Rabelais: the final secret is in the Bottle inscribed TRING.

virtue, and so through infinite ramifications.

This idea of accomplishing the Great Work by a voluntary death was bound up with the belief that the sun died, and was reborn with the hours and the seasons. Astronomy having exploded this fiction, mankind was ready to gain a further comprehension of its own parallel case.

My own word, Thelema, supplies a new and scientifically sound basis for ethics. Self-sacrifice is a romantic folly; death does not end life; it is a temporary phase of life as night and winter are of terrestrial activity. Very many other conceptions are implied in this Word, Thelema. In particular, each individual is conceived as the centre of his own Universe, his essential nature determining his relations with similar beings and his proper course of action. It is obvious that these ideas are revolutionary. Yet to oppose them is to blaspheme science. Already, in a thousand ways, the principles involved have replaced those of the Dying God. Little remains but to accept Thelema consciously as a statement of law, so that any given problem may be solved by applying it to each case.

The man, Crowley, had been chosen to emanate this Law, that is, to exercise the essential function of a Magus. But he had yet to understand it, a task which involved the

virtue, and so through infinite ramifications.

This idea of accomplishing the Great Work by a voluntary death was bound up with the belief that the sun died, and was reborn with the hours and the seasons. Astronomy having exploded this fiction, mankind was ready to gain a further comprehension of its own parallel case.

My own word, Thelema, supplies a new and scientifically sound basis for ethics. Self-sacrifice is a romantic folly; death does not end life; it is a temporary phase of life as night and winter are of terrestrial activity. Very many other conceptions are implied in this Word, Thelema. In particular, each individual is conceived as the centre of his own Universe, his essential nature determining his relations with similar beings and his proper course of action. It is obvious that these ideas are revolutionary. Yet to oppose them is to blaspheme science. Already, in a thousand ways, the principles involved have replaced those of the Dying God. Little remains but to accept Thelema consciously as a statement of law, so that any given problem may be solved by applying it to each case.

The man, Crowley, had been chosen to enunciate this Law, that is, to exercise the essential function of a Magus. But he had yet to understand it, a task which involved the

crossing of the Abyss, already described; and further, to identify his Will with the Law, so that his personality might act as the focus of its energy. Before he could be that Pure Will whose name is that Word, he had to be purged by fire of all competing volitions; and this was done by those who had chosen him during this part of his life, which I am about to record.

He had indeed got rid of his sense of the personal self, yet his force was discharging itself dispersedly through all sorts of channels appropriate to the various elements in his nature. It was necessary to constrain every particle of his energy to move in one sole direction. (The physical analogy of a gase whose electrons are polarized and one not so organized, is not so bad.)

It must now be explained how he was able to understand what was happening to him in this initiation - his life from 1914 to 1919. The Grade of Magus is traditionally connected with the idea of the number 2; male creative energy, wisdom, and the expression of a single idea in terms of duality. It transmits the idea of the Divine Unity to its Feminine counterpart, the Understanding, somewhat as a man transmits the essence of his racial character to his wife so that he perceives his inmost nature, itself unintelligible to him

Re Cat. Wilson
Beauchamp letter 200
W. L. Loomis 8/20/00

932

crossing of the Abyss, already described; and further, to identify his Will with the Law, so that his personality might act as the focus of its energy. Before he could be that Pure Will whose name is that Word, he had to be purged by fire of all competing volitions; and this was done by those who had chosen him during this part of his life, which I am about to record.

He had indeed got rid of his sense of the personal self, yet his force was discharging itself dispersedly through all sorts of channels appropriate to the various elements in his nature. It was necessary to constrain every particle of his energy to move in one sole direction. (The physical analogy of a gas whose electrons are polarized and one not so organized, is not so bad.)

It must now be explained how he was able to understand what was happening to him in this initiation - his life from 1914 to 1919. The Grade of Magus is traditionally connected with the idea of the number 2; male creative energy, wisdom, and the expression of a single idea in terms of duality. It transmits the idea of the Divine Unity to its Feminine counterpart, the Understanding, somewhat as a man transmits the essence of his racial character to his wife so that he perceives his inmost nature, itself unintelligible to him

crossing of the Abyss, already described; and further, to identify his Will with the Law, so that his personality might act as the focus of its energy. Before he could be that Pure Will whose name is that Word, he had to be purged by fire of all competing volitions; and this was done by those who had chosen him during this part of his life, which I am about to record.

He had indeed got rid of his sense of the personal self, yet his force was discharging itself dispersedly through all sorts of channels appropriate to the various elements in his nature. It was necessary to constrain every particle of his energy to move in one sole direction. (The physical analogy of a gase whose electrons are polarized and one not so organized, is not so bad.)

It must now be explained how he was able to understand what was happening to him in this initiation - his life from 1914 to 1919. The Grade of Magus is traditionally connected with the idea of the number 3; male creative energy, wisdom, and the expression of a single idea in terms of duality. It transmits the idea of the Divine Unity to its Feminine counterpart, the Understanding, somewhat as a man transmits the essence of his racial character to his wife so that he perceives his inmost nature, itself unintelligible to him

directly, by observing the flowering of that essence in his son. The Hebrew title of the idea embodying these characteristics is Chokmah, whose numerical value is 73. This fact appears arbitrary and irrelevant; but it forms part of the symbolic language in which the praeterhuman Intelligences who control the Initiate communicate with him. Thus, my adventures in America seemed a series of stupidities for a long time. Nothing I did produced the expected results. I found myself suddenly switched from one episode to another so irrationally that I began to feel that I had somehow got into a world where causality did not obtain. The mystery only became clear when analysis disclosed that the events which threw me about in this manner occurred at almost exact intervals of 73 days, or of some multiple or sub-multiple thereof. I understood from this that 73 terrestrial days made up a single day of initiation. As soon as I had grasped this singular fact, I was able to interpret each such period by considering how its events influenced my spiritual development. In this I succeeded so well that towards the end I became able to predict the sort of thing that would happen to me beforehand, which helped me to meet circumstances intelligently and make the fullest and most appropriate use of them.

One further point with regard to this initiation must be mentioned, though it sounds so fantastic even to myself that I can scarcely smother a smile. In the ancient ceremonies of the Egyptians the Candidate was confronted or guided on his journey by priests wearing the masks of various animals, the traditional character of each serving to indicate the function of its wearer. Quaint as it sounds, I found myself discovering an almost stupefying physical resemblance to divers symbolic animals in those individuals whose influence on me, during their appointed period, was paramount.

From these and other indications I have been able to construct an intellectual image of the initiation; and if these preliminary remarks be thoroughly understood, it should be easy to follow the course of my progress to the Grade of Magus.

The first period of my sojourn in the United States was consecrated to my preparation for more active instruction by isolation and darkness. I had arrived with a not inconsiderable reputation, both as a man of letters and as a Magician. I had numerous connections with prominent people in both camps, and was furnished with excellent introductions. I was positively stupefied to discover, by the most baffling

experiences, that by none of these means could I make my way into public life. I lectured with apparent success; yet literally nothing came of it. I was welcomed by editors and publishers, written up and entertained with surprising enthusiasm; yet I failed to sell a single poem, story, essay, or even article (except in the special case of political writing in one paper of no credit) and no one would hear of publishing a book. Occasionally, a man promised great things; but the arrangements always fell through suddenly and unreasonably. I had a host of friends in the city, yet days and weeks would pass without my seeing a soul except in the most casual way.

I was even unable to practise my personal Magick. An inscrutable paralysis had me by the spine. After many days I said to myself that I must break up these conditions forcibly; I would a-wooing go whether my mother would let me or no. I set my teeth and began my ritual. But I was now confronted by a new obstacle. I could not do the proposed operations, urgently necessary as they were. I found myself forced to a daily invocation of Mercury (the God corresponding to the Grade of Magus) with whom I did not consciously want to have any dealings. For three times three-and-seventy days I remained thus blind and impotent,

oppressed and overwhelmed by the sense of my utter failure and futility, although on the surface all the conditions were in my favour, and there was not anywhere one single visible obstacle. I met dozens of interesting and important people; yet on none of these did my personality seem to produce the slightest effect, while (equally) none had any message for me. The surprise of the situation can only be understood if it be remembered that during my whole life I had never failed to attract eager attention wherever I went, to bring off whatever I planned, and to feel myself in every way a centre of electric energy.

My paralysis extended to every relation of life. I had never known what it was to lack human love; and now, not ^{like Waddell} only did I fail to find a single friend, but when Laylah came from England to join me, I recognized instantly that she was a stranger.

The three Chokmah-days (let me so call these periods of 75 days) ended on the 9th of June, 1915. On the 10th the oppression and obscurity were over. I was asked to dinner by a journalistic friend. He had bidden two women to meet me; one, prominent as a poetess; the other, as an actress. I will call one the Cat, the other the Snake; Pasht and Apophis. The Cat was ideally beautiful beyond

my dearest dream, and her speech was starry with spirituality. The Snake glittered with the loveliness of lust; but she was worn and weary with the disappointment of insatiable desire. Her intellect was brilliant but cynical. She had lost faith in the universe. Her speech was like a sword, to shear away the subtlest sophistries by which we so pitifully persuade ourselves that the perfection which we seek is possible.

A magnetic current was instantly established between the three of us. In the Cat, I saw my Ideal incarnate, and even during that first dinner we gave ourselves to each other by that language of limbs whose eloquence escapes the curiosity of fellow-guests. It was the more emphatic because we were both aware that the Snake had set herself to encompass me with the coils of her evil intelligence.

The sequel was as strangely significant of the symbolic character of the ordeal as its beginning. I took tea with the Cat at her club the next afternoon. We lost no time. She told me - a string of lies - of her loveless marriage with an old satyr who had snatched her almost from the cradle. She was about to divorce him; and having loved me at first sight, not sensually, but as my spiritual sister, we could be married quite soon. We sealed the sacrament with a kiss;

my dearest dream, and her speech was starry with spirituality. The Snake glittered with the loveliness of lust; but she was worn and weary with the disappointment of insatiable desire. Her intellect was brilliant but cynical. She had lost faith in the universe. Her speech was like a sword, to shear away the subtlest sophistries by which we so pitifully persuade ourselves that the perfection which we seek is possible.

A magnetic current was instantly established between the three of us. In the Cat, I saw my Ideal incarnate, and even during that first dinner we gave ourselves to each other by that language of limbs whose eloquence escapes the curiosity of fellow-guests. It was the more emphatic because we were both aware that the Snake had set herself to encompass me with the coils of her evil intelligence.

The sequel was as strangely significant of the symbolic character of the ordeal as its beginning. I took tea with the Cat at her club the next afternoon. We lost no time. She told me - a string of lies - of her loveless marriage with an old satyr who had snatched her almost from the cradle. She was about to divorce him; and having loved me at first sight, not sensually, but as my spiritual sister, we could be married quite soon. We sealed the sacrament with a kiss;

and there was no reason why, in the ordinary course of events, we should not have proceeded to an immediate liaison. But the Gods wished to test me. I really believed in her spirituality. I really loved her with a love more exalted than aught in all my experience. Yet in my soul I knew, against all reason, that she was a fraud: her aspirations affectations; her purity a pose; a false, heartless, brainless, perverse imitation of my Ideal. I fought down the intuition; I swore with all the passionate power of the poet that she was what she seemed. I staked my happiness on her truth, and made oath to be utterly worthy of her love.

They tested me by sending her out of the city for nearly a month. I endured the torture of absence, of doubt, of despair, with all the might of my manhood. To confirm myself ceremonially in this course of combat, I saw her rival occasionally, so as to affirm my absolute devotion to my ideal. To repulse the demons of realism, I set my foot upon the neck of the Snake that strove to shake my faith in the existence of perfection.

On July the 8th, the Cat returned to New York. Love had conquered. We consecrated ourselves that same night to its service. But though the Cat had given herself thus

simply and straightforwardly, she enjoyed the exercise of her power over me by tormenting me with doubts of her truth. She pretended to be disgusted by the sexual side of love, and in a thousand ways kept me on pins and needles. Not many days elapsed before she suddenly left the city without leaving word for me. She had driven me to such desperation that I nearly lost control of myself when I heard that she had gone.

Summoning my veteran chief-of-staff, General Gynonias-tix, I was readily convinced that this was a case for employing the strategy familiar to all men who have made up their minds to preserve their independence even at the cost of a broken heart. I telephoned straightway to the Snake and asked her to lunch, after which we went round to my apartment. I was not moved by love; I simply wanted to torture the woman I hated as the woman I loved was torturing me. I made no advances; I was brutally rude; and to clinch the matter, I inflicted physical pain.

I had unusually pointed canine teeth. I fix a fold of flesh between the two points; and then, beating time with one hand, suddenly snap, thus leaving two neat indentations on the flesh concerned. I have often done this as a demonstration; often as a jest or a psychological experiment.

sometimes as an intimation of affection, but never till then as a callous and cruel insult. Probably I misjudged my own motives. Somehow or other the genuineness and integrity of this lost soul began to appeal to me. I began to contrast her hard bitter cynical disbelief with the soft honied superficial assurance of her rival: before I knew what I was doing, our duel had developed into a death-struggle in which my hate and hopelessness strove to swamp themselves in a surge of amorous frenzy.

The spasm swept me away. I no longer remember how we went out and dined, or how we got down to her house. Every nerve in my soul was screaming with implacable pain. Through it all I stuck to my guns; I never forgot that I loved the other woman and all that she stood for. But when at last exhaustion ended the orgy, twelve hours or more of indescribably insane intoxication, I sank into a sleep deeper than death - and woke at dawn to find myself inscrutably purged of iniquity. I knew myself innocent in a sense more sublime than any imagination can conceive, and from this state I came mysteriously into a trance of a kind which I had never experienced. Its occurrence marks a definite stage in my spiritual career.

It is so important to the understanding of my life that

it must be quoted verbatim from the record which I made immediately on my returning to my apartment - where I received an additional proof that I had come successfully through the ordeal in the shape of a telegram from Pasht explaining why she had left the city, and how she had been prevented from letting me know. (Another string of lies!)

This diary does not give the whole story

"Result: This is one of the greatest experiences of my life. Curious that the 1906 success also came through a magical Thanksgiving under stress of passion. I went off to sleep almost at once. In the morning I woke early, before 7, in an absolutely renewed physical condition. I had the clean fresh feeling of healthy boyhood, and was alert and active as a kitten - post talem mortem! Mentally, I woke into Pure Love. This was symbolized as a cube¹ of blue-white light like a diamond of the best quality. It was lucid, translucent, self-luminous, and yet not radiating forth. I suppose because there was Nothing Else in the Cosmos. This verb Love is intransitive; the love has no object. My gross mind vanished; when, later on, memory-pictures of Hilarion² arose, they were rejected automatically. All the desire - quality, the clinging, the fear, were no more; it was Pure Love without object or attachment. I cannot describe the quality of the emancipation given by this most wonderful experience. Aum."

1. I say "a cube"; yet its most salient property was that it was without boundaries. Experience of similar trances is necessary for the understanding of this statement, which is a perfectly proper expression of a perfectly observed fact, despite its intellectual self-contradiction.
2. This was the "mystic Name" chosen for herself by the Cat. She had a smattering of Theosophy, and remembered this as being the name of some "Mahatma".

it must be quoted verbatim from the record which I made immediately on my returning to my apartment - where I received an additional proof that I had come successfully through the ordeal in the shape of a telegram from Pasht explaining why she had left the city, and how she had been prevented from letting me know. (Another string of lies!)

This diary does not survive elsewhere

"Result: This is one of the greatest experiences of my life. Curious that the 1906 success also came through a magical Thanksgiving under stress of passion. I went off to sleep almost at once. In the morning I woke early, before 7, in an absolutely renewed physical condition. I had the clean fresh feeling of healthy boyhood, and was alert and active as a kitten - post talem mortem! Mentally, I woke into Pure Love. This was symbolized as a cube¹ of blue-white light like a diamond of the best quality. It was lucid, translucent, self-luminous, and yet not radiating forth. I suppose because there was Nothing Else in the Cosmos. This verb Love is intransitive; the love has no object. My gross mind vanished; when, later on, memory-pictures of Hilarion² arose, they were rejected automatically. All the desire - quality, the clinging, the fear, were no more; it was Pure Love without object or attachment. I cannot describe the quality of the emancipation given by this most wonderful experience. Aum."

1. I say "a cube"; yet its most salient property was that it was without boundaries. Experience of similar trances is necessary for the understanding of this statement, which is a perfectly proper expression of a perfectly observed fact, despite its intellectual self-contradiction.

2. This was the "mystic Name" chosen for herself by the Cat. She had a smattering of Theosophy, and remembered this as being the name of some "Mahatma".

it must be quoted verbatim from the record which I made immediately on my returning to my apartment - where I received an additional proof that I had come successfully through the ordeal in the shape of a telegram from Pasht explaining why she had left the city, and how she had been prevented from letting me know. (Another string of lies!)

This diary does not give clearance

"Result: This is one of the greatest experiences of my life. Curious that the 1908 success also came through a magical Thanksgiving under stress of passion. I went off to sleep almost at once. In the morning I woke early, before 7, in an absolutely renewed physical condition. I had the clean fresh feeling of healthy boyhood, and was alert and active as a kitten - post talem mortem! Mentally, I woke into Pure Love. This was symbolized as a cube¹ of blue-white light like a diamond of the best quality. It was lucid, translucent, self-luminous, and yet not radiating forth. I suppose because there was Nothing Else in the Cosmos. This verb Love is intransitive; the love has no object. My gross mind vanished; when, later on, memory-pictures of Hilarion² arose, they were rejected automatically. All the desire - quality, the clinging, the fear, were no more; it was Pure Love without object or attachment. I cannot describe the quality of the emancipation given by this most wonderful experience. Aum."

1. I say "a cube"; yet its most salient property was that it was without boundaries. Experience of similar trances is necessary for the understanding of this statement, which is a perfectly proper expression of a perfectly observed fact, despite its intellectual self-contradiction.
2. This was the "mystic Name" chosen for herself by the Cat. She had a smattering of Theosophy, and remembered this as being the name of some "Mahatma".

It may not at first sight be apparent why this rather silly and commonplace intrigue should merit the attention which I paid it. The reason is this: just as the Master of the Temple is sworn to interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with his soul, so is the Magus to make his every act an expression of his Magical formula. Being in course of initiation at the time, I did not realise what was going on. It is only on reflection that I have come to understand that my relations with these two women constituted an ordeal; a test of my fitness for the Grade. It is written "as below, so above"; and my reaction to these women furnished a sure indication of how I should act in the greatest circumstances. For having succeeded in completely harmonizing the various energies of my being, there was no longer any danger that I should regulate my actions by conflicting standards. When therefore I rejected the Snake and chose the Cat, I was affirming magically that I would insist upon realizing my Ideal (most people idealise the real - which they dare not face) even though I knew it not to exist, and was broken-hearted by the continual mockery of the deception.

The Word of a Magus is always a falsehood. For it is a creative Word; there would be no object in uttering it if

it merely stated an existing fact in nature. The task of a Magus is to make his Word, the expression of his Will, come true. It is the most formidable labour that the mind can conceive.

Having made this decision, my next task was to cause my Word to become flesh. The morning of the fifth Chokmah day was devoted to the begetting of a son. I wanted to fulfil the love which I had found. As before, I understood nothing of this; I simply wanted to have a child by the Cat, and performed a series of Magical Operations with this object. I did not know that I was attempting a physical impossibility.

(I must digress to explain that every cause must produce its proper effect; so that, in this case, the son whom I willed to beget came to birth on a plane other than the material.) I must have been very blind indeed not to recognise my true situation, if for no other reason than the following. The celebration of the Autumnal Equinox coincided with an Operation with the object above stated. It was the last of this series of Operations, though I had no reason whatever for stopping, and only discovered the fact, much to my surprise, long after. Now, the Word of this Equinox was "Nebulae", which evidently points to

the conditions which result in the birth of a star. What I had really done was therefore to beget a Magical Son. So, precisely nine months afterwards, that is, at the ^{Summer Solstice} Summer Solstice of 1916, Frater O. I. V. (the motto of C. Stansfeld Jones as a Probationer) entirely without my knowledge, became a Babe of the Abyss.

I failed completely to understand the telegrams in which he announced the fact. His action was unprecedented in the whole history of Magick. It was utterly beyond my imagination to conceive of such an occurrence. He, on the other hand, while ignorant of my Operation in the Autumn, understood perfectly at the time what he was doing; that he was being born as "The Child" predicted in the Book of the Law. This interpretation does not rest upon any arbitrary ideas, either on his part or mine. The Book of the Law speaks of this "Child" as "One", as if with absolute vagueness. But the motto which Frater O.I.V. had taken on becoming a Neophyte was "Achad" which is the Hebrew word for "One". It is further predicted that this "Child" shall discover the Key of the interpretation of the Book itself, and this I had been unable to do. (The Book asserts that I should not succeed in this, astounding as it may seem, as I had 95 well in my mind, also 31 (93 ÷ 3)

as the value of AL and LA, whose importance in the Book I understood perfectly. The text literally teems with hints; yet I never thought of 31 as the Key. Such blindness is a miracle more surprising than any amount of perspicacity.) And in actual fact he did so discover that Key, two and a half years later.

Those unacquainted with our methods may ask for the basis of the assurance that the key in question really fitted the lock. The answer is that the moment it was communicated to me, I applied it to a number of obscure passages in the book, and found that it elucidated them completely. Incidentally, I received another very striking proof of the genuineness of the discovery. Every six months, at the Equinoxes, it becomes my duty to obtain a Word from the Gods, whose symbolic meaning indicates the events of importance to the Order which will occur in the course of the ensuing Equinox.

(For instance, in the Autumn of 1918, the Word was "Eleven". Apart from its special technical meanings, there was this: that the Armistice was signed at 11 o'clock on the 11th day of the 11th month of the year.) Now, the Word of the Equinox in which this key was discovered was SAC. I was greatly puzzled to interpret this word, and

it did not become clear in the light of the events of the period as it usually does. Only now, when I am writing this account, some four years later, has it suddenly flashed upon me that the numerical value of the word is identical with that of the Key! There are numerous other confirmations; but the above ought to suffice the most sceptical that the Author of the Book of the Law possessed an accurate knowledge of future events.

The next important stage in my initiation was the formal proclamation of my attainment. As a Master of the Temple I wore a seal-ring; the lapis lazuli, engraved with my cipher, was covered by a platinum lid studded with pyramids to represent the City in which the Masters of the Temple abide. On October 12, in the train from Chicago

1. SAC = 300 1 8 309 XX XI
 (Tarot Trumps corresponding to these letters). 31.
 The compound letter (Greek λ) in special reference to this combination of Tarot Trumps is the Third of the Words of value 31 (AL and LA) which complete 95. A volume might be (and has been) written on the fitness of this whole symbolism.

SAC = 90 1 20 111 Aleph
 1 "One". (Frater O.I.V. and the predicted discoverer of the Key.) Both spellings are valid to reveal the Word and its Discoverer! Such intricacy of device is one of the most evident proofs of the praeterhuman intelligence of the Author of the Book of the Law.

to Vancouver, while engaged in my annual Sammasati meditation upon my Path since the previous Birthday, I was suddenly impelled to tear off this lid. A little later I left the train; and on reaching the hotel found that the lapis lazuli had dropped out of its setting. In the morning I sought and found it on the platform of the station, broken into seven pieces. I picked them up and put them away with the utmost care in my travelling safe, intending to distribute them on my death to my nearest representatives. Just over a year later, looking through my belongings, the packet was missing. (I have noticed that every time I receive an important initiation, some cherished article mysteriously disappears. It may be a pipe, a pen, or what not: but it is always an object which is impregnated with my personality by constant use or special veneration. I cannot remember a single occasion when this has not happened. The theory is that the elementals or familiar spirits in attendance on the Magician exact, so to speak, a tip on all important occasions of rejoicing.) My idea in tearing off the lid was to proclaim ceremonially that I would come out of the darkness of the City of the Pyramids. (The exact period between these two initiations was predicted during the former; of course, in symbolic language, whose

meaning appeared only on fulfilment.)

By thus accepting the Grade of Magus I had incurred certain responsibilities. Previously, I had taken the attitude that, while the Book of the Law had been given to the world through me, and though I was ineluctably bound thereby, I could stand aloof to some extent. I could consider myself as a Magician pledged to the Law, accepting it, and working by its formula: but not identified with its promulgation to the exclusion of all other aims.

My formal attainment of the Grade involved my identifying myself with the Word Thelema. My personality must be completely merged in it. On realizing this I realized also how carefully I had avoided compromising myself in this respect. I had never openly proclaimed the Law in the first person, as one might say, either in speech or writing.

Accordingly, when (on arrival at San Francisco) I found myself invited to address a semi-public gathering, I began my speech with the words "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law", and proceeded as best I could to explain their import.

Again, on the last day of the year, whose midnight I habitually devote to a meditation on the past, culminating

in a formulation of my future career, I was moved to write what was shortly afterwards published (1) as a pamphlet in England, (2) as an article in The International, New York, (3) in Equinox Vol.III, No. 1, (4) as a pamphlet in Australia by Frater Ahah.¹ In this I summarized shortly the events which had led to my attainment of the Grade, and explained that I was thereby committed to an irrevocable and absolute identification of myself with my office as the Logos of the Aeon of Horus. For the future my whole essence must be conterminous with that of the Word, and my dynamical formula with that of its utterance.

I continued by setting forth the import and purport of that Word. I announced that since "Every man and every woman is a star", each of us is defined and determined by a set of co-ordinates, has a True Will proper and necessary, the dynamic expression of that nature. The conclusion from these premises is that the sole and whole duty of each

1. G.H. Frater AHAH 6° = 5° R.H. et A. C. is the humblest and simplest of the Brethren of the Order. He has worked with his hands since he was 9 years old and he understands and loves the Law and Its Logos as a child does its Mother and Father. He has my respect and affection as no other of my Brethren: for he represents to me Mankind incarnate at its weakest (and therefore strongest) and noblest (and therefore most "common"). He is, in a word, that "Man" of whom I am, being 666 (the number of a man) and whom I love and serve. An illuminating incident: he cannot spell, but under inspiration writes as none has ever done save one - John Bunyan!

of us is, having discovered the purpose for which he or she is fitted, to devote every energy to its accomplishment.

It need hardly be said that the theory of ethics thus outlined involves the consideration of many difficult and important problems. I did not understand at that time the extent of the implication, and have devoted immense labour in recent years to the solution of the theorems which are corollary to the fundamental proposition. It must suffice for the present to record the writing of this message. The act was the ceremonial gesture significant of my attainment: as one may say, the King's speech at the opening of the Parliament of the New Aeon.

of us is, having discovered the purpose for which he or she is fitted, to devote every energy to its accomplishment.

It need hardly be said that the theory of ethics thus outlined involves the consideration of many difficult and important problems. I did not understand at that time the extent of the implication, and have devoted immense labour in recent years to the solution of the theorems which are corollary to the fundamental proposition. It must suffice for the present to record the writing of this message. The act was the ceremonial gesture significant of my attainment: as one may say, the King's speech at the opening of the Parliament of the New Aeon.

The dissolution in my heart was completed by accident, and the Seventh Cheshuah-Day found me in the same attitude (Quote Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol.
"All men slay the things they love, etc.") - that a minister was appointed to comfort and console me. Exactly as before, every single relation that I had established snapped suddenly. I had plenty of friends: but none of them meant anything. However, my conscience was supreme. On the one hand, the despairing cynicism of the wise realist Snake, on the other, the heartless vanity of the foolish idealist Cat, had left no hope for humanity.

In this extremity, I met a very rare animal. A woman! she was a regular street-walker. She had been familiar with hardships, calumnies, opprobria, disease, and poverty from her cradle; but she possessed every noble quality to

The Sixth Cheshuah-Day was devoted to a terrible ordeal. I had by this time been enlightened as to the falsehood of the Cat; it therefore became my duty to slay her. I had created Truth by means of an untrustworthy material, and must therefore no longer cling to the image of the ideal. I must destroy it, well knowing that it would never again be possible for me to delude myself with poetical puppets. I must face reality for good and all.

(Insert story of Massacre of the Cats.)

? Edition missing

(Quote Oscar Wilde's Ballad of Reading Gaol.
"All men slay the things they love, etc.")

The Sixth Chokmah-Day was devoted to a terrible ordeal. I had by this time been enlightened as to the falseness of the Cat; it therefore became my duty to slay her. I had created Truth by means of an untrustworthy material, and must therefore no longer cling to the image of the ideal. I must destroy it, well knowing that it would never again be possible for me to delude myself with poetical puppets. I must face reality for good and all.

(Insert story of Massacre of the Cat.)

The desolation in my heart was unspeakably dreadful, and the Seventh Chokmah-Day found me in the same solitude and silence as the first three; with this difference: that a minister was appointed to comfort and console me. Exactly as before, every single relation that I had established snapped suddenly. I had plenty of friends; but none of them meant anything. However, my consolation was supreme. On the one hand, the despairing cynicism of the wise realist Snake, on the other, the heartless vanity of the foolish idealist Cat, had left me hopeless for humanity.

In this extremity, I met a very rare animal. A woman! She was a regular street-walker. She had been familiar with hardships, callousness, oppression, shame, and poverty from her cradle; but she possessed every noble quality to the full. Hers was the true pride, generosity, purity, and passion to which the Cat so basely pretended; and here also the clear-insighted intelligence, the wide experience, and deep insight of the Snake. Yet she had faced and conquered her foes, instead of acquiescing in despair.

I am not one of those sentimental slop-mongers who are always finding angels in the mud. On the whole, my experience of outcast women had not provoked any excess of sympathy. I thought that in most cases their own defects were

responsible for their misfortunes. Indeed, I failed to realize consciously the sublimity of this girl until long afterwards. But to-day, I see clearly enough the nature of her mission; which ended as strangely as it began, at the close of the Chokmah-Day. She disappeared into the "Ewigkeit" without a word, and all my efforts to trace her were fruitless.

This day of repose and reward had prepared me for my next ordeal. At the beginning of the Eighth Day appeared a Monkey and an Owl. Once again I was confronted with the necessity of choosing between two ideas. The Monkey had all the insensate passion, volubility, and vanity of the less developed primates. She was a great artist and a great lover; yet in each of these functions she displayed the utmost insanity of conceit. The Owl, on the other hand, was incapable of sublimity, and at the same time free from affectation. She was as pleasant and sensible as the Monkey was excruciating and absurd.

The nature of my ordeal was twofold. In the first crisis, it was put up to me to do the right thing without permitting any interference from personal inclination or consideration of the ultimate consequences of my line of action. The test was applied at a conference of the parties

The Monkey: Raten Beni, Mrs. Womawaswami
The Owl: (probably) Jorda von Kophke 954

responsible for their misfortunes. Indeed, I failed to realize consciously the sublimity of this girl until long afterwards. But to-day, I see clearly enough the nature of her mission; which ended as strangely as it began, at the close of the Chokmah-Day. She disappeared into the "Ewigkeit" without a word, and all my efforts to trace her were fruitless. I found myself completely masterless.

This day of repose and reward had prepared me for my next ordeal. At the beginning of the Eighth Day appeared a Monkey and an Owl. Once again I was confronted with the necessity of choosing between two ideas. The Monkey had all the insensate passion, vulgarity, and vanity of the less developed primates. She was a great artist and a great lover; yet in each of these functions she displayed the utmost insanity of conceit. The Owl, on the other hand, was incapable of sublimity, and at the same time free from affectation. She was as pleasant and sensible as the Monkey was exasperating and absurd.

The nature of my ordeal was twofold. In the first, it was put up to me to do the right thing without permitting any interference from personal inclination or consideration of the ultimate consequences of my line of action. The test was applied at a conference of the parties

The Monkey student was from a woman
The Owl probably sister to the Monk 954

responsible for their misfortunes. Indeed, I failed to realize consciously the sublimity of this girl until long afterwards. But to-day, I see clearly enough the nature of her mission; which ended as strangely as it began, at the close of the Chokmah-Day. She disappeared into the "Ewigkeit" without a word, and all my efforts to trace her were fruitless.

This day of repose and reward had prepared me for my next ordeal. At the beginning of the Eighth Day appeared a Monkey and an Owl. Once again I was confronted with the necessity of choosing between two ideas. The Monkey had all the insensate passion, volubility, and vanity of the less developed primates. She was a great artist and a great lover; yet in each of these functions she displayed the utmost insanity of conceit. The Owl, on the other hand, was incapable of sublimity, and at the same time free from affectation. She was as pleasant and sensible as the Monkey was excruciating and absurd.

The nature of my ordeal was twofold. In the first crisis, it was put up to me to do the right thing without permitting any interference from personal inclination or consideration of the ultimate consequences of my line of action. The test was applied at a conference of the parties

chiefly concerned. The Monkey's husband wanted me to take her off his hands. A divorce was to be arranged and a marriage to follow. Asked to give my views, I began: "I have no personal feeling in the matter." The words were a bombshell. Both husband and wife realized, to their amazed horror, that they had neither of them any means of influencing my conduct. I found myself completely master of the situation. It is only necessary to destroy in oneself the roots of those motives which determine a man's course, in order to enjoy the omnipotence and immunity of a God.

The second point of the ordeal concerned the choice between the women. The Owl offered all the delights of carefree ease and placid pleasure; but there was nothing to be gained. The Monkey represented a life of turmoil and anxiety, with few magnificent moments amid the hours of fretfulness; but progress was possible. It was as if the Secret Chiefs had asked me: "Are you content to enjoy the fruit of your attainment and live at peace with the world, surrounded by affection, respect, and comfort, or will you devote yourself to mastering and fertilizing mankind, despite the prospect of continual disquietude and almost certain disappointment?" I chose the Monkey. I was

perfectly willing to make the best of the Owl, in my spare time, so to speak; but I accepted the responsibility attached to her rival without reservation.

A single day was sufficient for this part of the initiation. At the dawn of the Ninth day all had been arranged. The Monkey went to England to wind up certain of her affairs, and the Owl had no string on me. I was thus able to undertake a Great Magical Retirement in June. For this purpose I went to live in a cottage on the shores of Lake Pasquaney in New Hampshire. My initiation now took on a more strictly Magical character. I was able to enter into direct communication with the realities of existence instead of conducting them by means of symbolic gestures.

My very first experience was the announcement of the birth of my "Son", as above mentioned. I did not understand the matter in that light but in this: that by means of my system of training, a man had crossed the Abyss and become a Master of the Temple in a much shorter period than had ever been known. My own case had been extraordinary. Eleven years had sufficed me to accomplish a task which in human experience had never required much less than triple the time. Moreover, the conditions had been almost uniquely favourable for me. I possessed all the qualities,

all the resources requisite. Life and the Universe
had In the case of O.I.V. the period was shorter still,
and by much; while for him the conditions had been wholly
adverse. He was obliged to earn his living in a distaste-
ful and exhausting manner. His domestic circumstances were
atrocious. He had not the means of travel or even of
scholastic research. I could only conclude that his
success was almost wholly due to the excellence of the
system which I had given to the world. In short, it was
the justification of my whole life, the unique and supreme
reward of my immeasurable toils.

Fortified and rejoiced by this good news, I began at
once to devote myself to research in the strict sense of the
word. This I had taken seven degrees. Nothing particular

And then the fun began! I found myself unable to do
anything of the sort. I am not quite sure how the circum-
stances responsible for this fit in with my general situation,
but they are well worthy of record for their own sake.

I have mentioned elsewhere that in the bosom of the
Sanctuary of the Gnosis of the O.T.O. is cherished a magical
formula, extremely simple and practical, for attaining any
desired object. It is, however, peculiarly appropriate to
the principal operations of alchemy, most of all the

all the resources requisite.

In the case of O.I.V. the period was shorter still, and by much; while for him the conditions had been wholly adverse. He was obliged to earn his living in a distasteful and exhausting manner. His domestic circumstances were atrocious. He had not the means of travel or even of scholastic research. I could only conclude that his success was almost wholly due to the excellence of the system which I had given to the world. In short, it was the justification of my whole life, the unique and supreme reward of my immeasurable toils.

Fortified and rejoiced by this good news, I began at once to devote myself to research in the strict sense of the word.

And then the fun began! I found myself unable to do anything of the sort. I am not quite sure how the circumstances responsible for this fit in with my general situation, but they are well worthy of record for their own sake.

I have mentioned elsewhere that in the bosom of the Sanctuary of the Gnosis of the O.T.O. is cherished a magical formula, extremely simple and practical, for attaining any desired object. It is, however, peculiarly appropriate to the principal operations of alchemy, most of all the

preparation of the Elixir of Life and the Universal Medicine. At first I used this method casually. It was only when various unexpectedly and even astoundingly successful operations compelled my attention, that I devoted myself systematically and scientifically to the serious study and practice of it. For some two and a half years I had conducted a careful and strenuous research into the conditions of success. Experience had shown me that sometimes this was complete, but at others partial or even negligible, while not infrequently the work would result in failure, perhaps almost amounting to disaster.

Just before leaving New York I had prepared by this method an elixir whose virtue should be to restore youth, and of this I had taken seven doses. Nothing particular happened at first; and it never occurred to me that it might be imprudent to continue.

I was mistaken. Hardly had I reached my hermitage before I was suddenly seized with an attack of youth in its acutest form. All mental activity became distasteful. I turned into a mere vehicle of physical energy. I could hardly bring myself to read a book even of the lightest kind. I could not satisfy my instincts by paddling the canoe which I had imported. I spent about an hour every

day in housework and cooking; the remaining fifteen hours of waking life were filled by passionately swinging an axe without interruption. I could hardly stop to smoke a pipe.

There was no self-delusion about this, as I might have persuaded myself to believe in the absence of external evidence. But this was furnished by an irrefutable monument. I wanted to build a wharf for my canoe. With this object I cut down a tree and trimmed a twenty-two foot log. Its circumference at the smaller end was too great for my arms to meet round it. My only instrument for moving this was a wooden pole. The tree had fallen about 100 yards from the bank; and though it was downhill all the way to the lake, the ground was very uneven and the path so narrow that it was impossible to roll the log at all. Nevertheless, I moved it single-handed into the lake, where I fixed it by driving piles. Passers-by spread the story of the Hermit-with-superhuman-strength, and people came from all parts to gaze upon the miracle. I should mention that normally my physical strength is far below the average, especially for work of this kind. It is quite an effort for me to shift a sixty pound load for even a few feet.

So much for the sufficiently remarkable truth. Of course imagination improved on the story. I received an indignant letter from New York from the lady who had lent me the cottage, reproaching me for having built a dam right across the lake, to the detriment of navigation!

This spasm of energy continued without abatement for some three weeks, after which I gradually recovered the balance of my normal faculties. The effect of my operations was now to increase the energy of each of them, but in reasonable proportion. I was now able to begin my proposed magical research.

In order to erect the temple of the New Aeon, it appeared necessary to make a thorough clearance of the rubbish of its ruined predecessors. I therefore planned and executed a Magical operation to banish the "Dying God". I had written in "The Wizard Way":

"He had crucified a toad
In the Basilisk abode."

and now I did so. The theory of the Operation was to identify the toad with the "Dying God" and slay it. At the same time I caused the elemental spirit of the slain reptile to serve me.

The result was immediately apparent. A girl of the

x see also Staves Battalion for de Val

So much for the sufficiently remarkable truth. Of course imagination improved on the story. I received an indignant letter from New York from the lady who had lent me the cottage, reproaching me for having built a dam right across the lake, to the detriment of navigation!

This spasm of energy continued without abatement for some three weeks, after which I gradually recovered the balance of my normal faculties. The effect of my operations had been to increase the energy of each of them, but in a reasonable proportion. I was now able to begin my proposed magical research.

In order to erect the temple of the New Aeon, it appeared necessary to make a thorough clearance of the rubbish of its ruined predecessors. I therefore planned and executed a magical operation to banish the "Dying God". I had written in "The Wizard Way": 1000 words. I had intended to confine

myself to death. "He had crucified a toad but he went In the Basilisk abode."

and now I did so. The theory of the operation was to identify the toad with the "Dying God" and slay it. At the same time I caused the elemental spirit of the slain reptile to serve me.

The result was immediately apparent. A girl of the

* See later Stanzas Battalion for details

So much for the sufficiently remarkable truth. Of course imagination improved on the story. I received an indignant letter from New York from the lady who had lent me the cottage, reproaching me for having built a dam right across the lake, to the detriment of navigation!

This spasm of energy continued without abatement for some three weeks, after which I gradually recovered the balance of my normal faculties. The effect of my operations was now to increase the energy of each of them, but in reasonable proportion. I was now able to begin my proposed magical research.

In order to erect the temple of the New Aeon, it appeared necessary to make a thorough clearance of the rubbish of its ruined predecessors. I therefore planned and executed a magical operation to banish the "Dying God". I had written in "The Wizard Way":

"He had crucified a toad
In the Basilisk abode."

and now I did so. The theory of the operation was to identify the toad with the "Dying God" and slay it. At the same time I caused the elemental spirit of the slain reptile to serve me.

The result was immediately apparent. A girl of the

^x see later Stanzas Battalion for details

village, three miles away, asked me to employ her as my secretary. I had had no intention of doing any literary work; but as soon as I set eyes on her I recognized that she had been sent for a purpose, for she exactly resembled the aforesaid toad. I therefore engaged her to come out every morning and take dictation. I had with me a copy of Bernard Shaw's Androcles and the Lion and bethought myself that I would criticize the preface. The almost unparalleled knowledge of the text of the Bible which I had acquired in early childhood was shocked by Shaw's outrageously arbitrary selection of the texts that sustained his argument. His ignorance of Asiatic life and thought had led him into the most grotesque misapprehensions. I set out to criticise his essay, section by section; but the work grew under my hand, and in three weeks or so, I had produced a formidable treatise of some 45,000 words. I had intended to confine myself to destructive criticism of my author; but as I went on, my analysis of the text of the Gospels revealed the mystery of their composition. It became clear ^{that} both those who believe in the historicity of "Jesus" and their opponents were at fault. I could not doubt that actual incidents and genuine sayings in the life of a real man formed part of the structure. The truth was that scraps of several such

village, three miles away, asked me to employ her as my secretary. I had had no intention of doing any literary work; but as soon as I set eyes on her I recognized that she had been sent for a purpose, for she exactly resembled the aforesaid toad. I therefore engaged her to come out every morning and take dictation. I had with me a copy of Bernard Shaw's Androcles and the Lion and bethought myself that I would criticize the preface. The almost unparalleled knowledge of the text of the Bible which I had acquired in early childhood was shocked by Shaw's outrageously arbitrary selection of the texts that sustained his argument. His ^{ignorance} of Asiatic life and thought had led him into the most grotesque misapprehensions. I set out to criticise his essay, section by section; but the work grew under my hand, and in three weeks or so, I had produced a formidable treatise of some 45,000 words. I had intended to confine myself to destructive criticism of my author; but as I went on, my analysis of the text of the Gospels revealed the mystery of their composition. It became clear ^{not} both those who believe in the historicity of "Jesus" and their opponents were at fault. I could not doubt that actual incidents and genuine sayings in the life of a real man formed part of the structure. The truth was that scraps of several such

men, distinct from, and incompatible with, each other, had been pitch-forked together and labelled with a single name. It was exactly the case of the students who stuck together various parts of various insects and asked their professor "What kind of a bug is this?" "Gentlemen," he replied, "this is a hum-bug."

In writing this book, I was much assisted by Frazer's Golden Bough, and, to a less extent, by Jung's Psychology of the Unconscious. But my main assets were my intimate knowledge of the text of the Gospels, of the conditions of life and thought in the East, of the details of magical and mystical work, and of the literary conventions which old writers employed to convey their ideas.

I may mention the absurdity of Shaw finding difficulty in the fact that the visit of the three "Kings" is not mentioned in profane history. Shaw did not realize that a "King" may be the equivalent of a very minor chieftain in the Highlands.

Again the injunction to abandon family ties and worldly cares involve no social theories. They are addressed only to would-be disciples, and have been so given - from the dawn of history to the present day - by every Eastern teacher that ever balanced himself upon one thumb, used a hip-bath instead

of a soup-plate, or rode the Wheel of Samsara in preference to a bicycle.

Once more, the irrational incidents of the life of Christ become entirely normal when understood as the Rubric of a Ritual of Initiation.

I claim that my book establishes the outline of an entirely final theory of the construction of Christianity. The subject is far too vast and complex to be adequately discussed in this auto-hagiography. But I have no hesitation in referring the student to my essay for the solution of any and every difficulty which he may have found in the consideration of this matter.

Having completed this treatise, I discovered myself to be inspired to write a number of short stories based on the Golden Bough. They are "The Hearth", "The God of Ibreez", "The Burning of Melcarth", "The Old Man of the Peepul Tree", "The Mass of St. Secaire", "The King of the Wood", "The Oracle of Cocytus", and "The Stone of Cybele".

Now with regard to my magical work strictly speaking, its character was presumably determined by my Grade. The Magus corresponds to the Sephira Chokmah, whose manifestation in the Universe is Maloth, the Sphere of the Fixed Stars. It was accordingly proper that I should receive a

* the gospel according to saint bernard

of a soup-plate, or rode the Wheel of Samsara in preference to a bicycle. No special objective in view. Almost

Once more, the irrational incidents of the life of Christ become entirely normal when understood as the Rubric of a Ritual of Initiation.

I claim that my book establishes the outline of an entirely final theory of the construction of Christianity. The subject is far too vast and complex to be adequately discussed in this auto-hagiography. But I have no hesitation in referring the student to my essay for the solution of any and every difficulty which he may have found in the consideration of this matter.

Having completed this treatise, I discovered myself to be inspired to write a number of short stories based on the Golden Bough. They are "The Hearth", "The God of Ibreez", "The Burning of Melcarth", "The Old Man of the Peepul Tree", "The Mass of St. Secaire", "The King of the Wood", "The Oracle of Cocytus", and "The Stone of Cybele".

Now with regard to my magical work strictly speaking, its character was presumably determined by my Grade. The Magus corresponds to the Sephira Chokmah, whose manifestation in the Universe is Maloth, the Sphere of the Fixed Stars. It was accordingly proper that I should receive a

*x The gospel according to Saint Bernard 8 has.
(it survives in manuscript)*

of a soup-plate, or rode the Wheel of Samsara in preference to a bicycle.

Once more, the irrational incidents of the life of Christ become entirely normal when understood as the Rubric of a Ritual of Initiation.

I claim that my book establishes the outline of an entirely final theory of the construction of Christianity. The subject is far too vast and complex to be adequately discussed in this auto-hagiography. But I have no hesitation in referring the student to my essay for the solution of any and every difficulty which he may have found in the consideration of this matter.

Having completed this treatise, I discovered myself to be inspired to write a number of short stories based on the Golden Bough. They are "The Hearth", "The God of Ibreez", "The Burning of Melcarth", "The Old Man of the Peepul Tree", "The Mass of St. Secaire", "The King of the Wood", "The Oracle of Cocythus", and "The Stone of Cybele".

Now with regard to my magical work strictly speaking, its character was presumably determined by my Grade. The Magus corresponds to the Sephira Chokmah, whose manifestation in the Universe is Masloth, the Sphere of the Fixed Stars. It was accordingly proper that I should receive a

*x The gospel according to Saint Bernard 8 hrs.
as given in typewritten*

revelation of the Universe in this aspect. I began my meditation with no special objective in view. Almost immediately (instead of after a long-continued effort, as had been the case generally speaking in the past) I obtained a Samadhi of which my conscious memory brought back the account "Nothingness with twinkles", adding subsequently "but what 'twinkles'!" This Samadhi developed in the course of time, as I repeated it, into such importance that I feel almost justified in calling it the radix of my whole philosophical outlook. I have described it, giving historical details, in my Comment on the Book of the Law, Chapter I, Verse 59. It seems convenient to quote this in this place, as throwing light upon the progress of my utmost apprehension of the Universe from this time forward.

The 'Star-Sponge' Vision

There is a vision of a peculiar character which has been of cardinal importance in my interior life, and to which constant reference is made in my magical diaries. So far as I know, there is no extant description of this vision anywhere, and I was surprised on looking through my records to find that I had given no clear account of it myself. The reason apparently is that it is so necessary a part of myself that I unconsciously assume it to be a matter of common knowledge, just as one assumes that everybody knows that one possesses a pair of lungs, and therefore abstains

revelation of the Universe in this aspect. I began my meditation with no special objective in view. Almost immediately (instead of after a long-continued effort, as had been the case generally speaking in the past) I obtained a Samadhi of which my conscious memory brought back the account "Nothingness with twinkles", adding subsequently "but what 'twinkles'!" This Samadhi developed in the course of time, as I repeated it, into such importance that I feel almost justified in calling it the radix of my whole philosophical outlook. I have described it, giving historical details, in my Comment on the Book of the Law, Chapter I, Verse 59. It seems convenient to quote this in this place, as throwing light upon the progress of my utmost apprehension of the Universe from this time forward.

The 'Star-Sponge' Vision

There is a vision of a peculiar character which has been of cardinal importance in my interior life, and to which constant reference is made in my magical diaries. So far as I know, there is no extant description of this vision anywhere, and I was surprised on looking through my records to find that I had given no clear account of it myself. The reason apparently is that it is so necessary a part of myself that I unconsciously assume it to be a matter of common knowledge, just as one assumes that everybody knows that one possesses a pair of lungs, and therefore abstains

from mentioning the fact directly, although perhaps alluding to the matter often enough.

It appears very essential to describe this vision as well as is possible, considering the difficulty of language, and the fact that the phenomena involve logical contradictions, the conditions of consciousness being other than those obtaining normally.

The vision developed gradually. It was repeated on so many occasions that I am unable to say at what period it may be called complete. The beginning, however, is clear enough in my memory.

I was on a retirement in a cottage overlooking Lake Pasquaney in New Hampshire. I lost consciousness of everything but a universal space in which were innumerable bright points, and I realized this as a physical representation of the Universe, in what I may call its essential structure. I exclaimed: "Nothingness, with twinkles!" I concentrated upon this vision, with the result that the void space which had been the principal element of it diminished in importance; space appeared to be ablaze, yet the radiant points were not confused, and I thereupon completed my sentence with the exclamation "But what Twinkles!"

The next stage of this vision led to an identification of the blazing points with the stars of the firmament, with ideas, souls, etc. I perceived also that each star was connected by a ray of light with each other star. In the world of ideas each thought possessed a necessary relation with each other thought; each such relation is of course a thought in itself; each such ray is itself a star. It is here that logical difficulty first presents itself. The seer has a direct perception of infinite series. Logically, therefore, it would appear as if the entire space must be filled up with a homogeneous blaze of light. This however is not the case. The space is completely full, and yet the monads which fill it are perfectly distinct. The ordinary reader might well exclaim that such statements exhibit symptoms of mental confusion. The subject demands more than cursory examination.

I can do no more than refer the critic to the Hon. Bertrand Russell's Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy, where the above position is thoroughly justified, as also certain positions which follow. At the time I had not read this book; and I regard it as a striking proof of the value of mystical attainment, that its results should have led a mind such as mine, whose mathematical training was of the most elementary character, to the immediate consciousness of some of the most profound and important mathematical truths; to the acquisition of the power to think in a manner totally foreign to the normal mind, the rare possession of the greatest thinkers of the world.

A further development of the vision brought to the consciousness that the structure of the universe was highly organized, that certain stars were of greater magnitude and brilliancy than the rest. I began to seek similes to help me to explain myself. Several such attempts are mentioned later in this note. Here again are certain analogies with some of the properties of infinite series. The reader must not be shocked at the idea of a number which is not increased by addition or multiplication, a series of infinite series, each one of which may be twice as long as its predecessor, and so on. There is no "mystical humbug" about this. As Mr. Russell shows, truths of this order are more certain than the most universally accepted axioms; in fact, many axioms accepted by the intellect of the average man are not true at all. But in order to appreciate these truths, it is necessary to educate the mind to thought of an order which is at first sight incompatible with rationality.

I may here digress for a moment in order to demonstrate how this vision led directly to the understanding of the mechanism of certain phenomena which have hitherto been dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders as incomprehensible.

Example No.1. I began to become aware of my own mental processes. I thought of my consciousness as the Commander-in-Chief of an army. There existed a staff of specialists to deal with various contingencies. There was an intelligence department to inform me of my

environment. There was a council which determined the relative importance of the data presented to them. It required only a slight effort of the imagination to think of this council as in debate; I could picture to myself some tactically brilliant proposal being vetoed by the Quarter-Master-General. It was only one step to dramatize the scene, and it flashed upon me in a moment that here was the explanation of "double personality"; that that illusion was no more than a natural personification of internal conflict, just as the savage attributes consciousness to trees and rocks.

Example No.2. While at Montauk, I had put my sleeping bag to dry in the sun. When I went to take it in, I remarked, laughingly, "Your bed-time, Master Bag," as if it were a small boy and I its nurse. This was entirely frivolous; but the thought flashed into my mind that after all the bag was in one sense a part of myself. The two ideas came together with a snap, and I understood the machinery of a man's delusion that he is a teapot.

These two examples may give some idea to the reader of the light which mystical attainment throws upon the details of the working of the human mind.

Further developments of this vision emphasized the identity between the Universe and the mind. The search for similes deepened. I had a curious impression that the thing I was looking for was somehow obvious and familiar. Ultimately it burst upon me with fulminating conviction that the simile for which I was seeking was the nervous system. I exclaimed "The mind is the nervous system," with all the enthusiasm of Archimedes, and it only dawned on me later, with a curious burst of laughter at my naivete, that my great discovery amounted to a platitude.

From this I came to another discovery: I perceived why platitudes were stupid. The reason was that they represented the summing up of trains of thought, each of which was superb in every detail at one time. A platitude was like a wife after a few years; she has lost none of her charms, and yet one prefers some perfectly worthless woman.

environment. There was a council which determined the relative importance of the data presented to them. It required only a slight effort of the imagination to think of this council as in debate; I could picture to myself some tactically brilliant proposal being vetoed by the Quarter-Master-General. It was only one step to dramatize the scene, and it flashed upon me in a moment that here was the explanation of "double personality"; that that illusion was no more than a natural personification of internal conflict, just as the savage attributes consciousness to trees and rocks.

Example No. 2. While at Montauk, I had put my sleeping bag to dry in the sun. When I went to take it in, I remarked, laughingly, "Your bed-time, Master Bag," as if it were a small boy and I its nurse. This was entirely frivolous; but the thought flashed into my mind that after all the bag was in one sense a part of myself. The two ideas came together with a snap, and I understood the machinery of a man's delusion that he is a teapot.

These two examples may give some idea to the reader of the light which mystical attainment throws upon the details of the working of the human mind.

Further developments of this vision emphasized the identity between the Universe and the mind. The search for similes deepened. I had a curious impression that the thing I was looking for was somehow obvious and familiar. Ultimately it burst upon me with fulminating conviction that the simile for which I was seeking was the nervous system. I exclaimed "The mind is the nervous system," with all the enthusiasm of Archimedes, and it only dawned on me later, with a curious burst of laughter at my naivete, that my great discovery amounted to a platitude.

From this I came to another discovery: I perceived why platitudes were stupid. The reason was that they represented the summing up of trains of thought, each of which was superb in every detail at one time. A platitude was like a wife after a few years; she has lost none of her charms, and yet one prefers some perfectly worthless woman.

I now found myself able to retrace the paths of thought which ultimately come together in a platitude. I would start with some few simple ideas and develop them. Each stage in the process was like the joy of a young eagle soaring from height to height in ever-increasing sunlight as dawn breaks, foaming, over the purple hem of the garment of ocean, and, when the many coloured rays of rose and gold and green gathered themselves together and melted into the orb'd glory of the sun, with a rapture that shook the soul with unimaginable ecstasy, that sphere of rushing light was recognized as a commonplace idea, accepted unquestioningly and treated with drah indifference because it had so long been assimilated as a natural and necessary part of the order of Nature. At first I was shocked and disgusted to discover that a series of brilliant researches should culminate in a commonplace. But I soon understood that what I had done was to live over again the triumphant career of conquering humanity; that I had experienced in my own person the succession of winged victories that had been sealed by a treaty of peace whose clauses might be summed up in some such trite expression as "Beauty depends upon form".

It would be quite impracticable to go fully into the subject of this vision of the Star-Sponge, if only because its ramifications are omniform. It must suffice to reiterate that it has been the basis of most of my work for the last five years, and to remind the reader that the essential form of it is "Nothingness with twinkles".

I conclude this note, therefore, by quoting certain chapters of Liber Aleph, in which I have described various cognate forms of the vision.

"De Cramine Sanctissimo Arabico.

"Recall, O my Son, the Fable of the Hebrews, which they brought from the City of Babylon, how Nebuchadnezzar the Great King, being afflicted in his Spirit, did depart from among Men for Seven Years' Space, eating Grass as doth an Ox. Now this Ox is the letter Aleph, and is that Atu of Thoth whose Number is Zero, and whose Name is Maat, Truth, or Maut,

the Vulture, the All-Mother, being an Image of Our Lady Muith; but also it is called the Fool, who is Parsifal, 'der Reine Thor', and so referreth to him that walketh in the Way of the Tao. Also, he is Harpocrates, the Child Horus, walking (as saith David; the Badawi that became King, in his Psalms) upon the Lion and the Dragon; that is, he is in Unity with his own Secret Nature, as I have shown thee in my Word concerning the Sphinx. O my Son, yester Even came the Spirit upon me that I also should eat the Grass of the Arabs, and by Virtue of the Bewitchment thereof beheld that which might be appointed for the Enlightenment of mine Eyes. Now then of this may I not speak, seeing that it involveth the Mystery of the Transcending of Time, so that in One Hour of our Terrestrial Measure did I gather the Harvest of an Aeon, and in Ten Lives I could not declare it."

"De quibusdam Mysteriis, quae vidi."

"Yet even as a Man may set up a Memorial or Symbol to import Ten Thousand Times Ten Thousand, so may I strive to inform thine Understanding by Hieroglyph. And here shall thine own Experience serve us, because a Token of Remembrance sufficeth him that is familiar with a Matter, which to him that knoweth it not should not be made manifest, no, not in a Year of Instruction. Here first then is one amid the Uncounted Wonders of that Vision; upon a Field Blacker and Richer than Velvet was the Sun of all Being, alone. Then about Him were Little Crosses, Greek, overrunning the Heaven. These changed from Form to Form geometrical, Marvel devouring Marvel, a Thousand Times a Thousand in their Course and Sequence, until by their Movement was the Universe churned into the Quintessence of Light. Moreover at another Time did I behold All Things as Bubbles, iridescent and luminous, self-shining in every colour and every combination of Colour, Myriad pursuing Myriad until by their perpetual Beauty they exhausted the Virtue of my Mind to receive them, and whelmed it, so that I was fain to withdraw myself from the Burden of that Brilliance. Yet, o my Son, the Sun of all this amounteth not to the Worth of one Dawn-Glimmer of our True Vision of Holiness."

970

125

It is a remarkable fact that physical phenomena of an appropriate character frequently accompany a spiritual event. I fail to see any special significance, from a magical point of view, in the experience now to be related; but it is highly interesting in itself, and there is unquestionably a striking correlation between it and the vision just described.

One morning I had started before dawn for the upper reaches of the lake. The day was breathlessly intense, the calm was somehow positive rather than negative, and seemed to conceal some huge menace. It was as if the heart of the world had stopped. I felt an indescribable awe, overwhelming in its solemnity. The act of paddling seemed almost a blasphemy. However, I made a fire on a rocky islet and cooked and ate my lunch, returning to the cottage in a curiously exhausted state. It was one of those days when the electrical conditions seem to abstract every particle of energy from one's nerves. The condition is familiar enough to me, and I understood that it foretold an approaching thunderstorm; in fact, an hour later, as I sprawled lazily on the verandah, I saw the imminence of the tempest.

I realized that, wharf or no wharf, my canoe could not possibly live through what was coming. I dashed down to the water's edge at the exact moment when the first drop of rain fell, and although the distance was barely 150 yards in all, and I picked up the canoe and tucked it under my arm like an umbrella, I was soaked and dripping before I got back to shelter. At this moment, a dog-cart, occupied by a man, a woman and a child, was hastily backed-up away from the road, and they asked leave to take refuge till the rain stopped. I showed them into the main room, staying outside myself to watch the wonder of the storm. Daylight had disappeared with the utmost suddenness. A pall of purple black drove down the valley at a height of scarce 100 feet above the water, and this pall was veined with a net-work of incessant lightning. Beneath it the air seemed praeter-naturally clear. It was the most spectacular performance I had ever seen. Ahead of the storm, the vast blue sky stood speckless above the unrippled sheen of the lake. Then the advance guard of the tempest, the hail and the rain splashed down in giant drops like bullets. Then came the Jerry purple of the cloud, and under it the wind lashed the lake into tempestuous froth so fiercely that no water remained visible.

The storm struck deadly chill: and, having been reminded recently of the lurking malaria in my blood, I decided to put on dry clothes.

I must give a brief description of the construction of the cottage. It was of wood, built round a chimney-stack and fireplace of brick. The main room faced the lake; and on the other side of the stack were a bedroom which I did not use, and the kitchen. The main room, where I slept, being occupied by my guests, I had to take my dry clothes into the bedroom. This room had two small windows. I forgot whether they were both closed; but if open, the slit was not more than 2 or 3 inches wide. There was a door, also closed, leading into the kitchen. The other door which led to the main room may possibly have been a little ajar. To put on my stockings, I sat down on a chair close to the brickwork of the chimney stack. As I bent down, I noticed, with what I can only describe as calm amazement, that a dazzling globe of electric fire, apparently between six and twelve inches in diameter, was stationary about six inches below and to the right of my right knee. As I looked at it, it exploded with a sharp report quite impossible to confuse with the continuous turmoil of the lightning, thunder and hail, or that of the lashed water and

smashed wood which was creating a pandemonium outside the cottage. I felt a very slight shock in the middle of my right hand, which was closer to the globe than any other part of my body. I must emphasize that I was not in the slightest degree alarmed or otherwise mentally disturbed. It will be remembered that I had been struck by lightning on the Pillar Mountain many years earlier. I have always felt extreme oppression while an electrical storm is gathering, and a corresponding exhilaration the moment it breaks. I have a powerful instinctive feeling that I am myself an wholly electrical phenomenon, and the wilder the storm, the more completely do I feel myself in my element. I am impelled to physical enthusiasm expressed in delightedly triumphant magical gestures and outbursts of ecstastically religious incantations. I am thrilled to the marrow by the mere full title of the Tarot Card called the Knight of Wands, "The Lord of the Flame and the Lightning, the King of the Spirits of Fire!" I want to shout aloud the superb Enochian invocation of that force. Something of that exaltation may be divined from the rhythm and swing of the lyric into which I have introduced this title:

"By the Brood of the Bysses of Brightening, whose
God was my sire;
By the Lord of the Flame and the Lightning, the King
of the Spirits of Fire ..."

This spiritually sublime intensity does not in any way interfere with my intellectual activity. On the contrary, I become more alert than in almost any other conditions. It is as if the illumination of the flash interpenetrated my spirit, as if my mental faculties entered into enjoyment of their ideal nourishment and stimulation thereby.

I was consequently in the best possible condition to observe. My perfectly impersonal interest, and of course my scientific training, stood me in excellent stead. My time-sense was markedly altered, much as I have described in the account of the attack on me in Calcutta. I was thus able to observe the events of what was probably not more than five seconds as if it had been as many minutes.

I thought the phenomenon of sufficient interest to record; and wrote a brief description to The New York Times. The result was surprising. I found myself inundated with letters of enquiry from so many electrical students that I had at last to have an account multigraphed to send out.

I had supposed that globular electricity was a well-known and undoubted, if rare, phenomenon, and was amazed to learn

that until then it had never been seen by any reliable and competent observer. I had quite an elaborate correspondence with Professor Elihu Thompson, one of the greatest living authorities on electricity about it. It appeared that previous accounts were the statements of common sailors. They left considerable room for doubting the existence of globular electricity at all. This doubt was strengthened by the extreme difficulty of framing any satisfactory hypothesis to explain the occurrence. My observation turned out, therefore, to be (in its way) a matter of primary importance. I ventured to suggest an explanation of my own; but Professor Thompson felt that, while it covered the facts of the case and even those of previous observations, it involved a conception of electricity which was not easy to reconcile with the implications of certain other phenomena.

In the course of our correspondence, Professor Thompson communicated several extremely subtle and stimulating ideas as to the nature of matter, electricity, and indeed, of nature in general. They perhaps helped me to envisage consciously, for the first time, a strictly formal identification of the results of rational intellection with those of immediate intuition. I had felt, not without severe qualms, that the data of Neschemah might be in irreconcilable antagonism with

those of Ruach. I was not in any way shaken in my opinion that the crown of Ruach (Daath, Knowledge) had no true place on the Tree of Life, that it was essentially illusory and self-contradictory. It had been my constant preoccupation to find a means of expression for the truth of spiritual illumination in terms of rational comprehension, and moreover to justify the former without denying the validity of the latter. Professor Thompson's remarks filled me with hope. It must be remembered that at the period when I studied science most exclusively, the reaction against mysticism was in full swing. The persecution of Darwin was like an unhealed scar; its contemplation bred resentment against the very root of any religious interpretation of the universe. I had been forced into the awkward position of having to be ready to go to the stake with Maudsley, Ray Lankester and Haeckel, as against superstitious religion, and yet to attack their conclusions with the utmost vehemence in the interests of the impregnable spiritual position which I had built on the rock of my own actual experience. At last it had become conceivable that this antinomy might be overcome, and that in the best way, in the way indicated by the symbolism of the Qabalah itself; that is to say, the eyes of Science were opening gradually to the perception that

the results of observation and experiment demanded an interpretation as repugnant to common sense (as understood by the man in the street and The Rationalist Press Association) as the utmost conceptions of Pythagoras, Paracelsus, and that Great Order itself of which I was an Initiate. My subsequent researches have been almost exclusively determined by considerations of this kind. While I have done my utmost to advance directly towards Truth by the regular traditional magical and mystical methods which the Book of the Law had perfected, I have constantly sought pari passu to correlate my results with those of modern intellectual progress; indeed, to demonstrate that the deepest thinkers are unwittingly approaching the apprehension of initiated ideas, and are in fact, despite themselves, being compelled to extend their definition of the Ruach to include conceptions proper to Neshamah, that they are, in other words, becoming Initiates in our sense of the word without suspecting that they are committing high treason against the majesty of materialism.

The remaining Chokmah-Days of the initiation proper seemed to be devoted principally to showing the candidate the material on which he is to work. I hope it will not sound too strange if I say that up to this time of my life I had been to a certain extent living in a Fool's Paradise. In

one way or another, either by actual shelter, by the protection of social and financial resources, by my own poetic rose-coloured spectacles, or by the singularly happy choice that I had made of the people among whom I dwell, I had not seen in all its naked nastiness the world of mankind. I had seen a good deal of cruelty, stupidity, and callousness; I realized how ignoble were the lives of the average man and woman, but there had been practically always a reasonable amount of compensation. It is necessary to live in the United States and know the people well to get a really clear view of hell with the lid off. I had already been some time in the country, but the truth about New York had been camouflaged. I, being who I was, had come into contact with the very cream of the city, and on my travels about the Union, I had seen little more than the superficial life of the people as it appears to the wanderer whose tent is a Pullman Car, a swagger hotel, or the abode of some friend who by that very fact is not truly representative of his community. I was soon to be brought into intimate relations with a society so primitive that it had no means of knowing who I was or recognizing the class I represented; to experience what the French rather neatly call le-struggle-for-lifeisme; and that with the absolute moral certainty of being completely beaten from

one way or another, either by actual shelter, by the protection of social and financial resources, by my own poetic rose-coloured spectacles, or by the singularly happy choice that I had made of the people among whom I dwell, I had not seen in all its naked nastiness the world of mankind. I had seen a good deal of cruelty, stupidity, and callousness; I realized how ignoble were the lives of the average man and woman, but there had been practically always a reasonable amount of compensation. It is necessary to live in the United States and know the people well to get a really clear view of hell with the lid off. I had already been some time in the country, but the truth about New York had been camouflaged. I, being who I was, had come into contact with the very cream of the city, and on my travels about the Union, I had seen little more than the superficial life of the people as it appears to the wanderer whose tent is a Pullman Car, a swagger hotel, or the abode of some friend who by that very fact is not truly representative of his community. I was soon to be brought into intimate relations with a society so primitive that it had no means of knowing who I was or recognizing the class I represented; to experience what the French rather neatly call le-struggle-for-lifeisme; and that with the absolute moral certainty of being completely beaten from

the very nature of things. In a country where the most weak and ignorant, the least intelligent and resourceful, find it easy enough on the whole to earn a fairly decent living, and where the slightest capacity of almost any sort makes it a safe bet that ten years will put its possessor on Easy Street, I was to find myself a Candidate for complete destitution. For many months I was, for the first time in my life, constantly preoccupied with the problem of keeping myself alive, and did so only by the operation of periodical windfalls. Again and again my coracle sank under me and each time those responsible for the conduct of my initiation handed out something to go on with from some totally unexpected source, in order to keep me on that psychological razor-edge whence one can always see the abyss as one can no longer do when one is in it. In this way, I saw all classes and all races, but no longer from the privileged standpoint, with the result that I was able to understand thoroughly what they were like to themselves and to each other. The horror and leathesomeness of those conditions left a permanent mark upon my character. It went far to destroy my capacity for lyrical expression, or perhaps rather to make impossible the point of view necessary to that kind of creative impulse. Love itself was to appear in a totally new form. I had never

before understood its roots in the moral weakness and physical incompetence of our breed of monkeys. I had been familiar enough with its romantic and spiritual implication, with the social and economic complications which degrade its ideal, and even with the brutalities and blasphemies which lust and greed impose upon it. I had never understood it as the expression of the bitter need of desperation which is after all its true nature so far as all but a very few individuals rari nantes in gurgite nastro are concerned.

It would be impossible for me even to attempt the merest outline of the abomination of desolation upon which the Chiefs forced me to gaze during these long dreary dreadful days. It was not that I saw only the vilest and basest elements in society; on the contrary, I was deeply impressed by the essential virtue which forms part of every human being, and the poison upon the barb of my experience was the fact that ignorance, unskillfulness, moral weakness, and the like made the helplessness and hopelessness of virtue utterly complete. Everywhere I saw unspeakably loathsome and inhuman vices triumphing with scarce a show of resistance; commerce in its uncleanliest forms had harnessed morality, religion, and even science to its Jaganath car. Every decent instinct, whether of the individual or of the community, was the prey of this

ghoul. In another chapter I shall give instances of the kind of thing which was not wholly dominant but practically universal. I had said enough to convey a general idea of the nature of the Ordeal through which I was passed at this period. I need only record a few of the actual magical results.

The misery which I underwent at this time had done much to cloud my memory. I do not clearly remember, for example, my reasons for going to New Orleans almost immediately after returning from Lake Pasquaney. It was my last glimpse of beauty for a long while. The old French-Spanish Quarter of the city is the only decent inhabited district that I discovered in America. From the architecture to the manners of the people, their clothes, their customs, and their cookery, all was delightful. It was like being back in Europe again with the added charm of a certain wildness and romance; it was a civilization sui generis, with its own peculiar adornment in the way of history. It enabled me to realize the spirit of the Middle Ages as even the most remote and time-honoured towns of Europe rarely do. I took a room conveniently close to the Old Absinthe House, where one could get real absinthe prepared in fountains whose marble was worn by ninety years' continual dripping. The

result was that I was seized by another of my spasms of literary creation, and this time, the definite sexual stimulus which I had imagined as partly responsible for such attack was, if not absent, at least related to an atmosphere rather than to an individual.

It lasted, if I remember rightly, some seventeen days. I completely lost track of the properties of time and place. I walked over to the Absinthe House in my shirt sleeves on one occasion without being in the slightest degree aware of the fact. My best work was an essay "The Green Goddess", descriptive of the Old Absinthe House itself in particular, and the atmosphere of the quarter in general. It may be regarded as the only rival to "The Heart of Holy Russia" for literary excellence and psychological insight. I wrote also The Scrutinies of Simon Iff, a series of six more or less detective stories; two or three less important essays; some short stories, of which I may mention "Every Precaution" for its local colour; and all but the last two or three chapters of my first serious attempt at a long novel, The Net. I also began from the very depths of my spiritual misery a very strange book of an entirely new kind; so much so that I describe it as "A Novelissim". Its title is Not the Life and Adventure of Sir Roger Blexam. It remains unfinished to this

result was that I was seized by another of my spasms of literary creation, and this time, the definite sexual stimulus which I had imagined as partly responsible for such attack was, if not absent, at least related to an atmosphere rather than to an individual.

It lasted, if I remember rightly, some seventeen days. I completely lost track of the properties of time and place. I walked over to the Absinthe House in my shirt sleeves on one occasion without being in the slightest degree aware of the fact. My best work was an essay "The Green Goddess", descriptive of the Old Absinthe House itself in particular, and the atmosphere of the quarter in general. It may be regarded as the only rival to "The Heart of Holy Russia" for literary excellence and psychological insight. I wrote also The Scrutinies of Simon Iff, a series of six more or less detective stories; two or three less important essays; some short stories, of which I may mention "Every Precaution" for its local colour; and all but the last two or three chapters of my first serious attempt at a long novel, The Net. I also began from the very depths of my spiritual misery a very strange book of an entirely new kind; so much so that I describe it as "A Novelissim". Its title is Not the Life and Adventure of Sir Roger Blexam. It remains unfinished to this

day; in fact it is hardly theoretically possible to finish it, strictly speaking. I have indeed serious qualms as to whether I have not overstepped the limits of truth in saying that I began it. To be safe, I should be content to say I wrote a good deal of it.

The lyrical faculty remained almost entirely dormant, no doubt owing to the fact that in a Quarter where almost every woman attracted me intensely, I was quite unable to fix my affection on any single specimen. Perhaps also it was inhibited by the iron which was entering my soul inch by inch and being twisted in my heart by the pitiless love of the Secret Chiefs of the Order. It was this, without doubt which threw a monkey-wrench into my creative machinery and its destructive energy may be measured by the frightful circumstance which must next be recorded.

The city of New Orleans is divided into two main sections by a broad thoroughfare. On one side is the Spanish Quarter, on the outskirts of which was a large and picturesque Red Light Section; one of the most interesting places of its kind that I have ever seen. In fact, if we except Cairo, it would have been hard to beat. Across the main street was the modern commercial Americanized section of the two where hardly a brick but screamed an obscene blasphemy against

everything that might delight a poet, arouse enthusiasm in a lover, or abstain from revolting the instincts of a gentleman. Before I had been long in the city, it had become obvious that this cancer was eating away the breast of the beautiful city, and the conviction was stamped into my soul by a very definite hoof-mark of the Mule Morality.

A millionaire with a very large interest in the Race Course at Havana bethought him that it would be good business to do away with the competition of New Orleans in that form of sport. He therefore proceeded to organize what is called a "clean-up" of the city. He bribed prominent pulpits to awake the consciences of sincere Puritans, squared the politicians and the newspapers, brought blackmail to bear on any honest people that seemed likely to stand in his way, and in every other respect fulfilled the conditions requisite for plundering the city and persecuting the poor, in the name of righteousness according to the most approved methods. His most spectacular success was to shut up the Red Light District, so far as the poorest classes were concerned. The effect of these proceedings was brought home to me by an incident which, happening in the United States, appeared to me vastly comic. I had been to the library in Lee Circle to get a book, and descending the steps was accosted by a woman with a

request for charity. I recognized her as one of the denizens of the wooden shanties of the Red Light District. My sympathy was aroused by the shameful cruelty to which she had been subjected by the hypocritical and dishonest manœuvres of the millionaire and his myrmidons. Her case was peculiarly pathetic as she was suffering from an active and contagious form of disease. The most elementary commonsense and decency would have come to her rescue long before, in the interest of her clients, no less than her own. I asked her what she was going to do now that her office had been closed. To my surprise, she was perfectly cheerful. The relief which she sought was only temporary, for she had got a good position as a nursemaid in a family of three young children for the following week!

Such was one of the innumerable similar symptoms of the foul disease which is ravaging the United States, and has already destroyed almost every vestige of the political, religious, and individual liberty which was the very essence of the original American idea. My spirit sank under the contemplation of the irremediable calamity which threatens to engulf the whole of humanity, since it is now an accepted principle of business to endeavour to make tyranny international, to suppress all customs of historical interest, and indeed

everything which lends variety or destruction to human society in the interest of making a market for standardized products. The moral excuse for these activities is miserably thin, for the element which it is most important to suppress is originality as such, even when the question concerns the very idea of craftsmanship in itself. The idea at the back of Puritanism is the reduction of the mass of humanity to a degree of slavery which has never previously been so much as contemplated by the most malignant tyrants in history; for it aims at completing the helplessness of the workman by minimising his capacity. He must no more be permitted to exercise the creative craftsmanship involved in making a pair of boots; he must be rendered unable to do more than repeat mechanically, year in, year out, one meaningless item in the manufacture, so that when the pinch comes it shall be impossible for anyone to have boots at all except through the complex industrial conspiracy of the Trusts. This idea, consciously or subconsciously, lies underneath all attempts to extend "civilization". The progress of this pestilence is only too visible all over the world. Standardized hotels and standardized merchandise have invaded the remotest districts, and these would be economically impossible unless supported by the forcible suppression of local

competition. When, therefore, we find the newspapers indignant at Mohammedan morality, we may suspect the real trouble is that American hatters see no hope of disposing of their surplus stock as long as the wicked Oriental sticks to his turban or turbush. The exquisite, dignified and comfortable clothes of remote people, from Sicily to Japan, must give way to the vile shoddy products of foreign factories, and the motive is supplied by a world-wide campaign on behalf of social snobbery. The people are persuaded that they ought to try to look like a sporting duke or a bank president. Such plans obviously depend on the destruction of everything that makes for originality, self-respect, the love of beauty, or the reverence for history.

It took me a long while before I could formulate consciously this idea, so Protean are its disguises and so subtly sinister its strategems. But I have always possessed the instinct, I have always reacted automatically against this principle whenever I found it. It should be obvious that "Do what thou wilt" cuts diametrically athwart this modern civilization to destroy the distinctions which constitute the sole hope of humanity to make real progress by the selection and variation which are the means of evolution. It may be said that my own work is in the nature of missionary

enterprise; and that this is, in fact, the very thing to which I object, since its idea is to persuade people to abandon their established beliefs and customs. This criticism is invalid. I do, as a matter of fact, object to missionary enterprise as such, whether it take the form of imposing the cult of Osiris on the worshippers of Adonis, of persuading the Chinese to eat with knives and forks, or of making Eastern Women obscenely ridiculous by changing their superb and suitable robes for frocks which pretend to have been made in Paris. But my message differs fundamentally from all previously promulgated precisely at this point. My predecessors have invariably said, "My belief is right and yours is wrong; my customs are worthy, yours are ignoble; my dress is decent, yours is not; think as I think; talk as I talk, do as I do, and you will be happy, prosperous and pleasing to God. If not, you will be wretched, poor, sick, disgraced, and damned; besides which, I shall cut your head off, burn you alive, starve you, imprison you, ostracize you, and otherwise make you sorry you did not agree to be a good boy." The essence of every missionary message has been to assimilate the Taught to the Teacher; and it has always been accompanied by bribes and threats. My message is exactly opposed to any of this. I say to each man and woman,

"You are unique and sovereign, the centre of an universe. However right I may be in thinking as I do, you may be equally right in thinking otherwise. You can only accomplish your object in life by complete disregard of the opinions of other people. You must not even take the outward signs of success as indications that the course of action which has produced them would serve your turn. For one thing, my coronet might not suit your complexion but give you a headache; for another, the measures which I took to obtain that coronet might not succeed in your case."

My mission is, in short, to bring everyone to the ~~the~~ realization and enjoyment of his own kingship, and my apparent interference with him amounts to no more than advice to him not to suffer interference. It may appear from this as if I were opposed to joint action directed to the attainment of a common purpose. But of course, this is not the case. The advantages, not merely of co-operation but of disciplined union, are the same as they were with previous theories of life. Yet there is a certain practical difference which, by the way, is curiously illustrated by the parallel of military discipline. In primitive warfare, the nexus between comrades is practically limited to an agreement to forget their individual quarrels in face of the common enemy.

The training of a soldier thus amounted to encouraging his personal prowess. It was gradually seen that some sort of plan for combined action made for victory, so that one leader or chieftain should be detailed to carry out a definite duty. It soon became clear that isolated action was dangerous to the whole army; and the consequent tendency was developed to the point at which the Prussian drill-sergeant was invaluable. The aim was to reduce the soldier to a brainless bulk of brawn, to be manipulated as mechanically as a chessman, exercising his inherent energies without the slightest wish or power to think or act for himself. (This stage corresponds to that which we are rapidly approaching in industry.) Now at least we have reached a further stage. The complexity of a battle and its mere extent in space have made it impossible for a single man to handle his troops as was done by Marlborough and Napoleon, and therefore it has become once more necessary for the subordinate officer, and even, to some extent, the private soldier, to understand his responsibility, to exercise initiative within limits, and also to train himself to be able to carry out a variety of operations demanding very varied knowledge and skill, instead of, as before, being confined to a highly specialized task demanding blind obedience and the suppression of all

intelligence. The Charge of the Light Brigade has in fact become impossible. We are moving intelligently enough, back in the direction of Sir Launcelot and Crillon. The necessities of warfare are the more truly instructive in that the military type of mind is so contemptible. The Commander-in-Chief is always hopelessly incompetent either to conceive or to perceive correctly the very elements of his business. The progress of military science is imposed upon stupidly by the facts; and it affords us, therefore, the best possible illustration of the blind workings of evolution. That is why industry, whose chiefs are just one degree less brainless than the Kitcheners and Frenches, is actually behind war in its biological adaptation to environment. Industrial crises are not so immediately fatal as those of tactics. Necessity has not so free a hand with the birch rod; and so, conditions alter more slowly, and their significance is less easy to interpret.

Considerations of this kind were constantly present to my mind at this period. Before my eyes was the sickening spectacle of humanity sinking ever deeper into the sticky slime of slavery. The tragedy of New Orleans illustrated one phase of the calamity. While as to the individual, his position might be gauged by the case of my own cousin in Florida, who quite seriously believed that God had sunk the ~~accursed~~ Titanic to rebuke the presumption of the builders, of the pitifully comic worship of the weakly megalomaniac at the ~~accursed~~ White House, and of the moral and mental level of such people as I met in the Masonic lodges whose gambols I have described in a previous chapter.

Hope died in my heart. There was not one glimmer of always fit the eyes. At the same time, the Secret light on the horizon anywhere. It seemed to me an obscene Chief's themselves had made no alliance. They knew perfectly mockery to be called a Magus. I must have been afflicted well what was at breaking strain, and they deliberately by "lust of result"; at least it came to this, that I felt pushed on beyond my limit for several excellent reasons, that I could not go on with my work. On every side the wizened They wanted me to know the extent of my capacity to subdue witches of religion and morality were shrill in celebration and therefore, of course, to increase that capacity in the of their obscene Sabbath. I felt that I had not only failed, perhaps by showing me that even when I thought I had crossed but that it was little short of lunacy to imagine that I could the chain of pale and loathsome links as firmly as ever, and ever make the slightest impression upon the monstrous mass was in front, a breakable; for it is an essential element of misery which was soaking through the very spine of of my being to be pledged to the performance of the Great mankind. My faith failed me; I made a gesture of despair; ~~WORK~~ They also caught me by this means the consequences I committed spiritual suicide, I closed my Magical Record of any such error; and this has been very useful to me in

and refused to write. "If the Masters want me to do their Work," said I, "let Them come forward and call me."

This action is the only one of my life of which I am really ashamed, I should not have surrendered while there was breath in my body. Well, perhaps it was not altogether a surrender; but it was at least a desperate appeal of anguish.

The penalty of my momentary lapse was frightful. Its effects are still observable to-day. The subject is really too painful to discuss at length. I need say no more than this: that my lack of confidence in The Secret Chiefs re-coiled on myself. (In Magick, of course, the punishment always fits the crime). At the same time, the Secret Chiefs themselves had made no mistake. They knew perfectly well what was my breaking strain, and They deliberately pushed me beyond my limit for several excellent reasons. They wanted me to know the extent of my capacity to endure; and thereby, of course, to increase that capacity in the future by showing me that even when I thought I had broken the chain it held by invisible links as firmly as ever, and was, in fact, unbreakable; for it is an essential element of my being to be pledged to the performance of the Great Work. They also taught me by this means the consequences of any such error; and this has been very useful to me in

dealing with those who may be in danger of making a similar blunder. The penalty itself was also the means of arranging events in such a way as to be of service to me in subsequent initiation.

I don't know whether I thought the world would come to an end, because I chose to turn nasty - but I was certainly very much annoyed to find that, as in the case of the Great Lord Cardinal, when he had finished cursing "nobody seemed one penny the worse". The Secret Chiefs were to all appearance entirely unconcerned at what I had done. Like my own Blind Prophet, I had pulled down the pillars on which I supposed the temple to be supported, but he at least succeeded in crushing himself, and I had not even done that!

What happened was in fact extremely curious. Stevenson observes that when a Magi is cashiered, he does not fall to be a rural dean or words to that effect. I found myself, like Othello, with my occupation gone. I might not be able to perform the task of a Magus, but there was certainly nothing else for me to do. I had no remorse, not so much as a qualm of conscience. The Secret Chiefs kept silent. And I found that after a fortnight or so I simply could not stand it any longer. I felt more than a little like a naughty dog, but there was simply nothing to be done but to crawl back with my tail between my legs, and I remember with somewhat

shame-faced amusement, that I had a sort of hope that I had escaped notice.

The situation had not in any way changed; when I reopened my Magical Record I did so entirely without hope of any kind; in fact, perhaps the best way to express the situation is that my misdemeanour had served to purge me of the "lust of result". But as for having escaped notice, if I had really harboured any delusions on that point, my mind was completely disillusioned in the first eleven seconds.

I said to myself that the obvious first step was to invoke Mercury. I instantly found myself, with a little internal laugh simmering in my solar plexus saying: "But I am Mercury". The suppressed chuckle was cut short suddenly by that feeling akin to alarm which a man often feels when he is sitting up late at night enjoying a book, and is suddenly reminded perhaps by some slight noise, of some serious matter; an unexpected visitor, can it be, outside his door?... For I was aware that there was something more in what I was saying to myself than its plain implication, and it came to me by some inscrutable instinct to couch the idea elsewhere. "Mercurius sum" I murmured, and now the unheard voice, not so loud as a whisper yet more compelling than a burst of thunder, told me without the use of language "No, that isn't it, say it in Greek." "E P M H C E I M I", I affirmed solemnly, and knew

shamefaced amusement, that I had a sort of hope that I had escaped notice.

The situation had not in any way changed; when I reopened my Magical Record I did so entirely without hope of any kind; in fact, perhaps the best way to express the situation is that my misdemeanour had served to purge me of the "lust of result". But as for having escaped notice, if I had really harboured any delusions on that point, my mind was completely disillusioned in the first eleven seconds.

I said to myself that the obvious first step was to invoke Mercury. I instantly found myself, with a little internal laugh simmering in my solar plexus saying: "But I am Mercury". The suppressed chuckle was cut short suddenly by that feeling akin to alarm which a man often feels when he is sitting up late at night enjoying a book, and is suddenly reminded perhaps by some slight noise, of some serious matter; an unexpected visitor, can it be, outside his door?.. For I was aware that there was something more in what I was saying to myself than its plain implication, and it came to me by some inscrutable instinct to couch the idea elsewhere. "Mercurius sum" I murmured, and now the unheard voice, not so loud as a whisper yet more compelling than a burst of thunder, told me without the use of language "No, that isn't it, say it in Greek." "E P M H C E I M I", I affirmed solemnly, and knew

immediately that I had done what was required of me, yet wondering almost contemptuously what was the object of the translation, and then, far more rapidly than I could have discovered by conscious calculation, I knew that "E P M H C E I M I" had the numerical value of 418, the Magical Formula of the Aeon. At the very first moment of resuming communication with my soul, the Secret Chiefs had given me an indubitable token of their existence, of their vigilant guardianship, by communicating Their pass-word, so to speak, in this secret cipher. My spirit leapt with joy to be reassured once more by this superbly simple means, this exquisitely neat and convincing language; yet stark shame savaged me. How could even such a mule of a mind as mine have been so obstinate to resist such perfect control? How could I ever have been such a coward as to lose my courage even for a moment, seeing that year after year the Secret Chiefs had never failed me? I had never despised myself so deeply. But the very sharpness of my scorn had also its use. It guaranteed me for ever against a repetition of any such collapse. I did not ask for any further token; I did not even form resolutions, or so much as ask for instruction. I simply became alive to the fact that I was a Magus, with every implication possible, and that I should infallibly perform whatever tasks might be given me. I even began to understand

that the actual absence of any task was evidence that my present conditions were essential to the Great Work; that my apparent impotence was part of the plan of the Secret Chiefs. I had been childishly petulant in wanting to bathe in "Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damascus", and thinking myself insulted by being told that the petty trickle of Jordan, a stream that did not even lead to the ocean, would suffice to cleanse my limbs of leprosy. Somehow or other, the ghastly situation in which I found myself, the stagnation of my career and the paralysis of my powers, were essential to my proper progress. I ceased to fret about the future, as to protest against the present. I took everything as it came almost without comment, confident that at the right moment I should find myself in the right position to do what was right.

Having witnessed the bedevilment of New Orleans, I was sent to Titusville, Florida, to complete my contemplation of the unspeakable degradation of humanity which is constantly being wrought by Christianity and commerce. I saw my Cousin ^{Brother} Lawrence, as decent a lad as one could wish to see, spiritually stunted and corrupted in every way by savage superstition; his wife, hardly turned thirty, a wrinkled hag of sixty, with no idea of life beyond the gnawing fear of the hereafter and the horrible pleasures of venting her spite on her

neighbours and thwarting and persecuting her children; his son, deprived of every boyish amusement, driven to secret indulgence in the most wretched vices, and his sisters (one of them with a voice which would have made her a queen in any civilized capital) thwarted in every innocent aspiration, and their eyes wide open to the frightful knowledge that they could never be anything but drudges sold into the worse slavery of marriage at eighteen, and ruined old women, dead to every possibility, at twenty-five. Their constant cry was "I don't want to grow up to be like mother!" Their least actions were spied on, their every attempt to fit themselves by education to get out of the ghastly swamp where they sweated away their youth in conditions which made the fever and famine themselves, with which they were familiar, more bearable than the malignant tyranny of the people to whom the very crocodiles might have served as a reproach and an inspiration.

From this hell of ignorance and family life I was removed to a very different place of punishment. I was to have a view of New York as it must appear to the average stranger, to all such of its inhabitants (these must constitute a very considerable percentage) who have not established business and social connections. It is striking evidence of the ability of the Secret Chiefs to arrange the conditions of an initiation that

such an experience was possible for me; for, by this time, I was pretty well-known in the city in very varied sets, and as it happened, I had under my hand as good a means of making myself, not only prosperous but popular, as any man could possibly wish for.

During my retirement by Lake Pasquaney I had, according to my custom when in solitude and in need of relaxation, passed the time by dealing myself hands in such games as Skat, Piquet, and Bridge. I was led to invent a new game, a variation of auction Bridge, which we subsequently called "Pirate Bridge". This appeared to me such an improvement on the ordinary game that I thought I would introduce it to the public. I convinced the Editor of Vanity Fair of its merits, and suggested that R. F. Foster should be called in to put the rules into definite shape.

It gave me a very curious feeling, by the way, to be in such relations with a man who, twenty years before, had been the inaccessible Godhead of the Universe of Card Games to my under-graduate enthusiasm! As a matter of fact, he misunderstood one of my rules; and I think the game was spoilt in consequence. However, even as it was, Vanity Fair was devoting a long article every month to the subject, and I had only to wander into the appropriate circles to make myself the darling of the community. But the Secret Chiefs

had it in mind that so far from doing anything of the sort, I should spend months of absolutely sickening solitude, direst poverty, and impotence to take any action whatever, so that I might realize how the world feels to the very vast majority of the inhabitants of its civilized sections, to people without resources, prospects, friends or exploitable abilities. I was also to be prepared to take up a public career for the first time in my life; my previous manifestations having been of a semi-private or amateur kind.

This period was inexpressibly distressing, apart from other unpleasantnesses, my health broke down in a quite inexplicable way. There was no satisfactory diagnosis; the symptoms were confined to a spiritual and physical malaise which deprived me alike of ambition and energy. (I have good reason to suspect that this was partly due to the reaction from my experiment in reviving Youth). Other trials were superseded. At one time I was so poor that I had to lie on the sofa of a friend in the garret which he called his studio to have anywhere to sleep, and I really don't quite remember what I did about eating. I suppose I must have earned a few dollars now and again in one way or another.

The Chokmah-Day beginning in June saw the break-up of these conditions. A new officer appeared. The initiation

1003
No. 1003

had now entered upon an entirely different phase. The function of the officers was no longer to administer ordeals (I had passed the tests); they were sent as guides to lead me on a journey through the Desert to the appointed "House of the Juggler" in which a Magus symbolically lives.

The first part of the initiation had occupied thirteen Chokmah Days counting from November 3, 1914 to June 9, 1917. I was able to recognize my guide. During the past days I had done much work in analyzing and interpreting the mysterious events which had characterized my sojourn in America. From this time on my progress was far less unintelligible than had hitherto been the case. I was therefore not surprised when an officer appeared at about the expected date, and her physical appearance told me at once where I had got to in my journey; for the God whose place on the Threshold of the Temple, whose function is to guard the portal of the sanctuary and introduce approved candidates to the assembled Deities, is Anubis. This God is always represented with the head of a jackal. (This has sometimes been interpreted as a dog; whence the Dog-headed Hermes in the mythology which the Greeks borrowed from Egypt).

Now this guide exactly resembled a dog; not only physically but morally. She had all the canine qualities, the best and the worst, in perfection, and she certainly

Re dog = Robbie Minor
No, she is the camel, see p. 900 1003

had now entered upon an entirely different phase. The function of the officers was no longer to administer ordeals (I had passed the tests); they were sent as guides to lead me on a journey through the Desert to the appointed "House of the Juggler" in which a Magus symbolically lives.

The first part of the initiation had occupied thirteen Chokmah Days counting from November 3, 1914 to June 9, 1917. I was able to recognize my guide. During the past days I had done much work in analyzing and interpreting the mysterious events which had characterized my sojourn in America. From this time on my progress was far less unintelligible than had hitherto been the case. I was therefore not surprised when an officer appeared at about the expected date, and her physical appearance told me at once where I had got to in my journey; for the God whose place on the Threshold of the Temple, whose function is to guard the portal of the sanctuary and introduce approved candidates to the assembled Deities, is Anubis. This God is always represented with the head of a jackal. (This has sometimes been interpreted as a dog; whence the Dog-headed Hermes in the mythology which the Greeks borrowed from Egypt).

Now this guide exactly resembled a dog; not only physically but morally. She had all the canine qualities, the best and the worst, in perfection, and she certainly

served to start me on my new journey. The impending section of my initiation was easy to understand. In the former I had been prevented from establishing any regular relations as a teacher or prophet with humanity. I had been prepared in solitude to become such. I was now, little by little, to enter upon my life as the Prophet of the Law of Thelema.

In July I was made the editor of The International, a Monthly which had the distinction of being the only publication in the United States with a genuine claim to represent the best literary tradition. The editor had made the fatal mistake of prostituting its columns to political propaganda. The paper was, therefore, on the rocks. Its literary merits had been entirely forgotten in the salient fact of its pro-German tendencies. I explain elsewhere how I came to be connected with anti-English sentiments, and part of my plan in taking over the paper was to restore it to political propriety, unknown by its backers, and also to keep close watch upon their activities, on behalf of the Department of Justice. But my main object was, of course, to obtain a medium for the Proclamation of the Law.

For all practical purposes, I was in complete control of the policy of the paper; but as far as pushing it was concerned I was obliged to rely on the broken reed of merit,

for it was conducted financially with short-sighted meanness. I had no idea that cheese-paring could be reduced to such a fine art. My own salary was \$20.00 per week, which was, at that time, little more than the wage of an unskilled stenographer, and it was a Titan task to extract as much as \$10.00 or the price of a lunch for a long article or story by a well-known writer. They expected me to get a cover design by a first-rate artist for \$5.00 and would try to cheat him or her out of it at that. I was horribly ashamed of having to eadge contributions in this way, but very proud to remember that many brilliant people seemed only too glad to give their work. They felt it an honour to support a magazine with such high standards as I introduced. One little fact illustrates the position with lurid light. Having got my article free, the least I could do was to have half a dozen copies of the number in which it appeared sent to the authors. The proprietor would countermand such instructions behind my back, not because of the cost of the paper, for there were always ample "returns", but to save the postage.

The upshot of all this was that I wrote the bulk of the paper myself, camouflaging the fact by the use of pseudonyms. After eight months I had so improved the reputation of the paper that it had become a valuable property.

and it was accordingly sold to a man who was so stupid as not to know that its sole asset was myself, and so fat-headed that he thought he could run it himself. He would not even accept a contribution from me, though I offered him one out of pure kindness. He pretended to be a great friend of mine, and I had not realized the dirtiness of the intrigues against me. Well, he had his way, and got out just one number. As soon as people found my name absent they would not buy it. Its sudden destruction was the greatest compliment I had ever received.

During the Three Chokmah-Days of my control of the paper, I devoted every energy to proclaiming the Law of Thelema in its pages both directly and indirectly.

My first important step in this direction, the thin end of the wedge, was an article The Revival of Magick which ran serially, ending in November. The last paragraph, a mere coxcombical flourish, though written with the quite serious idea of indicating to some person of adequate intelligence, the direction in which to seek for a Master, proved an element in an incident of the utmost complexity. I propose to recount this in great detail, because it gives an idea of the extraordinary strength and subtlety of the proof that I am in communication with some Intelligence possessing knowledge and power altogether superior to anything that we can reasonably

ascribe to any human being.

This paragraph runs as follows:

"Herein is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of The Beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and three score and six."

I must now return to the feature of my initiation; for the other conditions of the incident in question are connected therewith.

After only One Chokmah-Day I was obliged to get rid of my faithful Anubis. She had been a fine friend, but her manners were such that I could not really have her about the camp. Besides this, such a journey as I was now about to undertake required an animal of greater strength and size than the dog. To take me to the oasis I required a camel; and at the beginning of the next Chokmah-Day I found an admirable Mehari at the door of my tent. It is to be noticed that in this part of the initiation I was in no perplexity. I understood the proper function of the officer in charge of my progress and wasted no time in discussing right relations.

In January, 1918, I published a revised version of the Message of the Master Therion and also of the Law of Liberty, a pamphlet in which I uttered a panegyric upon the Law as the key to freedom and delight. (To get rid of the subject

I had better mention here the other Magical Essays which appeared in The International: Cocaine, The Ouija Board, Concerning Death, Pax, Hominibus Bonae Voluntatis, Geomancy, Absinthe, De Thaumaturgia, Ecclesiastic Gnosticae Canon Missae. Of these, Liber XV, its scope and purpose, I have already described at length.) The point which I wish to bring out is that despite the constraint imposed upon me by the requirements of public taste, I succeeded in proclaiming the Law to a wide audience of selected readers, explaining its main principles and general import in straight-forward language, and also in putting over a large amount of what was on the surface quite ordinary literature, but implying the Law of Thelema as the basis of right thought and conduct. In this way I managed to insinuate my message perhaps more effectively than could possibly have been done by any amount of visible argument and persuasion. The Scrutinies of Simon Iff are perfectly good detective stories, yet they not only show a master of the Law as competent to solve the subtlest problems by considerations based upon The Law, but the way in which crime and unhappiness of all sorts may be traced to a breach of the Law. I show that failure to comply with it involves an internal conflict. (Note that the Fundamental principle of psychoanalysis is that neurosis is caused by failure to harmonize the elements of character.)

The essence of the Law is the establishment of right relations between any two things which come into contact; the essence of such relations being "love under will". The only way to keep out of trouble is to understand and therefore to love every impression of which one becomes conscious.

Even in my political articles I make the Law of Thelema the sole basis of my articles. I apply it, in short, to every circumstance of life, securing in this way a completely coherent point of view. Most men and practically all Anglo-Saxons, have an elaborate system of mental-water-tight compartments. One of the most important elements of the panic fear of Truth in every form, the distrust of any man who seems likely to investigate things seriously, is due to the consciousness that even a superficial analysis will reveal a state of spiritual civil war whose issue it is impossible to foresee. They all pretend to be Christians, yet the injunction "Love your enemies", which by the way is really the first corollary of the Law of Thelema, is universally regarded as infinitely objectionable. I am myself in all kinds of a mess simply because I insist upon putting this into practice. I refuse to consider my enemies as irreconcilable; I take the utmost pains to understand and love them. By this means I invariably succeed sooner or

later in destroying them, that is, of incorporating them into my own idea of myself. (I am liable to express this operation by saying that having slain my foe in ambush, I devour his heart and liver raw in order to fortify myself with his courage, energy, and other fine qualities, and then I become very sad when I am currently quoted as a cannibal. Picturesque metaphor is not always appreciated.) I cannot make the public understand that to treat a man as an enemy in the ordinary sense of the word, to damage him in every possible way, and otherwise to disintegrate him, is simply to cut off one's nose to spite one's face. There is nothing in the universe which is not indissolubly one with every other thing; and the greatest man is that or he who makes no difference between any one thing and any other thing. He becomes the "chief of all" as stated in The Book of the Law.
