The Confessions of
Aleister Crowley

volume I

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The Confessions Of Aleister Crowley
an autohagiography
volume I

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AN AUTOHAGIOGRAPHY

VOLUME ONE

ALEISTER CROWLEY

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To Three Friends

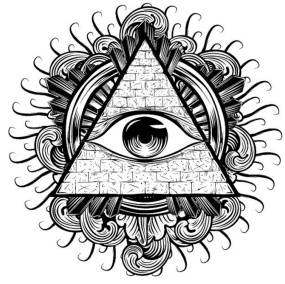
J. W. N. SULLIVAN
who suggested this booklet
AUGUSTUS JOHN
who first gave practical assistance
P. R. STEPHENSEN
who saw the point

And To Three Immortal Memories

RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON
the perfect pioneer of spiritual and physical adventure
OSCAR ECKENSTEIN
who trained me to follow the trail
ALLAN BENNETT
who did what he could

PART ONE

TOWARDS THE GOLDEN DAWN



PRELUDE

'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.' Not only to this autohagiography — as he amusedly insists on calling it — of Aleister Crowley, but to every form of biography, biology, even chemistry, these words are key.

'Every man and every woman is a star.' What can we know about a star? By the telescope, a faint phantasm of its optical value. By the spectroscope, a hint of its composition. By the telescope, and our mathematics, its course. In this last case we may legitimately argue from the known to the unknown: by our measure of the brief visible curve, we can calculate whence it has come and whither it will go. Experience justifies our assumptions.

Considerations of this sort are essential to any serious attempt at biography. An infant is not—as our grandmothers thought—an arbitrary jest flung into the world by a cynical deity, to be saved or damned as predestination or freewill required. We know now that 'that, that is, is', as the old hermit of Prague that never saw pen and ink very wittily said to a niece of King Gorboduc.

Nothing can ever be created or destroyed; and therefore the 'life' of any individual must be comparable to that brief visible curve, and the object of writing it to divine by the proper measurements the remainder of its career.

The writer of any biography must ask, in the deepest sense, who is he? This questions 'who art thou?' is the first which is put to any candidate for initiation. Also, it is the last. What so-and-so is, did and suffered: these are merely clues to that great problem. So then the earliest memories of any autohagiographer will be immensely valuable; their very incoherence will be an infallible guide. For, as Freud has shown, we remember (in the main) what we wish to remember, and forget what is painful. There is thus great danger of deception as to the 'facts' of the case; but our memories indicate with uncanny accuracy what is our true will. And, as above made manifest, it is this true will which shows the nature of our proper motion.

In writing the life of the average man, there is this fundamental difficulty, that the performance is futile and meaningless, even from the standpoint of the matter-of-fact philosopher; there is, that is to say, no artistic

unity. In the case of Aleister Crowley no such Boyg appeared on the hillside; for he himself regards his career as a definitely dramatic composition. It comes to a climax on April 8th, 9th and 10th, 1904 E.V. The slightest incident in the History of the whole universe appears to him as a preparation for that event; and his subsequent life is merely the aftermath of that crisis.

On the other hand, however, there is the circumstance that his time has been spent in three very distinct manners: the Secret Way of the Initiate, the Path of Poetry and Philosophy, and the Open Sea of Romance and Adventure. It is indeed not unusual to find the first two, or the last two, elements in the molecule of a man: Byron exemplifies this, and Poe that. But is is rare indeed for so strenuous and out-of-doors a life to be associated with such profound devotion to the arts of the quietist; and in this particular instance all three careers are so full that posterity might well be excused for surmising that not one but several individuals were combined in a legend, or even for taking the next step and saying: This Aleister Crowley was not a man, or even a number of men; he is obviously a solar myth. Nor could he himself deny such an impeachment too brutally; for already, before he has attained the prime of life, his name is associated with fables not less fantastic than those which have thrown doubt upon the historicity of the Buddha. It should be the true will of this book to make plain the truth about the man. Yet here again there is a lion in the way. The truth must be falsehood unless it be the whole truth; and the whole truth is partly inaccessible, partly unintelligible, partly incredible and partly unpublishable—that is, in any country where truth in itself is recognized as a dangerous explosive.

A further difficulty is introduced by the nature of the mind, and especially of the memory, of the man himself. We shall come to incidents which show that he is doubtful about clearly remembered circumstances, whether they belong to 'real life' or to dreams, and even that he has utterly forgotten things which no normal man could forget. He has, moreover, so completely overcome the illusion of time (in the sense used by the philosophers, from Lao Tzu and Plotinus to Kant and Whitehead) that he often finds it impossible to disentangle events as a sequence. He has so thoroughly referred phenomena to a single standard that they have lost their individual significance, just as when one has understood the word 'cat', the letters c a t have lost their own value and become mere arbitrary elements of an idea. Further: on reviewing one's life in perspective the astronomical sequence ceases to be significant. Events rearrange themselves in an order outside time and space, just as in a picture there is no way of distinguishing at what point on the canvas the artist began to paint. Alas! it is impossible to make this a satisfactory

book; hurrah! that furnishes the necessary stimulus; it becomes worth while to do it, and by Styx! it shall be done.

It would be absurd to apologize for the form of of this book. Excuses are always nauseating. I do not believe for a moment that it would have turned out any better if it had been written in the most favourable circumstances. I mention merely as a matter of general interest the actual difficulties attending the composition.

From the start my position was precarious. I was practically penniless, I had been betrayed in the most shameless and senseless way by practically everyone with whom I was in business relations, I had no means of access to any of the normal conveniences which are considered essential to people engaged in such tasks. On the top of this there sprang up a sudden whirlwind of wanton treachery and brainless persecution, so imbecile yet so violent as to throw even quite sensible people off their base. I ignored this and carried on, but almost immediately both I and one of my principal assistants were stricken down with lingering illness. I carried on. My assistant died. I carried on. His death was the signal for a fresh outburst of venomous falsehoods. I carried on. The agitation resulted in my being exiled from Italy; through no accusation of any kind was, or could be, alleged against me. That meant that I was torn away from even the most elementary conveniences for writing this book. I carried on. At the moment of writing this paragraph everything in connection with the book is entirely in the air. I am carrying on.

But apart from any of this, I have felt throughout an essential difficulty with regard to the form of the book. The subject is too big to be susceptible of organic structure unless I make a deliberate effort of will and a strict arbitrary selection. It would, as a matter of fact, be easy for me to choose any one of fifty meanings for my life, and illustrate it by carefully chosen facts. Any such method would be open to the criticism which is always ready to devastate any form of idealism. I myself feel that it would be unfair and, what is more, untrue. The alternative has been to make the incidents as full as possible, to state them as they occurred, entirely regardless of any possible bearing upon any possible spiritual significance. This method involves a certain faith in life itself, that it will declare its own meaning and apportion the relative importance of every set of incidents automatically. In other words, it is to assert the theory that the destiny is a supreme artist, which is notoriously not the case on any accepted definition of art. And yet—a mountain! What a mass of heterogeneous accidents determine its shape! Yet, in the case of a fine mountain, who denies the beauty and even the significance of its form?

In the later years of my life, as I have attained to some understanding of the unity behind the diverse phenomena of experience, and as the natural restriction of elasticity which comes with age has gained ground, it has become progressively easier to group events about a central purpose. But this only means that the principle of selection has been changed. In my early years the actual seasons, climates and occupations determined the sections of my life. My spiritual activities fit into those frames, whereas, more recently, the converse is the case. My physical environment fits into my spiritual preoccupation. This change would be sufficient by itself to ensure the theoretical impossibility of editing a life like mine on any consistent principle.

I find myself obliged, for these and many other reasons, to abandon altogether any idea of conceiving an artistic structure for the work or formulating an artistic purpose. All that I can do is to describe everything that I remember, as best I can, as if it were, in itself, the centre of interest. I must trust nature so to order matters that, in the multiplicity of the material, the proper proportion will somehow appear automatically, just as in the operations of pure chance or inexorable law a unity ennobled by strength and beautified by harmony arises inscrutably out of the chaotic concatenation of circumstances. At least one claim may be made; nothing has been invented, nothing suppressed, nothing altered and nothing 'yellowed up'. I believe that truth is not only stranger than fiction, but more interesting. And I have no motive for deception, because I don't give a damn for the whole human race — 'you're nothing but a pack of cards.'

I

Edward Crowley[1], the wealthy scion of a race of Quakers, was the father of a son born at 30 Clarendon Square, Leamington, Warwichshire[2], on the 12th day of October,[3] 1875 E.V. between eleven and twelve at night. Leo was just rising at the time, as nearly as can be ascertained. The branch of the family of Crowley to which this man belonged has been settled in England since Tudor times: in the days of Bad Queen Bess there was a Bishop Crowley, who wrote epigrams in the style of Marital. One of them—the only one I know—runs thus:

> The bawds of the stews be all turnèd out:
> But I think they inhabit all England throughout.

(I cannot find the modern book which quotes this as a footnote and have not been able to trace the original volume.)

The Crowleys, are, however, of Celtic origin; the name O'Crowley is common in south-west Ireland, and the Breton family of de Quérouaille—which gave England a Duchess of Portsmouth—or de Kerval is of the same stock. Legend will have it that the then head of the family came to England with the Earl of Richmond and helped to make him king on Bosworth Field.

Edward Crowley was educated as an engineer, but never practised his profession[4]. He was devoted to religion and became a follower of John Nelson Darby, the founder of the "Plymouth Brethren". The fact reveals a stern logician; for the sect is characterized by refusal to compromise; it insists on the literal interpretation of the Bible as the exact words of the Holy Ghost[5].

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[1] "the younger" (1834—87).

[2] It has been remarked a grange coincidence that one small county should have given England her two greatest poets—for one must not forget Shakespeare (1550—1616).

[3] Presumably this is nature's compensation for the horror which blasted mankind on that date in 1492.

[4] His son elicited this fact by questioning; curious, considering the dates.

[5] On the strength of a text in the book itself: the logic is thus of a peculiar order.

He married (in 1874, one may assume) Emily Bertha Bishop, of a Devon and Somerset family. Her father had died and her brother Tom Bond Bishop had come to London to work in the Civil Service. The important points about the woman are that her schoolmates called her "the little Chinese girl", that she painted in water-colour with admirable taste destroyed by academic training, and that her powerful natural instincts were suppressed by religion to the point that she became, after her husband's death, a brainless bigot of the most narrow, logical and inhuman type. Yet there was always a struggle; she was really distressed, almost daily, at finding herself obliged by her religion to perform acts of the most senseless atrocity.

Her firstborn son, the aforesaid, was remarkable from the moment of his arrival. He bore on his body the three most important distinguishing marks of a Buddha. He was tongue-tied, and on the second day of his incarnation a surgeon cut the fraenum linguae. He had also the characteristic membrane, which necessitated an operation for phimosis some three lustres later. Lastly, he had upon the centre of his heart four hairs curling from left to right in the exact form of a Swastika[6].

He was baptised by the names of Edward Alexander, the latter being the surname of an old friend of this father's, deeply beloved by him for the holiness of his life—by Plymouth Brethren standards, one may suppose. It seems probable that the boy was deeply impressed by being told, at what age (before six) does not appear, that Alexander means "helper of men". He is still giving himself passionately to the task, despite the intellectual cynicism inseparable from intelligence after one has reached forty.

But the extraordinary fact connected with this baptismal ceremony is this. As the Plymouth Brethren practise infant baptism by immersion, it must have taken place in the first three months of his life. Yet he has a perfectly clear visual recollection of the scene. It took place in a bathroom on the first floor of the house in which he was born. He remembers the shape of the room, the disposal of its appointments, the little group of "brethren" surrounding him, and the surprise of finding himself, dressed in a long white garment, being suddenly dipped and lifted from the water. He has also a clear auditory remembrance of words spoken solemnly over him; though they meant nothing, he was impressed by the peculiar tone. It is not impossible that this gave him an all but unconquerable dislike for the cold plunge, and

[6] There is also a notable tuft of hair upon the forehead, similar to the mound of flesh there situated in the Buddhist legends. And numerous minor marks.

at the same time a vivid passion for ceremonial speech. These two qualities have played highly important parts in his development.

This baptism, by the way, though it never worried him, provided a peril to the soul of another. When his wife's conduct compelled him to insist upon her divorcing him—a formality as meaningless as their marriage—and she became insane shortly afterward, an eminent masochist named Colonel Gormley, R.A.M.C. (dead previously, then and since) lay in wait for her at the asylum gates to marry her. The trouble was that he included among his intellectual lacunae a devotion to the Romish superstition. He feared damnation if he married a divorceuse dipsomaniac with non-parva-partial dementia. The poor mollusc asked Crowley for details of his baptism. He wrote back that he had been baptised "in the name of the Holy Trinity".

It now appeared that, had these actual words been used, he was a pagan, his marriage void, Lola Zaza a bastard and his wife a light o'love!

Crowley tried to help the wretched worm; but, alas, he remembered too well the formula: "I baptise thee Edward Alexander in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." So the gallant colonel had to fork out for a dispensation from Rome. Crowley himself squandered a lot of cash in one way or another. But he never fell so far as to waste a farthing on the three-card trick, or the three-God trick.

He has also the clearest visualization of some of the people who surrounded him in the first six years of his life, which were spent in Leamington and the neighbourhood, which he has never revisited. In particular, there was an orange-coloured old lady named Miss Carey who used to bring him oranges. His first memory of speech is his remark. "Ca'ey, onange"[7]; this, however, is remembered because he was told of it later. But he is in full conscious memory of the dining-room of the house, its furniture and pictures, with their arrangement. He also remembers various country walks, one especially through green fields, in which a perambulator figures. The main street of Leamington, and the Leam with its weir—he has loved weirs ever since—Guy's Cliffe at Warwick, and the Castle with its terrace and the white peacocks: all these are as clear as if he had seen them last week. He recalls no other room in the house except his own bedroom, and that only because he "came to himself" one night to find a fire lighted, a steam kettle going, a strange woman present, an atmosphere of anxiety and a feeling of fever; for he had an attack of bronchitis.

[7] He has never been able to pronounce 'R' properly — like a Chinese!

He remembers his first governess, Miss Arkell, a grey-haired lady with traces of beard upon her large flat face and a black dress of what he calls bombasine, though to this hour he does not know what bombasine may be, and thinks that the dress was of alpaca or even, it may be of smooth hard silk.

And he remembers the first indication that his mind was of a logical and scientific order.

Ladies will now kindly skip a page, while I lay the facts before a select audience of lawyers, doctors and ministers of religion.

The Misses Cowper consisted of Sister Susan and Sister Emma; the one large, rosy and dry, like an overgrown radish; the other small, pink and moist, rather like Tenniel's Mock Turtle. Both were Plymouth Sister old maids. They were very repulsive to the boy, who has never since liked calf's head, though partial to similar dishes, or been able to hear the names Susan or Emma without disgust.

One day he said something to his mother which elicited from her the curious anatomical assertion: "Ladies have no legs." Shortly afterwards, when the Misses Cowper were at dinner with the family, he disappeared from his chair. There must have been some slight commotion on deck, leading to the question of his whereabouts. But at that moment a still small voice came from beneath the table: "Mamma! Mamma! Sister Susan and Sister Emma are not ladies!"

This deduction was perfectly genuine: but in the following incident the cynical may perhaps trace the root of a certain sardonic humour. The child was wont to indicate his views, when silence seemed discretion, by facial gestures. Several people were rash enough to tell him not to make grimaces, as he "might be struck like that". He would reply, with an air of enlightenment after long meditation: "So that accounts for it."

All children born into a family whose social and economic conditions are settled are bound to take them for granted as universal. It is only when they meet with incompatible facts that they begin to wonder whether they are suited to their original environment. In this particular case the most trifling incidents of life were necessarily interpreted as part of a prearranged plan, like the beginning of *Candide*.

The underlying theory of life which was assumed in the household showed itself constantly in practice. It is strange that less than fifty years later, this theory should seem such fantastic folly as to require a detailed account.

The universe was created by God 4004 B.C. The Bible, authorized version, was literally true, having been dictated by the Holy Ghost himself to

scribes incapable of even clerical errors. King James' translators enjoyed an equal immunity. It was considered unusual— and therefore in doubtful taste—to appeal to the original texts. All other versions were regarded as inferior; the Revised Version in particular savoured of heresy. John Nelson Darby, the founder of the Plymouth Brethren, being a very famous biblical scholar, had been invited to sit on the committee and had refused on the ground that some of the other scholars were atheists.

The second coming of the Lord Jesus was confidently expected to occur at any moment[8]. So imminent was it that preparations for a distant future—such as signing a lease or insuring one's life—might he held to imply lack of confidence of the promise, "Behold I come quickly."

A pathetically tragic incident—some years later—illustrates the reality of this absurdity. To modern educated people it must seem unthinkable that so fantastic a superstition could be such a hellish obsession in such recent times and such familiar places.

One fine summer morning, at Redhill, the boy—now eight or nine—got tired of playing by himself in the garden. He came back to the house. It was strangely still and he got frightened. By some odd chance everybody was either out or upstairs. But he jumped to the conclusion that "the Lord had come", and that he had been "left behind". It was an understood thing that there was no hope for people in this position. Apart from the Second Advent, it was always possible to be saved up the very moment of death; but once the saints had been called up, the day of grace was finally over. Various alarums and excursions would take place as per the Apocalypse, and then would come the millennium, when Satan would be chained for a thousand years and Christ reign for that period over the Jews regathered in Jerusalem. The position of these Jews is not quite clear. They were not saved in the same sense as Christians had been, yet they were not damned. The millennium seems to have been thought of as a fulfilment of god's promise to Abraham; but apparently it had nothing to do with "eternal life". However, even this modified beatitude as not open to Gentiles who had rejected Christ.

[8] Much was made of the two appearances of 'Jesus' after the Ascension. In the first, to Stephen, he was standing, in the second, to Paul, seated, at the right hand of God. Ergo, on the first occasion he was still ready to return at once: on the second, he had made up his mind to let things take their course to the bitter end, as per the Apocalypse. No one saw anything funny, or blasphemous, or even futile, in this doctrine!

The child was consequently very much relieved by the reappearance of some of the inmates of the house whom he could not imagine as having been lost eternally.

The lot of the saved, even on earth, was painted in the brightest colours. It was held that "all things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose". Earthly life was regarded as an ordeal; this was a wicked world and the best thing that could happen to anyone was "to go to be with Christ, which is far better". On the other hand, the unsaved went to the lake of fire and brimstone which burneth for ever and ever. Edward Crowley used to give away tracts to strangers, besides distributing them by thousands through the post; he was also constantly preaching to vast crowds, all over the country. It was, indeed, the only logical occupation for a humane man who believed that even the noblest and best of mankind were doomed to eternal punishment. One card—a great favourite, as being peculiarly deadly —was headed "Poor Anne's Last Words"; the gist of her remarks appears to have been "Lost, lost, lost!" She had been a servant in the house of Edward Crowley the elder, and her dying delirium had made a deep impression upon the son of the house.

By the way, Edward Crowley possessed the power, as per Higgins, the professor in Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, of telling instantly from a man's speech what part of the country he lived in. It was his hobby to make walking tours through every part of England, evangelizing in every town and village as he passed. He would engage likely strangers in conversation, diagnose and prescribe for their spiritual diseases, inscribe them in his Address books, and correspond and send religious literature for years. At that time religion was the popular fad in England and few resented his ministrations. His widow continued the sending of tracts, etc. For years after his death.

As a preacher Edward Crowley was magnificently eloquent, speaking as he did from the heart. But, being a gentleman, he could not be a real revivalist, which means manipulating the hysteria of mob psychology.

2

If troubles arose in the outer world, they were regarded as the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecies in Daniel, Matthew and Revelation. But it was understood implicitly that England was specially favoured by God on account of the breach with Rome. The child, who, at this period, was called by the dreadful name Alick, supposed it to be a law of nature that Queen Victoria would never die and that consols would never go below par.

Crowley remembers, as if he had seen it yesterday, the dining-room and the ceremony of family prayers after breakfast. He remembers the order in which the family and the servants sat. A chapter of the Bible was read, each person present taking a verse in turn. At four years old he could read perfectly well. The strange thing about this is not so much his precocity as the fact that he was much less interested in the biblical narratives than in the long Hebrew names. One of his father's favourite sermons was based on the fifth chapter of Genesis; long as the patriarchs lived, they all died in the end. From this he would argue that his hearers would die too; they had therefore better lose no time in making sure of heaven. But the interest of Alick was in the sound of the names themselves — Enoch, Arphaxad, Mahaleel. He often wonders whether this curious trait was symptomatic of his subsequent attainments in poetry, or whether it indicates the attraction which the Hebrew Cabbala was to have for him later on.

With regard to the question of salvation, by the way, the theory of the exclusive Plymouth Brethren was peculiar, and somewhat trying to a logical mind. They held predestination as rigidly as Calvin, yet this nowise interfered with complete freewill. The crux was faith in Christ, apparently more or less intellectual, but, since "the devils also believe and tremble", it had to be supplemented by a voluntary acceptance of Christ as one's personal saviour. This being so, the question arose whether Roman Catholics, Anglicans or even Nonconformists could possibly be saved. The general feeling seems to have been that it was impossible for anyone who was once actually saved

to be lost, whatever he did[9]. But it was, of course, beyond human power to determine whether any given individual had or had not found salvation. This, however, was clear: that any teaching or acceptance of false doctrine must be met by excommunication. The leaders of the Brethren were necessarily profound theologians. There being no authority of any kind, any brother soever might enunciate any doctrine soever at any time, and this anarchy had already resulted, before the opening of our story, in the division of the Brethren into two great sects: the Open and the Exclusive.

Philip Gosse, the father of Edmund Gosse, was a leader among the Open Brethren, who differed from the Exclusive Brethren, at first, only by tolerating, at the Lord's table, the presence of "Professed Christians" not definitely affiliated to themselves. Edmund Gosse has described his father's attitude in *Father and Son*. Much of what he wrote taxes the credulity of the reader. Such narrowness and bigotry as that of Philip Gosse seemed beyond belief. Yet Edward Crowley regarded Philip Gosse as likely to be damned for latitudinariansm! No one who loved the Lord Jesus in his heart could be so careless of his Saviour's honour as to "break bread"[10] with a man who might be holding unscriptural opinions.

Readers of *Father and Son* will remember the incident of the Christmas turkey, secretly bought by Mr. Gosse's servants and thrown into the dustbin by him in the spirit of Moses destroying the golden calf. For the Brethren rightly held Christmas to be a pagan festival. They sent no Christmas cards and destroyed any that might be sent to them by thoughtless or blaspheming "goats". Not to disappoint Alick, who liked turkey, the family had that bird for lunch on the 24th and 26th of December. The idea was to "avoid even the appearance of evil"; there was nothing actually wrong in eating turkey on Christmas Day; for pagan idols are merely wood and stone — the work of men's hands. But one must not let others suppose that one is complying with heathen customs.

Another early reminiscence. On February 29th, 1808, Alick was taken to see the dead body of his sister, Grace Mary Elizabeth[11], who had only lived five hours. The incident made a curious impression on him. He did not see why he should be disturbed so uselessly. He couldn't do any good; the child was dead; it was none of his business. This attitude continued through his

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[9] "Of those that thou gavest me have I lost not one, except the son of perdition." In view of predestination, "those" means all the elect and not merely the Eleven, as the unenlightened might suppose.

[10] i.e. sit at the communion table.

[11] *What* a name!

life. He has never attended any funeral[12] but that of his father, which he did not mind doing, as he felt himself to be the real centre of interest. But when others have died, though in two cases at least his heart was torn as if by a wild beast, and his life actually blighted for months and years by the catastrophe, he has always turned away from the necrological facts and the customary orgies. It may be that he has a deep-seated innate conviction that the connection of a person with his body is purely symbolic. But there is also the feeling that the fact of death destroys all possible interest; the disaster is irreparable, it should be forgotten as soon as possible. He would not even join the search party after the Kangchenjunga accident. What object was there in digging frozen corpses from under an avalanche? Dead bodies themselves do not repel him; he is as interested in dissecting rooms as in anything else. When he met the dead body of Consul Litton, he turned back, knowing the man was dead. But when the corpse was brought to Tengyueh, he assisted unflinchingly at the inquiry, because in this instance there was an object in ascertaining the cause of death.

One other group of incidents of early childhood. The family went to the west of England for the summer. Alick remembers Monmouth, or rather Monmouth Castle. It is curious that, in the act of remembering this for the purpose of this book, he was obsessed by the idea that there could not be such a place as Monmouth; the name seemed fantastic. It was confused in his mind with "Monster" and "Mammoth", and it was some hours before he could convince himself of its reality. He remembers staying in a farm some distance from the road and has a very vague impression of becoming acquainted with such animals as ducks and pigs. Much more clearly arises the vision of himself on a pony with people walking each side. He remembers falling off, starting to yell and being carried up to the house by the frightened governess (or whoever it was) in charge of him. This event had a tragic result. He ought to have been put back on the pony and made to conquer his fears. As it was, he has never been able to feel at home on horseback, though he has ridden thousands of miles, many of them over really dangerous country.

On the other hand — subconscious memory of previous incarnations, or the Eastern soul of him, or the fact that he took to it after he had learned the foolishness of fear? — he was from the first perfectly at home on a camel. And this despite the fact that these animals act like highly placed officials and even — if scabby – like consuls, and look (when old) like English ladies engaged in good works. (There is much of the vulture in the type of head.)

[12] With one notable exception, at which he officiated.

One incident connected with this journey is of extraordinary interest as throwing a light on future events. Walking with his father in a field, whose general aspect he remembers perfectly well to this day, his attention was called to a clump of nettles and he was warned that they would sting if he touched them. He does not remember what he answered, but whatever it was it elicited from his father the question, "Will you take my word for it or would your rather learn by experience?" He replied, "I would rather learn by experience," and plunged head foremost into the clump.

This summer was marked by two narrow escapes. He remembers being seated beside the driver of some carriage with what seemed to him an extraordinarily tall box, though this impression may mean merely that he was a very small boy. It was going down hill on a road that curved across a steep slope of very green grass. He remembers the grinding of the brakes. Suddenly his father jumped out of the carriage and cried to the driver that a wheel was coming off. The only trace which this left in later life is that he has always disliked riding in unusual vehicles unless himself in control. He became a reckless cyclist and motorist, but he was nervous for a long while with automobiles unless at the wheel.

The last event of this period occurred at a railway station. He remembers its general appearance and that of the little family group. A porter, staggering under a heavy trunk, slid it suddenly off his back. It missed crushing the boy by a hair's breadth. He does not remember whether he was snatched away, or anything else, except his father's exclamation, "His guardian angel was watching over him." It seems possible that this early impression determined his course in later life when he came to take up Magick; for the one document which gripped him was *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, in which the essential work is "To obtain the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel".

It is very important to mention that the mind of the child was almost abnormally normal. He showed no tendency to see visions, as even commonplace children often do. The Bible was his only book at this period; but neither the narrative nor the poetry made any deep impression on him. He was fascinated by the mysteriously prophetic passages, especially those in Revelation. The Christianity in his home was entirely pleasant to him, and yet his sympathies were with the opponents of heaven. He suspects obscurely that this was partly an instinctive love of terrors. The Elders and the harps seemed tame. He preferred the Dragon, the False Prophet, the Beast and the Scarlet Woman, as being more exciting. He revelled in the descriptions of torment. One may suspect, moreover, a strain of congenital masochism. He liked to

imagine himself in agony; in particular, he liked to identify himself with the Beast whose number is the number of a man, six hundred and three score six. One can only conjecture that it was the mystery of the number which determined this childish choice.

Many of the memories even of very early childhood seem to be those of a quite adult individual. It is as if the mind and body of the boy were a mere medium being prepared for the expression of a complete soul already in existence. (The word medium is here used in almost exactly the same sense as in spiritualism.) This feeling is very strong; and implies an unshakable conviction that the facts are as suggested above. The explanation can hardly fail to imply the existence of an immanent spirit (the true self) which uses incarnations, and possibly many other means, from time to time in order to observe the universe at a particular point of focus, much as a telescope resolves a nebula.

The congenital masochism of which we have spoken demands further investigation. All his life he has been almost unduly sensitive to pain, physical, mental and moral. There is no perversion in him which makes it enjoyable, yet the phantasy of desiring to be hurt has persisted in his waking imagination, though it never manifests itself in his dreams. It is probable that these peculiarities are connected with certain curious anatomical facts. While his masculinity is above the normal, both physiologically and as witnessed by his powerful growth of beard, he has certain well-marked feminine characteristics. Not only are his limbs as slight and graceful as a girl's but his breasts are developed to quite abnormal degree. There is thus a sort of hermaphroditism in his physical structure; and this is naturally expressed in his mind. But whereas, in most similar cases, the feminine qualities appear at the expense of manhood, in him they are added to a perfectly normal masculine type. The principal effect has been to enable him to understand the psychology of women, to look at any theory with comprehensive and impartial eyes, and to endow him with maternal instincts on spiritual planes. He has thus been able to beat the women he has met at their own game and emerge from the battle of sex triumphant and scatheless. He has been able to philosophize about nature from the standpoint of a complete human being; certain phenomena will always be unintelligible to men as such, others, to women as such. He, by being both at once, has been able to formulate a view of existence which combines the positive and the negative, the active and the passive, in a single identical equation. Finally, intensely as the savage male passion to create has inflamed him, it has been modified by the gentleness and conservatism of womanhood. Again and again, in the course of this history, we shall find his

actions determined by this dual structure. Similar types have no doubt existed previously, but none such has been studied. Only in the light of Weininger and Freud[13] is it possible to select and interpret the phenomena. The present investigation should be of extraordinary ethical value, for it must be a rare circumstance that a subject with such abnormal qualities so clearly marked should have trained himself to intimate self-analysis and kept an almost daily record of his life and work extending over nearly a quarter of a century.[14]

[13] That is, for those not initiated into the Magical Tradition and the Holy Cabbala — the Children's table from which Freud and Weininger ate of a few crumbs that fell.
[14] It should be added that the apparently masochistic stigmata disappeared entirely at puberty; their relics are observable only when he is depressed physically. That is, they are wholly symptoms of physiological malaise.

3

When Alick was about six years old his father moved from Leamington to Redhill, Surrey. There was some reason connected with a gravel soil and country life. The house was called The Grange. It stood in a large long garden ending in woods which overhung the road between Redhill and Merstham; about a mile, perhaps a little more, from Redhill. Alick lived here until 1886 and his memory of this period is of perpetual happiness. He remembers with the utmost clearness innumerable incidents and it becomes hard to select those which possess significance. He was taught by tutors; but they have faded, though their lessons have not. He was very thoroughly grounded in geography, history, Latin and arithmetic. His cousin, Gregor Grant, six years older than himself, was a constant visitor; a somewhat strange indulgence, as Gregor was brought up in Presbyterianism. The lad was very proud of his pedigree. Edward Crowley used to ridicule this, saying, "My family sprang from a gardener who was turned out of the garden for stealing his master's fruit." Edward Crowley would not allow himself to be addressed as "Esquire" or even "Mr." It seems a piece of atavism, for a Crowley had petitioned Charles I to take away the family coat of arms; his successor, however, had asked Charles II to restore them, which was done. This is evidence of the satanic pride of the race. Edward Crowley despised worldly dignities because he was a citizen of heaven. He would not accept favour or honour from any one less than Jesus Christ.

Alick remembers a lady calling at the house for a subscription in aid of Our Soldiers in Egypt. Edward Crowley browbeat and bullied her into tears with a philippic on "bibles and brandy". He was, however, bitterly opposed to the Blue Ribbon Army. He said that abstainers were likely to rely on good works to get to heaven and thus fail to realize heir need of Jesus. He preached one Sunday in the town hall, saying, "I would rather preach to a thousand drunkards than a thousand T-totallers." They retorted by accusing him of being connected with "Crowley's Ales". He replied that he had been an abstainer for nineteen years, during which he had shares in a brewery. He had

now ceased to abstain for some time, but all his money was invested in a waterworks[15].

Besides Gregor Grant, Alick's only playmates were the sons of local Brethren. Aristocratic feeling was extremely strong. The usual boyish play-acting, in which various personalities of the moment, such as Sir Garnet Wolseley and Arabi Pasha, were represented, was complicated in practice by a united attack on what were called cads. Alick especially remembers lying in wait at the end of the wood for children on their way to the National School. They had to cross a barrage of arrows and peas and ultimately got so scared that they found a roundabout way.

Facing the drive, across the road, was a sand-pit. Alick remembers jumping from the top with a alpenstock and charging a navvy at work in the pit, knocking him down, and bolting home. But he was not always so courageous. He once transfixed, with the same alpenstock, the bandbox of an errand-boy. The boy, however, was an Italian; and pursued the aggressor to The Grange, when of course the elders intervened. But he remembers being very frightened and tearful because of some connection in his mind between Italians and stabbing. Here again is a curious point of psychology. He has no fear of being struck or cut; but the idea of being pierced disturbs his nerve. He has to pull himself together very vigorously even in the matter of a hypodermic syringe.

There has always been something suggesting the oriental — Chinese or ancient Egyptian — in Alick's personal appearance. As his mother at school had been called "the little Chinese girl", so his daughter, Lola Zaza, has the Mongolian physiognomy even more pronounced. His thought follows this indication. He has never been able to sympathize with any European religion or philosophy; and of Jewish or Mohammedan thought he has assimilated only the mysticism of the Cabbalists and the Sufis. Even Hindu psychology, thoroughly as he studied it, never satisfied him wholly. As will be seen, Buddhism itself failed to win his devotion. But he found himself instantly at home with the *Yi King* and the writings of Lao Tzu. Strangely enough, Egyptian symbolism and magical practice made an equal appeal; incompatible as these two systems appear on the surface, the one being atheistic, anarchistic and quietistic, the other theistic, hierarchical and active. Even at this period the East called to him. There is one very significant episode. In some history of the Indian Mutiny was the portrait of Nana Sahib, a proud, fierce, cruel,

[15] At Amsterdam. It was a failure at first, the natives objecting to a liquid which lacked taste, smell and colour.

sensual profile. It was his ideal of beauty. He hated to believe that Nana Sahib had been caught and killed. He wanted to find Nana Sahib, to become his ally, share in torturing prisoners, and yet to suffer at his hands. When Gregor Grant was pretending to be Hyder Ali, and himself Tipu Sahib, he once asked his cousin, "Be cruel to me."

The influence of Cousin Gregor at this time was paramount. When Gregor was Rob Roy, Alick was Greumoch, the outlaw's henchman in James Grant's novel. The MacGregors appealed to Alick as being the most royal, wronged, romantic, brave and solitary of the clans. There can be no doubt that this phantasy played a great part in determining his passionate. Admiration of the chief of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a Hampshire man named Mathers who inexplicably claimed to be MacGregor of Glenstrae.

The boy's attitude to his parents is one of the most remarkable facts of his early life. His father was his hero and his friend, though, for some reason or other, there was no real conscious intimacy or understanding. He always disliked and despised his mother. There was a physical repulsion, and an intellectual and social scorn. He treated her almost as a servant. It is perhaps on this account that he remembers practically nothing of her during this period. She always antagonized him. He remembers one Sunday when she found him reading *Martin Rattler* and scolded him. Edward Crowley took his part. If the book was good enough to read on any day, why not on Sunday? To Edward Crowley, every day was the Lord's Day; sabbatarianism was Judiasm.

When Alick was eight or thereabouts he was taken by his father to his first school. This was a private school at St. Leonards, kept by an old man named Habershon and his two sons, very strict Evangelicals. Edward Crowley wanted to warn his son against the commonest incident of English school life. He took a very wise way. He read to the boy very impressively the story of Noah's intoxication and its results, concluding: "Never let any one touch you there." In this way, the injunction was given without arousing morbid curiosity.

Alick remembers little of his life at this school beyond a vivid visual recollection of the playground with its "giant's stride". He does not remember any of the boys, though the three masters stand out plainly enough. One very extraordinary event remains. In an examination paper, instead of answering some question or other, he pretended to misunderstand it and wrote an answer worthy of James Joyce. Instead of selling a limited edition at an extravagant price, he was soundly birched. Entirely unrepentant, he began to will

Old Habershon's death. Strangely enough, this occurred within a few weeks; and he unhesitatingly took the credit to himself.

The boy's intellect was amazingly precocious. It must have been very shortly after the move to Redhill that a tailor named Hemming came from London to make new clothes for his father. Being a "brother", he was a guest in the house. He offered to teach Alick chess and succeeded only too well, for he lost every game after the first. The boy recalls the method perfectly. It was to catch a developed bishop by attacking it with pawns. (He actually invented the Tarrasch Trap in the Ruy Lopez before he ever read a book on chess.) This wrung from his bewildered teacher the exclamation, "Very judicious with his pawns is your son, Mrs. Crowley!"

As a matter of fact, there must have been more than this in it. Alick had assuredly a special aptitude for the game; for he never met his master till one fatal day in 1895, when W. V. Naish, the President of the C. U. Ch. C., took the "fresher" who had beaten him to Peterhouse, the abode of Mr. H. E. Atkins, since seven times amateur champion of England and still a formidable figure in the Masters' Tournament.

It may here be noted that the injudicious youth tried to trap Atkins with a new move invented by himself. It consists of playing K R B Sq, instead of Castles, in the Muzio Gambit, the idea being to allow White to play P Q 4 in reply to Q B 3.

In 1885 Alick was removed from St. Leonards to a school kept by a Plymouth Brother, an ex-clergyman named H. d'Arcy Champney, M.A. It is a little difficult to explain the boy's psychology at this period. It was probably determined by his admiration for his father, the big, strong, hearty leader of men, who swayed thousands by his eloquence. He sincerely wished to follow in those mighty footsteps and so strove to imitate the great man as best he might. Accordingly, he aimed at being the most devoted follower of Jesus in the school. He was not hypocritical in any sense.

All this strikes one as absolutely natural; what is extraordinary is the sequel.

A letter dating from his early school life at Cambridge:

> Dear Papa & Mama,
>
> For my holiday work prize I have got a splendid knife, 2 blades, a saw, a screwdriver, a thing to pull out thorns, another to get stones out of horse's shoes, another I don't know what for, a leather piercer, a gimlet & a corkscrew and name plate. It is nicol

plated in some parts, but the handle is ivory. The asphalt[16] gave way near the middle. We were nearly blown hup by the hoiler[17] a little while ago, no jokes. We had a ½ holiday given us on Friday. Please send me a little money for fireworks. Send up my bank-book by the 1st please. I am awfully well, thank you! I have joined a sort of band of chaps, who are with God's blessing, going to try & help others & speak to them about their souls. I will write soon again. Write quick please.

Good bye
Yr loving son
ALEC

He was thoroughly happy at this school; the boys liked and admired him; he made remarkable progress in his studies and was very proud of his first prize, White's *Selborne*, for coming out top in "Religious Knowledge, Classics and French".

But to this day he has never read the book! For certain lines of study he had a profound, instinctive and ineradicable aversion. Natural history, in any form, is one of these. It is hard to suggest a reason. Did he dislike to analyse beauty? Did he feel that certain subjects were unimportant, led to nothing that he wanted to explore? However this may be, he used to make up his mind with absolute finality as to whether he would or would not take some particular course. If he would, be panted after it like the hart after the water brooks; if no, nothing would persuade him to waste an hour on it.

It was while he was at this school that he began to write poetry. He had read none, except "Casabianca", "Excelsior", the doggerel of Sir Walter Scott and such trash. But he had a genuine love for the simple *Hymns for the little Flock* compiled by the "Brethren". His first taste of real poetry was *Lycidas*, set for the Cambridge Local Examination, if his memory serves him aright. He fell in love with it at once and had it by heart in a few days. But his own earliest effort is more on the lines of the hymnal. Only a few lines remain.

Terror, and darkness, and horrid despair!
Agony painted upon the once fair
Brow of the man who refused to give up

[16] i.e. Of the "playground".
[17] Query? "Oiler", of course, but what was that doing?

The love of the wine-filled, the o'erflowing cup.
"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging."
No wine in death is his torment assuaging.

Of this Redhill period there remain also memories of two summers, one in France and Switzerland, the other in the Highlands.

The former has left numerous traces, chiefly of a visual character; the Grand Hotel in Paris, Lucerne and the Lion, William Tell, the Bears at Berne, the Rigi, the Staubbach, Trummelbach and Giessbach, Basle and the Rhine, the Dance of Death. Two points only concern us: he objected violently to being taken out in the cold morning to see the sunrise from a platform on the Rigi-Kulm and to illumination of a waterfall by coloured lights. He felt acutely that nature should be allowed to go her own way and he his! There was plenty of beauty in the world; why make oneself uncomfortable in order to see an extra? Also, you can't improve a waterfall by stagecraft!

There is the skeleton of quite a philosophy of life in this.

As to the Scottish Highlands, the boy's mind had been so poisoned by romance that he saw nothing that he can remember. The scenery was merely a setting for silly daydreams of Roderick Dhu!

Three other episodes of the Redhill period are pertinent; not that they are in themselves very significant, save that two of them exhibit Alick in the character of a normally mischievous boy with some skill in playing upon other people's psychology. But they illustrate the singular environment.

A frequent guest at The Grange was an old gentleman named Sherrall, whose vice was castor oil. Edward Crowley was in the habit of holding "tea meetings"; a score or so of people would be invited to what is vulgarly known as a blow-out, and when the physical animal was satisfied, there would be a debauch of spiritual edification. On the mahogany table in the diningroom, extended to its fullest length, would stand two silver urns of tea. Into one of these young Alick emptied Mr. Sherrall's caster oil. So far, so good. The point is this, that the people served from that urn were too polite or overawed either to call the attention of their hostess or to abstain from the accursed beverage. The only precaution necessary was to prevent that lady herself from seeing one of the doctored cups.

A rather similar jest was played at a prayer meeting at the house of a Brother named Nunnerley. Refreshment was offered before the meeting; and a Sister, named Mrs. Musty, had been marked down on account of her notorious greed. Alick and some fellow conspirators kept on plying her with food

after every one else had finished, with the object of delaying the prayer meeting. The women herself was too stupid to see what was happening and the Brethren could not be rude enough even to hint their feelings.

This hesitation to act with authority, which was part of the general theoretical P. B. objection to priestcraft, on one occasion reached an astounding point in the following circumstances. A Mr. Clapham, the odour of whose beard proclaimed him truthfully a fishmonger, had a wife and a daughter who was engaged to a Mr. Munday. These three had gone on an excursion to Boulogne; and, by accident or design, the engaged couple missed the boat for Folkestone. It was again a question of avoiding even the appearance of evil and Mrs. Clapham was expelled from fellowship. It is to be presumed that her husband believed her innocent of all complicity, as a priori appears the most natural hypothesis. In any case, next Sunday morning she took her place with her husband at the Lord's Table. It is almost inconceivable that any gathering of human beings, united to celebrate the supreme sacrament of their creed, should have been destitute of any means of safeguarding common decency. But the fear of the priest was paramount; and the entire meeting waited and fidgeted for over an hour in embarrassed silence. Ultimately, a baker named Banfield got up trembling in inquired timorously: "May I ask Mr. Clapham if it is Mrs. Clapham's intention to break bread this morning" Mrs. Clapham then bounced out of the room and slammed the door, after which the meeting proceeded as usual.

Bourbonism still survives among some people in England. I remember explaining some action of mine to Gerald Kelly as taken on my lawyer's advice. He answered contemptuously, "Lawyers are servants!" The social position of the Lord Chancellor and other legal officers of the Crown meant no more to him than the preponderance of lawyers on the councils of the nation. He stuck to the futile stupidity that any man who used his brains to earn a living was an inferior. This is an extreme case of an exceptionally stupid standpoint, but the psychological root of the attitude permeates English conceptions. The definition of self-respect contains a clause to include pitiless contempt for some other class. In my childhood, Mrs. Clapham — one of whose adventures has been already recorded — once came to the grain in conjugal infelicity. "How could I ever love that man?" she exclaimed; "why, he takes his salt with his knife!" There is nothing to warn a fishmonger's wife that such sublime devotion to etiquette is in any way ridiculous. English society is impregnated from top to bottom with this spirit. The supreme satis-

faction is to be able to despise one's neighbour and this fact goes far to account for religious intolerance. It is evidently consoling to reflect that the people next door are headed for hell.

Practically all boys are born with the aristocratic spirit.[18] In most cases they are broken down, partly by bullying, partly by experience. In the case of Alick, he was the only son of a father who was naturally a leader of men. In him, therefore, this spirit grew unchecked. He knew no superior but his father; and though that father ostentatiously avoided assuming authority over the other Brethren, it was, of course, none the less there. The boy seems to have despised from the first the absence of hierarchy among the Brethren, though at the same time they formed the most exclusive body on earth, being the only people that were going to heaven. There is thus an extreme psychological contradiction inherent in the situation. It is improbable that Alick was aware at the time of the real feelings which must have been implanted in him by this environment; but the main result was undoubtedly to stimulate his pride and ambition in a most unwholesome (?) degree. His social and financial position, the obvious envy of his associates, his undoubted personal prowess, physical and intellectual, all combined to make it impossible for him to be satisfied to take any place in the world but the top. The Plymouth Brethren refused to take any part in politics. Among them, the peer and the peasant met theoretically as equals, so that the social system of England was simply ignored. The boy could not aspire to become prime minister or even king; he was already apart from and beyond all that. It will be seen that as soon as he arrived at an age where ambitions are compelled to assume concrete form, his position became extremely difficult. The earth was not big enough to hold him.

In looking back over his life up to May 1886, he can find little consecution and practically no coherence in his recollections. But from that month onwards there is change. It is as if the event which occurred at that time created a new faculty in his mind. A new factor had arisen and its name was death. He was called home from school in the middle of the term to attend a special prayer meeting at Redhill. His father had been taken ill. The local doctor had sent him to see Sir James Paget, who had advised an immediate operation for cancer of the tongue. Brethren from far and near had been summoned to help discover the Lord's will in the matter. The upshot was that the

[18] It is purely a question of virility: compare the noble races, Arabs, Pathans, Ghurkas, Japanese, etc. with the "moral" races. Of course, absence of caste determines loss of virility and vice versa.

operation was declined; it was decided to treat the disease by Count Mattei's electro-homeopathy, a now discarded system of unusually outrageous quackery. No doctor addicted to this form of swindling being locally available, The Grange was given up and a house called Glenburnie taken at Southampton.

On March 5th, 1887, Edward Crowley died. The course of the disease had been practically painless. Only one point is of interest to our present purpose. On the night of March 5th, the boy — away at school — dreamed that his father was dead. There was no reason for this in the ordinary way, as the reports had been highly optimistic. The boy remembers that the quality of the dream was entirely different from anything that he had known. The news of the death did not arrive in Cambridge till the following morning. The interest of this fact depends on a subsequent parallel. During the years that followed, the boy — and the man — dreamed repeatedly that his mother was dead; but on the day of her death he — then three thousand miles away — had the same dream, save that it differed from the others by possessing this peculiar indescribable but unmistakable quality that he remembered in connection with the death of his father.

From the moment of the funeral the boy's life entered on an entirely new phase. The change was radical. Within three weeks of his return to school he got into trouble for the first time. He does not remember for what offence[19], but only that his punishment was diminished on account of his bereavement. This was the first symptom of a complete reversal of his attitude to life in every respect. It seems obvious that his father's death must have been causally connected with it. But even so, the events remain inexplicable. The conditions of his school life, for instance, can hardly have altered, yet his reaction to them makes it almost incredible that it was the same boy.

Previous to the death of Edward Crowley, the recollections of his son, however vivid or detailed, appear to him strangely impersonal. In throwing back his mind to that period, he feels, although attention constantly elicits new facts, that he is investigating the behavior of somebody else. It is only from this point that he begins to think of himself in the first person. From this point, however, he does so; and is able to continue this autohagiography in a more conventional style by speaking of himself as "I".

[19] On revision, he thinks it was "talking on the march", a whispered word to the other half of his scale of the "crocodile".

4

I had naturally no idea at the time that the death of my father would make any practical difference to my environment. In most similar cases it probably would not have done so. Most widows naturally remain in the groove.

As things were, I found myself in a totally new environment. My father's religious opinions had tended to alienate him from his family; and the friends whom he had made in his own circle had no interest in visiting my mother. I was thrown into the atmosphere of her family. She moved to London in order to be near her brother, whom till then I had hardly met.

Tom Bond Bishop was a prominent figure in religious and philanthropic circles in London. He held a more or less important position in the Custom House, but had no ambitions connected with the Civil Service. He devoted the whole of this spare time and energy to the propagation of the extraordinarily narrow, ignorant and bigoted Evangelicalism in which he believed. He had founded the Children's Scripture Union and the Children's Special Service Mission. The former dictates to children what passages of the Bible they shall read daily: the latter drags them from their play at the seaside and hands them over to the ravings of pious undergraduates or hired gospel-geysers. Within his limits, he was a man of acute intelligence and great executive and organizing ability. A Manning plus bigoted sincerity; a Cotton Mather minus imagination; one might even say a Paul deprived of logical ability, and this defect supplied by invulnerable cocksureness. He was inaccessible to doubt; he *knew* that he was *right* on every point.

I once put it to him: suppose a climber roped to another who has fallen. He cannot save him and must fall also unless he cut the rope. What should he do? My uncle replied, "God would never allow a man to be placed in such a position"!!!! This unreason made him mentally and morally lower than the cattle of the fields. He obeyed blind savage impulses and took them for the sanctions of the Almighty.

"To the lachrymal glands of a crocodile he added the bowels of compassion of a cast-iron rhinoceros; with the meanness and cruelty of a eunuch he combined the calculating avarice of a Scotch Jew, without the whisky of the one or the sympathetic imagination of the other. Perfidious and hypocritical as the Jesuit of Protestant fable, he was unctuous as Uriah Heep, and for the rest possessed the vices of Joseph Surface and Tartuffe; yet, being without the human weaknesses which make them possible, he was a more virtuous, and therefore a more odious, villain.

"In feature resembling a shaven ape, in figure a dislocated dachshund, his personal appearance was at the first glance unattractive. But the clothes made by a City tailor lent such general harmony to the whole as to reconcile the observer to the phenomenon observed.

"Of unrivalled cunning, his address was plausible; he concealed his genius under a mask of matchless mediocrity and his intellectual force under the cloak of piety. In religion he was an Evangelical, that type of Nonconformist who remains in the Church in the hope of capturing its organization and its revenues.

"An associate of such creatures of an inscrutable Providence as Coote and Torrey, he surpassed the one in sanctimoniousness, the other in bigotry, though he always thought blackmail too risky and slander a tactical error."[20]

No more cruel fanatic, no meaner villain, ever walked this earth. My father, wrong-headed as he was, had humanity and a certain degree of common-sense; he had a logical mind and never confused spiritual with material issues. He could never have believed, like my uncle, that the cut and colour of "Sunday clothes" could be a matter of importance to the Deity. Having decided that faith and not works was essential to salvation, he could not attach any vital importance to works. With him, the reason for refraining from sin was simply that it showed ingratitude to the Saviour. In the case of the sinner, it was almost a hopeful sign that he should sin thoroughly. He was more likely to reach that conviction of sin which would show him his need of salvation. The material punishment of sin (again) was likely to bring him to his knees. Good works in the sinner were worthless. "All our righteousness is as filthy rags." It was the devil's favourite trick to induce people to rely on their good character. The parable of the pharisee and the publican taught this clearly enough.

I do not know whether my Uncle Tom could have found any arguments against this theory, but in practice he had a horror of what he called sin which

[20] I quote from an obituary of him published during his life.

was exaggerated almost to the point of insanity. His talents, I may almost say his genius[21], gave him tremendous influence. In his own house he was a ruthless, petty tyrant; and it was into this den of bitter slavery that I was suddenly hurled from my position of fresh air, freedom and heirship.

He lived in London, in what was then called Thistle Grove. The name has since been changed to Drayton Gardens, despite a petition enthusiastically supported by Bishop; the objection was that a public house in the neighbourhood was called the Drayton Arms. This is typical of my uncle's attitude to life. His sense of humour. When I called him "Uncle", he would snigger, "Oh my prophetic soul, my uncle!" But the time came when I knew most of *Hamlet* by heart, and when he next shot off his "joke", I continued the quotation, replying sternly, "Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast!" — I am, in a way, glad to think that at the end of his long and obscene life I was reconciled with him. The very last letter he ever received from me admitted (if a little grudgingly) that his mind was so distorted that he had really no idea how vile a thing he was. I think this must have stirred his sense of shame. At least, I never received any answer.

I suppose that the household at Thistle Grove was as representative of one part of England as could possibly have been imagined. It was nondescript. It was neither upper nor lower middle-class. It had not sufficient individuality even to belong to a category. My grandmother was a particularly charming old lady. She was inexpressibly dignified in her black silks and her lace cap. She had been imported from the country by the exigencies of her son's position in the Civil Service. She was extremely lovable; I never remember hearing a cross word fall from her. She was addicted to the infamous vice of bezique. It was, of course, impossible to have "The Devil's Picture Books" in a house frequented by the leading lights of Evangelicalism. But my Aunt Ada had painted a pack of cards in which the suits were roses, violets, etc. It was the same game; but the camouflage satisfied my uncle's conscience. No pharisee ever scoured the outside of the cup and platter more assiduously than he.

My grandmother was the second wife of her husband; of the first marriage there were two surviving children; Anne, a stout and sensual old maid, who always filled me with intense physical repulsion; she was shiny and greasy with a blob nose and thick wet lips. Every night she tucked a bottle of

[21] He devised a most ingenious method of teaching history by charts, each nation being represented by a river of greater or less breadth as it rose or fell, annexations by tributaries, etc., etc.

stout under her arm and took it to bed with her — adding this invariable "joke" — "My baby!" Even today, when people happen to drink stout at a table where I am sitting, I manage instinctively not to see it.

Her brother John had lived for many years in Australia in enjoyment of wealth and civic distinction. His wealth failed when his health broke; and he returned to England to live with the family. He was a typical hardy out-door man with all the colonial freedom of thought, speech and manner. He found himself in the power of his half-brother's acrid code. He had to smoke his pipe by stealth and he was bullied about his soul until his mind gave way. At family prayers he was perpetually being prayed at; his personality being carefully described lest the Lord should mistake his identity. The description would have suited the average murderer as observed by a singularly uncharitable pacifist.

I am particularly proud of myself for the way I behaved to him. It was impossible to help liking the simple-minded genial soul of the man. I remember one day at Streatham, after he and my grandmother had come to live with us, that I tried to cheer him up. Shaking all over, he explained to me almost in tears that he was afraid he was "not all right with Christ". I look back almost with incredulity upon myself. It was not I that spoke; I answered him with brusque authority, though I was a peculiarly shy boy not yet sixteen. I told him plainly that the whole thing was nonsense, that Christ was a fable, that there was no such thing as sin, and that he ought to thank his stars that he had lived his whole life away from the hypocritical crew of trembling slaves who believed in such nonsense. Already my unconscious self was singing in my ears that terrific climax of Browning's "Renan-chorus":

> Oh, dread succession to a dizzy post,
> Sad sway of sceptre whose mere touch appals,
> Ghastly dethronement, cursed by those the most
> On whose repugnant brow the crown next falls!

However, he became melancholy-mad; and died in that condition. I remember writing to my mother and my uncle that they were guilty of "murder most foul as in the best it is; but this most foul, strange and unnatural".

I lay weight upon this episode because my attitude, as I remember it, seems incompatible with my general spiritual life of the period, as will appear later.

I was genuinely fond of my Aunt Ada. She was womanly in the oldfashioned sense of the word; a purely passive type. Naturally talented though she

was, she was both ignorant and bigoted. In her situation, she could not have been anything else. But her opinions did not interfere with her charity. A woman of infinite kindness. Her health was naturally delicate; an attack of rheumatic fever had damaged her heart and she died before her time. The meanness and selfishness of my Uncle Tom were principally responsible. He would not engage a secretary; he forced her to slave for the Scripture Union and it killed her.

One anecdote throws a curious light upon my character in these early days and also reveals her as possessed of a certain sense of humour. Some years before, on the platform at Redhill with my father, I had seen on the bookstall *Across Patagonia* by Lady Florence Dixie. The long name fascinated me; I begged him to buy it for me and he did. The name stuck and I decided to be King of Patagonia. Psycho-analysts will learn with pleasure that the name of my capital was Margaragstagregorstoryaka. "Margar" was derived from Margaret, queen of Henry VI, who was my favourite character in history. This is highly significant, as indicating the type of woman that I have always admired. I want her to be wicked, independent, courageous, ambitious, and so on. I cannot place the "ragstag", but it is probably euphonic. "Gregor" is, of course, my cousin; "story" is what was then my favourite form of amusement. I cannot place the "yaka", but that again is probably euphonic.

I cannot imagine why, at this very early age, I cultivated a profound aversion to, and contempt for, Queen Victoria. Merely, perhaps, the clean and decent instinct of a child! I announced my intention of leading the forces of Patagonia against her. One day my Aunt Ada took me to tea at Gunters'; and an important-looking official document was handed to me. It was Queen Victoria's reply. She was going to blow my capital to pieces and treat me personally in a very unpleasant manner. This document was sealed with a label marked with an anchor to suggest naval frightfulness, taken for this purpose from the end of a reel of cotton. But I took the document quite seriously and was horribly frightened.

The dinginess of my uncle's household, the atmosphere of severe disapproval of the universe in general, and the utter absence of the spirit of life, combined to make me detest my mother's family. There was, incidentally, a grave complication, for my father's death had increased the religious bigotry of my mother very greatly; and although she was so fond of her family, she was bound to regard them as very doubtful candidates for heaven. This attitude was naturally inexplicable to a child of such tender years; and the effect on me was to develop an almost petulant impatience with the whole question of religion. My Aunt Ada was my mother's favourite sister; yet at her funeral

she refused to enter the church during the service and waited outside in the rain, only rejoining the procession when the corpse repassed those accursèd portals on its way to the cemetery. She stood by the grave while the parson read the service. It was apparently the architectural diabolism to which she most objected.

There was also an objection to the liturgy, on numerous grounds. It seems incredible, but is true, that the Plymouth Brethren regarded the Lord's Prayer as a "vain repetition, as do the heathen". It was forbidden to use it! Jesus had indeed given this prayer as an example of how to pray; but everyone was expected to make up his own supplications ex tempore.

The situation resulted in a very amusing way. Having got to the point of saying. "Evil, be thou my good," I racked my brains to discover some really abominable crimes to do. In a moment of desperate daring I sneaked one Sunday morning into the church frequented by my Uncle Tom on Streatham Common, prepared, so to speak, to wallow in it. It was one of the most bitter disappointments of my life! I could not detect anything which satisfied my ideas of damnation.

For a year or two after my father's death my mother did not seem to settle down; and during the holidays we either stayed with Bishop or wandered in hotels and hydros. I think she was afraid of bringing me up in London; but when my uncle moved to Streatham she compromised by taking a house in Polwarth Road. I hated it, because there were bigger houses in the neighbourhood.

I am not quite sure whether I am the most outrageous snob that ever lived, or whether I am not a snob at all. The truth of the matter is, I think, that I will not acquiesce in anything but the very best of its kind. I don't in the least mind going without a thing altogether, but if I have it at all it has got to be AI. England is a very bad place for me. I cannot endure people who are either superior or inferior to others, but only those who, whatever their station in life, are consciously unique and supreme. In the East, especially among Mohammedans, one can make friends with the very coolies; they respect themselves and others. They are gentlemen. But in England the spirit of independence is rare. Men of high rank and position nearly always betray consciousness of inferiority to, and dependence upon, others. Snobbishness, in this sense, is so widely spread that I rarely feel at home, unless with a supreme genius like Augustus John.

Aubrey Tanqueray is typical. He must not forfeit the esteem of his "little Parish", and avoids mortification by shifting from one parish to another. When Paula asks him. "Do you trouble yourself about what servants *think*?"

he answers, "Of course." If one had to worry about one's actions in respect of other people's ideas, one might as well be buried alive in an antheap or married to an ambitious violinist. Whether that man is the prime minister, modifying his opinions to catch votes, or a bourgeois in terror lest some harmless act should be misunderstood and outrage some petty convention, that man is an inferior man and I do not want to have anything to do with him any more than I want to eat canned salmon. Of course the world forces us all to compromise with our environment to some extent, and we only waste our strength if we fight pitched battles for points which are not worth a skirmish. It is only a faddist who refuses to conform with conventions of dress and the like. But our sincerity should be Roman about things that really matter to us. And I am still in doubt, as I write these words, as to how far it is right to employ strategy and diplomacy in order to gain one's point. The great men of the world have stood up and taken their medicine. Bradlaugh and Burton did not lose in the end by being downright. I never approved the super- subtlety of Huxley's campaign against Gladstone; and as for Swinburne, he died outright when he became respectable. Adaptation to one's environment makes for a sort of survival; but after all, the supreme victory is only won by those who prove themselves of so much hardier stuff than the rest that no power on earth is able to destroy them. The people who have really made history are the martyrs.

I suppose that there comes to all of us only too often the feeling which Freud calls the Œdipus complex. We want to repose, to be at peace with our fellows whom we love, who misunderstand us and for whose love we are hungry. We want to make terms, we want to surrender. But I have always found that, though I could acquiesce in some such line of conduct, though I could make all preparations for accommodation, yet when it came to the point, I was utterly unable to do the base, irrevocable act. I cannot even do evil that good may come. I abhor Jesuitry. I would rather lose than win by stratagem. The utmost that I have been able to manage is to consent to put forward my principles in a form which will not openly outrage ordinary susceptibilities. Bit I feel so profoundly the urgency of doing my will that it is practically impossible for me to write on Shakespeare and the musical Glasses without introducing the spiritual and moral principles which are the only things in myself that I can identify with myself.

This characteristic is evidently inherited from my father. His integrity was absolute. He lived entirely by his theological convictions. Christ might return at any moment. "Even as the lightning lighteneth out of the East and lighteneth even unto the West, so is the coming of the Son of Man." He

would have to give an account of "every idle word". It was a horrifying thought to him that he might be caught by the Second Advent at a moment when he was not actively and intensely engaged on the work which God had sent him into the world to do. This sense of the importance of the lightest act, of the value of every moment, has been a tragically intense factor in my life. I have always grudged the time necessary for eating, sleeping and dressing. I have invented costumes with the sole object of minimizing the waste of time[22] and the distraction of attention involved. I never wear underclothing. The "Magnetism" of men and women has for its physical basis sweat: in health this is sparse and very fragrant. Any defect should be instantly remedied: there is no surer danger sign than foul or unduly profuse perspiration.

This quality determined much of my life at school. I instinctively understood that I did not want academic knowledge as such; but since I was under duress, the best plan for avoiding interruption was to acquit myself well in class and in examination. I had no ambitions; but I invariably set myself to acquire the necessary knowledge with the minimum of exertion. My natural abilities, especially my memory, made this easy. I soon discovered that to distinguish myself in school was in the nature of a conjurer's trick. It is hard to analyse my method or to be sure of the analysis; but I think the essence of the plan was to make certain of the minimum required and to add a superstructure of one or two abstruse points which I would manage to bring to the notice of the master or the examiner so as to give him the idea that I had prepared myself with unusual thoroughness.

It occurs to me that this confession sounds rather strange, after my previous remarks about integrity. My justification is that I considered schoolmasters as importunate and possibly dangerous beggars. I was not in a position to fight; and I could not afford a good sixpence, so I put them off with a bad one. It was their own fault for plaguing me.

[22] In Mexico City in 1900 Eckenstein counselled me to turn back the heels of my stockings to facilitate putting them on. I objected to the waste of time involved. This developed into a long argument on the point: he won, but I couldn't believe it and am yet unconverted.

5

I found nothing in the school curriculum which interested me. I had no inkling of it at the time, but I was already in the thrall of the search for reality. Mathematics captured my imagination. I was brilliant at arithmetic until the subject degenerated into "practice", which was a matter for grocers. I might have liked geometry; but the arid method of presentation in Euclid put me off. I was asked to memorize what I did not understand; and, my memory being so good, it refused to be insulted in that manner. Similarly, I could never memorize the ordinary "repetitions" of Greek and Latin poetry. I took to trigonometry with ardour; but became disgusted as soon as I found my calculations were to be applied to such vulgarities as architecture. The only pure science for me was algebra and I progressed in that with amazing rapidity. On one occasion, at Malvern, the mathematical master wished to devote the whole hour to the three elder boys, who were going up for some scholarship, and set us juniors to work out quadratic equations. There were sixty-three in the chapter set. At the end of forty minutes I stood up and said, "Please, sir, what shall I do now?" he would not believe that I had worked them correctly, but I had. I seem to have an instinct for appreciating the relations of pure numbers and could find factors by intuition.

My intellectual activity has always been intense. It was for this very reason that I could not bear to waste a moment on subjects which seemed to me alien to my interest, though I had no idea what that interest was. As soon as I heard of chemistry, I realized that it dealt with reality as I understood the word. So I soon had "Little Roscoe" practically by heart, though it was not a school subject. I furnished a laboratory in the house at Streatham, and spent all my time and money in making experiments. It may be interesting to mention how my mind worked. I had heard of the petard as a military engine; and I was hoist with it. Roscoe told me that chloride of nitrogen was the most powerful and sensitive explosive known. My idea was to dissolve it in some volatile fluid; one could then leave a bucket of it at the enemy's gate. The fluid would evaporate and the chloride explode at the first vibration. After

several minor misadventures, I collect it over benzine — about a quart — and the whole thing exploded and nearly burnt the house down.

I had also a plan for manufacturing diamonds. By various analogies I came to the conclusion that a true solution of carbon might be made in iron and I proposed to crystallize it out in the regular way. The apparatus required was, however, hardly within the compass of a boy of fourteen and my diamonds are still theoretical.

Talking of theory, I came to the conclusion, which at that time was a damnable heresy and a dangerous delusion, that all the elements were modifications of one substance. My main argument was that the atomic weights of cobalt and nickel were practically identical and the characteristic colours of their salts suggested to me that they were geometrical isomers like dextrose and laevulose. This is all obvious enough today, but I still think that it was not bad for a boy in his 'teens in the early 'nineties, whose only source of information was "Little Roscoe".

An amusing situation arose out of this early devotion to the art of Flamel. In my last term at Malvern a panic-stricken board of governors determined to create a science side and started a chemistry class. With laudable economy they put it in charge of one Mr. Faber, a broken-down classical master, possibly in the belief that as he had a German name he knew as much as Ostwald. The result was that I had constantly to correct him in class; and he could do nothing, because the authorities, when consulted, proved to be on my side.

I had thus no difficulty at school as far as lessons were concerned, but in my three years at Champney's I had no lack of trouble; the nature of this can only be understood if I adduce a few facts to indicate the atmosphere. I used to tell people about my school life and met with such consistent incredulity that I made a little collection of incidents in the preface to my *The World's Tragedy*. I quote the passage as it stands.

A Boyhood in Hell

> The Revd. H. d'Arcy Champney, M.A. Of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, had come out of sect.
>
> He had voted at the parliamentary elections by crossing out the names of the candidates and writing, "I vote for King Jesus."
>
> He had started a school for the sons of Brethren at 51 Bateman Street, Cambridge. May God bite into the bones of men the pain of that hell on earth (I have prayed often) that by them it may be sowed

with salt, accursed for ever! May the maiden that passes it be barren and the pregnant woman that beholdeth it abort! May the birds of the air refuse to fly over it! May it stand as a curse, as a fear, as an hate, among men! May the wicked dwell therein! May the light of the sun be withheld therefrom and the light of the moon not lighten it! May it become the home of the shells of the dead and may the demons of the pit inhabit it! May it be accursed, accursed — accursed for ever and ever!

And still, standing as I stand in the prime of early manhood, free from all the fetters of the body and the mind, do I curse the memory thereof unto the ages.

It was a good enough school from the point of view of examiners, I dare say. Morally and physically, it was an engine of destruction and corruption. I am just going to put down a few facts haphazard as they come to my memory; you may form your own judgment.

1. We were allowed to play cricket, but not to score runs, lest it should excite the vice of "emulation".

2. Champney told me, a child of not yet twelve years old, that he had never consummated his marriage. (Only the very acute verbal memory which I possess enabled me years after to recall and interpret his meaning. He used a coarser phrase.)

3. We were told that "the Lord had a special care of the school and brought to light that which was done in darkness," etc., etc. Ad nauseam. "The instrument was on this occasion so-and-so, who had nobly come forward," etc., etc. In other words, hypocrisy and sneaking were the only virtues.

Naturally, one of several boys who might be involved in the same offence would take fright and save his skin by sneaking. The informer was always believed implicitly, as against probability, or even possibility, with complete disregard of the testimony of other and independent witnesses.

For instance, a boy named Glascott, with insane taint, told Mr. Champney that he had visited me (twelve years old) at my mother's house during the holidays — true so far, he had — and found me lying drunk at the bottom of the stairs. My mother was never asked about this; nor was I told of it. I was put into "Coventry", i.e. no master nor boy might speak to me, or I to them. I was

fed on bread and water; during play hours I worked in the schoolroom; during work hours I walked solitary round and round the playground. I was expected to "confess" the crime of which I was not only innocent, but unaccused.

This punishment, which I believe criminal authorities would consider severe on a poisoner, went on for a term and a half. I was, at last, threatened with expulsion for my refusal to "confess", and so dreadful a picture of the horrors of expulsion did they paint me — the guilty wretch, shunned by his fellows, slinks on through life to a dishonoured grave, etc. — that I actually chose to endure my tortures and to thank my oppressor.

Physically, I broke down. The strain and the misery affected my kidneys; and I had to leave school altogether for two years. I should add in fairness that there were other accusations against me, though, as you shall hear, almost equally silly.

I learnt at last, through the intervention of my uncle, in a lucid interval, what I was supposed to have done. I was said to have tried "to corrupt Chamberlain" — not our great patriotic statesman, shifty Joe — but a boy. (I was twelve years old and quite ignorant of all sexual matters till long after.) Also I had "held a mock prayer meeting". This I remembered. I had strolled up to a group of boys in the playground, who were indeed holding one. As they saw me one said, "Brother Crowley will now lead us in prayer." Brother Crowley was too wary and walked away. But instead of doing what a wise boy would have done: gone straight to the head and accused them of forty-six distinct unmentionable crimes, I let things slide. So, fearing that I might go, they hurried off themselves and told him how that wicked Crowley had tried to lead them away from Jesus.

Worse, I had called Page I a pharisee. That was true; I had said it. Dreadful of me! And Page I, who "walked very close to Jesus", of course went and told.

Yes, they all walked very close to Jesus — as close as Judas did.

4. A boy named Barton was sentenced to one hundred and twenty strokes of the cane on his bare shoulders, for some petty theft of which he was presumably innocent.

Superb was the process of trial. It began by an extra long prayer time and Joshua's account of the sin of Achan, impressively read. Next, an hour or two about the Lord's care of the school, the way He brought sin to light. Next, when well worked up and all our

nerves on the jump, who stole what? Silence. Next, the Lord's care in providing a witness — like the witnesses against Naboth! Then the witness and his story, as smooth as a policeman's. Next, sentence. Last, execution, with intervals of prayer!

Champney's physique being impaired, one may suppose by his excessive devotion to Jesus, he arranged to give sixty strokes one day and sixty the next.

My memory fails — perhaps Barton will one day oblige with his reminiscences — but I fancy the first day came so near to killing him that he escaped the second.

I remember one licking I got — on the legs, because flogging the buttocks excites the victim's sensuality! — fifteen minutes prayer, fifteen strokes of the cane, fifteen minutes more prayer, fifteen more strokes — and more prayer to top it!

5. On Sunday the day was devoted to "religion". Morning prayers and sermon (about forty-five minutes). Morning "meeting" (one and a half to two hours). Open-air preaching on Parker's Piece[23] (say one hour). Bible reading and learning by heart. Reading of the few books "sanctioned for Sunday" (say two hours). Prayer meeting (called voluntary, but to stay away meant that some sneak in the school would accuse you of something next day) (say one hour). Evening prayer and sermon (say thirty minutes). Preaching of the gospel in the meetingroom (one and a half hours). Ditto on Parker's Piece (say one hour). Prayer before retiring (say half an hour).

6. The "Badgers': meeting". Every Monday night the school was ranged round the back of the big schoolroom, and the scourings of Barnswell (Cambridge's slum) let in, fed, preached to and dismissed.

Result, epidemics of ringworm, measles and mumps.

Oh no! Not a result; the Lord's hand was heavy upon us because of some undiscovered sin.

I might go on for a long while, but I will not. I hope there are some people in the world happy enough to think that I am lying, or at least exaggerating. But I pledge my word to the literal truth of all

[23] Evangelizing was almost all plain terrorism. Besides the torments of hell, there were "judgments". For instance, the Blasphemous Butcher who, begged to get "washed in the Blood of the Lamb", replied "Right you are, I've got a lamb of my own." *And that very same night his reason tottered on its throne,* etc.

I have said, and there are plenty of witnesses alive to confirm me, or to refute me. I have given throughout the actual names, addresses and other details.

It is impossible to suppose that the character of the school had completely changed between my father's death and my return from the funeral. Yet before that I was completely happy and in sympathy with my surroundings. Not three weeks later, Ishmael was my middle name. I cannot account for it at all satisfactorily. I had been perfectly genuine in my ambition to lead a life of holiness; the idea of intimate communion with "Jesus" was constantly present to my mind. I do not remember any steps in the volte-face. I asked one of the masters one day how it was that Jesus was three days and three nights in the grave, although crucified on Friday and risen again on Sunday morning. He could not explain and said that it had never been explained. So I formulated the ambition to become a shining light in Christianity by doing this thing that had never yet been done. This idea, by the way, is very characteristic. I am totally unable to take any interest in doing anything which has been done before. But tell me of an alleged impossibility; and health, wealth, life itself are nothing. I am out to do it. The apparent discrepancy in the gospel narrative aroused no doubt in my mind as to the literal truth of either of the texts. Indeed, my falling away from grace was not occasioned by any intellectual qualms; I accepted the theology of the Plymouth Brethren. In fact, I could hardly conceive of the existence of people who might doubt it. I simply went over to Satan's side; and to this hour I cannot tell why.

But I found myself as passionately eager to serve my new master as I had been to serve the old. I was anxious to distinguish myself by committing sin. Here again my attitude was extraordinarily subtle. It never occurred to me to steal or in any other way to infringe the decalogue. Such conduct would have been petty and contemptible. I wanted a supreme spiritual sin; and I had not the smallest idea how to set about it. There was a good deal of morbid curiosity among the saints about "the sin against the Holy Ghost" which "could never be forgiven". Nobody knew what it was. It was even considered rather blasphemous to offer any very positive conjecture on the point. The idea seems to have been that it was something like an ill-natured practical joke on the part of Jesus. This mysterious offence which could never be forgiven might be inadvertently committed by the greatest saint alive, with the result

that he would be bowled out at the very gate of glory. Here was another impossibility to catch my youthful fancy; I must find out what that sin was and do it very thoroughly.

For (evidently) my position was exceedingly precarious. I was opposed to an omnipotent God; and for all I knew to the contrary, He might have predestined me to be saved. No matter how much I disbelieved in Jesus, no matter how many crimes I piled up, He might get me in spite of myself. The only possibility of outwitting Him was to bring him up against His own pledge that this particular sin should never be forgiven, with a certificate from the recording angel that I had duly done it.

It seems incredible that such insane conclusions should form the basis of practical action in any human being above the level of a bushman. But they follow logically enough from the blasphemous and superstitious premisses of Christian theology. Besides this, I had never a moment's inclination to take the material world seriously. In the *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, Cardinal Newman tells us, I suspect truthfully, that as a child he wished that *The Arabian Nights* were true. As we all know, he gratified his ambitions by accepting for reality the Freudian phantasm of hashed-up paganism with Semitic sauce which led him to the hat. But I went further. My senses and my rational judgment created a subconscious feeling of uneasiness that supernaturalism might not be true. This insulted my inmost consciousness of myself. But the reply was not to accept the false for the true, but to determine to make it true. I resolved passionately to reach the spiritual causes of phenomena, and to dominate the material world which I detested by their means. I was not content to believe in a personal devil and serve him, in the ordinary sense of the word. I wanted to get hold of him personally and become his chief of staff.

In my search for a suitable sin which might earn me the diabolical V.C., I obviously enough came in touch with the usual thing. Champney was always sniffing around it, but — to me — he was completely unintelligible. I frequented the boys whose reputation for wickedness was best established, and was further directed in my inquiry by an intuitive sense of magnetism or appreciation of physiognomy. But the reign of terror was so firmly established in the school that nobody cared tell me outright the nature of this sin, even when the knowledge of it was admitted. Mysterious hints were given; and at last a boy named Gibson told me what action to make, but he did not tell me to what object to apply the process. It seems extraordinary that nature should have afforded me no indication. I nowise connected the organ of reproduction with any voluntary act. I made conjectures dictated by purely intellectual considerations, and carried out experiments based on their results;

but they were absolutely ill-directed. I never guessed what organ was in question. The discovery was delayed for years.

My revolt must have manifested itself by actions which were technically not blameworthy. I cannot accuse myself of any overt crime. The battle between myself and the school was conducted on the magical plane, so to speak. It was as if I had made wax figures of the most inoffensive sort, that yet were recognized by the spiritual instinct of Champney as idols or instruments of witchcraft. I was punished with absolute injustice and stupidity, yet at the same time the mystical apprehension of Champney made no mistake.

6

I must mention the intervention of my Uncle Jonathan in the matter of the Badger's meeting, and that of my Uncle Tom in the final eruption.

Jonathan Crowley, my father's elder brother, was the beau ideal of the noble patrician. He looked like a Roman emperor as we romantically imagine him to have been, not as we see him in most sculpture. The tremendous brow, the eagle eyes, the great hooked arrogant nose, the firm mouth and the indomitable jaw combined to make him one of the most strikingly handsome men that I have ever seen.

He lived in a stately splendour which had no hint of ostentation. I never knew his first wife, by whom he had two children, Claude and Agnes. Claude was strikingly ugly, so much so as to be attractive, and he had a touch of deformity without being actually a hunchback. The same traits appeared in his mental and moral character. I always thought of him admiringly as Richard III; but he was merely weak and feeble-minded. Agnes inherited her father's aristocratic haughtiness and a share of his good looks. She was too proud to marry and the repression preyed on her mind until she developed an idée fixe. For the last thirty years of her life she was constantly announcing her engagement and drawing up marriage contracts, which never came to anything. She was also possessed by the demon of litigation, and imagined herself wronged by various members of the family.

My uncle married the governess of the children. This was a lady of a distinguished Saxon family, who could trace her pedigree to the time of Edward the Confessor. Tall, thin, distinguished and highly educated, she made an admirable chatelaine. Her personality appealed strongly to me, and she took that place in my affections which I could not give to my mother. She became a prominent member of the Primrose League, and it was through her influence with Lord Salisbury and Lord Ritchie that I obtained my nomination for the Diplomatic Service.

My uncle and aunt visited me at Cambridge. I told them about the Badger's meeting, not in a spirit of complaint, but rather as Sir Richard Burton

might have described his adventures among savages. Uncle Jonathan did not see the matter in that light at all. He made inquiries which confirmed my story; and told Champney point blank that this sort of thing had got to stop. Champney attempted to bluster, but on being threatened with the sanitary authorities, knuckled under. The matter, however, did not stop there. My uncle saw clearly that I was being brutally illtreated; and he made an application to the courts which resulted in my being called to see Mr. Justice Stirling in chambers. I have always been intensely loyal even to my enemies, and (for all I knew) the judge might send my mother and her brother to prison. So I lied like a little man and pretended that I was perfectly happy at the school. I do not think that he was entirely fooled by my protestations; and although I was not made a ward in Chancery, a promise was exacted that I should go to a public school and university as soon as I had passed the "Cambridge Local".

Meanwhile, nature took my part. At the end of the first term of my punishment I was so obviously ill during the holidays that questions were asked, and I complained to my mother of the ill-treatment. Instead of investigating the circumstances, they sent for Champney without saying anything to me. I was taken over to my Uncle Tom's house one evening and found myself penned in a corner of the room by the fulminating headmaster. The surprise terrified me and I did not dare to deny anything. But there was still no accusation made against me. Champney did not even tell my mother and Uncle Tom what I was supposed to have done. I was sent back to the school to serve the remainder of my sentence. At the end of that term, however, for some reason whose nature I cannot guess, Uncle Tom decided to come up to Cambridge and make further inquiries. Warned of the visit, Champney put on extra pressure. I must confess or be expelled. I did my utmost to invent satisfactory abominations; but as of course these were not connected in any way with the real accusations, I merely made matters worse. On Uncle Tom's arrival I once more resorted to telling the simple truth, that I had no idea what I had done. This time my uncle lapsed from righteousness to the extent of insisting on knowing what the accusations were. Champney told him. My uncle had sense enough to see that they were all absurd, put down Champney for a lunatic, and took me away from the school. As a matter of fact, within a very short time the insanity of the headmaster became patent and the school was broken up in consequence.

As regards myself, the mischief had been done. I, who had been a happy, healthy, good-natured, popular boy, had learned to endure complete solitude for months at a time. I spoke to no boy and the masters always addressed me, when necessity compelled them, with sanctimonious horror. The bread and

water diet, and the punishment of perpetual walking round the playground during school hours, had broken down my constitution. I was taken to a doctor, who found that I was suffering severely from albuminuria, and predicted that I should never live to come of age. I was put on special diet and prescribed a course of country life with a tutor. During the next year or two I was constantly travelling round Wales and Scotland, climbing mountains and fishing for trout. I also had one delightful summer at St. Andrews where Andrew Kirkaldy taught me to play golf. My health rapidly improved. I was allowed to work a very limited number of hours, but I progressed rapidly, having the undivided attention of my tutors.

These persons, however, were not too satisfactory; they were all my Uncle Tom's nominees; that is, they were of the sawny, anaemic, priggish type, who at the best could boast of minor Cambridge[24] colleges. Of course, I considered it my duty to outwit them in every possible way and hunt up some kind of sin.

This uncle, by the way, some years later, contributed what he esteemed a brilliantly witty article to the *Boy's Magazine*, the organ of an Evangelical attempt to destroy the manhood of our public schools. It was called *The Two Wicked Kings*. These were described as tyrants who ruined the lives of boys and enslaved them. Their names were Smo-King and Drin-King. Uncle Tom called my attention to his masterpiece and I said, with shocked surprise, "But, my dear Uncle, you have forgotten to mention a third, the most dangerous and deadly of all!" He couldn't think who that was. I told him. Now, I ask you, is it not deplorable that so important and accurate an addition to his thesis should not have been accepted with pious glee?

Things went from bad to worse as I grew in moral power. Part of the time I was well enough to go to a day school in Streatham, where I learnt at long last the terrible secret which I had racked my brains to discover for nearly three years. Here was certainly a sin worth sinning and I applied myself with characteristic vigour to its practice.

As my father had been accustomed to drink wine, I could not see how drinking could be a sin. There was, therefore, no object in doing it. I never touched wine until I got to Trinity and I have never felt the smallest temptation to excess. My father had, however, not been a smoker, saying that if God had intended men to smoke He would have supplied a chimney at the top of

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[24] Oxford was *anathema maranatha* to my Uncle Tom. Keble! Manning!! Newman!!! Procurers to the lords of hell far subtler and more fearful than Darwin, Huxley and Tyndall.

the head[25]. I had no hesitation, therefore in making a great point of smoking. I had no thought of connecting the service of the "third King" with the reproduction of the species, and therefore no reason to suppose that my father had ever so far forgotten himself. I spent my whole time trying to enrol myself under the royal banner; but this could only be done by cooperation and it was sometime before I found the means.

To return to my tutors. Relations were invariably strained. On one occasion the Rev. Fothergill had taken me for the summer to a fishing centre near Lairg called Forsinard. We went fishing one day to a loch over the moors and in the course of some argument I threw his rod far into the water.

He attacked me with fury, but I got a good hold and threw him after it. I then went of in the boat, but he caught me as I was pushing off, overturned the boat on top of me and tried to drown me. That night the gods still further favoured me. For a village girl named Belle McKay found herself with nothing better to do than to roam with me amid the heather. We returned together quite openly and Fothergill threw up the sponge. He took me back to London the next morning. Breaking the journey at Carlisle, I repeated my victory with a buxom chambermaid.

But murder is not the only amusement open to pious tutors. The brother of the Dean of Westminster (he subsequently became a missionary and died at Lokoja) had been taught that if he couldn't be good he should be careful. While he was actually in charge of me his conduct was irreproachable, but after giving me up he invited me over to his mother's house at Maze Hill to spend the night, and did his best to live up to the reputation of his cloth. I did not allow him to succeed, not because I could see no sin in it, but because I thought it was a trap to betray me to my family. Just before he left for Africa he invited me again, prayed with me, confessed to his offence, excusing himself on the ground that his elder brother Jack, also a missionary, had led him astray, and asked my pardon. Once again I adopted the attitude of the man of the world, "Tut, tut, my dear fellow, don't mention it," which annoyed him very much, because he wanted to be taken seriously as the chief of sinners.

One of the principal points about the sin stupidity is that it flatters the sinner. All insanity depends upon the exacerbation of the ego. The melancholic hugs the delusion that he has committed the unpardonable sin. Sins grow by repression and by brooding upon their enormity. Few people would

[25] One might surely argue that His most generous device was the adaptation of tobacco to the nerves of taste and smell.

go to excess if they were not unwholesomely over-excited about their trivial apishness.

Most people, especially Freud, misunderstand the Freudian position. "The libido of the unconscious" is really "the true, will of the inmost self". The sexual characteristics of the individual are, it is true, symbolic indications of its nature, and when those are "abnormal", we may suspect that the self is divided against itself in some way. Experience teaches the adepts who initiate mankind that when any complex (duality) in the self is resolved (unity) the initiate becomes whole. The morbid sexual symptoms (which are merely the complaints of the sick animal) disappear, while the moral and mental consciousness is relieved from its civil war of doubt and self-obsession. The complete man, harmonized, flows freely towards his natural goal.

It will be seen that I had developed enormously in these years. Unfortunately, my misery was so great during this long battle with my tyrants that while the incidents themselves stand out luminously in focus, I find it very hard to remember the order in which they occurred. There are, moreover, curious contradictions in myself against which I seem always to be stumbling. For example, as late as 1894, I think it must be, I find myself writing hymns of quite acceptable piety. One was published in *The Christian*; it began:

> I am a blind man on a helmless ship
> Without a compass on a stormy sea.
> I cannot sink, for God will hold me up, etc.

Again, I wrote a poem on the death of my Aunt Ada, which I thought good enough to include in my *Songs of the Spirit*, and is entirely irreproachable on the score of piety. It seems as if I possessed a theology of my own which was, to all intents and purposes, Christianity. My satanism did not interfere with it at all; I was trying to take the view that the Christianity of hypocrisy and cruelty was not true Christianity. I did not hate God or Christ, but merely the God and Christ of the people whom I hated. It was only when the development of my logical faculties supplied the demonstration that I was compelled to set myself in opposition to the Bible itself. It does not matter that the literature is sometimes magnificent and that in isolated passages the philosophy and ethics are admirable. The sum of the matter is that Judaism is a savage, and Christianity a fiendish, superstition.

It is very strange that I should have had no inkling of my tendency to Mysticism and Magick by means of any definite experience. It is true that, from the beginning, I held the transcendental view of the universe, but there

was nothing to back it up in the way of experience. Most children have a touch of poetry and believe in what I hate to call psychic phenomena, at least to the extent of fancying they see fairies or being scared of "bugges by night". But I, although consciously engaged in the battle with "principalities and powers", never had the slightest hallucination of sense or any tendency to imagine things ghostly. I might have had an ambition to see the devil and talk things over with him, but I should have expected such communication to be either perfectly material or perfectly intellectual. I had no idea of nuances. When I eventually learnt how to use my astral eyes and ears, there was no confusion; the other world had certain correspondences with our own, but it was perfectly distinct. I seem to have made a very determined effort to prevent the obliteration of my spiritual consciousness of the world beyond the veil by the ink of terrestrial experience. Then again, there are sudden outbreaks of a fully formed personality, in which I spoke with the assurance and authority of a man of fifty on subjects on which I had really no opinion at all in the ordinary sense of the word.

There is one amazing incident; at the age of fourteen as near as I can remember. I must premise that I have always been exceptionally tenderhearted, except to tyrants, for whom I think no tortures bad enough. In particular, I am uniformly kind to animals; no question of cruelty or sadism arises in the incident which I am about to narrate.

I had been told "A cat has nine lives." I deduced that it must be practically impossible to kill a cat. As usual, I became full of ambition to perform the feat. (Observe that I took my information unquestioningly *au pied de la lettre*.) Perhaps through some analogy with the story of Hercules and the hydra, I got it into my head that the nine lives of the cat must be taken more or less simultaneously. I therefore caught a cat, and having administered a large dose of arsenic I chloroformed it, hanged it above the gas jet, stabbed it, cut its throat, smashed its skull and, when it had been pretty thoroughly burnt, drowned it and threw it out of the window that the fall might remove the ninth life. In fact, the operation was successful; I had killed the cat. I remember that all the time I was genuinely sorry for the animal; I simply forced myself to carry out the experiment in the interest of pure science.

The combination of innocence, ignorance, knowledge, ingenuity and high moral principle seems extraordinary. It is evident that the insanely immoral superstition in which I had been brought up as responsible for so atrocious an absurdity. Again and again we shall see how the imposition of the antinatural theory and principles of Christianity upon a peculiarly sane, mat-

ter-of-fact, reality-facing genius created a conflict whose solution was expressed on the material plane by some extravagant action. My mind is severely logical; or, rather, it was so until mystic experience enabled it to shake off its fetters. Logic is responsible for most of the absurd and abominable deeds which have disgraced history. Given Christian premisses, the Inquisition was acting in accordance with the highest humanitarian principles in destroying a man's body to save his soul. The followers of Descartes were right to torture animals, believing them to be automata. Genuine determinists would be justified in committing any crime, since the fact of its occurrence would prove that it was unavoidable. Huxley, in *Evolution and Ethics*, makes out a very poor case against infanticide and race suicide. We are constantly using our judgment to preserve one section of humanity as against another; we are in fact constantly compelled to do so. As for the future of humanity, the certainty of final extermination when the planet becomes uninhabitable makes all human endeavour a colossal fatuity.

It is one of the principal theses of this book to show the above statement to be absurd, by offering a theory of realty compatible with sanity.

However, that comes later.

7

The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley. Even so cunning a combination of rat and ape as my Uncle Tom made occasional mistakes, and one of these was very fortunate for me. He engaged a tutor names Archibald Douglas, an Oxford man who had purged that offence by having travelled for the Bible Society across Persia. If my uncle had ever heard of George Borrow, he might have saved himself much trouble; and I might have been driven insane. It was in the spring of '91. I had recovered from a bad attack of whooping-cough. The idea was that we should bicycle down to Torquay, but on reaching Guildford I was too ill to ride further and we went down by train. Though Douglas called himself a Christian, he proved to be both a man and a gentleman. I presume that poverty had compelled the camouflage. From the moment that we were alone together he produced a complete revolution in my outlook upon life, by showing me for the first time a sane, clean jolly world worth living in. Smoking and drinking were natural. He warned me of the dangers of excess from the athletic standpoint. He introduced me to racing, billiards, betting, cards and women. He told me how these things might be enjoyed without damaging oneself or wronging others. He put me up to all the tricks. He showed me the meaning of honour. I immediately accepted his standpoint and began to behave like a normal, healthy human being. The nightmare world of Christianity vanished at the dawn. I fell in with a girl of the theatre in the first ten days at Torquay, and at that touch of human love the detestable mysteries of sex were transformed into joy and beauty. The obsession of sin fell from my shoulders into the sea of oblivion. I had been almost overwhelmed by the appalling responsibility of ensuring my own damnation and helping others to escape from Jesus. I found that the world was, after all, full of delightful damned souls; of people who accepted nature as she is, accepted their own place in nature and enjoyed it, fought mean and despicable things fairly and firmly whenever they met them. It was a period of boundless happiness for me. I had always yearned for the beauty of nature; my only friends, except animals and occasional strangers, from whom I was carefully protected, had been the skies, the

streams, the mountains and the seas. For the first time in my life I was brought into contact with my fellow men and women. For the first time honest friendship, wholesome love, frank, gay and courageous, became possible and actual. I had loved nature as a refuge from mankind. I now perceived the beauty of the world in conjunction with the beauty of my species. For the first time the sea sparkled, the breezes whispered other songs than those in praise of solitude, the flowers lent their fragrance and their folly to light, laughing girlhood; the moon, instead of Artemis, was Aphrodite.

> I said, "she is warmer than Dian . . .
> Come up through the lair of the Lion
> With love in her luminous eyes."

It is possible that my own indiscretion may have produced the catastrophe. I may have let my mother know that I was happy by the tone of my letters. In any case, her suspicions were aroused. Uncle Tom appeared upon the scene. Got Douglas out of the way by some lie, rifled his belongings, stole his private letters and dismissed him. But it was too late; my eyes were opened and I had become as a god, knowing good and evil. I was in a position to take the initiative. Till them, I could only aim at escaping from the hideous hell of home. Now I had an objective; now I could attack.

I must explain something of the horror of life in my mother's house. To begin with, I was entirely debarred from the society of boys and girls of my own age, unless they were the children of Brethren. The sect was already moribund and in addition had split over the Raven heresy. The situation is illustrated by the story which I will quote from the preface to my *The World's Tragedy.*

> An irreligious man may have moral checks; a Plymouth Brother has none. He is always ready to excuse the vilest crimes by quoting the appropriate text and invoking the name of Christ to cover every meanness which may delight his vain and vicious nature. For the Plymouth Brethren were in themselves an exceptionally detestable crew. The aristocrats who began the movement were, of course, just aristocrats, and their curious system left them so. But they ran a form of "Early Christian" spiritual socialism by having no appointed priest or minister, and they were foolish enough to favour their followers financially.

Thus Mr. Giblets — let us call him — the third-best butcher in the village found (on the one hand) that while at church he was nobody at all, and in chapel but an elder, in the little meeting in the squire's morning-room he was no less than the minister of God and the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost; just as on the other hand it was only natural that the orders from the Hall should come his way and leave the first-best butcher lamenting and the second-best bewildered. So that in my time the sect (though it is only fair to point out that they refused to be described as a sect, since what they had done was not to form a new sect, but to "Come out of Sect" — this they maintained in spite of the fact that they were far more exclusive than any other religious body in Europe) was composed of a few of the old guard, my father the last of them all, and the meanest crew of canaille that ever wriggled.

With my father's death the small schisms which had hitherto lopped off a few members every year or two were altogether surpassed by the great Raven heresy, which split the body into two nearly equal halves and extinguished the last sparks of its importance.

I am going beyond my subject, but I cannot refrain from telling the awful story of the meeting at Oban.

The meeting at Oban consisted of a Mr. Cameron and his wife and the bedridden mother of one of the two, I forget which. Now as it is written "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them", it was all very well: but two forms a quorum. Jesus will not come for less. This has never been disputed by any doctor of the Brethren. Wigram is clear on the point; if Darby had ever been clear on any point, it would have been on that. Kelly never denied it; even Stuart was sound in this matter, and Stoney himself (though reluctantly) gave his adhesion. To hold a meeting you must have two persons present . . .

Well, I need hardly say that Mr. and Mrs. Cameron took opposite sides of the controversy. When the glad wires flashed the message that Mr. Raven in the meeting at Ealing had deliberately said with slow and weighty emphasis, "He that hath the Son hath eternal life", Mrs. Cameron almost wept for joy. When (the message continued) Major McArthy had risen to his feet and retorted,

"He that hath the Son of God hath everlasting life", Mr. Cameron executed a Highland through funeral fling.[26]

When Mr. Raven, stung to the quick, had shaken his fist at the major and yelled, "Brother, you're a sinful old man!" Mrs. Cameron "had always known there was something", and invented a ruined governess. But — oh the laughter of her husband when the telegraph brought the major's retort, "Brother, have you no sin?" — spoken with an accent of mildness which belied the purple of his face.

In short, the meeting at Oban had split. Mr. Cameron had withdrawn from the Lord's supper!!! It was therefore absolutely necessary for both of them to assure themselves that the bedridden mother was of their way of thinking, or neither could hold the morning meeting; though I suppose either could preach the gospel — *morosa voluptas*!

Unhappily, that excellent lady was a hard case. She was quite deaf and very nearly blind; while mentally she had never been remarkable for anything beyond a not unamiable imbecility. However, there was but one thing to be done, to argue her into conviction.

They agreed to take eight-hour shifts; and for all I know, they are arguing still, and neither of the meetings at Oban can meet!

As it happened, my mother took the minority view. This means that she cut herself off from every single intimate friend. On the strength of a text in one of the epistles, she refused to shake hands with anyone who was teaching false doctrine. The very few remaining were new friends. My associates could therefore be counted on the fingers of one hand and our only bond of sympathy was a detestation of our tyrants.

My intellectual avidity was enormous, yet I was absolutely cut off from literature. One or two books of Scott and Dickens were permitted. Ballantyne was approved, G. A. Henty winked at rather than openly tolerated. *David Copperfield* was barred because of Little Em'ly, for she was a naughty girl;

[26] The alleged antithesis between these two texts (I cannot perceive it) was actually the basis of the schism. My mother thought that one of them (I forget which) "dishonoured the Lord's person"!

besides, Emily was my mother's name, and to read the book might diminish my respect for her. One of my tutors brought down *The Bab Ballads*, one of which begins:

Emily Jane was a nursery maid.

My mother threw the book out of the house and very nearly threw him after it. Another tutor read "The Ancient Mariner" aloud after dinner one night and my mother, after delivering a stormy tirade, snatched me from the contamination of his presence. The reason was that when the Ancient Mariner saw the water snakes playing around the ship, he "blessed them unaware". An outrageously blasphemous act, for snakes are cursed in Genesis!

Here, by the way, is a curious point. These bigots are so inconsistent that I have never been able to follow the working of their minds. There is a great deal of doctrine in "The Ancient Mariner" which outrages every tenet of the Plymouth Brethren, but my mother does not appear to have taken offence at that. My only suggestion is that she detested snakes for Freudian reasons; she had probably met them in dreams and had therefore good reason (from her point of view) for identifying them with the devil in his most objectionable form. My mother was naturally a rather sensual type of woman and there is not doubt that sexual repression had driven her as nearly as possible to the borders of insanity.

My cousin Agnes had a house in Dorset Square. My mother took me to tea there one afternoon. A copy of *Dr. Pascal* was in the room. The word "Zola" caught my mother's eye and she made a verbal assault of hysterical fury upon her hostess. Both women shouted and screamed at each other simultaneously, amid floods of tears. Needless to say, my mother had never read a line of Zola — the name was simply a red rag to a cow.

This inconsistency, by the way, seems universal. I have known a printer object to set up "We gave them hell and Tommy", while passing unquestioned all sorts of things to which exception could quite reasonably be taken by narrow-minded imbeciles. The censor habitually passes what I, who am no puritan, consider nauseating filth, while refusing to license *Œdipus Rex*, which we are compelled to assimilate at school. The country is flooded with the nasty pornography of women writers, while there is an outcry against epoch-making masterpieces of philosophy like Jurgen. The salacious musical comedy goes its libidinous way rejoicing, while Ibsen and Bernard Shaw are on the black list. The fact is, of course, that the puritan has been turned by

sexual repression into a sexual pervert and degenerate, so that he is insane on the subject.

Of course, I could not be prevented entirely from reading. I was kept very short of pocket money, so that I could not even buy books to any extent. But I used to get them now and again, smuggle them into the house inside my clothes, and lock myself into the water-closet to read them. One such book, I remember, was *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*. My mother considered the hansom cab as an engine specially devised by the devil and any reference to one was considered obscene.

Having given an idea of the atmosphere of home, it should be intelligible that I was prepared to go out of my way to perform any act which might serve as a magical affirmation of my revolt. I was, in fact, restrained from developing my mind in any wholesome manner. I had no opportunity to think of anything but fighting fire with fire.

A new parlour maid took it into her head to better herself by getting a stranglehold on the young master. I arranged to meet her on her evening out at a safe distance from Streatham and we drove in a cab over to Herne Hill, indulging in a mild flirtation on the way. On Sunday morning, however, I brought things to a point. I made an excuse for staying away from the morning meeting, got the girl into my mother's bedroom and made my magical affirmation. I had no idea that there was any counterplot, but the girl proceeded to "blow the gaff". She was, of course, instantly flung into the street, but she continued her operations for bettering herself. Uncle Tom intervened, for of course my mother could not discuss such a subject with me at all. I denied the whole affair point blank. My uncle tried to find the cabman, but failed. They scented trouble for somebody and knew no more than so many Chinamen. He begged me, however, to try to furnish some positive proof of my innocence; and this is where my subtlety came in. I pretended to be in great trepidation. Yes, I could prove it, and yet, how could I? My uncle scented a mystery and adjourned the examination.

I immediately went out and appealed to the tobacconist on the bridge above Streatham station to say, if asked, that he remembered my having been in his shop on the Thursday night previous, which was that of the cab drive. He was a good sportsman and naturally anxious to oblige. I went back to my uncle and proposed a deal. I would tell him where I had been, but he must not punish me, for I had been led astray by bad companions. He was only too glad; and I owned up, tremulous and tearful, that I had been in the tobacconist's.

He would have doubted a merely innocent alibi. The girl was, of course, discredited, and nothing more was heard of the matter. And I had had her on my mother's very bed!

That is the state of affairs which is caused by puritanism. First we have a charming girl driven to attempt blackmail, next a boy forced to the most unmanly duplicity in order to exercise his natural rights with impunity, and incidentally to wrong a woman for whom he had nothing but the friendliest feelings. As long as sexual relations are complicated by religious, social and financial considerations, so long will they cause all kinds of cowardly, dishonourable and disgusting behaviour. When war conditions imposed artificial restraint on the sister appetite of hunger, decent citizens began to develop all kinds of loathsome trickery. Men and women will never behave worthily as long as current morality interferes with the legitimate satisfaction of physiological needs. Nature always avenges herself on those who insult her. The individual is not to blame for the crime and insanity which are the explosions consequent on the clogging of the safety valve. The fault lies with the engineer. At the present moment, society is blowing up in larger or smaller spots all over the world, because it has failed to develop a system by which all its members can be adequately nourished without conflict and the waste products eliminated without discomfort.

On the whole, I was so well guarded that incidents like the above were rate accidents. I had been taught by bitter experience that almost anybody might be a spy, so that the slightest indiscretion in talking to an apparently harmless stranger might result in some disaster. The foundations were laid of an exaggerated shyness which has never left me. I was practically debarred from human intercourse, even that of the great men of the past. My only consolation was writing poetry.

It is difficult to explain by what means I came to the conclusion that poetry was of paramount importance. There was a sort of family tradition which honoured the poet; but it was as irrational as the rest of their beliefs. I can only imagine it as derived from their having been told at school that the English poets were the glory of humanity, for they certainly knew no poetry beyond "Casabianca" and "We are Seven". I discovered Shakespeare for myself. It happened that in the farmhouse at Forsinard were three old folio volumes. My mother had an edition of Shakespeare; but I had never read it, because it was permitted. At the farmhouse, however, there was nothing else to read. I became fascinated and spent night after night poring over the pages. (I have always been singularly thorough in anything I take up. My father had a favourite sermon on the word "but"; and I went through the whole Bible,

page by page, enclosing this word, wherever it occurred, with an oblong of ink.)

Apart from the few regular pieces for recitation, there was *Paradise Lost*. This bored me for the most part as much as it does now, but allowed me to gloat over the figures of Satan and sin. After all, Milton was a great poet; and the subconscious artistic self of him was therefore bitterly antagonistic to Christianity. Not only is Satan the hero, but the triumphant hero. God's threats have not "come off". It is the forces of evil, so called, that manifest in strength and beauty of form. The glories of the saints are tinsel. It is impossible to draw goodness with character. On the Christian theory, goodness is, in fact, nothing but absence of character, for it implies complete submission to God. Satan's original fault is not pride; that is secondary. It springs from the consciousness of separateness. Now of course this is, mystically speaking, sinful, because the mystic holds that all manifestation is imperfection. Christian theology has not had sufficient logic to see, like its elder sister, Hindu theology, that any attributes soever must distinguish their possessor from some other possible being. But their instinct has been to go as far in that direction as possible and consequently the divine characters in Milton are comparatively colourless. Such was the transmutation in the nature of God effected by building a super-structure of Greek philosophy upon the foundation of the savage phantasm of Jehovah. My own attitude in the matter is to be seen in my aesthetic tendencies. I could never tolerate smooth, insipid beauty. The ugliness of decrepitude revolted me; but that of strength absorbed my whole soul. I despised the tame scenery of the Swiss lakes; the ruggedness of barren pinnacles of rock and the gloomy isolation of such lakes as Llyn Idwal appealed to my imagination. Wastwater disappointed me. It did not come up to the level of its poetic reputation. It was only when I got among the crags themselves that I was happy. I demanded to be at grips with death in one way or another. The bourgeois ambition to get through life without unpleasantness seemed to me the lowest vileness and entirely in keeping with the moral attitude of the heavenly people in *Paradise Lost*.

I was allowed to read Tennyson and Longfellow, but it is impossible to class them as poets. The emasculation of all the characters disgusted me beyond measure. Their very sins are suburban.

8

So when it came to my writing poetry myself, my work fell naturally into three divisions. Firstly, short lyrics modelled on the hymns to which I was accustomed; secondly, parodies, principally of Scottish and English songs; and thirdly, epics based on Sir Walter Scott. I must have written over a hundred thousand lines. They have all been destroyed; and I am rather sorry for it. While they possessed no merit, their contents would afford a valuable key to my thoughts at the time. The few fragments which escaped destruction were reprinted in my *Oracles*. I remember something of their general moral tendency, which was to celebrate the triumph of the revolt of youth and passion against age and propriety. I tried to get effect by using extremes of expression. I remember two lines from an epic. "Lady Ethelreda":

> Baron Ethelred waxed wroth,
> Frothed he with a frothy froth.

But as I grew a little older I became able to manage my material with more discretion. My mother designed me, of course, to follow in my father's footsteps as am evangelist, but as I had to take a profession she decided she would like me to be a doctor, of the ground that "doctors have so many opportunities". (Scil. for bringing souls to Jesus. She did not see anything funny in this remark!) So I began to learn a little about medicine and produced the following effusion:

A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES

In the hospital bed she lay
    Rotting away!
Cursing by night and cursing by day,
    Rotting away!
The lupus is over her face and head,
Filthy and foul and horrid and dread,

And her shrieks they would almost wake the dead;
Rotting away!
In her horrible grave she lay,
Rotting away!
In the place of her face is a gory hole,
And the worms are gnawing the tissues foul,
And the devil is gloating over her soul,
Rotting away!

Note that the title of this poem is ironical. It is taken from a goody-goody book, popular at that time, which describes the life of traveling barnstormers and how the only hope for them was to be converted. But the irony goes somewhat deeper. It was a genuine criticism of the shallow philosophy of optimism which went with the polite Christianity of the time. I was analysing life in the spirit of Schopenhauer. I couldn't see any sense in pretending that life was not full of horrors. Death and trousers are facts in nature; and merely to avoid reference to them or to invent euphemisms for them does not alter their character. I was reduced to gloating on murder and putrefaction, simply because these things gave the most forcible denial to the assumptions current at home. Paganism is wholesome because it faces the facts of life; but I was not allowed to take a normal view of nature. In my situation, I could not dismiss the falsities of Christianity with a smile; I was compelled to fight fire with fire and to oppose their poisoned poultices with poisoned daggers.

Such was the influence of home life. But it was partially interfered with by the more decent current of school life. I have mentioned my school in Streatham. It was there that occurred the last important incident of this period. Being the star chemist of the school, I determined to distinguish myself on the fifth of November, 1891. I procured a ten-pound jar from the grocer's, put two pounds of gunpowder at the bottom and filled it up with various layers of different coloured "fires". These were all — except for the small ingredients of varied metallic salts — of the same composition: sugar and chlorate of potash. In order to make sure of success, I turned the whole household on to mixing these ingredients, with the result that they were mingled so intimately as to produce what was to all intents and purposes chlorate power! I pressed this down very powerfully, buried the jar in the playground, stuck a rocket into the top and lighted it at the critical moment. The rocket had been fixed too firmly to rise and the protecting wad of paper burnt through before I could step back. I neither saw nor heard anything. I felt as if a brush of some

warm tarry and gritty substance had been passed across my face; and found myself standing on the brink of a hole in the ground of no mean size. I wondered how on earth it could have happened that my experiment had failed. I remember apologizing for the failure and saying that I must go up to the house to wash my face. I discovered that I was being supported on the journey by my private tutor and my mother. Then I found myself in the headmaster's sanctum, receiving first aid. I remember nothing more for some time except the annoyance of being awakened to have my dressings changed. I slept for ninety-six hours with these semi-conscious intervals. My tutor had the sense to wire to Guy's Hospital for Dr. Golding Bird, whose intervention probably saved me from erysipelas and the loss of my sight. In the course of convalescence, over four thousand pieces of gravel and the like were removed from my face; and it was on Christmas Day that I was first allowed to use my eyes for a few minutes. The explosion had been devastating. The windows were smashed for a long way round; and the bottles in the chemist's shop on the railway bridge — a quarter of a mile and more away — rattled, though the passage of trains had no such effect. Strangely enough, I was the only person injured. Throughout I enjoyed the episode; I was the hero, I had made my mark!

The following year I was ready to go to a public school. My Uncle Jonathan wanted me to go to Winchester, as per the family tradition, but my health demanded a more bracing climate and it was decided that I should go to Malvern. The school at that time was rising to the height of its glory in athletics. We possessed a brilliant bat in Percy Latham; H. R. and W. L. Foster were sure to distinguish themselves in one way or another, and the youngsters of that famous game-playing family were coming on, ready to take their places when the time came. There was also C. J. Burnup as a promising colt.

In other matters, however, the school had a long way to go. Bullying went on unchecked, the prefects being foremost offenders. As a shy, solitary boy in ill-health, incapable of football, I naturally got more than my share, and this led ultimately to one of the few actions in my life with which I have ever felt inclined to reproach myself. The tone of the school was brutal and imbecile. The authorities had done much to stamp out the practice of "greasing", which consists in spitting as smegmatically as possible either in people's faces or on their backs. It still flourished at our house, Huntingdon's, No. 4, and constituted our only claim to distinction. I do not think we had a single member in either of the elevens. The prefects were hulking louts, shirking both work and play, and concentrating on obscenity and petty tyranny. It annoyed them particularly that my conduct was irreproachable. They could not

cane me without the housemaster's permission. I did not realize how closely I was being watched, but ultimately I committed some trifling breach of discipline during "prep". After the hour was over the prefect in charge gleefully hastened to the housemaster. He found me there already. I got my licking; but there was a fine series of expulsions to balance it. Of course my action was technically indefensible; but after all, I had held my tongue uncomplainingly for months and it was only when they appealed to the housemaster to fight their battles that I appealed to him to fight mine.

I may as well emphasize at this moment that I remained amazingly innocent. My study companion was actually the favourite "tart" of the house; so much so, that he thereby added considerably to his income. But though I was aware of these facts, I had no conception whatever of what they implied.

An anecdote illustrates this fact. It was the custom of our form master to remit twenty per cent of any number of lines that might be given one to write if they were delivered before the time appointed. It happened that I was set a number of lines by some other master and I handed in eighty per cent with the written remark, "Twenty per cent deducted as usual for premature delivery." He thought that I was "getting at him", but on investigation I was acquitted; in fact, I had no idea of any ambiguity.

My life at Malvern made little impression on me. For the most part I was lost in my own thought and touched school life as little as I could, I made no real friends. I had no sympathy with the general brutality and refused to pander to it by making myself the favourite. The following story helps to illustrate my attitude.

Some of the prefects were twitting me with cowardice and proposed that I should prove my virtue by fighting Smith tertius, a boy much smaller than myself. I refused, observing that if I did not fight him I must pass for a coward, and if I did I should be accused of bullying, and probably be reported for fighting as well.

None of my ambitions were connected with the school. I preferred to daydream of my plans for mountaineering in the holidays and to busy myself with writing poetry. Memory has preserved fragments of two efforts. The first;

> "Put not thy trust in princes." 'Tis a speech
> Might thee, O Gordon-Cumming, something teach.

It seems absurd that a boy of my age should take an interest in such matters and become so positive a partisan. But I had an ingrained hatred for the

Hanoverian usurper and took for granted what I still believe to have been the fact, that the man who cheated was not Gordon-Cumming.

Of the second poem I retain:

> Poor lady! whom a wicked jury's hate
> In face of facts as iron as the grave
> To which they would have doomed thee – bitter fate!
> Thee guiltless to the cruel hangman gave.
>
> Shame on the judge who sees but half the facts!
> Shame on the nurse who private letters opes!
> But never shalt thou be forgot by us,
> The pity of thy life's so blasted hopes.
>
> Lady, hope on! All England takes thy part
> But a few bigots. Lady, then, take heart.

My sympathy with Mrs. Maybrick nowise argues my belief in her innocence. She was admittedly an adulteress. I asked no further questions. The mere fact thrilled me to the marrow. Adultery being the summit of wickedness, its commission excused everything.

I made no intimate friendships. I did my work sufficiently well to avoid serious punishment, but without ambition. I took no interest in the Shakespeare prize, for which everybody had to enter, and had not read a line of the two plays prescribed, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard III*. But for some reason or other I got scared three days before the examination, got excused from games and worked so hard that I came out sixth in the school. I was able to quote several long passages accurately from memory. With me, it was always a question of the interest which I took in things. I had the makings of a sound classical scholar, but I could not bring myself to memorize Greek and Latin poetry. Stranger still, I could not master the rules of prosody. My most hostile critics admit that my technique and my sense of rhythm are unsurpassed; but the rules of scansion meant nothing to me, because no one explained their connection with the way a poem should be read.

I should have liked school life well enough if it had not been for the bullying and the complete lack of intellectual companionship. I had no interest in games; my athletic ambitions were confined to climbing mountains. But at least there was no Christianity! and what morality there was was rather manly than otherwise. However, I was now old enough to match myself against my private tutors and found greater freedom with them than at

school. I decided to leave and drew such a picture of the abominations which went on, though I knew nothing about them or even what they were, that my mother refused to let me go back. I told her, she once reminded me, that "if Mr. Huntingdon (the housemaster) knew what was going on in the house, it would break his heart". Pure bluff! but the following term I was entered at Tonbridge.

By this time I had acquired a considerable facility in making the best of my advantages. I had in some ways much more experience of life than most boys of my age. My holidays, what with fishing, mountain climbing and running after girls, were full of adventures of one kind and another, in which I was always being thrown on my own resources. By the time I reached Tonbridge I had developed a kind of natural aristocracy. People were already beginning to be afraid of me and there was no question any longer of bullying. My health must have been very much better. Albuminuria breeds melancholy and destroys physical courage. I had also, no doubt, been subject to constant irritation due to my phimosis and the operation had relived me. I was, therefore, more or less ready to fight anybody that annoyed me. And people took good care not to do so.

The atmosphere at Tonbridge was, moreover, much more civilized than at Malvern. Today it impresses me as having been on the namby-pamby side. There was at that time no trace of the marriage system since introduced and now said to be flourishing. "Mrs. So-and-so" was almost a term of derision, while now it is exacted by its owner to show that he is not "one of those". My best friend was a brother of C. F. G. Masterman. He was neither a sneak nor a hypocrite; but it gives an idea of the atmosphere.

The glimpse of normal human life afforded by Archibald Douglas had rendered me completely sane as far as my conscious life was concerned. The problem of life was not how to satanize, as Huysmans would have called it; it was simply to escape from the oppressors and to enjoy the world without any interference of spiritual life of any sort. My happiest moments were when I was alone on the mountains; but there is no evidence that this pleasure in any way derived from mysticism. The beauty of form and colour, the physical exhilaration of exercise, and the mental stimulation of finding one's way in difficult country, formed the sole elements of my rapture. So far as I indulged in daydreams, they were exclusively of a normal sexual type. There was no need to create phantasms of a perverse or unrealizable satisfaction. It is important to emphasize this point, because I have always appeared to my contemporaries as a very extraordinary individual obsessed by fantastic passions. But such were not in any way natural to me. The moment the pressure was relieved

every touch of the abnormal was shed off instantly. The impulse to write poetry disappeared almost completely at such periods. I had not even any of the ordinary ambitions of young men. I was content to enjoy sport without wishing to attain eminence in it. It came natural to me to find ways up mountains which looked to me interesting and difficult. But it never occurred to me to match myself against other people. It was from purely aesthetic considerations that I climbed the gullies of Tryfan and Twll Du. This last climb landed me, as luck would have it, in a controversy which was destined to determine my career in a very remarkable manner.

9

It had never occurred to me that rock climbing, as such, might be a recognized sport. However, my mother and I were at the Sligachan Inn in Skye during the summer of 1892. I talked about my hill rambles with Sir Joseph Lister, who happened to be staying there, and asked him about the Coolins. He was kind enough to suggest to some real climbers who were staying at the hotel to include me in their party the next day, and they were kind enough to take me up Sgurr-nan-Gillean by the Pinnacle Ridge. I found myself up against it; and realized at once that there was something more to be done than scrambling.

I think it was the following summer that I was staying at a farm in Langdale and heard from the natives of the celebrated twenty-four hours' walk. The idea is to climb the four highest fells, Scafell Pikes, Helvellyn, Skiddaw and Saddleback, in a day. I conceived a minor ridge walk and set out one morning at dawn from Langdale, climbed the Langdale Pikes, and followed the crest of the fells to Scafell Pikes. Then I crossed to Scafell by the Broad Stand; and, seeing the Deep Ghyll pinnacle, climbed that on my way to the summit of Scafell. It was a terrifically hot day over Lingmell and down into the valley to climb the screes of Great Gable. My attention was attracted by the Great Napes Needle and I climbed that. Thence I took the easiest way — the Needle ridge, or a gully, I forget which — to the summit of the mountain. I had become almost insane from heat, thirst and exhaustion; I could not longer walk, but crawled on hands and knees down to Sty Head Tarn, whose waters revived me to some extent. I struggled on homewards and reached the top of Rossett Ghyll Pass shortly after nightfall. There was a bright moon, but I had a terrible time picking my way down the path. I must have been a little light-headed from exhaustion and there was a Dantesque quality in the long climb among the blinding white patches of light and the jetty shadows. At the bottom of the pass I met a small rescue party who had just started out to look for me, and reached home about eleven o'clock. It was, in its way, a remarkable performance of a boy.

Another incident is less heroic but more amusing. My tutor had invited his sister to stay a few days at the farm at Langdale. One day I took her up the Langdale Pikes and found quite decent bit of scrambling. Having not rope, I could only help her from below. She became scared and broke into a passionate monologue punctuated by screams. It consisted of variations on a triple theme. "I'm going to fall — Our Father which art in heaven — don't look at my legs." Ah me! — "I learnt about women from 'er." It was a startling complete revelation of the psychology of the well-brought-up young lady. Craven fear, prurient shame and narcotic piety: of such is the kingdom of Tennyson!

The glimpse that I had had of Wastdale attracted me and I went over there. One very wet morning I started to climb Scafell, chiefly with the idea of tackling some of the gullies which I had noticed in the Great Cliff. I had reached the Grass Traverse when I heard voices in the mist above me, and a few minutes later a powerful man with red whiskers and a rope about his shoulders came towards me from the cliff. It was J. W. Robinson, a local farmer, who had laid the foundation of Cumberland climbing. He offered to show me some of the easier climbs. He had started that morning with a man named Owen Glynne Jones. Jones had insisted on trying to climb Steep Gill, which is for the most part a shallow gully of smooth slabs set at a dangerous angle. There is no reliable hold for hand or foot on the main pitch, which is some eighty feet high. As torrents of icy water were pouring over the crags, it was sheer foolhardiness to attempt it. Robinson had refused to do so, whereupon Jones had quarrelled with him and they had parted.

I had every reason, later on, to agree with Robinson. I was only once on a rope with Jones. It was on Great Gable; the rocks were plastered with ice and a bitter wind was blowing. In such conditions one cannot rely on one's fingers. Our party proposed to descend the Oblique Chimney on the Ennerdale face. Robinson led the way down. The second man was a Pole named Lewkowitch, who was generally known as "Oils, fats and waxes", because of his expert knowledge of them and the personal illustration of their properties which he afforded. He had no experience of climbing and weighed about sixteen stone. It was up to me, as third man on the rope, to let him slowly down. I had, of course, to descend little by little, the rope being too short to allow me to lower him from the top. I soon found myself in the most difficult part of the chimney, very ill placed to manipulate a dangling ox. I looked up to Jones, the last man, to hold my rope so that I could give full attention to Lewkowitch, and saw to my horror that he was maintaining his equilibrium by a sort of savage war dance! He was hampered by a photographic apparatus

which was strapped to his back. Robinson had urged him to lower it separately. As nor Einstein or the Blessed Virgin Mary was there to suspend the law of gravitation, I have no idea how we got to the bottom undamaged; but when we did I promptly took off the rope and walked home, utterly disgusted with the vanity which had endangered the party. Of course, there could only be one end to that sort of thing, and Jones ended by killing himself and three guides on the Zinal side of the Dent Blanche a few years later.

The imbecility of the accident is shown by the fact that the fifth member of the party, who was quite a beginner, found himself — after the smash — alone on the precipice. The guides had begged Jones not to attempt the pitch from which he fell, but he had persisted. The fifth man had hitched the rope over a rock and it had broken between him and the third guide. But this man, instead of going down to the valley, actually climbed the mountain, spent a night on the ridge and went down the next day to Zermatt.

The dangers of mountaineering are ridiculously exaggerated. I have never known of any accident which was not due to ignorance or folly. Eckenstein, the greatest climber of his age, told me the same thing.

Jones obtained the reputation of being the most brilliant rock climber of his time by persistent self-advertisement. He was never a first-rate climber, because he was never a safe climber. If a handhold was out of his reach he would jump at it, and he had met with several serious accidents before the final smash. But his reputation is founded principally on climbs which he did not make at all, in the proper sense of the word. He used to go out with a couple of photographers and have himself lowered up and down a climb repeatedly until he had learnt its peculiarities, and then make the "first ascent" before a crowd of admirers. Now the essential difficulty of negotiating a pitch of any length is that one has to waste any amount of time and strength while one is finding out where the holds are. There is no credit at all in repeating a climb.

Another trick of Jones' was to get his friends to make dates with other people to try various unclimbed places, and then to postpone the expedition on various pretexts until Jones had managed to negotiate it by the method above described.

This conduct seemed to me absolutely unsportsmanlike. To prostitute the mountains to personal vanity is in fact something rather worse. And I had a taste of the malice of people's envy in my first week. A personal issue arose from the very start. Robinson happened to ask me if I had climbed in Wales. I told him yes, and mentioned one particular place, the Devil's Kitchen or Twll Dy, which I had climbed by taking off my boots. I had no idea that the

place was famous, but it was. It was reputed unclimbable. Almighty Jones himself had failed. I found myself, to my astonishment, the storm centre. Jones, behind my back, accused me flatly of lying. Quite unconsciously, however, I put myself in the right. I have always failed to see that it is necessary to make a fuss about one's climbs. There is a good reason for describing a first climb. To do so is to guide others to enjoyment. One may also for the same reason describe interesting variations of a climb, or its accomplishment by a solitary man. Now as it happened, Jones had been blowing his trumpet about the first ascent of Kern Knotts Chimney; the top pitch, however, he had failed to do unaided. He had been hoisted on the shoulders of the second man. I went to have a look at it and found that by wedging a stone into a convenient crack, and thus starting a foot higher up, I could get to the top, and did so. I recorded this in the Climbers' Book; and the following day a man named H. V. Reade, possibly in a sceptical mood, followed in my footsteps. He found my wedged stone, contemptuously threw it away, climbed the pitch without it, and recorded the feat. That was a double blow to Mr. Jones. It was no longer a convincing argument that if he couldn't do a thing it couldn't be done.

But this was not all. Scafell is separated from Scafell Pikes by a pass called Mickledoor; and on the Scafell side it is precipitous. The ridge of the pass is well-marked; by going down a little, on one side one can climb the cliffs by the Broad Stand or Mickledoor Chimney, on the other side by the North Climb; and so on. But it had been the ambition of every climber to start from the exact top of the ridge. This was called the direct climb of Mickledoor; and nobody had done it. That seemed to be a shame, so I did it. This time the fat was in the fire. My good faith was openly challenged in the smoking-room. I shrugged my shoulders, but offered to repeat the climb the following day before witnesses — which I accordingly did. I suppose I am a very innocent ass, but I could not understand why anyone calling himself human should start a series of malicious intrigues on such a cause of quarrel. I must admit that my methods were sometimes calculated to annoy; but I had no patience with the idiotic vanity of mediocrities. I took the Climbers' Record to be a serious complication and never wrote in it without the fullest sense of responsibility. So when I found a solemn Te Deum being chanted on account of the fifth ascent of the Pillar Rock by a "lady", I took my dog to the top and recorded, "First ascent by a St. Bernard bitch." When Jones, after the usual practice, had climbed Kern Knotts Crack, and three public school masters, who ought to have known better, said they had seen him do it, and it was a

marvellous exhibition of skill and so on, I completed their remarks by a colophon: (Advt.) So much fuss was made about Kern Knotts Crack that Eckenstein took a young girl named Miss. Nicholls and asked her to lead up it, which she did.

Wastdale at that time was a rendezvous for many amusing characters as well as for some of the most brilliant men in England. Professor Milnes Marshall spent most of his holidays there. His death is one of the most curious accidents in the history of climbing. He had gone up to Deep Ghyll with some friends one bright winter day when the mountains were covered with snow. But, not feeling particularly well, he remained at the foot of Deep Ghyll while his friends climbed it, proposing to take photographs of them. He set up his camera on a snow slope no steeper than Ludgate Hill, a place entirely free from danger. But he fell and rolled gently down the slope, making no effort to save himself, finally pitching over a small cliff, at the foot of which he was picked up dead. It was not a climbing accident at all, any more than the death of Norman Neruda, who died of heart failure when he happened to be in a rock chimney in the Dolomites.

After a short time at Tonbridge my health again broke down. It was evident that boarding-school life was unsuited to me. It was arranged for me to live at Eastbourne with a tutor named Lambert, a Plymouth Brother. It is curious (by the way) to reflect that Henry Bernstein, the celebrated French dramatist, being also a "hope" of the Brethren, was one of Lambert's pupils. I saw hardly anything of him. All I remember is that one day, for no reason that I can remember, we set to in the street and fought it out. At that time I knew no boxing. My one idea was to get his head "in chancery" under my left arm and bash his face in with my right, which I succeeded in doing, making no attempt to defend myself against his blows which he gave like a windmill on my skull. I remember acutely my surprise that they did not hurt me at all. During the day I worked at Eastbourne College in the chemical laboratory under Professor Hughes, and was privileged to assist that great man in several researches which go to prove that no two substances can combine in the absence of a third. It seems strange that I should have seen the bearings of this upon philosophy.

One very significant incident is stamped upon my memory. I was spending an evening with the professor and in the course of some discussion I said, "The Bible says so." These words dripped with the utmost irony from my lips. I meant to imply the bitterest contempt. I was not understood. He took me seriously and broke out into a passionate denunciation of the book. His manner was so ferocious that I was positively startled; and the interesting thing

about the incident is this. I had been so long so alert lest I should be accused of disbelief, that it almost took my breath away to hear a man in authority speak so openly[27]. I have explained how I had vainly sought supreme wickedness in the Church of England. I had even gone to so-called "high" churches and on one occasion dared to enter the portals of the papists. But I had found nothing wicked even there. They all seemed to me to be tarred with the same brush; they were cold, heartless, dull, stupid, vapid and fatuous. The emotionalism of some and the sacramentalism of others seemed to me perfectly insincere. The fact is that (as my brother-in-law, Gerald Kelly, once told me, with astounding insight) I was the most religious man that he had ever met. It is the inmost truth. The instinct was masked for a long time, firstly by the abominations of the Plymouth Brethren and the Evangelicals; secondly, by the normal world. It only broke out at a subsequent period in any recognizable form. But when it did so, it became the axis of my being. As a matter of fact, even in these early days, my real need was spiritual satisfaction; and I was a satanist or a worldling (as the case may be) in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi.

My poetry during this period was either amorous or satirical. A few of my efforts are preserved in *Oracles*. I quote the first and last verses from a lyric about a girl I met on the sea front.

ELVIRA

Was thy fault to be too tender?
...Was thine error to be weak?
Was my kiss the first offender
...Pressed upon thy blushing cheek?

Heaven at your accurst creation
...Shall become a hell of fire:
Death for kisses, and damnation
...For your love, shall God require!

What is worthy of note is what I may call the *laus veneris* point of view; which symbolizes my revolt and required many years to wear out. It seems as if I clung to the idea of the wickedness of love and the belief that it entailed divine retribution, partly perhaps because of my tendency to masochism, but consciously, at least, as adding actual value to sin. Pleasure as such has never

[27] I remember my first stolen visit to the Theatre — *Little Christopher Columbus*. Weren't all these people afraid of being found out?

attracted me. It must be spiced by moral satisfaction. I was reluctant to abandon my intellectual belief in Christianity; if the whole thing was nonsense, where was the fun of fighting it?

All this early poetry, moreover, tended to become worse instead of better as my mind developed. I explain this by reference to the analogy of such games as billiards. As soon as one begins to take lessons one spoils one's natural game and one does not recover until the artificially acquired technique has been driven down into the subconscious by continual practice.

Apart from a very few very early poems like "The Balloon", all my writing is wooden, imitative and conscious, until I reached Cambridge, with hardly an exception.

At Eastbourne, I had still no interest in games. I was still prevented from anything like intimate association with my fellow creatures. I was still ignorant of the existence of English literature and I became a first-rate French scholar without reading any French literature. In my play time I was either hunting flappers on the front, playing chess or climbing Beachy Head. My chess was almost entirely book learning and I was very mush surprised to find myself the best player in the town. For although the local champion insisted on giving me pawn and more, I beat him so easily every time I met him that the odds might have been reversed without making much difference to the result. I edited a chess column in the *Eastbourne Gazette* and made myself a host of enemies by criticizing the team. I wanted to arose enthusiasm, to insist on study and practice and to make Eastbourne the strongest town in England. The result fell short of breaking up the club, but not very far.

I used my position a editor to criticize the formation of the team and anything else that seemed to me wrong. I was absolutely unable to conceive that anyone should be anything but grateful for constructive criticism. I had moreover in my mind a firm conception of an editor as *Jupiter tonans*. I remember one occasion on which I made myself particularly nasty. In a club tournament I had won all my games except two against a man named Martin, who had failed to play any of his games. At the same time he would not withdraw from the tournament. I tried to deal with the situation in my weekly articles. I requested Mr. Martin to begin to play his games; I implored him to begin to play his games; I pointed out to him the propriety of beginning to play his games, I showed him that the best traditions of England (which had made her what she was) spoke with no uncertain voice to the effect that he should begin to play his games. All this settled down to a weekly chorus à la Cato, *Delenda est Carthago*. Whatever the subject of my discourse, it invariably ended, "Mr. Martin has not yet begun to play his games."

By this persistent nagging I got him to make an appointment with me and the game had to be adjourned in a position which was clearly won for me. He determined to avoid defeat by the simple process of refusing to make any further moves. I could have done a great deal with a brazier and a gimlet, but short of that there was no moving him; and his abstention prevented me from being proclaimed the winner. I published an analysis of the position, demonstrating that he was bound to lose and suggesting that he should either play it out or resign. But of course the result of my manoeuvres had simply been to drive him into blind fury and the situation was never settled. It simply lapsed by my departure for Switzerland.

10

My grand passion was Beachy Head. The fantastic beauty of the cliffs can never be understood by anyone who has not grappled them. Mountain scenery of any kind, but especially rock scenery, depends largely on foreground. This is especially the case when one has acquired an intimate knowledge of the meaning, from the climber's point of view, of what the eyes tell one. The ordinary man looking at a mountain is like an illiterate person confronted with a Greek manuscript. The only chalk in England which is worth reading, so to speak, is that on Beachy Head. This is due to the fact that it is relatively so much higher than other similar cliffs. Most chalk cliffs are either unbroken precipices, unclimbable in our present stage of the game, or broken-down rubble; but Beachy Head offers rock problems as varied, interesting and picturesque as any cliffs in the world. I began to explore the face. Popular ignorance had surrounded it with innumerable absurd rumours. The general opinion was that no one had ever climbed it. There was, however, a legend that it had once been done. I settled the point by walking up, smoking a pipe, with my dog (I had no woman available) in nine and a half minutes from the beach to the coastguard station.

My cousin, Gregor Grant, was with me on my earlier climbs. These were the most obvious, but also the most important, Etheldreda's Pinnacle — which I named after my dog, or a schoolgirl with whom I had stolen interviews, I forget which — was the first great triumph. The second was the Devil's Chimney, and the third the Cuillin Crack. I have always refused till now to claim this climb, as I finished it with the moral support of a loose rope from above. It would be formidable enough were it of the best rock in the world: there is one section which actually overhangs. I believe that these latter climbs have never been repeated.

Chalk is probably the most dangerous and difficult of all kinds of rock. Its condition varies at every step. Often one has to clear away an immense amount of debris in order to get any hold at all. Yet indiscretion in this operation might pull down a few hundred tons on one's head. One can hardly

ever be sure that any given hold is secure. It is, therefore, a matter of the most exquisite judgment to put on it no more weight than is necessary. A jerk or a spring would almost infallibly lead to disaster. One does not climb the cliffs. One hardly even crawls. Trickles or oozes would perhaps be the ideal verbs.

The unique character of the climbing led to an amusing incident. The greatest rock climber in England, A. F. Mummery, published a short account of his work on the cliffs at Dover, where he lived. He stated that at more than twenty to thirty feet above sea-level no climbing was possible, and that practically all his climbs were traverses; that is horizontal and not vertical. I wrote to him saying that my experience was precisely the opposite. All my climbing had been done at greater altitudes, and that (with hardly an exception) my climbs were vertical. He wrote back rather superciliously to the effect that there were certainly grassy gullies which corresponded to my description, but they were not what he called climbing. I replied, thanking him and begging him to accept a few photographs of the grassy gullies under description. These showed the most formidable-looking pinnacles in the British Islands, and vertical cracks as precipitous as anything in Cumberland. He wrote back immediately a warm letter of congratulation. It was evident that we had been using the word "chalk" to cover two widely different species of material.

I published some of my records in the local newspapers with the idea of inspiring the natives with praiseworthy enthusiasm. Once again I had misjudged humanity. All I got was a leading article beginning the the words, "Insensate folly takes various forms." Another shock was to come. Cousin Gregor suddenly declared that he was engaged to be married and that he didn't think he had the right to climb any more on Beachy Head. My boyhood's idol was shattered at a blow. I received my first lesson in what the religions of the world have discovered long since, that no man who allows a woman to take any place in his life is capable of doing good work. (Similarly, men may be as foolish over dogs as old maids over cats.) A man who is strong enough to use women as slaves and playthings is all right. Even so, there is always a danger, though it is difficult to avoid it. In fact, I don't think it should be avoided. I think a man should train himself to master what are commonly called vices, from maidens to morphia. It is undeniable that there are very few such men. Again and again I have had the most promising pupils give up the great work of their lives for the sake of some wretched woman who could have been duplicated in a Ten Cent Store. It doesn't matter what the work is; if it is worth while doing, it demands one's whole attention, and a woman is only tolerable in one's life if she is trained to help the man in his work without the slightest reference to any other interests soever. The necessary self-

abnegation and concentration on his part must be matched by similar qualities on hers. I say matched — I might say better, surpassed — for such devotion must be blind. A man can become his work, so that he satisfies himself by satisfying it; but a woman is fundamentally incapable of understanding the nature of work in itself. She must consent to co-operate with him in the dark. Her self-surrender is, therefore, really self-surrender, whereas with him it is rather self-realization. It is true that if a woman persists long enough in the habit, she will ultimately find herself therein. For woman is a creature of habit, that is, of solidified impulses. She has no individuality. Attached to a strong man who is no longer himself by this work, she may become a more or less reliable mood. Otherwise her moods change with her phantasms. But the most dominant mood of woman will always be motherhood. Nature itself, therefore, insures that a man who relies on a woman to help him is bucking the tiger. At any moment, without warning, her interest in him may be swept off its feet and become secondary. Worse — she will expect her man to abandon the whole interest of his life in order to look after her new toy. A bitch does not lose all her interest in her master just because she has puppies.

I found a new climbing companion on Beachy Head in a man named J. S. New. We worked out the possible climbs systematically and made a largescale map of the cliff. I ultimately contributed an illustrated article on the subject to the *Scottish Mountaineering Journal*. But with the exception of Mr. H. S. Bullock, and one or two others who repeated a few of our climbs and made one or two new ones, little work has been done on the Head. Climbers generally seem to have come to the conclusion that it was altogether too dangerous. It must be admitted that, at any rate, it is very unpleasant. In wet weather the chalk forms a paste which clogs the boots and makes foothold impossible. In dry weather the dust takes possession of the eyes and throat. But for all that, may of my happiest days have been spent on the face.

I must record a very strange phenomenon in connection with my adventures on Beachy Head. One summer day I went up with my mother and took her down to the grassy slopes (the Grass Traverse) which used to extend eastward from Etheldreda's Pinnacle. I say "used to extend", for since that time there has been an extensive landslide. It was rather a scramble for an old lady to reach them from the top of the cliff, but it could be done by descending a narrow gully called Etheldreda's Walk. I put her in a comfortable position where she could make a water-colour sketch, and went off to do some climbing on the Devil's Chimney, which is some distance west of the pinnacle. The general contour of the cliff is here convex, so that I was entirely out of her sight, besides being a quarter of a mile away. Such breeze as there was

was blowing from the south-west, that is, from me to her. I was trying to make a new climb on the west of the Devil's Chimney and had got some distance down, when I distinctly heard her crying for help. At this time I had no acquaintance with psychic phenomena, yet I recognized the call as of this type; that is, I had a direct intuition that it was so. It was not merely that it seemed improbable that it could be normal audition. I did not know at the time for certain that this was impossible, though it was afterwards proved to be so by experiment. I had no reason for supposing the danger to be urgent: but I rushed madly to the top of the cliff, along it and down to the Grass Traverse. I reached her in time to save her life, though there were not many seconds to spare. She had shifted her position to to get a better view and had wandered off the traverse on to steep, dusty, crumbling slopes. She had begun to slip, got frightened and done the worst thing possible; that is, had sat down. She had been slipping by inches and was on the brink of a cliff when I reached her. She had actually cried for help at the time when I heard her, as nearly as I could judge; but, as explained above, it was physically impossible for me to have done so. I regard this incident as very extraordinary indeed. I have never taken much stock in the regular stories of people appearing at a distance at the moment of death and so on; nor does the fact of something so similar having actually happened to me make me inclined to believe such stories. I cannot offer any explanation, apart from the conventional magical theory that a supreme explosion of will is sometimes able to set forces in motion which cannot be invoked in ordinary circumstances.

To return to my subject. Despite the regrettable incident of impulsive humanitarianism above recorded, my associations with Beachy Head possess a charm which I have never known in any other district of England. My climbs there fulfilled all my ideals of romance, and in addition I had the particularly delightful feeling of complete originality. In other districts I could be no more than *primus inter pares*. On Beachy Head I was the only one — I had invented an entirely new branch of the sport.

For a number of weeks I slept in a Mummery tent on one of the traverses. It was my first experience of camp life, which is, one thing with another, the best life I know. The mere feeling of being in the fresh air under the stars when one goes to sleep, and of waking at dawn because it is dawn, raises one's animal life *ipso facto* to the level of poetry.

There have always been in me two quite incompatible personalities with regard to my judgment of men and in practical matters. One of them possesses great instinctive shrewdness partaking of cynicism; the other an innocence amounting almost to imbecility. *Der reine Thor!* In certain respects,

this later quality is calculated. Thus, I have always refused to believe that I am being cheated, even when I know the facts perfectly well. I have deliberately made up my mind that it is not worth while to allow my purity to be contaminated by descending to the level of the people who are swindling me. In some matters again, I am genuinely unable to criticize; and so I take people at their face value, occasionally with disastrous results.

For instance, one of the most original characters that I have ever met was the Rev. T. C. V. Bastow, of Little Peatling Rectory, Lutterworth. It was the proud boast of this gentleman, who used to spend his vacations at Wastdale Head, that he possessed a rudimentary tail; and though I was never favoured personally with a view of this distinction, he was credited with readiness to demonstrate the Darwinian theory to any earnest young anatomist who might be in the offing. He wandered about the crags with a three-pronged claw attached to twenty or thirty feet of rope, his theory being to throw it up the rocks till it caught somewhere, and then swarm up the rope. He gave himself the air of being a rock climber of the first rank and I never thought of doubting it.

Now I had made the first solitary descent of the Ennerdale face of the Pillar Rock, a feat at that time considered theoretically impossible. He asked me casually whether it was the sort of place that he could take his daughter. I did a sort of rule of three sum in my head. If poor little I, the beginner, could do it, a fortiori so could the great man, even with the handicap of the girl novice. As a matter of fact, he could not climb at all, and the delightful pair found themselves crag-fast.

Some years later I made a blunder of the same kind which resulted in a frightful tragedy. I was in Arolla in 1897[28] with Morris Travers and his younger brother. In Coolidge's Guide there is a record of the ascent of the Petite Dent de Veisivi by the gap facing Arolla. The local guides, however, unanimously denied that this route had ever been done. The rocks below the gap, they said, were overhanging and were impossible. We decided to test these statements, ascended the mountain by the ordinary way and came down by the route in question. The rocks do overhang, but the holds are so good that the climb is quite easy. We discussed the climb with a son of the celebrated Dr. John Hopkinson, Edward, who was there with a large family. We said, quite truthfully, that there was no difficulty or danger for a responsible party; but he and three of his children attempted to repeat our climb and

[28] See *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 127.

all were killed. A peculiarly English incident adds a touch of grotesque grimness to the story. The widow begged Travers, who was a member of the rescue party (I had left the valley), to allow her to take a last look at her husband. She had been brought up to fancy pictures of people lying in state — "calm and grand in Death", and that sort of thing. As a matter of fact, all the remains had been brought down in one sack; no one could tell what was whose.

This difficulty in understanding that professed climbers could be incurably incompetent culminated in the one great mistake of my mountaineering career. Despite the actual evidence of 1902 that Dr. Jacot Guillarmod was utterly ignorant and untrustworthy, vain and obstinate, I consented to take him to Kangchenjunga, with the disastrous result to be recorded later.

There remains one remarkable incident of my climbing in Cumberland. I had been trying some new routes on the Pillar Rock one day, when I was caught by a terrific thunderstorm. Luckily for me, as it turned out, I was soaked to the skin in ten minutes. Any further serious climbing being impossible, I started back to Wastdale. In doing this one crosses the ridge of Pillar Mountain, along which runs a wire sheep fence. I crossed this; and, the storm increasing in violence, my attention was attracted by the little flames of lightning that played upon the iron uprights. I forgot about my axe. The next thing I knew was that I had been knocked down. I can hardly say that I felt any definite electrical shock; but I knew what must have happened. I was seized by a curious mixture of exhilaration and terror; and dashed down the face of the mountain at its steepest point, leaping from rock to rock like a goat. I easily beat the record from the summit to the hotel! Despite the intense concentration[29] necessary to jump down the dangerous crags, my conscious attention was absorbed by the magnificent spectacle of the cliffs of Scafell, framed in lurid purple storm clouds and literally ablaze with lightning; continuous and vivid to a degree that I have never since seen except on one occasion near Madrid, when the entire sky was a kaleidoscopic network of flame for nearly two hours.

[29] But see *The Book of Lies*, cap. 32, "The Mountaineer".

II

In 1894 I had my first serious taste of the Alps. I went with my tutor to the Suldenthal in the Austrian Tyrol. I had discovered the Badminton Volume of Mountaineering. I looked on it very much as I had been taught to look on the Bible. It says much for my innocence previously described, that despite the data already in my possession, I failed entirely to realize that the one book was as full of grotesque blunders and inaccuracies as the other. I arrived in Sulden with a deep reverence for the Alpine guide, and hastened to engage Joseph Pingerra, who was supposed to be the best in the valley. I was very shocked to find that is was customary in the Tyrol to go two on a rope instead of three, though in point of fact this was the only thing they knew about climbing. But I was amazed beyond measure to find that I was a much better rock climber than my guide. He did not know what rock climbing was, judged by Cumberland standards! I had no experience of snow and ice; so here, of course, I was the reverent disciple. Imagine my astonishment, then, when after two or three days Pingerra slipped and fell on a perfectly easy snow slope. He was entirely unable to do anything to save himself and I had to pull him up on the rope. I retained my faith in Badminton by saying to myself that the guides in the outlying groups must be very poor examples. I engaged two other guides and started for the Köenigspitze, spending the night in a hut. In the morning the guides were drunk and unwilling to start, making absurd excuses about the weather. I had not sufficient self-confidence to tackle the Köenigspitze by myself; but I dismissed them, made a solitary ascent of the Eisseespitze, and thought the matter over. I was utterly disgusted and decided to learn ice and snowcraft by myself, as I had with rocks.

A few days later I went out alone and made the first ascent of the Ortler by the Hintere Grat. The mountain had previously been climbed on this side; but the ridge had not been followed with the conscientiousness which was the rule in England. It took me six and a half hours to reach the summit.

My arrival created a profound sensation. Sitting on the top were an American and a guide, who had come up by the easy way from the Payerhütte. The guide regarded my appearance as strictly supernatural; but the American feared not God, neither regarded man. He had been trying to persuade the guide to go down to Sulden by the Hintere Grat and the guide had cold feet.

My arrival changed the situation. Once assured that I was flesh and blood, the guide plucked up a little courage, which the American further stimulated by a promise of additional dollars. As I had come up alone, the three of us could evidently go down together. I agreed to accept the responsible position of last man and we roped up accordingly. But we were no sooner started than the guide again lost whatever nerve he ever possessed. His employer had never been on a mountain before, but he had common sense and pluck; he behaved admirably in every respect; we half nursed and half chivvied that guide down that ridge. It was, of course, out of the question to follow the ridge, as I had just done, so that two or three thousand feet of the descent were accomplished by glissading down snow slopes. If I had been alone I could have got down by that route in under three hours. As it was, we took nine and a half. But the next day the guide had no lack of nerve; he wanted me to pay him for his services! Nothing doing.

I made a number of other ascents in the district, for the most part alone, but once or twice with some chance-met English. My chief aim was to master the technique of snow and ice; and by dint of using my senses and my sense I found out most of the tricks of the trade in the course of the season. I am particularly proud of having invented a pattern of Steigeisen, identical with that used by Oscar Eckenstein as far as the idea was concerned. The difference was that he, being an engineer, had had them forged in accordance with mechanical principles, whereas I had entrusted the execution of mine to a rotten firm with a great reputation in Alpine Club circles, whose ignorance of the elements of material and workmanship must have caused many "regrettable incidents".

In 1895 I felt myself fit to tackle the higher peaks of the Alps and went to the Little Scheideck. My first exploit was a solitary ascent of the Eiger. I started late and on the final ridge caught up with a "strong" party of English with guides, the principal Herr being a charming clergyman from Japan, the Rev. Walter Weston. The guides were more or less drunk and frightened. They were trying to make some excuse for turning back; but shame stimulated their courage when I came up and we proceeded to the summit. We all went down together; the guides professed themselves delighted with the

sure-footed agility of my performance and said that I was "*wie ein Führer*." A year before the compliment would have persuaded me that I had died and gone to heaven, but time had changed all that. I still clung pathetically to Badminton; I had merely reached the stage of praying pathetically to meet the good guides described in the book. I was still obsessed by the idea that it was suicidal to cross snow-covered glaciers without a rope. So I took a porter: he was quite willing to obey my orders implicitly, since I was regarded as a *Wunderkind*. We went up the Jungfrau by the Schneehorn-Silberhorn route, I leading up and descending last. But it was the same old story. The man couldn't stand on a snow slope. I was constantly having to misuse valuable time in saving his worthless life.

I began to reason the whole business out from the start. Mountaineering, I saw, was primarily a scientific problem. How, then, could the superstitious and ignorant peasants of the Alps master it or even attack it? There could be only one answer; they made no attempt to do so. Their craft was traditional; one man learnt from another by rule of thumb. Confront any guide with any mountain that he did not know by habit, and he was at sea. How was it, then, that the mountains had ever been climbed at all? And the answer to that was that the general standard of climbing was, given good weather conditions, altogether beneath contempt from the standpoint of the pioneers in England and Wales. The ordinary way up any Swiss mountain is little more than a scramble. Eckenstein used to say that he would take a cow up the Matterhorn provided that he were allowed to tie its legs. And once, when an ex-president of the Alpine Club began to reply to this remark by mentioning that he had been up the Matterhorn, some tactless person interrupted, "Did they tie *your* legs?"

Mummery, Collie and Hastings from England, with Eckenstein and one or two minor lights on the one hand, and Purtscheller, Blodig and others from Germany on the other, were setting up an entirely new standard of Alpine climbing. They were men of education and intelligence; they had studied the physical theory of mountain conditions; they had practised the various types of technique required to meet these conditions in detail. They were doing climbs which had never been dreamt of by any Alpine guide. The first-rate amateur was to the professional as a rifleman to a man with a flint axe.

In '95 I was not yet aware of what was going on. I discovered independently the facts of the case. I found that I could go pretty well anywhere without the least danger or difficulty, whereas all the people I met were constantly on the brink of disaster. I began to think that solitary climbing was the

safest form of the game. The one problem was the snow-covered glacier. I began to study that question by itself. I soon noticed that when I looked down on such a glacier from a ridge, I could see the covered crevasses quite plainly. They appeared as lines of shade. Descending to the glacier, I found that I was still able to detect the slight differences in illumination. So much for the theory. But the question still remained, "I see it, but can I cross it safely?" My experience with chalk helped to give me confidence. I was accustomed to estimate the breaking-strain of rotten material. Now, given a night's hard frost, it stands to reason that a bridge which has not fallen through by its own weight during the previous day would support my extra weight in the early morning. I began to test my theory, being, of course, careful to arrange my routes, so as to avoid having to cross snow-covered glaciers after sunrise. I noticed, however, that a great deal of care was necessary to avoid accidents; and this made for slowness. There were also many other occasions on which a second man would be a safeguard, and some when he might be of active assistance.

The question of a third man is quite different. He diminishes the mobility of the party; the middle man is deprived almost completely of any freedom of action. Whenever the ground is so difficult that only one man can move at a time, a party of three takes not half as long again but twice as long as a party of two, since the operation of pulling in a section of rope is duplicated. The speed of a party means a great deal to its safety. As regards nightfall, weather conditions, and avalanches or falling stones, two is evidently much safer than three. Another point is that it is at least twice as hard to find two competent companions as it is to find one.

The combination of Mummery, Collie and Hastings could hardly happen again in a century. Mummery had a genius for rock climbing and an uncanny instinct for mountain problems in general. Collie was brilliant all round and had an absolute scientific knowledge of materials and a feeling for topography. Hastings was a tower of physical strength and endurance, an ideal second man either as a hoist or an anchor. All three were accomplished technicians and had experience of every kind of ground and conditions.

In the absence of so miraculous a combination, the best thing to be hoped for was one other man who would possess all the qualities which one lacked oneself; and it was my supreme good fortune in 1898 to find what I sought in Oscar Eckenstein.

In the meantime I went on climbing in the Bernese Oberland during the summer of 1895. Certainly the Lord must have been leading me, for I hardly

ever went out on a mountain without striking some episode which directed my thoughts into the right channel.

To return to psychology. It is hard to summarize the general effects of my queer education. But it was terribly uneven. In some respects I was a long way ahead of most boys of my age; in others I was little better than an imbecile. I was practically prevented from acquiring the habit of normal relations with other people. My associates were, for the most part, much older than myself.

But the one really disastrous feature was the attitude which I was compelled to assume about money. I was taught to expect every possible luxury. Nothing was too good for me; and I had no idea of what anything cost. It was all paid for behind my back. I was never taught that effort on my part might be required to obtain anything that I wanted; but one the other hand I was kept criminally short of pocket money lest I should spend it in some disgraceful way, such as buying books or tobacco, or spending it on even worse abominations such as theatres and women. (I was encouraged to keep a dog!) I had therefore no sense of responsibility in the matter of money. It never occurred to me that it was possible to make it, and I was thus trained to be dependent to the point of mendicancy. The effect was, of course, disastrous. When I got to Cambridge I still had everything paid for me and in addition I found myself with unlimited credit which I could keep secret. When I came into my fortune a year later, I was utterly unprepared to use it with the most ordinary prudence, and all the inherent vices of my training had a perfectly free field for their development. Before, if I wanted to give a dinner party every day of the week, I could do it, but if I wanted a little cash my only alternative to the card table was the pawnshop, till I came of age. After that, it was simply a question of writing a cheque, which gave me no idea of the nature of the transaction involved. I doubt whether any one in history was ever furnished with such a completely rotten preparation for the management of practical affairs.

My residence at Eastbourne broke up very suddenly. During the whole of my adolescence I had taken the romantic point of view of love; and I found that the universal practice was for elder people to interfere in the affairs of their juniors. Two people could not decide to marry without rousing a hurricane. There was never any exception. Engagements were always being made and broken on unintelligible religious grounds. The family of the Lamberts was no exception to this. The eldest daughter was an acid old maid in the late twenties; the youngest was a hysterical monster of suppression. The middle

girl was beautiful, voluptuous and normal. She was not sufficiently intelligent to revolt openly against her family; but her human instincts told her that something was wrong and that she had better get out of it. She was in love with a quite suitable young man and engaged to him on probation. The question was whether he would or wouldn't join the Plymouth Brethren. Naturally, the more he saw of them the less he liked them and he ultimately made up his mind to stand by the church of his fathers. On announcing this desolating decision he was overwhelmed with abuse and thrown out of the house. His fiancée was forbidden to communicate with him in any way, and to all intents and purposes imprisoned. I offered to arrange for correspondence with a view to an early elopement. But I couldn't stand the continuous abuse and ill-treatment which was the portion of the unfortunate girl. The family literally foamed at the mouth on every opportunity. Meals were a poisoned whirlwind. She was constantly reduced to tears and perhaps the happiest time she had was when she was actually being beaten. I ought to have conducted my intrigues with greater patience, no doubt, but it got on my nerves too much. One morning at breakfast I said about a millionth part of what I thought and the family started screaming. It was as if they had been attacked by collective mania. Everything was thrown at me; they went for me with claws and fists. They were too blind with rage to know what they were doing. I simply knocked their heads together and walked out of the house. When I thought the atmosphere had had time to dissipate I returned with the intention of carrying out a rescue for the distressed damsel. They were too much scared to oppose me and I begged her to come away at once and go to her ex-fiancé's family. But she could not summon up courage to do it. The opportunity went by; and later in the afternoon my Uncle Tom, summoned by telegram, came to fetch me away from the accursed spot.

The incident had a wholesome effect on my own family. They had failed to break my spirit and begun to realize that I had reached the stage when I could make as much trouble for them as they could for me. The best thing they could do was to let me go my own way. I had won the fight; and the evidence of my triumph was my season in the Bernese Oberland on my own responsibility. I was recalled by a telegram. They had decided to let me go to Trinity; and the entrance examination was only a week away. I went up to Cambridge and passed it without difficulty, though I had had no opportunity of preparing the set classics. But I followed Browning's advice to "greet the Unseen with a cheer": my real knowledge of Greek and Latin enabled me to give renderings, far above the average, of unfamiliar passages. I could never

adapt myself to the sheep-system of mnemonic "learning". In October I entered the university, taking rooms at 16 St. John's Street. From that moment begins an entirely new chapter in my life.

12

When I went up to Cambridge in the October term of 1895, I had the sensation of drawing a long deep breath as one does after swimming under water or (an even better analogy) as one does after bracing oneself against the pain inflicted by a dentist. I could not imagine anything better in life. I found myself suddenly in an entirely new world. I was part of the glories of the past; and I made a firm resolution to be one of the glories of the future. I should like the haunted room over the Great Gate of Trinity to be turned into a vault like that of Christian Rosencreutz to receive my sarcophagus. I must admit that I don't know of much else in England of the works of man which I would not make haste to destroy if the opportunity occurred. But Trinity, except New Court and Whewell's Court, is enough for nay poet to live and die for.

I remember being amazed in later years when my patriotism was doubted. I wasn't going to have "*Eintritt Verboten*" put up over the Great Gate with a Prussian sentry to enforce it. I am perfectly aware that I am irrational. The traditions of England are intertwined inextricably with a million abuses and deformities which I am only too eager to destroy. But all Englishmen keep their brains in watertight compartments. It would be a comic degradation of make Trinity the headquarters of the Rationalist Press Association. But at the time I had not seen the logical incompatibility of my various positions. Shakespeare's patriotism in John of Gaunt's dying speech and *Henry V* appeals directly to my poetic sense.

I am quite prepared to die for England in that brutal, unthinking way. "Rule, Britannia" gets me going as if I were the most ordinary music-hall audience. This sentiment is not interfered with by my detestation of the moral and religious humbug which one is expected to produce at moments of national crisis. My patriotism is of the blatant, unintelligent variety, popularized by Kipling. I like the old rime:

Two skinny Frenchmen, one Portugee,
One jolly Englishmen lick 'em all three.

But I can find no moral excuse for my attitude. I am an animal with a family and a country. To hell with everybody! This animal is prepared to use its brains and its force as stupidly and unscrupulously as the Duke of Wellington. It is not convinced by its own philosophical opinions, which condemn patriotism as parochialism, regard war as immoral savagery and economic insanity, and consider public opinion and its leaders as the bleating of sheep, huddling into their fold at the barking of mongrel dogs.

The atmosphere of Cambridge formed an admirable background for my state of mind. I saw myself as a romantic character in history. The Church of England, as represented by my Uncle Tom, had seemed a narrow tyranny, as detestable as that of the Plymouth Brethren; less logical and more hypocritical. My Uncle Jonathan was a sound churchman; but he kept his religion to himself and went his own triumphant way in the world, keeping ecclesiastical discipline at arm's length as far as he himself was concerned. He was prima facie one of the saved, whenever he troubled to think about it, no doubt; but in practice the Church of England was simply a machine for keeping the lower classes in their proper place. At Trinity it was the same thing. Christianity was the official religion with which it was convenient to comply, just as it is convenient to go to a good tailor. It was, in short, a political paganism.

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

I entered for the Moral Science Tripos with the idea that it would help me to learn something about the nature of things. I don't know why it should have interested me. It must have been my subconscious will speaking. In any

case, I was profoundly disgusted to find that political economy was one of the subjects. I attended the first lecture; the professor told us that the subject was a very difficult one because there were no reliable data. It is easy to imagine the effect of such a statement on a boy who had been trained in the exactitude of mathematics and chemistry. I closed my notebook and never attended another lecture. My tutor naturally called me to account, but by great good fortune he was a man of extraordinary ability — Dr. A. W. Verrall. He accepted my plea that my business in life was to study English literature. He was, indeed, most sympathetic. He knew only too well that the university curriculum afforded no opportunities. He knew, too, that my school knowledge was amply sufficient to take me through the university examinations without my doing any work for them. In fact, during my three years I only did one day's work for the university, and that consisted in employing a boy to read through a translation of a Greek play while I followed it in the text. I got either a first or second class in every subject.

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

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

I was very put out by finding, as a first year man, that Hall was at half-past eight. I objected to my evenings being cut into by dining so late and soon acquired the habit of having all meals sent in from the kitchen. I was thus almost totally dissociated from the corporate life of the college. The only institution which interested me was the debating society, the Magpie and

Stump. But I could not take even this seriously. It seemed to me absurd for these young asses to emit their callow opinions on important subjects. I was only interested in "rag" debates. I remember on one occasion that the suggestion had been made by a committee inspired by one of the tutors, the eminent mathematician, W. W. Rouse Ball, to establish a junior common-room. My contribution to the discussion was to say that "this proposal seems to me to be all Ball's." (An even happier moment was in a debate on a proposal to institute a passion play in England, when Lord Kilmarnock said that it would certainly be a popular attraction to hear Arthur Roberts say "I thirst.")

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

Most people of this disposition are readily carried away into antisocial channels. But with me this was not the case. I dropped my subscription to the boat club because I was getting nothing out of it; but I was always wildly enthusiastic about the success of the boat. I have always had a passionate yearning for mankind, wholesale and retail, but I cannot endure to have them anywhere around. It is a very peculiar psychology; yet it is frequently found among poets. We are lonely and suffer intensely on that account. We are prepared to love any and every specimen of humanity in himself, for himself, and by himself; but even a dinner party gets on our nerves.

It is perhaps part of the psychology of sensitiveness. We cannot bear having our corners knocked off, and at the same time we are so well aware of the intense suffering of isolation that we long to lose ourselves in a crowd at a football match. I can be perfectly happy as an unknown individual in a revel, from a political meeting to a masked ball; but inevitably one's unique qualities draw attention to one; the cruel consciousness of self is reawakened,

one becomes utterly miserable and flees to the ends of the earth to be rid of one's admirers. A certain coarseness is inseparable from popularity and one is therefore constantly driven away from the very thing one needs most. It is a quasi-electrical phenomenon. One can only find satisfaction in intimate union with one's opposite.

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

I must here point out that the social system of England makes it impossible for a young man of spirit and intelligence to satisfy his nature with regard to sex in any reasonable way. The young girl of position similar to his own is being fattened for the market. Even when his own situation makes it possible for him to obtain her he has to pay an appalling price; and it becomes more difficult than ever for him to enjoy female companionship. Monogyny is nonsense for any one with a grain of imagination. The more sides he has to his nature, the more women he needs to satisfy it. The same is, of course, true, *mutatis mutandis*, of women. A woman risks her social existence by a single experiment. A young man is compelled by the monogamic system to develop his character by means of corrupt society vampires or women of the lower classes, and though he may learn a great deal from these sources, it cannot but be unfortunate that he has no opportunity to learn from women of his own birth, breeding, education and rank in society.

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

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

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

It is commonly supposed that women themselves are the chief obstacle to such an arrangement. But this is only because they have been drilled in to thinking that the happiness and well-being of the children depend upon their supporting the existing system. When you tackle a woman on the subject she pretends to be very shocked; and hysterically denies the most obvious facts. But she wilts under cross-examination and agrees with the above conclusions in a very short time. For women have no morality in the sense of the world which is ordinarily understood in Anglo-Saxondom. Women never let ideals interfere with their practical good sense. They are also influenced by selfishness; it is natural to them to put the interests of their children before their own. Men, on the other hand, are hard to convince. When forced to analyse the situation, they arrive not at a reason but at a prejudice, and this is purely the brainless bestial lust for exclusive possession.

Anthropology proves these theorems thoroughly. The first step in civilization is to restrain women from infidelity. The institutions of the pardah, sati and the marriage laws all show that men think that women must be kept under lock and key, whereas women have always realized that it is impossible

and undesirable to prevent men from taking their happiness where they find it. The emancipation of women, therefore, depends entirely upon leaving them free to act as men do. Their good sense will prevent them from inflicting the real wrongs; and besides, their complete independence and happiness will encourage them in nobility and generosity.

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

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

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

Cambridge is, of course, an ideal place for a boy in my situation. Prostitution is to all intents and purposes non-existent, but nearly all the younger

women of the district are eager to co-operate in the proper spirit — that of romance and passion.

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

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

I was very anxious that my style should not be influenced by my contemporaries, and also not to waste myself on anybody who had not stood the test of time. I made it a rule to read no one who had not been dead for fifty years, unless brought under my notice in some special way. For example, I could not avoid Swinburne, as one of my friends was crazy about him and I could not doubt, after the first acquaintance, that that he was a classic. Similarly, I allowed myself to read Sir Richard Burton, because *The Arabian Nights* was an established masterpiece and his was the best translation. I also read a good deal of French literature and all the best Greek and Latin authors. But my peculiar temperament made me balk at one or two fences. I had certain innate ideas about literature; I say innate because I cannot imagine on what grounds I formed them. Thus I could not tolerate the idea of a novel exceeding a certain length, with the result that I have never read a page of Samuel Richardson. It is easier to understand the objection which I had to what I thought gossip. I have never read Boswell and have never been able to bring myself to face the average memoir. With regard to history[30] again, I demanded that the subject should be important. I did not see why I should bother my head about the Crimean War. I studied philosophy and kindred

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

subjects with the greatest enthusiasm; but resented the form in which it was set forth by such people as Plato. It seemed to me that the argument of any of Plato's dialogues might have been presented much more clearly and cogently in about a tenth of the space. I made a very thorough study of logic as being my critical apparatus.

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

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

With regard to the choice of a profession, I decided on the Diplomatic Service. It seemed to me to afford the greatest opportunities for worldly enjoyment, while at the same time demanding the highest qualities of mind. The subtlety of intrigue has always fascinated me. It is very curious that this should have been the case, in view of my master passion for truth and my relentless determination to tell it without regard for consequences. The obstacle to my success in the preliminary canter was that I had no aptitude whatever for learning languages. I could master the grammar of a language in a few hours; but I was impatient of acquiring the vocabulary. Genders and inflections irritated my sense of simplicity. It is also difficult for me to acquire a language by ear, partly because my hearing is not particularly acute, and partly because I resent any conversation whatever which does not deal with

matters of prime importance. The early stages of learning a language are, therefore, agonizing.

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

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

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

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

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

my companion were the overflowing of ecstatic passion. Sin had been abolished, I was back in Eden.

In London one cannot even go to the National Gallery or the British Museum with a pure heart as one goes to the Louvre or the Prado. One cannot get away from the sense that one is performing an act of piety. Concerts are even more dreadful than the opera. The surroundings are invariably bleak; one feels that the artist is doing it on purpose. Singing and playing demand background. Singing is the natural expression of human emotion, the joy of youth and life as connected with the landscapes of Corot and Gauguin, or with the interiors of Teniers. Elaborate instrumental music asks for appropriate architecture, not necessarily that of the cathedral. Music should have its own temples. London concert halls are blasphemous and obscene.

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

The rest of the evening's entertainment remains a mystery. I have a vague memory of being stretched on the seat of a railway carriage and I

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

The very streets testify against the city. On the one hand we have pale stunted hurrying pygmies jostling each other in the bitter search for bread; an ant heap is a miracle of beauty and dignity in comparison. On the other, when it comes to excitement or amusement, we see perspiring brutes belching the fumes of beer; course, ugly parodies of apes. Nature affords no parallel to their degradation. There is no open air life, physical or mental, and there is the ever-abiding sense of sin and shame to obsess these slaves. Nowhere, except in English cities, do these conditions exist. Slum life there is elsewhere, and misery enough; pitiful struggle, monstrous greed and triumphant brutality. But only in England are the people poisoned through and through; elsewhere there is a sense of independence even in the most servile. The Russian mujik is in his way an aristocrat.

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

superiors, felt with acute agony the degradation of the slaves among whom they moved, and became revolutionaries and exiles because they could not endure to live in such a degraded community.

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

At Cambridge I was surrounded by a more or less happy, healthy, prosperous set of parasites. The paganism of the university had to a great extent redeemed them from the sense of sin. But during vacation I either hid myself in the mountains among the sturdy peasants or went abroad. North-western Europe appealed to me. There was a certain element of romance in the long nights, the cold clear air, the ice. I loved to wander solitary in Holland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. There was a mystery in the streets and a spontaneous gaiety in the places of amusement, which satisfied my soul. Life seemed both more remote and more intense. As a stranger, I never came into contact with the malaise, the soul-searching, the psychological dissatisfaction which Ibsen and Strindberg describe. But though my view was thus entirely superficial, it was none the less in a certain sense profound and accurate. One can get a very good idea of a country by traveling through it in the train. The outward and visible signs do, after all, reveal, especially to the poet, its inward and spiritual graces. The people who lead one astray are the analysts who fail to come out the other side. Mr. Jorrocks and Mr. Pickwick give a better idea of England than Charles Reade or Sir Walter Besant. Dumas père tells us more about France than Zola. A great deal of the interior workings of a national mind ought to be taken for granted. One can distinguish profitably between two pretty girls at the end of an opera glass. It is absolutely misleading to disembowel them, and the average so-called psychological

writer tries to do. There are all sorts of obscure processes always at work in nature and they are more or less the same for all of us. To insist upon them is one of the worst kinds of false thinking. Zola's peasants in *La Terre* are untrue, except as among themselves. The ultimate issue is that these people breed cattle, grow corn and wine, and fight like demons for their country. Henri Barbusse's *Le Feu* was a disgrace to literature. Mass psychology is the only important thing about the masses. The great artists, such as Emily Brontë — or was it her brother? — make no such blunder. They deal with individuals; but they never lose sight of the fact that the individual is only such to a limited extent. He is only one figure in a picture; and when he stands out unnecessarily, there is something wrong with the picture. Captain Marryat's stories contain masterpieces of individual portraiture, but he never loses sight of the background. I am convinced that the English people were very much happier under the old semi-feudal system. "Hard cases make bad law." We have abolished all kinds of injustice on our attention being called to them; but the result has been that we have created an artificial doctrinaire society in which nobody is really happy or prosperous. All classes are complaining. We are in the condition of a man whose nerves all talk at once instead of doing their work quietly. The most appalling of political mistakes is to develop consciousness in sections of the social organism which are not its brains. The crash has come in Russia; and we shall not have long to wait.

But in those days of adolescence I had no inducement to do any political thinking. The atmosphere was one of prosperity and stability. It was taken for granted that England was the greatest country in the world and that nothing could go wrong. One heard about Ireland as a perennial nuisance; and Mr. Gladstone was regarded as a traitor, neither more not less. One of my tutors had been a Caius don named d'Arcy, whose father was the rector of Nymphsfield in Gloucestershire. I had spent some time there — to make my first appearance in the hunting field. "Chapel folk" were looked upon as criminals of no class. I remember the old rector clucking over a riddle. "Why is Gladstone's hair like a tuft of grass?" "Because it grows on the top of an old sod." That was the quality of political thought which was considered on the same level of certainty as two and two make four. I recall two lines of a poem that I wrote to Lord Rosebery:

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

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

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

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

And look not thou so black, my friend,
....Nor seam that hoary brow;
Thy deeds are seamier, my friend,
....Thy record blacker now.
Your age and sex forbid, old man,
....I need not tell you how,
Or else I'd knock you down[31], old man,
....Like that extremist cow.

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

And I didn't.

My life at Cambridge did nothing to make me think more deeply. With regard to foreign politics, the position was parallel. It was pure Kipling; but (in another watertight compartment) I was passionately enamoured of the views of Shelley, though I did not correlate them with any practical programme.

[31] Mr. Gladstone was attacked by a cow in Hawarden Park in 1891.

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

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

My innate transcendentalism leapt out towards it. The *Morte d'Arthur*, *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* were my world. I not only wanted to go out on the quest of the Holy Grail, I intended to do it. I got the idea of chastity as a positive virtue. It was delightful to be pure. Previously, chastity had been my chief abomination; the sign-manual of cowardice, heartlessness and slavery. In the Celtic Church there was no fear of God, but a communion with Him as nobly familiar as the relations of Roland and Charlemagne. I still too everything very literally. Browning's quotation:

Childe Roland to the dark tower came

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

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I obtained the honour of knighthood[32] from one of Don Carlos' lieutenants. It is part of the legitimist theory that the sovereign had abrogated to himself the monopoly of conferring spurs, while on the other hand a woman could not confer knighthood. All Victorian creations are invalid.

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

I took my admission to the Order with absolute seriousness, keeping vigil over my arms in a wood. The theory of the Celtic Church was that Romanism was a late heresy, or at least schism. The finest cathedral in the world was too small for the Church, as Brand found. The mountains and forests were consecrated sports. The nearest thing to a material house would be a hermitage such as one was likely to encounter while traveling on the Quest.

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

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

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

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

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

I did not go into a definite trance in this meditation; but a spiritual consciousness was born in me corresponding to that which characterizes the Vision of the Universal Sorrow, as I learnt to call it later on. In Buddhist phra-

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

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

From the nature of things, therefore, life is a sacrament; in other words, all our acts are magical acts. Our spiritual consciousness acts through the will and its instruments upon material objects, in order to produce changes which will result in the establishment of the new conditions of consciousness which we wish. That is the definition of Magick. The obvious example of such an operation in its most symbolic and ceremonial form is the Mass. The will of the priest transmutes a wafer in such wise that it becomes charged with the divine substance in so active a form that its physical injection gives spiritual nourishment to the communicant. But all our actions fit this equation. A tailor with the toothache takes a portion of the wealth derived from the business to which he has consecrated himself, a symbol of his accumulated and stored energy, in order to have the tooth removed and so to recover the consciousness of physical well-being.

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

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

To me the spiritual world consisted roughly of the Trinity and their angels on the one side; the devil and his on the other. It is absolutely sophistical to pretend that Christianity is not Manichaean in essence. The Vedanta theory of Advaitism in the Upanishads makes evil — and indeed all manifested existence — Maya, pure illusion. But even at this, there is no satisfactory explanation of the appearance of the illusion. In Christianity evil is just as real as good; and so long as two opposites exist they must either be equal or there must be a third component to balance them. Now this is in itself sophistical, for the third component only exists as a make- weight; and it is pure fiction to discriminate between two things whose only function is to counterbalance a third thing. In respect of the universe of discourse involved, a proposition cannot have two contradictories. If the opposite of good exists at all, as it must, if "good" is to have any meaning, it must be exactly equal in quantity and quality to that good. On the Christian hypothesis, the reality of evil makes the devil equal to God. This is the heresy of Manes, no doubt. But those who condemn Manes must, despite themselves, implicitly affirm his theorem.

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

It was with intense disappointment and distrust that I read this compilation. The author was a pompous, ignorant and affected dipsomaniac from America, and he treated his subject with the vulgarity of Jerome K. Jerome, and the beery, leering frivolity of a red-nosed music-hall comedian making jokes about mothers-in-law and lodgers.

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

The compiler of *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts* is not only the most ponderously platitudinous and priggishly prosaic of pretentiously pompous pork butchers of the language, but the most voluminously voluble. I cannot dig over the dreary deserts of his drivel in search of the passage which made me write to him. But it was an oracular obscurity which hinted that he knew of a Hidden Church withdrawn from the world in whose sanctuaries were preserved the true mysteries of initiation. This was one better than the Celtic Church; I immediately asked him for an introduction. He replied kindly and intelligibly, suggesting that I should read *The Cloud upon the Sanctuary* by Councillor von Eckartshausen. With this book I retired to Wastdale Head for the Easter vacation of 1898. This period proved to be the critical moment of my early life; in two most important respects it determined the direction of my efforts. The two were intimately linked in certain ways and in order to make clear my position I must retrace my steps for a little and bring myself up to date in the matter of climbing, as also of literature.

The summers of 1896 and 1897 were spent in the Alps. They were the logical development of my previous experience. I had made up my mind to look for a climbing companion of a permanent character. I had met Professor Norman Collie in Westmorland. His teaching and advice were invaluable. I

arranged to spend part of the summer with Morris Travers, Collie's demonstrator at University college, London, and a very admirable "second man" he was. A man who writes treatises on "Gas Manipulation" and who knows how to rebuff the advances of his girl students is an ideal companion on a mountain. Unfortunately, he obtained an appointment in a far country and had to give up climbing in consequence. But we made our mark in the Alps, beginning with the first guideless traverse of the Mönch, the Vuibez Séracs, and the first traverse of the Aiguilles Rouges, climbing all the pinnacles.

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

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

Taking of sunburn, there was once — improbable as it may appear — a Dr. Bowles, of Folkestone, interested in the subject. He arranged with Morris Travers to carry out a research on the actinic value of the solar rays on glaciers. Travers and I and his brother went to live in a hut on a glacier somewhere above Bel Alp, where Travers was to carry out some experiments. One day there arrived Bowles and a number of voluntary victims, each member of the party having his face painted with grease paint of divers colours, the right half vermilion and the left sky-blue, or the left bright green and the right orange, and so on. I record, with regret, that I, who had refused to abdicate the dignity

of humanity to this extent, was the only person in the party who was not badly burnt. The sun showed no respect to persons in the matter of their camouflage. My freedom was due to the fact that I had spent most of my life in the open air and gradually acquired immunity. It sometimes strikes me that the whole of science is a piece of impudence: that nature can afford to ignore our impertinent interference. If our monkey mischief should ever reach the point of blowing up the earth by decomposing an atom, and even annihilate the sun himself, I cannot really suppose that the universe would turn a hair. If we are ever to do anything, it can only be by the manipulation of those spiritual forces which lie behind the consciousness of which the universe of matter is but a symbolic phantasm.

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

We now found that so far from this obstacle being the last, it was the first! I take a good deal of credit to myself for finding the way to the top through the tangled pinnacles of ice. I began to be not a little alarmed; the séracs stretched line after line above us. There was no way of getting out of them and at any moment the sun might strike the glacier and overthrow their pride and our temerity. We climbed with desperate haste and managed to reach the snow-covered glacier above them just in time. As it happened, a party had gone out from the hotel after breakfast with the idea of watching us from the opposite slopes and they told us next evening that our tracks had been obliterated in a dozen places by falling ice.

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I must not omit to mention the first descent of the west face of the Trifthorn. It was early in the season of '96. Going up to Zermatt in the train I met an English climber whom I will call Arthur Ellis. He was anxious to do guideless work and we agreed to try a few mountains together. We made some minor expeditions and he proved highly competent. One day we climbed the Trifthorn by the ordinary route, with the idea of attempting the traverse. As I was to go down last, he was carrying the rucksack with our provisions. We made several attempts to find a way down the Zinal face; but always the slopes steepened until it became evident that they pitched over, and we had to retrace our steps. Ellis, however, was very annoyed at my caution and wanted to glissade, which was a proposal about as reasonable as jumping off the Eiffel Tower. Presently he made an excuse for taking off the rope and retired behind a rock while I sat down and lit my pipe. I was aroused by a hail. Ellis was three or four hundred feet down the slope! He urged me once more to glissade. He said he had invented a new method of exercising this art, which was to hold the axe by the shaft and use the pick as a brake. It was downright insanity; and took me absolutely by surprise, as previously he had been a sound and careful climber. I could do nothing to restrain him: I tried to humour him and suggested that he should "come up to where I was and start fair". But he wasn't taking any and let himself go. A few seconds later he was performing cartwheels and then disappeared over the edge. The angle was such that I could not see where he had fallen. I hastily climbed a convenient rock pinnacle. Then I saw him. He was lying, spreadeagled, in the Bergschrund, with his blood staining the snow; which, by the way, ought not to have been there, and would not have been but for the continuous bad weather.

The task before me was hardly prepossessing. It was up to me to find my way alone down a face which had never previously been climbed. However, I discovered a route which took me to the glacier in about five hours. At one

point I was obliged to lower myself down by the rope; and, as I could not unhitch it, I was thrown more than ever on my own resources after that. On several occasions I was obliged to make some very risky jumps, so that I might have been cut off if I had found a passage beyond my powers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This made everybody very much ashamed. Even the guides were stung into trying it. But nobody else got up. So I started to coach them on the rope. Several succeeded with the moral support and without being hauled. A fair

number, however, came off and looked rather ridiculous, dangling. People began the urge the chaplain to try his hand. He didn't like it at all; but he came to me and said he would go if I would be very careful to manage the rope so that he did not look ridiculous, because of the respect due to his cloth. I promised him that I would attend to the matter with the utmost conscientiousness. I admitted that I had purposely made fun of some of the others, but that in his case I would tie the rope properly; not under his arms but just above the hips.

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

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

We took off the rope to descend some slopes covered with loose rock. As I sat down to coil the rope I realized that I was completely exhausted, though mentally rather than physically. My brain played me a curious trick. Gregor had reached a patch of broken rocks at the bottom of the slope and I followed him slowly. Suddenly I saw a troll, one of those funny little dwarfs with pointed caps and formidable beards that one sees pictured in German fairy stories and on beer mugs (*Heinzelmännchen* appears to be the official name). This creature was hopping about the rocks in a very jovial way. He appeared quite real in every respect. For instance, he was not transparent. But it never occurred to me to believe in him. I put him down to cerebral fatigue. The apparition only lasted for a few minutes. He was gone before I rejoined my cousin.

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

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

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

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Such were some of the adventures of 1896 and 1897. My experiences all contributed to build up an original theory of mountaineering. It was not till 1898 that I discovered the identity of my own ideas with those of the great climbers. But I discovered the extremely unpleasant fact that the English Alpine Club were bitterly opposed to mountaineering — its members were incompetent, insanely jealous of their vested interests and unthinkably unsportsmanlike. Professor Norman Collie had proposed me for the club and Sir Martin Conway had been kind enough to second me; but the record of climbs which I put in to qualify for admission was much too good. It was subversive of all authority. The average Alpine clubman qualifies by paying guides to haul him up a few hackneyed peaks. He is not expected to do any new climbs whatever; and it is an outrage to the spirit of the club to do anything original. Mummery had been blackballed because he was the most famous climber in England; and, though occasionally climbing with guides before he found Collie and Hastings, had been in fact the leader of the party. The club was, of course, afraid to give its real reasons for objecting to him. It circulated the lie that he was a bootmaker! Later on, it became a public scandal that he was not a member of the club and he was weak enough to allow himself to be elected. In my case, Collie and Conway warned me that my election would be opposed and I withdrew my name. On this, the son of a church furnisher named Tattersall, who had insinuated himself into Trinity, circulated the rumour that I had been expelled from a London club. He hated me because I, as president of the Cambridge University Chess club, did not see my way to allow him to become secretary. He was an excellent player, but unsuitable for conducting official correspondence with other clubs. I went to his rooms with a heavy malacca and demanded that he should retract his falsehood or fight. He refused to do either, so I thrashed him soundly then and there. He complained to my tutor, who halled me, made a few remarks on the desuetude of the duel, changed the conversation to Ibsen and asked me to dinner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let me emphasize the fact that I am absolutely satisfied with this result. I am congenitally incapable of personal ambition and envy. My interest is in the sport itself. I care nothing for glory. In 1899, for example, I worked out a route up the Aiguille du Géant from the Montanvers. This mountain had never been climbed fairly. The ordinary way up is a matter of engineering by means of pitons and wire ropes. I did not keep my knowledge to myself in order to have the glory of making the first ascent. I indicated the way up to other climbers and was absolutely overjoyed when two Austrian amateurs made the climb. In the same way, I am perfectly satisfied at having broken down the dishonest and imbecile traditions of Badminton and only regret that I was not in command of the the 1922 Everest expedition, because that expedition failed and cost heavily in human life. I am convinced that if I had been there the summit would have been reached and that no one would have been killed. In the expedition of K 2, neither man nor beast was injured, and in that to Kangchenjunga, the catastrophe was the direct result of mutinous disobedience to my orders. I do not lay claim to personal credit for this record, save in so far as I was on the way to an apprehension of the proper principles of mountain craft when I met Eckenstein, to whose instructions I am profoundly indebted.

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

was a steep slab, polished by ice and constantly bombarded. I had to rush it, at the gravest risk of slipping on the one hand and being smashed on the the other.

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

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

The expression „absolutely perpendicular" ultimately became a byword. It was used so frequently by ostensibly reliable men to describe quite gentle slopes. We used to ask engineers and other people accustomed to practical trigonometry to estimate the angle of the Matterhorn from Zermatt and from the Schwartzsee. They would give us anything from thirty degrees to fifty degrees in the first case and from forty-five degrees to eighty degrees in the second. The actually figures are ten degrees and fifteen degrees.

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

During my three years at Cambridge my literary faculties made sudden strides. The transition was brief. It is marked by my *The Tale of Archais*. But in *Aceldama*, my first published poem of any importance, I attained, at a bound, the summit of my Parnassus. In a sense, I have never written anything better. It is absolutely characteristic. Its technical excellence is remarkable and it is the pure expression of my unconscious self. I had no corresponding mental concepts at the time. It enounces a philosophy which subsequent developments have not appreciably modified. I remember my own attitude to

it. It seemed to me a wilfully extravagant eccentricity. I had no idea that it was the pure water of the Dircean spring.

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

Another book of the transition period was *Green Alps*. This was never published. I had paid Leonard Smithers to have it printed and he told me that the printers' works had been destroyed by fire, which may or may not have been the case. It is characteristic that I accepted the situation with a shrug of the shoulders. I had a complete set of proofs, but I had become rather ashamed of the book. I merely selected the poems which I thought really worth while for inclusion in subsequent volumes. The collection was marked by a tendency to earthly passion; and its title shows that I already regarded human love as an idea to be transcended. *Green Alps* are pleasant pastures, but I was bound for the peaks.

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

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

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

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

I had frequently beaten Bird at Simpson's and when I got to Cambridge I made a savagely intense study of the game. In my second year I was president of the university and had beaten such first-rate amateurs as Gunston and Cole. Outside the master class, Atkins was my only acknowledge superior. I made mincemeat of the man who was champion of Scotland a few years later, even after I had given up the game. I spent over two hours a day in study and more than that in practice. I was assured on all hands that another year would see me a master myself.

I had been to St. Petersburg to learn Russian for the Diplomatic Service in the long vacation of 1897, and on my way back broke the journey in Berlin to attend the Chess Congress. But I had hardly entered the room where the masters were playing when I was seized with what may justly be described as a mystical experience. I seemed to be looking on at the tournament from outside myself. I saw the masters — one, shabby, snuffy and blear-eyed; another,

in badly fitting would-be respectable shoddy; a third, a mere parody of humanity, and so on for the rest. These were the people to whose ranks I was seeking admission. „There, but for the grace of God, goes Aleister Crowley," I exclaimed to myself with disgust, and there and then I registered a vow never to play another serious game of chess. I perceived with praeternatural lucidity that I had not alighted on this planet with the object of playing chess.

Aleister Crowley, by the way! I have not yet explained how I came to have changed my name. For many years I had loathed being called Alick, partly because of the unpleasant sound and sight of the word, partly because it was the name by which my mother called me. Edward did not seem to suit me and the diminutives Ted or Ned were even less appropriate. Alexander was too long and Sandy suggested tow hair and freckles. I had read in some book or other that the most favourable name for becoming famous was one consisting of a dactyl followed by a spondee, as at the end of a hexameter: like „Jeremy Taylor". Aleister Crowley fulfilled these conditions and Aleister is the Gaelic form of Alexander. To adopt it would satisfy my romantic ideals. The atrocious spelling A-L-E-I-S-T-E-R was suggested as the correct form by Cousin Gregor, who ought to have known better. In any case, A-L-A-I-S-D-A-I-R makes a very bad dactyl. For these reasons I saddled myself with my present nom-de-guerre — I can't say that I feel sure that I facilitated the process of becoming famous. I should doubtless have done so, whatever name I had chosen.

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

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

My sexual life was very intense. My relations with women were entirely satisfactory. They gave me the maximum of bodily enjoyment and at the same time symbolized my theological notions of sin. Love was a challenge to Christianity. It was a degradation and a damnation. Swinburne had taught me the doctrine of justification by sin. Every woman that I met enabled me to affirm magically that I had defied the tyranny of the Plymouth Brethren and the Evangelicals. At the same time women were the source of romantic inspiration; and their caresses emancipated me from the thraldom of the body. When I left them I found myself walking upon air, with my soul free to wing its way through endless empyreans and to express its godhead in untrammelled thought of transcendent sublimity, expressed in language which

combined the purest aspirations with the most majestic melodies. Poems like "the Philosopher's Progress" illustrate my unconscious, and poems like "De Profundis" my conscious reaction. But, morally and mentally, women were for me beneath contempt. They had no true moral ideals. They were bound up with their necessary preoccupation, with the function of reproduction. Their apparent aspirations were camouflage. Intellectually, of course, they did not exist. Even the few whose minds were not completely blank had them furnished with Wardour Street Chippendale. Their attainments were those of the ape and the parrot. These facts did not deter me. On the contrary, it was highly convenient that one's sexual relations should be with an animal with no consciousness beyond sex.

As to my men friends, I had never met anyone of sufficiently exalted ideals and refinement to awaken serious sympathy. Pollitt was a new species. My feeling for him was an intensely pure flame of admiration mingled with infinite pity for his spiritual disenchantment. It was infinite because it could not even imagine a goal and dwelt wholly amid eternal things.

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

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

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

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

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

In his time at Cambridge Pollitt had been very prominent as a female impersonator and dancer. He called himself Diane de Rougy — *après* Liane de Pougy. The grossness of people who do not understand art naturally misinterpreted this aesthetic gesture and connected it with a tendency to androgynity. I never saw the slightest symptoms of anything of the kind in him; though the subject sometimes came under discussion. But at that time it was

considered criminal to admire *Lady Windermere's Fan*. I have always take the attitude of Bishop Blougram and pay no attention to

> the infamy scrawled abroad
> About me on the church wall opposite.

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

But the conscience of the world is so guilty that it always assumes that people who investigate heresies must be heretics; just as if a doctor who studies leprosy must be a leper. Indeed, it is only recently that science has been allowed to study anything without reproach. Matter being evil, the less that we know about it the better — such was the Christian philosophy in the ages which it darkened. Morris Travers told me that his father, an eminent physician, had been ostracized, and had lost much of his practice, for joining the Anthropological society. Later still, Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter have been treated with the foulest injustice by ignorant and prejudiced people. My mother always believed that *Great Eastern*, the first steamship of any size to speak of, met with repeated disasters because God was jealous, as He had been of the tower of Babel. In 1917 my cousin, Lawrence Bishop, told me that he thought that "the Lord prepared a great iceberg" for the *Titanic* in annoyance at the claim of the shipbuilders that she was unsinkable. William Whiteley had several fires, which my mother took as the repartee of the Almighty to the merchant's assumption of the title "Universal Provider", which could be properly attributed only to God.

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

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

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

At this time I had not carried these arguments to their logical conclusion. *The Cloud upon the Sanctuary* told me of a secret community of saints in possession of every spiritual grace, of the keys to the treasurers of nature, and of moral emancipation such that there was no intolerance of unkindness. The members of this Church lived their secret life of sanctity in the world, radiating light and love upon all that came within their scope, yet they were free from spiritual pride. They enjoyed intimate communion with the immanent divine soul of nature. Inheritors of innocence and illumination, they were not self-seekers; and their one passion was to bring mankind into the sphere of their own sublimity, dealing with each individual as his circumstances required. To them the members of the Trinity were nearer and more real than anything else in the universe. But they were pure ideas of incorruptible integrity. The incarnation was a mystical or magical operation which

took place in every man. Each was himself the Son of God who had assumed a body of flesh and blood in order to perform the work of redemption. The in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost was a sanctification resulting from the completion of the great work when the self had been crucified to itself and raised again in incorruptible immortality.

I did not yet see that this conception reposed on metaphysical bases as untenable as those of orthodoxy. There was no attempt to explain the origin of evil and similar difficulties. But these things were mysteries which would be revealed to the saint as he advanced in the way of grace. Anyhow, I was certainly not the person to cavil. The sublimity of the idea enthralled me; it satisfied my craving for romance and poetry. I determined with my whole heart to make myself worthy to attract the notice of this mysterious brotherhood. I yearned passionately for illumination. I could imagine nothing more exquisite than to enter into communion with these holy men and to acquire the power of communicating with the angelic and divine intelligence of the universe. I longed for perfect purity of life, for mastery of the secret forces of nature, and for a career of devoted labour on behalf of "the Creation which groaneth and travaileth".

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

It may seem strange that, despite the yearning after sanctification, which is the keynote of these works, I never lost sight of what seems on the surface the incompatible idea of justification by sin. "Jezebel" and the other poems in that volume prove this point. It is as if my unconscious were aware that every act is a sacrament and that the most repulsive rituals might be in some ways the most effective. The only adequate way of overcoming evil was to utilize it fully as a means of grace. Religion was for me a passionate reality of the most positive kind. Virtue is etymologically manhood. Virility, creative conception and enthusiastic execution were the means of attainment. There could be no merit in abstention from vice. Vice indeed is *vitium*, a flaw or defect.

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

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

I did this sort of thing on purpose to affirm magically that nothing mattered except the work of the moment. It was "Take not thought for the morrow" carried out in its most literal sense. I made a point of putting God on His honour, so to speak, to supply anything I might need by demonstrating to him that I would not keep back the least imaginable fraction of my resources. I acquired this custom later on, when I had definitely discovered the direction of my destiny; but the moral basis of my attitude was already present. The first important indication of its incidence is given by the outcome of my friendship with Pollitt.

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

I was absorbed *in The Cloud upon the Sanctuary*, reading it again and again without being put off by the pharisaical, priggish and pithecanthropoid notes of its translator, Madame de Steiger. I appealed with the whole force of my will to the adepts of the Hidden Church to prepare me as postulant for their august company. As will be seen later, acts of will, performed by the

proper person, never fall to the ground, impossible as it is (at present) to understand by what means the energy is transmitted.

Although Pollitt had done so much for my education by introducing me to the actual atmosphere of current aesthetic ideas, to the work of Whistler, Rops and Beardsley in art, and that of the so-called decadents in literature, as well as to many remote and exquisite masters of the past whom I had ignored or misunderstood, my admiration and gratitude did not prevent me from becoming conscious of the deep-seated aversion of our souls. He had made no mistake in divining that my spiritual aspirations were hostile to his acquiescence in despair of the universe. So I felt in my subconscious self that I must choose between my devotion to him and to the Secret Assembly of the Saints. Though he was actual and adequate, I preferred to risk all on the hazard. Human friendship, ideal as it was in this case, was under the curse of the universal sorrow. I determined deliberately to give it up, notwithstanding that it was unique and adorable in its way; that there was no reasonable hope of replacing it. This was my act of faith, unalloyed with the dross of hope, and stamped with the imperial countenance of love, to determine that I would not continue our relations.

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

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

I told him frankly and firmly that I had given my life to religion and that he did not fit into the scheme. I see now how imbecile I was, how hideously wrong and weak it is to reject any part of one's personality. Yet these mistakes are not mistakes at the time: one has to pass through such periods; one must be ruthless in analysis and complete it, before one can proceed to synthesis. He understood that I was not to be turned from my purpose and we parted, never to meet again. I repented of my decision, my eyes having been enlight-

ened, on a little later, but the reconciliation was not written! My letter miscarried; and in the autumn, when he passed me in Bond Street, I happened not to see him; he thought I meant to cut him and our destinies drew apart.

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

18

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

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

Now, there was a bookseller in the town with whom I had few dealings, for he was the most nauseatingly hypocritical specimen of the pushing tradesman that I ever set eyes on. He was entirely irreligious and did a con-

siderable business in the kind of book which is loathsomely described as "curious". But he was out to get the clerical and academic custom and to this end adopted a dress and manner which would have been affected in the sweetest of young curates. Somehow or other, a copy of *Aceldama* got into his hands; he showed it to Kelly, who was so excited by the quotation from Swinburne that he found out who I was, and a meeting was arranged. His knowledge of both art and literature was encyclopaedic, and we became very intimate, projecting collaboration in an Arthurian play and a new magazine to take the place of *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*, which had died with Beardsley. Nothing much came of this at the time, but the meeting had in it the germs of important developments. The critical event of the year was my meeting with Oscar Eckenstein at Wastdale Head.

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

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

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

To illustrate one point. I had considered myself a very good glissader, and as compared with the other people whom I met on the mountain side,

even such experts as Norman Collie, I had little to learn. But Eckenstein showed me that I was not even a beginner. He made me start down assorted slopes from all sorts of positions, and to pick myself up into any other desired position; to stop, to increase my pace or to jump, at the word of command. Why "starting from all sorts of positions"? The idea was that one might conceivably fall on to a snow slope or have to jump to it from a great height, and it was therefore necessary to know how to deal with such situations[33].

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

He was rather short and sturdily built. He did not know the meaning of the word "fatigue". He could endure the utmost hardship without turning a hair. He was absolutely reliable, either as leader or second man, and this quality was based upon profound and accurate calculations. He knew his limitations to a hair's breadth. I never saw him attempt anything beyond his powers; and I never knew him in want of anything from lack of foresight.

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

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

[33] See *The Diary of a Drug Fiend*, pp. 159-60.

to burn our feet through our boots. We recognized that it was hopeless to proceed.

We decided to make for the farm and soon reached a belt of virgin jungle where the *chapparal* and fallen timber made it almost impenetrable. The trees were so thick that we could rarely see the sky. The only indication for progress was to keep on down hill. The slopes were amazingly complicated, so that at any moment we might have been facing east, south or west. The dust of the rotten timber almost choked and blinded us. We suffered tortures from thirst, our water supply being extremely limited. Night fell; it was impossible to see our hands in front of us. We accordingly lit a fire to keep off the jackals and other possibilities, which we heard howling round us. We naturally began to discuss the question of direction; and I said, "The moon will rise over there", and laid down my axe as a pointer. Eckenstein independently laid down his, after a rather prolonged mental calculation. When the moon rose we found that my axe was within five degrees and his within ten degrees of the correct direction. This was only one of many such tests; and I do not see in the least how I knew, especially as astronomy is one of the many subjects of which my knowledge is practically nil. In spite of innumerable nights spent under the stars, I can recognize few constellations except the Great Bear and Orion.

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

I have also an astonishing memory for the minutest details of any ground over which I have passed. Professor Norman Collie had this quality very highly developed, but he paid me the compliment of saying that I was much better than he was himself. This too, was in my very early days when he was teaching me many quite rudimentary points in the technique of rock climbing. Again, we have a question of subconscious physical memory. I am often quite unable to describe even the major landmarks of a climb which I have just done, but I recognize every pebble as I come to it if asked to retrace my steps. Efforts on my part to bring up a mountain into clear consciousness frequently create such a muddle in my mind that I almost wonder at myself.

I make such grotesque mistakes that I am not far from doubting whether I have been on the mountain at all: yet my limbs possess a consciousness of their own which is infallible. I am reminded of the Shetland ponies (see Wilkie Collin's *The Two Destinies*) which can find their way through the most bewildering bogs and mist. This faculty is not only retrospective — I can find my way infallibly over unknown country in any weather. The only thing that stops me is the interference of my conscious mind.

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

Eckenstein and I were both exceedingly expert at describing what lay behind any mountain at which we might be looking. In his case, the knowledge was deduced scientifically; in mine, it was what one must call sheer clairvoyance. The nearest I could get to understanding his methods was judging by the glow above the ridge of a mountain whether the other side was snow-covered, and estimating its steepness and the angle of its rocks by analogy with the corresponding faces of the mountains behind us, or similar formations elsewhere. I should hardly be necessary to point out the extraordinary practical value of these qualities in deciding one's route in unknown country.

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

I remember going out on Scafell with a man named Corry. He was the ideal athlete and had gone through a course of Sandow; but had little experience of climbing at that time. I took him up the North Climb of Mickledoor. There is one place where, while hunting for holds, one supports oneself by an arm stretched at full length into a crack. The arm is supported by the rock and the hand grasps a hold as satisfactory as a sword hilt. The inconceivable happened; Corry fell off and had to be replevined by the rope. I was amazed, but said nothing. We continued the climb and, reaching the top of the Broad

Stand, took off the rope. By way of exercise, I suggested climbing a short, precipitous pitch above a sloping slab. There was no possible danger, it was within the powers of a child of six; but Corry came off again. I was standing on the slab and caught him by the collar as he passed on his way to destruction.

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

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

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

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

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

We arranged to spend the summer in a tent on the Schönbühl glacier under the Dent Blanche, primarily with the idea of fitting me for the Himalayan expedition, and secondarily with that of climbing the east face of the Dent Blanche by a new route which he had previously attempted with Zurbriggen. They had been stopped by a formation which is exceedingly curious and rare in the Alps — slopes of very soft snow set in an unclimbable angle.

He thought that my capacity for swimming up places of this sort might enable us to bag the mountain.

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

I fell it one of my highest duties to record in these memoirs as much as possible relative to this man, who, with Allan Bennett, stands apart from and above all others with whom I have been really intimate. The greatness of his spirit was not inferior to that of such giants as Rodin; he has an artist no less than if he had actually produced any monument to his mind. Only his constant manhandling by spasmodic asthma prevented him from matching his genius by masterpieces. As it is, there is an immense amount in his life mysterious and extraordinary beyond anything I have ever known. For instance, during a number of years he was the object of repeated murderous attacks which he could only explain on the hypothesis that he was being mistaken for somebody else.

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

This story is briefly as follows. One night after being attacked in the streets of Soho, or the district between that section of Oxford street and the Euston Road, he determined, in case of a renewed assault, to walk home by a roundabout and unfamiliar route. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Caledonian Road he thought that he was being followed — it was not late at night and somewhat foggy. To make sure, he turned into a narrow passage on to which opened the gardens of a row of houses, in one, and only one, of

which lights were visible. The garden door of this house was open and he dodged in to see whether the men he suspected were following. Two figures appearing at the end of the passage, he quietly closed the door behind him with the intention of entering the house, explaining his position and asking to be allowed to leave by the front door. The door was opened by a young and beautiful woman in fashionable evening dress. She appeared of good social position and, on his explaining himself, asked him to sty to supper. He accepted. No servants appeared, but on reaching the dining-room — which was charmingly furnished and decorated with extremely good pictures, Monet, Sisley and the like, with sketches or etchings by Whistler, all small but admirable examples of those masters — he found a cold supper for two people was laid out. Eckenstein remained for several hours, in fact until daylight, when he left with the understanding that he would return that evening. He made no note of the address, the street being familiar to him and his memory for numbers entirely reliable. I think that he was somehow prevented from returning the same evening; I am not quite sure on this point. But if so, he was there twenty-four hours later. He was surprised to find the house in darkness and astounded when no further inspection he saw a notice "To Let". He knocked and rang in vain. Assuming that he must have mistaken the number, unthinkable as the supposition was, he explored the adjacent houses, but found nothing. Annoyed and intrigued, he called on the agent the next morning and visited the house. He recognized it as that of his hostess. Even the lesser discolorations of the wallpaper where the bookcase and pictures had been testified to the identity of the room. The agent assured him that the house had not been occupied for three months. Eckenstein pointed to various tokens of recent occupancy. The agent refused to admit the conclusion. They explored the back part of the premises and found the French windows through which Eckenstein had entered, and the garden gate, precisely as he had left them. On inquiry it appeared that the house was vacant owing to the proprietor (a bachelor of some sixty years old, who had lived there a long while with a man and wife to keep house for him) having been ordered to the south of France for the winter. He had led a very retired life, seeing no company; the house had been furnished in early Victorian style. Only the one room where Eckenstein had had supper was unfurnished. The agent explained this by saying that the old man had taken the effects of his study with him to France, for the sake of their familiarity.

The mystery intrigued Eckenstein immensely and he returned several times to the house. A month or so later he found the two servants had returned. The master was expected back in the spring. They denied all

knowledge of any such lady as described; and there the mystery rests, save that some considerable time later Eckenstein received a letter, unsigned, in evidently disguised handwriting. It contained a few brief phrases to the effect that the writer was sorry, but it could not be helped; that there was no hope for the future, but that memory would never fade. He connected this mysterious communication with his hostess, simply because he could not imagine any other possibility.

I can offer no explanation whatever, but I believe every word of the story, and what is most strange is that I possess an impenetrable conviction that something almost exactly the same must have happened to me. I am reminded of the one fascinating episode which redeems the once- famous but excessively stupid and sentimental novel *Called Back* from utterly abject dullness. There is also an admirable scene in one of Stevenson's best stories, "John Nicholson". A similar theme occurs in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, "The Sire de Malétroit's Door", and "A lodging for the Night". There are similar ideas in oriental and classical literature. The fascination of the central idea thus seems a positive obsession to certain minds.

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

In the course of writing this story down, the impression of personal reminiscence has become steadily stronger. I now recall clearly enough that I have actually experienced not one but many such adventures, that is, as far as the spiritual essence is concerned. I have repeatedly, sometimes by accident but more often on purpose, gone into the wrong room or the wrong house, with the deliberate intention of finding romance. More often than not, I have succeeded. As to the sequel, I have often enough failed to return; and here again sometimes the fore of circumstances has been responsible, sometimes disinclination; but, most frequently of all, through the operation of that imp of the perverse whom I blame elsewhere in this book for occasional defeats at chess. I have wished to go, I have made every preparation for going, I have perhaps reached the door, and then found myself powerless to enter. Stranger still, I have actually returned; and then, despite the strongest conscious efforts to "recapture the first fine careless rapture" of the previous visit, behaved in such a way as to make it impossible.

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

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

He attaches great significance to the failure of Eckenstein to keep the appointment. It seems to him as if the whole business were a sort of magical ordeal, that Eckenstein should have been awake to the miraculous character of the adventure and kept his appointment though hell itself yawned between him and the house. The main test is his realization that the incident is high Magick, that if he fail to grasp its importance, to understand that unless he return that night the way will shut for ever. He suggests that by failing to appreciate the opportunity at its full value he had somehow missed the supreme chance of his life, as if the "wrong house" were the gateway to another world, an inn, so to speak, on the outskirts of the City of God. In recent years I have been constantly alert and on the look-out for something of the kind. Whenever my plans are disarranged by a number of apparently trivial and accidental circumstances, I look eagerly for the possibility that the situation to which they lead may prove the opening scene in some gigantic drama. Numerous episodes in these memoirs illustrate this thesis. One might even say that the whole book is a demonstration of how the accumulation and consequence of large numbers of apparently disconnected facts have culminated in bringing "the time and the place, and the loved one all together".

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

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

waited accordingly for the absence of thunderstorms and then proceeded to tie up the watchmen.

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

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

Eckenstein share the idiosyncrasies of certain very great men in history. He could not endure kittens. He did not mind grown-up cats. The feeling was quite irrational and conferred mysterious powers! for he could detect the presence of a kitten by means of some sense peculiar to himself. We used to tease him about it in the manner of the young, who never understand that anything may be serious to another person which is not so to them. One Easter the hotel was overcrowded; and five of us, including Eckenstein and myself, were sleeping in the barn. One of Eckenstein's greatest friends was Mrs. Bryant, whose beautiful death between Chamonix and Montanvers in 1922 was the crown of a noble life. She had brought her niece, Miss Nichols, who to intrepidity on rocks added playfulness in less austere surroundings. I formally accuse her of putting a kitten under Eckenstein's pillow in the barn while we were in the smoking-room after dinner. If it had been a cobra Eckenstein could not have been more upset!

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

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

Eckenstein was a recognized authority on what is known as Kirkwood's schoolgirl problem, but we used to work all sorts of things, from problems connected with Mersenne's numbers and Fermat's binary theorem to the purely frivolous attempt to represent any given number by the use of the number four, four times — neither more nor less, relating them by any of the accepted symbols of mathematical operations. Thus:

$$18 = 4\ (4.4) + .4$$
$$38 = \underline{14} + \cdot\tfrac{4}{4} + 4$$
$$106 = \overline{|4} + 4.\tfrac{4}{4}$$
$$128 = 4^{4} \div 4 - \sqrt{4}$$

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

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

We were naturally always interested in any problems concerned with the working out of a difficult route, and here his probity on one occasion made him the victim of an unscrupulous child of Shaitan. The villain appeared in the guise of an old and valued friend, saying "Is it possible to reach Q from P (mentioning two places in London) without passing a public house?" Eckenstein accordingly took his walks in that direction and after endless trouble discovered a roundabout way which fulfilled the condition. Communicating the joyful news, his friend replied, "Good for you! Here's something else. Can you get to the Horseshoe, Tottenham Court Road, from here without passing a public house?" I do not know how many pairs of alpine boots Eckenstein wore out on the problem, before asking his friend, "Can it be done?" A telegram assured him that it could. More boots went the way of all leather and then he gave up. "It's perfectly easy," said the false friend, *don't* pass them — go in!"

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

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

I suppose that every form of navigation possesses its peculiar dangers. I remember Eckenstein telling me of an adventure he once had with Legros. One might be tempted to think that very little harm could come to a barge in a dock on the Thames, bar being cut down by a torpedo ram. But the facts are otherwise. It was the first time that either of them had been in charge of this species of craft, which they had to manoeuvre in order to inspect a wharf which required some slight repair. The gallant little wave-waltzer displaced a hundred and twenty tons and was called the *Betsy Anne*.

They boarded the barge without difficulty, but to get her going was another matter. The fellow-countrymen of Cook, drake and Nelson were not behindhand with wise advice couched in language of frankness and fancy. They learned that the way to make a barge go was to walk up and down the broad flat gunwale with a pole. She was certainly very hard to start; but it got easier as she gathered way. They entered into the spirit of the sport and began to run up and down with their poles, exciting each other to emulation with cheerful laughter. Pride filled their souls as they observed that their rapid mastery of the awkward craft was appreciated on shore, as the lusty cheering

testified. It encouraged them to mightier efforts and before long they must have been making well over two miles an hour. Then Eckenstein's quick ear asked him whether the shouting on shore was so wholly the expression of unstinted admiration as he had supposed. He paid greater attention and thought he detected yells of coarse ridicule mingled with violent objurgation. He thought he heard a word at the conclusion of a string of extremely emphatic epithets which might easily have been mistaken for "Fool!" At this point Legros stopped poling, said shortly and unmistakably "Hell!" and pointed to the wharf, which, as previously stated, stood in need of some trifling repairs. It was now not more than fifty yards away and seemed to them to be charging them with the determination of an angry elephant. They realized the danger and shouted for advice. The answer was, in essence, "Dive!" It was, of course, hopeless to attempt to check or even to deflect the *Betsy Anne*. They dived, and a moment later heard the rending crash of the collision, and were nearly brained by baulks of falling timber. "Well," said Eckenstein, a they drove home to change their muddy garments, "We've done a good morning's work, anyhow. That wharf is no longer in need of trifling repairs." Both it and the *Betsy Anne* kept the neighbourhood in matchwood for the next two years. Oh! for a modern Cowper to immortalize the maritime John Gilpin!

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

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

On another occasion he found himself at Lima during the battle; if you can call it a battle when everyone thought it the best bet to shoot anyone he saw as a mater of general principle. Paley, being a man of peace, took up a position on a remote wall with the idea of shooting anyone that approached in case of his proving unfriendly. However, the first person that arrived was obviously an Englishman. They recognized each other and proceeded to concert measures for escape.

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

that their friend had been hanged a few days before, and that anyone who knew him might expect a similar solution to his troubles!

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

The weather made it impossible to do any serious climbing; but I learnt a great deal about the work of a camp at high altitudes, from the management of transport to cooking; in fact, my chief claim to fame is, perhaps, my "glacier curry". It was very amusing to see these strong men, inured to every danger and hardship, dash out of the tent after one mouthful and wallow in the snow, snapping at it like mad dogs. The admitted, however, that it was very good as curry and I should endeavour to introduce it into London restaurants if there were only a glacier. Perhaps, some day, after a heavy snowfall —

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

As for me, I made no mistake. I felt that the moment of opportunity was come. I had sent out the S.O.S. call for a Master during that Easter at Wastdale Head; and here was a man who was either one himself or could put me in touch with one. It struck me as more than a coincidence that I should have been led to meet him partly through my ill-health and partly through my fatuous vanity. That night I resolved to renew my acquaintance with Baker in

the morning and tackle him seriously about the intricate question which lay close about my heart.

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

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

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

The passionate dedication to Swinburne is significant of my literary hero-worship. With this play were published (in 1899) a number of lyrics entitled "Mysteries, Lyrical and Dramatic". The shallow critic hastily assumed that the influence of Swinburne was paramount in my style, but on rereading

the volume I do not think that the accusation is particularly justifiable. There are plenty of other authors who might more reasonably be served with an affiliation summons. Indeed, criticism in England amounts to this: that if a new writer manifests any sense of rhythm, he is classed as an imitator of Swinburne; if any capacity for thought, of Browning.

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

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

I was little of him and George Moore. I have always been nauseated by pretentiousness; and the Celtic revival, so-called, had all the mincing, posturing qualities of the literary Plymouth Brother. They pretended to think it an unpardonable crime not to speak Irish, though they could not speak it themselves; and they worked in their mealymouthed way towards the galvanization of the political, ethnological and literary corpse of the Irish nation. Ireland has been badly treated, we all know; but her only salvation lay in forgetting her nonsense. What is the use of setting up a scarecrow provincialism, in re-establishing a barbarous and fantastic language which is as dead as Gothic and cannot boast sufficient literature to hold the attention of any but a few cloistered scholars — at the price of cutting Ireland off from the main stream of civilization? We see already that the country has slunk into the slough of anarchy. When the Kilkenny cats have finished shooting each other from behind hedges, the depopulated island will necessarily fall into the hands of practical colonists, who will be content to dwell peaceably together and communicate with the world in a living language.

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

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

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

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

NOTE ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

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

I hope it is not altogether the blindness of filial affection that inclines me to suggest that the essential difference depends upon the greater freedom

of the more famous university. Oxford makes a very definite effort to turn out a definite type of man and even his ingrained sense that he is not as other men operates finally as a limitation. At Cambridge the ambitions and aspirations of any given undergraduate are much less clearly cut and are of wider scope than those of his equivalent on the Isis. It seems to me no mere accident that Cambridge was able to tolerate Milton, Byron, Tennyson and myself without turning a hair, while Oxford inevitably excreted Shelly and Swinburne. *Per contra*, she suited Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde perfectly. Had they been at Cambridge, the nonsense would have been knocked out of them. They would have had to succeed or fail entirely on their own virtues; whereas, as things were, the Oxford atmosphere and the Oxford manner shielded them from the rude blasts of all-round criticism.

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

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

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

This particular contrast is manifest to both universities. Whenever the subject comes up, anecdote answers anecdote to the point. The psychology extends to the individual. Our conception of the ideal proctor is very different to theirs. I my second year one proctor effected some capture by watching his victim from the darkness of a doorway. The story want round and within a week dishonour met its due. The dirty dog was ducked in the Cam. Nor

were the avengers sent down. On the contrary, the proctor was obliged to burn his bands. Such conduct was practically unprecedented.

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

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

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

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

"I have that honour, sir."

"Dean of Blank, Oxford, I understand."

"That is so, sir."

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

"Thank you, sir."

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

"May I hope that you will be with us at breakfast tomorrow?"

"Thank you, sir."

"Good morning, Mr. Wilkinson."

"Good morning, sir."

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

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

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

I became aware of my feeling on this point quite suddenly. The impression is the more intense. One night there had been a regular rag. I forget what about, but we built a big bonfire in the middle of the market place and otherwise spread ourselves. Things began with no definite pulse of passion discernible, but as the evening advanced, we found ourselves somehow or other at odds with the townees. I think we must have resented their attempt to participate in the general gaiety. Sporadic free fights sprang up here and there, but nothing really serious. On the whole we gave and took in good temper. Just before twelve o'clock I turned to go home. Just beyond the tobacconist's – Bacon, celebrated by Calverley in his overrated ode — swirled a swarm of townees shouting and swearing in a way that struck me as ugly. It was no affair of mine and I did not want to be late. But even as I changed my course to avoid the mob I saw that their game was to reinforce half a dozen roughs who were surrounding a doorway and hustling one of the proctors. My immediate impulse was to gloat upon the evil that had befallen my natural enemy, for

until that moment my absurd shyness had prevented me from realizing my relations with the authorities. I had timidly accepted the conventional chaff, but now almost before that first thought was formulated my inmost instincts sprang into consciousness. I shouted to the few scattered gownsmen that were still in the square and hurled myself headlong to the rescue of my detested tyrant. He was pretty well under the weather, warding off feebly the brutal blows that the cowardly cads rained on his face. His cap was gone and his gown was in shreds. His bulldogs had been handled still more roughly. I suppose the townees saw them as traitors to the cause, hirelings of the aristocracy. They had been knocked clean down and were being battered by the boots of the mob. We must have been about a dozen, not more, and we had to fight off forty. It was the first time that I had ever had to face the animal anger, unreasoned and uncontrolled, of a mass of men whose individual intelligences, such as they were, had been for the moment completely swamped by the savage instinct to stamp on anything that seemed to them sensitive.

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

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

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

I was half-past twelve before I got home. I took a tub and found I was black and blue. Of course my breach of the rule about midnight was duly reported. I was halled and explained why I had been late. The proctor whom

we had conveyed to Christ's had not taken our names and I have no reason to think that he knew me. But my tutor asked no questions. He took my story for true; in fact, he treated me simply as another gentleman. That could not have happened at Oxford.

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

On my return from Switzerland in 1898, I had nowhere in particular to go. There was no reason why I should settle down in any special place. I simply took a room in the Cecil, at that remote period a first-class hostelry, and busied myself with writing on the one hand and following up the magical clues on the other. *Jephthah*, and most of the other poems which appear in that volume, were written about this period. It is a kind of backwater in my life. I seem to have been marking time. For this reason, no doubt, I was the more ready to be swept away by the first definite current. It was not long before it caught me.

I had a number of conversations with Julian Baker, who kept his promise to introduce me to "a man who was a much greater Magician than he was himself". This was a Welshman, named George Cecil Jones. He possessed a fiery but unstable temper, was the son of a suicide, and bore a striking resemblance to many conventional representations of Jesus Christ. His spirit was both ardent and subtle. He was very widely read in Magick; and, being by profession an analytical chemist, was able to investigate the subject in a scientific spirit. As soon as I found that he really understood the matter I went

down to Basingstoke, where he lived, and more or less sat in his pocket. It was not long before I found out exactly where my destiny lay. The majority of old magical rituals are either purposely unintelligible or actually puerile nonsense[34]. Those which are straightforward and workable are, as a rule, better adapted to the ambitions of love-sick agricultural labourers than those of educated people with a serious purpose. But there is one startling exception to this rule. It is *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage.*

This book is written in an exalted style. It is perfectly coherent; it does not demand fantastic minutiae of ritual or even the calculations customary. There is nothing to insult the intelligence. On the contrary, the operation proposed is of sublime simplicity. The method is in entire accordance with this. There are, it is true, certain prescriptions to be observed, but these really amount to little more than injunctions to observe decency in the performance of so august an operation. One must have a house where proper precautions against disturbance can be taken; this being arranged, there is really nothing to do but to aspire with increasing fervour and concentration, for six months, towards the obtaining of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Once He has appeared, it is then necessary, first, to call forth the Four Great Princes of the Evil of the World; next, their eight sub-princes; and, lastly, the three hundred and sixteen servitors of these. A number of talismans, previously prepared, are thus charged with the power of these spirits. By applying the proper talismans, you can get practically anything you want.

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

[34] Some are doubtless survivals of various forms of nature religion; but the majority are adaptations of Catholic or Jewish traditions to the ambitions, cupidities, envies, jealousies and animal instincts of the most ignorant and primitive type of peasant.

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

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

In these days I took my Magick very much *au pied de la lettre*. I knew, of course, that Magick had fallen into desuetude chiefly because people would follow the prescribed course of action and get no result. An exquisitely amusing incident bearing on this point is as follows: Gerald Kelly, Ivor Back and one or two other ardent spirits, inspired by my success, decided to do Magick themselves. They hired and furnished a room at Cambridge for the purpose and proceeded to evoke various spirits. Nothing happened. At last one of the greatly daring extended his little finger outside the circle. He was not "slain or paralysed as if blasted by the lightning flash" and thence concluded that Magick was all rubbish. I offer this example to logic to the Museum of Human Imbecility, in the principal city of the Astral Plane.

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

But I suppose that their failure and my success was mostly a matter of personal genius, just as Burns with hardly any literary apparatus could write poetry, and Tennyson, with any amount, could not.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dr. Woodman had died and Mathers forced Dr. Westcott to retire from active leadership of the Order. Mathers, however, was not trusted. He, therefore, announced to the most advanced adepts that he had himself made the Magical Link with the Secret Chiefs; and, at an interview with three of them in the Bois de Boulogne, had been confirmed in the supreme and sole authority as the Visible Head of the Order. The adepts entrusted with this information were required to sign a pledge of personal obedience to Mathers as a condition of advancement in the Order. Nevertheless, dissatisfaction continued. The advancement did not arrive. They suspected that Mathers had no more knowledge to give; and he retorted that, however that might be, he wasn't going to waste it on such hopeless duffers. Both positions have much to recommend them to discriminating sympathy.

These petty squabbles apart, a big thing had happened. Mathers had discovered the manuscript of *Abra-Melin* in the library of the Arsenal in Paris and begun to translate it[35]. He found himself harassed and opposed on all sides. In those days there was practically no public way of getting about Paris at all. Mathers lived at Auteuil, a long way from the Arsenal, and met with so many bicycle accidents that he was driven to go on foot. (There is always occult opposition to the publication of important documents. It took me over three years to get my *The Goetia* through the press, and over two years in the

[35] This debacle had not yet taken place at the time of my first initiation, November 18th, 1898.

case of *777*. This is one of the facts whose cumulative effect makes it impossible to doubt the existence of spiritual forces.) Other misfortunes of every kind overwhelmed Mathers. He was an expert Magician and had become accustomed to use the Greater Key of Solomon with excellent effect. He did not realize that *Abra-Melin* was an altogether bigger proposition. It was like a man, accustomed to handle gunpowder, suddenly supplied with dynamite without being aware of the difference. He worried through and got *Abra-Melin* published; but he perished in the process. He became the prey of the malignant forces of the book, lost his integrity and was cast out of the Order of which he had been the visible head.

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

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

Being thus able to appreciate the inmost intention of my initiation, I was able to stand the shock of the events immediately subsequent. I was introduced to an abject assemblage of nonentities; the members of the Order were as vulgar and commonplace as any other set of average people. Jones and Baker themselves were the only members with any semblance of scientific education, until, a few months later, I met Allan Bennett, a mind pure, piercing and profound beyond any other in my experience. There was one literary

light, W. B. Yeats, a lank dishevelled demonologist who might have taken more pains with his personal appearance without incurring the reproach of dandyism; and one charming and intelligent woman, Mrs. Emery, for whom I always felt an affectionate respect tempered by a feeling of compassion that her abilities were so inferior to her aspirations. The rest of the Order possessed no individuality; they were utterly undistinguished either for energy or capacity. There is not one of them today who has made any mark in the world.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I should have explained that, on deciding to join the Order, I had taken a flat at 67 and 69 Chancery Lane[36]. I had already determined to perform the Operation of *Abra-Melin*, but Jones had advised me to go through my initiation first. However, I began to busy myself with the preparations. *Abra-Melin* warns us that our families will object strenuously to our undertaking the Operation. I resolved, therefore, to cut myself off absolutely from mine. So, as I had to live in London, I took the flat under the name of Count Vladimir Svareff. As Jones remarked later, a wiser man would have called himself Smith. But I was still obsessed with romanticism, while my summer in St. Petersburg had made me in love with Russia. There was another motive behind this — a legitimate one. I wanted to increase my knowledge of mankind. I knew how people treated a young man from Cambridge. I had thoroughly appreciated the servility of tradesmen, though I was too generous and too ignorant to realize the extent of their dishonesty and rapacity. Now I wanted to see how people would behave to a Russian nobleman. I must say here that I

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

have repeatedly used this method of disguise — it has been amazingly useful in multiplying my points of view about humanity. Even the most broad-minded people are necessarily narrow in this one respect. They may know how all sorts of people treat them, but they cannot know, except at second hand, how those same people treat others.

To return to Allan Bennett. I found him staying with V. H. Frater Aequo Animo[37] in a tiny tenement in Southwark or Lambeth — I forget which. It was a mean, grim horror. Æ. A., whose name was Charles Rosher, was a widely travelled Jack-of-all-trades. He had invented a patent water-closet and been court painter to the Sultan of Morocco. He wrote some of the worst poetry I have ever read. He was a jolly-all-round sportsman with an excellent heart and the cheery courage which comes from knocking about the world, and being knocked about by it. If his talents had been less varied, he might have made a success of almost anything.

[37] I ultimately conjectured: Equi Animo: "with the soul of a horse".

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

No doubt, this constant suffering affected his attitude to life. He revolted against being an animal; he regarded the pleasures of living (and above all, those of physical love) as diabolical illusions devised by the enemy of mankind in order to trick souls into accepting the curse of existence. I cannot forbear quoting one most remarkable incident. When he was about sixteen, the conversation in the laboratory where he was working turned upon childbirth. What he heard disgusted him. He became furiously angry and said that children were brought to earth by angels. The other students laughed at him and tried in vain to convince him. He maintained their theory to be a bestial blasphemy. The next day one of the boys turned up with an illustrated manual of obstetrics. He could no longer doubt the facts. But his reaction was this: "Did the Omnipotent God whom he had been taught to worship devise so revolting and degrading a method of perpetuating the species? Then this God must be a devil, delighting in loathsomeness." To him the existence of God was disproved from that moment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During this time, magical phenomena were of constant occurrence. I had two temples in my flat; one white, the walls being lined with six huge mirrors, each six feet by eight; the other black[38], a mere cupboard, in which stood an altar supported by the figure of a Negro standing on his hands. The presiding genius of this place was a human skeleton, which I fed from time to time with blood, small birds and the like. The idea was to give it life, but I never got further than causing the bones to become covered with a viscous slime. In *The Equinox*, vol. I, no. 1 is a story, "At the Fork of the Roads", which is in every detail a true account of one episode of this period. Will Bute is W. B, Yeats[39], Hypatia Gay is Althoea Gyles, the publisher is Leonard Smithers.

The demons connected with *Abra-Melin* do not wait to be evoked; they come unsought. One night Jones and I went out to dinner. I noticed on leaving the white temple that the latch of its Yale lock had not caught. Accordingly, I pulled the door to and tested it. As we went out, we noticed semi-solid shadows on the stairs; the whole atmosphere was vibrating with the

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

[39] The identification is conjectural, depending solely on the admissions of Miss Gyles.

forces which we had been using. (We were trying to condense them into sensible images.) When we came back, nothing had been disturbed in the flat; but the temple door was wide open, the furniture disarranged and some of the symbols flung about in the room. We restored order and then observed that semi-materialized beings were marching around the main room in almost unending procession.

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

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

The house is a long low building. I set apart the south-western half for my work. The largest room has a bow window and here I made my door and constructed the terrace and lodge. Inside the room I set up my oratory proper. This was a wooden structure, lined in part with the big mirrors which I brought from London.

On first arriving at Boleskine, I innocently frightened some excellent people by my habit of taking long walks over the moors. One morning I found a large stone jar at my front door. It was not an infernal machine; it was illicit whisky — a mute, yet eloquent appeal, not to give away illicit stills that I might happen to stumble across in my rambles. I needed no bribe. I am a free trader in every sense of the word. I have no sympathy with any regulations which interfere with the natural activities of human beings. I believe that they aggravate whatever trouble they are intended to prevent; and they create the greatest plague of humanity, officialdom, and encourage underhand conduct on both sides, furtiveness and espionage. Any law which tends to

destroy manly qualities is a bad law, however necessary it may seem on the surface. The tendency of most modern legislation is to bind Gulliver with packthread. I have never broken the law myself, because the things I happen to want are so utterly different from those desired by men in general, that no occasion has ever risen.

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

Salmon fishing on Loch Ness should be remembered by people who are praying for "those in peril on the deep". It is a dull year when nobody is drowned. The lock is large enough to get up a regular sea; and the hills are so arranged that the wind can come down in all sorts of unsuspected ways. The most violent storms often arise without five minutes' warning. In addition, there is one section of the loch (north-east of Boleskine, on the same side) where the shore for some two miles is a rocky precipice just too high above the water to be climbable, even if one could get a footing.

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

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

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

I took Lady Etheldreda to Scotland with me. I have had many dogs in my time; but she was *sui generis*. I had trained her to follow me on the moun-

tains and she was not only an admirable rock climber but an uncannily prophetic tracker. For instance, I would leave her at the foot of a precipice beyond her powers and, after a climb, descend another precipice to another valley, often in mists so thick that I could not see ten years in any direction. But I would invariably find her at the foot of the rocks after making a detour of perhaps ten miles across unknown country.

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

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

On off days at Wastdale Head, it was one of our amusements to throw the boomerang. Eckenstein had long been interested in it and constructed numerous new patterns, each with its own peculiar flight. As luck would have it, Walker of Trinity came to the dale. He had earned a fellowship by an essay on the mathematics of the boomerang. The theoretical man and the practical put their heads together; and we constructed some extraordinary weapons. One of them could be thrown half a mile, even by me, who cannot throw a cricket ball fifty yards. Another, instead of returning to the thrower, went straight from the hand and undulated up and down like a switchback,

seven or eight times, before coming to the ground. A third shot out straight, skimming the ground for a hundred yards or so, stopped as suddenly as if it had hit a wall, rose, spinning in the air to the height of some fifty feet, whence it settled down in a slowly widening spiral. Obviously, these researches bore on the problem of flying. Eckenstein and I, in fact, proposed to work at it. The idea was that we should cut an alley through the woods on that part of my property which bordered Loch Ness. We were to construct a chute and start down in on a bicycle fitted with movable wings. There was to be a steam launch on the loch to pick up us at the end of the flight. We were, in fact, proposing to do what has now, in 1922, proved so successful. But the scheme never went further than the construction of the boathouse for the launch. My wanderings are to blame.

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

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

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

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

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

Now the furnaces of the British Aluminium company cost a great deal to light. It was, therefore, impossible to extinguish them every Saturday evening. The people of the neighbourhood learnt this fact with unfeigned horror. Such wickedness was inconceivable! But besides that, it was sheer madness. Did not these people in Glasgow understand the God did not permit such things to happen with impunity? So on the first Saturday night the people betook themselves to points of vantage on the surrounding hills in order to see the works destroyed by the divine wrath. No explanation has ever been offered why it did not come off!

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

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

One day I came back from shooting rabbits on the hill and found a Catholic priest in my study. He had come to tell me that my lodgekeeper, a total abstainer for twenty years, had been raving drunk for three days and had tried to kill his wife and children.

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

Besides these comparatively explicable effects on human minds, there were numberless physical phenomena for which it is hard to account. While I was preparing the talismans, squares of vellum inscribed in Indian ink, a task which I undertook in the sunniest room in the house, I had to use artificial light even on the brightest days. It was a darkness which might almost be felt. The lodge and terrace, moreover, soon became peopled with shadowy shapes, sufficiently substantial, as a rule, to be almost opaque. I say shapes; and yet the truth is that they were no shapes properly speaking. The phenomenon is hard to describe. It was as if the faculty of vision suffered some interference; as if the objects of vision were not properly objects at all. It was as if they belonged to an order of matter which affected the sight without informing it.

By the exercise of dour determination, I succeeded in getting everything ready in good time to begin the work proper at Easter. It is unfortunate that

in these days I had no idea of the value of a Magical Record from the historical standpoint. I find few dates, nor have I troubled to set down even such startling occurrences as are related above. I was dead set on attainment. Anything which appeared to me out of the direct road to the goal was merely a nuisance, a hindrance and a distraction. Apart from my memory, therefore, the chief sources of information about my life at this period are poems, rituals and records of visions.

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

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

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

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

I quote:

The Oath of the Beginning.

I, Perdurabo, Frater Ordinis Roase Rubeae et Aureae Crucis, a Lord of the Paths in the Portal of the Vault of the Adepts, a 5○ = 6□, of the Order of the Golden Dawn; and an humble servant of the Christ of God; do this day spiritually bind myself anew:

By the Sword of Vengeance:

By the Powers of the elements:

By the Cross of Suffering:

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

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

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

The obligation of the Operation.

I, Perdurabo, in the Presence of the Lord of the Universe, and of all Powers Divine and Angelic, do spiritually bind myself, even as I am no physically bound unto the Cross of Suffering.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) To conquer the temptations.

(8) To banish the illusions.

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

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

Furthermore, I most solemnly promise and swear: to acquire this Holy Science in the manner prescribed in the Book of Abra-Melin, without omitting the least imaginable thing of its contents; not to gloss or comment in any way on that which may be or may not be, not to use this Sacred Science to offend the Great God, not to work ill unto my neighbour: to communicate it to no living person, unless by long practice and conversation I shall know him thoroughly, well examining whether such an one really intendeth to work for the Good or for the Evil. I will punctually observe, in granting it, the same fashion which was used by Abra-Melin to Abraham. Otherwise, let him who receiveth it draw no fruit therefrom. I will keep myself as from a Scorpion from selling this Science. Let this Science remain in me and in my generation as long as it shall please the Most High.

As all these points I generally and severally swear to observe under the awful penalty of the displeasure of God, and of Him to whose Knowledge and Conversation I do most ardently aspire.

So help me the Lord of the Universe, and my own Higher Soul![40]

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

[40] Some of the above phrases are prescribed by Abra-Melin itself; others are adapted from my 5○ = 6□ documents.

In bed, I invoked the Fire angels and spirits on the tablet, with names, etc., and the 6th Key. I then (as Harpocrates) entered my crystal. An angel, meeting me, told me, among other things, that they (of the tablets) were *at war with the angels of the 30 Aethyrs, to prevent the squaring of the circle*. I went with him unto the abodes of fire, but must have fallen asleep, or nearly so. Anyhow, I regained consciousness in a very singular state, half consciousness being there, and half here. I recovered and banished the Spirits, but was burning all over, and tossed restlessly about — very sleepy, but consumed of Fire! Only repeated careful assumption of Harpocrates' god-form enabled me to regain my normal state. I had a long dream of a woman eloping, whom I helped, and after, of a man stealing my Rose Cross jewel from a dressing-table in an hotel. I caught him and found him a man weak beyond the natural (I could bend or flatten him at will[41]), and then the dream seemed to lose coherence ... I carried him about and found a hairbrush to beat him, etc. etc. Query: Was I totally obsessed?

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

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

I went with a very personal guide[42]: and beheld (after some lesser things) our Master as he sat by the Well with the Woman of Samaria. Now the five husbands were five great religions which had defiled the purity of the Virgin of the World: and "he whom thou now hast" was materialism (or modern thought).

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

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

[42] This horrible phrase was not my own: I must not be judged by it.

First the Abyss of the Water: on which I, even I, brooded amid other dusky flames as Shin upon Maim, held by my Genius. And I beheld the victory of Râ upon Apophis and the First of the Golden Dawns! Yea: and monsters, faces half-formed, arose: but they subsisted not.

And the firmament was.

Again the Chaos and the Death!

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

So I returned; having difficulty to find the earth. But I called on S.R.M.D. and V.N.R., who were glad to see me; and returned into the body: to waste the night in gibing at a foolish medico.

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

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

> Now, with regard to the Second Order, it would be with the *very greatest regret* both from my personal regard for you, as well as from the Occult standpoint, that I should receive your Resignation as my Representative in the Second Order in London; but I cannot let you form a combination to make a schism therein with the idea of working secretly or avowedly under Sapere Aude under the mistaken impression that he received an Epitome of the School of the Second Order work from G. H. Soror, Sapiens Dominabitur Astros. For this forces me to tell you plainly (and, understand me well, I can prove to the hilt every word which I here say and more, and were I confronted with S. A., I should say the same) though for the sake of the Order, and for the circumstance that it would mean so deadly a blow to S. A.'s reputation, I entreat you to keep this secret from the "Order," for the present, at least, though you are at perfect liberty to show *him* this if you think fit, *after mature consideration.*
>
> He has NEVER been at *any time* either in personal or written communication with the Secret Chiefs of the order, he having *either himself forged* or *procured to be forged* the professed correspondence between him and them, and my tongue having been tied all these years by a Previous Oath of Secrecy to him, demanded by him, from me, before showing me what he had either done or caused to be done or both. You must comprehend from what little I say here the *extreme gravity* of such a matter, and again I ask you, both for his sake, and that of the Order, not to force me to go further into the subject.

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

My own attitude was unhampered by any ethical considerations. I had seen a good deal of Mathers personally. He was unquestionably a Magician of extraordinary attainment. He was a scholar and a gentleman. He had that habit of authority which inspires confidence because it never doubts itself. A man who makes such claims as he did cannot be judged by conventional codes and canons. Ordinary morality is only for ordinary people. For example, assume a Prime Minister who has private information that somebody has discovered, and is cultivating, a new germ by means of which he intends to destroy the nation. To pass a "Short Act" would be to give the alarm and precipitate the disaster. It would be his duty to override the law and put his foot upon the mischief. Then again, the whole of Mathers' conduct might have been in the nature of a test. It might have been his way of asking the adepts whether they had the power of concentrating on the spiritual situation, of giving up for ever all their prejudices.

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

The result of this offer was recorded as follows:

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

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

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

A. Are you convinced of the truth of the doctrines and knowledge received in the grade of 5○ = 6□? Yes or No?

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

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

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

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

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

II. The practice of masks is to be introduced. Each member will know only the member who introduced him. Severe tests of the candidate's moral excellence, courage, earnestness, humility, refusal to do wrong, to be inserted in the Portal or 5○ = 6□ ritual.

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

IV. Vault to be reconsecrated.

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

April 12th, 1900.

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

In Saecula Saeculorum. Amen!

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

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

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

oblivion. "Nothing in the above resolutions shall effect our connection with the Rosicrucian order." The poor darlings meant affect.

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

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

PART TWO

THE MYSTICAL ADVENTURE

23

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

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

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

Till this time I had never been in any reputedly hot country. I was appalled to find New York intolerable. I filled a cold bath, and got in and out of it at intervals till eleven at night, when I crawled, panting, through the roasting streets and consumed ice-water, iced watermelon, ice-cream and iced coffee. "Good God," I said to myself, "and this is merely New York! What must Mexico be like!" I supposed that I was experiencing normal conditions, whereas in point of fact I had landed at the climax of a heat wave which killed about a hundred people a day while it lasted. I should have discovered the truth if I had looked at a newspaper; but I did not read them. I had already learnt that even the finest mind is bound to perish if it suffers the infection of journalism. It is not merely that one defiles the mind by inflicting upon it slipshod and inaccurate English, shallow, commonplace, vulgar, hasty and

prejudiced thought, and deliberate dissipation. Apart from these positive pollutions, there is the negative effect. To read a newspaper is to refrain from reading something worth while. The natural laziness of the mind tempts one to eschew authors who demand a continuous effort of intelligence. The first discipline of education must therefore be to refuse resolutely to feed the mind with canned chatter.

People tell me that they must read the papers so as to know what is going on. In the first place, they could hardly find a worse guide. Most of what is printed turns out to be false, sooner or later. Even when there is no deliberate deception, the account must, from the nature of the case, be presented without adequate reflection and must seem to possess an importance which time shows to be absurdly exaggerated; or vice versa. No event can be fairly judged without background and perspective.

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

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

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

I found myself spiritually at home with Mexicans. The despise industry and commerce. They had Diaz to do their political thinking for them and

damned well he did it. Their hearts are set on bull fighting, cock fighting, gambling and lechery. Their spirit is brave and buoyant; it had not been poisoned by hypocrisy and the struggle for life. I hired part of a house overlooking the Alameda, a magnificent park intended for pleasure and protected from the police. I engaged a young Indian girl to look after me and settled down to steady work at Magick. I had an introduction to an old man named Don Jesus Medina, a descendant of the great duke of Armada fame, and one of the highest chiefs of Scottish rite free-masonry. My Cabbalistic knowledge being already profound by current standards, he thought me worthy of the highest initiation in his power to confer; special powers were obtained in view of my limited sojourn, and I was pushed rapidly through and admitted to the thirty-third and last degree before I left the country.

I had also a certain amount of latitude granted by Mathers to initiate suitable people *in partibus*. I, therefore, established an entirely new Order of my own, called L.I.L.: the "Lamp of the Invisible Light". Don Jesus became its first High Priest. In the Order L.I.L., the letters L.P.D. are the monograms of the mysteries. An explanation of these letter is given by Dumas in the prologue of his *Memoirs of a Physician*, and Eliphas Lévi discusses them at some length. I, however, remembered them directly from my incarnation as Cagliostro. It would be improper to communicate their significance to the profane, but I may say that the political interpretation given by Dumas is superficial, and the ethical suggestions of Lévi puerile and perverse; or, more correctly, intentionally misleading. They conceal a number of magical formulae of minor importance by major practical value, and the curious should conduct such research as they feel impelled to make in the light of the Cabbala. Their numerical values, Yetziratic attributions, and the arcana of the Atus of Tahuti, supply an adequate clue to such intelligences as are enlightened by sympathy and sincerity.

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

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

I devoted practically my whole time to this and other magical work. I devised a Ritual of Self-Initiation (see *The Equinox*, vol. I, no. III, p.269), the

essential feature of which is the working up of spiritual enthusiasm by means of a magical dance. This dance contained the secret gestures of my grade, combined with the corresponding words. I used to set my will against the tendency to giddiness and thus postpone as long as possible the final physical intoxication. In this way I lost consciousness at a moment when I was wholly absorbed in aspiration. Thus, instead of falling into dull darkness, I emerged into a lucid state, in which I was purged of personality and all sensory or intellectual impressions. I became the vehicle of the divine forces invoked and so experienced Godhead. My results were satisfactory so far as they went; but they did not aid my personal progress very much, since I had not formulated an intellectual link between the divine and human consciousness.

I worked also at acquiring the power of invisibility. (See *The Equinox*, vol. I, no. III, p. 272 for the ritual.) I reached a point when my physical reflection in a mirror became faint and flickering. It gave very much the effect of the interrupted images of the cinematograph in its early days. But the real secret of invisibility is not concerned with the laws of optics at all; the trick is to prevent people noticing you when they would normally do so. In this I was quite successful. For example, I was able to take a walk in the street in a golden crown and a scarlet robe without attracting attention.

Most interesting of all, perhaps, is a magical practice which I devised, ostensibly to deal with the dilemma propounded by the Sphinx: "The postulant to Magic must be morally perfect." It may be that I felt instinctively that my pious predecessors were wrong in demanding the suppression of manhood and imposing arbitrary codes of conduct. (I know now, of course, that their instructions have been misunderstood; every element in one's molecule must be developed to the utmost and applied to the service of one's true will.) I suppose I have to thank Stevenson for the idea, which was this. As a member of the Second Order, I wore a certain jewelled ornament of gold upon my heart. I arranged that when I had it on, I was to permit no thought, word or action, save such as pertained directly to my magical aspirations. When I took it off I was, on the contrary, to permit no such things; I was to be utterly uninitiate. It was like Jekyll and Hyde, but with the two personalities balanced and complete in themselves. I found this practice of very great service. It was in fact essentially a beginning of systematic control of thought. The method is now incorporated in the instructions of the A∴A∴ (See *Liber Jugorum*.)

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

Yet my principal achievement had its roots in Europe. At one of Mathers' semi-public ceremonies, I had met a member of the Order, an American prima donna. She took me by storm and we became engaged. The marriage could not take place immediately, as she had to get rid of some husband that she had left lying about in Texas. But I heard her sing Venus in *Tannhäuser* at Covent Garden; and she courteously insisted on my sampling the goods with which she proposed to endow me. The romance of an intrigue with so famous an artist excited my imagination. One afternoon, in Mexico, I picked up a woman who attracted me by the insatiable intensity of passion that blazed from her evil inscrutable eyes and tortured her worn face into a whirlpool of seductive sin. I passes some hours with her in her slum; and, walking home, found myself still so unappeased — *lassatus, sed non satiatus* — that my fever developed a delirium whose images assumed the form of Wagner's opera. I went home and sat down at once to write my own poetical and magical version of the story. I neither slept nor ate till it was finished — sixty-seven hours later. I had not been aware of the flight of time. I could not understand why it was afternoon; I thought that I had merely written all night. This play marks the climax of the first period of my poetry.

During the summer I wanted to travel in the interior. I went down to Iguala, bought an orange pony and rode slowly back to the city, taking things as they came. In all my travels I have hardly ever "seen the sights". Nothing is so disappointing. My plan is simply to live in any new city the ordinary life of the people. I wander about and presently come unexpectedly upon one of the wonders of the world. In this way one gets the thrill which those who have sold their souls to Baedeker miss. Imagine the delight of discovering the Coliseum or the Taj Mahal for oneself, at a moment, perhaps, when one's mind was preoccupied with commonplace ideas! I may have missed a few masterpieces, but not many; and people who go to see them on purpose miss them all altogether.

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

In fact, they are making it continually in their hearts and only wait opportunity to suit the word and action to the thought. Nor does opportunity

lag. There are no practical difficulties. Indoors and out nature and art combine to invite Cupid to pay every kind of visit, passionate, permanent, transitory, trivial. The caprice of the moment is the sole arbiter of the event. The idea of worry is unknown. "Take no thought for the morrow" is the first principle of human relations, especially in regard to all such matters. Love is the business of life, but it is all profit and no loss. There is no false shame, no contamination by ideas of commerce and material matters in general. There is no humbug about purity, uplift, idealism, or any such nonsense. I cannot hope to express the exquisite pleasure of freedom. One's spontaneity was not destroyed by anticipations of all sorts of difficulty in finding a friend of any desired type, obstacles in the way of consummating the impulse, and unpleasantness in the aftermath. The problem of sex, which has reduced Anglo-Saxon nations to hysteria and insanity, has been solved in Mexico by the co-operation of climate and cordiality. Even Catholicism has lost most of its malignancy in Mexico. Clergy and laity unite, spiritually and somatically, with gay ardour. The Virgin is here actually the *fille-mère* which the gospels really represent, for all our blustering denial of the obvious facts. Of course, the priest likes a little gratification for his complaisance, but that is a very human trait, and as he is neither greedy, malicious, nor hypocritical, the charity which he enjoys is given freely in the friendliest spirit.

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

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

My second night was otherwise amusing. I struck a pioneer camp, where a wooden hut had been thrown together. Two Chinamen were running an eating house. I sat down to dinner with two of the engineers. They spotted the new chum and began to scare me with tales of scorpions and fever. Before serving dinner, one of the Chinese came in with a saucepan of boiling water and went round the room tipping it into the cavities formed by the crossing

of the timbers of the hut. As often as not, a scalded scorpion fell out. I went to bet that night with my mind full of a particularly unpleasant trick of my reptilian brothers. They have a habit of dropping from the roof on to one's bed. This is quite without malice, but one stirs in one's sleep at the touch. The are alarmed and strike. This didn't happen; but in the morning I found my legs so swollen from mosquito bites that I could not get my boots one. The result was my first acquaintance with malaria, which attacked me very severely shortly after I got back to the city. My ride was full of very varied adventure. The incident that stands out is this:

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

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

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

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

The result was surprising. Business went on pretty well as in the past, with this remarkable difference: the motive for cheating and hording and gambling was gone. One could, of course, amass a fortune on the balance sheet of the town council; but it would be hard to cash in. So nobody troubled to outwit his neighbour or plot his ruin. They contented themselves with aiming at comfort and ease. Old enemies became fast friends; the usurers turned their hands to productive purposes; the loafers and spongers and gamblers realized that they must work or starve. The whole town prospered; poverty disappeared; financial anxiety ceased to exist; the moral tone of the community became almost angelic. Everyone had plenty to do, plenty to eat, plenty of leisure and plenty of pleasure. Everyone was happy. Of course it was too good to last. Communications were restored and a month later society had relapsed into a dog-fight for dollars.

24

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

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

I came to frequent the American colony and club. I remember being introduced to a new but already popular and respected member, "Meet Mr. Tewkesbury," and, a loud whisper, "*Thorne*, you know, who got away from Chi with a quarter of a million plunks." At this club I met some really charming ranchers, who invited me to stay with them and convalesce. Their place was near Guanajato, a great centre for silver mines. Guanajato possessed an unique curiosity: some eccentric millionaire had built a theatre, sparing no expense to make it the most gorgeous building of its kind in the world. The stalls, for instance, were upholstered in real velvet, embroidered with real gold thread. For some reason, I think because the President had declined to open it, the owner felt himself insulted and kept it shut up. It was never opened at all except as a show place for visitors like myself, and finally was somehow burnt to the ground.

Mexico City was full of American professional gamblers and confidence men. I saw a good deal of two of these; a lank grey Yankee named McKee and his genial jackal Wilson, or some such name. After a few days' acquaintance Wilson approached me with the following proposal. It appeared that the manager of a mine near St. Luis Potosi had stolen a quantity

of gold dust. He had got scared and dared not bolt. Wilson thought that if we offered him a thousand dollars, each putting up half, he would be willing to hand over the compromising sacks, value five thousand or so. Not for nothing had I read the works of "Pitcher of The Pink 'Un", and other authorities on the gentle art of parting a fool and his money. I joyfully accepted Wilson's proposal. "Bring your five hundred right along," I said, "and I'll go and put the job through. I know you're too busy to leave the city." He agreed and returned an hour later, not with the cash, but with his partner. They apologized profusely for mistaking me for a mug. "Look here," said McKee, "the innocence of your face is a fortune. I know a rich man here who is crazy on gambling. You shall rook him at Brazilian poker. (In this game one backs one's hand as in ordinary poker, but the hands are of two cards with the option of taking a third, as in baccarat.) We'll signal you what he holds. With your face, he'll never get wise to the stunt."

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

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

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

First let me insist that the nave is always a fool. Prosperity is a function of biological success and (facts being facts) the habit of lying begets credulity. My friend never profited except now and then for a few lucky weeks, though

he scooped in that time enough to keep a man with a grain of good sense for the rest of his life.

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

I could give the details of half a hundred schemes of this sort. Their ingenuity extorts my intellectual admiration, and yet there is always a fundamental flaw that, in the hands of such men, a million melts more quickly than a thousand would with anyone else. In every swell bar and hotel one can see plenty such — all well dressed and well groomed, laughing and joking, and throwing their money about, and all the time ninety per cent feel a sinking in the pit of the stomach as the thought hammers persistently at the back of their brains, "How shall I pay my bill?" at the best; and, overshadowing lesser worries, "What about when my luck turns?" "When will my own confidence in the imbecility of my fellow men be enlightened by their robbing me of the stake I risked, my liberty?"

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

I had been playing a modified martingale with happier results than my stupidity deserved. But, one night, luck ran against me and my stake had increased to the limit allowed by the house. There was a slight delay — I think someone had called for a fresh pack of cards — I found myself walking nervously up and down. Somewhat as had happened in the chess congress at Berlin, I had a vision of myself from somewhere outside. "Look at that young fool," I seemed to be saying; "that stake he has there is about a month's income." The cards were dealt. I had won, but "in the door", so that I only got seventy-five per cent. I picked up my winnings, walked out and have never gambled again; except once at Monte Carlo for the fun of the thing, some years later. I made it a rule to take five pounds to the casino and quit, when it was gone, for the day. As luck would have it, on the fourth day I kept on winning. I had an appointment for lunch. Remembering this, I suddenly awoke to the fact that I had won over three hundred and fifty pounds. That was good enough for me. After lunch I packed up and escaped to Nice, with a vow never again to set foot in the principality.

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

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

25

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

One of my results demands detailed record, because it proved later to be one of the foundations of the Great Work of my life. The word Abracadabra is familiar to everyone. Why should it possess such a reputation? Eliphas Lévi's explanations left me cold. I began to suspect that it must be a corruption of some true "word of power". I investigated it by means of the Cabbala. I restored its true spelling. Analysis showed it to be indeed the essential formula of the Great Work. It showed who to unite the Macrocosm with the Microcosm. I, therefore, adopted this word and its numerical value, 418, as the quintessentialized expression of the proper way to conduct all major Magical Operations.

This discovery was only one of many. Before Allan Bennett left for Ceylon, he gave me most of his magical notebooks. One of these contained the beginnings of a Cabbalistic dictionary in which various sacred words were entered, not alphabetically, but according to their numerical value. I must explain that the fundamental idea of the Cabbala is that the universe may be regarded as an elaboration of the numbers from 0 to 10, arranged in a certain

geometrical design and connected by twenty-two "paths". The problem is to acquire perfect comprehension of the essential nature of these numbers. Every phenomenon, every idea, may be referred to one or more numbers. Each is thus, so to say, a particular modification of the pure idea. Sacred words which add up to any number should be eloquent commentaries on one of its aspects. Thus the number 13 proves to be, as it were, an essay on the number 1. The words "unity" and "love" both add up to 13. These ideas are therefore qualities of 1. Now, 26 combines the idea of duality, which is the condition of manifestation or consciousness, with this 13; and we find, accordingly, that 26 is the value of the name Jehovah. From this we see Him as the Demiourgos, the manifestation in form of the primordial *One*.

For many years I worked on these lines continually, adding to Allan's nucleus, and ultimately making a systematic compilation. The resulting book was published in *The Equinox*, vol. I., no. VIII. It is the only dictionary of the Cabbala in existence that can claim any degree of completeness. Since its publication, of course, new knowledge has come to light and I hope to issue a revised edition in course of time. As it stands, however, it is the essential book of reference for the student. It can never be complete; for one thing, every student must create his own Cabbala. My conception, for instance, of the number 6 will not be identical to yours. The difference between you and me is, in fact, just this; you are capable of perceiving one set of aspects of absolute reality, I another. The higher our attainment, the more closely will our points of view coalesce, just as a great English and a great French historian will have more ideas in common about Napoleon Bonaparte than a Devonshire and a Provinçal peasant. But there will always be more in any being than any man can know.

My magical work was pushed into the background by the arrival of Eckenstein. He openly jeered at me for wasting my time on such rubbish. He being brutally outspoken, and I shy and sensitive, I naturally avoided creating opportunities for him to indulge his coarse ribaldry on a subject which to me was supremely sacred. Occasionally, however, I would take advantage of his unintelligence by talking to him in terms which I knew he would not understand. I find that it relieves my mind and helps me to clarify my thoughts if I inflict my jargon on some harmless stranger haphazard. As will be told in due course, Eckenstein and I made a very thorough exploration of the mountains of Mexico. During this time, my magical distress again increased. I could not relieve it by the narcotic of preparing and performing actual ceremonies, of silencing the voice of the demons by absorption in active work. It was while we were preparing our expedition to Colima that I broke out one evening and

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

I agreed at once to his proposals and he taught me the principles of concentration. I was to practise visualizing simple objects; and when I had succeeded in keeping these fairly steady, to try moving objects, such as a pendulum. The first difficulty is to overcome the tendency of an object to change its shape, size, position, colour, and so on. With moving objects, the trouble is that they try to behave in an erratic manner. The pendulum wants to change its rate, the extent of its swing or the plane in which it travels.

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

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

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

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

On the grand scale, too, I had proved their possibilities. One day, Eckenstein being ill, I had arranged to go with Longstaff and his two guides over the Col du Géant. Not feeling very fit myself, I thought I would start an hour ahead of the others. Having inspected the ice fall, I found a way straight up. When I was about half way through the séracs, I heard Longstaff's guides yelling blue murder. I had taken the "wrong" way. Their route involved a detour of a mile or more. I took not notice of their friendly anxiety and reached the top a long way in advance. When they arrived, they explained that what I had done was impossible. To carry on the joke, when we got back I offered a hundred and fifty francs to any party that would repeat the climb by my route. Nobody did so.

It is really astonishing and distressing that (after all these years of proof that men with proper claws are to men without them as a rifleman to an archer) English climbers are still quite ignorant of what claws can do, or how to use them. In Mr. Harold Raeburn's book he argues amiable against them. He admits that one can walk up hard snow at easy angles without steps, but fears to do so lest, returning later in the day, he should find the snow soft, and then where would he be without a staircase? He seems to have no idea that the supreme use of claws is on ice and that the harder the ice the surer the hold. Yet Mr. Raeburn pits himself against Everest, where claws would

convert the most perilous passages into promenades, and ice slopes whose length and steepness make step-cutting impracticable into serenely simple staircases. The policy of boycotting Eckenstein and his school, of deliberately ignoring the achievements of Continental climbers, to say nothing of my own expeditions, has preserved the privilege and prestige of the English Alpine Club. Ignorance and incompetence are unassailable. Ridicule does not reach the realms of secure snobbery. The mountains themselves vainly maim and murder the meddlers; they merely clamour all the more conceitedly to be considered heroes. It is one of the most curious characteristics of the English that they set such store by courage as to esteem a man the more highly the more blindly he blunders into disaster. We thought it rather unfair to take cove against Boer marksmanship; we are still proud of being unprepared in the Great War. We doubt whether science is sportsmanlike; and so it is thought rotten bad form to point out how mismanagement smashed Scott's expedition. No gentleman criticizes the conduct of the campaign of Gallipoli.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is hard to say why Queen Victoria should have seemed the symbol of this extraordinary state of suspended animation. Yet there was something in her physical appearance and her moral character which pointed to her as the perfect image of this inhibiting idea. The new generation, seeing their predecessors in perspective, perceive the individual qualities of each. There is nothing to tell them that in those days each one of us seethed with impotent rage at our doom. We were all damned with faint praise. Sir Richard Burton was toned down into a famous traveller and translator; Gordon sentimentalized into a warrior saint; Hardy was accepted as the Homer of Wessex; Meredith patted on the back as the modern Ovid. It was impossible to dynamite the morass of mediocrity. Progress was impossible. The most revolutionary proposals, the most blasphemous theories, lost their sting. A sovereign of suit, a parliament of putty, an aristocracy of alabaster, an intelligentsia of india-rubber, a proletariat of pulp; it was impossible to shape such material. The

strongest impression was blunted by the inertia of the viscous glue which resisted nothing, but resumed its formlessness as soon as the immediate impulse of the impact was spent.

England had become a hausfrau's idea of heaven, and the empire an eternal Earl's Court exhibition. This was the real reason why people who loved England, like Tom Broadbent in *John Bull's Other Island*, used to indulge in spasms of glee whenever we happened to have a corporal's file ambushed by some horde of savages[43].

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

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

On this excursion we met a man who said he had seen with his own eyes the famous phantom city. This yarn has for me a peculiar fascination. I am not sure that I do not believe that in some sense it is true, thought it would be hard to say in exactly what sense. I heard the story at least a dozen times;

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

twice first-hand from serious informants. The story varies but slightly and only in unimportant details.

Its general tenor is this: A man on horseback, sometimes a solitary prospector, sometimes a member of a party temporarily separated from the rest, but always alone, loses his way in hilly wooded country. (The district varies considerably with the narrator, but as a rule is somewhere within a couple of hundred miles of Mexico City, the direction being between north-west and south-west.) The horseman is eager to find a way out of the forest, so that he may take his bearings. It is getting late; he does not want to camp out if he can help it. At last he sees the trees thinning out; he hurries forward and finds himself on the brink of the hillside. At this moment darkness falls suddenly. It is impossible to proceed. Then he sees on the hillside opposite, possibly two or three miles distant, a city gleaming white. It is not a large city by modern standards, but it is an important city. For its size, it is very bravely built. The architecture does not suggest a modern city; I have heard it described as "like an Arabian Nights city", "like an old Greek city", "like an Aztec city". The traveller proposes to himself to visit it in the morning. But when he wakes there is not trace of it. There is not even any distinguishing character about the hillside where he saw it which might have suggested the idea of a city to a tired man. In some cases lights are seen in the city; occasionally there is even the sound of revelry.

Talking of liars! We suddenly discovered that we were regarded in the light ourselves. I suppose it is the abject ignorance and narrow outlook of ordinary people that makes them sceptical about anything out of the common. However, that may be, a paragraph appeared in the Mexican *Herald* which indirectly threw doubt on our expeditions. It was particularly pointless; we had published noting, made no claims, behaved in fact exactly as we should have done in the Alps. But Eckenstein was annoyed at the impertinence and proposed to take summary vengeance. He accordingly went down to the low bar frequented by the peccant reporter, bought him a few drinks, congratulated him on his literary style, and politely regretted that he should have been led into error by ignorance of his subject.

The reporter was far from sure that the conversation would not suddenly by a bullet being put through him, for Eckenstein always looked a very formidable customer; but he found himself charmingly invited to come with us and climb Popocatapetl, so as to acquire first-hand knowledge of mountains and the men who climbed them. He gaily and gratefully accepted this insidious proposition. We rode merrily up to the sulphur ranch, where intending climbers stay the night. The next morning the fun began. One of the

world's records which we had left in tatters was that for pace uphill at great heights. Long before we got to the lowest point of the rim of the crater our sceptical friend found that he couldn't go another yard — he had to turn back. We assured him that the case was common, but could easily be met by use of the rope. So we tied him securely to the middle; Eckenstein set a fierce pace up hill, while I assisted his tugging by prodding the recalcitrant reporter with my axe. He exhausted the gamut of supplication. We replied only by cheerful and encouraging exhortations, and by increased efforts. We never checked our rush till we stood on the summit. It was probably the first time that it had ever been climbed in an unbroken sprint. Our victim was by this time convinced that we could climb mountains. And he was certainly the sorriest sight!

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

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

Eckenstein used to lure people to discuss eyesight and mention that mine was miraculous for distant objects. It would by arrange for me to drop in at this stage, accidentally on purpose, and then Eckenstein would offer to prove his tall stories on the spot. So we would go up to the roof with field glasses and I would describe distant objects in great detail, read names on shops a quarter of a mile off, etc. etc. The victim would check this through the field glasses, confirming my accuracy. No one ever suspected that this stunt had been prepared by my using the field glasses and learning the scenery by heart!

I should have mentioned a short excursion which I took to Vera Cruz. My ostensible object was to see some cases of yellow fever. As a matter of fact, I was horribly afraid of the disease. So I picked an occasion when the port had shown a clean bill of health for the previous three weeks. I had an introduction to a local doctor and told him how sorry I was not to be able to see any

cases. "Well, well," said he, "come round to the hospital tomorrow morning anyhow — some points may be of interest." And then I found any amount of yellow Jack, mendaciously diagnosed as malaria, typhoid, etc., in the hope of throwing dust in the eyes of the United States inspectors and getting them to remove the quarantine.

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

We had intended to finish our programme by climbing Citlaltepetl; but there were difficulties about mules and none about the mountain. We were too bored to trouble to climb it. Somehow or other, the current of our enthusiasm had become exhausted. We had achieved all our real objects and the next thing was to get ready for the Himalayas. Eckenstein returned to England and on the twentieth of April I started for San Francisco, westward bound. My objective was a curious one. Since leaving England, I had thought over the question of the authority of Mathers with ever increasing discomfort. He had outraged every principle of probity and probability; but he was justified, provided that his primary postulate held good. I could think of only one way of putting him to the test. It concerned an episode at which Allan Bennett was present. Allan, and he alone, could confirm the account which Mathers had given me. If he did so, Mathers was vindicated; if not, it was fatal to his claims. It seems absurd to travel eight thousand miles to ask one question — a childish question into the bargain! — but that was what I did. The sequel will be told in the proper place.

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

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

Outside Juarez was a labour camp. Public works of some sort were in progress — at least such progress as we find in Mexico! Hundreds of men were loafing about at their eternal cigarettes and tossing various liquefactions of heel-fire down their chilli-armoured gullets. Most of the groups were squatting round a soiled poncho, on which were scattered coins and greasy cards. I stood and watched one party of three. The swearing, jabbering and quarrelling were incessant here, as all over the camp. Nothing struck me as abnormal. Then, like a flash of forked lightning, one of the men flung himself across the poncho and twisted his fingers in the hair of the man opposite. (Astounding recklessness to let it grow so long!) He thrust his thumbs into the corners of his enemy's eyes, as he writhed and kicked on top of him, the momentum of his spring having bowled the other on to his back. The man's eyes were torn from their sockets in a second and his assailant, disengaging

himself by a violent jerk from his victim's clutch, made off like an arrow across country to the frontier. The shrieks of the mutilated man were answered by universal uproar. Some followed on foot, others ran to their bronchos, but the great majority maintained an attitude of philosophical indifference. It was no business of theirs, except so far as it might remind them to visit the barber.

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

It was a glorified El Paso, a madhouse of frenzied money-making and frenzied pleasure-seeking, with none of the corners chipped off. It is beautifully situated and the air reminds one curiously of Edinburgh. At that time it possessed a real interest and glory — its Chinatown. During the week I was there, I spent most of my time in that quarter. It was the first time that I had come into contact with the Chinese spirit in bulk; and, though thee exiles were naturally the least attractive specimens of the race, I realized instantly their spiritual superiority to the Anglo-Saxon, and my own deep-seated affinity to their point of view. The Chinaman is not obsessed by the delusion that the profits and pleasures of life are really valuable. He gets all the more out of them because he knows their worthlessness, and is consequently immune from the disappointment which inevitably embitters those who seek to lay up treasure on earth. A man must really be a very dull brute if, attaining all his ambitions, he finds satisfaction. The Eastern from Lao Tzu and the Buddha to Zoroaster and Ecclesiastes, feels in his very bones the futility of earthly existence. It is the first postulate of his philosophy.

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

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

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

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

It was not finished till the middle of 1904. Book I is in form a gigantic Greek ode. It celebrates all the forces of nature and the children of time. Orpheus invokes them in turn; and they reply. Book II describes the winning of Eurydice by Orpheus. It is entirely a monologue by him. My literary insanity is well indicated by my proposal to insert a five-act play, *The Argonauts*, afterwards published separately, as an incident in his wooing!

Book III describes the visit of Orpheus to Hades; and contains the invocations of the necessary deities, with their replies. Book IV relates the death of Orpheus. Unwieldy as the poem is, it contains some of my best lyrics. Further, even conceding that the entire effort was a fiasco, it must be admitted that the task of writing it was an excellent discipline; it taught me a great deal about technique and its very awkwardness warned me what to avoid.

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

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

In the autumn of '98 my friend, J. L. Baker, whom I hastened to see in London on my return from the Alps, took me on my first astral journey. The details of the method are given in full in *The Equinox*, Vol. I No. II, (*Liber O*). I may here outline them thus:

Imagine an image of yourself, standing in from of you. Transfer your consciousness to it. Rise upward. Invoking forces desired by the prescribed methods. Observe their appearance. Test their authenticity. Enter into conversation with them. Travel under their guidance to the particular part of the universe which you desire to explore. Return to earth. Cause the Body of Light to coincide spatially with the physical. Reconnect them, using the sign of Harpocrates. Resume normal consciousness. Record the experience. Test its value by the critical methods advocated in *The Equinox*.

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

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

As a type of the first class, let me quote the following: G. H. Frater S.R.M.D. had asked me to visit him in Paris. He expected me in the afternoon. My train was late; I was tired and dirty. I postponed my call till the following day. To my surprise, my host and hostess did not greet me quite as I expected. In the course of our talk they made allusions which were quite unintelligible. At last we became aware that we were talking at cross-purposes. The crash came when Soror Vestigia insisted, "But you said so yourself at tea!" I couldn't remember that I had ever been there to tea. On my one previous visit I had

lunched one day and dined the next, but no more. "At tea!" I echoed, bewildered. "Yes, at tea!" she repeated. "Surely you remember. It was only yesterday." We compared times. I was then dozing in the train from Calais. It then came out that I had called quite normally, though I seemed tired and dazed. I had stayed about an hour. Nothing had let them to suspect that I was not physically present.

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

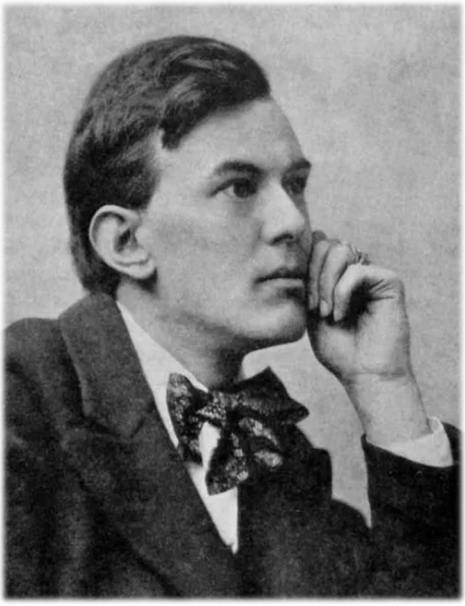
All the same, I feel grateful. Her stupid lie put it into my head to make the experiment in question, though of course with the knowledge and approval of the girl. The result is recorded in a subsequent chapter.

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

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

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

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



Aleister as a boy and a young man

Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers and Moïna Mathers

Crowley as a young student at Trinity College at Cambridge

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

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

But my horizon gradually filled with romantic love and other occupations faded little by little. The woman was herself worthless from the points of view of the poet. Only very exceptional characters are capable of producing the positive effect; but it is just such women as Alice who inspire masterpieces, for they do not interfere with one's work. Passionately as I was in love, and crazily as I was behaving in consequence, I was still able to make daily notes of the progress of the affair with the detached cynicism of a third party. I took her with me to Japan[44], but there was not enough in her character to count "the world well lost for love". Exactly fifty days after I had met her she beat it back to her "provider"; and I understood immediately why my subconsciousness had insisted on my scribbling the details of our liaison in my diary.

The departure of Alice inspired me to write the story of our love in a sonnet sequence. Each day was to immortalize its events in poetry. This again was one of my characteristically crude ideas, yet the result was surprisingly good — much better, perhaps, than I ever thought, or think now. No less a critic than Marcel Schwob called it "a little masterpiece". And many other people of taste and judgment have professed themselves in love with it. Possibly the simplicity of its realism, its sincere and shame-free expression of every facet of my mind, constitute real merit. It is certainly true that most

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

people find much of my work hard to read. The intensity of my passion, the profundity of my introspection, and my addiction to obscure allusions, demand the reader serious study, that he may grasp my meaning; and subsequent re-reading after my thought has been assimilated; until, no intellectual obstacle interrupting, he may be carried away by the current of my music and swept but it into the ocean of ecstasy which I myself reached when I wrote the poem. I am aware that few modern readers are capable of settling down deliberately to decipher me. And those who are may for that very reason be incapable of the orgiastic frenzy. Scholarship and passion rarely go together. But my muse is the daughter of Hermes and the mistress of Dionysus.

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

My most interesting impression was Kamakura. The Daibutsu, colossal amid his gardens of iris, with no canopy but the sky, does really produce a sense of his universality; it does remind one of the grandeur and solidity of his teaching; of the reasonableness of his methods of attainment, the impersonal peace which is their reward; and of the boundless scope of his philosophy, independent as it is of all arbitrary assumptions, parochial points of view, sordid appeals and soul-stupefying superstitions.

Already there had arisen in me the aspiration to attain to states whose very possibility I did not suspect; already I was aware, in the abyss of my heart, secret and silent, that I was Alastor, the wanderer in the wilderness, the Spirit of Solitude. For Kamakura, calmly certain of its soul-searching accents, called to me to abide in the security of its shadow, there to toil even as the Buddha had done, that I might come to the perfect Illumination, and thereby being made free from all the fetters of falsehood, being to mankind the Word of Wisdom and magic that hath might to enlighten their eyes, to heal their hearts, and to bring them to a stage of spiritual evolution such that their poets could not longer lament, as I:

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

I inquired as to the possibility of settling down on one of the neighbouring monasteries; but somehow my instinct opposed my intention. The In-

most knew that my destiny lay elsewhere. The Lords of Initiation cared nothing for my poetic fancies and my romantic ideals. They had ordained that I should pass through every kind of hardship at the hands of nature, suffer all sorrow and shame that life can inflict. Their messenger must be tested by every ordeal — not by those that he himself might choose. The boy who, asked to discuss some point of doctrine in the Epistles, replied, "Far be it from me to presume to parley with St. Paul: let me rather give a list of the kings of Israel and Judah!" (the only thing he knew), probably became a Cabinet minister; but similar adroitness does not avail the aspirant to adeptship. The Masters test every link in turn, infallibly and inexorably; it is up to you to temper your steel to stand the strain; for one flaw means failure and you have to forge it all afresh in the fires of fate, retrieve in a new incarnation the lost opportunity of the old.

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

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

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

True, one of me knew all along the augury of the adventure; but then, all the worse! For if Alice had been a real danger, might not I have damned myself for her, as many a knight for Venus of the Hollow Hill, as many a saint for Lilith, Lady of the Lake of Fire? Yet no: the answer came, august and austere, from mine Angel, that I had passed the Ordeal. I had proved that no passion, however pure and powerful, could enslave me. The caresses of no Calypso could chain me in her courts, the cup of Circe corrupt my chastity, the song of no Siren seduce me to suicide, the wiles of no Vivien ensnare my simplicity and bind me in the hollow oak of Broceliande.

I had intoxicated myself utterly with Alice; I had invested her with all the insignia that my imagination could invent. Yet, loving her with all my heart and soul, she had not seduced me from my service. I knew — and They who put her on my Path knew also — that I was immune. I might dally with

Delilah as much as I liked and never risk the scissors. Love, who binds other Samsons, blinds them and sets them to serve the Philistines, to be their scorn and sport, would be to me my Light and lead me in the way of liberty. The secret of my strength was the, that love would always stand a shining symbol of my truth, that I loved spiritually the soul of mankind. Therefore each woman, be she chaste or wanton, faithful or false, inspiring me to scale the summits of song or whispering me to wallow in the swamps of sin, would be to me no more than a symbol in whose particular virtue my love could fins the bread and wine of its universal eucharist.

Time has confirmed this claim: I have loved many women and been loved. But I have never wavered from my Work; and always a moment has come when the woman had to choose between comradeship and catastrophe. For in truth, there was no Aleister Crowley to love; there was only a Word for the utterance of which a human form had been fashioned. So the foolish virgins, finding that love and vanity could not live together, gave up a man for a mirror; but the wise, knowing that man is mortal, gave up the world for the Work and thereby cheated satiety, disillusionment and death.

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

Ah me! the Gods were at their grim game; they had another dagger ready to slip between my ribs. Fidelis was now a married woman. She was still playing at Magick, as another might play at bridge. But her true life was dresses, dinners and dances; and her thought were taken up by her husband

and her lover. (In hot countries, white men being relaxed by the climate, European women, over-stimulated for the same reason, almost inevitably practise polyandry.)

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

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

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

Thomas Hardy was a tall, dignified, venerable figure, with a patriarchal beard and manner equally courteous and authoritative. I had not known he was a clergyman — as his costume assured me. After a little conversation, I began to surmise dimly that there was something wrong, and might have said something tactless if he had not volunteered an account of his literary career and been quite unaware of the existence of the Mayor of Casterbridge. He was the *great* Thomas Hardy, the only and original bird, the chaplain to the forces at Hong Kong and author of *How to be happy though married*. I don't know how I kept my face straight.

As a matter of fact, he was perfectly human and even contributed a quite valuable item of information as to the psychology of publishers. He had approached one of these ineffable imbeciles[45] with his book and been told that while the text was all that could be desired, it was quite impossible to publish a book with that title. The reverend gentleman had the good sense to reply,

"You blasted jackass — God damn your soul to Hell! (or words to that effect). Do anything you like with the book, but leave the title alone!" He cowed them and they complied, with the result that the book sold by hundreds of thousands.

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[45] "Present Company Always Excepted". (WE ARE NOT SO SURE).

27

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

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

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

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

of social tone, moral elevation, manners and refinement is attained by the Japanese ladies of pleasure.

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

The Christians are, of course, obscene outcasts from even the traditional tolerance of their clan; they have accepted Jesus with the promise of a job, and gag conscience with assurance of atonement, or chloroform superstitious terrors by ruminating on redemption. The Buddhists are sodden with their surfeit of indigestible philosophy and feebly flaunt a fluttering formula of which the meaning is forgotten; the debauchery of devil dances, the pointless profession of Pansil (the Five Precepts of the Buddha), the ceremonial coddling of shrines as old maids coddle cats, voluble veneration and rigmarole religion: such is the threadbare tinsel which they throw over the nakedness of their idleness, immorality and imbecility.

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

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

But more, Colombo is the "place where four winds meet", the crossroads of the civilized world. Westward lies Europe, the energetic stripling, who thought to bear the world on his shoulders, but could not co-ordinate his own muscles. Northward lies India, like a woman weary of bearing, a widow holding to her ancient habits without hope. Southward, Australia, topsy-turvy as our childhood's wisdom warned us, sprawls its awkward adolescence and embarrasses its elders by its unconscious absurdity. Lastly, look eastward! There lies China; there is the only civilization that has looked time in the face without a blush; an atheism with good manners. There broods the old wise man, he who has conquered life without the aid of death, who may survive these strenuous youths and even the worn barren widow mumbling meaningless memories in her toothless mouth.

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

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

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

Must I digress to excuse Allan Bennett, the noblest and the gentlest soul that I have ever known? Surely the immanence of physical agony, the continual anguish of the cross on which he has been nailed for more than fifty years, he not complaining, he not submitting, he not demanding release, but working inexorably and inexpugnably at this appointed Task — surely the unremitting stroke of that fell fact must have avenged itself for its foiled malice by fashioning his conception of the universe in the same form as seemed omni-

valent to the Buddha, who could not estimate the influence of his vain desolating years of idle luxury and the abortive atonement of his random reaction to angry asceticism.

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

Meanwhile, I was simply an adept — wandering round the world in the way adepts have — bent on picking up any pearls that proved their pedigrees from honest oysters and were guaranteed rejected by swine.

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

The official record is subjoined.

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

> He and I.A. had disagreed upon an obscure point in theology, thereby formulating the accursed Dyad, thereby enabling the Abra-Melin demons to assume material form: one in his own shape, another in that of I.A. Now, the demon that looked like I.A. had a revolver, and threatened to shoot him (D.D.C.F.), while the demon that resembled himself was equally anxious to shoot I.A. Fortunately, before the demons could fire, V.N.R. (Mrs. Mathers) came into the room, thus formulating the symbol of the Blessed Trinity.
>
> Frater I.A.'s account was less of a strain upon P.'s faculties of belief. They had had, he said, an argument about the God Shiva, the Destroyer, whom I.A. worshipped because, if one repeated his name often enough, Shiva would one day open his eye and destroy the universe, and whom D.D.C.F. feared and hated because He would one day open His eye and destroy D.D.C.F. I.A. closed the argument by assuming the position Padmasana and repeating the Mantra: "Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva." D.D.C.F., angrier than ever, sought the sideboard, but soon returned, only to find Frater I.A. still muttering: "Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva." "Will you stop blaspheming?" cried D.D.C.F.; but the holy man only said: "Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva." "If you don't stop I will shoot

you!" said D.D.C.F., drawing a revolver from his pocket and levelling it at I.A.'s head; but I.A., being concentrated, took no notice and continued to mutter: "Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva, Shiva."

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

Mathers thus disposed of, to business!

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

We simply dismissed from our minds the whole question of the G∴D∴ and restated the problem on first principles.

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

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

An appeal couched in such chastely correct yet politely passionate phraseology could not fail to bury its barb in the bull's eye. Allan "prayed permission to quit the presence" of the pious Parananda, whose arrogance and meanness be equated with his scholarship and sanctity. We sampled Kandy — which has delights (permit the pun for the advertisement!) unsuspected

by “Mary Elizabeth”. We took a furnished bungalow called “Marlborough” (God knows why!) on the hills, by a stream, with waterfall complete, overlooking the lake, the temple and an amateur attempt at an hotel. We hired a hopeless headman, who sub-hired sleepy and sinister servants and dismissed all these damnable details from our minds, devoting ourselves with diabolical determination and saintly simplicity to the search for a spiritual solution to the material muddle. Our sojourn, short as it was by worldly reckoning, proved to be pregnant with events of internal import. The tyrant time took his first wound in Kandy.

28

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

Allan was already at heart a Buddhist. The more he studied the Tripitika, "the three baskets of the law" — waste paper baskets I used to call them — the more he was attracted, but he was fearfully disappointed by the degeneracy of the Singalese bhikkhus. With rate exceptions, they were ignorant, idle, immoral and dishonest. At Anuradhapura, the sacred ruined city, there conduct is so openly scandalous as to have given rise to a proverb: "A bhikkhu is made, not born — except at Anuradhapura." Allan had been offered the post of treasurer to a famous monastery outside Colombo, for the avowed reason that they could not trust any one of themselves. Considering that a bhikkhu is not allowed to touch money at all, this was rather the limit.

The Solicitor-General of Ceylon, the Hon. P. Ramanathan, engaged Allan as private tutor to his younger sons. This gentleman was a man of charming personality, wide culture and profound religious knowledge. He was eminent as a yogi of the Shaivite sect of Hindus (he was a Tamil of high caste) and had written commentaries on the gospels of Matthew and John, interpreting the sayings of Christ as instructions in Yoga. It is indeed a fact that

one of the characters who have been pieced together to compose the figure of "Jesus" was a yogi. His injunctions to abandon family ties, to make no provision for the future, and so on, are typical.

From this man, Allan learnt a great deal of the theory and practice of Yoga. When he was about eighteen, Allan had accidentally stumbled into the trance called Shivadarshana, in which the universe, having been perceived in its totality as a single phenomenon, independent of space and time, is then annihilated. This experience had determined the whole course of his life. His one object was to get back into that state. Shri Parananda showed him a rational practical method of achieving his. Yet Allan was not wholly in sympathy with his teacher, who, despite his great spiritual experience, had not succeeded in snapping the shackles of dogma, and whose practice seem in some respects tat variance with his principles. Allan was almost puritanically strict. He had been offered a position as manager of a coconut plantation, but refused it on learning that his duties would involve giving orders for the destruction of vermin. He had not sufficient breadth of view to see that any kind of life implies acquiescence in, and therefore responsibility for, murder; by eating rice one becomes the accomplice of the agriculturist in destroying life.

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

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

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

During this retirement I was fortunate in being under the constant vigilant supervision of Allan Bennett, whose experience enabled him to detect the firs onset of disturbing ideas. For instance, the revising and typing of

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

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

I attribute my own success in mysticism and Magick, and the much greater success that I have been able to secure for my successors, almost entirely to my scientific training. It enabled me to determine the actual physiological and psychological conditions of attainment. My experience as a

teacher enables me to simplify more and more as each fresh case comes under my notice. I can put my finger more quickly and surely on the spot with every waxing moon. I achieved in eleven years what hardly anyone before had done in forty, and it cannot be explained by individual genius, for I have been able to take men with hardly a scrap of talent and teach them what took me eleven years in seven or eight for the firstcomers, in five or six for their successors, and so on till, at the present moment, I feel able to promise any man or woman of average ability who has the germ of genuine aspiration, the essence of attainment within eight sessions. Of course it depends on each postulant to determine the details. Some departments of occult science lie outside the scope of particular people; each one must fill in for himself his personal programme. But the supreme emancipation is the same in essence for all, and for the first time in history it has been possible to present this free from confusion, so that people can concentrate from the very beginning of their training on the one thing that matters.

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

I was led to this discovery chiefly through studying comparative mysticism. For instance; a Catholic repeats Ave Maria rapidly and continuously; they rhythm inhibits the intellectual process. The result is an ecstatic vision of Mary. The Hindu repeats Aum Hari Aum in the same way and gets a vision of Vishnu. But I noticed that the characteristics of both visions were identical save for the sectarian terminology in which the memory recorded them. I argued that process and result were identical. It was a physiological phenomenon and the apparent divergence was due to the inability of the mind to express the event except by using the language of worship which was familiar.

Extended study and repeated experiment have confirmed this conviction. I have thus been able to simplify the process of spiritual development by eliminating all dogmatic accretions. To get into a trance is of the same order of phenomena as to get drunk. It does not depend on creed. Virtue is only

necessary in so far as it favours success; just as certain diets, neither right nor wrong in themselves, are indicated for the athlete or the diabetic. I am proud of having made it possible for my pupils to achieve in months what previously required as many years. Also, of having saved the successful from the devastating delusion that the intellectual image of their experience is an universal truth.

This error has wrought more mischief in the past than any other. Mohammed's conviction that his visions were of imperative importance to "salvation" made him a fanatic. Almost all religious tyranny springs from intellectual narrowness. The spiritual energy derived from the high trances makes the seer a formidable force; and unless he be aware that his interpretation is due only to the exaggeration of his own tendencies of thought, he will seek to impose it on others, and so delude his disciples, pervert their minds and prevent their development. He can do good only in one way, that is by publishing the methods by which he attained illumination: in other words, by adding his experience to the sum of scientific knowledge. I have myself striven strenuously to do this, always endeavouring to make it clear that my results are of value only to myself, and that even my methods may need modification in every case, just as each poet, golfer and barrister must acquire a style peculiar to his idiosyncrasies.

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

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

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

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

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

> *Breaks* are classed as follows:
>
> *Firstly*, physical sensations. These should have been overcome by Asana.
>
> *Secondly*, breaks that seem to be dictated by events immediately preceding the meditation. Their activity becomes tremendous. Only by this practice does one understand how much is really observed by the senses without the mind becoming conscious of it.
>
> *Thirdly*, there is a class of breaks partaking of the nature of reverie or "daydreams". These are very insidious — one may go on for a long time without realizing that one has wandered at all.
>
> *Fourthly*, we get a very high class of break, which is as sort of aberration of the control itself. You think, "How well I am doing it!" or perhaps that it would be rather a good idea if you were on a desert island, or if your were in a sound-proof house, or if your were sitting by a waterfall. But these are only trifling variations from the vigilance itself.

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

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

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

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

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

29

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

But we need not go so far into their philosophy or accept it. Thanks partly to William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience*, I got the idea of employing the methods of Yoga to produce genius at will. James points out that various religious teachers attained their power to influence mankind in what is essentially the same way; that is, by getting into Samadhi. The trance gives supreme spiritual energy and absolute self-confidence; it removes the normal inhibitions to action. I propose then that any man should use this power to develop his faculties and inspire his ambitions by directing the effects of the trance into the channel of his career. This idea at once connects mysticism with Magick; for one of the principal operations of Magick is to invoke the god appropriate to the thing you want, identify yourself with Him and flood your work with His immaculate impulse. This is, in fact, to make Samadhi with that God. The two processes are essentially identical; the apparent difference arises merely from the distinction between the European and Asiatic conceptions of the cosmos. Most European religion, including orthodox Judaism, is anthropomorphic, an expansion of the moral ideas connected with the members of a family. Asiatic religions[46], even when superficially theistic, always imply an impersonal universe. One idealized human forces; the other, the forces of nature.

[46] Including the oldest Greek religion in its best aspects.

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

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

One soon obtains new conception of one's own mind. Till one has practised, one has no idea of the actual contents. The fact is that the uninitiate is aware only of the solutions of his mental equations; he is not conscious of the rough working. Further, he does not feel the actual impression made by each individual impact upon the mind. He totally mistakes its character, which is, in reality, arbitrary and imperative. The first analysis shows it as out of relation with its predecessors and successors. Later on, one discovers the subconscious links which join the elements. This process of subdivision seems as if it might be continued indefinitely.

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

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

each crystal is composed of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, elements which in themselves possess none of the characteristic qualities of sugar. One perceives that mental and physical phenomena share this irrationality.

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

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

I saw a very striking case of this at Kandy. When Allan was mediating, it was my duty to bring his food very quietly (from time to time) into the room adjoining that where he was working. One day he missed two successive meals and I thought I ought to look into his room to see if all was well. I must explain that I have known only two European women and three European men who could sit in the attitude called Padmasana, which is that usually seen in seated images of the Buddha. Of these men, Allan was one. He could knot his legs so well that, putting his hands on the ground, he could swing his body to and from in the air between them. When I looked into his room I found him, not seated on his meditation mat, which was in the centre of the room at the end farthest from the window, but in a distant corner ten or twelve feet off, still in his knotted position, resting on his head and right shoulder, exactly like an image overturned. I set him right way up and he came out of this trance. He was quite unconscious that anything unusual had happened. But he had evidently been thrown there by the mysterious forces generated by Pranayama.

There is no doubt whatever about this phenomenon; it is quite common. But the yogis claim that the lateral motion is due to lack of balance and that if one were in perfect equilibrium one would rise directly in the air. I

have never seen any case of levitation and hesitate to say that it has happened to me, though I have actually been seen by others on several occasions apparently poised in the air. For the first three phenomena I have found no difficulty in devising quite simple physiological explanations. But I can form no theory as to how the practice could counteract the force of gravitation, and I am unregenerate enough to allow this to make me sceptical about the occurrence of levitation. Yet, after all, the stars are suspended in space. There is no a priori reason why the forces which prevent them rushing together should not come into operation in respect of the earth and the body.

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

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

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

The phenomena of concentration are very varied and curious. For instance, the suppression of one's normal thoughts leads to their being replaced, not only by their elements, as explained above, but by long forgotten memories of childhood. There are also what I have called "atmospherics". For instance, a voice is suddenly heard, "And if you're passing, won't you?" or

"And not take the first step on virtue's giddy road." One of the entries on September 6th is worth quoting verbatim:

> 10:45-10:55 P.M.
> Dharana on tip of nose. I obtained a clear understanding of the unreality of that nose. This persists. An hour later whilst breathing on my arm as I was asleep, I said to myself, "What is this hot breath from?" I was forced to *think* before I could answer "my nose". Then I pinched myself and remembered at once; but again breathing, the same thing happened again. Therefore the "Dharanization" of my nose dividualizes me and my nose, affects my nose, disproves my nose, abolishes, annihilates and expunges my nose.

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

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

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

> After some eight hours' discipline by Pranayama arose "the Golden Dawn".
>
> While meditating, suddenly I became conscious of a shoreless space of darkness and a glow of crimson athwart it. Deepening and brightening, scarred by dull bars of slate-blue cloud, arose the Dawn of Dawns. In splendour not of earth and its mean sun, blood-red, rayless, adamant, it rose, it rose! Carried out of myself, I asked not "Who is the witness?" absorbed utterly in contemplation of so

stupendous and so marvellous a fact. For there was no doubt, no change, no wavering; infinitely more real than aught physical is the Golden Dawn of this Eternal Sun! But ere the Orb of Glory rose clear of its banks of blackness — alas my soul! — that Light Ineffable was withdrawn beneath the falling veil of darkness, and in purples and greys glorious beyond imaging, sad beyond conceiving, faded the superb Herald of the Day. But mine eyes have seen it! And this, then, is Dhyana! Whit it, yet all but unremarked, came a melody as of the sweet-souled Vina.

Next day:

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

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

The immediate current being thus exhausted, we decided to go on a pilgrimage to the ruined sacred cities of Buddhism. Allan had become more and more convinced that he ought to take the Yellow Robe. The phenomena of

Dhyana and Samadhi had ceased to exercise their first fascination. It seemed to him that they were insidious obstacles to true spiritual progress; that their occurrence, in reality, broke up the control of the mind which he was trying to establish and prevented him from reaching the ultimate truth which he sought. He had the strength of mind to resist the appeal of even these intense spiritual joys. Like physical love, they persuade their dupe to put up with the essential evil of existence.

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

I was as full of romantic folly about the wisdom of the East, and the splendours and luxuries of Asia, as I had been about Jacobites. But already I had learnt to use my eyes; prejudices had somehow lost their power to persuade. My experience of the Order probably counted for a good deal in this. At the same time, I did not swing from one extreme to the other. "Blessed are they that expect nothing; for they shall not be disappointed!" I was in no danger of judging the principles of Buddhism by the practices of Buddhists. I worked out the logical consequences of any philosophy without reference to the criticisms of history. The Buddhism of Ceylon is based on the canon of their scriptures. But the customs of the people have been for the most part adapted to the new religion; very much as paganism persisted unchanged, except as to terminology, when it was camouflaged by Christianity; just as the ass of Priapus became the ass of the Nativity; as Jupiter became Jehovah; Isis, Mary; and so on; as the crown of Osiris developed into the papal tiara; as the feats of corn and wine were resumed in the Eucharist, so did the old rites of fetish and ancestor worship continue under new names. The old demonology was adapted to Buddhist theories.

The primitive instincts of people are ineradicable; their passions and fears always find approximately the same expression, despite the efforts of philosophers and religious reformers. So I was neither surprised nor shocked (as was the more ingenuous Allan) at the devil dances and similar superstitious practices which pretended to be a part in the pure rational and straightforward spirituality of Buddhism. The very simplicity and savagery of these

practices were pleasing. The enthusiasm was sincere; there was no hypocrisy, no humbug, no sanctimoniousness, no protestations of virtue or assumptions of superiority.

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

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

One incident was somewhat scandalously amusing. He was doing his best to enter into the spirit of the thing and called my attention to the "strains of wild oriental music". I knew better. I had read Herrick's poem abut the young lady who left a glove in the royal presence, and remembered that Lady Clara de Vere de Vere has certain physiological properties in common with the elephant. Poor Allan was absolutely horrified when he realized his mistake.

The scene was wild and somewhat sinister. The darkness, the palms, the mountainous background, the silent lake below, the impenetrable canopy of space, studded with secretive and significant stars, formed a stupendous setting for the savage noise and blaze of the ceremony. One half saw huge shad-

owy shapes moving mysteriously in the torchlight, and the air vibrated violently with the jubilant rage of riotous religious excitement. It communicated a sort of magnificent madness to the mind. One didn't know what it meant or if it meant anything particular. One was not hampered by knowledge; one could let oneself go. One felt a tense, tremendous impulse to do something demoniac. Yet one had no idea what. It put one's nerves on the rack. It was almost a torture to feel so intensely, and desire so deliriously, such unintelligible irritations. Hours passed in this intoxicating excitement. One can understand perfectly the popular enthusiasm. It was the release of the subconscious desires of the original animal. To a civilized mind, accordingly, the impression was charged with a certain disquietude partaking of the nature of terror without understanding why; one felt the presence of forces which appal because one feels their power, recognizes their existence in oneself. They are the things one has tried to forget and persuaded oneself that they are in fact forgotten. They are the voices of ancestral appetite. It is the roar of the mob in the ears of the educated: but as for any definite religious impression, the Perahera had nothing to say. It was no more Buddhism than the carnival at Nice is Christianity. IΩ IIAN!

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

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

30

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

One evening Allan and I were meditating, as usual. The servants were absent for some reason; some marauder took the opportunity to break in and steal my cash box. I am ashamed to say that I was stupid enough to report the incident to the police. A day or two later an alleged inspector appeared, made various inquiries and went off. He took with him my pocket compass, under the impression that it was my watch! This time, of course, we could identify the thief, who had been playing this game all over the island. He was caught and put in the dock; but escaped conviction on some technicality. But I remember the incident acutely on account of the conversation I had with the magistrate, who explained that the man might be flogged for this offence. He spoke of the punishment with a shudder — it was terrible to witness; but his tones displayed intense sadistic pleasure at the idea. It was my first glimpse of the bestial instincts of the average respectable and cultured Englishman. I

had not really believed what I had read in Krafft-Ebing about perverse pleasures of this sort; I could not understand cruelty.

Is it Gorky who tells us the at the universal characteristic of the Russian is to delight in the infliction of pain for its own sake, in the absence of any comparatively intelligible basis like anger and hatred? He describes how men's mouths are filled with gunpowder and exploded, how women's breasts are pierced, ropes inserted and the victim left to hang from the ceiling. These things are done exactly as English children sometimes torture animals. He says that the whole of this life has been poisoned by realizing the existence of this instinct, which seemed to him a fatal objection to any possible justification of the universe. I cannot follow him so far. I can understand that every possible combination of qualities may exist somewhere and that I have no right even to assume that my own detestation of such things proves them to be unjustifiable.

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

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

One of the results of this was that I began to grow a beard. Eckenstein had put me up to a lot of the points of conduct that should be observed in travelling among Mohammedans and I practised these conscientiously. For instance, I taught myself never to touch my face with my left hand. I found this practice tends to make my mind constantly vigilant. Later, I developed the idea into *Liber Jugorum*, which is one of the most important elements in the preliminary training for the A∴A∴. But the Singalese, knowing nothing

of our motives, could only conclude that sahibs with beards must be Boer prisoners. The same ridiculous mistake was made even by the whites at Rawalpindi, when the expedition arrived, though we were mixing freely with them and half our party talking English slang.

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

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

At Dambulla is one of the most extraordinary works of human skill, energy and enthusiasm in the world. The temple is a cave in the rock, of vast extent but with a very small opening. How could the many statues of the Buddha which filled the cave have got there? It was the camel and the needle's eye again. But what had been done was to cut away the rock of the cave itself, leaving the statues. So gigantic a conception and so admirable an execution extort one's whole-hearted praise. Nothing so drives home the fact of modern degeneracy as this: not only are the Singalese of today utterly incapable of creative work, but they are so far fallen that they have piously smeared this superb statuary with thick coats of gamboge so lavishly that the delicacy of the modelling is entirely concealed.

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

The only incident was that I came across my first buffalo. In the course of a ramble, I had come out upon a clearing in the forest where there was a shallow lake. A bull with two cows arrived simultaneously from the other

side, in quest of a drink. In those days I carried a Mauser `303. I got within a hundred yards before he took alarm. As he raised his head I aimed and fired. The cartridge failed to explode and the bull thundered past me before I could reload. If he had been charging — good night! I took the lesson to heart and always carried a double-barrelled rifle ever after. Apart from the extra time needed to lower a single-barrelled rifle and manipulate the lever, which might well cause a fatal delay, there is more than a possibility of a cartridge jamming, which would leave one entirely unarmed.

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

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

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

I spent some weeks wandering through the southern provinces. I cannot forbear mentioning one charming incident. At some station or other, I was about to take the train. A white man with a long white beard came down the whole length of the train in the blazing sun to my carriage. He had seen that I was strange to the country and asked if he could be of any service. (Unless one knows the ropes, one has to put up with a lot of petty discomforts.)

The man was Colonel Olcott. It was the first act of kindly thoughtfulness that I had ever known a theosophist perform — and the last. For many years.

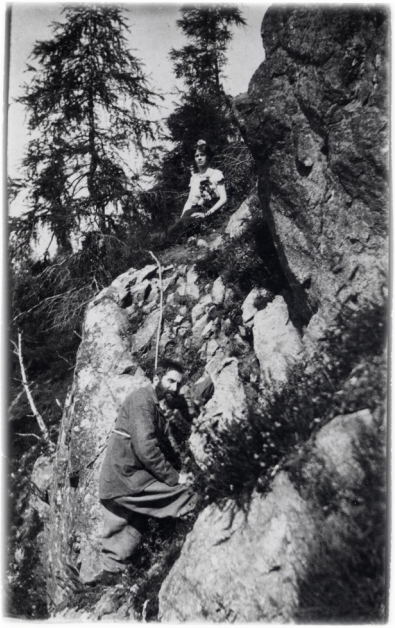
The rock temples of Madura are probably the finest in India, perhaps in the world. There seems no limit. Corridor after corridor extends its majestic sculptures, carved monoliths, with august austerity. They are the more impressive that the faith which created them is as vital today, as when India was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

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

To a young wizard waltzing round the world, some of the early impressions of the India whose philosophy and religion he has learnt to reverence so profoundly are a shade disconcerting. I could not help feeling the degradation of the woman who swept out the dak bungalow at Madura. She was a grotesque hag at thirty. I had seen nothing of the kind in Mexico, or, indeed, anywhere else before or since, till I struck the back-blocks of the United

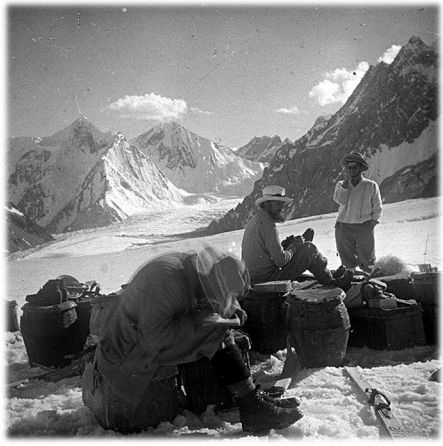
States of America. But in her time she had been a woman of great wealth, for I could have put my hand and arm clean through the lobe of her ear. She must at one time have worn enormously heavy earrings.

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

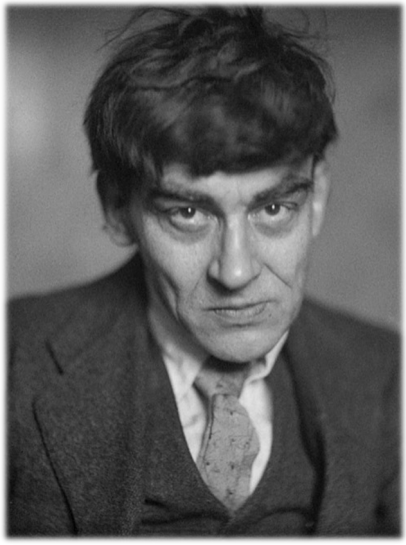


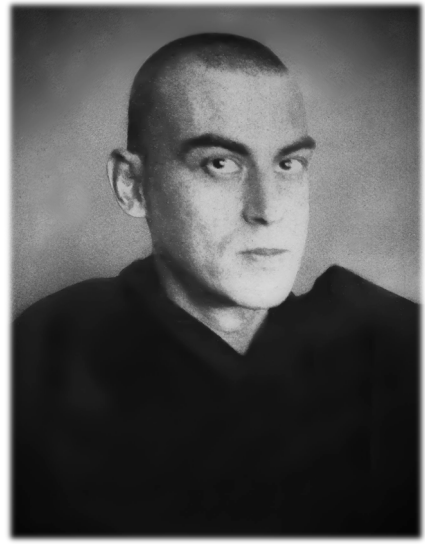
Oscar Eckenstein

K2 expedition



Ascent to K2





Charles Henry Allan Bennett - Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya

I had made a point from the beginning of making sure that my life as a Wanderer of the Waste should not cut me off from my family, the great men of the past. I got India-paper editions of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Browning; and, in default of India paper, the best editions of *Atalanta in Calydon*. *Poems and Ballads* (First Series), Shelley, Keats and *The Qabalah Unveiled*. I caused all these to be bound in vellum, with ties. William Morris had re-introduced this type of binding in the hope of giving a mediaeval flavour to his publications. I adopted it as being the best protection for books against the elements. I carried these volumes everywhere, and even when mu alleged waterproof rucksack was soaked through, my masterpieces remained intact. Let this explain why I should have been absorbed in Browning's *Christmas Eve* and *Easter Day* at Tuticorin. I was criticizing it in the light of my experience in Dhyana, and the result was to give me the idea of answering Browning's apology for Christianity by what was essentially a parody of his title and his style. My poem was to be called "Ascension Day and Pentecost".

I wrote "Ascension Day" at Madura on November 16th and 'Pentecost" the day after; but my original idea gradually expanded. I elaborated the two poems from time to time, added "Berashith" — of which more anon — and finally "Science and Buddhism", an essay on these subjects inspired by a comparative study of what I had learnt from Allan Bennett and the writings of Thomas Henry Huxley. These four elements made up the volume finally published under the title *The Sword of Song*.

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

domestic misery of Europe and America, but exposes the individual to neurosis. It is hardly too much to say that our lives are blasted by conscience. We resort to suppression and the germs created an abscess.

The Hindu is of course a slave to his superstitions about sin even more than most nominal Christians, for the simple reason that he is absolutely serious about the welfare of his soul. I remember coming across a tribe which did not use tobacco. I offered them some and they refused. I supposed it was forbidden by their religion, but they told me no. It was, however, not commanded by their religion; they could therefore see no object in doing it. The Hindu attitude towards sin, absurd as it is, compares favourably with ours; because, though afraid of it, they have not reached our own state of panic which makes us the prey of the most fantastic superstitions and perversions of truth. I have found it practically impossible to convince middle-class

Anglo-Saxons of facts which anyone would think were bound to be known. They take refuge in angry denial. It seems to them that if they once admit the most elementary and obvious propositions, they are bound to fall headlong into a bottomless pit of bestiality. Where, in fact, they always are.

31

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

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

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

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

Lambe was at the wharf to meet me and drove me off to his house, a large building in a compound, as gardens surrounded by a wall are called in India. It was a colony of four men, with one of whom, Edward Thornton, I

soon struck up an intimacy based on implicit sympathy in the matter of philosophical speculation.

Before I had been in the house three days, a curious incident occurred. I am always absent-minded. A current of thought flows through the back of my brain quite independent of what I am consciously doing. I might even say that the above statement is incorrect. Most of the time I am more conscious of what I am thinking than of what I am saying and doing. Now there was an animated conversation at dinner about the absurdity of the native mind; the curious ideas that they got into their heads; and I "awoke" to hear someone say, as an illustration of this thesis, that the servants of the house were very excited by my arrival because I had penetrated into the temple at Madura and sacrificed a goat. I had said nothing to my friends about my interest in Magick and religion, and they were much astonished when I told them that their servants were right. I explained how I had cut communications at Madras and wanted to know how the servants could possibly have found out the facts.

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

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

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

The "native telegraph" now reappeared in a different form. Somehow or other my munshi got it into his head that I was a Magician. This was very curious, as I had done practically no Magick since landing in Ceylon and certainly had not talked about it at all. *The Sword of Song* bears witness to the completeness with which I had abandoned Magick. I had not in the least lost my faith in its efficacy: I regarded it very much as I regarded rock climbing. I could not doubt that I was the best rock climber of my generation, but I knew

that my abilities in that respect would not help me to climb Chogo Ri any more than my ability at billiards would help me to understand Dostoyevsky. Similarly, my magical attainment had no bearing on my Quest. Of course I was wrong. I had simply failed to understand the possibilities of Magick. I had not realized that it was the practical side of spiritual progress.

Ultimately, my Magick proved more far-reaching in importance than my mysticism, as will appear in due course.

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

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

I had little real pleasure in rattling the rupees in my pocket. My cynical disgust with the corrupt pettiness of humanity, far from being assuaged by the consciousness of my ability to outmanoeuvre it, saddened me. I loved mankind; I wanted everybody to be an enthusiastic aspirant to the absolute. I expected everybody to be as sensitive about honour as I was myself. My disillusionment drove me more and more to determine that the only thing worth

doing was to save humanity from the horror of its own ignorant heartlessness. But I was still innocent to the point of imbecility. I had not analysed human conduct: I did not understand in the least the springs of human action. Its blind bestiality was a puzzle which appalled me, yet I could not even begin to estimate its elements.

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

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

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

Jan. 15. It is a fallacy that the absolute must be the all-good, etc. There is *not* an intelligence directing law — line of least resistance. Its own selfishness has not even the wit to prevent Buddha arising. We cannot call nature

> *evil*. "Fatal" is the exact word. Necessity implies stupidity — this the chief attribute of nature. As to "supreme intelligence", consider how many billion years were required to develop even so low a thing as emotion.

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

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

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

On a litter in the shadow of the pagoda lay a boy of about fourteen years. He suffered from hydrocephalus. An enormous head, horrifyingly inane, surmounted a shrivelled body, too feeble even to support it. There indeed was a manifest symbol of the universe as conceived by the Buddha! Senseless suffering proves that nature has no purpose or pity. The existence of a single item of this kind in the inventory demonstrates the theorem. As I gazed on the child, I began to understand that all the syllogisms of optimism were enthymemes. Every teleology depends on the error of generalizing from a few selected phenomena. The boy impressed me more than the pagoda. One was the freak of misfortune; the other the considered climax of colossal care. Yet both were transitory and trivial toys of time. I went back to Rangoon profoundly penetrated by the insight which enabled the Buddha to attain understanding of the import of the cosmos.

Ever since leaving Ceylon I had been almost constantly down with malaria. In Rangoon the fever assumed a remittent form: I lived on quinine and iced champagne. The persistence of the disease brought me to a state in which I not longer struggled to recover my ordinary health. I lived on a low level, without desire even to die. I began to understand the psychology of Allan. My mind was abnormally clear: I was cleansed of the contamination of desire. Nothing was worth wishing for; I did not even complain of suffering. This state of mind is a useful experience. Something very similar can be induced artificially by fasting.

I recovered quite suddenly, though the cachexia continued. I was quite well, but felt extraordinarily weak. The curious thing about malaria is that one seems to lack strength to life a finger, and yet one can do the day's work with astonishing endurance. One makes up one's mind that one can't be any worse, and one's muscles are freed from the inhibition of fatigue just as they are if one anaesthetizes oneself with cocaine. I have walked thirty-five miles in sweltering heat through the most difficult jungle, carrying a heavy rifle, when I simply had not the strength to swallow my breakfast. One learns to live on a level of invalidism. Most Europeans accustomed to the tropics acquire this aptitude; they go on, year after year, apathetically carrying out their routine. They have got beyond disappointment and ambition.

I remember visiting a forest officer up country in Ceylon. We dined with him on the eternal monotony of chicken under various disguises and canned meats. Everything tastes alike. He had no conversation; he tried to entertain us by turning on a worn-out gramophone, as he had done to relive his evenings ever since the instrument was invented. He was an old man and could have retired on his pension two years earlier, but he had lost all interest

in life. What was the sense of his going to England? He had no friends, no family, no future! He had become part of the jungle. The psychology is common to all but men of rare intelligence and energy. They cling childishly to the skirts of civilization by drearily dressing for their dreary dinner; but everything becomes formal and meaningless. Unable to force an answer from the sphinx of their surroundings, they are petrified into its stony silence, which yet does not share its sublimity because it has neither shape nor soul.

In order to cross the Arakans to Akyab, we obtained various credentials from the authorities, especially a letter to the forest commissioner of the district that he might provide us with elephants. We engaged a servant, a man from Madras, whose name was Peter. The first question one asks of a servant in India is: his religion? Peter amused us by replying that he was "a free man, a Roman Catholic". Outside subscribers to missionary societies, everyone is aware what is implied by the term "native Christians". Anyone who is such an absolute scoundrel as to exceed the very wide latitude of his environment, who makes himself intolerable to his family, friends and neighbours, cuts the painter and "finds Jesus". Conversion is a certificate of incorrigible rascality. We should not have taken a Christian if we could have found anyone else who spoke English and Hindustani. The inconceivable pettiness of the thefts of Peter was to me a revelation of the possibilities of human degradation. It was combined with such cowardice of conscience that one could understand easily why the "native Christian" invariably calls on his deathbed for the minister of his original religion.

32

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

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

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

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

It soon began to get hot, and a double `577 is not the kind of toy one wants to carry on a fifteen-mile tramp. As a matter of fact, I probably did nearer twenty miles than fifteen, as I was going eight hours with very little rest. We went up and down hills repeatedly, but thee wild buffalo was shy, and, as a matter of fact, I did not the whole day see anything whatever shootable, except some small birds which I took home for dinner. In the afternoon we went off bathing together in a delightful pool directly under the hill on which the bungalow was situated. I took down the shout gun with the intention of killing a big paddy bird which we saw from the bank. These birds are valuable on account of the aigrette. I fired, but my shot did not seem to hurt him, and he flew off. I resigned the gun to the Burmese boy, and had just finished my bath when the impudent beast came back. I hastily signalled for the gun; and putting on a topee and a towel round my waist proceeded to stalk him across the ford. I must have presented the most ridiculous spectacle. Thornton said he had not laughed so much for years, and I daresay that the paddy bird laughed too; but I got the best laugh in the end, for after about ten minutes' infinite pains I got a close shot at him, which put an end to his career. That evening we tried to eat roast parrots, but it was a total failure. I am told, however, that parrot pie is quite a good dish; well, I don't like parrot, so there will be all the more for those who do.

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

the path with him and that he had hit it on the head, whereon the animal had rolled down the steep slopes towards the river. I could not make out from his description what kind of an animal it could possibly be, but on examining the tracks I saw them to be those of a nearly full-grown leopard. We did not retrieve the body, though it must have been mortally wounded, otherwise Thornton would hardly have escaped so easily.

The headman now returned and told us that he could not give us coolies to cross the Arakan Hills, nobody had ever been there, and it was very dangerous, and everyone who went there died, and all that sort of thing. But he could give us men to go about twenty miles, and no doubt we should be able to get more coolies there. I thought there was more than a little doubt; and, taking one thing with another, decided it would be best to give up the idea and go instead back to the Irrawaddy down the Mindon Chong; we consequently hired a boat of the dug-out type, about thirty-five feet long and just broad enough for two men to pass; over the middle of the boat was the usual awning. The next morning we started down the stream, always through the most delightful country and among charming people. All the villages in this part of the country are strongly fortified with palisades of sharpened bamboos. The voyage down the river was exceedingly pleasant and the shooting delightful. One could sit on the stern of the boat and pot away all day at everything, from snipe to heron. Our Burmese boys and the kites had great rivalry in retrieving the game. The kites seemed to know that they would not be shot at. I had another slight attack of fever in the afternoon, but nothing to speak of. We tied up at Sakade for the night. There was no dak bungalow near and one does not sleep in a Burmese village unless necessity compels. And yet

> By palm and pagoda enchaunted o'ershadowed, I lie in the light
> Of stars that are bright beyond suns that all poets have vaunted
> In the deep-breathing amorous bosom of forests of Amazon might,
> By palm and pagoda enchaunted.
>
> By spells that are murmured, and rays of my soul strongly flung,
> never daunted;
> By gesture and tracery traced with a wand dappled white,
> I summon the spirits of earth from the gloom they for ages have
> haunted.
>
> O woman of deep red skin! Carved hair like the teak! O delight
> Of my soul in the hollows of earth — how my spirit hath taunted . . .

Away! I am here, I am laid to the breast of the earth in the dusk
of the night,
By palm and pagoda enchaunted.

This poem was inspired by an actual experience. The effects of my continued bouts of fever had been to make me spiritually sensitive. The jungle spoke to me of the world which lies behind material manifestation. I perceived directly that every phenomenon, from the ripple of the river to the fragrance of the flowers, is the language by which the subtle souls of nature speak to our senses. That night we were tied up under a teak tree, and as I lay awake with my eyes fixed ecstatically on its grace and vigour, I found myself in the embraces of the Nat or elemental spirit of the tree. It was a woman vigorous and intense, of passion and purity so marvellous that she abides with me after these many years as few indeed of her human colleagues. I passed a sleepless night in a continuous sublimity of love.

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

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

is not exposed, unless a lucky pellet should find its way to the brain. So on the next occasion, having noticed that when disturbed they always went down stream, I went some distance below them and sent two boys to frighten them from above. The result was an excellent right and left, and I consoled myself for my previous fiascos. We stopped the night at Toun Myong.

After a delightful night we went off the next morning and got to Kama on the Irrawaddy, whence we signalled the steamboat which took us back to Prome, where we stopped that night. The next day we spent in visiting the pagoda, Thornton doing some sketching and I writing a couple of Buddhist poems. We went off in the evening for Rangoon. The next day we drove about the town but did little else; and on Monday we paid off Peter. The principle on which I had dealt with this man was to give him money in lump sums as he wanted it, and to call him to give an account of all he had spent. He made out that we owed him thirty-seven rupees by this said account. I made a few trifling corrections; reducing the balance in his favour, and including the wages due to him (which he had not reckoned), to two rupees, four annas. He was very indignant and was going to complain to everyone from the lieutenant-governor to the hotel-keeper. I think he was rather staggered when I told him that, as he had been a very good servant in other respects, I would give him as backsheesh the bottle of champagne and the three tins which he had already stolen. He appeared very surprised at my having detected this theft. Whereby hangs a tale. On leaving Rangoon I gave him a list of all the provision, with the instructions that when he took anything from the store he was to bring the list to me and have that thing crossed off. On the second day the list was missing; he, of course, swore that I had not given it back to him. I had kept a duplicate list, which I took very good care not to show.

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

On the twelfth of February I went on board the *Komilla* for Akyab, where Allan was now living. In the course of the day the sea air completely restored me to health. On the thirteenth we were off Sandaway, which did not appear fascinating. On the next day we put in a Kyakpyu, which I had so vainly hoped to reach overland. It has a most delightful bay and beach, its general appearance recalling the South Sea Islands; but the place is a den of malaria. We had no time to land, as the captain was anxious to get into Akyab

the same night. We raced through the straits and cast anchor there about eight o'clock — just in time.

I went ashore with the second officer and proceeded in my usual casual manner to try to find Allan in the dark. The job was easier than I anticipated. The first man I spoke to greeted me as if I had been his long-lost brother, and took me off in his own carriage to the monastery (the name of which is Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung) where I found Allan, whom I now saw for the first time as a Buddhist monk. The effect was to make him appear of gigantic height, as compared to the diminutive Burmese, but otherwise there was very little change. The old gentleness was still there.

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

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

They managed to give me some sort of a shakedown, and I slept very pleasantly at the monastery. The next morning I went off to breakfast on board to say goodbye to the captain, who had shown me great kindness, and

afterwards took my luggage and went to Dr. Moung Tha Nu, the resident medical officer, who welcomed me heartily and offered me hospitality during my stay in Akyab.

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

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

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

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

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

The best thing in Book III of *Orpheus*, which occupied this period, is, perhaps, the invocation to Hecate, which I recited at Akyab with full magical intention. The goddess appeared in the form of Bhavani. The fact made more concrete my perception of the essential identity of all religions. Sinai and Olympus, Mount Kailasha and Mount Meru differed from each other as do the Dent Blanche, Mote Silvio and the Steinbockhorn. It is the same mountain seen from different sides and named by different people. It encouraged me to continue my studies in the Cabbala, which claims to reduce all possible ideas to combinations of comparatively few originals, the ten numbers, in fact; these ten numbers themselves being of course interrelated.

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

as to say that the form of the latter implies the consciousness of duality and therefore tends to inhibit identification.

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

Sunday the twenty-third I went aboard S.S. *Kapurthala* to return to Calcutta. The next day we anchored outside Chittagong, a most uninteresting place. I was to lazy to land. Two days later I got back to Calcutta. Getting my mail, I busied myself in preparing for the great journey. It was now definitely settled that our expedition should meet at Rawalpindi. I only took one day off, when I went to Sodpur snipe shooting with a friend of Thornton's, with whom I was now staying, Lambe having gone off to Australia.

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

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

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

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

The aesthetic criticism needs revision. I do not think the building beautiful; the conception is too exquisite for the scale of the execution. The is that of an etching twenty feet by thirty.

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

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

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

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

I went to Delhi on the sixteenth. The best thing here is the Turkish bath, where the process of purification is completed by charming ladies. On the eighteenth I wrote about Orpheus, "The accursed Book III utterly finished. Oh *Book IV*!" On the nineteenth I went and saw the fort with "Major Graham, a prize fool from South Africa". The entry demands emendation.

He wasn't a major; his name wasn't Graham; he had never been to South Africa; and he was anything but a fool! His idea was to represent himself as in charge of some Boer prisoners and obtain credit and cash by various misrepresentations.

The twentieth and twenty-first were great days in my life. I wrote an essay which I originally gate the title "Crowleymas Day" and published under the title "Berashith" in Paris by itself, incorporating it subsequently in *The Sword of Song*. The general idea is to eliminate the idea of infinity from our conception of the cosmos. It also shows the essential identity of Manichaeism (Christianity), Vedantism and Buddhism. Instead of explaining the universe as modifications of a unity, which itself needs explaining, I regard it as NOTHING, conceived as (illusory) pairs of contradictories. What we call a thought does not really exist at all by itself. It is merely half of nothing. I know that there are practical difficulties in accepting this, though it gets rid so nicely of a priori obstacles. However, the essay is packed with ideas, nearly all of which have proved extremely fertile, and it represents fairly enough the criticism of my genius upon the varied ideas which I had gathered since I first came to Asia.

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

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

> Maiden, the proprietor of the hotel, came with me and provided a most admirable tiffin. I lent him my Mauser and relied myself upon the `577. After getting permission from the engineer in

charge of the canal works, we put off in a small boat and rowed up the stream. Very soon we saw a fine big crocodile on the banks; but as they are very suspicious beasts and slide into the water at anyone's approach, we determined to try a long shot. I crawled into the bow of the boat, and while the natives held the boat steady, loosed off at about a hundred and thirty yards. The shot was either a very good one or a very lucky one, for the magar was certainly mortally wounded by it. We rowed rapidly up to the beast to find him lashing about in a couple of feet of water and bleeding profusely. I had almost certainly shot him through the heart. Unfortunately, this is of very little use with these reptiles. We got up as close as the natives could be persuaded to go. There certainly was some risk if we had gone quite close in, but we ought to have ventured near enough to drive a boat-hook into the mud between him and the deep water. But they could not be persuaded to do this and there was no time for argument. Maiden sat up in the middle of the boat and fired about fifteen Mauser cartridges into the struggling crocodile, which I think was a proceeding of doubtful utility. He persuaded me, however, to fire a couple more cartridges myself, which I did, right down the beast's throat. The second shot, however, very nearly led to a catastrophe, as the boat was not at all steady and the recoil of the heavy express sent me an awful cropper backwards on to the gunwale of the boat. Luckily no harm came of it. I was now more anxious than ever to get hold of the beast or to pin him with the boathook, thought his struggles were gradually ceasing, but nothing we could do was any good; little by little he slid off the shallow into the deep water and sank. After hunting about for twenty minutes we gave the affair up as a bad job.

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

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

The Chogo Ri expedition had begun.

34

Agreement between Oscar Eckenstein and Aleister Crowley

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

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

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

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

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

"The leader" must give his orders in writing if requested. (N.B. This should always be done if separation of the party is involved.) "The leader" shall have the right to consult any member of the party, who must consider his difficulty with judicial care, and return a serious answer, in writing if requested. Should any dispute arise, a council may be called to sit under parliamentary usage, "the leader" to be chairman, unless his own conduct be in question. In the latter case, a chairman to

be selected. A majority vote to decide. "The leader" to have a casting vote in case of equality. "The leader's" orders shall be otherwise without appeal, and shall be obeyed cheerfully and to the best of ability: except that no member of the party is to be obliged anywhere to risk his life, how own judgment to be the arbiter as to whether such and such an order involves danger, whether from men, starvation, animals or other causes.

5. All members of the party pledge themselves to have nothing whatever to do with women in any way that is possibly avoidable: not to interfere in any way whatever with native prejudices and beliefs.
This clause shall take effect from the accomplishment of (3).

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

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

Witness our hands.

At Kandy, Oct. 12th, 1901.

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

This is called the Misadventure of Pfannl.

Mountain Sigma. On the Finsteraarhorn after traversing Schreckhorn directly from R.R. journey, Pfannl had to be carried down

from the Concordia but. Again, on the Géant, he collapsed from food, etc. The whole moral of this is: "If Pfannl collapses, it will be complete. He is sure to overtrain."

The Austrians were totally unable to understand the workings of the native mind, as appeared very soon. It was a great mistake to bring them. The sixth member of the party was a Swiss ex-Army doctor named Guillarmod, who looked and behaved like Tartarin de Tarascon. He knew as little of mountains as he did of medicine, and proved a great source of weakness, though his delightful geniality helped both the psychology of the party and our relations with the natives. He was our comic relief and did much to make things more tolerable for all of us. For all that, I think we should have done better to take none of the foreigners[47]. Our numbers made us unwieldy; and the question of international jealousy contributed indirectly to our failure, as will be explained later.

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

Our adventures began with startling suddenness. I woke up in the dak bungalow at Tret the next morning to find a dignified young gentleman sitting at my bedside. I wondered if I had been ill without knowing it, for his face expressed the sympathetic concern of Luke Fildes's "doctor". Not at all; he was a police inspector who had arrived by tonga, a two-horse rattletrap which is used by people in what passes for a hurry in these parts of the world. All he knew was that we mustn't start — "his not to reason why". I said he had better talk to the leader of the expedition, Mr. Eckenstein. He assumed an awed expression, as if I had said something not quite nice. Knowles and I, who were sharing the same room, proceeded to dress with elegant leisure and bore our bewilderment to Eckenstein.

[47] This was done in stark violation of clause 3. Knowles and I paid the whole expenses of these undesirable aliens.

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

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

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

Temporarily deprived of our leader, we went on wearily to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, which we reached on the fourteenth of April. Several incidents ion the road demonstrated the extraordinary importance which the

government attached to Eckenstein. Though everything had been arranged, there were all sorts of excitement at the frontier, and telegrams and spies were bustling about. It reminded me of the turmoil in an ant-had which had been disturbed.

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

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

On the fourth day the ekka drivers conspired cautiously to delay us. On the fifth they appointed a delegate to give us hell. (The arrangement was that Knowles and I should bring up the rear of the procession to prevent any ekkas from straggling.) This man kept on making unnecessary repairs in his harness, and finally managed to lock his wheel in that of another ekka which happened to meet us. He was delighted to find that I made no complaint and he thought that he was going to get away with it. His ekka and ours arrived in camp more than an hour after the rest of the party. But the moment we were visible I jumped down, fixed my left hand in his beard (itself a blood insult), dragged him from his ekka and lammed into him with my belt in view of the whole camp — apparently without any provocation.

The psychology is instructive. I knew that the man's misbehaviour was a put-up job; in beating him, I was establishing the morale of the whole expedition. Their subtle minds understood perfectly the essential justice of my action and applauded my perspicuity and determination. The result was that I never had the slightest difficulties with natives in India ever afterwards and

was able to practise perfect tolerance of genuine accidents. I had forced them to respect us, which, with an Indian, is the first step to acquiring his love. And the men soon showed themselves willing to risk their lives, as they ignorantly thought they were being asked to do, in order to please us. Younghusband's expedition of Yarkand cost seventeen coolies their lives, and our men were convinced that the object of our expedition was to make a new pass to that city. Nothing I could say would persuade them otherwise. They came and told me that they knew they were going to die on the journey and they were quite willing to do it. They were almost disappointed when I sent them back from Camp 10!

Had I failed to understand the psychology of the ekka driver, we should have been nagged to death by pin-pricks. On the way back, crossing the Deosai plateau, we fell in with an English lieutenant who, after a fruitless shikar after ibex, had been worried into illness and was being deliberately worried to death by his servants, who kept on misunderstanding his orders "accidentally on purpose". They had found out his weak spot and had no mercy. The first business of any traveller in any part of the world is to establish his moral superiority. He has to be uniformly calm, cheerful, just, perspicacious, indulgent and inexorable. He must decline to be swindled out of the fraction of a farthing. If he once gives way, he is done for.

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

We cannot even plead that we have lacked a prophet. The genius of Rudyard Kipling, however aesthetically abominable, has divined the secrets of destiny with cloudless clarity. His stories and his sermons are equally in-

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

I am not responsible[48] for the fact that the universe is constructed in defiance of the principles of reason. I see perfectly that the crude conceptions of European culture are intellectually contemptible; but if we are to enter into relations of any kind with the East, we must either behave like little children in the presence of age and wisdom, or we must be brutal bosses. The soldiers who slew Archimedes had only one alternative — to sit at his feet and learn geometry, and thank him when he rapped them over the knuckles. We must therefore choose between shutting up fourteen thousand sipahis in a compound and blowing them to pieces with grapeshot in cold blood, like Havelock, and sprawling to kiss their slippers like European students of Yoga. Our attempt to compromise between incompatible civilizations can only end in our confessing the impotence of our own.

We see, even in England itself, how the abdication of Norman arrogance has let to the abrogation of all standards of superiority, so that the man who wishes to govern England today is obliged to conform with the dishonest devices and servile stratagems of democracy. Government demands virtue; in its etymological sense of manliness. In modern England, courage, truthfulness and determination are at a discount. A leader can only lead by drugging the populace. When Beaconsfield (wasn't it?) said, "We must educate our masters," he formulated the creed of Communism; for it is impossible to educate the people. I myself, despite my public school and university,

[48] P.S. — Well, I am not so sure.

despite a life devoted to continual travel and study of social, political, economic and historical facts, am only too well aware of my abject incompetence to provide a remedy for the least of the diseases which have come to actual issue. I only know that one must abdicate one's intelligence and submit to rule-of-thumb government. The best master is a go-as-you-please generous gentleman who settles everything by rude common sense. Our modern pretence at scientific government, based on theories and statistics, possesses all the irremediable inadequacies of purblind pedantry. My wanderings have shown me that individual happiness and prosperity flourished most freely in Mexico under the autocracy of Diaz, Russia under that of the tsar, India and Egypt under that of England, and China when the son of Heaven exercised supreme and unquestioned sway.

The last quarter of a century has swamped all these. The world is seething with the dissatisfaction that springs from insecurity. Men can adapt themselves to pretty well any conditions, but when they do not know from one day to another whether some fundamental principle may not be abolished in the interests of progress, they no longer know where they are. They tend to adopt the principles of the man who flits from one place to another, grabbing portable property and dodging creditors and policemen. Civilization has become a hysterical scramble for momentary material advantage. Thrift is senseless when one is threatened with a levy on capital. Investment is insane when gilt-edged securities may lose two thirds of their value for no assignable reason. Suppose two brothers inherited ten thousand pounds apiece in 1900: one keeps his gold in a bag and spends four hundred pounds a year; the other buys Consols and lives on a little over two hundred pounds of the income without touching his capital. Today[49] the spendthrift would be worth more than his prudent brother. Marriage is a detestable institution, but the facilities for divorce (introduced ostensibly in the interests of the woman) have cut away the economic ground from under her feet.

I have little use for Rudyard Kipling, especially in his latter days of senile schoolboyishness, aggravated by his addiction to the hydroxide of the second of the paraffin radicles. But his general attitude about India obtains my adhesion. We conquered the peninsula by sheer moral superiority. Our unity, our self-respect, our courage, honesty and sense of justice awakened the wonder, commanded the admiration and enforced the obedience of those who either lacked those qualities altogether, possessed some of them and felt

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

the lack of the others, or had, actually or traditionally, sufficient of them to make them the criteria of right and ability to govern. As elsewhere observed, our modern acquiescence in the rationally irrefutable argument that the colour of a man's skin does not prevent him from being competent in any given respect, has knocked the foundations from underneath the structure of our authority.

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

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

To begin with, they cannot stand the climate, which compels them to live lives whose inevitable tendency is to relax the moral fibre. Thus even high-class memsahibs sometimes have themselves bathed by their beras. The excuse is that any sexual irregularity with such inferior animals is unthinkable. But "a man's a man for a' that." Incidentally, the heat increases the female lasciviousness as it decreases the male. White women are thus subject to continual nervous irritation of which they often fail to suspect the character. Besides, the healthiest of them is usually more or less ailing in various minor respects. They are usually short-tempered from this and other causes, and any species of lack of self-control has a fatal effect on the attitude of the native.

Apart from this, it seems to him incredibly shameless on our part that our women should appear in public at all; that they should do so unguarded and unveiled appears the climax of immodesty. Some Englishmen are fatuous enough to suppose that they have explained quite nicely to the satisfaction of Indians — whose point of view in these matters is practically identical from Tuticorin to Peshawar, and Chittagong to Karachi; it being an imperative necessity imposed by the climate, irrespective of creeds and social condi-

tions — that our customs are compatible with correct conduct and even common decency. Such self-delusion marks the utmost limit of bad psychology. India could be kept in order, even now, to its own salvation and our great credit and profit, if we would eliminate the European women and tradesmen, the competition wallah, and the haw-haw officer, and entrust the government of the country to a body of sworn "samurai" vowed like the Jesuits to chastity and obedience, together with either poverty or a type of splendour in which there should be no element of personal pride or indulgence, but only prestige. Like the Jesuits, too, these men should be sworn never to return to Europe as long as they lived. The capacity of such men to govern would be guaranteed by the fact of their having volunteered to accept such conditions. They would enjoy universal respect and absolute trust. They would require no army to enforce their authority. All the best elements of India would spontaneously unite to support it. One further condition. They would have to be guaranteed against the interference of any ignorant and indifferent House of Commons. The stupid callousness of the India Office is as much to be dreaded as the silly sentimentalism of sympathizers with "national aspirations", "the brotherhood of man" and all such bunkum.

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

It was an affectation of poetry and romance in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to let itself go about the vale of "Cashmere": "Whom, not having seen, we adore." The descriptions are as vague as they are voluptuous. In reality Kashmir has very positive and definite qualities, and they have certainly never been suggested by the polite dithyrambs of its distant devotees. Technically, of course, it is principally the valley of the Jhelum. But the country does not impress one as being a valley at all: it is a well-watered plateau, ringed by mountains, with a narrow gap through which the river empties itself. Its height is from six thousand to eight thousand feet above the sea. The climate in spring and summer resembles that of Mexico combined with that of Switzerland. The air is clear and exhilarating, yet an atmosphere of peace tempts the wayfarer to pass away the time in the delights

of love-in-idleness. In winter the snows transform it to a fascinating fairy-land, rather like northern Europe with the addition of sunlight.

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

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

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

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

A curious misfortune overtook a native in this connection. His little farm was on the banks of the Indus. During the winter two landslides cut him off completely from his neighbours. The mountain path could not be repaired until the spring. He saved himself from starvation by killing his cow. For this offence he barely escaped the penalty of death.[50]

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

The general bandobast of the expedition was open to a good deal of criticism. One of Eckenstein's few failings was his faith in professorial science.

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

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

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

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

Next came our staff of personal servants, headed by Salama Tantra, who was in all respects an admirable servant, so much so that I brought him from Kashmir in 1905 and took him with me across China. His subordinates were all good men in their way and we had not trouble with them.

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

The naivety of the natives was sometimes very amusing. The regular rate of pay was fourpence a day, and this princely profusion induced the inhabitants of distant side valleys to make sometimes as much as six days' march in each direction from their homes to some point on our route. They would then disseminate themselves among the crowd of coolies and present

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

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

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

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

A great fuss has been made about the actual difficulties and dangers of crossing the pass, but it is merely a long snow trudge. Pfannl and Wessely, who were always boiling over to exhibit their prowess, went up to the col to prospect. They reported on returning (a) that they could not see anything, (b) that the pass was very steep on the other side, and (c) that the other side was

free from snow. On the following day we learnt that the first of these statements may have been correct; the other two enlarged my horizon as to the possibilities of inaccuracy.

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

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

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

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

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

Apart from the mere fatigue of these marches, they are made detestable by the utter monotony and ugliness of the landscape. The mountains are huge hideous heaps of shapeless drab. There is hardly one noble contour; there is not rest for the eye; there is no aspiration and no interest — nothing but a gnawing desire to be done with the day's dreary dragging. In addition to this there is a good deal of actual discomfort. The glare of the sun in very distressing and either it, or its reflection from the hot arid rocks, is scorching. At the same time it often happens that a bitterly biting wind is blowing. It seems to eat into one's very bones with harsh cold. One does not know what to do about clothes. On one side one is roasted; one the other frozen. It is easy to understand how the heart leaps whenever the eye falls upon the distant green lattice of a grove, and even how eagerly the eye looks for geological indication of the probability of one appearing. It is an additional annoyance that the mere distance one has travelled tells one so little as to what remains to be done, for the reasons given above.

On some of these marches we were able to get ponies, though the Austrians disdained such effeminacy. The Indian hill pony compares very unfavourably with the Mexican. He is neither so swift, so strong, nor so surefooted. More often than not, too, he is in bad condition and sometimes actually lame. The best of them stumble at almost every other step, though ti is

said that they never lose their footing completely. I could never rid my self altogether of nervousness. The road is officially the highway to Skardu and Yarkand, but it rarely amounts to more than a rough and narrow mountain track, scarce better than the paths to Alpine Club huts, at their worst. Some stages, indeed, are altogether impracticable for ponies, either because the track crosses a ravine by a rope bridge or because actually too steep for them to climb. The road is never dangerous from the point of view of the pedestrian, but it looks so to a man on horseback; for in a great many places its loose stones lie on the edge of what is a precipice for all practical purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

The exhilaration of the game is extraordinary. Played as it is, it is free from the lust of result which has spoilt practically all sorts and games in Europe. Strange that in my old age I should suddenly find myself acquiescing in the absurdity which angered me so when a boy, Champney's plan of playing cricket without scoring runs. After all, the madman was right. It would be far

finer to play the game for the sake of enjoying the free exercise of one's enthusiasm. True it is, scoring does lead to post-mortem controversies which are not in the spirit of sport. Climbing itself is being very much spoilt by the attitude of the Alpine Club in insisting that the achievement, not the enjoyment, is the important thing. It has let to their virulent, dishonest, envious intrigues against guideless climbing and climbers. This is the American spirit, to count and compare instead of being content with spiritual satisfaction. This is what is meant by the Scripture, "The love of money is the root of all evil."

This spirit is at the root of all modern attempts at standardization of attainment and it leads directly to every kind of foul play, falsehood, cheating and controversy. Consider merely American football and baseball; the drilling of the teams to carry out a series of evolutions designated by a string of ciphers. Again, what of the intrigues to attain the transfer of professional players, to say nothing of the possible selling of matches to syndicates of gamblers? Sport of all kinds has tended to become spectacular and gladiatorial even in games like lawn tennis, which was originally the very incarnation of social amenity. It is the same story everywhere; see boxing, in which a man may get more for half an hour's battery than any dozen university professors receive for a lifetime of devoted labour on behalf of the race. The root of the mischief is the spirit of taking life too seriously. It is really almost expected of the man who happens to run over to Philadelphia from New York for a day, that he should forthwith write an encyclopaedic history of the Quakers.

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

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

We stayed at the dak bagha, which stood some thirty yards back from a delicious stream of clear water. One evening, just after sunset, a young man appeared carrying on his shoulders his brother, who had been working in a quarry. A falling rock had struck the inside of the leg just below the knee and laid it open to the bone as far as the ankle. The doctor needed plenty of running water. So we took the patient down to the stream and held Alpine lanterns while the doctor operated. The leg was in a shocking mess and we suggested chloroform. The doctor said "No — the boy will faint with the pain in a few seconds," and he went on washing out the dirt and snipping away loose pieces of flesh, and ultimately stitching up the whole fourteen inches of wound. The game went on for an hour and a half. But the boy never lost consciousness, and never moaned or so much as murmured. We heard nothing from him except a perfectly calm request, about half way through the job, for a drink of water.

I did not content myself with admiring the lad's stoicism. His conduct made me suspect that the Mongolian (the Baltis are Mongols) as a very different nervous system from our own. I understood Chinese ideas of torture form this and similar facts, and began to correlate these physiological reactions with the psychology and philosophy of the race. It helped me to see that what we call ultimate truth is in reality no more than a statement of the internal relations of the universe which we perceive. One may say, indeed, that a unicellular organism would be absolutely justified in explaining the universe

in terms of his own experience; that he could indeed by no possibility do anything else, and that the sole valid criticism which could be applied to his cosmology would be based on facts neither known nor knowable to him. Apply this argument to our actual ideas: any religion must rest of revelation and cannot be proved by reason or experience. It is at once necessary and impudent to claim the exercise of faith. From this it follows that religion must always be repugnant to reason and its upholders must be prepared to be called charlatans.

There is, however, one issue from this dilemma. It is possible to base a religion, not on theory and results, but on practice and methods. It is honest and hopeful to progress on admitted principles towards the development of each individual mind, and thus to advance towards the absolute by means of the consciously willed evolution of the faculty of apprehension. Such is in fact the idea underlying initiation. It constitutes the absolute justification of the Path of the Wise as indicated by the adepts, whether of the magical or mystical schools. For Yoga offers humanity an organ of intelligence superior to intellect, yet co-ordinate with it, and Magick serves to arose spiritual energies which while confirming those of the mind, bring them to their culmination.

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

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

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

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

On one march we had to walk along the smooth round stones of the river bed for several miles. The track became impossible for horses. We crossed a pari (a buttress which juts into the stream and has to be climbed in consequence) over twelve hundred feet high. The next day we came to Ghomboro. The character of the country had completely changed once more. We had got back to the conditions of the valley of the Upper Indus. Ghomboro is a delightful village of apricot orchards. Below the terraces roars the water of the Bralduh Nala, a terrific torrent pent between narrow cliffs.

The most striking impression of the entire journey is the variety of the physical geography. It is as if nature had conspired to afford one the maximum of new sensations. Nowhere else in the world have I observed such apparent discontinuity, such wealth of unexpected phenomena tumbling over each other to claim astonishment and admiration.

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

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

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

man bringing a stone as large as he could carry and dropping it into the most suitable place he could see. Having helped the men over the first torrent, I had automatically become rearguarded, and the bulk of the men had gone gaily over the second and more formidable obstacle when I arrived. They had got it into excellent condition and I strolled over as if it had been stepping stones across the Wharfe or the Lynn, and I was going to meet my girl!

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

The day following, another rope bridge brought us back to the right bank of the Bralduh, where another phenomenon of astonishing beauty lay in wait. The extremely narrow gorge through which the Bralduh rushes for so many miles had suddenly broadened out. We were in a wide smiling valley ringed with mountains which, gigantic as they were, seemed to confess by the comparative mediocrity of their structure that they were second rate. The valley is wholly bare of verdure except for plantations, as throughout Baltistan. The first thing to meet our eyes was what, suppose we had landed in the country of Brobdignag, only more, so, might have been the lace handkerchief of a Super-Glumdalclitch left out to dry. It was a glittering veil of brilliance of the hillside; but closer inspection, instead of destroying the illusion, made one exclaim with increased enthusiasm.

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

I had to summon my consciousness of godhead before venturing to invade it. The water streams delicately with sulphurous emanations, yet the

odour is subtly delicious. Knowles, the doctor and I spent more than an hour and a half reposing in its velvet warmth, in the intoxicating dry mountain air, caressed by the splendour of the sun. I experienced all the ecstasy of the pilgrim who has come to the end of his hardships. I felt as if I had been washed clean of all the fatigues of the journey. In point of fact, I had arrived, despite myself, at perfect physical condition. I had realized from the first that the proper preparation for a journey of this sort is to get as fat as possible before starting, and stay as fat as possible as long as possible. I was now in the condition in which Pfannl had been at Srinagar. I could have gone forty-eight hours without turning a hair.

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

In Wessely's case this was mostly because he had no imagination enough to be ill. None of us had ever seen such a perfect pig. He was very greedy and very myopic. In order to eat, he would bend his head over his plate and, using his knife and fork like the blades of a paddle wheel, would churn the food into his mouth with a rapid rotatory motion. There was always some going up, and always some going down, until he deposited his well-sucked instruments of nutrition on a perfectly clean plate and asked for more. It was the most disgusting sight that I have ever seen. Explorers are not squeamish; but we had to turn our heads away when Wessely started to eat. I admit and deplore my human weakness. All forms of genius should be admired and studied, and Wessely was a world's champion.

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

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

Later I asked him to dinner in London. He began with two large fried soles to his own cheek, and went on with a porterhouse steak. I forget the rest. But, compared with Wessely, he was a Succi! When Wessely reached Rdokass on the return journey, the servants asked permission to celebrate by killing two sheep of the flock which we had taken there; they would, or course, cook the best parts of the meat for the sahibs. Pfannl could eat nothing, and Guillarmod very little, but in a short time the servants repeated their request. Wessely had devoured practically the whole two sheep. Of course the mountain variety is not a Southdown. It probably does not weigh more than the average four months lamb in Sussex. But even so Wessely's exploit is pretty good.

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

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

I may mention in this place that experience has convinced me of the truth of the Hindu theories about Prana. Apart from the chemical and physiological transactions involved in eating, one is nourished directly, but what one must call, however one may hate to do so, the vital principle in food. We had already found on Iztaccihuatl that canned food ten years old failed to nourish anything like as well as stuff recently tinned. We derived much more energy from fresh-killed mutton, cooked before rigor mortis had set in, than from ordinary butcher's meat. I ultimately learnt that I could make myself actually drunk on half a dozen oysters chewed in the manner of the yogis.

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

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From the hot spring one goes gently along the valley to Askole. The whole march is short, easy and delightful. It only occupied five hours, of which at least three were spent at the rope bridge and in the pool. The entire journey had been extraordinarily favourable. We had had very little bad weather, the coolies had behaved admirably, there had been no accidents and no sickness, except for my own dermatological trouble. At Askole, however, several of the servants were slightly indisposed for a couple of days.

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

There was one trifling conflict of opinion between myself and Eckenstein at Askole. It was arranged that our valises should not exceed forty pounds on the glacier, though many of the loads exceeded fifty. I could not get my belongings within the limit. Eckenstein wanted me to leave behind my library. His theory of travelling in wild countries was that one should temporarily become an absolute savage; but my experience had already shown me that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. I attributed the almost universal mental and moral instability of Europeans engaged in exploring to their lack of proper intellectual relaxation far more than to any irritations and hardships inseparable from physical conditions. Conrad's "An Outpost of Progress" and Kipling's

story of the lighthouse keeper who went mad are outstanding examples of the psychological processes which are likely to occur. Perfectly good friends become ready to kill each other over a lump of sugar. I won't say that I couldn't have stood the Baltoro glacier in the absence of Milton and the rest; but it is at least the case that Pfannl went actually mad, that Wessely brooded on food to the point of stealing it, and that Eckenstein and Knowles[51] both lost their heads over the cholera scare! Thus the only man beside myself to retain perfect mental balance was the doctor, who kept his mind constantly occupied by observations in natural history, photography, writing articles for the Swiss newspapers, keeping an elaborate journal for the purposes of his book on the expedition, and spending the rest of his spare time in playing chess with me.

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

Pfannl and Wessely had become rather a nuisance. They complained of Eckenstein's discipline and made themselves notably unpleasant. We rather encouraged them to go off all day and make heroic ascents. But their proposal to take three days' provisions in their rucksacks and go off and climb K2 was negatived. It is really astonishing that so many days of travel had taught them nothing about the scale of the mountains. One cannot measure them by feet and miles. I myself cannot quite see how it is that the difference comes in. But there is not doubt of the fact. It is quite useless to talk of climbing a mountain whose summit is five thousand feet above the starting point, as one could do if one were in the Alps. For one thing, however perfect may be one's physical condition, the effect of marching day after day is to make it somehow impossible to make an extra effort. I suppose it is the difference between the hundred yards and the three miles at Queens. But apart from this, there seems to

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

be some subtle factor which determines the limit of the day's work. But if I could not explain, at least I thoroughly appreciated, the conditions.

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

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

Another ill effect of including the foreign element was this. Eckenstein, somewhat forgetful of the principles of selfless concentration which are essential to the performance of any Great Work, made a point of admitting the existence of the possibility on international jealousy. He therefore forbade me to cross the Bergschrund before the whole party had arrived at the main camp, which it was my business to establish at the foot of the mountain proper. I wish I had remembered about Nelson's blind eye. When I arrived at Camp 10 on the level glacier above the ice fall underneath the south-eastern slopes of Chogo Ri, I could have gone on without any difficulty up those slopes to the well-marked shoulder immediately beneath the final pyramid,

and had I done so, I have no doubt whatever that we could have made a successful dash for the summit.

I started on June 5th for Korophon, going as slowly as I could. The march occupied over forty-eight hours. The march crosses the Biafo glacier; and there I had my first real taste of certain conditions peculiar to the Himalayas. There is a violent alternation of heat and cold between night and day. The maximum shade temperature, rarely less than 25° centigrade, often touched 30° and sometimes climbed close to 40°, whereas the minimum was hardly ever above zero, even at Askole, and on the glacier reached anything from -10° to -30°. The result is that a few minutes of sunshine produces revolutionary results. A thick hard crust of snow disappears almost instantaneously and leaves one floundering in a mass of seething crystals. Rocks perched on ice become very hot in an incredibly short time and break loose from the ice on which they are poised in a way which takes men of merely Alpine experience by surprise. My Mexican expedition proved invaluable in enabling me to foresee these phenomena. But the first warning was given on this march when two enormous stones which, anywhere else, would have stayed where they were for years, fell about twenty yards in front of me and the advance guard!

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

The next day I went on to Bardumal at the foot of the spur. There are actually a few trees at this place. On this march one has to cross the Punmah, a broad and shallow stream which I found easy enough to ford. The alternative — to which we were reduced on our return — is to trudge about six miles up stream to a rope bridge and down the other bank. It may be that the low barometric pressure affects the velocity of running water, for streams seem much swifter than one would expect for the slope. The current carries down round stones in the most dangerous way. When Knowles tried to ford this river on the way back, though the water was barely knee-deep, he was swept away at once, and would have been drowned or battered to death in a few seconds if he had not been promptly pulled back by the rope which he had prudently put on. As it was, he received two violent blows from stones, one of which nearly snapped his thigh and the other his spine. On looking at the

photographs of this stream, it seems positively ridiculous to associate the slightest danger with crossing them.

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

There are many phenomena of extraordinary interest, had we not been surfeited with things stupendous and strange. At one part of this journey, we were literally walking for hours on garnets. Another marvel is a range of stratified eruptive rocks which stand out brilliantly black against the greys and browns of the background. Near Paiyu there is a regular range of mountains composed of consolidated glacial mud. Again, there is a row of pinnacles capped by enormous boulders on the principle of glacier tables.

They have been weathered into slender tapering cones; the stone at the top has protected them from being washed down evenly.

Paiyu is an open plateau boasting at least three trees. We were to remain a day here to build a stone house to protect our supplies and to do the repacking necessary for my advance guard.

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

Out of this arise an incident which I shall always remember with peculiar delight. I was able to play Haroun al-Rashid and administer poetic oriental justice. We had furnished the malefactors with magnificent new coats for the journey. One of the men, not content with this, had bullied and cheated one of the Kashmiri servants out of his torn rags, and insisted on disrobing his victim that he might bear away the spoils on his departure. To all intents and purposes, the man was left with nothing to wear. He complained to me. I heard the case with grave attention; I had to admit that by native justice the clothes belonged to the marauder, who grinned and triumphed and redoubled his insults to his discomfited dupe. "But wait," said I. "Hassan's coat certainly belongs to you, but the coat you are wearing belongs to *me*! So I made him take it off and clothed the unfortunate Hassan in its splendours, while

the villain of the piece had to go off down the valley (where a nice prison was waiting for him) clad in the wretched rags, much too small for him, amid the joy of the entire caravan at seeing the biter bit.

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

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

The most honest man cannot always be sure that he is not violating some statute. This is even more appallingly and Gilbertainly true in the United States, where federal laws, state laws, municipal laws and police regulations clash their contradictory complexities at ever turn. "Ignorance of the law excuses no man." But it leads him to take his chance of peril which he cannot but ignore, and thus the law falls into disrespect and ultimately into desuetude. In the meantime, small gangs take advantage of their special knowledge to blackmail certain sections of the community by technical persecution. We see the censorship, the licensing laws, the inland revenue laws, and even certain commercial and criminal laws arbitrarily invoked against people who have no idea that they are doing wrong in doing exactly as their neighbours do.

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

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

The glacier was a complete revelation to me. The difference in scale had merely multiplied one's difficulty accordingly in previous matters; but there they become more formidable in a geometrical progression with a big f. In Switzerland one does not seem any moraines over a hundred feet high. Here they run to a thousand or fifteen hundred feet. There are something like twenty tributary glaciers feeding the Baltoro. Each of these contributes at least three moraines. The glacier being about thirty miles long, and rarely

more than two wide, it is distinctly a congested district! The competing moraines jostle each other unscrupulously. One would hardly know that one was on ice at all for the first ten miles; there is hardly a bare patch. But the close competition tends to form many steep slopes; and this means that the sides of most of the moraines are covered with rocks which, even when they are of enormous size, are in extremely unstable equilibrium. Again, the pressure and temperature combine to loosen the bands of rock and ice. The general result is that the passage of a party rearranges that section of the glacier much more radically than would be the case in the Alps. The task of picking one's way is very arduous; and there is a good deal of luck about it, for there is no means of telling whether one may not at any moment be cut off by an obstacle. For example — the rivulets which flow openly through small channels on Swiss glaciers may here be torrents rushing through cuttings in the ice anything up to a hundred feet broad and deep. In the Alps, I remember few such places where I could not step across easily, and those few were always within a bit of a jump.

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

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

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

though it cleared up in the afternoon. Just after sunset, however, a very violent wind sprang up. On the eleventh, I went on to Rdokass, a much longer march in distance. But the going on the glacier had become much easier. I found some comparatively level stretches.

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

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

One cannot wash on the glacier — nay, not so much as one's hands. The extreme dryness of the atmosphere removes all the natural grease of the skin, which becomes so brittle that the touch of water causes it to peel of, leaving a horribly painful, and practically unhealable, wound. It let my hands get as greasy and as dirty as I could to protect them. When thus coated, it is safe to leave them in contact with water, provided it is not for too long and there is no rubbing. One can indeed put one's hands into boiling water, for at these low barometric pressures water boils easily. At Rdokass, for example, water boils at 87.4°, corresponding to 13,904 feet; higher up, it is of course less.

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

Rdokass remains to this day in my memory as a veritable Beulah. It is a broad grassy ledge on the rocks two or three hundred feet above the glacier. There are superb views in every direction. But there is "something about the place" beyond that; the atmosphere of restfulness is paramount. There was here quite a lot of grass; even some flowers. I accordingly sent word to bring our flocks along. It was the last oasis of any account and in fact the only place

of its kind that we found on the whole glacier. The day after, I crossed the glacier to Lhungka. It was a very nervous business picking one's way across the moraines, especially as I had to build stone men to guide the other parties, and I had only the vaguest ideas as to what point on the other bank of the glacier to make for. I climbed a high point in the middle and took compass observations, as I could now see Masherbrum (25,660 feet) and Gusherbrum (26,630 feet). These peaks are the most spectacular of the whole range; the one as stupendous wedge of brilliantly lighted rock and ice; the other a dim luminous cone. It had this appearance because of its orientation. We never saw it in full light; because at sunset, when it would have been illuminated, it happened always to be cloudy.

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

At Lhungka I built a shelter for the coolies, a low stone wall behind which they could lie in case of violent wind. It would of course have been impossible to take tents for them; but as a matter of fact they did not complain of cold at any time. The thermometer did not register more than five degrees centigrade of frost till after June 19th.

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

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

From Biange one can see Mitre Peak across the glacier. Although a relatively minor summit (7,500 metres), its architecture is incomparable. The name is inevitable. From this point of view the double horn could not fail to suggest the title (I had myself indulged in a little nomenclature, calling a mountain crowned by three square-cut towers of rock "Three Castles".)

The next day a short march took me to Doksam. I was now almost at the head of the Baltoro glacier (15,518 feet). In nearly thirty miles of march I had only made four hundred feet of ascent. But here I was on the floor of a glacier

at a height close to that of Mont Blanc. In front of me the glacier widened out; three major and several minor glaciers coalesced. I was irresistibly reminded of the Concordia Platz in the Oberland and named the plateau in affectionate remembrance.

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

My camp at Doksam was pitched on the borders of a good-sized lake between the mountains and the glacier, which at this point presents a wall of ice well over a thousand feet high. The position is consequently comparatively sheltered and in its way very agreeable. The presence of still water lends it the charm of utter peace, and the absence of the vermin which desecrate the crust of the earth so objectionably in other places is rendered even more agreeable by the holly courageous children who were my comrades and my friends. I went out reconnoitring for three hours in the middle of the day and got a very clear idea of the situation. A sudden snowstorm of a rather severe type swept the camp for an hour; but at four o'clock the weather again cleared. "Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new" — except that there were neither woods nor pastures! "We were the first that ever burst into that silent sea" — except that there wasn't any sea! The poets are really very thoughtless to leave their heir without an appropriate quotation!

On the sixteenth of June I marched for a little over four hours where man had never yet trodden. It proved to be the easiest going yet. The eternal moraine was less in evidence; we were able to walk over admirable snow most of the way. Once more, though, I have to record a unique phenomenon totally out of keeping with the rest. At the corner of the Baltoro glacier and its northern affluent, the Chogo Lungma, as I named it, one has to cross a scree of pure white marble. Eckenstein, who arrived at this point in a snowstorm, found it very distressing. He told me that it was impossible to pick footholds; the entire surface was a blinding glare. Camp 8 (16,592 feet) is situated at the foot of a subsidiary spur descending from the ridge of which Chogo Ri is the climax. I was now in full view of the mountain itself, bar clouds; and, my first duty being to reconnoitre the mountain, I spent all day and all night watching

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

Modern writers have made a great deal of fun of the golden age; they have been at great pains to prove that primitive man is a bloodthirsty savage. The Balti gives them the lie. These men were all innocence, all honesty, all good faith, all loyalty, all human kindness. They were absolutely courageous and cheerful, even in face of that they supposed to be certain death of a most uncomfortable kind. They had no disquietude about death and no distaste for life. They were simple-minded and merry. It was impossible not to love them, and not to contrast them with the dirty despicable insects whose squabbles and crimes make civilization itself the greatest of all crimes, and whose ignorance (for all their boasting) is actually darker and deeper and more deadly than that of these children.

From Camp 9 there is a rapid rise of fourteen hundred feet to Camp 10 (18,733 feet). I was a little doubtful as to how the pabu of the men would behave. Pabu are a kind of footgear which reminds one of a gouty man. Straw or rags are wrapped round the feet by thongs of raw hide. Their softness enables the wearer to get excellent hold on moraine, and they protect the feet from cold very effectively. The question was whether they would not slip on the hard snow. I was consequently very careful to pick the easiest way and to scrape large steps when necessary. I took the first few men up on a rope, ex-

plaining the use of it, and told them how to keep their eyes skinned for concealed crevasses. They were highly intelligent; picked up the trick of everything without argument or complaint, and made no mistakes.

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

I was blamed subsequently for my selection of Camp 10 as main camp. Eckenstein thought that I might have chosen a more sheltered position. But there were no such positions in the neighbourhood and it was quite useless to go further away from the foot of the slopes which it was my intention to climb. Furthermore, during my ten days on the glacier, I had experienced all sorts of weather, and none of it had given the slightest ground for supposing that we were likely to meet any conditions which would make camp 10 other than a desirable country residence for a gentleman in failing health. My principal preoccupation, moreover, was to keep out of the way of avalanches and falling stones. I had already seen enough of the apparently arbitrary conduct which one might expect from them; I thought it best therefore to choose a level spot in the middle of the glacier.

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

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

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

could have been reached without question, given one fine day. But my orders were formal and I never thought of disobedience. Of course, if I had foreseen the volte-face of the weather, I might have decided otherwise.

I was a little worried by the failure of Pfannl and Wessely to maintain the communications for which arrangements had been made. I could not see their party on the glacier below and wondered whether they had not broken loose. It was just the sort of thing that one might expect; to find that they had bolted up the south end of the mountain and spoilt the whole plan. They arrived, however, on the next day, the nineteenth, and on the twentieth Knowles and the doctor joined us. They arrived in a snowstorm which continued the whole day. It was the first of uninterruptedly bad weather. On the twenty-first the wind dropped, though the snow continued. It tried to clear up on the twenty-second; and the twenty-third was fine. But of course, nothing could be done in the absence of Eckenstein. On the twenty-fourth a blizzard began. It was the most furious wind that I have ever known. A corner of my tent broke loose; and the only remedy was to sit on it the whole morning! The violence of the wind was indeed amazing. I had secured the side ropes of my tent by tying them round square kiltas and putting others on top. There was thus over one hundred pounds to hold down each rope; but the wind made no bones about shifting them. The twenty-fifth was a dull doubtful day; and on the twenty-sixth the weather was rather worse. On the twenty-seventh it cleared up in the afternoon and Eckenstein arrived with fresh meat and bread.

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

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

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

We had a spare tent for the use of the few natives whom we kept with us. I had gone out to try to refix my tabernacle at sunset — and there was a Balti out in the snow praying with his face towards Mecca! The religion of the Mohammedan, unlike that of the Christian, is positive. It is not based on fear, but on the actual sense of the relations of man and God. I laugh to think of the well-fed, idle and ignorant missionary at Shigar trying to convert men of this stamp. Their simplicity sees through Christian sophistication at a glance; and, their sense of ethics being outraged as well as their sense of reverence, it is easy to understand that the only converts from Mohammedanism are absolutely conscienceless scoundrels who wish to live on the scarcely camouflaged subsidies of missions.

The next day found me completely snow-blind. The pain is not so much severe as irritating. The feeling is as of having red hot sand at the back of one's eyes. One keeps on blinking with the idea of removing it, and of course it won't be removed. During my *ski-läufing* I had religiously worn goggles. My

condition was due entirely to pottering about the camp for a few minutes in the snowstorm, fixing my tent. I got all right again in a couple of days. The weather was moderate on June 30th and July 1st. But from July 2nd to 6th was a continuous snowstorm. There was no remittance day or night. It was this which made Camp 10 unpopular.

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

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

However, I was overruled. The doctor and I prepared to leave on the eighth. It was on this occasion that we discovered the incapacity of the natives to pull a sledge. It is about three hours' march to Camp 11. The going was not bad, though I was still rather sick. The weather was good enough to go out. I went a considerable distance up the slopes of the mountain. There is some conflict in opinion as to the height reached by various members of the party. Eckenstein was fanatically determined never to exaggerate any exploit. We made a very great number of boiling-point determinations of the heights of our camps; but even these are subject to various sources of error. Camp 11 is roughly 20,000 feet; but I suspect it to be a little higher. I estimated my climbing at 21,500 feet at the time; but this was mostly out of respect for Eckenstein. I was his most devoted disciple; I would not have given him any chance to reproach me by making a statement which might afterwards prove an exaggeration. But my real opinion is that I reached something over 22,0000 feet. I could see clearly over Windy Gap; I must have been well above it. I would not depend on the reading of aneroids in any circumstances. We

had taken three instruments specially constructed; they only began to register at 15,000 feet and went to 30,000. But comparisons of the three showed — usually — that no two were alike.

In the evening I was very ill indeed; indigestion, fever, shivering. In order to breathe I had to use my whole muscular strength. I was also on the point of vomiting and remained in this condition nearly all the night. In the morning I was a little better; my breathing had become normal; but I had a great deal of pain and felt very ill and weak. The weather was splendid.

Wessely and Guillarmod were encouraged to repeat my climb of the previous day; but from their report it is not clear whether or not they got farther than I did. I lay in the sunlight and rested. I noticed strange sights; a fly, a butterfly, some crows and an insect which I thought was a bee, but I could not be sure. All visited the camp. Later the camp was covered with the snow from a big avalanche from Chogo Ri. It stripped the whole wall of the northeast ridge; that is, it was about four miles broad.

Eckenstein and Knowles came up on the eleventh. Another fine day. I was still very ill; my temperature 39.4° Centigrade. I did not at all realize the cause at first, simple as it was. The true explanation was very far-fetched in the actual sense of the word. My symptoms became unmistakable before long and I had to admit that I was suffering from malaria. The hardships of the journey had removed my physiological protection and the bug stated to buzz about. I was thus the proud possessor of another world's record; the only man who had had malaria at over twenty thousand feet! Incidentally, I was also the only poet at that altitude. I have always been very amused at Shelley's boast that he had "trodden the glaciers of the Alps" — the Mer de Glace and the Glacier des Boissons! But I was actually writing poetry in these camps. *Better* poetry.

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

I have mentioned hardships. It may be interesting to mention the nature of these. The first and greatest was malaise, which was mostly due to lack of food and exercise. The latter complaint seems rather ridiculous; but it is an absolute fact. One must not bring damp things into the tent; if one does, it practically destroys the efficacy of one's protection against cold. One must therefore stay cooped up in one's tent as long as the weather is bad. I was in charge of the kitchen and had to go out in all sorts of weather; but that was hardly exercise. I often found that by the time I had filled and lighted the stoves and got the snow melted, I could not stand the cold any longer. I had to rush back to my sleeping-bag and warm up while someone else prepared the food.

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

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

We suffered little from cold in the acute way, but rather from a chronic effect. The problem of cold has not been scientifically stated by any explorer so far as I know. It is thus: The normal temperature of the body is 37° centigrade. If therefore the temperature of the air is 30° one has to make up the difference by the heat disengaged by the combustion of food. If the temperature is 23° one requires theoretically twice as much food, if 15° three times as much, if 8° our times as much, if 1° five times as much, if -6° six times as much, if -13° seven times as much, if -30° eight times as much. There temperatures are very much less hot and less cold than those actually experienced. The maximum and minimum thermometers proved altogether unreliable; and the observations on the chart refer to more or less arbitrary times. Other thermometers showed temperatures of over 40° and under 30° centigrade. Unfortunately, simple arithmetic is not the only consideration. The digestive apparatus is calculated for dealing with an amount of food corresponding to, I don't know what temperature, but we might say at a guess 1°. If the average

temperature is less than this, it means that you have to eat more than you can digest; and that means a gradual accumulation of troubles.

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

After cancelling out all the excrescences of the equation, the situation amounts to this; that you cannot live permanently in conditions unsuited to your organism. It is pitiful to have to make statements of this kind, seeing that it is no more than a recapitulation of the main proposition of Darwin and Spencer. But the average explorer (for some inexplicable reason) seems absolutely incapable of applying common sense, experience or the teaching of science to the vital problems with which he is posed. Here in 1922, after all our experience, we have the members of the Everest expedition drivelling about acclimatization, as if science did not exist. Norman Collie told me plainly in 1896 on his return from the Mummery expedition to Nanga Parbat, that the only chance of getting up a big mountain was to rush it. I knew Collie for a man of science and for a man of sense and experience. I trusted his information absolutely and I governed myself accordingly.

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

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

This programme is however hardly acceptable to Western minds, so little penetrated with Einstein's ideas that everything has to be done in a hurry. We may therefore leave "acclimatization" to the mentally defective heroes of the Everest expedition of 1921 and 1922. Collie was right in saying that one is living on one's capital on prolonged mountain expeditions. My experience enables me to add that it is not only a question of mountains. Any kind of prolonged hardship gradually wears one down. Again I repeat, it is pitiful to have to insist on such obvious truths. The low vitality of the working classes, the national deterioration caused by the privations of wartime, scream their warning. Anyone on earth except a member of the English Alpine Club would take it to heart.

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

We were all suffering more or less. Knowles had lost 33 of his 186 pounds; the doctor some 20 of this 167 since leaving Askole. A man with galloping consumption could hardly do better. Our haemoglobin had diminished by twenty per cent. Eckenstein was suffering from various complicated pulmonary troubles; Knowles and the doctor were repeatedly down with influenza; as for myself, the recrudescence of my malaria, which began with a violent liver chill on the twenty-seventy of July and lasted till the end of the month, kept my temperature at 39.3° or thereabouts. Pfannl, the great athlete, had a story of his own. (Coming soon.)

Owing to the fact that snow at these altitudes evaporates without melting, it disappears from the neighbourhood of a tent, leaving a pinnacle where it is protected by the canvas. Thus, at the end of five days' snowstorm one would find oneself perched on a plateau some feet above the rest of the glacier. (This illustrates the formation of glacier tables.) It was necessary, whatever the weather might be, to shift the tent, as otherwise the weight of the snow on the sloping sides, and the general strain, would tear the canvas. We have a photograph of the plateau from which our tents had been removed after five days of snowstorm. In the middle of the square patch of hard snow

relegated by pressure are two deep depressions like rude graves. These represent the ice melted by the warmth of our bodies through a double groundsheet of Willesden canvas, the canvas of the Roberts valise and the thick cork mattress.

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

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

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

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

But where it came close, we realized that it was the doctor. His face was steaming with sweat and expressed an agony of fear. Eckenstein was not sympathetic. He merely said, "Where's your coolie?" Guillarmod explained that he had left hat specimen of the Creator's handiwork in a crevasse. Eckenstein uttered a single violent objurgation which opened new vistas on the depth of his feelings. I did not waste even one word — I was putting my boots on. Before Guillarmod had fairly crawled into his tent, Eckenstein and I were skimming over the snow on our ski with a coiled rope. (In my haste I forgot to take my goggles, which cost me another two days of snow blindness.)

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

(I accuse myself of having minimized these things. I should never have agreed to take him on my next expedition, but I liked the man personally so much that I instinctively made every allowance for him, and unquestionably

he was suffering no less than the rest of us. I have a fatal weakness for believing the best about everybody. In the face of the plainest evidence, I cannot believe in the existence of dishonesty and malice, and I always try to build with rotten material. I always imagine that I have merely to point out an error for it to be energetically eliminated, and I am constantly lost in mild surprise when the inevitable occurs. Here is a description by himself on one of his bad days.

> Pour moi, je reste couché, atteint d'une attaque d'influenza plus forte que je n'en ai jamais eu: la fièvre n'est pas très intense, mais mes amygdales sont si tuméfiées et douloureuses gue j'ai beaucop de peine à respirer; le moindre mouvement produit un accès de suffocation; impossible de dormir; des douleurs lancinantes et des frissons me torturent horriblement.)

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

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

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

On the second the storm raged without letting up for a moment. I had really made up my mind, ever since it had been decided to give up the idea of

climbing the mountain direct from Camp 10, and from my instinctive judgment of weather, that the expedition had failed in its main objective, and I was not in the least interested in killing myself gradually against my judgment. I was absolutely satisfied with the results of my original reconnaissance of Chogo Ri, and the Archangel Gabriel could not have convinced me that we were likely to succeed in forcing a ridge over three miles long of the moist desperate character.

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

On August 3rd the storm was still going strong; but we packed and went down on the fourth to Camp 9, stopping at Camp 10, where many of our kiltas were still stored, to pick out anything that was worth taking home (which we calculated as anything worth over half a crown a pound) and anything which we immediately wanted, especially sugar, of which we were already in sore need. On the fifth we lay idle in medium weather, while the coolies brought down from Camp 10 the goods which we had selected, and on the sixth we went to Camp 7.

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

On the seventh we rested at Camp 7. It was fine and the temperature in my tent was 37°; but the high peaks were "smoking their pipes" so that a violent wind must have been blowing up there; and as the morning advanced, the clouds gathered. However, I took a chance; and washed. It is a curiously refreshing sensation. I sometimes wonder why people do not indulge in it more often. On the eighth we went to Camp 6. My indiscreet debauch with

water had added a cold in the head to my other miseries. Again a fine morning degenerated into thick weather. We rested on the ninth and went to Camp 5 on the tenth. It was cloudy all day and in the afternoon we had a violent storm of rain. On the eleventh we went to Rdokass direct by short cut, passing over a very beautiful scree whose stones were iridescent; every colour of the spectrum glistened on their rain-washed surfaces.

On the twelfth we held a durbar and expelled Wessely from the expedition. Pfannl decided to go with him. Pfannl was now more or less well again, but he would never be able to climb mountains in the future. It poured with rain all day and the following, which I spent in bed. On the fourteenth we went to Camp 1. It took me ten hours; the last part of the march was very bad, the enormous increase of water having made some sections of the march impossible by the route previously taken. I was well enough to eat.

The weather was fairly fine, bar one or two snowstorms; but it snowed all night.

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

I have had very bad luck (on the whole) with my weather on mountains. Even in Mexico, we had a fortnight of cold and wet which had no parallel in the memory of man, and caused the stoves in the city to be sold out in the first forty-eight hours. Then I was once at Wastdale Head for forty-three days when it rained quite continuously except on one morning and one afternoon. On the other hand, during the nine days I was at Akyab it once stopped raining for nearly twenty minutes. I ought to have taken the exact time: but I thought the end of the world had come, so that it never occurred to me to look at my watch till it began again.

I had been altogether sixty-eight days on the glacier, two days longer than any other member of the party. It was another world's record; and, as far as I know, stands to this hour. I hope I may be allowed to die in peace with it. It would be a sorry ambition in anyone to grasp my laurels and I can assure

him that to refrain will bring its own reward. Of these sixty-eight days, eight only were fine, and of these no three were consecutive. Of course some days were of mixed character. But in no case have I classed as bad weather any days which would be considered in the Alps fine enough to go out on an average second-rate peak.

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

But Eckenstein and Knowles would not pass through the village at all. They decided to return to Shigar by the Skoro La, which is a pass avoiding the big bend formed by the Bralduh Nalan and the Shigar Rivers. It is just about as many days' march and is decidedly harder on the men. So the doctor and I went round by the valley. At Ghomboro we hound fresh apricots, and after a final go of indigestion caused by surfeit of fresh mulberries and melons at Shigar my health cleared up with astonishing rapidity. Within a week I was in perfectly good form again and convinced more than ever that mountains as such have precious little to do with mountain sickness.

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

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

The zak is a local variety of raft; to a framework of crossed bamboos are bound a number of goat skins. Our raft had twenty-four: six one way and four the other. As these goat skins all leak, one has to find a landing place

every twenty minutes or so, and this is not always easy. The great danger is that one may stick on a submerged rock. It would be quite impossible to get off and quite impossible to get ashore, though one might be only six feet from the bank. At each corner is a man with a long bamboo pole to fend off rocks. But otherwise little can be done to direct one's course or even to steer sufficiently to prevent the zak turning round and round. I was reminded of Ben Gunn's coracle in *Treasure Island*. The behaviour of a zak on a sea confirms the analogy, for at one place the river was traversed by rows of waves five or six feet high.

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

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

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

41

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

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

A moment — and I understood! The poor old man had been unable to cross the plateau and was returning home to die! I expressed my sympathy and offered help. Oh, no, not at all! He had carried his sack all the way to Srinagar; but finding on arrival that the price of his produce had gone down

by a fraction of a penny a pound, he refused to sell and was bringing the stuff back. The sack itself looked fabulous, so I got out the "butcher's terror" and found that it weighed four hundred and ten pounds. The whole business struck me as extraordinarily sublime. I dashed to old boy five rupees. This made him wild with happiness and restored his debilitated conviction in the existence of a Supreme Being who put in most of His time in caring for his faithful.

The next day, about four hours' ride took us to the top of the pass, from which we had a magnificent view of the plain of Skardu and the Indus backed by the great mountains, while in front of us lay the Deosai, and absolutely treeless wilderness of comparatively level country framed by minor peaks. It gives a unique impression of desolation. I have never seen its equal in this respect elsewhere. Yet the march was very pleasant with many lovely flowers and streams. The weather was delightful and the going good.

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

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

We descended the Burzil valley, a gorge of amazing beauty and colouring, with gorgeous trees to "fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep". At Pashwari it had already begun to open, and at Gurais a broad calm stream

winds slowly through a broad level valley. As I rode slowly down the track to this camp I heard a sudden shout behind me. "Hat Jao!" (get out of the way!); a moment later a gigantic English major brushed past me muttering curses. I laughed into my beard. It was amusing to be taken for a native!

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

At Gurais are a big suspension bridge and the remains of a very large old fortress. On the second we went to Gurai and on the third to Tragobal. The road here crosses a pass some ten thousand feet high. It is a magnificent ride through the wildest yet richest forest and mountain scenery. Some of the trees are enormous and one obtains intoxicating views of the valley framed by their dark splendour. Few men know what a view can be. The European idea is to go, preferably by train, to some high place and obtain a panorama. To me, even the noblest panoramas are somewhat monotonous. Their boundlessness diminishes their aesthetic value. To see distant prospects to the best advantage one needs a foreground. In rock climbing and travelling through mountain forests one sees nature in perfection. At every turn, the foreground picks out special bits of the background for attention, so that there is a constant succession of varying pictures. The eye is no longer bewildered by being asked to take in too much at once; and the effect of the distance is immensely heightened by contrasts with the foreground.

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

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

42

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My mind began, moreover, to flow back into its accustomed channels. For one thing, I came to the conclusion that "the most permanent poetry is

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

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

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

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

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

I began to pick out the old threads of my life. Despite the evidence of Allan Bennett as to the integrity of Mathers, the premisses of my original syllogism as to his authority were not impaired. His original achievements proved beyond doubt that he had been at one time the representative of the Secret Chiefs; that he had either been temporarily obsessed or had permanently fallen.

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

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

I had, however, little doubt that he had fallen through rashly invoking the forces of *The book of the Sacred Magick of Abra-Melin the Mage*. I thought I would try the testimony of an independent observer. Among the English colony of Montparnasse was a youth named Haweis, son of the once celebrated H. R. Haweis of *Music and Morals*. He had been to Peterhouse and was now studying art, in which he has since achieved a certain delicate eminence. He went to see Mathers and came back very bored with a pompous disquisition on the ancient gods of Mexico. The charlatan was apparent; Mathers had got his information from the very people who had induced me to go out to Mexico. He was exploiting *omne ignotum pro magnifico* like the veriest quack. At this moment I came into magical contact with his forces. The story has been

told admirably, if somewhat floridly, by Captain (now Major-General) J.F.C.Fuller. I can hardly do better than quote his account.

> Gerald Kelly showed considerable perturbation of mind, and on being asked by Frater P. what was exercising him, Gerald Kelly replied, "Come and free Miss Q. from the wiles of Mrs. M." Being asked who Mrs. M. was, Gerald Kelly answered that she was a vampire and a sorceress who was modelling a sphinx with the intention of one day endowing it with life so that it might carry out her evil wishes; and that her victim was Miss Q. P. Wishing to ease his friend's mind asked Gerald Kelly to take him to Miss Q.'s address, at which Mrs. M. was then living. This Gerald Kelly did.
>
> Miss Q., after an interview, asked P. to tea to meet Mrs. M. After introduction, she left the room to make tea — the White Magick and the Black were left face to face.
>
> On the mantelpiece stood a bronze head of Balzac, and P., taking it down, seated himself in a chair by the fire and looked at it.
>
> Presently a strange dreamy feeling seemed to come over him, and something velvet-soft and soothing and withal lecherous moved across his hand. Suddenly looking up he saw that Mrs. M. had noiselessly quitted her seat and was bending over him; her hair was scattered in a mass of curls over her shoulders and the tips of her fingers were touching the back of his hand.
>
> No longer was she the middle-aged woman, worn with strange lusts; but a young woman of bewitching beauty.
>
> At once recognizing the power of her sorcery, and knowing that if he even so much as contemplated her gorgon head, all the power of his Magick would be petrified, and that he would become but a puppet in her hands, but a toy to be played with and when broken cast aside, he quietly rose as if nothing unusual had occurred; and placing the bust on the mantelpiece turned towards her and commenced with her a magical conversation; that is to say a conversation which outwardly had but the appearance of the politest small talk, but which inwardly lacerated her evil heart, and burnt into her black bowels as if each word had been a drop of some corrosive acid.
>
> She writhed back from him, and then again approached him even more beautiful than she had been before. She was battling

for her life now, and no longer for the blood of another victim. If she lost, hell yawned before her, the hell that every once-beautiful woman who is approaching middle age, sees before her; the hell of lost beauty, of decrepitude, of wrinkles and fat. The odour of man seemed to fill her whole subtle form with a feline agility, with a beauty irresistible. One step nearer and then she sprang at Frater P. and with an obscene word sought to press her scarlet lips to his.

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

A blue-greenish light seemed to play round the head of the vampire, and then the flaxen hair turned the colour of muddy snow, and the fir skin wrinkled, and those eyes, that had turned so many happy lives to stone, dulled and became as pewter dappled with the dregs of wine. The girl of twenty had gone; before him stood a hag of sixty, bent, decrepit, debauched. With dribbling curses she hobbled from the room.

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

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

The vision at first was of little importance, then by degrees the seer was led to a house which P. recognized as that in which D.D.C.F. lived. He entered one of the rooms, which he also at once recognized; but curious to say, instead of finding D.D.C.F. and V.N.R. there, he found Theo and Mrs. Horos. Mr. Horos

(M.S.R.) incarnated in the body of V.N.R. and Mrs. Horos (S.V.S.) in that of D.D.C.F. Their bodies were in orison; but their spirits were in the house of the fallen chief of the Golden Dawn.

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

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

In England there is no such social atmosphere. Artists and writers are either isolated or members of petty cliques. It is impossible to do so much as give a dinner to a distinguished man without upsetting the antheap, and arousing the most insanely violent and personal jealousy. A writer who respects himself in England is bound to become a solitary like Hardy and Conrad; the greatness of his art debars him utterly from taking the smallest part in the artistic affairs of the moment. In a way, this is not to his disadvantage, for the supreme genius does not need specialized human society; he is a home in the slums or on the countryside. The salon stifles him. The social intercourse between artists in France tends to civilize them, to bring them to a common level; and thus, though the average of good writers is far higher than in England, we can show more men of supreme attainment; we can even make a pretty shrewd guess who the masters are even during their lifetime, for we instinctively persecute them.

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

In France one attains eminence by a less gratuitous Golgotha. Men of art and letters are respected and honoured by each other and by the public. Their final position in history is quietly assigned by time. It is only in very exceptional circumstances that a great man is awarded the distinction of a Calvary. Of course, Zola went through the mill; but only because he had butted into politics by his *J'accuse*; he was only denounced as obscene because any stick is good enough to beat a god with.

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

Rodin told me how he had conceived his Balzac. He had armed himself with all the documents; and they had reduced him to despair. (Let me say at once that Rodin was not a man, but a god. He had no intellect in the true sense of the word; his was a virility so superabundant that it constantly overflowed into the creation of vibrating visions. Naively enough, I haunted him in order to extract first-hand information about art from the fountain head. I have never met anyone — white, black, brown, yellow, pink or spot-blue —

who was so completely ignorant of art as Auguste Rodin! At his best he would stammer out that nature was the great teacher or some equally puerile platitude. The books on art attributed to him are of course the compilation of journalists.)

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

Most people do not realize the power which genius possesses of comprehending the essence of a subject without the need of learning it laboriously. A master in one art is at home in any other, without having necessarily practised it or studied its technicalities. I am reminded of the scene in Rodin's studio which I described in a sonnet. Some bright spirit had brought his fiddle and we were all bewitched. Rodin suddenly smiled and waved his hand towards "Pan et Syrinx". I followed the gesture: the bars just played were identical with the curve of the jaw of the girl. The power to perceive such identities of essence beneath a difference of material manifestation is the inevitable token of mastery. Anyone who understands (not merely knows) one subject will also understand any other, whether he also knows it or not. Thus: suppose there had also been present a great gardener, a great geologist and a great mathematician. If they did not understand and approve that signal of Rodin's, I should refuse to admit that they were real masters, even of their own subjects. For I regard it as an infallible test of a master of any art or science that he should recognize intuitively (Neschamically) the silent truth, one and indivisible, behind all diversities of expression.

I find by experience that any man well learned in a subject, but whose understanding of it falls short of the mastery I have described, will profoundly resent this doctrine. It minimizes the dignity of his laborious studies and in the end accuses him of inferior attainment. The more sophisticated victim can usually put up an apparently non-emotional defence in the form of a scepticism as to the facts, a scepticism those obstinate irrationality is plain to an outside observer, but seems to the victim himself a simple defence of what he feels to be truth. This type of Freudian self-protection is often entirely passion-proof even against direct accusation of intellectual pride and

jealousy. It relies on the ability of the mind to confuse, when hard-pressed, the essence of a subject with its accidents. Nothing but a very pure aspiration to truth — and experience (often humiliating) of such reactions — is of much use against this particular kind of bondage.

While other defenders of Rodin were apologizing for him in detail I brushed aside the nonsense — "a plague o' both your houses!" — and wrote a sonnet, which is, in its way, to conventional criticism exactly what the Balzac was. It was translated into French by Marcel Schwob and made considerable stir in Paris. Even at this length of time, I attach a certain importance to it. For one thing, it marks a new stage in my own art.

BALZAC

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

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

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

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

In accordance with Eckenstein's puritanical ideas of propriety, no communications about the expedition had been made to the newspapers. Ultimately, in the sheer interests of science, a paragraph had been permitted to appear in *The Times*. It contained thirty-two lines and seventeen misstatements of fact! I myself had been interviewed by a French journalist and the report of my remarks bore no discoverable relation with them. I am perhaps unduly sensitive about such stupidities. I ought perhaps to rely on time to sweep away the rubbish into the dustbin of oblivion and set the truth upon her throne; but yet, the evidence of history smiles grimly. What do we really know of the rights and wrongs of the struggle between Rome and Carthage! What do we know even of Buddhism and Christianity but that the most authentic accounts of their origins are intrinsically absurd! "What is truth?" said jesting Pilate. But, personally, I fail to see the joke.

I went through life at this time with a kind of cynical bonhomie; nothing was really any particular good, so I might as well do what was expected of me. I wrote even of Buddhism with a certain detached disenchantment, as may be seen by reference to my *Summa Spes*, which I published separately (twelve copies contain the portrait of me by Haweis and Coles, subsequently

reproduced in volume II of the vellum edition of my *Collected Works*) and sent to some of my friends in Paris on my departure for England.

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

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

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

My sonnet on Rodin begins "Here is a man", which Marcel Schwob very properly translated, "Un homme". I took the draft to Rodin's studio. One of

the men present was highly indignant. "Who is this Marcel Schwob," He exclaimed, "to pretend to translate from this English? The veriest schoolboy would know that 'here is a man' should be turned into 'Voici un homme'."

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

Occasionally he came to see Kelly in his studio. His conversation was full of the most intensely interesting, because impersonally intimate, details about men of letters. He told us at first hand the tragedy of Meredith's life, the mystery of his birth, and his father's attempts to establish a marriage with would have entitled him to a place in the peerage; the romance of *Vittoria*; and the intrigue of *Diana of the Crossways*. He traced the influence of the master's locomotor ataxia upon his life, his character and his creatures. He explained how the long years of suffering had deformed Meredith's disposition and led him to disgrace himself by refusing to head the petition for Oscar Wilde's release.

He told us the true story of Salome. The character of Wilde was simple. He was a perfectly normal man; but, like so many Irish, suffered from being a snob. In Dublin, Sir William Wilde was somebody in society; but when Oscar reached Oxford, he discovered that a medical knighthood, so far from being a distinction, was little better than a badge of servility. A family even of commoners could afford to sneer at his acceptance of a trumpery honour at the hands of a Hanoverian hausfrau. Wilde could not bear to be despised by brainless dukes, so he had sought hegemony in the hierarchy by the only means available, as a socially sensitive swineherd might aspire to the papacy. He determined to become the high priest of the cult which already conferred

a kind of aristocracy upon the undergraduate, though it had not yet been organized and boosted. That was the result of his "martyrdom", which accounts for most of the loathsome creatures that jostle one too frequently in 1929. "The Law is a Hass"!

Wilde had denied his nature in the interests of social ambition, and the success of his scheme drove him to adopt every affectation as a sign of superiority. Outside the English system of caste, he might have been a contented cornchandler. Within it, he found himself obliged to affect to be sexually stirred by Maeterlinck, Flaubert, Gustave Moreau, and even the most sacred character of Scripture. He degraded the Sphinx by representing her as a sexual monster. He interpreted the relations between Christ and John, between Paul and Timothy, in the light of his own perverse imagination.

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

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

At the time I had only read one of his books — *The Grand Babylon Hotel*; Which I thought, and still think, somewhere near his high-water mark. I told him how much I admired it and was surprised to find that I had apparently said the wrong thing. But Kelly explained that he took himself seriously as a serious novelist, on the strength of having complied some books of reference on life in Shropshire or Staffordshire or some such place. I don't know which

is which, thank God; I do not understand the system of classification of indexing, so I cannot turn up the symptoms of a dying Doultonware artist if I want to. But then I don't.

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

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

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

I was much touched by Henley's kindness in inviting me. I have never lost the childlike humility which characterized all truly great men. Modesty is its parody. I had to wait some little while before he came down. When he did so, he was obviously suffering severe physical distress. Like Marcel Schwob himself, he was a martyr to constipation. He told me that the first half of every day was a long and painful struggle to overcome the devastating agony of his body. Only three weeks later he died. He was engaged in various tremendous literary tasks and yet he could give up a day to welcome a young and unknown writer!

I could not pretend to myself that so great a man could feel any real interest in me. It never occurred to me that he might have read anything of mine and thought it promising. I took, and take, his action for sheer human kindness. I probably behaved with my usual gaucherie. The presence of anyone whom I really respect always awakes my congenital shyness, always overawes me. Henley's famous poem (which Frank Harris regards as "the bombast of Antient Pistol") appealed intensely to my deepest feeling about man's place in the universe; that he is a Titan overwhelmed by the gods but not surrendering. And the form or the poem is superb. It is in line with all the great

English expressions of the essential English spirit, a certain blindness, brutality and arrogance, no doubt, as in "Rule Britannia", "Boadicea", "The Garb of Old Gaul", "The British Grenadiers", "Hearts of Oak", "Toll for the Brave", "Ye Mariners of England", *et hoc genus omne*; but with all that, indomitable courage to be, to do and to suffer as fate may demand.

I never thought much of the rest of Henley's verse, distinguished as it is for vigour and depth of observation. It simply does not come within my definition of poetry, which is this: A poem is a series of words so arranged that the combination of meaning, rhythm and rime produces the definitely magical effect of exalting the soul to divine ecstasy. Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Machen share this view. Henley's poem conforms with this criterion.

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

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

I spent many of my evenings at a little restaurant called the Chat blanc in the rue d'Odessa, where was "an upper room furnished" and consecrated informally to a sort of international clique of writer, painters, sculptors, students and their friends. It has been described with accurate vigour in the introduction to *Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden*. I quote the passage.

> His evenings were spent in that witty and high-thinking informal club that met nightly at the restaurant Au Chien Rouge, whose members are so honoured in the world of art. There he met

C— the brilliant but debauched sculptor, caustic of wit, though genial to his friends; N—, the great painter, whose royal sense of light made his canvases into a harmonious dream: he also the sweet friend of Bacchus, who filled him with a glow and melody of colour and thought. There too, were D— and L—, the one poet and philosopher, the other painter and — I fear — pederast. Twins in thought, the two were invincible in argument as they were supreme in their respective arts. Often have I sat, a privileged listener, while D—'s cold acumen and L—'s superb indignation, expressed in fiery swords of speech, would drive some luckless driveller from the room. Or at times they would hold down their victim, a bird fascinated by a snake, while they pitilessly exposed his follies to the delighted crowd. Again, a third, pompous and self-confident, would be led on by them, seemingly in full sympathy, to make an exhibition of himself, visible and hideous to all eyes but his own. L—, his eager face like a silver moon starting from a thundercloud, his hair, would pierce the very soul of the debate and kindle it with magick joy or freeze it with scorn implacable. D—, his expression noble and commanding, yet sly, as if ever ready to laugh at the intricacies of his own intellect, sat next him, his deep and wondrous eyes lit with strange light, while with words like burning flames of steel he shore asunder the sophistries of one and the complacencies of another. They were feared, these two! There also did he meet the well-known ethicist, I—, fair as a boy, with boy's gold locks curling about his Grecian head; I—, the pure and subtle-minded student, whose lively humour and sparkling sarcasm were as froth upon the deep and terrible waters of his polished irony. It was a pity that he drank. There the great surgeon and true gentleman, in spite of his exaggerated respect for the memory of Queen Victoria, J—, would join in with his ripe and generous wit. Handsome as a god, with yet a spice of devil's laughter lurking there, he would sit and enjoy the treasures of the conversation, adding at the proper interval his own rich quota of scholarly jest.

Needless to say, so brilliant a galaxy attracted all the false lights of the time. T—, the braggart, the mediocre painter, the lusty soi-disant maquereau of marchionesses, would seek admission (which was in theory denied to none). But the cutting wit of C— drove him headlong, as if by the cherubin, from the gates of

the garden of Eden. G—, the famous society painter, came one night and was literally hounded out of the room by a swift and pitiless attack on the part of D— and the young ethicist. A bullet-headed Yankee, rashly supporting him, shared the same fate and ever after sat in solitary disgrace downstairs, like a shipped hound outside its master's door. A fool reveals himself, though he talk but of greasing gimlets, in such a fierce light as beat upon the Chien Rouge. Nor could any fool live long in that light. It turned him inside out; it revealed him even to himself as a leper and an outcast; and he could not stand it.

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

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

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

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

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

S—, again, with a face like a portrait by Rembrandt, a man of no great intellect, but making no pretence thereto, how he was loved for his jolly humour, his broad smile, his inimitable stories! Yet it must not be suppose that the average man, however sincere, had much of a welcome there. Without intention to wound, he was yet hurt — the arrows of wit shot over his head and he could never feel at home.

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

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

Dreaded as they were by the charlatan, no set of men could have been more genial, more fraternal. United by a bond of mutual respect, even where they differed — of mutual respect, I say, by no means of mutual admiration, for it was the sincere artistry that they adored, not the technical skill of achievement — they formed a noble and harmonious group, the like of which has perhaps never yet been seen.[52]

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

[52] C. Paul Bartlett, N.J.W.Morrice, D.Crowley, L.Kelly, I.Heward Bell, J. Ivor Back, I. One Kite, G?, B. Penrhyn Stanlaws, S. One Root.

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

But in 1902 we were right to chivy him!

It had leaked out that our luckless victim had taken a medical degree and J. W. Morrice[53] used to torment the poor fellow, whose distress was accentuated by his being a confirmed stammerer, by ringing the changes on this disgraceful episode of his career. Morrice was invariably mellow drunk all day and all night. He would look up from his crème de menthe and *oeufs sur le plat*, clear his throat and tell Maugham with grave importance that he would like to consult him on a matter concerning the welfare of art and artists. "What would you do if —" and after repeating himself in a hundred ways so as to prolong the rigmarole to the utmost, he would wind up by confessing to the premonitory symptoms of some comic and repulsive malady. It was really needlessly cruel, for, bar his pretensions to literature, there is not an ounce of harm in Maugham, any more than there is in a packet of sterilized cotton wool. Even the pretence is after all a perfectly harmless affectation.

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

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

will turn rudely from his door a friendly journalist bent on making him famous and rich. Also, he is a cad.

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

I have never been able to analyse this mental attitude at all adequately, but part of it certainly derives from the fact that I have never lost my innocence. I sometimes wonder whether it may not prove a defect in my philosophical system that I am unable to believe in the existence of evil. There is of course the appearance of evil due to ignorance, bad judgment and so on; but my major premiss is "Every man and every woman is a star."; and I always conceive the problem of progress as depending merely on enlightenment. I do not believe in original sin except in this sense that "The word of Sin is Restriction."; and our normal conscious selves are inevitably restricted by the categories of space, time and causality, which are essential conditions of the manifestation of separate individualities. But I cannot get it into my head that any single human being can be really hostile to another. I regard all such passions as the symptoms of a definite deformity of nature produced by its inadequacy to deal with its environment. Just as a stick appears bent when thrust partly under water, so does a man's will apparently deviate when the refractive index of his environment deceives his vision.

I do not know whether it is fair to say that I am callous, whether the long torture of my patient silent struggle against the tyrants of my boyhood case-hardened me against the world. I do not know how far the habit of concentration and the peculiar selective action of my memory has deadened my sensibilities, for I am as indifferent to most impressions as the holiest hermit

could desire. I have become almost incapable of registering conscious impressions unless they pass the censor as having legitimate business with me. Of course a not dissimilar state of abstractedness is common enough in men whose lives are devoted to study, by the time they are fifty; but in me these tendencies were already bearing fruit long before I was thirty.

The Montparnasse quarter was of course full of people who took their trumpery love affairs very seriously. But the English colony was riddled with English hypocrisy. I remember giving the manuscript of Alice to Kelly and a girl named Sybil Muggins[54] to read, and they agreed that no really nice woman would have kissed a man so early as the thirteenth day of his wooing. I must confess to having been taken a little aback, especially as Sybil Muggins was Haweis's mistress. A few days back, moreover, Haweis having gone to Brussels for a week, she switched over to Kelly. What dreadful days those were! They worked themselves up into such a state that Kelly actually proposed to marry Sybil, and his sister bustled over post haste to prevent it by threatening that his allowance would be stopped if he did anything so foolish.

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

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

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

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[54] Query "Meugins".

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

44

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

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

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

relief mingled with mild surprise and a strong sense of shame at having made such a fool of myself in the presence of Eckenstein.

But the entire packet had been sealed up and stowed away at the back of the safe, in accordance with the routine of the office never to allow the mind to feed upon thoughts connected with money. I know that this seems farfetched and many people will find it entirely unintelligible; but it is the fact.

The ultimate secret of my life is that I really live up to my principles. I decide that it is disgraceful to allow financial considerations to dictate my conduct; but instead of allowing this to remain a pious opinion, I am at pains to invent a regular technique for dismissing them.

Another incident. In returning to Zapotlan we had ridden a hundred and twenty miles in the broiling sun. I had outridden O.E., who was amazed and irritated at my power to endure heat and thirst. I became alarmed when I found he was nowhere to be seen and rode back a good many miles, managing (as luck would have it) to miss him in one small patch of woodland which diversified the desert. When I reached Zapotlan I had to be lifted off my horse. We were to start the next morning, as we were in rather a hurry to get back to Mexico City.

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

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

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

to his disciples on awakening: "Just now I was dreaming that I was a butterfly: but is it so, or am I a butterfly dreaming that it is Kwang-Tze?")

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

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

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

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

I was delighted with him. He was Pinkerton of *The Wrecker*, with every t crossed and every i dotted. His innocent earnestness, without any root to it, his infatuation for "uplift", his total ignorance of the morality of the artist,

his crude prejudices based upon Sunday School, his attitude to everything assumed in blissful unconsciousness of a background: this was all perfectly charming. He had all the fascination of a new penny toy.

Now, at this time, Gerald Kelly was in his Whistler-Velasquez period. Kelly's mind is in no way creative or even critical in the true sense of the word. He was a scholar. He would convince himself by elaborate argument that So-and-so was the greatest of all artists; and he would then endeavour to discover the secrets of the master in the spirit of the analytical chemist, and proceed to paint with the most pitiful perseverance in the style of his latest hero. I possess sketches by Kelly which I defy the world to distinguish from Beardsley, Rossetti, Morris, G.F.Watts, etc. Robbie Ross once told me of a man who collected fans by Charles Conder. He had twenty-three when he died; four of them Conders, five doubtful, but the remaining fourteen genuine Kellys.

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

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

I gradually sickened of the atmosphere of Paris. It was all too easy. I flitted restlessly to London and back, and found no rest for the sole of my foot. I had even got engaged to be married, but returning after a week in London I was partly too shy to resume relations with my fiancée, and partly awake to the fact that we had drifted under the lee shore of matrimony out of sheer lack of moral energy. This lady claims notice principally as the model for several poems, notably (in *Rosa Mundi, and other Love Songs*) "The Kiss", "Eileen" and the poems numbered 14, 15, 16, 18, 21 to 28. She was also the "Star" in *The Star and the Garter*, Which I wrote at this time; and the three women connected with the "Garter" were an English lady with a passion for either, an

acrobat and model whom I called my boot-button girl because her face was "round and hard and small and pretty", and thirdly Nina Olivier. Nina is described in the poem itself and also in several lyrics, notably "The Rondel" — "You laughing little light of wickedness". My adoration of Nina made her the most famous girl in the quarter for a dozen years and more. She figures, by the way, in my "Ordeal of Ida Pendragon".

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

Some time later I added an appendix of a very obscure kind. The people of our circle, from Kathleen Bruce (since Lady Scott and Mrs. Hilton Young) to Sybil Muggins and Hener-Skene (later, accompanist to Isadora Duncan) are satirized. Their names are introduced by means of puns or allusions and every line is loaded with cryptic criticism. Gerald and I, as educated men, were frightfully fed up with the presumption and poses of the average ass — male or female — of the quarter.

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

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

The Star and the Garter deals frankly with this problem, among others. As far as sexual charm is concerned, it is only reasonable to expect the expert

to be more satisfactory than the new chum; and even, class for class, the professional than the amateur. The desire for exclusive possession is one of the most idiotic and bestial pieces of vanity in human psychology. But love can exist between man and woman entirely independent of any sexual relations between them. The condition of this love is that both parties should have completely mastered their sexual natures; for otherwise their mutual relations are not free to love decently until they have analysed themselves completely and swept away every trace of mystery from sex; and this means the acquisition of a profound philosophical theory based on wide reading of anthropology and enlightened practice.

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

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

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

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

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

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

> In the year 1899 I came to Boleskine House and put everything in order with the object of carrying out the Operation of Abra-Melin the Mage.
>
> I had studied Ceremonial Magick and had obtained remarkable success.
>
> My gods were those of Egypt, interpreted on lines closely akin to those of Greece.
>
> In philosophy I was a realist of the Cabbalistic school.
>
> In 1900 I left England for Mexico, and later the Far East, Ceylon, India, Burma, Baltistan, Egypt and France. It is idle there to detail the corresponding progress of my thought; and passing through a stage of Hinduism, I had discarded all deities as unimportant, and in philosophy was an uncompromising nominalist. I had arrived at what I may describe as the position of an orthodox Buddhist; but with the following reservations.
>
> 1. I cannot deny that certain phenomena do accompany the use of certain rituals; I only deny the usefulness of such methods to the White Adept.
>
> 2. I consider Hindu methods of meditation as possibly useful to the beginner and should not therefore recommend them to be discarded at once.
>
> With regard to my advancement, the redemption of the cosmos, etc. etc. I leave for ever the "Blossom and Fruit" theory and appear in the character of an inquirer on strictly scientific lines.
>
> This is unhappily calculated to damp the enthusiasm; but as I so carefully of old, for the Magical Path, excluded from my life all other interests, that life has now no particular meaning; and the path of Research, on the only lines I can now approve of, remains the one Path possible for me to tread.

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

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

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

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

The howl of a bulldog, exactly like the crying of a child, is heard far off.

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

FENELLA. He sees the ghost of old Lord Lovat.

GEORGE. Old Lord Lovat?

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

GEORGE Pleasant pastime!

FENELLA. What else is a man to do?

GEORGE. What's that tapping?
(He stops to listen.)

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

GEORGE. What old woman?

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

GEORGE. Oh damn it!

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

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

bead would roll merrily up and down the table with untiring energy. The moment we opened the door the noise would stop; but there would be no visible cause.

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

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

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

45

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

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

This sort play is singularly unsatisfactory as a work of art, but extremely significant as a piece of autohagiography. The explanatory note in my *Collected Works* is itself obscure.

> The idea of this obscure and fantastic play is as follows:
> By a glorious act human misery is secured (history of Christianity).
> Hence, appreciation of the personality of Jesus is no excuse for being a Christian.
> Inversely, by a vile and irrational series of acts human happiness is secured (story of the play).
> Hence, attacks on the mystics of history need not cause us to condemn mysticism.

> Also, the knowledge of good and evil is a tree whose fruit man has not yet tasted: so that the devil cheated Eve indeed; or (more probably) Eve cheated Adam. Unless (most probable of all) God cheated the devil and the fruit was a common apple after all. (*Cf.* H. Maudsley, *Life in Mind and Conduct*.)

The influence of *The Golden Bough* and the Spencerian philosophers whom I was reading is apparent. In the last paragraphs, too, is evidence that I still clung to Shelley's dream of a regenerated humanity. There is a touch of the influence of a man named L. C. R. Duncombe Jewell, the eldest son of a Plymouth Brother at Streatham, who had "gone to the bad" by becoming a Roman Catholic. I had asked him to spend a week at Boleskine and he had managed somehow or other to settle down there as my factor. I suppose he saved me trouble in one way or another, and was some sort of companion. He called himself Ludovic Cameron, being a passionate Jacobite and having a Cameron somewhere in his family tree. He was very keen on the Celtic revival and wanted to unite the five Celtic nations in an empire. In this political project he had not wholly succeeded: but he had got as far as designing a flag. And, oh so ugly!

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

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

Nor did I agree that the Buddha was altogether right. I thought it a great mistake to interfere with physiological processes. I was perfectly aware that greed, lust and hatred were the enemies of peace; but I was also aware that

forcing oneself to abstain from food, love and society could only result in diverting the natural appetites into abnormal channels. St. Anthony attributed an exaggerated importance to sex. I was convinced that the repression of natural instincts was an insult to nature and a short cut to moral deformity. I already saw that the only proper course of action was to order one's life in accordance with its conditions.

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

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

The condition of my soul is clearly indicated by my output. The fount of lyric poetry had run completely dry. I had not touched the unfinished *Orpheus*; wrote nothing new. I no longer aspired to become the redeemer of humanity. I doubt whether I should have been able to attach any meaning to any such words. After returning from Edinburgh, I do not seem even to have kept a record and I remember nothing about my doings. July is however the date of an essay "The initiated interpretation of ceremonial magick" which I prefaced to my edition of *The Goetia*. I had employed Mathers to translate the text of *The Lesser Key of Solomon the King* of which *The Goetia* is the first section. He got no further; after the events of 1900, he had simply collapsed morally. I added a translation of the conjurations into the Enochian or Angelic language; edited and annotated the text, prefixed a "Preliminary Invocation", added a prefatory note, a Magical Square (intended to prevent improper use of the book) and ultimately an Invocation of Typhon when the First Magical War of the Aeon of Horus was declared.

This essay throws a very clear light upon my position. I could not deny the facts of Ceremonial Magick. It is impossible to explain why a dog squeals when you hit him with a stick; but we do not therefore deny that this happens, or at least that there is some impression of some such kind somewhere. I was in precisely the position of those philosophers who were driven to the

theory of causality and said that there was no cause why an apple should fall; it was simply a matter of coincidence that God should happen to will that it should touch the ground after willing it should be detached from the bough. The facts of Magick appear quite natural if one accepts the explanation officially put forward without inquiring too closely.

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

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

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

So much for July. But early in August, Gerald Kelly wrote suggesting that I should join his party at Strathpeffer. I had nothing better to do. Redheaded Arabella was still in Edinburgh; I was being bored to death, either by my meditation or by my inability to rouse myself to the point of doing any. So I packed a bag and went over.

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

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

She told me that she was being forced into the marriage with Howell by her family. She had been carrying on an intrigue with a married man named Frank Summers. This had got to the ears of her family because, being hard up for money, she had told her mother that she was pregnant and got forty pounds from her for the purpose of having an illegal operation. Naturally, this led to inquiries; and though the pregnancy was merely an ingenious pretext, and the operation consisted of dinners and dresses, the Kellys were determined to prevent further raids on their purse and their prestige by insisting on her remarriage.

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

It really seems absurd that I should have been so ignorant of the elements of psychology; but I genuinely imagined that this fantastic programme was possible. It certainly satisfied all theoretical requirements! But like other

Utopian dreamers from Sir Thomas Browne to Karl Marx, I omitted to take into consideration one insignificant element in the problem — the existence of the mysterious force called human nature.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Twas all she knew. However, I wasn't going to have to live with her. All I had to do was to emancipate her. So there was no reason for trying to talk to her.

We reached Dingwall in the clod damp dawn; we disinterred the sheriff's address from a sleepy policeman and arrived at his house only to be told by a dishevelled maid that we couldn't get at him till eight or nine or ten o'clock. I was piqued. The hint of obstacles roused me. I wasn't going to elope, whatever my reasons might be, and make a mess of it. I demanded the address of a lawyer and excavated him. He promised to be at his office at eight o'clock. With that we had to be content. There was no reason for apprehen-

sion. It wasn't likely that our disappearance would be discovered until breakfast time. We repaired to the hotel and ate and drank something in a state of suppressed nervous excitement. I confess to having been ashamed of myself. There I was, accoutred cap-a-pie from my bonnet to my claymore, and I had nothing at stake; and yet I was nervous! We were at the lawyer's on the stroke of eight, where we discovered that the sheriff was a mere flourish and that all we had to do was to consent to being married, and declare that we regarded ourselves as man and wife. A faint disgust at the prose of the proceedings induced me to elaborate them by taking out my dirk and kissing it, as a pledge of my faith. I never thought of kissing her!

It then transpired that the sheriff had to have his little whack, after all, no less than an Armenian pimp. The marriage had to be registered in his office. We were completely at a loose end. I was to go back to Boleskine, of course, but there were some hours before the train started. She was to go back to Strathpeffer: but — at this moment, Gerald Kelly burst into the room, his pale face drawn with insane passion. He was probably annoyed at his stupidity in not having realized that the announcement of our engagement, nineteen hours earlier, had been serious. On learning that we were already married, he aimed a violent blow at me. It missed me by about a yard. I am ashamed to say that I could not repress a quiet smile. If he had not been out of his mind, his action would have been truly courageous, for compared with me he was a shrimp; and while I was one of the most athletic men in the country, his strength had been impaired by his sedentary stupor and loose living in Paris.

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

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

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

It was arranged that Rose and I should go to the sheriff and register our marriage, as we risked fine and imprisonment if we omitted to do so. We were then to drive together to a wayside station, where we could take our own decision as to our future proceedings. Dingwall and Strathpeffer were of course seething with scandal. There were probably as many separate stories as there were inhabitants; and the appearance of the laird and his bride on the platform of Dingwall might have been the signal for a demonstration to eclipse the diamond jubilee and the relief of Mafeking.

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

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

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

We arrived at our destination a little before dinner time. My embarrassment reached an acute point. It was simply impossible for me to register at the hotel. I confess to the most abject cowardice. I made some excuse and left Rose to confront a clerk, while I went to look at the sea and wish ti weren't too cold to drown myself. I returned to find that she had booked a double

room. I thought it was hardly playing the game; but I couldn't be rude to a lady and, at the worst, it was only a matter of a day or so. I could decently dispatch her from Boleskine to the embraces of Mr. Summers and proceed to

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

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

In any case, there was nothing for it but to behave like a gentleman. So we drank a lot of champagne for dinner. We had been married on August 12th and could give God glory for his good gift of grouse, and then — What's champagne for, anyhow? Rose retired immediately after dinner; I sat in the smoking-room and pole-axed a stranger by making mysterious remarks until he thought I was mad, and fled. I had some more champagne and remembered that I was a poet. I got some paper and wrote the following rondel. Damn it, I had to play up to my partner!

> Rose on the breast of the world of spring,
> I press my breast against thy bloom;
> My subtle life drawn out to thee; to thee
> its moods and meaning cling.
> I pass from change and thought to peace,
> woven on love's incredible loom,
> Rose on the breast of the world of spring!
>
> How shall the heart dissolved in joy take
> form and harmony and sing?
> How shall the ecstasy of light fall back to
> music's magic gloom?
> O China rose without a thorn, O honey-bee
> without a sting!
>
> The scent of all thy beauty burns upon the
> wind. The deep perfume
> Of our own love is hidden in our hearts,
> the invulnerable ring.

No man shall know. I bear thee down unto
the tomb, beyond the tomb,
Rose on the breast of the world of spring!

I went upstairs.

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

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

However, there I was, married to one of the most beautiful and fascinating women in the world. The love between us grew to the utmost possibilities of passion without my suspecting it. The Kellys had acquiesced in the fait accompli. The last little splutter was a letter from the Rev. Frederick Festus demanding that I should settle ten thousand pounds on Rose. I might have done so had it not been for his pompous statement that the daughters of his house never married without a settlement. Considering that the very one whom I married myself had had no settlement at her first marriage, the lie was a little blatant, even for a clergyman. I replied with appropriate decision; they abandoned the idea that I could be bullied, as they were accustomed to bully timid and servile people who could be bounced. I have never understood the quality of bluster with which some people seem to get right through the world. It must be so humiliating to be "called". I much prefer to put forward my weakness to induce the attack of the malicious, while I am lying in ambush with an overwhelming reinforcement.

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

When trouble is not suppressed permanently by a little friendly punishment, it is a sign that the virtue has gone out of the master. When the suffragette went from worse to worse and made severity itself inhuman and useless, it did not prove in the least that women had altered from the days of the jungle, but that industrialism and piety had sapped the virtue of the male. Rome did not fall because the Germans and the Gauls had in any way improved; they were just the same and could be beaten by the same tactics and weapons as in the earliest centuries. But Christianity had eaten the heart out of Rome. The manly virtues and the corresponding womanly virtues, one of which is recognition of the relation between the sexes, had been corrupted by slave morality. The England of Victoria, by bringing up the best stock in the country in the most favourable physical conditions, and teaching the boys from the start that they were brought into the world in order to rule it, produced a class of men who were like Old Testament heroes. (Under George III we had a rehearsal. Can it be that long prosperous reigns favour the production of such men? We had another crop under Elizabeth, when the restoration of the abbeys to the people of England gave a chance to the development of a daring and dominant breed.) But the influences which are commonly called civilized attenuate the aristocratic spirit.

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

A nation lives by its architecture; when it comes to consciousness of its soul, it feels that it has to build a house for that soul to life in. Such buildings must be utterly useless; the soul will not live in a Woolworth Building — that

is inhabited by the unclean spirit whose name is Legion, and that is the evidence that America, with all its material prosperity, has no soul. Nor is a man rich while he confines his purchases to things which are useful.

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

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

Rose and I were walking towards the Pont Alexandre III when it met Vestigia, as we always called Mrs. Mathers. I had not seen her for a long time and we started an animated conversation. I noticed nothing peculiar. I do not live in the world of phenomena: I only visit it at rare intervals. I had forgotten Rose's existence. When Vestigia had gone, I realized that I had not introduced her to my wife. She did not ask me who it was. I told her. "Oh," said she, "I thought it was some model that you knew in the old days."

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

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

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

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

passed a very uncomfortable night. I fear me dalliance had corrupted my Roman virtue. In the morning the astral light had completely disappeared and the only sound was the flitting of the bats.

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

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

> Jan. 1st.
>
> Began badly: missed dear and hare. So annoyed. Yet the omen is that the year is well for works of love & union; ill for those of hate. Be mine of love!

This entry does not sound as if I were still wholly lunatic in the rays of the honeymoon. The explanation is that the mere fact of getting back to camp life reawakened in me the old ambitions and interests. It may be part of my feeling for ritual that to put on certain types of clothes is to transform my state of mind. However lazy I may be, I have merely to change trousers for knickerbockers to feel athletic at once. There is also the point that I make a profession of virtue when reminded of certain dates, just as a totally irreligious man might go to church at Christmas. The subsequent entries give no hint that my mind was really turning to its ancient masters. The sole entries concern sport and camp life; and they are very meagre.

I have never been able to enjoy reading chronicles of slaughter, and I do not propose to inflict any such on the world. They are as monotonous and

conventional as those of mountaineering. Sportsmen and climbers follow the fashion with frightful fidelity. Norman Collie wrote the only book on mountains which possesses any literary merit. Mummery's is good because he really had something to say, but his style shows the influence of Collie. Owen Glynne Jones produced a patent plagiarism of Mummery's style; and when it came to the brothers Abraham, the bottom was reached. And what a bottom! In fact, two.

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

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

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

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

And in my diary there is no allusion to the poem. (It may in fact have been written during an earlier illness of rose — on December 15th — but I don't think so, because I connect the inspiration with eating buffalo steak,

and on the earlier date I was only eating snipe.) I have only noted, "Rose ill, one bloody birdling, bread arrived in P.M."

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

My most amusing adventures have been always when I strolled alone into the jungle without trackers or bearers, met a boar, a bear or a buffalo by chance or the exercise of native wit, and conquered him in single fight. My native servants used to be horrified at my proceedings, very much as orthodox mountaineers have been at my solitary climbs. They did not doubt my prowess with the rifle; they respected it because they understood it. But they had been accustomed to white men relying on them for light and leading, and they made sure that I should be hopelessly lost without them in the jungle. Perhaps the chief part of my pleasure consisted in the problems presented by having to find my way home, very likely in the dark, after having pursued some quarry by a devious route, by virtue of my sense of direction, especially as impenetrable undergrowth, uncrossable patches of water, or marshes, may complicate matters very seriously.

The most dangerous animal in Ceylon (there are no tigers, and if there were, the statement would stand) is the buffalo. One can distinguish a wild from a tame buffalo by his psychology. If he is wild, he runs away; if he is tame, he charges you. Yet these fanatical partisans of "Asia for the Asiatics" permit themselves to be ridden, cursed and bullied by brats not six years old. The buffalo is always savage and always intelligent enough to know who has wounded him. He is also infinitely courageous and vindictive. Many tigers will turn tail even when slightly but painfully wounded. But the buffalo never gives in morally or physically, and shows almost human powers of strategy and tactics in his vendetta. His vitality is incredible; the gaur (a not

dissimilar species) which killed Captain Sayers in Burma had seventeen bullets from heavy rifles in him while he was goring and trampling the aggressor. The other Englishmen present could no nothing to save him.

One evening I shot a sambhur; the great stag (miscalled elk) of Ceylon. He was standing some three hundred yards away, across a small lagoon. He went off like a streak of lightning. It was impossible to follow him and I thought I had missed him. But two days later I came on him by accident, twenty-five miles from where I had shot him. My bullet had penetrated the lungs and grazed the heart. I cannot help thinking that there is something in the apparently absurd contention of certain mystics that life does not depend wholly on the integrity of the physiological apparatus, but on the will to live. I have dropped the most powerful animals stone dead with a single shot in the right place; but if that first shot happens not to kill him outright, he is so inflamed with fury that you can riddle him with bullets in the most vital spots without further disabling him. I know it sounds like utter nonsense, but I have seen it again and again. The sambhur above mentioned is only one case.

One day I was told of an exceptionally fine wild buffalo bull who was so lost to all principles of propriety that he used to come down every evening to enjoy a heard of tame cows. I felt that I could never face Exeter Hall[55] in the future if I allowed this sort of thing to go on. The only sign of grace in this bull was that he had a guilty conscience and departed for the *Ewigkeit* at the first hint of human proximity. The cows were accustomed to feed in a wide flat country. It was impossible to approach them in the open. I crawled out to the edge of the jungle and law low, hoping that they would come near enough for a shot. They did. But I misjudged the range; and my bullet, by the most curious luck, pierced the near fore hoof of the bull. He made off indignantly for the jungle at a point some three or four hundred yards from my ambush.

Ten minutes later "I stood tiptoe upon a little hill" and looked around me "with a wild surmise". I knew where I had hit him by the way he limped, and that he was no more put out of action than Battling Siki, if I had trod on his pet corn. I knew that a buffalo bull can conceal himself in the Ceylon jungle as effectively as a bug in a barracks, and I knew that he was perfectly informed of my character and intention. I knew that I was nervous by the way I gripped my rifle (my principal battery, by the way, was a 10-bore Paradox with lead and also steel core bullets, and a .577 Express, both double barrelled). As I stood, I realized for the first time the responsibility of the white man. I had to exhibit perfect *aplomb*. No sign of the bull!

[55] At that time headquarters of Evangelicalism.

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

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

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

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

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

and biff him

> Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide

Under the last rib, sheer through bulk and bone
Deep in —

and see

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

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

One of my boars, by the way, gave me a lesson in literature. I came across his body two days after the battle and it hit me in the eye — to say nothing of the nose — with Baudelaire's "Charogne".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To Baudelaire, as we know, a similar sight suggested his "Inamorata". I was presumably too blindly in love with Rose to see the resemblance; the main impression on my mind was more impersonally philosophical. I thought of the 13th Key of the Tarot, of the sign of Scorpio, the invincible persistence of life perpetuating itself by means of that very putrefaction which seems to shallow minds the star witness against it. Here were vermin feeding on corruption, yet the effect was of lambent vibrations of white brilliance, disporting themselves in the sunlight — here, quit! Am I a sportsman describing his heroic feats, or am I not?

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

One elephant whose track I followed took the camp of a Frenchman in his morning stroll. The man's wife had taken him out to Ceylon to keep him way for alcohol, but prohibition forgot the proverb, "Out of the frying-pan into the fire". The elephant got him before I got the elephant.

One of our most beautiful camps was a sort of dak baghla near the shores of a superb lake. Open on its principal arc, the further shore merged into marshes. In the shallow waters at the edge grew magnificent trees whose branches were festooned with legions of flying foxes, as they call the species of bat whose breast is furred with marvellous red and white. I thought I would kill a few dozen and make my wife a toque and myself a waistcoat. We went out in a boat not unlike a clumsy variety of punt to catch them in their sleep. They keep no guard; but at the firs gunshot they awake and the air literally becomes dark with their multitude. One has merely to fire into the mass. One of the bats, wounded, fell right on my wife and frightened her. It may have

been thirty seconds before I could detach her from his claws. I thought nothing of the matter; but it is possible that her condition aggravated the impression. Our beds in the baghla were furnished with four stout uprights and a frame for mosquito curtains. I suppose in so remote a district they had been made of unusually strong poles. I was awakened in the dead of night by the squeal of a dying bat.

I remember debating whether I was in fact awake or not, whether the noise, which was horribly persistent, might not be part of a dream evoked by the events of the day. I even called to Rose to resolve my doubts. She did not answer. I lighted the candle. She was not there. My alarm completed my awakening. The bat squealed hideously. I looked up. I could not see any bat. But there was Rose, stark naked, hanging to the frame with arms and legs, insanely yawling. It was quite a job to pull her down. She clung to the frame desperately, still squealing. She refused utterly to respond to the accents of the human voice. When I got her down at last, she clawed and scratched and bit and spat and squealed, exactly as the dying bat had done to her. It was quite a long time before I got her back to her human consciousness.

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

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

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

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

There are also terrible thorns. My head tracker came to me one day with one in his foot. The end was protruding and I imagined that I should have no difficulty in pulling it out with forceps. But the thorn was soft as pith. I had to cut open the man's sole along the whole length of the thorn, seven and three quarter inches. His skin was a tough as rawhide, the epidermis a quarter of an inch thick. The thorn had not reached the dermis. It seemed miraculous that it should have penetrated a hide that came near to turn the edge of my surgical knife.

The heaviest weapon and the truest eye and hand may sometimes fail to account for the smallest of God's creatures. I could not understand why my 10-bore Paradox seemed so ineffective against small birds. One day I came across a rat-snake, nineteen feet long, and said, "This time I will bruise your head and I bet you don't bruise my heel." I was within a few yards of him and fired several times. He moved off with leisurely disgust; he could not imagine what my game could be. Why had I disturbed his sleep? I followed, protesting

with further drum fire. He moved lazily beyond the barrage. I am a patient man; but the conduct of this snake insulted and humiliated me. One of the me, his sensitive oriental spirit doubtless observing my distress, went forward and knocked him on the head with a stick. Theoretically, he should have been as full of holes as a lace fichu; but there wasn't a mark on him. It dawned slowly upon my mind that there must be something wrong with my cartridges. When we got to camp, I put up the lid of an old box and fired at it from ten yards, in order to test the penetration of the shot. The pellets did not mark the board; they bounced back and hit me in the face. I reserved my remarks from my return to Colombo.

This event took place on the sixteenth of January. My headman had swindled me outrageously; but there was no remedy. There is no remedy for anything in Ceylon. The whole island is an infamy. It is impossible to get twelve Singalese to agree on any subject whatever, so a majority decision determines the verdict of a jury of seven! Justice is usually done, because it really is the case that the man with the more money is less often wrong than his opponent.

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

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

The next morning I was amazed to read, in the *New York Herald*, an outrageously outspoken account of the affair[56]. On the heels of this came the news that MacDonald had shot himself in the Regina. He was a great simple lion-hearted man with the spirit of a child; with all his experience in the Army, he still took the word honour seriously, and the open scandal of the accusation had struck down his standard.

One incredible detail must be told. The hotel communicated at once with the British Embassy, and the attaché, who went down to see the body

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

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

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

I called on the khansamah to tell me if I was suffering from delirium tremens. He told me no; what I saw was really there, and it was some kind of committee from Scotland, and that was all he knew. After lunch I discovered that the Great Heart of Scotland refused to admit that any member of the Kirk could have acquiesced in the amenities of the Anglican clergy. The elders had therefore sent out a committee to vindicate the innocence of MacDonald. I could no less in courtesy than make them feel more at home in Ceylon by revealing myself as an Inverness laird. They opened their hearts to me; they were already discouraged. They told me that the prosecution had the affidavits of no less than seventy-seven native witnesses. "Ah well," I said. "You don't know much of Ceylon. If there were seven times seventy-seven, I wouldn't swing a cat on their dying oaths. The more unanimous they are, the more it is certain that they have been bribed to lie." I am really glad to think I cheered to old boys up; and I hope that the succeeded in fixing their hero with a halo, though I never heard what happened.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now, Samadhi, whatever it is, is at least a state of mind exactly as are deep through, anger, sleep, intoxication and melancholia. Very good. Any state of mind is accompanied by corresponding states of the body. Lesions of the substance of the brain, disturbances of the blood supply, and so on, are observed in apparently necessary relation to these spiritual states. Furthermore, we already know that certain spiritual or mental conditions may be induced by acting on physico- and chemico-physiological conditions. For instance, we can make a man hilarious, angry or what no by giving him whisky. We can induce sleep by administering such drugs as veronal. We can even give him the courage of anaesthesia (if we want him to go over the top) by means of either, cocaine and so on. We can produce fantastic dreams by hashish, hallucinations of colour by anhalonium Lewinii; we can even make him "see stars" by the use of a sandbag. Why then should we not be able to devise some pharmaceutical, electrical or surgical method of inducing Samadhi; create genius as imply as we do other kinds of specific excitement?

Morphine makes men holy and happy in a negative way; why should there not be some drug which will produce the positive equivalent?

The mystic gasps with horror, but we really can't worry about him. It is he that is blaspheming nature by postulating discontinuity in her processes. Admit that Samadhi is *sui generis* and back come the whole discarded humbug of the supernatural. I was back at the old bench exploring the pharmacopoeia for the means of grace, as I had done with Allan long ago; but I had come back to the problem armed in the panoply of the positive natural philosophy of modern science. Huxley had vindicated the alchemists. There was nothing impossible or immoral about the Stone of the Wise and the Elixir of Life. Maudsley — rather to my surprise — agreed with all these propositions, but could not suggest any plausible line of research.

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

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

We landed at Port Said on Monday, February the eighth, and went to Cairo on the following day. It was part of the plan of the gods that my romantic passion and pride, the intoxicated infatuation of my hymeneal happiness, should have induced me to play a puerile part on the world's stage. I had called myself Count Svareff and Aleister MacGregor for quite definite and legitimate reasons; but I had never made a deliberate fool of myself by assuming an absurd alias. I was not for a moment deceived by my own pretext that I wanted to study Mohammedism, and in particular the mysticism of the fakir, the Darwesh and the Sufi, from within, when I proposed to pass myself off in Egypt for a Persian prince with a beautiful English wife. I wanted to swagger about in a turban with a diamond aigrette and sweeping silken robes

or a coat of cloth of gold, with a jewelled talwar by my side ant two gorgeous runners to clear the way for my carriage through the streets of Cairo.

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

In a way, my mother was insane, in the sense that all people are who have watertight compartments to the brain, and hold with equal passion incompatible ideas, and hold them apart lest their meeting should destroy both. One might say that we are all insane in this sense; for, ultimately, any tow ideas are incompatible. Nay, more, any one idea is incompatible with itself, for it contains in itself its own contradiction. (The proof of this thesis will be given in the proper place.)

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

I conclude my allusion to 66:

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

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

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

As to my study of Islam, I got a sheikh to teach me Arabic and the practices of ablution, prayer and so on, so that at some future time I might pass for a Moslem among themselves. I had it in my mind to repeat Burton's journey to Mecca sooner or later. I learnt a number of chapters of the Koran by heart. I never went to Mecca, it seemed rather *vieux jeu*, but my ability to fraternize fully with Mohammedans has proved of infinite use in many ways.

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

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

I was quite fixed in scepticism, as I have always been, but also in so-called rationalism, and I prosecuted these studies in a strictly scholarly spirit. I worked very hard at them and made great progress accordingly; but my true life was still the honeymoon, slightly diluted by the ordinary pleasures of sport and society. I relapsed into golf after some fourteen years' total abstinence; took a few lessons from the pro at the Turf Club, and found that my St. Andrews swing and the canniness inculcated by Andrew Kirkaldy made a fine basis for playing a fairly decent game. We went to Helwan on February 19th; and I played nearly every day, filled with a passionate ambition to become amateur champion. I had picked up my old form so rapidly that I imagined myself a heaven-born golfer. But the game haled its own. I never even got to scratch.

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

One day I joined a party of three to shoot quail, which I recall on account of a singular accident. I was in the middle of the line. A bird got up and flew between me and the man on my right; but I withheld my fire for hear of hitting him. We swung round again; another bird came in the same direction and suddenly dodged and passed on the right. The end man fired. There was a howl. I, having turned to watch the bird, saw the accident clearly. A native had risen from the ground at the moment of the shot. My friend swore that

he had not seen him, and I had not seen him myself until I heard him. There was no cover. It seems incredible that my friend at least should not have seen him, for he must have only just missed walking over him, the man being slightly behind our line when the shot was fired. And he was so close to the gun that the shot had not begun to scatter when it stuck him. It had cut a clean narrow groove in the man's shaved scalp, not even laying bare the bone.

I mention this incident, not only on account of its extraordinary features, but to compare it with the "horrors of Denshawai". The spirit of the natives was entirely friendly. Our administration of Egypt was characterized by paternal firmness; everyone was in the right, everyone respected himself and others; no one complained. Yet, within three years, our prestige had been completely destroyed by the intelligentsia of England — everyone was in the wrong, no one respected himself or anyone else, and every one complained.

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

PART THREE

The advent Of the Aeon of Horus

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This chapter is the climax of this book. Its contents are so extraordinary, they demand such breadth and depth of preliminary explanation, that I am in despair. It is so serious to me that my responsibility overwhelms me. My entire previous life was but a preparation for this event, and my entire subsequent life has been not merely determined by it, but wrapped up in it.

I have made several attempts to write the history of these few weeks, notably, that section of *The Temple of Solomon the King* which appears in *The Equinox*, vol. I, no. VII. I cannot with literary propriety incorporate these documents in the body of this book, but they are presented in an appendix, together with the text of *The Book of the Law*.

Most of the past nine years of my life have been preoccupied, each year more fully than the last, with the problem of proving to humanity in general the propositions involved. To make the elements of my thesis as clear and distinct as possible, I shall endeavour to insulate them in sections.

Ouarda and I left Helwan for Cairo. (Date unascertained, probably on March 11th or 13th.) We had taken an apartment (Address unascertained) on Wednesday, March 16th. One day, having nothing special to do, I made the "Preliminary Invocation" referred to above. I had no more serious purpose than to show her the sylphs as I might have taken her to the theatre. She could not (or refused to) see them, but instead got into a strange state of mind. I had never seen her anything at all like it before. She kept on repeating dreamily, yet intensely, "They are waiting for you." I was annoyed at her conduct.

March 17th. I don't remember whether I repeated my attempt to show her the sylphs, but probably did. It is in my character to persist. She again got into the same state and repeated her remarks, adding, "It is all about the child." And "All Osiris." I think I must have been annoyed by her contumacy. Perhaps for this reason I invoked Thoth, the god of wisdom, presumably by the invocation printed in *Liber Israfel* (The Equinox, Vol. I, Vo. VII),

which I knew by heart. I may also have been subconsciously wondering whether there was not something in her remarks, and wanted to be enlightened. The record says, "Thoth, invoked with great success, indwells us." But this strikes me as to some extent "written up" in a spirit of complacency, if not arrogance. I remember nothing of any result.

March 18th. Possibly I repeated the invocation. The record says, "Revealed that the waiter was Horus, whom I had offended and ought to invoke."

"Waiter" sounds like a sneer. I thought is was sheer impudence of Ouarda to offer independent remarks. I want her to see the sylphs.

I must have been impressed by one point. How did Ouarda know that I had offended Horus? The troubles of Mathers were due to his excessive devotion to Mars, who represents one side of the personality of Horus, and no doubt I was inclined to err in the opposite directions, to neglect and dislike Mars as the personification of unintelligent violence.

But was her bull's-eye a fluke? Her mention of Horus gave me a chance to cross-examine her. "How do you know that it is Horus who is telling you all this? Identify him." (Ouarda knew less Egyptology than ninety-nine Cairene tourists our of one hundred.) Her answers were overwhelming. The odds against her being right were one in many million.

I allowed her to go on. She instructed me how to invoke Horus. The instructions were, from my point of view, pure rubbish. I suggested amending them. She emphatically refused to allow a single detail to be altered. She promised success (whatever that might mean) on Saturday or Sunday. If I had any aspiration left at all, it was to attain Samadhi (which I had not yet ever done). She promised that I should do so. I agreed to carry out her instructions, avowedly in order to show her that nothing could happen if you broke all the rules.

On some day before March 23rd, Ouarda identified the particular god with whom she was in communication from a stele in the Boulak Museum, which we had never visited. It is not the ordinary form of Horus but Ra-Hoor-Khuit. I was no doubt very much struck by the coincidence that the exhibit, a quite obscure and undistinguished stele, bore the catalogue number 666. But I dismissed it as an obvious coincidence.

March 19th. I wrote out the ritual and did the invocation with little success. I was put off, not only by my scepticism and the absurdity of the ritual, but by having to do it in robes at an open window on a street at noon. She allowed me to make the second attempt at midnight.

March 20th. The invocation was a startling success. I was told that "The Equinox of the Gods had come"; that is, that a new epoch had begun. I was to formulate a link between the solar-spiritual force and mankind.

Various considerations showed me that the Secret Chiefs of the Third Order (that is, of the A∴A∴ whose First and Second Orders were known as G∴D∴ and R.R. et A.C. respectively) had sent a messenger to confer upon me the position which Mathers had forfeited. I made it a condition that I should attain Samadhi; that is, that I should receive a degree of illumination, in default of which it would be presumptuous to put myself forward.

March 21st-22nd-23rd. There seems to have been a reaction after the success of the twentieth. The phenomena faded out. I tried to clear up my position by the old methods and did a long Tarot divination which proved perfectly futile.

March 23rd to April 7th. I made inquiries about the stele and had the inscriptions translated into French by the assistant curator at Boulak. I made poetic paraphrases of them. Ouarda now told me to enter the room, where all this work had been done, exactly at noon on April 8th, 9th and 10th, and write down what I heard, rising exactly at one o'clock. This I did. In these three hours were written the three chapters of *The Book of the Law*.

The above statement is as succinct as I can make it. By April 8th, I had been convinced of the reality of the communication and obeyed my wife's arbitrary instructions with a certain confidence. I retained my sceptical attitude none the less.

THE CLAIM OF *THE BOOK OF THE LAW* IN RESPECT OF RELIGION. The importance of religion to humanity is paramount. The reason is that all men perceive more of less the "First Noble Truth" — that everything is sorrow; and religion claims to console them by an authoritative denial of this truth or by promising compensations in other states of existence. This claim implies the possibility of knowledge derived from sources other than the unaided investigation of nature through the senses and the intellect. It postulates, therefore, the existence of one or more praeter-human intelligences, able and willing to communicate, through the medium of certain chosen man, to mankind a truth or truths which could not otherwise be known. Religion is justified in demanding faith, since the evidence of the senses and the mind cannot confirm its statements. The evidence from prophecy and miracle is valid only in so far as it goes to the credit of the man through whom the communication is made. It establishes that he is in possession of knowledge and power different, not only in degree but in kind, from those enjoyed by the rest of man kind.

The history of mankind teems with religious teachers. These may be divided into three classes.

1. Such men as Moses and Mohammed state simply that they have received a direct communication from God. They buttress their authority by divers methods, chiefly threats and promises guaranteed by thaumaturgy; they resent the criticism of reason.

2. Such men as Blake and Boehme claimed to have entered into direct communication with discarnate intelligence which may be considered as personal, creative, omnipotent, unique, identical with themselves or otherwise. Its authority depends on "the interior certainty" of the seer.

3. Such teachers as Lao-Tzu, the Buddha and the highest Gnana-yogis announce that they have attained to superior wisdom, understanding, knowledge and power, but make no pretence of imposing their views on mankind. They remain essentially sceptics. They base their precepts on their own personal experience, saying, in effect, that they have found that the performance of certain acts and the abstention from others created conditions favourable to the attainment of the state which has emancipated them. The wiser they are, the less dogmatic. Such men indeed formulate their transcendental conception of the cosmos more or less clearly; they may explain evil as illusion, etc., but the heart of their theory is that the problem of sorrow has been wrongly stated, owing to the superficial or incomplete data presented by normal human experience through the senses, and that it is possible for men, but virtue of some special training (from Asana to Ceremonial Magick), to develop in themselves a faculty superior to reason and immune from intellectual criticism, by the exercise of which the original problem of suffering is satisfactorily solved.

The Book of the Law claims to comply with the conditions necessary to satisfy all three types of inquirer.

Firstly, it claims to be a document not only verbally, but literally inspired. *Change not as much as the style of a letter; for behold! thou, o prophet, shalt not behold all these mysteries hidden therein. ... This book shall be translated into all tongues: but always with the original in the writing of the Beast; for in the chance shape of the letters and their position to one another: in these are mysteries that no Beast shall divine. Let him not seek to try: but one cometh after him, whence I say not, who shall discover the Key of it all.*

The author claims to be a messenger of the Lord of the Universe and therefore to speak with absolute authority.

Secondly, it claims to be the statement of transcendental truth, and to have overcome the difficulty of expressing such truth in human language by what really amounts to the invention of a new method of communicating thought, not merely a new language, but a new type of language; a literal and numerical cipher involving the Greek and Hebrew Cabbalas, the highest mathematics etc. It also claims to be the utterance of an illuminated mind co-extensive with the ultimate ideas of which the universe is composed.

Thirdly, it claims to offer a method by which men may arrive independently at the direct consciousness of the truth of the contents of the Book; enter into communication directly on their own initiative and responsibility with the type of intelligence which informs it, and solve all their personal religious problems.

Generally, *The Book of the Law* claims to answer all possible religious problems. One is struck by the fat that so many of them are stated and settled separately in so short a space.

Top return the the general question of religion. The fundamental problem has never been explicitly stated. We know that all religions, without exception, have broken down at the first test. The claim of religion is to complete, and (incidentally) to reverse, the conclusions of reason by means of a direct communication from some intelligence superior in kind to that o any incarnate human being. I ask Mohammed, "How am I to know that the Koran is not your own compilation?"

It is impertinent to answer that the Koran is so sublime, so musical, so true, so full of prophecies which time has fulfilled and confirmed by so many miraculous events that Mohammed could not have written it himself.

The author of *The Book of the Law* foresaw and provided against all such difficulties by inserting in the text discoveries which I did not merely not make for years afterwards, but did not even possess the machinery for making. Some, in fact, depend upon events which I had no part in bringing about.

It may be said that nevertheless there may have been someone somewhere in the world who possessed the necessary qualities. This again is rebutted by the fact that some of the allusions are to facts known to me alone. We are forced to conclude that the author of *The Book of the Law* is an intelligence both alien and superior to myself, yet acquainted with my inmost secrets; and, most important point of all, that this intelligence is discarnate.

The existence of true religion presupposes that of some discarnate intelligence, whether we call him God or anything else. And this is exactly what no religion had ever proved scientifically. And this is what *The Book of the*

Law does prove by internal evidence, altogether independent of any statement of mine. This proof is evidently the most important step in science that could possibly be made: for it opens up an entirely new avenue to knowledge. The immense superiority of this particular intelligence, AIWASS, to any other with which mankind has yet been in conscious communication is shown not merely by the character of the book itself, but by the fact of his comprehending perfectly the nature of the proof necessary to demonstrate the fact of his own existence and the conditions of that existence. And, further, having provided the proof required.

THE CLAIM OF *THE BOOK OF THE LAW* TO OPEN UP COMMUNICATIONS WITH DISCARNATE INTELLIGENCE. In the above section I have shown that the failure of previous religions is due, not so much to hostile criticism, but to their positive defect. They have not made good their claim. It has been shown above that *The Book of the Law* does demonstrate the prime position of religion in the only possible way. The only possible argument, on the other side, is that the communication cannot have been made by a discarnate intelligence, because there are none such. That indeed constitutes the supreme importance of *The Book of the Law*. But there is no a priori reason for doubting the existence of such beings. We have long been acquainted with many discarnate forces. Especially in the last few years science has been chiefly occupied with the reactions, not merely of things which cannot be directly perceived by sense, but of forces which do not possess being at all in the old sense of the word.

Yet the average man of science still denies the existence of the elementals of the Rosicrucian, the angels of the Cabbalist, the Nats, Pisachas and Devas of southern Asia, and the Jinn of Islam, with the same blind misosophy as in Victorian days. It has apparently not occurred to him that his position in doubting the existence of consciousness except in connection with certain types of anatomical structure is really identical with that of the narrowest geocentric and anthropocentric Evangelicals.

Our actions may be unintelligible to plants, they might plausibly argue that we are unconscious. Our real reason for attributing consciousness to our fellow-men is that the similarity of our structure enables us to communicate by means of language, and as soon as we invent a language in which we can talk to anything soever, we begin to find evidence of consciousness.

The was is therefore clear for me to come forward and assert positively that I have opened up communication with one such intelligence; or, rather, that I have been selected by him to receive the first message from a new order of beings.

THE HISTORICAL CONCEPTION ON WHICH *THE BOOK OF THE LAW* IS BASED. Just as *The book of the Law* reconciles an impersonal and infinite interpretation of the cosmos with an egocentric and practical viewpoint, so it makes "infinite space" speak in the language of a goddess and deals with the details of eating and drinking:

Be goodly therefore: dress ye all in fine apparel; eat rich foods and drink sweet wines and wines that foam! Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me.

The emancipation of mankind from all limitations whatever is one of the main precepts of the Book.

Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt.

It reconciles cosmological conceptions which transcend time and space with a conventional, historical point of view. In the first place it announces unconditional truth, but in the second is careful to state that the "Magical Formula" (or system of principles) on which the practical part of the book is based is not an absolute truth by one relative to the terrestrial time of the revelation. (It is a strong point in favour of the Book that it makes no pretence to settle the practical problems of humanity once and for all. It contents itself with indicating a stage in evolution.)

The Book of the Law presumes the existence of a body of initiates pledged to watch over the welfare of mankind and to communicate its own wisdom little by little in the measure of man's capacity to receive it.

The initiate is well aware that his instruction will be misinterpreted by malice, dishonesty and stupidity: and not being omnipotent, he has to acquiesce in the perversion of his precepts. It is apart of the game. *Liber I vel Magi* tells the Magus (here defined as the initiate charged with the duty of communicating a new truth to mankind) of what he may expect.

There are many magical teachers but in recorded history we have scarcely had a dozen Magi in the technical sense of the word. They may be recognized by the fact that their message may be formulated as a single word, which word must be such that it overturns all existing beliefs and codes. We may take as instances the Word of Buddha-Anatta (absence of an atman or soul), which laid its axe to the root of Hindu cosmology, theology and psychology, and incidentally knocked away the foundation of the caste system; and indeed of all accepted morality. Mohammed, again, with the single word Allah, did the same thing with polytheisms, patently pagan or camouflaged as Christian, of his period.

Similarly, Aiwass, uttering the word Thelema (with all its implications), destroys completely the formula of the Dying God. Thelema implies not merely a new religion, but a new cosmology, a new philosophy, a new ethics. It co-ordinates the disconnected discoveries of science, from physics to psychology, into a coherent and consistent system. Its scope is so vast that it is impossible even to hint at the universality of its application. But the whole of my work, from the moment of its utterance, illustrates some phase of its potentiality, and the story of my life itself from this time on is no more than a record of my reactions to it.

To recapitulate the historical basis of *The Book of the Law*, let me say that evolution (within human memory) shows three great steps: 1. the worship of the Mother, when the universe was conceived as simple nourishment drawn directly from her; 2. the worship of the Father, when the universe was imagined as catastrophic; 3. the worship of the Child, in which we come to perceive events as a continual growth partaking in its elements of both these methods.

Egyptian theology foresaw this progress of humanity and symbolized it in the triad of Isis, Osiris, Horus. The neophyte ceremony of the Golden Dawn prepared me for the New Aeon; for, at the Equinox, the officer who represented Horus in the West took the throne of Osiris in the East.

The Book of the Law is careful to indicate the nature of the formula implied by the assertion that the residing officer of the temple (the earth) is Horus, the Crowned and Conquering Child. And again, Egyptology and psychology help us to understand what is implied, and what effect to expect, in the world of thought and action.

Horus avenged his father Osiris. We know that the sun (indeed, every element of nature) does not suffer death.

The child is not merely a symbol of growth, but of complete moral independence and innocence. We may then expect the New Aeon to release mankind from its pretence of altruism, its obsession of fear and its consciousness of sin. It will possess no consciousness of the purpose of its own existence. It will not be possible to persuade it that it should submit to incomprehensible standards; it will suffer from spasms of transitory passion; it will be absurdly sensitive to pain and suffer from meaningless terror; it will be utterly conscienceless, cruel, helpless, affectionate and ambitious, without knowing why; it will be incapable of reason, yet at the same time intuitively aware of truth. I might go on indefinitely to enumerate the stigmata of child psychology, but the reader can do it equally for himself, and every idea that comes to him as characteristic of children will strike him as applicable to the events of

history since 1904, from the Great War to Prohibition. And if he possess any capacity for understanding the language of symbolism, he will be staggered by the adequacy and accuracy of the summary of the spirit of the New Aeon given in *The Book of the Law*.

I may now point out that the reign of the Crowned and Conquering Child is limited in time by The Book of the Law itself. We learn that Horus will be in his turn succeeded by Thmaist, the Double-Wanded One; she who shall bring the candidates to full initiation, and though we know litter of her peculiar characteristics, we know at least that her name is justice.

THE ETHICS OF *THE BOOK OF THE LAW*. Every cosmography implies some sort of ethical theory. The Aeon of Osiris had been succeeded by that of Horus. The Magical Formula of the Aeon being no longer that of the Dying god but that o the Crowned and Conquering Child, mankind is to govern itself accordingly. A "righteous" act may be defined as one which fulfils the existing Magical Formula. The motives which were valid in the Aeon of Osiris are sheer superstition today. What were those motives and on what basis did they rest? The old conception was that man was born to die; that eternal life had to be gained by a magical act, exactly as the sun had to be brought to life every morning by the priest.

There is no need to develop the ethics of Thelema in detail, for everything springs with absolute logic from the singular principle, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." Or, to put it another way, "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt." And, "thou hast no right but to do thy will." This formula itself springs ineluctably from the conception of the individual outlined in the preceding section. "The word of Sin is Restriction." "It is a lie, this folly against self." The theory is that every man and every woman has each definite attributes whose tendency, considered in due relation to environment, indicate a proper course of action in each case. To pursue this course of action is to do one's true will. "Do that, and no other shall say nay."

The physical parallel still holds. In a galaxy each star has its own magnitude, characteristics and direction and the celestial harmony is best maintained by its attending to its own business. Nothing could be more subversive of that harmony than if a number of stars set up in a uniform standard of conduct insisted on everyone aiming at the same goal, going at the same pace, and so on. Even a single star, by refusing to do its own will, by restricting itself in any way, would immediately produce disorder.

We have a sentimental idea of self-sacrifice, the kind which is most esteemed by the vulgar and is the essence of popular Christianity. It is the sac-

rifice of the strong to the weak. This is wholly against the principles of evolution. Any nation which does this systematically on a sufficiently large scale, simply destroys itself. The sacrifice is in vain; the weak are not even save. Consider the action of Zanoni in going to the scaffold in order to save his silly wife. The gesture was magnificent; it was evidence of his own supreme courage and moral strength; but if everyone acted on that principle the race would deteriorate and disappear.

There is here a conflict between private and public morality. We should not protect the weak and the vicious from the results of their inferiority. By doing so, we perpetuate the elements of dissolution in our own social body. We should rather aid nature by subjecting every newcomer to the most rigorous tests of his fitness to deal with his environment. The human race grew in stature and intelligence as long as the individual prowess achieved security, so that the strongest and cleverest people were able to reproduce their kind in the best conditions. But when security became general through the operation of altruism the most degenerate of the people were often the offspring of the strongest.

The Book of the Law regards pity as despicable. The reason is partly indicated in the above paragraph. But further, to pity another man is to insult him. He also is a star, "one, individual and eternal". The Book does not condemn fighting — "If he be a King, thou canst not hurt him."

There are many ethical injunctions of a revolutionary character in the Book, but they are all particular cases of the general precept to realize one's own absolute God-head and to act with the nobility which springs from that knowledge. Practically all vices springs from failure to do this. For example: falsehood is invariably the child of fear in one form or another.

With regard to what are commonly considered offences against morality, the undesirable results often observed are due to the same error. Strong and successful men always express themselves fully, and when they are sufficiently strong no harm comes of it to themselves or to others. When it does, it is practically always due to the artificial situation brought about by people who, having no business of their own, meddle in that of other people. One may mention the cases of Sir Charles Dilke and Charles Steward Parnell. It didn't matter a straw to anybody outside the negligibly small circle of their acquaintances what these men did in their private lives, but England lost her greatest foreign minister and Ireland her greatest leader, because it was discovered that they were doing exactly the same as practically everyone else in their class.

With regard again to personal jealousy and ill-regulated passion, is it too much to say that nine tenths of the social misery not due to poverty arises from these hallucinations? *The Book of the Law* sweeps them out of existence. "There shall be no property in human flesh." Nobody has a right to say what anyone else shall or shall not do with his or her body. Establish this principle of absolute respect for others and the whole nightmare of sex is dispelled. Blackmail and prostitution automatically lose their raison d'être. The corrupting influence of hypocrisy breaks like a rotten reed. The sweating of "female labour cheapened by prostitution" (as Bernard Shaw says) becomes impossible. I have written at considerable length in recent years on the ethical, as well as on the cosmographical problems solved by the Law of Thelema. I need not go into them more deeply in this place. But the subsequent events of my life will furnish constant illustration of how every time I violated the Law, as I sometimes did with what I was ass enough to call the noblest motives, I got myself into a mess — and failed to benefit those on whose behalf I had chosen to make a fool of myself.

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It is part of my character to rest on my oars at the very moment when a spurt would take me past the post. I begin to be recognized as the one poet in England: "Good," I say to myself, "I needn't bother about that any more." I acquire most of the world's records as a mountaineer — that lets me out. *Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero pulsanda tellus.* I reach eminence in Magick; it is the signal for me to drop it; in mysticism, and I lose my interest. Now, charged by the Secret Chiefs of the Third Order with a mission of such importance that the last event in the world's history of importance, even approaching it, was Mohammed's, I get cold feet, carry out my instructions as perfunctorily as possible, and even try to find excuses for postponing such work as I could not actually avoid.

I made a certain number of studies of *The Book of the Law*; for even then I was bound to admit that Aiwass had shown a knowledge of the Cabbala immeasurably superior to my own. I had the manuscript typed. I issued a circular letter to a number of my friends, something in the nature of a proclamation of the New Aeon, but I took no trouble to follow it up. I took a certain number of wide-reaching plans for assuming responsibility, but they remained in the stage of reverie. I dropped the whole business, to all intents and purposes. I completely abandoned my diary. I even neglected a really first-rate opportunity for bringing *The Book of the Law* into public notice, for Mrs. Besant was on the ship by which Ouarda and I returned to Europe, and I conversed a great deal with her about sacred subjects. In Paris, I wrote a formal letter to Mathers informing him that the Secret Chiefs had appointed me visible head of the Order, and declared a new Magical Formula. I did not expect or receive an answer. I declared war on Mathers accordingly, but it was a *brutum fulmen*.

The fact of the matter was that I resented *The Book of the Law* with my whole soul. For one thing, it knocked my Buddhism completely on the head. *Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.*

I was bitterly opposed to the principles of the Book on almost every point of morality. The third chapter seemed to me gratuitously atrocious. My soul, infinitely sad at the universal sorrow, was passionately eager to raise humanity. And lo! the Magical Formula denounced pity as damnable, acclaimed war as admirable and in almost every other way was utterly repugnant to my ideas. I did not understand the fundamental principles of the initiation of mankind; and (in my own case) I did not realize that Aiwass was not necessarily responsible for the character of his message any more than the newspaper for reporting an earthquake.

The Secret Chiefs had informed me that a New Aeon implied the breaking up of the civilization existing at the time; obviously to change the Magical Formula of the planet is to change all moral sanctions and the result is bound to appear disastrous. The Cult of The Dying God introduced by Dionysus destroyed the Roman virtue and smashed the Roman culture. (Possibly the introduction of the worship of Osiris in an earlier epoch was primarily responsible for the decay of Egyptian civilization.) The nature of Horus being "Force and Fire", his aeon would be marked by the collapse of humanitarianism. The first act of his reign would naturally be to plunge the world into the catastrophe of a huge and ruthless war.

The Secret Chiefs told me that this war was imminent and that they had chosen me as their representative on account of my comprehensive knowledge of the mysteries, my correct understanding of their real import and my literary ability. The chief duty which they laid upon me was to publish the Secret Wisdom of the Ages in such a form that after the wreck of civilization the scholars of subsequent generations would be able to restore the traditions. I was to issue a compendium of the methods by which man may attain the God-head. The released me from my obligation of secrecy.

The responsibility of this, apart from anything else, was sufficient to stagger me. I had been taught to dread the result of publishing the least part of the Secret Knowledge: in unworthy hands the most appalling mischief was only too likely to ensue. I had been almost absurdly scrupulous with regard to the secrets entrusted to me; indeed my experience had already shown me what shocking messes had been made by apparently trivial indiscretions on the part of others. I was not even proud that the choice of the Secret Chiefs had fallen upon me; I was too well aware of my incapacity and indolence.

The task of reducing the Magical and mystical methods of every time and clime to a coherent and intelligible form frightened me. On the one hand, I was reluctant to attempt to ambitious a work; on the other, acutely anxious lest I should prove unworthy of my office.

I have always been utterly contemptuous of the criticism of people whom I do not respect. I frankly despise Keats for having been upset by the review of "Endymion"; but the correlative of this is over-sensitiveness about people whom I regard as authorities. The least word of admonition of Eckenstein about climbing would throw me into agonies of self-reproach. When Allan reproved me for some error in Yoga, I was overwhelmed with shame.

My position was therefore very difficult. I was bound to the Secret Chiefs by the most solemn of obligations. I never dreamt of trying to minimize my responsibility to them, yet they had cut across the whole trend of my aspiration. The magical part o me was, in a manner of speaking, stunned.

My wife and I passed a short time in Paris and renewed old ties. One incident stands out in my memory as peculiarly amusing. We asked Arnold Bennett to lunch at Paillard's. He was completely overpowered by the deference of the Maître d'hôtel, who knew me very well, and his embarrassment at being introduced to such splendours was childishly charming. He was, of course, enormously pleased and very kindly offered to give me an introduction to H. G. Wells. As Arnold Bennett had gratified the public with a highly spiced description of me in *Paris Nights*, hope that he will take it as a compliment if I imitate his frankness in the matter of personalities. His accent and dialect made his English delightfully difficult. As we were leaving the restaurant, he told me that there was one thing about Wells that I mustn't mind: he spoke English with an accent.

59 rue de Grenelle, Paris

14 *Feby* 1911

Dear Aleister Crowley,

Many thanks. I am very glad to have the volume. I will mention it in *The New Age*, but I no longer write for T. P's. Weekly. Not a portrait of you — my dear Crowley — in the *English Review*! for all you sat for was the waistcoat, the title and the poetry. All these portraits are composite.

Yours sincerely,

ARNOLD BENNETT

Alas! I lack the literary skill to construct composite portraits. My own poor effort is the most crude photography. Also, I beg him to excuse my personalities. He is too great a man at heart to resent jests at the expense of his

perishable vehicle; he is himself a star bright-blazing, the more glorious for the thickness of the terrestrial vapours which it has had to pierce.

We wandered back to Boleskine, after arranging with a doctor named Percival Bott to come and stay with us and undertake the accouchement. I asked my Aunt Annie to preside over the household, and an old friend of Gerald's (Kelly) and mine, Ivor Back, at this time a surgeon at St. George's, to make up the house party. Ivor Back is one of the most amusing companions possible, to those who can stand him. He knows a good deal about literature and had published in *The Hospital* magazine some of the poems in which I had celebrated various diseases. I dedicated my *In Residence*, a collection of my undergraduate verses, to him, and he collaborated with me to a certain extent in the composition of various masterpieces of the lighter kind. He and Gerald are also responsible for numerous improvements in the preface to *Alice, An Adultery*. He also edited the three volumes of my *Collected Works*, supplying learned notes to divers obscure passages.

My activities as a publisher were at this time remarkable. I had issued *The God-Eater* and *The Star & the Garter* through Charles Watts & Co. of the Rationalist Press Association, but there was still no such demand for my books as to indicate that I had touched the great heart of the British public. I decided that it would save trouble to publish them myself. I decided to call myself the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, and issued *The Argonauts*, *The Sword of Song*, *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King*, *Why Jesus Wept*, *Oracles*, *Orpheus*, *Gargoyles* and *The Collected Works*. I had simply no idea of business. Besides this, I was in no need of money; my responsibility to the gods was to write as I was inspired; my responsibility to mankind was to publish what I wrote. But it ended there. As long as what I wrote was technically accessible to the public through the British Museum, and such places, my hands were clean.

And yet I took a course implying a diametrically opposite state of mind. I printed a large edition of *The Star & the Garter*, and issued it at a shilling, with the idea of reaching the people who might have been unable to buy my more expensive books. I printed a leaflet and circularized the educated classes. (I have no copy available.) The meat of the circular was the offer of one hundred pounds for the best essay on my work. The business idea was to induce people to buy my *Collected Works* in order to have material for the essay. This offer led ultimately to far-reaching results; in fact, it determined the course of my life for a number of years. The winner of the prize became an

intimate friend and colleague. His scholarship, acumen, enthusiasm and indefatigability proved most important factors in the execution of the orders of the Secret Chiefs.

Meanwhile, we had a glorious time at Boleskine. What with the salmon and the venison and my cellar, billiards and rock scrambling, the good company and the perfect summer, life passed like an ecstatic dream. In summer in the Highlands, time seems to forgive. At midnight one can sit and read in the open air even in the absence of the moon. Night is "one faint eternal eventide of gems".

One of our adventures is worthy of record. It is one of the most startling incidents that I have ever known in all my experience of climbing. Beyond the Italian garden I had constructed a large trout pond, with Canadian canoe and sacred spring complete. From the farther bank, a short slope leads to a precipitous cliff which affords an admirable variety of rock problems. Having taught Bott and Back the elements of the sport, we decided to attempt a more serious climb. Across the loch, beyond Glen Moriston, is a well-marked gully, through which pours a torrent from Mealfuarvonie. Eckenstein and I marked this down; but during his visits it had always been merely a frantic waterfall. The long spell of dry weather made me think there was a chance to climb it, so I rowed over with Bott and Back, and started on the lowest pitch. This is a broad precipice of water-worn rock, perhaps a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet high. A good deal of water was coming over, but there seemed a possible way up. Starting outside the true left of the stream, I hoped to work my way up the bare slabs to within twenty feet of the edge, where the stream pitched over, and then climb obliquely to the left until I was actually in the torrent; for its broken character indicated good hold (for both hand and foot) which I trusted would prove sufficient to enable me to pull myself up despite the weight of the water.

At the best the climb was very exposed and I ought not really to have attempted it in any but first-class company. There was no alternative to my proposed route. Where the water had not washed the rock clean, the pitch was a dripping precipice of greasy, mossy slabs, set at a frightful angle, with practically no hand-hold or foot-hold at all. Such cracks as existed gave obvious evidence of disintegration, so that any apparent hold must certainly be rotten. I would not have attempted it with Eckenstein, and I would have refused to follow him had he wished to attempt it himself!

I led up the pitch with Bott as second man and Back as third. I reached the most critical part of the climb. My holds were the merest friction holds. I could not have supported a rabbit. I half expected to come off; and I knew

that Bott (though reasonably safe himself, or I should not have gone on) could no nothing to save me if I fell. Back, in a perfectly safe position far below (we had a long rope), saw how insecure I was. He completely lost his nerve. He began to utter incoherent cries and to untie himself from the rope. The act was, of course, outrageous, but he was not responsible. He took no notice of my orders to keep quiet and not be a damphool. I could not even come down with any safety, Bott being naturally upset by Back's hysteria, so I called to Ivor to stay where he was and we would come round for him.

In the circumstances, my best course was to finish the climb as quickly as I could and I went on at my best pace. In the roar of the falling water which swamped me, I could, of course, see and hear nothing. I dragged myself up the water fall by sheer force; I had to trust for hand-and foot-hold to my previous observations, for I had to keep my eyes shut against the rush of the torrent. I hauled myself through the gap on the brink and wedged myself against the rocks which confined it, head first. I found myself in a sort of cauldron where I could stand with my head and shoulders above water. I had climbed the pitch. I called to Bott to come on, and pulled him up the slabs on the rope. It had been a terrific climb; one of the most dangerous I had ever done.

My anxiety had been increased by seeing that Back, having untied himself, had not sat down quietly as ordered, but started to scramble towards the utterly unclimbable and dangerously deceptive slabs of dripping moss. Bott and I extricated ourselves from the cauldron without further difficulty. And then I began to wonder whether the nymph of the waterfall had not played me a trick! I was certainly suffering from some kind of hallucination. Had my anxiety about Back created a phantasm? For there, on the slopes above us was an apparition in his shape, gesticulating, muttering and shouting by turns. But it was Back in the flesh! He had done the impossible thing: he had climbed the unclimbable cliff! so incredible was the feat that I was at pains to go round and look at the place again from below. My judgment had not deceived me — there was no sort of way up — yet the torn moss and a few fresh broken bits of rotten rock proved his passage. To this day I regard the facts as the least credible of any that have ever come my way.

When Rose and I first arrived at Boleskine, we had made a sort of sporadic effort to carry out some of the injunction of Aiwass. We had arranged before leaving Egypt for the "abstruction" of the Stele of Revealing. I did not understand the word or the context, and contented myself with having a replica made by one of the artists attached to the museum. We now proceeded to prepare the "perfume" and the "Cakes" according to the prescription given in chapter III, verses 23-9.

We had resumed Magical work, in a desultory way, on finding that Mathers was attacking us. He succeeded in killing most of the dogs. (At this time I kept a pack of bloodhounds and went man-hunting over the moors.) The servants too were constantly being made ill, one in one way, and one in another. We therefore employed the appropriate talismans from *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin* against him, evoking Beelzebub and his forty-nine servitors. Rose had suddenly acquired the power of clairvoyance. Her description of these servitors is printed in *The Bagh-i-Muattar*, pages 39, 40. (I may mention: Nimorup, a stunted dwarf with large head and ears. His lips are greeny bronze and slobbery. Nominon, a large red spongy jelly-fish with one greenish luminous spot like a nasty mess. Holastri, an enormous pink bug.) As to this perfume of *The Book of the Law*, "let it be laid before me, and kept thick with perfumes of your orison: it shall become full of beetles as it were and creeping things sacred unto me." One day, to my amazement, having gone into the bathroom to bathe, I discovered a beetle. As I have said, I take no interest in natural history and know nothing of it.

But this beetle attracted my attention at once. I had never seen anything like it before. It was about an inch and a half long and had a single horn nearly as long as itself. The horn ended in a small sphere suggestive of an eye. From the moment, for about a fortnight, there was an absolute plague of these beetles. They were not merely in the house, they were on the rocks, in the gardens, by the sacred spring, everywhere! But I never saw one outside the estate. I sent a specimen to London by the experts were unable to identify the species.

Here was a tangible piece of Magick. It ought to have convinced me that *The Book of the Law* meant business. Instead, it left me absolutely cold. I experienced a certain proud glee, much as I had in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid, but there it stopped. I took the necessary measures to protect Rose against the murderous attack of Mathers, and went on playing billiards. The attack was, however, prolonged and deadly. We were putting central heating into the house, and attempting to construct a small golf course on the estate. (Idiot! why not a tennis court on the Ennerdale Face of the Pillar?)

Ivor and I were playing billiards one morning after breakfast, when we heard screams and oaths from the direction the the kitchen. I snatched up a salmon gaff as the readiest weapon and we hurried out. One of the workmen had become suddenly maniacal and attacked my wife, who was making her usual inspection of the offices. It was the work of a moment to gaff the offender and thrust him into the coal cellar, and send for the police. As they were a long time in coming, the animal made several attempts to crawl out of

the chute, but our vigilance succeeded in baffling him, and he was duly handed into custody. But nothing followed! It is one of the peculiarities of Scotch law that there is no private prosecution unless the police choose to take up any give case; you can be murdered ad libitum without possibility of redress. As the police in the Highlands are largely recruited from the assassin class — there is no other — one can well understand why the gentry maintain, to a great extent, the ancient custom of surrounding themselves with armed retainers.

As soon as Beelzebub got on the job, the magical assaults ceased; and, deprived of the stimulus to perform Magick, my interest faded once more. We spent out time in sport and society, tempered by pregnancy, as if there were no hereafter. I used my official titles and position without emphasis, very much as a peer takes advantage of his social privileges without ever giving a thought to the Hose of Lords as a political institution.

On July 28th my wife gave birth to a girl, called Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith. Nuit was given in homage to our Lady of the Stars; Ma, goddess of Justice, because the sign of Libra was rising; Ahathoor, goddess of Love and Beauty, because Venus rules Libra; I'm not sure abut the name Hecate, but it may have been as a compliment to the infernal gods; a poet could hardly do less than commemorate the only lady who ever wrote poetry, Sappho; Jezebel still held her place as my favourite character in Scripture; and Lilith, of course, holds undisputed possession of my affections in the realm of demons.

Duncombe Jewell remarked later on that she had died of acute nomenclature. Cad. In my ears rang that terrible cry of Macduff, "He had no children."

Everything had gone as well as possible, and we were the happiest house party in the Highlands. There was only one problem, that of keeping my wife amused during her convalescence. She was normally an intensely active, joyous being, but she had absolutely no resources. She could not play even the simplest game of cards, and of my whole library of three thousand books and more there were only some half dozen that she cared to read. Hill Caine was too deep for her. It was up to me to produce an example of the only kind of literature she understood.

Now the objection to this form of art is its monotony; its preoccupation with detailed incident precludes a plot, and the range of its characters is deplorably limited. The men are nearly always priests or peers; the women countesses, school mistresses or milliners. These books possess the merit of

frankness of the most engaging kind; but they frequently strain one's credulity. The heroes of medieval romance are not so inhumanly disproportionate to the facts of life; that the author could claim the title of realist only ads to one's disgust. They arose every instinct of my puritanism with almost insane intensity. I suppose I was really furious at the fact that the wife whom I loved so passionately and honoured so profoundly should be intellectually circumscribed in this way. My only remedy was a *reductio ad absurdum*. I resolved to write a novel myself — one of this kind, but it should be very much better and bigger. And damn the expense. No priest nor monk should be my hero. I would have an archbishop. He should not be as superhuman as six men; he should do better than six hundred. My models had annoyed me by the pathetic paucity of their vocabulary. Having the excellent dictionary of John B. Farmer and W. E. Henley, I was able to avoid repeating myself. However, I took the liberty of inventing many new words and phrases to add further variety. So for every detail, I would show up the imbecile ineptitude to this type of literature by exaggerating its faults at every point.

I pounded off a chapter a day of this novel on my typewriter and read it to my wife, Gerald, Ivor and the rest of the house party, except my aunt, who shared the psychology of my wife, only on the other side of the fence. Rose could not see in the least what I meant; like Colonel Gormley, anything whatever that turned her mind towards the subject of love produced a direct excitement and was pleasing. The effect was the same on my aunt, except that she had schooled herself to pretend that it was unpleasing.

Even in France the *pudibond* fury of the bourgeoisie is rampant. Part of the public horror of sexual irregularity so-called is due to the fact that everyone knows himself essentially guilty. "Methings the lady doth protest too much." If men would face the facts of life, including their own constitutions and they are, practically all abuse and perversions would disappear. They are for the most part morbid phantasms of putrefaction, aggravated by the attempt at suppression. The wound of Amfortas will not heal because it has never been properly opened and rendered aseptic.

Madame Bovary was assumed to be a provincial Phryne. The story of her adultery was condemned as "immoral", as tending to incite illicit passions. Its critics had been simply unable to read the book. Flaubert was in reality grinding his heel into the woman's foolish face; he was showing that her conduct was not romantic and voluptuous, but sordid, stupid, bestial and anaphrodisiac. What could be more puritanical than *Ghosts*? It is the most frightful indictment of immorality that has ever been penned. Yet to the Anglo-Saxon it is "immoral". They don't understand a word, but it makes them

think of their own beastliness; with the result that they discuss it furtively, licking their lips, and cry in the market place that it is an offence to their purity.

I have never been able to comply with these foully perverse conventions. I face anything frankly and the phantasm fades. I do not permit any author to play on my passions. I read a book with my soul, and only those books appeal to me whose authors speak sincerely and sanely such truth as has been given them. I utterly loathe the author who practises on popular psychology. The sentimentalism of Charles Dickens, the eroticism of D. H. Lawrence, the pornographic religiosity of Mrs. Humphry Ward[57] seem to me to be appeals to the appetites of the unintelligent. They prostitute their scrap of art exactly as quacks do when they try to persuade people that a pain in the back always means Bright's disease; or that every trifling symptom, from headache to ingrowing toe-nails, is the result of secret vice.

The plain truth of the matter is that love stories are only fit for the solace of people in the insanity of puberty. No healthy adult human being can really care whether so-and-so does or does not succeed in satisfying his physiological uneasiness by the aid of some particular person or not. *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* illustrate the situation with singular clearness. Despite the astounding power of Wilkie Collins to draw characters, he cannot make the heroine interesting. Laura Fairlie is little better than an imbecile even when not actually suffering from dementia.

The artist's subconscious mind plays this sort of thing on him as a joke. He gets so disgusted with himself that he avenges himself on the dummy which offends him. In these tow novels, the heroes are represented as exceptionally fine fellows in every way, but for all their heroic deeds they seem wishy-washy, sordid dummies; for the simple reason that they have no object in life but to attain sexual possession of so many pounds of flesh. Nor does the interest of these books really depend on love. Great artists always find more serious themes. Sex is a means of intoxication; it is therefore proper to celebrate it in lyrics. But when one is sober, as one is when reading a novel, one doesn't want sex thrust down one's throat. One doesn't mind white wine in the sauce of the fish, and the man who is upset by its presence is a neurotic. As for the man who wants his cook to make his sauce so that he can get drunk on it — I simply don't want to meet him. But that is what the Anglo-Saxon public does, and that is why I don't want to meet it.

[57] I have never read a word of her. But somehow I don't like the idea.

Shakespeare has few stories of which the interest depends on love; when it does, the love always implies ruin, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Othello*. His only love stories with a happy ending, bar absolutely mechanical dénouements, are where he is secretly gratifying his secret perversity, as in *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*. Our greatest novelists have complied with convention by inserting a love interest ready made; *Tom Jones*, *Roderick Random* and so on; but the interest is hardly even secondary. All our greatest masterpieces treat love in its proper relation to life. *Jonathan Wild, Moll Flanders, Robinson Crusoe, Tristram Shandy, Gulliver's Travels, A Tail of a Tub, The Pilgrim's Progress, The Pickwick Papers, Vanity Fair, Armadale, The Shaving of Shagpat, The Way of all Flesh*, the Cabell epic: what have these to do with love?

In France it is the same. It can be done once. Aucassin and Nicolette. But afterwards! Think of a nice young girl introduced into *La Peau de chagrin*, *La Cousine Bette*, *Le Cousin Pons*, *Le Père Goriot*, *Eugénie Grandet*, *Le Colonel Chabert*. There is not one story in all Balzac where love is the saving or even the main motive. Dumas — think of d'Artagnan in love with a nice young lady and living happy ever after! (The love interest in *A Gentleman of France* and *Under the Red Robe* explains why Stanley Weyman's imitations of Dumas are so deplorably vulgar.) What happens to the Vicomte de Bragelonne (will all the virtues) when he falls in love? Russia supplies the extreme case, for in that country love has always been understood as a definitely diabolical pitfall.

It is true that there is a modern school founded by Emily Brontë, from Thomas Hardy to D. H. Lawrence, whose plots turn on the sexual relation of the characters, but wherever such books are healthy, the theme is that the exaggeration of the importance of such relations leads to disaster.

To return to my *jeu d'esprit* and the psychology involved. I have for my solicitor one of the most acute observers in the world. He said to me the other day, "You seem never to be able to do anything as anyone else would." I retorted, "No; nor by halves," which was smart — but hardly a rebuttal. The fact is, I consider everything *sub specie universali, sub specie aeternitatis*. It come natural to me to write an article on the parish council election in Little Piddlington for the eyes of the philosophers of two centuries hence. I cannot bring myself to believe that anything which is going on at the present time has any real existence. It is a meaningless letter in a word and its value depends on the rest of the letters. "A" and "O" are in themselves mere varieties of breathing, yet one helps to make "hag", and the other "hog" — one "cot", and the other "cat". Unless I know the consonants I cannot tell whether I need an "a" or an "o".

Now this perception is obvious to everybody, yet everybody acts as if he knew exactly what would be the result of writing "a" instead of "o", assuming that he is free to choose which he will do — which he isn't. But I bring this principle into my life; it governs me in every action outside my regular reflexes. I am really aware that I do not know whether it would be to my advantage to be hanged. I have only attained to a standard of conduct by referring all my judgments to my will, and until I knew what my true will was, I was utterly at sea.

To apply these ideas to the issue which we are discussing. I knew that a poet is incapable of recognizing his best work, but I knew also that though good technique does not mean good work bad technique does mean bad work. So I used to experiment with new forms by choosing a ridiculous or obscene subject, lest I should be tempted to publish a poem whose technique showed inexperience.

Ivor and I, with some assistance from Gerald, collected such of these manuscripts as had not been destroyed, and with "the Nameless Novel", we composed a volume[58] to carry on the literary form of *White Stains* and *Alice*; that is, we invented a perpetrator for the atrocities.

I do now know what mischievous whim induced me to have the book printed, but I was absolutely innocent of any desire to rival the exploit of Alfred de Musset and George Sand, the *Femmes* and *Hombres* of Verlaine, or the *jeu d'esprit* of Mark Twain of which Sir Walter Raleigh is the hero. I did not even hope to get the British government to give me a pension of four thousand pounds a year, as id did to John Cleland.

This literary diversion, and the regular sports of the Highlands, kept us happy; but, as the summer faded, we broke up. I did not want Rose and the baby to have to endure a Highland winter and towards the end of October went off to St. Moritz to make arrangements for them to come out. Rose, however, decided to take a holiday from nursing and left the child with her parents under the charge of the nurse, who was of course a very highly trained woman. She joined me at St. Moritz in November. I had always been enthusiastic about winter sports of every kind with the exception of *skiläufing*, which I appreciate as a means of covering necessary distances, but not otherwise. I like swooping down the slopes, and an occasional jump is rather good fun. But to go back up hill again! No, thank you!

The Cresta run was great joy and the sports committee paid me the greatest compliment of asking my advice about its construction. But it

[58] *Snowdrops from a Curate's Garden*

seemed to me ideally perfect. The only suggestions which I had to make were connected with safety; and, in fact, several men have been killed since through the precautions proposed by me not having been taken. I cannot blame anyone; my ideas were perhaps hardly practicable. Something should doubtless have been done about the level crossing, where a man going at sixty miles an hour or so came off second best when he hit a cart. But that is a rare chance. The constant danger is that an unskilful rider thrown over the walls of Battledore and Shuttlecock may strike the same place as a previous misadventurer. In this case he will land, not on soft snow but on an irregular mass of regelated ice. He is sure to cut himself and may easily get killed. The walls of the run should be sufficiently high and steep to make it impossible for a toboggan to leave the trough, in which case he would have to be very clever to come to much harm, provided he is properly clothed and hangs on to his seat. The difficulty is that men are so keen for the season to open that the run is often built when there is not nearly enough snow.

The frost began to break and we went back to England. I propose to mention an incident, despite its strictly medical character, as a warning to the world of the utter idiocy of woman as a class and the criminal idiocy of trained nurses in particular. They are the most dangerous animals in the community. They are so proud of their disconnected scraps of medical knowledge that they are always trying to usurp the position of the physician. In the present instance my wife came within an ace of death on a false alarm which two words from a qualified practitioner would have dispelled.

Since the birth of the baby, she had not settled down into the normal course of her physiological life. She jumped to the conclusion that she was pregnant again, though her symptoms, of course, implied nothing of the sort. Instead of seeking a doctor she went hysterically to the nurse who proceeded to dose her with ergot. As no abortion took place she redoubled her efforts. I had been away on business for two or three days and returned to find her in a perfectly frightened condition. I forced a confession and dragged her to the station (we were staying with her family near Bournemouth) and got her to the Savoy before midnight. Bott and Back, summoned by telegram, were waiting for us. They were frankly delighted, never having seen such a bad case of ergot poisoning in their lives.

I really don't know why I didn't prosecute that filthy nurse. Even if her diagnosis had been correct, I consider criminal abortion in any circumstances soever as one of the foulest kinds of murder. Apart from anything else, it nearly always ruins the health of the woman, when it fails to kill her.

The vigour of my views on this point strengthens my general attitude on the question of sexual freedom. I believe that very few women, left to themselves, would be so vile as to commit this sin against the Holy Ghost; to thwart the deepest instincts of nature at the risk of health and Life, to say nothing of imprisonment. Yet criminal abortion is one of the commonest of crimes and one most generally condoned by what I must paradoxically call secret public opinion. And the reason is that our social system makes it shameful and punishable by poverty for a woman to do what evolution has spent ages in constructing her to do, save under conditions with which the vast majority of women cannot possibly comply. The remedy lies entirely with public opinion. Let motherhood be recognized as honourable in itself, and even the pressure of poverty would not prevent any but a few degenerate women, with perverse appetites for pleasure, from fulfilling their function. In the case of such it would indeed be better that they and their children perish.

There is yet a further point. My marriage taught me many lessons, and this not the least: when women are not devoted to children — a few rare individuals are capable of other interests — they take a morbid pleasure in conspiring against a husband, especially if he be a father. They take advantage of his preoccupation with his work in the world to conceive and execute every kind of criminally cunning abomination. The belief in witchcraft was not all superstition; its psychological roots were sound. Women who are thwarted in their natural instincts turn inevitably to all kinds of malignant mischief, from slander to domestic destruction.

I am afraid that my adventures have lost me the citizenship of the world. Alastor is my name, the Spirit of solitude, the Wanderer in the Waste. I am only at home in the Elysian Fields, conversing with the mighty men of old. I dislike London, not because it is busy and noisy and dirty and dark and sordid, ad so on, but because it is so pettily provincial. I live in a city beyond time and space; how much more beyond the ticking centuries and the itching inches of London! I have accustomed myself so long to look at the universe as a while that its parts have become imperceptible. When I am reminded of them, it is like being reminded of one's eye by getting a fly in it. That is what I mean when I say that London gives me a pain.

I was very glad to be back in Boleskine. I had no particular plans; I had really settled down. If I had a tendency at all, it was to play little practical jokes. They were the outcome of my happiness. I put up a signboard in a field across the road:

This way to the Kooloomooloomavlock (does not bite),

in the hope that the wayfarer might amuse me by going to look for it. As a matter of fact, this animal created the greatest terror in the neighbourhood, the more so that it remained invisible. After my departure in 1905, the hotel keeper of Foyers determined to abate the nuisance and took his gun and tried to stalk it. He was observed from the hill by my ghillie and piper, Hugh gillies, the best servant I ever had in Europe, advancing by short rushes and in every way comporting himself as the military necessities of the situation required. "She may no bite," quoth Gillies, "but a'm thinking she pu's legs."

My activities as a publisher were in themselves a sort of practical joke. It amused me to bewilder and shock people. I took nothing seriously except my occult life at any time and that was at present more or less in abeyance. I wrote one or two poems at this time, notably *Rosa Inferni*, before Rose joined me in St. Moritz, and somehow or other I had written the fourth book of *Orpheus* part of which is inspired by my experience in Egypt. I published them at once. They had never satisfied me; the form was theoretically impossible. On the other hand, the lyrics and some of the dramatic dialogue are as good as anything in my work. I felt that one part of my life was drawing to a close. I made a clean sweep of my literary dustbin. I had its contents carted away and dumped on the public. I felt myself to be on the brink of a new birth and in *Gargoyles* will be found the first fruits of that new life.

But at this particular time I was much too happy to create. Creation is the effect of physiological dissatisfaction. That is why it comes as a relief. The creation of the universe, love, sea-sickness, are all of the same order of phenomena. I was at this time like the Eternal, lapped in calm bliss and enjoying his own perfection. But to such states there always arrives a period when discomfort arises from the accumulation of the secretions produced by the metabolism of one's elements. Presently one become conscious of the need to sneeze or what not, and in course of time one has to sneeze.

It is a very curious thing, by the way, that the average man accepts quite calmly the heresies of the average thinker with perfect equanimity. Bernard Shaw's attacks of religion and morality are taken as a matter of course. But when people like Ibsen, Nietzsche and myself say the same things, we are held up to popular execration.

There was no snake in my Eden; the impulse which drove me out took the positive form of Opportunity. From time to time, various friends had visited us: Gerald Kelly and his mother, Eckenstein, and so on, and a quite insignificant creature named Lieutenant-Colonel Gormley, who was destined to play a curious part in my life. He was a medical soldier and had spend countless years in India, Burma and South Africa without acquiring a single

fact of interest. He was incapable of appreciating so much as a funny story, even an improper one if there were any touch of wit in it. But if anyone introduced an obscene word into the conversation on any pretext soever, he would rock with laughter and continue to titter for an indefinite period.

He was the first masochist I had ever met; in fact I have only met one other, and it is not for me to decide which was the filthier fool. Gormley claimed to have been flagellated by over two thousand women. I rather suspect him of vaingloriousness: it seems a very large number. He was in love with my wife, chiefly because she treated him with such disgust and contempt. He had proposed to her several times a week, even before her first marriage, and he saw no reason why he should abandon this habit merely on account of Major Skerrett and myself. I don't know why I tolerated him; I don't know why anyone tolerated him. Perhaps it was the subconscious feeling that one cannot be unkind to anything so pitiable.

On April 27th, the good Tartarin, who had published a book (in the Swiss language) on our expedition to Chogo Ri, illustrated with many admirable photographs but not distinguished by literary quality or accuracy (in many respects), and had lectured in Paris and other capitals on Chogo Ri, dropped in. I was heartily glad to see him. He was the same cheerful ass as ever, but he had got a bit of a swelled head and was extremely annoyed with me for not leading him instantly to stalk the sinister stag, to grapple with the grievous grouse, and to set my ferrets on the fearful pheasant. He could not understand the game laws. Well, I'm a poet; I determined to create sport since it did not exist. More, it should be unique.

I opened the campaign as follows. Tartarin knew the origin of the wild buffalo of Burma. When the British destroyed the villages, their cattle escaped the bayonet and starvation by taking to the jungle, where they had become practically a new species. After the '45 the British had pursued the same policy of extermination — I mean pacification — in the Highlands, and I thought it plausible to invent a wild sheep on the analogy of the wild buffalo. And more, the beast should be already famous. I described its rarity, its shyness, its ferocity, etc., etc. — "You have doubtless heard of it," I ended; "it is called the haggis." My '52 Johannesburg completed that part of the "come-on". Tartarin dreamt all night of scaling a lonely and precipitous pinnacle and dragging a lordly haggis from his lair. For my part, like Judas in the famous story of the Sepher Toldoth Jeschu, I did not dream at all: I did better!

Two mornings later, Hugh Gillies, with disordered dress and wild eyes, came rushing into the billiard room after breakfast. He exploded breathlessly, "There's a haggis on the hill, my lord!"

We dropped our cues and dashed to the gun case. Trusting to my skill, I contented myself with the .577 Double Express, and gave Tartarin the principal weapon of my battery, a 10-bore Paradox, with steel-core bullets. It is a reliable weapon, it will bring an elephant up short with a mere shock, even if he is not hit in a vital part. With such an arm, my friend could advance fearlessly against the most formidable haggis in the Highlands.

Not a moment was to be lost. Gillies, followed by the doctor, myself and my wife, tiptoed, crouching low, out of the front door and stalked the fearsome beast across the Italian garden.

The icy rain chilled us to the bone before we reached the edge of the artificial trout lake. I insisted on wading through this – up to the neck, guns held high — on the ground that we should thus throw the haggis off our scent!

We emerged dripping and proceeded to climb the hill on all fours. Every time anyone breathed, we all stopped and lay low for several minutes. It was a chilly performance, but it was worth it! Tartarin soon reached the point where every bent twig looked to him like one of the horns of our haggis. I crawled and dripped and choked back my laughter. The idiocy of the whole adventure was intensified by the physical discomfort and the impossibility of relieving one's feelings. That interminable crawl! The rain never let up for a single second; and the wind came in gusts wilder and more hitter with every yard of ascent. I explained to Tartarin that if it should shift a few degrees, the haggis would infallibly get our scent and be off. I implored him to camouflage his posteriors, which arose in front for my balaclava, heaving like the hump of a dying camel. The resulting wiggles would have driven Isidora Duncan to despair; the poor man was indeed acutely conscious that, anatomically, he had not been constructed with the main idea of escaping notice.

However, after an hour and a half, we reached the top of the hill, three hundred feet above the house, without hearing that hideous scream-whistle of alarm by which (so I had been careful to explain) the haggis announces that he has detected the presence of an alien enemy.

Breathlessly, we crawled towards the hollow space of grassy and heathery knolls that lay behind the huge rock buttress that towers above the garden and the lake, that space whose richness had tempted our distinguished visitor to approach so near to human habitation.

The mist drove wildly and fiercely across the hillside towards us. It magnified every object to an enormous size, the more impressively that the background was wholly blotted out. Suddenly Gilles rolled stealthily over to the

right, his finger pointed tremulously to where, amid the unfurling wreaths of greyness, stood ...

Tartarin brought forward the 10-bore with infinite precision. The haggis loomed gargantuan in the mist; it was barely fifty yards away. Even I had somehow half hypnotized myself into a sort of perverse excitement. I could have sworn the brute was the size of a bear.

Guillarmod pressed both triggers. He had made no mistake. Both bullets struck and expanded; he had blown completely away the entire rear section of Farmer McNab's prize ram.

We rushed forward, cheering frantically. Gillies had to be first in at the death; the supply of oats with which he had induced our latest purchase to feed in that spot all the morning without moving, might, if observed, have detracted from the uncanny glory of that romantic scene. But next day at dinner, when we ate that haggis, the general hilarity passed unchallenged. The atmosphere had become wholly Homeric; there was no reason why the wildest glee should seem out of place.

Tartarin sent the ram's head to be stuffed and mounted; a suitable inscription was to be engraved upon a plate of massive gold. For had not the gallant Swiss vindicated their race once more? Would not the *Gazette de Lausanne* literally foam at the mouth with the recital of so doughty an exploit?

And so the contented Tartarin developed his plans for renewing the attack upon the Himalayas. Eckenstein had been approached, but for one reason or another had refused. I should have preferred it vastly if he had accepted; but I was a keen as ever to capture the only world's record which he and I did not, severally or jointly, hold; that of having reached a higher point on mountains than any other climbers. (This record was held either by Graham on Kebru — a doubtful case — or by Matthias Zurbriggen, the guide whom Eckenstein had trained to mountaincraft, on Aconcagua.)

Mindful, however, of Tartarin's misadventure in 1902, I made the strictest conditions before agreeing to join the new expedition. A document was drawn up and signed by which I should be acknowledged leader of the party. I was to be obeyed implicitly in all matters relating to the actual conduct of the expedition on the mountain. It was a deliberate breach of this agreement which caused directly its failure and the disaster which disgraced it.

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Expedition 1905, au Kangchenjunga.

Accord.

Le Dr. J. Jacot Guillarmod & ses trois amis fournissent une somme de quinze mille francs.

Monsieur Aleister Crowley & un ami fourniront à deux une somme de 5,000 franks (cinq mille).

Pour cette dernière contribution, le Dr. J. Jacot Guillarmod s'engage à fournir l'approvisionnement & le transport du moment du départ de Darjeeling jusqu'au retour à Darjeeling.

L'expédition sera enterprise dans les meilleures conditions possibles, vu la nature du pays à traverser.

Le but de l'expédition sera l'ascension du Kangchenjunga (28,150 feet).

On essayera d'abord par le glacier de Yalung.

On partira de Darjeeling dans la seconde moitié de juillet; on y reviendra en octobre au plus tard.

Aleister Crowley partira pour Darjeeling aussitôt que possible, afin de faire tous les préparatifs & arrangements nécessaires.

On respectera soigneusement les préjugés & les croyances indigènes & on ne s'immiscera pas dans leurs manières de vivre.

On n'achètera rien sans l'assentiment dy Dr. J. Jacot G. ou de A. Crowley.

On s'engage à n'avoir aucune relation directe ou indirecte avec les femmes, indigènes ou étrangères, qu'on peut éviter.

Le Dr. J. Jacot G. est seul & suprême juge des questions d'hygiène ou de santé de la caravane.

Aleister Crowley est seul & suprême juge des questions se rapportant exclusivement à l'alpinisme & aux montagnes.

Les questions de route & du personnel des caravanes seront décidées par lui seul. Ses camarades se conformeront à ses résolutions.

Personne ne sera obligé de risquer sa vie, à cause du froid, du manque de nourriture, d'ascension périlleuse, pouvant entraîner une chute.

Toute discussion relative à cet accord doit être soumise à l'arbitrage; on ne peut invoquer de loi ou de jugement d'homme de loi.
Les clauses de cet accord lient tous les membres de l'expédition par leur honneur.

Dr. J. Jacot Guillarmod — Aleister Crowley
A. C. R. de Righi — Ch. Reymond
Alexis A. Pache

There was no time to spare, if we were to attack Kanchenjunga this summer. It was arranged that the doctor was to get together the necessary provisions and equipment at once in Europe, while I went direct to Darjeeling to make arrangements with the government about transport and such communications as the heliograph, by which means we intended to signal our progress to observers on Signal Hill, above the station, to collect some of our old Kashmir shikaris if possible, to learn a little Nepali, and perhaps to enlist the assistance of enterprising individuals on the spot.

I left for London on May 6th and made such preparations with regard to my personal equipment as seemed desirable, and on May 12th left England for the East by the P & O S.S. *Marmora*. Eckenstein maintained constantly that the adventure was foolhardy; that, for his own part, he would never consent to go on a mountain again with Jacot Guillarmod; and that, in one way or another, his vanity, inexperience, fatuity and folly were certain to land us in disaster. I liked Tartarin so well, personally, that I unconsciously minimized his imbecility; and I was still much too young to realize how much mischief may be done indirectly be the mere presence of such a man, despite every precaution that prudence can suggest and all the supervision that caution can recommend. So I went into it — and realize only of late how lucky I was to come out of it all!

It was part of my policy with regard to physical training to make the whole journey by sea. I fed up and lounged about and told stories till the twenty-third, when I arrived in Cairo. The city is abandoned by tourists by this time of the year on account of some superstition about the climate; but to me Cairo at the end of May was more pleasant that I had ever known it. I joined the P & O on the thirty-first. It was certainly hot in the Red Sea, but I remember with intense pleasure of wonder a single incident. Most of the passengers, including myself, slept on deck. I was awakened one morning before dawn by a dazzling ray of blue, as if a searchlight had been suddenly turned

on me. The planet Jupiter had risen. Curiously enough an exactly parallel incident had taken place when I passed through the Red Sea from Chogo Ri, but on that occasion it was a crimson glare and the planet was Mars.

Blue Mushtari strove with red Mirrikh
which should be the master of the night,

as I wrote a few months later. The sensation was unfeignedly one of alarm which melted to wonder and rapture. Many years later I was indeed frightened for more than a moment of surprise by a quite normal celestial phenomenon. I was walking through unfrequented parts of Spain with a disciple. We were on a lonely road and night had fallen heavy and black. Suddenly a wedge of flaming scarlet stabbed my eyes. It increased rapidly in size and (perhaps therefore) seemed to be approaching us with frightful velocity. I remember to this hour my startled halt and the fierce gaze I fixed upon the enemy. I remember steeling myself to meet annihilation. But it was merely the full moon, rising through a gap in the mountains.

I reached Bombay on June 9th. It was my first experience of the low country of India in the hot season. I did not find it unbearable and I would go back and live a month for the sake of just one mango. The mango is a very strangely sensitive fruit. The perfect flavour is the private property of a very limited district, as in the case of champagne. The mangoes of Bengal are as inferior to those of Bombay as second-rate brands of "boy" to the best vintages of Rheims. Those of Ceylon are like Asti Spumante.

I left Bombay the same day at half-past eleven. My first act was to go into the bathroom with which the best Indian trains are furnished and turn on the shower. Owing to the confined space, I was unable to beat the world's record for combined high and long jump! The carriage had been standing on a siding in the sun that the tank was full of scalding water. The worst of the journey was the smuts from the engine. I reached Calcutta at four o'clock in the morning of the eleventh and had breakfast and dinner with my old friend Thornton. The next day I left for Darjeeling. It is certainly one of the most impressive experiences that a railway can afford. One begins by jogging dully across the acrid plains of Bengal and then at Sara Ghat one finds oneself suddenly on the bank of the Ganges. I had seen the river before, higher up, and it is not particularly exciting, but here it flowed gigantically across a vast desolation. The time was sunset, the turbid water glowed with angry reds and oranges. There was an evil coppery sheen upon its waveless turmoil. Its breadth possessed a horror of its own; it was like a river of hell. Far away it

reached to the right and left. There was nothing to break the horizon. I gave the desolate effect of ocean, but the boundlessness of the open sea suggests liberty. This river had told of barrenness and bitter bondage. The windless Ganges stank of putrefaction. It was not even the stench of rotting vegetation. It seemed as if it were the earth itself which was decaying. A more fantastic and more frightful sight I have never seen. We crossed this tartarean river in a steamer and the actual breadth may be estimated from the fact that dinner is served on board. It was a bad dinner, too; it completed the hellishness of the scene.

One lands. The eternal funeral march of the train is resumed. The heat of the night is stifling. The waning moon — when laggard she looms up above the rim of the planet — is almost as impotent as the stars to pierce the sultry haze of dust which chokes one. The coolest place on one's pillow is where one's head has cooled it. One tosses in blind torment. There is no question of seeking relief; one has an instinct that nothing will do any good. Perhaps one drops off to sleep for a few moments, and those, however few they be, are filled with aeons of delirious and demoniac dreams of suffocation dipped in despair.

Then suddenly comes dawn. The slow train stutters and stops. One is still an insect on the infernal plain, but there is a touch of coolness in the air which is not wholly the chill of death. The sticky sweat on one's body begins to evaporate and one's spirit to revive. There is a call to Chota Hazri. One steps out of the carriage. Good God!

Not many miles away across the level to the east rise thickly wooded slopes, a confused tangle both of hills (as it seems) and of trees, and behind them again, still higher heights of misty purple and green. And then — good God! Is it a mirage? Is it a phantom of hope created by courage from the chaos of nightmare? For there, above the highest hills, at an angle for which even one's experience of Chogo Ri has not prepared me, there stands the mass of Kangchenjunga, faint rose, faint blue, clear white, in the dawn.

On reaching the foot of the hills, one transfers to a toy railway, which climbs the six thousand odd feet to Darjeeling by means of complicated curves and even loops. One ascends rapidly; the view constantly changes; one begins to appreciate the geology of the country as a whole. In the foreground the tropical vegetation is superbly thick and rich. One is so relieved by the change to cool shade and a suggestion of moisture that it comes as a shock to remember that this is the Teri, one of the most deadly fever districts in the world. By lunchtime the character of the vegetation is already markedly altered. The heavy tangle of the low country begins to give place to

mountain sprightliness, but also the view tends to disappear altogether. One enters the region of almost eternal mist. The day is warm; and yet one is chilled to the bone. One is glad to come out on to an exposed ridge at Ghum and find the train begins to go down hill. It was the sign of the nearness of Darjeeling. I got off the train. With unfeigned satisfaction, I observed immediately that the current legends about the amazing powers of the coolies were true. The principal item of my baggage was a full-sized wardrobe trunk, but its contents were not mostly air, as usual with the American variety of this device. It contained comparatively few clothes; boots, axes, rifles, revolvers, scientific instruments and books made up the tale. I do not know how much it weighed, because the baggage clerk at Calcutta had asked me to bribe him with a rupee to declare it below the free allowance; but I should have been very sorry to have to do more than set it up on end unaided. A young girl coolie took it on her back, as I might have done a rucksack, and carried it at a good steady pace up the steep narrow paths to the Woodlands Hotel. I no longer disbelieved the story that a woman had once carried a full-sized upright piano all the way to Darjeeling from Siliguri on the plains.

Darjeeling is a standing or rather steaming example of official ineptitude. Sir Joseph Hooker, one of the few men of brains who have explored these parts, made an extended survey of the district and recommended Chumbi as a hill station. "Oh well," they say, "Darjeeling is forty miles nearer than Chumbi. It will do rather better." So Darjeeling it was. The difference happens to be that Chumbi has a rainfall of some forty inches a year; Darjeeling some two hundred odd. The town is perched on so steep a ridge that there is practically no level road anywhere and one gets from one house to another by staircases as steep as ladders.

The whole town stinks of mildew. One's room is covered with mildew afresh every morning.

India being the last hope of the unmarriageable shabby-genteel, Darjeeling is lousy with young ladies whose only idea of getting a husband is to practise the piano. In such a climate it is of course impossible to keep a piano in tune for five minutes, even if one could get it into that condition. The food itself is as mildewed as the maidens. The hotels extort outrageous rates which they attempt to justify by describing the meals in bad French. To be reminded of Paillard is adding insult to injury, for what the dishes are made of I never did discover. Almost the whole time I was there I was suffering from sore throat, arthritis, every plague that pertains to chronic soddenness. Do I like Darjeeling? I do not!

On the other hand, I hound the heaven-born and the army as full of cordiality and comradeship as ever. As luck would have it, a new Worshipful Master was to be installed at the Lodge of Freemasons, so I went to the Jadugar-Khana and received a most brotherly welcome to the ceremony and banquet. There I met Sir Andrew Fraser, the lieutenant-governor, the commissioner, the deputy-commissioner, the Maharaja of Kuch Behar and all sorts of delightful people. Everyone was only too willing to help in every way.

I wanted to start for the mountain as early in the season as possible. We had reliable information as to what the weather on the higher peaks was likely to be. We had no Zojila to cross, no forty marches to the foot of the peak but twelve or fifteen at the outside. If we found it continuously bad, one could retreat into the valley and recuperate almost as one can in the Alps, for Tsetam is only about twelve thousand feet.

I had reconnoitered Kangchenjunga from England, thanks to the admirable photographs of every side of the mountain taken by Signor Vittorio Sella, who accompanied some man named Freshfield in a sort of old-world tour around the mountain. I had also a map by Professor Garwood, the only trouble with which was that, not having been up the Yalung glacier himself, he had had to fill in the details from what he himself calls the unintelligible hieroglyphics of a native surveyor, who had not been there either.

It did not matter; but I was very much puzzled by the appearance of a peak where no peak should have been, according to the map.

The bandobast for this expedition was very different to that necessary for Chogo Ri, if one takes Darjeeling as the analogy to Srinigar, for there are no villages and supplies of men and food to be had anywhere on the way. I had to send on eight thousand pounds of food for the coolies to a depot as near the Yalung glacier as possible. The government transport officer, Major White, very kindly undertook to oversee this part of the transport and I left it entirely in his hands. Unfortunately, things did not go as well as could be desired. The coolies in this part of India compare very unfavourably with the Baltis and the Kashmiris. They are Tibetan Buddhists with an elaborate priestcraft and system of atonement which persuaded early Jesuit travellers that Satan had perpetrated — in advance! — a blasphemous parody on Christianity; for they found only trivial, formal distinctions between the religions of Lhasa and Rome. They are therefore accessible to emotion and acquire a sentimental devotion to people for whom they take a fancy. But they have no notion of self-respect, no loyalty, no honesty and no courage. Many of Major White's men deserted, either dumping their loads anywhere on the way or stealing them; and there was no means of controlling their actions. I prepared

to expect trouble and was very glad that I had sent to Kashmir for three of our best men of 1902 — Salama, Subhana and Ramzana.

My throat gave me such trouble that I decided to go to Calcutta for a few days — from July 13th to 20th. I had in any case to purchase a number of additional stores, as Guillarmod had "economized". The bandobast went on in charge of the manager of the Drum Druid Hotel, to which I had moved shortly after my arrival. He was an Italian named Righi. He offered to join the expedition as transport officer and I, relying on his knowledge of the language and the natives, thought it best to accept him, though his character was mean and suspicious and his sense of inferiority to white men manifested itself as a mixture of servility and insolence to them and of swaggering and bullying to the natives. These traits did not seem so important in Darjeeling, but I must blame myself for not foreseeing that his pin brain would entirely give way as soon as he got out of the world of waiters.

I was quite happy about the mountain. On July 9th, only twenty-six days after my arrival in Darjeeling, the rain stopped for a few minutes and I was able to get a good view of the mountain through my glasses. It entirely confirmed my theoretical conclusions; the highest peak was almost certainly easy to reach from the col to the west of it, and there could be no doubt that it was an easy walk up to that col by a couloir of sorts which I called Jacob's Rake (a "portmanteau" of Jacob's ladder and Lord's rake). The word couloir does not quite describe it; the word "rake" does, but I can't define rake. Anyone who wants to know what I mean must go to Cumberland.

The foot of this rake is in a broad snow basin and the only possible question was whether that snow basin was reachable from the Yalung glacier. I have told already of my ability to describe accurately parts of a mountain which I cannot see. I judged the snow basin accessible. My clairvoyance turned out to be exactly correct.

But more promising even that the feasibility of the route was the appearance of the mountain. Despite the perpetual bad weather at Darjeeling, which made me feel absolutely hopeless, there was no new snow at all on the mountain. Only forty-five miles away, it had been continuous fine weather. I went down to Calcutta with a light heart. I had had good news too from Tartarin. He had persuaded a Swiss army officer, Alexis Pache, to join us. The other man of the party was named Reymond, who had had a fair amount of guideless experience on the Alps.

On the fifteenth I had a telegram from the doctor that he had been shipwrecked in the Red Sea. I might have known it! The three Swiss arrived on July 31st. I had got everything into such a forward state of preparation that we

were able to start of August 8th. There was nothing to be done but to pack the baggage which the doctor seemed to have brought out, in the units which I had got ready for him. The doctor seemed to be suffering from ill-health from various trifling causes. He seemed a shade irritable and fussy. I suspect the cause was partly physical. His sense of his own importance was hurting him. Reymond I liked well enough; a quiet if rather dour man, who seemed to have a steady mind and common sense. But Pache won my heat from the moment I met him — a simple, unaffected, unassuming gentleman. He was perfectly aware of his own inexperience on mountains, and therefore in a state to acquire information by the use of his eyes rather than of his ears.

Everything went off without a hitch, except the affair of the depot. We learnt on August 6th that the coolies had dumped the food at Chabanjong, scarce eighteen miles north-west of Darjeeling, instead of at Jongri, thirty miles due north. This fact, among others, led to my deciding to approach Kangchenjunga by way of the ridge which leads from Ghum practically directly to the head of a side valley through which a tributary of the Yalung Chu descends from the Kang La.

Our party consisted of five Europeans, three Kashmiris, the sirdar of the coolies, six personal servants and seventy-nine regular coolies. We left Darjeeling at ten sixteen on Tuesday, August 8th. The expedition had begun.

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One can certainly reach the neighbourhood of Kangchenjunga with delightful comfort. Though the mountain is only forty-five miles from Darjeeling, as the Crow flies, the way is round about. The stages from Ghum are Jorpakri 8½, Tongly 18½, Sandakphu 33, Falut 45, Chabanjong 51. Up to this point there is an excellent riding path, while the first four stages have well-furnished dak baghlas.

Unpleasant features of the journey are two: one, the rain, and the other the leeches. I thought I knew a bit about rain — I didn't. At Akyab one puts one's head under water in the hope of getting out of the wet; at Darjeeling one's head is under water all the time. But on that ghastly ridge, I met a quality and quantity of bat weather that I had never dreamt of in my wildest nightmares. What follows sounds exaggerated. On getting into a dak baghla and standing stripped in front of a roaring fire, one expects to get dry. But no! the dampness seems to be metaphysical rather than physical. The mere removal of the manifestations of the elements of water do not leave one dry. But one used to obtain a sort of approximation to dryness by dint of fires; and of course we were provided with waterproofs specially constructed for that abominable climate. One morning I timed myself; after taking every precaution, it was eight and one half minutes from the door of the baghla before I was dripping wet. When I say "dripping wet", I mean that the water was coursing freely inside my clothes. In most parts of the world rain falls, but on that accursed ridge it rises. It is blown up in sheets from the valley. It splashes on the rocks so as to give the effect of waterfalls upside down.

On the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth, there were short spells of respite; otherwise, from the eighth to the twentieth it never slackened and outside the dak baghlas I was not dry, even partially, for a single second.

The leeches of the district are a most peculiar tribe. For some reason, they can only live within a very well-defined belt. Thus, I never saw a leech at Darjeeling, while at Lebong, some five hundred feet lower, they are a pest. The Terai is the haunt of some of the most tenacious of animals, but the leech

has cleared them out completely. A single leech will kill a pony. It works its way up into the nostril and the pony simply bleeds to death. Hence the Anglo-Indian proverb. "A jok's a jok [Hindustani for leech] but a jok up your nose is no jok."

I witnessed a remarkable sight on the road to Chabanjong, which was here a *paka rasta* (that is, a road made by engineers as opposed to *kacha rasta*, a track made by habit or at most by very primitive methods) wide enough for carts to pass. I had squatted near the middle of the road as being the least damp and leech-infested spot available and got a pipe going by keeping the bowl under my waterproof. I lazily watched a leech wriggling up a blade of tall grass about fifteen inches high and smiled superiorily at its fatuity — though when I come to think of it, my own expedition was morally parallel; but the leech was not such a fool as I thought. Arrived at the top, it began to set the stalk swinging to and from; after a few seconds it suddenly let go and flew clean across the road. The intelligence of and ingenuity of the creature struck me as astonishing. (Legless animals are practically helpless on open ground. One can walk up to a king cobra on a smooth road and set one's heel on its head, as prophesied in Genesis, without much danger of being struck, and though it sees you coming, it is quite unable to escape. But give the same snake a little grass to flagellate and the eye can hardly follow its motion. It goes like a snipe.)

Coming back over the same ridge, I was on an open hillside running fast. It was raining downwards instead of upwards for once, and that but slightly. I heard a little noise, as if something had fallen on my hat, and took no notice. A few moments later I found that my hand was wet with blood, running fast, and looking down I saw a leech on the back of it. How it managed to fall from the sky I don't know. I have seen leeches up to seven inches long; and there seems hardly any limit to the amount of blood they can assimilate. I heard of a gorged leech weighing nearly two pounds and I believe it without effort.

Another strange sight in these parts is the sheep. Tartarin, still proud of his haggis, invented wonderful theories to explain the fact that they are muzzled. However, they are not *moutons enragés*; the muzzle is to prevent them from poisoning themselves with wild aconite.

The scenery along the while of his ridge is extraordinarily grand, so far as the mist permits one to see anything. Some of the Himalayan trees are superb. But the prevailing vegetation is the rhododendron, a plant which has little in common with its English cousin. It grows to a height of fifteen feet or more and the stems are often as thick as a man's thigh. It grows in unbroken

forests and the worst Mexican chaparral I ever saw was not worse to have to cut one's way through.

At Chabanjong the road stops and I sent back my horse. Thence a shepherd's track leads along the ridge. One the whole it was very good walking.

We had already found trouble with our own coolies. To begin with, the police had caught me up at Jorpakri and arrested one of them for some petty offence — he joined us for more reasons than one. Six of the men deserted in the early part of the march. I was a small percentage and they had evidently never had any intention of earning their advances. Later, when I had to go on ahead, five men deserted Pache, whom I had to leave in charge. They were probably scared by superstitious fears. Pache could not talk to them and did not know how to encourage them.

After leaving Chabanjong it was impossible to tell exactly where one was on the ridge. The *paros* have names, but I could never discover that they applied to anything; it was all rain and rhododendra. There is a place called Nego Cave which I hoped was a cave where I could shelter from the rain for a few hours, but nobody seemed to know here it was and I never found out. I had actually to rest a day in this abominable place, as the official permit for our party to enter Nepal had not arrived; but it did so during the day and one the eighteenth came a very long march of something like eight hours of actual going. During the latter part of the march the path dips suddenly and one descends some three thousand feet into a valley.

Well do I remember this camp Gamotang! Apart from the flora and fauna, the last two days might have been spent on the Welsh mountains, but the descent to Gamotang was like stepping into fairyland. There are certain places — Sonamarg in Kashmir is one of them — which possess the quality of soft brilliance quite unearthly. There is really nothing to distinguish them from a hundred other spots in the neighbourhood, yet they stand out; as a genius does from a hundred other men in evening dress. I find these phenomena quite as real as any others and I feel impelled to seek an explanation.

Assuming the existence of inhabitants imperceptible by our grosser senses, the problem presents no difficulty. One of a row of similar houses is often quite different from its neighbours, perhaps on account of the loving care and pride of its chatelaine. When I see an analogous phenomenon in scenery, I cannot blame myself if a similar explanation comes to my mind.

The weather was already noticeably better than at Darjeeling. It did not begin to rain till eight or ten in the morning every day.

The partial failure of the bandobast kept us a day at Gamotang. There was in any case no great hurry. I was glad of every opportunity to acquire the affection of the men. I was careful not to overwork them. I gave a prize to the first three men to come into camp every day and those who had come in first three times had their pay permanently raised. I made friends with them, too, by sitting with them round the camp fire and exchanging songs and stories. On the other hand, I made it clear that I would tolerate no nonsense. They responded for the most part very well, I never had any trouble in all my wanderings with natives, servants, dogs and women. The secret is that I am really unconscious of superiority and treat all alike with absolute respect and affection; at the same time I maintain the practical relations between myself and others very strictly indeed.

It is the fable of the belly and the members. It is absurd for one speck of protoplasm to insist on its social superiority to another speck, but equally absurd for one cell to want to do the work of another. There is another point, admirably stated by Wilkie Collins. Count Fosco says that the way to manage women is "never to accept a provocation from a woman's hands. It holds with animals, it holds with children and it holds with women, who are nothing but children grown up. Quiet resolution is the one quality the animals, the children and the women all fail in. If then can once shake this superior quality in their master, they get the better of HIM. If they can never succeed in disturbing it, he gets the better of THEM."

I make it an absolute rule to be imperturbable, to impress people with the idea that it is impossible to avoid doing what I have done. I never try to arouse enthusiasm. I never bribe, I never threaten, but I identify my purpose with destiny and I administer reward and punishment unsparingly and impersonally.

The coolies began to be very fond of me, not only because of my good comradeship and my cheerful calm and confidence, but because they were subconsciously relieved by my conduct from their personal demons of fear, jealousy, desire and the like. They became unconsciously aware that they were parts of a machine. As long as they did their duty, there was absolutely nothing to worry about. Most people suffer all their lives from subconscious irritation; due to what the Hindus call Ahamkara, the ego-making faculty. The idea of self is a continual torment and though I was still far from having got rid of this idea completely. I was pretty free of it in practice in matters where my responsibility was extensive. I had begun to understand how to work "without lust of result".

Unfortunately, Tartarin and Righi were undoing my web as fast as I wove it. Righi was a low-class Italian, who ran his hotel by hectoring the men under him. Finding himself for the first time in his life in a position of real responsibility, and without the background of an external authority to which he could appeal to enforce his orders, he was utterly at sea. On one occasion he actually threatened a disobedient coolie with his kukri and revolver, and the man, knowing he would not dare to use them, laughed in his face. The natives despised him as a weak man, which is the worst thing that can befall anyone that has anything to do with them.

Tartarin too, though cheerful and genial, had forgotten the lesson of 1902. He was fussy and helpless. On one occasion he actually tried to bribe a man with boots and claws to do his ordinary duty. As long as I was with the main body, these things didn't matter. Nobody dared to disobey the Bara Sahib. A moment's hesitation in complying with any order of mine and they saw a look in my eyes which removed the inhibition. They knew that I would not scold or wheedle, but had a strong suspicion that I might strike a man dead without warning; at the same time they knew that I would never give an unreasonable order and that my active sympathy with the slightest discomfort of anyone of them was as quick as my insight to detect and deal with malingering or any other attempt to pull my leg.

From Gamotang one has to climb to the Chumbab La — about four hours' march. Then one skirts the slopes of the Kang La and descends to the branch valley of the Yalung Chu. I found a great block of quartz three and one half hours beyond the pass and pitched camp. The doctor arrived late — eight thirty. He had had some trouble with the coolies, but they were safely camped some short distance above.

The next day was fearfully wet. There is another little pass to cross, and hour beyond the quartz block; two and a half hours more took me down the valley to a camp near Tseram, which is a group of huts on the main stream a couple of miles below the snout of the Yalung glacier. I avoided camping in Tseram itself, on the general principle of having nothing to do with natives. The Dewan of Nepal was sending an officer to superintend our journey. I should perhaps have mentioned before that England has a special treaty with Nepal, one of its terms to the effect that no foreigners are to enter the dewan's dominions. He knew that the most harmless of Europeans is the herald of disaster to any independent country. Where the white man sets his foot, the grass of freedom and the flower of good faith are trampled into the mire of vice and commercialism.

But in the present instance our route touched only this one tiny outlying hamlet of Tseram and permission had been obtained without difficulty for us to pass. At the same time, the dewan was going to have a man on the spot to see that we did not maltreat and corrupt the natives as we have done in every other part of the globe in which our impulses of greed and tyranny have seen a possibility of satisfaction.

I saw no reason for waiting for the arrival of the dewan's "guide" and, leaving a man with a message for him, continued the advance.

I took only a very small party and left Pache in command. He was to wait until the arrival of the main body of the coolies, while I went on the glacier to reconnoitre. I wanted to establish the main camp as high as possible, but of course I did not know whether I might not have to retrace my steps. The glacier stream might prove uncrossable. I would make sure that the whole party could reach the glacier without difficulty.

I left the camp at six a.m. on the twenty-first. I was now in really mountainous country. The valley was gorgeously wild, it glowed with rich bright grass and masses of marvellous flowers. There was an admirable track. The day was fine and I had views of both Little and Big Kabru (21,290 and 24,015 feet respectively) but Kangchenjunga itself was hidden in clouds. I have rarely enjoyed a mountain walk so thoroughly and my heart was uplifted by the excellence of our prospects.

It sang within me. I was already at fourteen or fifteen thousand feet, less than a fortnight our from the base, in perfect physical condition, not an ounce of my reserve of strength yet called upon; a perfectly clear course to the peak in front of me, the mountain scarce five miles away, the weather looking better all the time, and none of the extremes of temperature which had been so frightful on Chogo Ri. No sign that wind was likely to give any trouble. In short, not one dark spot upon the horizon.

Camp 2, though no place for a golf course, as the game is at present played, possesses the great advantage of being a perfect Pisgah. The summit of Kangchenjunga is only two miles away and I am able to see almost the whole of the debatable ground which my reconnaissance from above Darjeeling had denied me. I climbed to a short distance above the camp: the last doubt disappeared. The level glacier stretched less than a mile away. Thence rose a ridge covered by steep glacier except at its eastern edge, where there was a patch of bare rock with scarcely any interruption from ice. This rock was cut away on its right by a terrific precipice, sheer to the lower glacier, but there was no reason why anyone should fall off. The rocks were of the char-

acter — easy slabs — of those of the Eiger above the little Scheideck, the precipice being on the right hand instead of on the left. The slabs ended in a level space of snow jutting beyond the glacier above, and therefore safe from any possible avalanche. The place would make an admirable camp.

Thence, one could work a way to the west; and, avoiding a patch of séracs, ascend steep slopes of ice (covered at present by snow) which led directly to the great snow basin which lies, as one may say, in the embrace of Kangchenjunga. These slopes were the critical point of the passage. It intended to fix a long knotted rope at the top, if necessary, to serve as handhold for the coolies, it being now certain that we could establish our main camp at the foot of Jacob's Rake. Certain, that is, bar the interference of absolute perversity.

The following day showed me that such perversity was only too likely to put a spoke in the wheel. The arrangement was that I was to find my way to Camp 3, which I had already been able to choose through my glasses. I left Tartarin and Reymond in charge of the bulk of the coolies, having pointed out to them the best way across the glacier. It was more or less intricate going compared with Piccadilly, but it was certainly less trouble than an average march on the Baltoro. My object in going ahead was merely to make sure that Camp 3 was as favourable as it looked from a distance. It was. There was a broad level plateau of loose stones marked by a big boulder, which I called Pioneer boulder, for a variety of reasons, all referring ironically to "Pioneer Peak". This plateau was perhaps seven hundred to a thousand feet above the glacier.

I must here remark that I cannot pretend to any accuracy about either heights or distances. Tartarin was in charge of the surveying and I do not know whether he took proper observations at all. All I can say is that Professor Garwood's map is seriously wrong in many important points. I could do little more than make shots at my position by dead reckoning. I settled down quite comfortably at Camp 3 and sent a man down to find the main body and tell them it was all right, and they were to come up. Most unfortunately, it was misty. I could not see what had happened. And if I had been able to, I might almost have doubted my eyes. The coolies were coming — Oh ho! oh ho! — in a long circular route round the head of the glacier, for no reason at all. The weather cleared towards evening and there they were, within shouting distance, within three quarters of an hour's easy going for the slowest men, up excellent slopes on firm rocky ground.

To my amazement, I saw the doctor preparing to pitch camp. It was inexplicable imbecility. Shouts produced no effect and there was nothing for it

but for me to go down. He had chosen a bivouac on bare ice, where there was hardly sufficient level ground to pitch the tents, but it was too late to pack up again, so I had to make the best of it. I asked him the reason for his extraordinary conduct. He replied that there was a rumour that I had broken my leg on a moraine. This was as antecedently unlikely as anything could possibly be; and anyhow he could see perfectly well with his own eyes that I had done nothing of the sort; and thirdly, if I had done it, all the more reason for coming to my assistance. I began to think there was something seriously wrong with the man.

On the top of this, there was bad news from the rearguard. Righi sent up bitterly quarrelsome messages. His antics had made all sots of trouble with the coolies, who were at one time in open revolt. Pache managed to get them into good humour again. He was a gentleman; he understood the oriental mind instinctively. He was, in fact, making extremely good. As soon as he saw that Righi was half insane with the fear that comes to people of his class in the absence of a chattering heard of his fellows, and in the presence of the grandeur of nature, he assumed moral charge of him. The difficulties with the rearguard disappeared immediately. Unfortunately, I did not understand at the time what was happening, o I should have gone down and sent Righi back to his kitchen. Pache himself did not realize his own importance and took it upon himself to come up. The moment his back was turned, Righi became insane.

Everyone had passed a most uncomfortable night at the absurd bivouac. I decided to go no further than Camp 3 the next day. Tartarin was absolutely astonished that the men which whom he had been having such trouble behaved quite simply and naturally as soon as I was on the spot. He claimed that they had positively refused to go further, but they picked up their loads and strolled cheerfully up the slopes without so much as a word of admonition.

Not understanding the secret of my power, though he had seen it exercised so often by Eckenstein and myself, he imagined that I must be terrorizing the men by threats and beatings. In point of fact, I never struck a man during the entire expedition, save on one occasion to be described presently.

Camp 3 was extremely pleasant. It afforded magnificent views in every direction and one had one's choice of sun or shade. I spent the day in taking advantage of the amenities of the situation. I took pains to fix up an excellent shelter for the men by means of large tarpaulins, and saw to their comfort in every way. We had even the advantage of song, for the camp was a haunt of small birds. Its height cannot have been far short of eighteen thousand feet.

It was urgent that the march to Camp 4 should be started at the earliest glimmer of light, for though the route lay almost entirely over rock, there were a few short snow passages which would become dangerous after sunrise, and the hanging glacier on our left might conceivably discharge some of its superfluous snow across one or two points of the route. I explained these points carefully to the men, who were for the most part quite intelligent enough to understand. Moreover, they were already aware of the general principles, a number o them having already travelled, if not on glaciers, at least on winter snow. They were eager to start; but Tartarin deliberately hindered them. I had awakened at three o'clock and got them off by six. It had not been a cold night, none of the men showed any signs of suffering or made any complaint, but the doctor said that they ought to be allowed to warm themselves thoroughly in the sun before starting. He suggested that the march should begin at about eleven o'clock. These were the words of sheer insanity. Even on Chogo Ri, where the nights were really cold, no such nonsense had ever been suggested.

I led at once on to the glacier. There was no difficulty of any sort; the snow being in excellent condition, it merely required a little scraping and stamping. But at the point where it becomes necessary to take the rocks on the right so as not to be under a small patch of séracs, the slope is in the direction the the tremendous precipice previously described. It was there that I gave an exhibition of glissading. I do not think the men would have been afraid at all if the excited shouts and gesticulations of Reymond and the doctor had not demoralized them. These celebrated climbers were themselves actually afraid for their own skins. And this, if you please, on a slope down which I could glissade head first! Having got the men across, we proceeded up the rocky slopes. I must confess that here I had misjudged the difficulty.

I had expected to find quite easy walking, but there were a few passages where it amounted to scrambling from the point of view of a loaded man. I decided to arrange for a fixed rope as a measure of safety, it being my plan to send the picked coolies up and down regularly to bring up supplies as they were needed. In the meantime, the men behaved magnificently, laughing and joking and giving each other a helping hand whenever required. I posted the Kashmiris and the other personal servants at the *mauvais pas*, but there was no hint of any real danger.

Camp 4 is at the top of this rocky slope on a level ridge, level enough, but not a broad as I could have wished. There was, however, a certain amount of natural shelter afforded by rocks and I was able to construct a fairly comfortable place for the night. There was a better camp three hours higher; but

the weather, after a fine morning, had begun to look bad and the snow was in bad condition. The men, too, though perfectly happy, were most of them very tired, and some of them knocked over by what they supposed to be mountain sickness — symptoms of exhaustion, headache, pains in the abdomen, dizziness and so forth. I knew what the trouble was and went round to the sufferers and dropped a little atropine into their eyes. Half an hour later they were all perfectly restored. The alarming symptoms were all due to the glare.

I sent down to Pache to come up to Camp 3 as better in every way than Camp 2. I asked Tartarin and Reymond if they had any messages to send. They were too exhausted to reply to their names. I was utterly bewildered. The previous day had been a bare hour, and the march to Camp 4 perfectly easy and by no means long or trying for men without loads. I myself, though I had borne the burden and heat of the day more than anyone, was as fresh as paint and as fit as a fiddle. I had never felt better in my life. I was in perfect condition in every respect. I spent the afternoon nursing the invalids.

Tartarin recovered by the next morning sufficiently to curse. I could not imagine what his grievance was an cannot imagine it now. The most charitable explanation of his conduct that I can give is that he was mentally upset, partly no doubt due to psychical distress, and to some form of heat stroke. I have always been satanically happy in the hottest sunshine, but the slopes of Kangchenjunga on a fine day at noon were near my limit. Both the doctor and Reymond were unquestionably very ill. It was impossible to think of going on to the next camp that day. We rested accordingly. Late in the day, to my surprise, Pache arrived with a number of coolies, I had asked him to send up the sirdar and one other man. I wanted to give Naga personal instructions about the management of his men. It had been no part of my plan for any of the others to come beyond Camp 3. I wanted to make Camp 3 the base until we found a good place on the snow basis above. The arrival of Pache and his men overcrowded Camp 4.

The root of the trouble, apart from any ill-feeling, was that none of my companions (except Pache) understood that I expected them to keep their word. I had arranged a plan, taking into consideration all sorts of circumstances, the importance of which they did not understand and other of which they did not even know, and they did not realize that to deviate from my instructions in any way might be disastrous. Their disobedience having resulted in things going wrong, they proceeded to blame me. Righi had refused point blank to send Nanga on my express command; he had failed to send up

any supplies, so that we were absolutely out of petroleum and short of food, both for ourselves and for our men.

Pache reported that some of the men had deserted. It was never cleared up why they should have done so. But one of them, in disobedience to orders, had gone off by himself — I never discovered exactly where — and had fallen and been killed. This man, it was said, was carrying Pache's sleeping valise. This at least was certain, that the valise was missing.

An accident being alleged, I sent down the doctor on the following morning to make in inquiry into the matter, and also to send up supplies of food and fuel which we needed urgently. Pache told me that Righi was deliberately withholding food from us. His conduct was murderously criminal, if only because we might have been prevented by bad weather from descending in the last resort.

That afternoon Reymond and I mad a little excursion up the slopes. We found that the snow was not as bad as might have been expected, and the gradients were so easy and the glacier so free from ice fall that there would be no danger for a prudently conducted party, even when the snow was soft.

On this slope of Kangchenjunga one occasionally meets a condition of snow which I have never seen elsewhere. Rain or sleet blows against the face of the mountain and is frozen as it touches. The result is to produce a kind of network of ice; as frozen drop serves as a nucleus from which radiate fine filaments of ice in every direction. It is like a spider's web in three dimensions. A cubic foot of network would thus be almost entirely composed of air; the ice in it, if compact, would hardly be bigger than a tennis ball, perhaps much less. With the advance of the evening, the rain turns to snow; and in the morning it may be that the network is covered to a depth of several inches. The temperature possibly rises a few degrees and the surface becomes wet. It then freezes again and forms a hard crust. Approaching a slope of this kind, it seems perfectly good névé. One strikes it with one's axe and the entire structure disintegrates. In front one one is a hole as big as a cottage and as the solid slope disappears, one hears the tinkle of falling ice. It is a most astonishing and disconcerting phenomenon.

During the while time that I was on the mountain, I experienced no high wind and no unpleasant cold. But the heat of the day was certainly very severe. My skin had gradually become inured to the sun. I had not been burnt painfully in ten years. I simply browned quietly and pleasantly. But on Kangchenjunga it got me — not badly enough to cause sores – but enough to make the skin somewhat painful and brittle. Here was another reason for starting early in the day and reaching camp, if possible, by noon at the latest.

On the nineteenth, having dispatched Tartarin to the rear, Reymond, Pache and myself went on with our small party. The doctor was, of course, to make sure of sending up supplies and Pache's valise. We reached Camp 5 in about three hours. It was situated on a little snowy hump below a small peak on the ridge. We intended to make out way to the path between this peak and the main spur. The slopes were rather steep in one or two places, but quite without danger, as they eased off a short distance below (about two hundred and fifty feet) to a practically level part of the glacier. I should, in fact, have preferred to go straight up them instead of making the detour by the rocks on the edge of the big precipice, had it not been that a small patch of sérac overhung them.

No valise arrived for Pache that night, and no petrol or rations. We were accordingly obliged to rest the next day. I had given Pache my eiderdown sleeping-bag and one of my blankets. He was thus quite comfortable physically; but he was, of course, anxious about his effects. All his spare boots, clothes etc. were in the missing bag, and all his private papers.

During the day a few provisions arrived, but no rations for the men, and no petrol. I sent back one of the men with urgent orders and several others to assist in carrying the supplies. (Also because we could not feed them where we were.) I wrote a second letter to Tartarin the same day; a man arrived at last with the petrol. In this letter which was signed by Pache as well as myself, the blame for the failure of the bandobast was given entirely to Righi.

> It seems to me and to Pache also that the shortage of food is the fault of M. Righi who refused to send Naga when Pache told him to do so. This disobedience, which has come so near to involving us in disaster, must not be repeated. All the loads should be sent to Camp 3 except those which are under shelter. Righi must be responsible for carrying this out. For yourself, you should join us as soon as you can with at least ten loads of sattu and Naga to help us. The next three days will be the crisis of the expedition.
>
> With cordial friendship, yours.

There was no difficulty whatever in carrying out these perfectly simple, normal instructions.

Camp 5 is at the height of twenty to twenty-one thousand feet and certainly not more than two to three thousand feet above Camp 3. We had taken the first ascent very easily, it having been transformed into a regular snow track with immense steps made solid by repeated regelation. It might be

called two hours' easy going. The doctor had recovered his health and his good humour, and we had none of us a moment's doubt that he would put the fear of God into Righi and carry out the above instructions promptly and efficiently.

On Thursday, August 31st, I started up the slopes with six men and a perfectly light heart. The problem was, of course, how to get the coolies up with the minimum of trouble. I sent Salama ahead with an axe and shovels on a rope. Their job was to clear away all loose snow and to enlarge the steps made by Salama so that the way up the mountain should be literally a staircase of the easiest kind. Their leader was a man named Gali. I remained close to him throughout so that if by any chance he fell I could catch him.

I would not rope myself, so as to be able to go to the rescue instantly in case Salama got tired or came to a passage too difficult for him. We advanced very rapidly. We were certainly over twenty-one thousand and possibly over twenty-two thousand feet. There were no symptoms of the slightest deficiency of physical energy on the part of anyone. I have never seen a man ply an ice-axe faster than Salama did that day. I was, of course, very carefully on the lookout for the slightest tendency on the part of the snow to slip.

We had reached a shallow couloir. Reymond and Salama had got some distance ahead of the coolies. Some of the chips of ice dislodged by their step-cutting were sliding down in our direction and they began to carry some of the surface with them. I was warned by the gentle purring hiss, rather like a tea kettle beginning to sing, which tells one that loose snow is beginning to move. Gali saw the little avalanche, coming towards him, was frightened and fell out of his steps. I caught him, put him back and hastily anchored the rope to a wedged axe. But the man had completely lost his nerve and by the operation of that instinct which make a drowning man throw up his hands, began to do the one thing that could possibly have brought him to harm — to untie himself from the rope. I ordered him to desist, but he was quite hysterical, uttered senseless cries and took no notice. There was only one thing to do to save him from the consequences of his suicidal actions, and that was to make him more afraid of me than he was of the mountain; so I reached out and caught him a whack with my axe. It pulled him together immediately and prevented his panic communicating itself to the other men. Things then went on all right.

Some of the slopes were really very bad; deep soft snow on ice. One short patch was at an angle of fifty degrees. It was a question of fixing a rope or finding a new route to the left, which I did not want to do as I was in doubt about the glacier above. There were some séracs which might or might not be

stable. We went down to Camp 5 without further adventure, but the morale of the men had been shaken by the incident of the toy avalanche. Their imaginations got out of hand. They began to talk nonsense about the demons of Kangchenjunga and magnified the toy avalanche and Gali's slip and wallop to the wildest fantasies. During the night some of them slipped away and went down to Camp 3.

On September 1st we renewed the assault. Reymond, Pache and Salama went up the sloes on the rope and got over the bad patch. They were so much encouraged by their success that they went out of sight and hearing, contrary to my instructions. I needed them to help the three coolies with loads over the had part. They preferred to leave the whole responsibility to me, but I could not bring three heavily loaded men up such slopes without assistance, and there was nothing to do but await their return. In the meantime, I saw to my surprise that a large party had arrived at Camp 5. When I got down I found that Tartarin's hysteria and Righi's malignant stupidity had created yet another muddle.

They had arrived at the camp, bringing with them some seventeen or twenty coolies, and they had not brought any of the things of which we stood in such need. Their behaviour was utterly unintelligible. The doctor did not seem to know what he was saying; his remarks were merely confusedly irritated. He did not seem to be able to answer any of my questions or give any explanation of what had happened in the past. His one idea was to hold a durbar and have himself elected leader in my place. There was no provision in our agreement for any such folly. He pointed out that it was merely a scrap of paper. When the others arrived, an excited argument began. There was no suggestion that I had acted improperly in any way. From first to last it was merely the feeling of foreigners against being bossed by an Englishman. The same thing had happened with Pfannl on Chogo Ri.

On the present occasion, however, the Englishman was in a minority of one. Fortunately I had never heard that a fact of that sort makes any difference to an Englishman. I did my best to reason with them and quiet them, like the naughty children they were. Reymond had nothing to complain of and was actively friendly.

Indeed, I had much more to worry me than the nonsense of Tartarin and Righi. They had brought up all these men without any provisions for food or shelter and it was now late in the day. The snow was in an absolutely unsafe condition and though I had chosen the route so as to minimize the danger, it was absolutely criminal to send men down. But the mutineers were utterly insensible to the voice of reason. I told the coolies that since they

could not stay at Camp 5, the best thing they could do was to shelter under the rocks at Camp 4, and they went off and did so. I warned the mutineers that they would certainly be killed if they tried to go down that night; it was perhaps more or less right for coolies, but for THEM — I knew only too well the extent of Tartarin's ingenuity in producing accidents out of the most apparently unpromising material. They stormed all the more. I ought to have broken the doctor's leg with an axe, but I was too young to take such a responsibility. It would have been hard to prove afterwards that I had saved him by so doing.

To my horror, I found that Pache wanted to go down with them. The blackguards had not even had the decency to bring up his valise. I implored him to wait till the morning. I told him he could have the whole of my sleeping kit. But nothing would move him. I explained the situation, but I suppose he could not believe that I was telling the literal truth when I said that Guillarmod was at the best of times a dangerous imbecile on mountains, and that now he had developed into a dangerous maniac. I shook hands with him with a breaking heart, for I had got very fond of the man, and my last words were, "Don't go: I shall never see you again. You'll be a dead man in ten minutes." I had miscalculated once more; a quarter of an hour later he was still alive.

Less than half an hour later, Reymond and I heard frantic cries. No words could be distinguished, but the voices were those of Tartarin and Righi. Reymond proposed going to the rescue at once, but it was now nearly dark and there was nobody to send, owing to Righi's having stripped us of men. There was, furthermore, no indication as to why they were yelling. They had been yelling all day. Reymond had not yet taken his boots off. He said he would go and see if he could see what was the matter and call me if my assistance were required. He went off and did not return or call. So I went to sleep and rose the next morning at earliest dawn and went to investigate.

The task was easy. About fifteen minutes below Camp 5 the track had been carried away over a width of twenty feet (seven short paces). The angle of the slope was roughly twenty degrees (limits of error twenty-five degrees and twelve degrees). The avalanche had stopped two hundred and fifty feet below, and at this point it was from forty to sixty feet in width; that is to say, it was an absolutely trivial avalanche. A single man could have ridden it head first without the slightest risk of hurting himself. The width of the avalanche (and other signs) showed that six men on a 120-foot rope had been walking on each other's heels, the rope being festooned so as to be worse than useless. A man struggling in loose show avalanche has a fair chance of getting to the top, but if every time he does so he is jerked away by the rope, it will be the

greatest piece of luck if he is not killed. Tartarin, who should have been the last man on a descent in order to watch the others, to see that the rope was kept stretched, and to check any slip at the outset, was leading.

Here is Righi's account of the accident.

> Suddenly the four men above us began to slide; we hoped they would be able to stop themselves, but the slope was too steep. They swept past us like lightning. The doctor and I did the best we could to stop them, but in vain; for, as they rushed downwards, they started an avalanche (the snow being in such a moist condition from the afternoon sun, and easily moved). I was torn away from my anchor, head downwards, the doctor vainly calling to me to hang on as we might be able to stop the others. I was pulled down in what seemed a whirlwind of snow. I remember nothing during the fall. The doctor followed and fell farther down. I came to a few minutes after, hearing the doctor calling and telling me to get up. I could not do so, being pinned down on one side by the rope which was straight into the avalanche, and on the other I was keeping the doctor from falling farther down the slope. Had he been killed by the fall, I should have been helpless and most likely would have been frozen where I lay.

It is noteworthy that some seventeen coolies without ropes, axes, boots, claws and Tartarin, had crossed the fatal spot quite safely.

I found these men perfectly happy. They had taken my advice and passed the night under the rocks by Camp 4. I slowly descended, they following at a short distance. Presently I came to a place where the snow had slipped off the glacier ice for some distance. The angle was decidedly steep, and though I was able to cross it easily enough in my claws, it would not do for the coolies; so I called to them to go higher up over the glacier. But they were afraid to do this. They said they wanted to follow me, which they did, after enlarging my steps with an axe. At the time, I had no doubt that this place was the scene of the accident, if there had been one, of which I was not sure. Anyhow, I could not see how even Tartarin could have come to grief on so easy and safe a slope as the other. But on arrival at Camp 3 I was able to understand what had happened. Thanks to my habits of accuracy, I had taken careful measurements.

Pache and three of my best coolies had been killed. Tartarin was badly bruised, and thought his spine was damaged. The accident had brought him

completely to his senses. He realized that I had been right all along, and was appalled by the prospects of returning to Switzerland and meeting Pache's mother.

Righi, on the other hand, showed only the more what an ill-conditioned cur he was. He had not been hurt at all badly, but his ribs were slightly bruised; he claimed that he had "rupture of the heart", and spent his time moaning and bellowing. That his sufferings were mostly pure funk was evident from the fact that he forgot all about them directly he was engaged in conversation.

I ought to have been much angrier than I was, for the conduct of the mutineers amounted to manslaughter. By breaking their agreement, they had assumed full responsibility. It was impossible for me to continue with the expedition. My authority had been set at nought, and I would not risk any man's life. Eckenstein had made it the first point of mountaineering that the proper measures invariably reduced the risk of accident to nothing. They wanted me to go on. Righi himself said that the coolies believed the demon of Kangchenjunga was propitiated with the sacrifice of the five men — one for each peak — and would go on in future without fear. He had a little image given him by a Tibetan lama. This had saved his life. He never took any important step without consulting it, and it had now told him that we could climb the mountain without difficulty. Like Queen Victoria on a celebrated occasion I was not amused.

As a matter of fact, the coolies had been very much demoralized by the accident. Small blame to them: I told Righi, as transport officer, to bring down my belongings from Camp 5. He parleyed with them, gave it up as hopeless, and turned it over to me. I told the sirdar to send up men at once to help Salama and Bahadur Singh, who were still at Camp 5. He made no difficulty and sent up, not two men, but twelve. They brought everything. I made the necessary arrangements about digging out the corpses and building them a commemorative cairn, which was done. The next day, September 3rd, I left, and reached Darjeeling on Friday.

Here I was faced by an extraordinary circumstance, illustrating the fact that when men lose their heads on mountains they lose them very completely. The money of the expedition was banked against the signature of either myself or Guillarmod. He had written to the manager to ask him to refuse to honour my signature! The bank though he must be out of his mind, and advised me to draw the whole of the amount so as to be sure that it would be used to pay the coolies the sums due to them. This I did. On the twentieth the others arrived. I had all the amounts in proper order. I immediately paid

the men what was due, with a reasonable amount of backsheesh. In view of Tartarin's extraordinary behaviour about money, I was on my guard. He was anxious not to come to a settlement. I, on the other hand, had no further business in Darjeeling, and I naturally asked him to sign a release, which he did.

> Sept. 20, 1905. Les comptes de l'expédition étant définitivement réglés le 20 Sept. 1905, nous déclarons que tout réclamation après cette date, sera nulle. La somme des compensations dues aux parents des morts sera payée par la caisse de l'expédition.
>
> D. J. JACOT GUILLARMOD

He became very friendly and asked me to lend him or give him money. My account of the accident having been fairly frank, there was some question of a public inquiry.

I wrote accounts of the expedition for the *Pioneer of India* and the *Daily Mail* of London, and I republished them later in *Vanity Fair*. I used these articles to attack the English Alpine Club. Every incident served for the occasion of some gibe, sarcasm, insult or irony. I had no personal motive, of course. I wished to hold up to ridicule and contempt the set of old women who were knocking the sport on the head by intriguing against any climbers who were no simply polite people pulled up peaks by peasants and proud of it at that. The Alpine Club has done its best to ignore Himalayan expeditions, as it did to burke every ascent by guideless climbers in the Alps.

The lessons of the Kangchenjunga expedition were not learnt; so we hear in 1922 the old idiocy that coolies should not start till it is quite warm. The Everest party repeated the fatal fatuity of the doctor, by putting seven men on one rope, and that without knowing the use of the rope, so that one fall of one man must inevitably drag down the others. When I heard the composition of the Everest party and its plans, I prepared an article to warn them they were violating every principle of common sense, and could only meet with further failure and disaster. I foretold exactly what would happen, except that I heartily hoped that the Englishmen would be killed and their coolies escape by some miracle.

It was not to be. They made the mistake against which I had warned them; they had precisely the same kind of accident as in 1905 that resulted from the mutinous violation of my orders; but, just as the doctor and Righi had escaped with their worthless lives, to go about the world with the manslaughter of their comrades on their consciences, so also it happened in 1922.

But the London press refused to publish my article. One editor told me that it was a shame to "crab" the expedition, and that my warnings would give pain to the relations of the party! No, better wait until the accident had happened, and then it would be interesting to point out why it had happened. Of course that is the journalistic point of view. Disasters should not be prevented. Heaven forbid! We should rather encourage battle, murder and sudden death. Our business is to make the splash. This psychology is one of my reasons for holding the press in horror. I do not believe in restrictions on business enterprise, but it really ought to be made impossible that it should be to anyone's interest to bring about a European war.

On the twenty-third Guillarmod came to see me and ask me to say no more in the public press, as far as he was concerned. On the twenty-fourth we discussed the whole matter. He admitted that he had been in the wrong and excused himself (on the ground of ill-health and nervousness) for his behaviour. I thought I knew him; he was simply a fool but incapable of malice or treachery. On the twenty-fifth he and Righi made a violent attack on me in the columns of a newspaper, but "out of their own mouths"! Their admission proved my case. In particular, they blamed the coolies, so I had to write to the paper, "I would most especially call attention to the repeated complaints against the coolies as evidence of incapacity to manage them, and emphasize my own testimony to their steadiness, capacity and goodwill."

Guillarmod's overtures had been intended merely to give them time to strike. "Cet animal est trés m‚cant: quand on l'attaque il se défend." I hit back and cut Guillarmod publicly on the twenty-sixth. On the twenty seventh I received the following amazing letter.

> 27.IX.05
>
> Lord Boleskine,
>
> Vos procédés financiers puent l'escroc à plein nez & font honneur à la noblesse irlandaise.
>
> Faire signer un papier par lequel je déclare ne plus rien réclamer alors que vous savez pertinemment que j'oublie plusieurs dépenses est un acte aussi honnête que l'hospitalité écossaise (haggis).
>
> Je comprends maintenant les raisons qui vous font rechercher les endroits reculés & inhabités; vous craignez trop de rencontrer de vos dupes, filou que vous êtes.
>
> Je conserve précieusement le reçdu de 300 Rs que vous venez d'envoyer à Reymond & si demain à 10 h. du matin je n'ai pas reçu

un chèque de cette somme, je dépose avec une plainte en escroquerie un exemplaire des *Snowdrops* où vous préféreriez ne pas le voir.

J.J.G.

I took it at once to a lawyer who warned him that by the Indian penal code he was rendering himself liable to a long term in prison. I realized that the man was simply insane with remorse and did not press the charge. On the contrary despite the agreement of the twentieth, I agreed to pay him a small sum for certain items which had been overlooked. I went down to Calcutta on the twenty-eighth, and a week later accepted an invitation from the Maharaja of Moharbhanj to shoot big game in his province.

I was very sad at heart about the death of my friends, but with regard to the mountain I was in excellent spirits. I had demonstrated beyond doubt the existence of an easy way up. I was sure of being able to establish a main camp within striking distance of the summit, and I had familiarized myself with all the vagaries of the weather and the snow. Cut short as the expedition had been, at its first leap, the actual attainment had not been insignificant. We had reached a height of approximately twenty-five thousand feet, and found life at that altitude as enjoyable and work as easy as anywhere else. I had written a detailed proposal to Eckenstein, suggesting that we should tackle the mountain in 1906 — but no foreigners!

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I had been so concentrated on Kangchenjunga that the other facts of my life had not glittered perceptibly. They had kept up with me, but I hardly knew it. They were now to shine, the bushel of Kangchenjunga having been rudely removed.

My instinct against *The Book of the Law* had apparently had its way. It was as if the events of eighteen months before had never taken place. I was going on with Magick on the old lines, without any particular ambition, but quietly exercising the powers already obtained. For instance, I had established regular communications with Soror F. (Soror Fidelis — Mrs. Elaine Simpson). We had long interviews, visiting each other alternately. I was a little better than she was, but her body was quite material enough to impress all the senses.

It occurs to me that I ought to give further details. Our astral bodies, as we had got them, were replicas of our physical bodies, save that they were slightly larger. Hers, for example, was just over sic feet high instead of five feet seven inches. The body was self-luminous and partially transparent, so that I could see the background behind her, much as through a muslin curtain. The substance of the body appeared homogeneous. It was usually clothed and crowned. The materials were of the same quality of matter as the body, but could be distinguished from flesh by such optical devices as colour and reflections. We moved according to the laws of the astral plane; that is, without making the normal physical actions, though we were able to use our limbs in the ordinary way. We communicated, sometimes by audible speech, sometimes by direct transmission of thought such as occurs every day in ordinary life, when one knows what a friend is going to say before he says it.

One very curious phenomenon must be recorded. In the early days we had arranged special hours for our interviews by calculating the difference of time due to longitude. We now summoned each other by means of the astral bell. But on comparison of our records we discovered an astounding fact. Alt-

hough we agreed about the character of the interview, the subject of conversation etc., we found that the time did not necessarily correspond. That is: suppose I went to see her at midnight on Friday (India), she did not see me at four a.m. on Saturday (England) but at some other time which might be later or earlier. I could easily imagine a delay in my appearance, but it seemed to me nonsense that I should have arrived before I started! At that time I understood little of the nature of time.

My lyric gift had begun to sit up and take notice a little after the shock of the realization of all its aspirations. I had begun to write again. Some of my poems at this period were definitely rationalistic. I was already aware that the rationalist position was wooden and shallow. The members of the Rationalist Press Association were no less narrow-minded sectarians than the Evangelicals. They had the same suburban point of view, the same prudish exclusiveness; they were shocked by any fact which did not immediately fit into their framework, and angrily denied its existence.

I was shifting slowly back to Buddhism; though even more impatient than before of Buddhists, their parochial morality and their emphasis on the evils of existence. But I wrote a few lyrics about love and nature which are still among my best. I may mention "The Song".

Dance a measure
  Of the tiniest whirls!
Shake out your treasure
  Of cinnamon curls!
Tremble with pleasure
  O wonder of girls!
Rest is bliss,
  And bliss is rest,
Give me a kiss
  If you love me best!
Hold me like this
  With my hand on your breast!

There was also "Said", inspired by my week in Cairo: "Patchouli", a shot of rhapsody upon African and Asiatic themes; "The Jilt", a piece of sadistic exultation over my wife's cruelty to Howell, who we heard was stricken to the heart by the thunderbolt of her marriage. Then there was "The Eyes of Pharaoh", a terrific presentation of the mystery of Egypt, and "Benzai", a poem in praise of Japan, then at was with Russia. There was a new note in my

work: that of humour. "The Beauty and the Bikkhu" is a versification of a Buddhist legend. The original is unconsciously funny, and I brought this out, while preserving the sublimity of the story. Again "Immortality" develops an idea in the *Gorgias* of Plato that after death one goes on doing very much what one did before. The style is at once passionate, pictorial, and terrifying and witty.

Another new string to my lyre; I had been reproaching myself for my ignorance of the Sufi doctrines, and intended to cross Persia on my way back to England. For this purpose I began to study the language with a munshi. I began to imitate the poets of Iran. "Ali and Hassan" is a paraphrase from Alf Laylah Wa Laylah. "Al Malik" is a ghazal; that is, a series of couplets with a monorime. The first two lines and each successive even line rime with each other. In Darjeeling (on my return) I had had a brief but intense liaison with a Nepali girl, Tenguft. I celebrated this passion in a rondel "Tarshitering".

NEPALI LOVE SONG

O kissable Tarshitering! The wild bird calls its mate — and I?
Come to my tent this night of May, and cuddle close and crown me king!
Drink, drink or fill of love at last – a little while and we shall die,
O kissable Tarshitering!

Droop the long lashes; close the eyes with eyelids like beetle's wing!
Light the slow smile, ephemeral as ever a painted butterfly, Certain to close into a kiss, certain to fasten on me and sting!

Nay? Are you coy? hen I will catch your hips and hold you wild and shy
Until your very struggles set your velvet buttocks all a-swing, Until their music lulls you to unfathomable ecstasy,
O kissable Tarshitering!

I must explain that oriental modesty does not allow the self-respecting poet to introduce the name of a woman, just as in Shakespeare's time it was considered scandalous for a woman to appear on the stage. I respected this convention and replaced the name of Tenguft by a male name, which I thought euphonious and suitable to my scheme of time and scansion.

Moharbhanj was an ideal place for meditation. I had absolute leisure, I was at the top of my form physically and every other way, and I could not start anything serious until my wife and child arrived, which they did not do until October 29th. I was in a wild district with no one to talk to; it afforded

the maximum opportunity for taking stock of my life, finding out what the past meant and taking aim for the future.

The Durga Puja was in course. I was able to appreciate the enthusiasm of the aboriginal Hindu much better than I could have done in Calcutta, where the corrosion of civilization has eaten into primitive practice.

Moharbhanj, though only thirteen hours from Calcutta, is as far from it morally as it is from London. The people were unspoilt. For the first time I liked Hindus. The maharajah was away for the day. He had sent his Minister of Public works to meet me and entertain me until his return. This gentleman, whose name was Martin, had taken a high degree at Oxford, and had studied science and engineering very thoroughly. No one could have suspected that he had a Bengali grandmother. But in the first twenty-four hours I had discovered the truth of the aphorism "Blood will tell". For all his European education, he believed in the most primitive superstitions, from ghosts and witches to mysterious medicines.

The next day the maharajah returned. I found him an extremely interesting and delightful companion. One could hardly expect less from the direct descendant of a peacock. I am sorry to say that he did not take his ancestry seriously. He had exchanged his illusions for another set far less fascinating, far less inspiring and equally absurd. He believed in Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill. One of his stories is extremely instructive. If it were graven upon the eye-corners, it would be a warning to such as would be warned! There are no principles of politics, economics and the rest; it is all balderdash. More, it is a damnable heresy and a dangerous delusion to apply the theories of the Thames valley to the practice of the Coromandel coast.

Moharbhanj is a province on the sea-board of Orissa. In my wanderings I came to a range of hills of unparalleled wonder. It was between ten and twenty miles in length, and some three thousand feet high. The marvel of it is that it is composed very largely of pure iron pyrites, whose bare outcrop forms huge rounded bosses. I first saw these hills at sunset, and they glowed with crimson splendour too vivid to be merely mineral. It was like blood on a bull's shoulder in the sunlight. The maharajah knew the commercial value of his mountains, but he had no coal; to exploit his treasure he needed a light railway from the mountains to the sea.

When he came to the throne he nobly determined to confer the benefits of liberal principles upon his people. Now he was not only the Maharajah of Moharbhanj, but its zemindar or landlord. He wished to create a peasantry of prosperous and independent freeholders. He understood that it would be fatal to make them a present of the land; so he made a law by which any man

who cultivated his land continuously for fifteen years would at the end of that time become its owner. As is generally known, the greatest pride of the Hindu is to make his daughter's wedding as splendiferous as possible. For this purpose he will get himself into debt for generations ahead as recklessly as the most progressive nation will do for their own pet phantom of glory.

So as soon as the new law was proclaimed, the Marwaris descended upon Moharbhanj like locusts, and advanced sums beyond the wildest imaginations of the peasants, to them. The marriages were magnificent; so were the mortgages. At the end of fifteen years the land belonged not to the cultivator but to the alien usurer. The maharajah could not even see that he had ruined himself and his subjects. He told me with honest pride, "I have conferred great benefit upon my people." Yet he was in a comical state of distress because the Marwaris refused to grant him the concession to build the light railway so that he could melt up his mountains! In the meanwhile the people were poorer than before, though the administration of his revenues by the British had increased his personal income from three to eighteen lakhs of rupees in less than twenty years.

He told me one enthralling story about his raj. A great deal of it is unexplored and impenetrable jungle. In the clearing are villages inhabited by very primitive folk of a different race to the bulk of the population. I saw a good deal of these people. They go in many cases naked. At the most, they wear a rudimentary loin cloth. They have a language of their own which possesses a few affinities with outer dialects. It possesses less than three hundred words, some two hundred and fifty of which are classed as obscene. The men are armed with bows and arrows, or occasionally spears, some of which show great skill of metallurgy and workmanship as well as a knowledge of certain branches of mechanics, and a marked sense of beauty.

The women are free from the ordinary Hindu inhibitions, and their breasts are the most beautiful that I have ever seen, not excepting those of the women of Tehuantepec. They are small and well proportioned. Even when the women are mothers, they do not lose their form. The whole breast stands firm and points upwards. To the eye of the artist, the female breast of the European is a hideous deformity. Even in the case of the most beautiful women, it breaks the line of the body, and it makes one think of a cow. But these women bear their breasts in triumph. One thinks of the phallophorus in a pagan procession.

Men and women alike are admirably proportioned, muscular and active. Their habit of carrying loads on the head — a coolie carries thirty pounds, which, considering the heat of the plains, is equivalent to the fifty

pounds of the hillman — gives them perfect balance and makes them light on their feet. The skin is of that superb velvety black with is really rich deep purple. Primitive as these people are, they are as capable of aesthetics and the popes and princes of the Renaissance. They love with rapacious intensity, adorned with all the arts of Aphrodite.

These folk are considered "wild men of the woods" by the sophisticated Hindus of the town. Yet there is a third proportional.

In the jungle live people known as Jewans, whom I hesitate to describe as a tribe, because nothing is known of their habits. Even their appearance has not been satisfactorily described. It is said by some that no white man has ever seen one, though others say that one or two have done so. Even the folk of the villages on the confines of the jungle have no knowledge of them, yet they carry on with them a regular traffic.

Certain places outside the village are marked out, usually by white stones, and here they deposit rice and other products of cultivation at nightfall. In the morning these goods are found to have been replaced by various products of the jungle. It is said that this commerce has never been degraded by dishonesty. Attempts have been made to catch the Jewans in the act of making the exchange, but they have always proved too wary.

The maharajah did not shoot, but appointed a forest officer named d'Elbroux to introduce me to the bears and tigers. The only animal I was not allowed to shoot was the elephant. One has to be a viceroy or a travelling royalty to indulge in that sport. D'Elbroux, in his youth, had come to grips with a bear. He had been very badly mauled, and many of his features had been replaced by metal plates. He told me that he had lain in the jungle wounded for more than two days before help arrived.

My only noteworthy shooting adventure was this. D'Elbroux had prepared a machan. There were some seven hundred beaters. The first animal that broke was a bear, whom I settled with a shot from the 10-bore. The second barrel jarred off and the surprise knocked me on my back. The bullet struck a tree as thick as a telegraph pole, and cut it in two, so that it fell across the machan and very nearly killed one of the men.

My best memory of Moharbhanj is not of tigers and such small fowl, but of elephants, which I was not allowed to shoot. I have always felt that my life has numerous points of contact with *Alice in Wonderland*, and I now come to the incident, "The Elephants did tease so!"

I went out one night to a bhul, or salt lick, in a tree overlooking which a machan had been built for me. A particularly fine tiger was reputed to visit

the place every night. I took up my vigil immediately after dinner. A three-quarter moon was due to rise about half-past eight. We kept extremely quiet, of course. I dislike shooting from a machan, exactly as I dislike coarse fishing. One cannot do anything to help things along. On the contrary, one has to avoid the slightest action.

The waiting sounds as if it might be good practice for meditation. I found it quite the opposite, for the object of one's vigil is itself a distraction, and if one concentrated on the sport, it would of course disappear, as had already happened to my nose and my navel. Soon after dark I began to hear the noises of the jungle, from the rustling of leaves and grasses as small animals moved cautiously about their business to the distant roaring of the tiger. Once or twice a shadowy shape made the darkness that brooded over the salt lick deeper, but there was no sense in risking a shot till moonrise. I could hardly see my own hands, much less the sights of my rifle.

When the moon rose at last, the few animals that had arrived vanished with equal stealth. There was a great silence in the jungle and the roars of the tigers (there were several all round the compass) became less frequent and less near.

All of a sudden I became aware of a tremendous disturbance. It was not exactly a noise — I'm inclined to think that it may have been a smell. I cannot say definitely more than this, that I had the impression that something enormous was going on.

I had been lying flat in the machan, listening. I raised my head cautiously. The silvern glades were now mysteriously peopled with gigantic shapes. It was a herd of elephants! I counted twenty-four of them. My shikari whispered that there would be no shooting that night; no other animals would venture into the neighbourhood of the master of the jungle. I realized, moreover, that my position was one of extreme danger. The machan was high from the ground; but had the elephants winded me and taken alarm, my tree would have snapped like a twig. But I had no time to think of danger; I was thrilled with exaltation. I sat up and spent the night watching the elephants as they went about their business. It was the most fascinating vision that had ever been vouchsafed to me on the material plane.

I did not grudge the loss of my night's sport. I was not really very keen about the shooting. I was in a very curious frame of mind. I loved to wake at dawn on my camp bed and meditate and read Kant, Berkeley and Firdausi. Persian fascinated me more than any other language had ever done and I revelled in the ideas of the Sufis. Their esoteric symbolism delighted me beyond

measure. I took it into my head to go one better than my previous performance in the way of inventing poets and their productions.

I spent most of my time writing ghazals, purporting to be by a certain Abdullah al Haji (Haji, with a soft "h", satirist, as opposed to Haji with a hard "h", pilgrim) of Shiraz. I caused him to flourish about 1600 A.D., but gave to the collection of his ghazals the title *Bagh-i-Muattar* (*The Scented Garden*), which implies the date 1905, the value of the Arabic letters of the title adding up to the equivalent o hat year of the Hegira. I also invented an Anglo Indian major to find, translate and annotate the manuscript, an editor to complete the work of that gallant soldier (killed in South Africa) and a Christian clergyman to discuss the matter of the poem from the peculiar point of view of high Anglicanism.

The ghazals themselves are rendered sometimes in the supposed original monorime, sometimes in prose, and the annotations contain a great deal of the more esoteric information about the East, which I had picked up from time to time. It is especially to be noted that, although I have packed every kind of magical and mystical lore into the volume, there is nowhere any reference to *The Book of the Law*. I was setting my whole strength against the Secret Chiefs. I was trying to forget the whole business.

The book itself is a complete treatise on mysticism, expressed in the symbolism prescribed by Persian piety. It describes the relations of God and man, explains how the latter falls from his essential innocence by allowing himself to be deceived by the illusion of matter. His religion ceases to be real and become formal; he falls into sin and suffers the penalty thereof. God prepares the pathway of regeneration and brings him through shame and sorrow to repentance, thus preparing the mystical union which restores man to his original privileges, free will, immortality, the preception of truth and so on.

I put the last ounce of myself into this book. My previous efforts in the same direction would have deceived nobody, but the *Bagh-i-Muattar*, despite my inability to produce the Persian original — my excuse was that it was rare and held the most sacred and most secret, but was being copied for me — persuaded even experienced scholars that it was genuine. It was issued by Probsthain & Co., by private subscription, in 1910. I have heard of a copy changing hands at fifty guineas.

This spurt of genius is an eloquent portrait of my mind at this time. I was absolutely convinced of the supreme importance of devoting my life to attaining Samadhi, conscious communion with the Immanent Soul of the Universe. I believed in mysticism. I understood perfectly the essence of its

method and the import of its attainment, but I felt compelled to express myself in a satirical and (it might appear to some) almost scandalous form. I testified to the tremendous truth by piling fiction upon fiction. I did not know it. I did not suspect it, but the *Bagh-i-Muattar* is a symptom of supreme significance. I was on the brink of a totally new development.

On Sunday, October 22nd, I had an astral interview with Soror F. which brought my up with a shock. She was accompanied by a golden hawk, in whom I later recognized one of the Secret Chiefs of the A∴A∴. The conversation turned on the subject of the Great Work. It was defined as the creation of a new universe. The interview left me spiritually prostrate. I had been perfectly happy with my programme, doing a little work there and a little there; Magick on Monday and teaching on Tuesday, so to speak; advising any applicant that approached me; editing and publishing any documents that fell into my hands.

But the Secret Chiefs were determined not to allow me to fool myself. When they picked me out o do their work they meant me to get busy and do it, and were going to see that I did. They did not insist on my taking up the work of the New Aeon. They knew their business too well. They knew that I should not be ready until I had undergone the proper preparation. They were content therefore with stirring me up to tackle the problem of my relations with the universe as seriously as the Buddha had done twenty-five centuries before.

I rode into Moharbhanj hardly aware of my surroundings. I was criticizing myself with ruthless severity. I do not remember whether *The Book of the Law* so much as crossed my mind. If so, I must have put it angrily aside. All I did know was that I should not have a moment's peace again until I had solved the great problem and I had no idea how to tackle it. I began to set my ideas in order.

Returned again to Calcutta. One day I went over to Kalighat and sacrificed a goat to a goddess. That night I was sitting alone reading. She appeared to me and inspired me to write a poem to her. I quote the first two stanzas:

KALI

There is an idol in my house
By whom the sandal always steams.
Alone, I make a black carouse
With her to dominate my dreams.
With skulls and knives she keeps control
(O Mother Kali!) of my soul.

She is crowned with emeralds like leaves,
and rubies flame from either eye;
A rose upon her bosom heaves,
Turquois and Lapis Lazuli.
She hath a kirtle like a maid —
Amethyst, amber, pearl, and jade!

This poem is important as foreshadowing my final solution of the problem of evil and sorrow, the interpretation of illusion by the initiate and its transmutation into truth.

I saw as usual a good deal of Thornton. One morning, driving down the Maidan in his tum-tum, I said, "I cannot formulate a plan of action of any kind because there is no true continuity in phenomena." He turned on my quite simply, and said, "Quite so, but there is equally no continuity in yourself." That, of course, was no news to me. It was Hume's answer to Berkeley, for one thing. It was the essence of Sakkaya-Ditthi, for another. The ground was cut away from under my feet. At the moment, my consciousness failed to pick up the full purport of this proposition, for I found myself suddenly forced into action by a set of circumstances of which I had no control, and which bore no relation to any past purpose of my life. But I believe they were arranged for me by the Secret Chiefs.

My wife was due to arrive with the baby on the twenty-ninth and the natural thing would have been to see a little of Calcutta society, especially as I was naturally a bit of a lion, and then stroll across Asia somewhere, at our leisure. The Secret Chiefs arranged for me to be in a situation where I was at their mercy. They meant to initiate me whether I liked it or not. And this is how they went to work.

I set forth after dinner, one fate-fraught night, to try to get unguided to a street of infamy called "Culinga Bazar" from the corner of the Maidan. It was a worthy feat to attempt; for I had been to the Bazar only once before, in 1901; and then I had been driven to it in the dark from afar distant part of Calcutta. The night was extremely dark; the streets were lighted only by the flares and fireworks of the native festival — the Durga-Puja — which was in course, and all semblance of honesty or decency quitted the houses before I had advanced three minutes into the bowels of Calcutta.

As I did so, my savage instincts surged to my brain. I "smelt" the direction almost at once; and as I got into this state, I became aware of impending trouble of some sort, as savages are. That "eerie feeling", alone in a desperate section of a foreign city at night? Nine to one it is plain funk. But as I had

already admitted, I am the biggest coward alive; and I have constantly forced myself to face my fear. So not I was not tingling with the pleasurable sense of confronting the unknown; I had the definite sense of being trailed. The sensation angered me; I tried to ascribe it to imagination. I forgot it and I went my way.

Presently, however, I turned aside for a moment from the dim street I was treading into an alley guarded by a black archway. I had no idea where it might lead; I simply wished to withdraw from the observation of my fellows for a few seconds, for reasons which are fully described and justified in Carpenter's *Physiology*.

I passed through the archway. It was as "dark as the pit". (I don't know what pit may be meant.) The alley beyond was somewhat lighter; the sky loomed dull blue-grey above.

I noticed various doorways in the walls; also one at the end of the alley; I was in a cul-de-sac. And then I saw, faint glimpses in the gloom, the waving white of native robes. Men were approaching me and I was aware — through hardly by sight — that they moved in a semi-military order, in single file. There was noting to alarm me in this it is the habit of natives to march thus. And yet I was pungently aware that some evil was meant. As it happened, I was dressed in dark clothes and my face burnt deep brown. I effaced myself against the wall.

Three of the men passed me; then they turned. I was surrounded. Strong hands gripped my arms; greedy hands sought my pockets. I barked out sharp orders: they should have no doubt that I was a sahib. For all answer I saw the pallid gleam of a knife.

I must really break off to say that I have always found the psychology of this incident enthralling. It stands out in my memory in *alto-relievo*.

I have never on any other occasion had so much time to think — I am afraid I express it badly. I mean that I was acutely conscious of a few well-marked thoughts, without the usual gradations, sub-thoughts, connections and so forth, that make it hard — in ordinary life — to discriminate between conscious and unconscious thought.

On this night I was as primitive as an ape. My thoughts stand out stark as stars on a background of utter blackness. I had become, as by an enchanter's spell, the primeval caveman. Perhaps the long strain and horror of the Kangchenjunga tragedy had prepared me for this sudden outcropping of atavism.

However that might be, I remember nothing but these harsh clear thoughts, uninterfered with by the usual mental processes. I felt myself a "human leopard"; something in me warned me that — contrary to all common sense and evidence — I had lured these men. I was, so to say, a Q-ship! I remember the resistance of my civilized self to this insane idea; I was an English gentleman, attacked without provocation by a band of common robbers.

I had given the order that they should unhand me; they had disobeyed a sahib; my life was in danger. This being the case, I was right to act in self-defence. I would press the trigger of the Webley on which my forefinger had rested since the first glimpse of white robes in the alley. I did so. There was a slight click.

Now, my Webley holds five cartridges; I invariably keep the hammer down on an empty chamber. The chamber will only revolve freely when the gun is at half-cock. Therefore, thought I, "with omnipotence at my command and eternity at my disposal" I must have been fiddling unconsciously with the weapon, set it at half-cock and twiddled the chamber round until the hammer was down, not on the empty space, but on the cartridge next to it, so that the gun, in cocking itself under trigger-pressure, had dropped the hammer on the void. True; but then, to correct the error, it was only necessary to press the trigger a second time.

I have purposely described these thoughts in detail, to emphasize the fact that my mind was working in a more leisurely manner than I had ever known it to do. It is all the more amazing to reflect that my whole train of thought, except the final detail, what to do next, was totally inaccurate!

I pressed the trigger again. My arms were held firmly to my sides, but even so I was too economically minded to fire through my pocket; I managed to raise the muzzle above the edge.

A violent explosion followed.

I had fired without aim, in pitch blackness; I could not even see the white robes of the men who held me. In the lightning moment of the flash I saw only that whitenesses were falling backwards away from me, as if I had upset a screen by accident.

The blackness which followed the flash was Cimmerian. My eyes are naturally very slow to accommodate themselves to change of illumination — I have never met any man equally helpless in case of sudden diminution of light. I had no thought soever as to whether my shot might have hit anybody. There was not the faintest sound; but the alley seemed somehow empty. I do

not know whether I stepped over fallen bodies or not. (I was facing the archway when I fired.)

I thought: I will get out of this alley at once. Those people may be lying in ambush in the archway, especially as I do not know whether there are doors opening out of it or not. I will keep my forefinger on the trigger and at the same time light a match to make sure of the archway. When I get out into the open street, I will walk away very quickly and very quietly, and go straight to the Dharamtolla Road and take a gharry, and drive to Edward Thornton and tell him what has happened.

I carried out this programme to the letter.

And now comes a curious circumstance. Me experiments in Mexico City in "making myself invisible" have been recorded with considerable detail; and it will be remembered that I was far from satisfied with the results. I had reached the "flickering" condition, but I had never succeeded in "putting myself out" completely.

But on this occasion — when my unconscious self seems to have had me in hand throughout — I made myself invisible right enough. The report of the pistol, the screams (for all I know!) of the wounded or frightened men, and the alarm given by the fugitives, had aroused the entire district. An European was a rare bird in that quarter at that time of night; and no native would be likely to have such a gun. No doubt, too, the whole assault had been watched from the beginning; and I must have been denounced descriptively. I remember clearly enough noting with a type of amusement which I must really admit to having something "devilish" in its composition, that the streets through which I passed were filled with wildly excited crowds, all looking for me. "But he, passing through the midst of them, went his way." I am aware that this sounds like a fish story. But as a matter of fact people who lived with me for the last three years or so have noticed that I make myself invisible quite frequently, and that (apparently) when I am not aware that I am doing so.

There is a peculiar type of self-absorption which makes it impossible for people to be aware of one. In these recent cases, the observer who could see me quite plainly because in sympathy with me, could also see that the other people in the street — or wherever it was — could not see me at all. My theory is that the mental state in question distracts people's attention from one automatically, as a conjurer does deliberately. I can transfer this property of invisibility, however, even to inanimate objects. For instance, a police officer recently came to my house in search of a certain thing which he named. I admitted that I possessed it; I showed it to him; I insisted on his seeing, smelling,

tasting and touching it; but he left the house and reported that he had been unable to find it. In this particular instance I knew what I was doing. I deliberately overwhelmed his mind with my earnestness in helping him and other objects of thought. I cut the connecting link between his senses and his mind.

But we digress. I enjoyed lazily the splendour of the drowsy night as I jogged along with lighted pipe — never tobacco tasted better — in the broken-down old gharry up to Thornton's.

I had good reason to be proud. I had been the butt of every gully at school, I had suffered the agonies of knowing myself a coward and a weakling. My whole life seemed at times to be one vast and slimy subterfuge to cozen death.

Yet in the past month there had been a dozen outrages upon Europeans in Calcutta, some of them culminating in the most brutal murder. And I was the only Englishman who had come out on top. I had lost four rupees, eight annas, it is true; but I had won the victory, one against six.

Thornton was in bed when I arrived; but I had not hesitation in making his "bera" admit me. I told him my story and opened my revolver. Then only did I discover that my elaborate course of reasoning was entirely at fault! I had NOT monkeyed with the weapon and the hammer HAD been down on the empty chamber as was right. What had happened was that the first cartridge had failed to explode; for there was the dent in the cap; once again had nature, simple and sufficient, mocked the pomposity of the human intelligence!

Now, concluded I, hadn't I better go to the police and have these ruffians rounded up? Thornton was half asleep, but his mocking eye expressed a more than godlike pity for my idiocy. "Go to bed," he murmured in his dreams; "come round after Chota Hazri in the morning and I'll take you to the right man." My indignation subsided. I agreed. I withdrew. I slept. I bathed. I breakfasted. I went to Thornton.

Thornton took me to a Scottish solicitor named MacNair. I brought out my indignation, its hair nicely brushed, and parted exactly in the middle. MacNair remembered what his ancestors (who, at the time of the Flood, had a boat of their ain) thought about caution. "Go to Garth," was his considered opinion. Garth was one of the most brilliant barristers in Calcutta. I brought out my indignation again, but its hair got slightly ruffled, and I am not sure but what there was a speck of dust on its collar. I protested violently that I wanted to go to the police.

"Well," said Garth, "Curzon and Fraser are busy with the partition of Bengal, for reasons of purely administrative convenience; and it is singularly unfortunate that the measure will break the political power of the Bengali into a lot of dirty little bits. Their hearts bleed for Bengal. So, if you should have happened to hit somebody last night, they will be very indignant and bring you to trial. You will be instantly acquitted, but they will invent some scheme for having you tried again, and acquitted again, to show the sincerity of their love for the Bengali, whom they are out to smash."

"Then you advise me," I said innocently, "to say nothing?" "Indeed no," he said tempestuously, "as a sworn barrister, it is my duty to advise you to report the whole affair immediately to the police." I became more innocent that ever. "Well, I don't see how I can throw any light on the matter. (I was still ignorant of the effect, if any, of the shot.)

He bellowed with laughter. "You can throw a whole flood of light on it," he shouted. My Quaker ancestors knocked at the door of my dull mind, I suppose. "Would you do it yourself?" I asked meekly. "Well," he said more soberly, "you'd be acquitted of course. A man doesn't stroll out after dinner to murder strangers. But you'd be kept hanging about Calcutta indefinitely; and an unscrupulous man, I'm afraid, might be tempted to hold his tongue and clear our of British India p.d.q."

My Quaker ancestors told me what to do. I said sternly, but sadly, "then I suppose it is my duty to go to the police at once. Where is my gharry?" The great barrister wrung my hand in silent sympathy.

But it has been one of the guiding principles of my life never to go into a game unless there is a sporting chance. It is silly to be tried for murder if there is no possibility of conviction. All the bubbles are gone from the champagne. So I waited two days more, still unaware whether my shot had told, and went to meet my wife and child at the wharf.

"How are you?" she exclaimed dramatically. My prosaic reply was, "You've got here just in time to see me hanged!"

Thornton gave a dinner party in our honour that night. My wife sat at his right hand. I saw that she was upset about something. I had no opportunity to talk to Thornton alone before dinner. He kept on giving a curious gesture and then raising two fingers. My stupid mind could not imagine what he was driving at. After dinner he took me and Rose aside for a moment. The unimaginable had happened. My single shot had gone clean through the abdomen of the man with the knife and lodged in the spine of the villain behind him. They had been taken to hospital and made a full confession of their crime.

So the next morning the *Standard* gave me my meed of publicity. Column three of the main page gave the story of the attempted robbery. The man with the gun was thought to be a sailor from one of the ships in the harbour; the police offered a reward for his apprehension. Column five contained an interview with the hero of the expedition to Kangchenjunga. "They will go round the ships," said Thornton, "and they they'll have a shot at the hotels. Get out and get out quick!"

"Darling sweetheart lovey-dovey silly great big she-ass!" I whispered to my wife, "would you rather walk across Persia or across China?"

The wretched woman knew no geography. All she knew about Persia was rugs and Omar Khayyam; all she knew about China was opium smoking, porcelain and tea. She was fed up with Omar, who was at that time deplorably the rage in this wasp-witted country. "My ownest own," she purred, "let's go through China!" We hastily engaged an ayah for our baby. This female was hideous, ill-mannered and untrustworthy; she claimed to be a Roman Catholic so as to conceal that her caste would have nothing to do with her, but she was the only ayah available, so off we went. The one honest human being in the party was dear old shikari Salama Tantra. The loyal staunch old hound! He never flinched, he never failed; he had all the innocence of a child and all the wisdom of Pythagoras; the courage to face the unknown — which Indians almost always fear to the limit — and the gentleness which goes with great strength of body and soul. Peace be to thee, old friend, where'er thou be.

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The voyage to Rangoon was uneventful and delightful. The weather was perfect; for a wonder, the shores and spine of western Burma were on show. There was a fearful fascination in those deadly beauties. I cursed again the fate that had driven me back in 1902 from the sombre slopes of the Arakans. I had rather I had left my bones to Bleach upon those pestilential peaks.

Yet my mind — thanks be to the most high eternal gods! — can never rest for more than an albatross's glide upon the slopes of the past. Today, writing my memories, I feel as if I were playing a sort of practical joke upon myself. I am hot on the trail of the future. I can imagine myself on my deathbed, spent utterly with lust to touch the next world, like a boy asking for his first kiss from a woman.

Beyond Burma lay mysterious China; I conjured up a cloud of amusing phantasies. Romance and adventure. I am incurable; though I have had all the good thinks of life, nearly all my life, though I no longer value them or enjoy them for themselves, I still enjoy the idea of them. I embrace hardship and privation with ecstatic delight; I want everything that the world holds; I would go to prison or to the scaffold for the sake of the experience. I have never grown out of the infantile belief that the universe was made for me to suck. I grow delirious to contemplate the delicious horrors that are certain to happen to me. This is the keynote of my life, the untrammelled delight in every possibility of existence, potential or actual. Fear had been eliminated from me by the fact that I look back with the keenest interest and pleasure to the events which at the time were torture unassuaged.

Imagine, then, how I gloried in the low of the silken waters about the ship, in the fantastically immaterial outlines of the Arakan hills, in the gloom of the gracious frondage of the forests, in the curves of the cobra coast, in the sinister stories of wreck and piracy which haunt that desolate abyss through which we were steaming, where for nine months of the year one can scarce

distinguish between sky and sea, so dark and damp is the air, so subtly steaming the swell of ocean; while beyond, as in a hashish dream, arose the highlands of china, provinces all but unknown even to civilized Chinese themselves. There, primrose to purple, was the promise of undreamed-of tribes of men, strangely tattooed and dressed, with awful customs and mysterious rites, beyond imagination and yet brutally actual, folk with sublimity carven of simplicity and depravity woven of the most complex madness.

I went toward China, my veins bursting with some colossal bliss that I had never yet experienced. I boiled with love for the unknown, the more so that my brain was overcharged with grisly imaginings bred of Octave Mirbeau's *Le Jardin des Supplices*, combined with fervid actualities born of the feeling that I was (after all) treading, though reverently and afar off, in the footsteps of my boyhood's hero, Richard Francis Burton.

The approaches to Rangoon are of the most turbulent kind. The river is always the same violent angry dirty flood. It seems to be desperately annoyed with itself about something, possibly at having to pass through Rangoon, which is a wretchedly provincial and artificial town, saved from utter insignificance by one crowing glory, the Shwe Dagon pagoda.

The Buddhists of Burma cannot be induced to do anything which might contribute to their welfare or that of their religion; but they are ridiculously lavish in building new dagobas or regilding old ones. Shortly before my arrival an immense sum of money had been collected to lay plate of pure gold on the Htee of the Shwe Dagon, and while this operation was in progress, a tigress indiscreetly walked into the city one night, climbed the scaffolding and was shot by an Englishman. The outrage to the community, which objects to the slaying, even by accident, of an insect, was causing serious political trouble. Their most holy shrine defiled by deliberate murder! There was also considerable friction between the petty English authorities and the Buddhist ponggis of European extraction who were trying to settle in Rangoon, live the holy life and revive Buddhism as a missionary religion. European officials in a colony are necessarily nuisances to themselves; the consequently try to pass it on to somebody else, on the principle of school bullies — the prototype of the administration.

I personally met with the greatest courtesy and kindness from the authorities in Burma, but the country is not so settled socially as India, and the climate is so abominable that there is every excuse for irritability on the part of anyone unfortunate enough to have to live there. It is, however, a pity that the administration should look with such provincial suspicion upon people like Allan Bennett, that they should fancy political dangers when a European

chooses to study native religion. This disfavour extended to their own officials whenever they happened to have sufficient intelligence to take a sympathetic interest in the people and their customs and beliefs. Fielding Hall, a judge, found himself quite unpopular in official circles on account of his excellent though somewhat sentimental book *The Soul of a People*.

The Englishman in all the colonies that I have visited, except in India, which is not a colony, is childishly jealous of his supposed superiority to the native. He has convinced himself that he represents a step ahead in evolution and he is fantastically afraid of "going fanti"; so he has his knife into anyone who has a good word to say for the people.

Allan Bennett, by becoming a Buddhist monk, was a lining witness that some Europeans thought Burmese beliefs better than their European equivalents; and the idea — so far as an idea may be ascribed to an official — was that native agitators might use this as an argument that British rule in Burma was unjustified. The whole ratiocination is an utter muddle; but men are not governed by reason, either individually or politically. There is, therefore, some excuse for the anxiety of the administration.

At the same time, the example of India should have been enough. British prestige in India rested on the real moral superiority of courage, truthfulness, justice and self-control. It has been destroyed by the attempt to replace this irrational lever of iron by the rotten laths of reason. We should never have shown our weakness to the Indian student who fills Bengal with the tale of his sexual conquest of white women, our servant girls who took these sons of pettifoggers for princes. We should never have sent out middle-class pets-of-examiners to govern the aristocratically minded inhabitants of the tongue of Asia. Duxmia — I suspect some very wise bird — wrote in *Vanity Fair* (October 13th, 1907):

> The British Empire was not built up by public school boys, for the excellent and all sufficient reason that while it was really being built up the public schools did not exist. The men who defeated Napoleon and crushed the Indian Mutiny were sons of country squires, educated in private seminaries, or by tutors on their fathers' own estates, often left to run wild among grooms and stableboys, and obtaining their military or colonial posts through purchase or influence, certainly not through examinations. And never let it be forgotten that the Navy, the one efficient service we possess, is officered by men who have not been to public schools.

It is the plain truth. Our new intellectual Y.M.C.A. snobbery has sucked away our spinal marrow.

I left my family in the hotel and went to stay with Allan, who had been advanced from a simple bikkhu to a sayadaw in his choung (monastery) some two miles from the city. Thornton's remark about the discontinuity of the ego had begun to take hold. I was anxious to confer with my old guru as thoroughly as possible. His view at this time was that, no matter how earnestly and skilfully one practised, one could not obtain Samadhi, and a fortiori, Arhatship, unless one's Kamma (Karma) was, so to speak, ripe. His theory was that one must comply with the Dhamma in all respects to give oneself a chance, but to do so was no guarantee of success. That depended on coincidence. His analogy was this:

Suppose you are a point of a wheel and wish to touch a certain stone on the road, it is obviously necessary to take up your position on the rim of the wheel, bet even so you may be at the top of the wheel just at the moment when the wagon passes over the stone.

I said: "How does this doctrine differ from that of Shri Parananda, who said that Samadhi depended on 'the grace of the Lord Shiva'?" He smiled grimly and said that Shri Parananda's doctrine was not Buddhism!

In any case, I resented those views. I clung passionately to my belief that a man's progress depended upon personal prowess. No doubt this is philosophically absurd, but I still maintain that it is practical good sense. The conversation, nevertheless, turned to considerations of what my Kamma had in store for me. "This might be discovered," he said, "by acquiring the Magical Memory." This is equivalent to Sammasati, Right Recollection, the seventh step on the Noble Eightfold Path. I must explain what this means.

The Buddhist theory of metempsychosis does not involve, like the corresponding Hindu idea, the survival of the individual. There is in fact no ego to survive. When a Buddhist says that he remembers the events of his boyhood, he does not imply that he is the boy in question. He is not; nor is he the man, elephant, bat, hare or what-not of "his" previous incarnation. The wave that breaks on the shore is not composed of the same particles of water as the "same" wave (as we call it) a minute earlier. Incarnation are successive phenomena causally connected but not identical. It would have been incorrect for the Buddha to say "I was that holy hare". He should express the facts as follows: There is a consciousness of a tendency to perceive that holy hare and this man Gautama Buddha, as collection of impressions in which the one partially determines the other. This connection tends to produce the illusion of

an ego whose experiences include the phenomena associated, then with the hare, now with the Gautama.

There are two main methods of acquiring the Magical Memory as defined above. One is to train the normal memory to work backwards instead of forwards, so that any past action is presented to the mind after the manner of a cinematograph film set running in the reverse direction. (I never succeeded fully in acquiring the technique of this method.) The other is to deduce from present circumstances those which gave rise to them.

Just so, one may deduce from the examination of a position on a chessboard what line of pay brought it about. One could not be absolutely sure; the pieces might have been set up by a madman; but granted that the position is intelligible, the laws of probability make it as certain as anything can be that it arose in a certain way. Now in considering one's life one has more material for investigation than a single position; one has a series of successive positions. Intelligent inquiry ought to be able to deduce not only the unknown past, but the unknown future. We have no hesitation in reconstructing the boyhood of Swinburne — presuming the absence of direct information – from his works. His poetry proclaims that he studied classics sympathetically and profoundly, that he was influenced by pantheistic, anti-clerical and republican friends, and so on.

Astronomers, again, observing an infinitesimally short section of the course of a planet or star, confidentially pronounce on its position in the past and the future, and even in some cases calculate its complete orbit. There is therefore nothing a priori absurd in trying to discover one's own nature, history and prospects, at least within very wide limits, from careful consideration of one's known characteristics and environment. "Explore the rivers of the soul," says Zoroaster, "whence and in what order thou hast come." I saw that if I was to be intelligible to myself, I must do so, and this resolution resulted in the critical events which made the months of November, December, January and February the most important period of my life so far as my personal attitude to myself and the universe was concerned.

His life as a bikkhu had not been too good for my guru. The abstinence from food after sunset is bad for the health, bit Allan found that after three weeks he got into the habit. But he was likely to be haunted by the ghost of his dead appetite. He had, moreover, got into a very shocking state physically from lack of proper hygiene and perhaps also of proper medical attention, as well as from his determination to carry out the strict rules of the Order. He had acquired a number of tropical complaints.

I felt that my poetry had been undergoing a transition and I was not sure of my feet. Allen told me that he thought the most magical line in English was Coleridge's "And ice, mast high, went floating by." The comparison is not with mountains or cathedrals, though they are taller than masts. The imminence of the ice is expressed by the phrase chosen and the reader is put upon the deck of a ship. He becomes, maugre his teeth one of the companions of the Ancient Mariner.

This conversation led to my endeavouring to put a certain vividness of phraseology into my poetry. "The Eyes of Pharaoh" was my first attempt to give vivid and immediate images. I chose my similes so as to strengthen the main theme. Later in the month, at Mandalay, I wrote approximately half of "Sir Palamede the Saracen". The idea of this book was to five an account of the Mystic Path in a series of episodes, and each episode was to constitute a definite arrangement of colour and form. Thus, Section I shows the blue and yellow of sea and sand, a knight in silver armour riding along their junction to a point where an albatross circles round a mutilated corpse.

One further subject remained for discussion. I had it in my mind to put spiritual research on a scientific basis. The first step was to get mankind to agree on a language. Allan maintained that a perfectly adequate terminology existed already in the Abhidhamma, the metaphysical section of the Buddhist canon. I could not deny the excellence of his intention, but from the point of view of the average Western student, the terms are so jawbreaking as to be heartbreaking. I said: We already possess a universal language which does not depend on grammar. The fundamentals of mathematics are the basis of the Holy Cabbala. It is natural and proper to represent the cosmos, or any part of it, or any operation of it, or the operation of any part of it, by the symbols of pure mathematics.

On November 15th we started up the Irrawaddy by the steamship *Java* and reached Mandalay on the twenty-first. I spent my days and nights leaning over the rail, watching the wavelets of the great river and the flyingfish. I became insane. There I was, lean, stern, brown and immobile; and there was a set of disconnected phenomena, each with a sufficient reason in itself, and the whole of them uniting to produce another phenomenon; but there was no connection between one set of reasons and the other. Each wavelet was caused by certain physical conditions and the effect of the total was to slow down the revolution of the earth. But neither the so-called transitory, nor the so-called permanent, phenomenon was ultimately intelligible. Further, what I called "I" was simply a machine which recorded the impact of various phenomena.

I wrote, "About now I may count my speculative criticism of the reason as not only proved and understood, but realized." And the following day, "the misery of this is simply sickening; — I can write no more." The influence of the river journey itself had something to say to this. It is a vast implacable flood. The tangled forests on the banks seem like a symbol of disorder, desolation and disease. Religion itself becomes offensively monotonous. On every point of vantage are pagodas — stupid stalagmites of stagnant piety. There is only one dagoba with any pretence to beauty. The eccentricity is explained thus. Even the atrophied ambition of architects had become sick of perpetual plagiarism. The contractor went to the queen and asked how he should build it. She extruded one of her breasts and said, "Take that for a model." He did so, and the result is a refreshing relief from the routine of the regular dagoba.

But the prevailing impression is one of putrefaction. Moored to the steamer were flats piled with fish. The sun rotted them to the point when they became unfit for food. The stench was incomparable; it somehow fitted with the state of my soul. At Mandalay I exhibited this state by this entry in my diary, "Saw palace and 450,001,293,847 pagodas." The criticism is unjust: I had not counted them. There is, however, one good pagoda in the city, the Arrakan, and there is one really beautiful Buddha Rupa. It is said that this statue is the only one which is a portrait of Gautama from life. This may or may not by; at least it is free from the sickening conventionality of the regular smirking stupidity. The real glory of Mandalay consists of the tables of the law. There are ten thousand slabs engraved with the canon, each under a canopy to protect it from the weather. I thought I had done rather well in the matter of book production, but I had to admit I was sitting with jack high against a royal flush.

Mandalay is ghastly most of the year. It is practically under water all the summer. At least fifty per cent of the European residents are on the sick list and a goodly proportion of these die outright. There is little to choose between the Irrawaddy basin and the worst parts of West Africa.

Yet the dwellers thereof talked as if they were in a health resort whenever the Salween valley was mentioned by some intrepid spirit. This was encouraging, as my main objective involved crossing the Salween. The map had fascinated me. The Salween, the Mekong and the Yangtze Kiang run parallel for a considerable distance and they are so near together that it only took me three days between the first two of these rivers; yet the first reaches the sea at Moulmein, in the Gulf of Martaban, the second below Bangkok in the Gulf of Siam, with the whole of the Malay peninsula between them, while the

third turns suddenly from south to north of east and reaches the Yellow Sea thousands of miles away. The "divides" or watersheds between these three rivers during their dramatic parallelism must evidently be mountains of the most interesting type. I wanted to visit a corner of the earth which appealed thus vividly to my imagination.

Incidentally, there were practical difficulties. I had at this time no notion that everybody was a perfect idiot. I could not understand the parochial psychology of the average Englishman. Even Litton, the British consul at Tengyueh, wrote, "I will say frankly that I had no idea that Mrs. Crowley or a child would be with you, and that while there is really no reason why they should not go to Yunnanfu, along the main road, they will, I fear, suffer a good deal of discomfort and inconvenience on the road from the inquisitiveness and impertinence of the Chinamen: which will try your temper. I would also recommend you to dress in Chinese style, and if Mrs. Crowley would not object to a Chinese lady's upper garment or jacket, she would attract much less attention and be less subject to annoyance."

I did not in the least understand that the average Englishman actually resents being asked to sleep in a bedroom which has not been furnished in the Tottenham Court Road, and has not not and cold water laid on. I did not understand that his fears invariably cause him to interpret the natural curiosity of villagers who have never seen Europeans in their lives, as insolence and hostility. I did not understand that he regarded it incumbent on him to instruct the population who have been highly civilized for thousands of years in the rudiments of politeness and morality, to say nothing of religion. I knew, as I know that two and two make four, that it is only necessary to behave like a gentleman in order to calm the apprehensions of the aborigines and to appeal to the fundamental fact that all men are brothers. By this I do not mean anything stupid, sodden and sentimental; I mean that all men equally require food, clothing and shelter, in the first place; and in the second, security from aggression in respect of life and property.

Litton himself understood and appreciated the Chinese character perfectly. Though he was only the consul of the most remote town of the most remote province of the most remote empire on earth, he ruled that whole province by the sheer strength of the superiority conferred by sympathy, integrity and moral courage. But his experience had not led him to expect that any other Englishman's character could coincide with his own at all these critical points.

The irritability and insularity of the Englishman, with his snobbishness, pomposity and cant, had established a prejudice on the part of the authorities

against allowing Englishmen to visit the interior of China. My countrymen could be relied upon to make mischief out of the most unpromising materials. Therefore, while the government of France encouraged its citizens to explore the province, Whitehall made it as difficult as possible for Britons. I got my permission only after senseless delay and encompassed by ridiculous restrictions.

On November 23rd I went on board the *Irrawaddy* for Bhamo, but for one cause or another she did not leave Mandalay till the twenty-ninth. There are two defiles to be passed. The river is constructed by outcrops of rock so as to form rapids so dangerous as to be navigable only with extreme caution. I reached Bhamo on December 1st.

The Irrawaddy is the scene of one of the most exciting commercial gambles of the world. At the head of the waters are mines of jade, and huge blocks of the crude mineral are shipped on rafts to merchants lower down. These blocks are bought by auction. It may almost be said that the purchaser relies on his clairvoyance, for there is no scientific means of determining what will happen when the block is split. The purchaser proceeds to split it and takes his loss or profit accordingly. The process is then repeated as the jade goes down the river. By the time it reaches Rangoon, it has been cut up into small sections an its ultimate value is approximately determined. During its transit fortunes have been made or lost.

Though the upper river passes through hilly country, it still signals its sinister message of decay and death. A dramatic incident had stamped the fact on my memory. On the steamer was an old man, a distinguished official who had intended to retire from the service and take his pension a month or two before. He had been personally requested by the lieutenant governor to postpone his return to England that he might facilitate the arrangements for the visit of the Prince of Wales. The conversation of Europeans in these parts of the earth is inexpressibly morbid; they seem obsessed by the ever present probability of death. The official tried to conceal his panic by loudly asserting a medical theory of his own, that plague, cholera, dysentery and typhoid (the four princes of the blood royal in the palace of King Death) were merely varieties of malarial fever. I said scornfully, "Next time you get cholera, I hope they'll give you quinine." The joke came three days later, when he died of cholera. I do not know whether they gave him quinine or not.

Bhamo is a delightful outpost. One is outside the malarial stewing of the jungle. But I got to hate it, as I wanted to proceed to China, and was held up for seventeen days by the non-arrival of my passport. The delay was partly deliberate. The deputy commissioner was absent; and his assistant was an

Eurasian, who took the greatest delight in annoying the white man. I ultimately got leave to proceed over his head, and having done so rubbed it in with the following letter:

16.12.05 *Dak Bungalow, Bhamo*

Dear Sir,

In response to your thoughtful suggestion (conveyed in your favour of yesterday's date), I did myself the honour of presuming to enter into telegraphic communication with H.B.M. Consul at Tengyueh. I will bring to your notice, with your kind permission, my intention to leave Bhamo tomorrow in consequence o the information thus conveyed; but I will refrain from agitating you with other portions of his communication.

These, though, I suspect, will sooner or later be brought before you by His Honour the Lieutenant governor of Burma; and I trust that you will extend to this gentleman's observations the same prompt courtesy and intelligent attention which you have hitherto been graciously pleased to condescend to bestow upon mine.

I must overwhelm myself in due expressions of gratitude for the untiring pains you have so willing given yourself on my behalf, and trust that efforts so unintermitted have had no prejudicial effect upon your constitution.

I am sure that you have thoroughly enjoyed yourself, virtue being its own reward, and I am sure I can express no more welcome good wish than that fate may soon send you another real white man to treat you as you have treated me.

I have the honour to be, Dear Sir,

Saint E. A. Crowley

The Assistant Commissioner, Bhamo

I am not a snob or a puritan, but Eurasians do get on my nerves. I do not believe that their universally admitted baseness is due to a mixture of blood or the presumable peculiarity of their parents; but that they are forced into vileness by the attitude of both their white and coloured neighbours. A similar case is presented by the Jew, who really does only too often possess the bad qualities for which he is disliked; but they are not proper to his race. No people can show finer specimens of humanity. The Hebrew poets and prophets are sublime. The Jewish soldier is courageous, the Jewish rich man generous. The race possesses imagination, romance, loyalty, probity and humanity in an exceptional degree.

But the Jew has been persecuted so relentlessly that his survival has depended on the development of his worst qualities; avarice, servility, falseness, cunning and the rest. Even the highest-class Eurasians such as Ananda Coomaraswamy suffer acutely from the shame of being considered outcast. The irrationality and injustice of their neighbours heightens the feeling and it breeds the very abominations which the snobbish inhumanity of their fellow-men expects of them.

With the departure from Bhamo may be said to begin a new phase of my career. Up to this point, I have been able to interweave the strands of my three lives; the lives of the soul, the mind and the body; or, more accurately, in the language of the Cabbala, the Neschamah, the Ruach and the Nephesch. The Hebrew sages have made an admirably simple, significant and accurate classification.

The Neschamah is that aspiration which in most men is no more than a void and voiceless longing. It become articulate only when it compels the Ruach to interpret it. The Nephesch, or animal soul, is not the body itself; the body is excremental, of the Qliphoth or shells. The Nephesch is that coherent brute which animates it, from the reflexes to the highest forms of conscious activity. These again are only cognizable when they translate themselves to the Ruach.

The Ruach lastly is the machine of the mind converging on a central consciousness, which appears to be the ego. The true ego is, however, above Neschamah, whose occasional messages to the Ruach warn the human ego of the existence of his superior. Such communications maybe welcomed or resented, encouraged or stifled. Initiation consists in identifying the human self with the divine, and the man who does not strain constantly to this end is simply a brute made wretched and ashamed by the fact of self-consciousness.

I find by experience that this theory represents the facts very closely. I thought it necessary to give at least the bare skeleton, because the next months of our story compel me. It is no longer possible to interweave my three lives. My ordinary career becomes a welter of strange adventures, some of the most uncanny kind; yet the spiritual life is all-important and absolutely simple. The one is linked to the other only by the fact that my adventures appear as if they were so many obstacles deliberately put in the way of my performing the Operation of the Sacred Magick of Abra-Melin the Mage. I shall deal first with the life of the senses.

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It is probably a rare incident for any young man to meet, in the flesh, the ideal of his boyhood's dreams. Such, however was my great good fortune. In the consul at Tengyueh, Mr. Litton, I found all that I had lost when Richard Burton died. He possessed the spirit of adventure in its noblest and most joyous form. He had the instinct for learning foreign languages and dealing with foreign people; and in one respect, his history had been similar. Some years before, he had been consul in another part of China which was the heart of the Boxer movement. Moving, as he did, among the Chinese in the most intimate way, he understood the feeling behind the agitation. He employed his genius in unravelling the conspiracy and succeeded in discovering the plans of the Boxers in detail. This information he communicated to the authorities in Peking. It will be remembered that Burton did exactly the same thing in the matter of the Indian Mutiny; and to a certain extent, Sir William Butler had done this with regard to the Boers.

The result in each case was exactly the same. The indignant authorities banished Litton to the remote and unimportant post of Tengyueh, at the very edge of the wildest province of China. But it is hard to keep a good man down. Litton's influence over the natives was so great that he was the real ruler of the province. He was just starting on tour to compose some native squabble near the frontier, some thirty miles from Tengyueh; and we lunched together by the wayside. He had done miracles to smooth my path.

He had been originally alarmed by my taking my wife and child with me on such a journey. His letter amused me very much; it showed the class of the English people with whom he was expected to deal. He expected us to scream if hot water and cold water was not laid on in every Chinese inn, and to take down every Chinese coolie, farmer or merchant for a murderer with a special "down" on "foreign devils". He thought the we would be very much upset by that natural curiosity of the natives at seeing a white woman and interpret their interest as intentional insult. When he found with what practical common sense I travelled, he realized immediately that there was going to be no

trouble. During this lunch he gave me more genuinely valuable information about China that I had had in the whole previous course of my life. One of his sayings was this: whatever one hears, however extraordinary, is true in China somewhere or other!

He also told me the main psychological difference between the Chinese and Indian as regards practical dealing with them. The Chinese does not respect the white man as the Indian does — for his possession of high moral qualities. The very coolies despise their wealthiest merchants for their honesty, which, by the way, is unique in commerce. They respect any man who acts as their own mandarins act; with absolute lack of sympathy, justice or any other human feelings. They treat the traveller well in proportion as he is overbearing, haughty and avaricious.

I found, in fact, that it was necessary to throw the whole of my previous principles overboard. One cannot fraternize with the Chinese of the lower classes; one must treat them with absolute contempt and callousness. On the other hand the Chinese gentleman is the noblest and courtliest in the world. His general bearing is that of Athos in *The Three Musketeers*, at his best. One's relations with him should be those of absolute mutual respect; and here again, intimacy of any kind is impossible. Each man abides on pinnacles of isolation. A typical case is the relation of the Emperor to a man like Li Hung-chang. The Son of Heaven was so far above even the greatest of his subjects that he could make no difference between him and the commonest labourer. He wrote to him simply as Li.

Litton furnished me with careful notes of the stages of my journey to Yunnanfu, which I found extremely useful. I could not start from Tengyueh until my passport arrived from the consulate general. With extreme kindness, Litton invited me to stay at the consulate until it arrived. He himself hoped to be back in Tengyueh within a week, so that I expected to see him again and learn more of his vision. We sat and talked for a couple of hours, each feeling instinctively that he had found a sympathetic spirit.

The march from Bhamo to Tengyueh had been rather eventful. The first day was a pleasant ride of about nine miles to Mamouk where we dined at the officers' mess. We were still in the Burmese atmosphere and the minds of the people were preoccupied with European affairs and disease. There was no trace of the singular horror with which I was to come in contact beyond the frontier, a horror from which I found no one but Litton himself entirely free, until I got into the sphere of French influence. The next day we covered twenty-one miles and the third sixteen, where we camped for the first time in the open. The scenery had not been particularly striking; but there was a

feeling of openness on leaving the Irrawaddy basin which we found extremely pleasant.

On the fourth day we crossed the Chinese frontier. At this point it is marked by a small stream in a ravine. There is not proper bridge; only an insecure-looking tree trunk. I had doubts about my pony and decided to walk across. I was of course riding last to prevent straggling, and by the time I had crossed the stream the rest of the party were out of sight around the corner of the path which rises sharply along the hillside, in order to cross the mountain. I had got a little stiff with riding and thought I would stretch my legs; so I walked with my horse up the slope for some distance. Deciding to remount, I swung my leg over the saddle; and, before I was seated, the brute put his hind hoof over the khud, which was here precipitous. We rolled over each other twice, a distance of thirty or forty feet.

We were neither of us in the least hurt; my feeling was one of plain astonishment. I look up at the cliff. It was well within my posers to climb, but there was no possibility of getting the pony up. I climbed up the path and carefully retied my turban, which had come off, before shouting for Salama to come back and extricate my horse. I felt it essential to show myself imperturbable. The men returned to find me quietly sitting and smoking. They had considerable difficulty in find a way round for the pony. The day's adventures were not yet over. Just before getting to camp I was kicked on the thigh by a mule. I shall explain later the extreme importance of this day in my career.

There was quite a series of small accidents during these days. Salama had started it by falling off his mule. Then came my turn. The day after, Rose and the baby fell while walking across a bridge, quite incomprehensibly. It was extraordinary luck that they did not come to serious grief. The day after, we spent the night in a Buddhist temple after a march in the pouring rain, during which the ayah was both kicked and bitten by a mule. The day after that it was again my turn to be kicked. I have had a good deal of experience with mules in various parts of the world; but only in this short section did such things occur.

This day was again very wet. The road led over a pass three thousand feet high. I say "road", and of course this is the main highway from Burma to China, just as the road we had followed from Srinagar is the main highway from Kashmir to Turkestan. In neither case would it be considered good going by the average goat. The day we were to arrive in Tengyueh, the ayah gave us the slip. We had camped by a hot spring the night previous, in company with a caravan bound for Burma. One of the muleteers took the fancy of the

lady and she decided to throw in her lot with his and go off to Burma. She had been such a bad servant and given so much trouble that I made no attempt to retrieve her.

We met with a warm welcome at the consulate from Litton's Chinese wife, an exceedingly beautiful woman with perfect manners. They had five charming children. The prejudice against half-castes requires analysis. It is not the mixture of blood, as a rule, that makes the majority of them such degraded specimens of humanity, but the circumstances usually attending their birth. These circumstances, again, are due to the crass imbecility of public morality. When the child is a by-blow of drunken Tommy and a bazaar woman there is no need of profound anthropological hypotheses to explain why it is not a Newton or a Chesterfield. There is no doubt, however, that some races make better combinations than others. The best class of Englishman and the best class of Chinese mingle admirably, provided (of course) that the children are brought up decently in an environment where they are not handicapped from the first by feeling themselves objects of dislike and contempt. Nothing is worse for children than to be humiliated; they should be brought up to realize that they are "kings and priests unto God".

The foreign colony at Tengyueh was small and dull. The head of the customs was Napier, the son of an old friend of my father's. He was a melancholy aristocrat who only kept himself from going insane in these monotonously uncongenial surroundings by a sort of Promethean courage. The other Britons have made no impression on my mind soever. There was a Norwegian missionary named Amundsen, even more colourless and doleful than brainless Scandinavians usually are. The doctor was a Bengali named Ram Lal Sircar, a burly nigger of the most loathsome type. I am not fond of Benaglis at the best and he as the worst specimen of his race I have ever seen. He was fat and oily, with small piglike treacherous eyes. On the rare occasions when he was not eating, he was writing anti-British articles for the Bengal native press.

There was, however, a guest at the consulate with whom I struck up an immediate warm friendship. This was a botanist named George Forrest, who was recuperating from an adventure which I must narrate in some detail, as it includes one of the most striking ghost stories I ever heard. His happy hunting ground had been the Mekong-Salween divide. He had been north beyond the twenty-eighth parallel, in country practically untraversed by any whites, among mountains which rose to nineteen thousand feet. His headquarters was a Jesuit mission.

The district had been disturbed for some time; a comparatively important town was the centre of a small revolt against the Chinese government. An army had been dispatched to reduce it. The siege was typically Chinese. Having invested the town, the imperial general made no attempt to take it by assault; he simply entered into negotiations with the garrison as to the price of the surrender. After interminable haggling, a sum was fixed. So much is intelligible, but at this point the baffling psychology of the Chinese comes into play. The inhabitants were put to the sword and the town sacked, exactly as if it had been taken as the result of murderous conflicts.

The general weakening of the imperial authority led to the outbreak of raids on the part of the Buddhist lamas who lived in remote serais perched upon the inaccessible crags of the mountains bordering Tibet. Bands of these monks swept down from their fastnesses to indulge in orgies of rapine, rape, murder and cannibalism. (The official descriptions of the various hells in the Buddhist canon are of course actual pictures of fact; the tortures of the damned are simply slight exaggerations of those actually inflicted by Buddhists on their enemies. In particular, it was the custom of these lamas to devour the hearts and livers of their enemies in order to acquire their vitality and courage. As I have already explained, I do not regard this as superstitious; I think it is practical common sense.)

Forrest was at the Jesuit mission when word came from the north that the lamas were on the war path. It was decided to flee and the entire mission hurried off. Its eldest member, Father Bernard, was a man over eighty. It was decided to separate for greater safety; but Forrest found it very hard to bring himself to leave the old man, for whom he had acquired extreme respect and affection. However, it was the only thing to do, and Forrest plunged off alone into an obscure side valley hoping to reach the comparative safety of the main road from Tengyueh to Yunnanfu by means of a detour.

The nightfall of the second day showed him the camp fires of the lamas on the hills to the south and he recognized that he was cut off. In the light of the fires he could see the gigantic silhouettes of their hounds. He suddenly realized that his European boots made it easy to track him, so he discarded them. During the day, the slightest movement might easily be observed, or the hounds might be on his track, so he spent it under a rock which overhung the river, up to his neck in the icy water. When night fell, he crawled out and tried to get some warmth into his body. (His food soon failed him. During this adventure he lived for eight days on nothing at all and for the twenty-one following on tsampa, Tibetan flour, which has the property of producing violent diarrhoea in the average European.)

Aleister Crowley

Leah Hirsig - Soror Alostrael

Betty May

Jane Wolfe - Soror Estai

Leila Wadell - Laylah

Rose Edith Kelly - Soror "Ouarda"

Jeanne Robert Foster - Soror Hilarion

Mary d'Este Sturges – Soror Virakam

Evelyn Pearl Brooksmith with Aleister Crowley

Rose Edith Kelly - Soror "Ouarda"

Leah Hirsig - Soror Alostrael

Night came on utterly black and Forrest was suddenly aware of a luminous figure standing beside him. He recognized it immediately as that of Father Bernard. He thought to himself, "They have caught and killed him!" (This was subsequently verified. The old man met his end earlier on that day.) The phantom did not speak, but its right arm was outstretched as if to urge Forrest to seek refuge in that direction. Forrest laughed to himself, despite the atrocious circumstances, at the absurdity; the direction indicated was the one of all others which was most certainly fatal to take. After a few minutes the figure disappeared. Dawn broke and showed him the situation unchanged. He passed a second day in the water under the rock.

The second night the spectre reappeared. Again he pointed in the same direction and this time the gesture was imperious. Forrest's instinct of self-preservation had been practically worn out by hardship. "Oh well," he said to himself, "a quick death is better than this," and off he went in the direction designated. He had not gone far before he fell in with a countryman who offered to help him to escape, and led him, barefoot as he was, across a snow-covered pass over fifteen thousand feet high. The met no lamas and eventually reached the main road, where Forrest fell in with a caravan of merchants travelling to Tengyueh, who treated him well and had him carried to the consulate, where I hound him, still weak from his adventure and still shaken in nerve. He told his story with the utmost modesty and equanimity; and I could not doubt that the apparition of Father Bernard was a fact. That it should have pointed out the way of salvation in the most unlikely direction certainly indicated supernormal knowledge.

The atmosphere at Tengyueh was intensely oppressive. The conversation invariably turned upon battle, murder and sudden death, embroidered with fantastic wealth of disease and torture. It was an absolute nightmare. I really take great credit to myself for having spent twenty-five days in this community without losing my nerve or becoming obsessed. Everyone seemed to be preoccupied with the idea that at any moment the Chinese might break out and put us all to the most cruel death.

I must admit that there was a quite unusual number of really terrifying incidents; even trifling occurrences seemed too apt to take on a sinister significance. For instance, two of Litton's horses died suddenly. I diagnosed anthrax and wanted to take the obvious measures; but there was nothing to be done. The servants at the consulate had taken the carcasses to the market and spent the next three days in janging for them. To hang is to haggle; but the most inveterate haggler is a fixed price merchant in comparison. It was certainly the limit to think of the animals being sold for human food! One must

be resolute to prevent one's mind from dwelling on such subjects; one must take one's precautions so far as possible without thinking about the threatened calamity.

Another disquieting incident was as follows. Tengyueh was supposed to be ion direct telegraphic communication with Peking. One of the most absurdly characteristic arrangements was that the observatory at Peking telegraphed to us daily the correct time. Now at Yungchang there was a relay and, as often as not, the telegraphists would be engaged in smoking opium for three or four days at a time. Consequently a whole bunch of telegrams would arrive late one evening telling us that it was noon at Peking.

One was therefore not very sure of getting the news. And just about this time a message came though telling us of the riots in Shanghai and that seventeen people had been killed. We could not tell how serious this might he; whether it was a local outbreak or whether it was part of a general antiforeign rising. I heard later the details. The European colony had been badly scared and fortified themselves in the country club; but the riot fizzled out. It was none the less alarming to get an isolated item of news of this kind. Thinking of it today, I wonder that it never occurred to me to go back to Burma. I did not feel either courageous about it or alarmed. There is in me a quality of almost imbecile stoicism. I simply cannot be bothered to worry about danger or hardship of any kind unless it is force on my immediate notice.

I cannot account for this peculiar imperturbability. It seems entirely at war with my extreme sensitiveness. And yet it may indeed be the Freudian protection against this; it may be that my instincts warn me that if I allow myself to think at all on certain subjects the pain will be unendurable. However that may be, there is no doubt that I possess a peculiar solidity; having decided to do anything, I go on my course no matter what new facts arise. I will not go a step out of my path of avoid the most obvious unpleasantness. And I have certainly never been able to make up my mind whether this quality is an advantage in the long run or no.

The final episode of my story at Tengyueh might indeed have caused most men to change their plan. It is in many ways the most dramatic adventure of my life and has left an ineradicable impression on my mind. I despair of describing its intensity or the wildness of the setting. The oppressively electric atmosphere of the previous three weeks, the indescribable apprehension which hung over the colony, suddenly discharged itself in a thunderbolt.

At eight p.m. on January 10th we were sitting at dinner in the consulate when we heard confused cries and flying footsteps in the courtyard. The doors were suddenly flung open and a gigantic runner dripping with sweat

came crashing into the room, sprawling his gaunt arms and legs in the extravagance of his gestures. For a moment we believed that an attack was imminent but Forrest soon elicited a somewhat vague story to the effect that Litton was ill and required the services of a doctor. He was said to be camped at about two days' march away in the direction of Bhamo; but we resolved to cover the distance in the course of the night. Forrest being my senior, and knowing the language, was evidently marked as chief of the expedition. I put myself unreservedly at his orders.

The first thing was to get the horses, which was easy; the second to rout out the Bengali, which was an entirely different proposition. It was after nine o'clock before he joined us at the outskirts of the town. The word forward was given, and Forrest and I galloped furiously into the darkness. We kept up a tremendous pace as far as the foot of the hills. It was a wild and windy night; torn clouds scudded fitfully across a misty moon. Some rain had fallen and the broad smooth stones of the road were as slippery as glass. It was impossible to ride on the slopes; the tatu stumbled at every step.

My mountain boots with their wrought iron nails proved equally awkward. I was forced to march, supporting myself with one hand on the pony's neck and urging him with my whip with the other. We pressed on eagerly through the night; and at last we came to the crest of the ridge and began to run down the other side of the path towards the hot springs. There was just sufficient light in the east to reveal the landscape by the time we got near the foot of the hill. Then I saw a litter slowly approaching. Forrest gave a shout and dashed enthusiastically forward; but I silently turned my horse, for I saw that the consul's legs were tied.

The situation, apart from its tragic present, was full of anxiety for the future. How had Litton died! A glance at the body was not reassuring. There were symptoms which suggested poison and the least sinister alternative was some deadly infection. I wanted a medical opinion; but the doctor avoided the neighbourhood of the litter, saying that the examination could be made at Tengyueh. I did not fully realize what was behind this and acquiesced. He hurried back much faster than he had come. For all I knew, he had it in his mind to make various preparations.

About four o'clock we reached a wretched hamlet where some coolies had kindled a fire in the street. The bearers of the litter, utterly fagged out, threw themselves down by the fire. There was some loose straw lying about and Forrest and I followed their example. We tried to learn the circumstances of Litton's death; but the men gave vague and apparently contradictory accounts of what had happened. It was awkward; some of them might have

been in a conspiracy; and we had no means of telling its purport or extent. I snatched a few moments of that uneasy slumber which supervenes upon exhaustion and distress, and dulls while it does not rest the nerves.

We started again at about half-past six and reached Tengyueh at about ten o'clock. We had allowed the litter to precede us, thinking that the doctor would be in waiting, having made all arrangements, but we hound that nothing of the sort had been done. The coolies had simply dumped the body in the outer courtyard of the consulate. We hat it taken into an empty room on the opposite side of that in which people were living and sent round for the doctor. He returned an evasive answer.

After several further messages, Forrest lost patience and asked me to go round and bring him back by force if necessary. It must not be supposed that Forrest was in any way hysterical. It was immediately urgent to ascertain the cause of Litton's death. The safety of the European community might depend on it. If he had died by violence, our one chance might be for troops to be rushed up for our protection; if by disease, to take quarantine measures.

I found the Bengali seated at his table before a plate of rice such as I have never seen in my life. There was certainly enough for six average people. I stayed a few moments to watch the process of deglutition. It was well worth seeing; and from the debris on the table, it was clear that this was merely a little light dessert. I did not lose my temper; but I must confess to being very angry. I asked him to come round and he then began to try to get out of it altogether. I soon saw hat he had made up his mind that the consul had died of some dangerously infectious disease and was solely preoccupied with keeping himself out of danger. Persuasion and reproach failing to reach him, I resorted to the use of my whalebone cutting-whip. He made no attempt to ward off the blows, still less to tackle me; he simply cowered and howled. I stopped at intervals to impress upon his mind that I intended to go on until he came with me to do his duty. He ultimately gave in and I drove him down the street to the consulate. But once in the chamber of death, it was still impossible to get him to make a proper examination. He would not approach the body. Forrest and I cut off the clothes.

There were some curious wounds caused, in my judgment, by the attempts of some of the coolies to relieve the symptoms. They were none of them serious in themselves. The main visible symptom was large patches of extravasated blood. The doctor refused point blank to make a post-mortem and said he would give his certificate that death was due to erysipelas. He then bolted. His next act was to remember that erysipelas was a notifiable infectious disease and that therefore his best course was to find my wife and

child, and endeavour to communicate it if possible. Luckily she had sufficient sense to keep herself and the baby out of his way.

Only one thing was needed to put the lid on. When Forrest and I had done what was necessary, we proceeded to disinfect ourselves before rejoining the rest. The missionary Amundsen rushed up to us in great excitement and called our attention to an illustrated newspaper which he had just received. "Look," he cried, "there is the Norwegian royal family!"

We buried Litton the following day.

The next business was to get off. My permission had arrived, but I was told that I must engage an interpreter. I should have been only too glad to have one; but I might as well have looked for a snowball in hell. Eventually they dug up a person named Johnny White. He was the first Chinese with whom I had been in direct permanent connection; and I was highly amused to discover that his Chinese name had been Ah Sin. He had been brought up from infancy at the Wesleyan Mission at Mandalay. As a servant he had the defect that he was continually drunk on arrack and opium. As an interpreter, one, he spoke no Chinese; two, he spoke no English. It was with the utmost pain that I was able to communicate with him at all. I cross-examined him, of course very severely, as to his religion. It took a long time for him to grasp my meaning; but ultimately he reassured me as to his creed, which was this: "John Wesley all same God." He was so besotted with drink and drugs that his human qualities, if he ever possessed any, were completely in abeyance. His name was soon corrupted into "Janwar" — which is Hindustani for "wild animal".

The journey to Yunnanfu was unique in my life in one important respect. I became richer as I went along — by the simple process of spending my money! It was impossible to get a change of silver except at one or two points. I carried the bulk of my money in copper cash. (Everyone knows the coins with the square holes.) These furnished loads for two men. I must explain the financial status of this part of the world. Silver money had no denomination, but was valued by weight, and the "coinage" consisted of lumps of silver, whose purity was guaranteed by its shape. The bulkier kind was something like a houseboat, some three inches long and between one and two in the other dimensions. The other kind was not unlike a tortoise and its surface had a peculiar striation. Thus there were these lumps of silver identified as the products of the imperial mint.

Now, there was a varying relation (rate of exchange) between a certain weight of this silver and a string of cash. A string consisted nominally of a hundred cash; but these were what was called market cash. A certain number

of cash counted as a hundred for all commercial purposes and this number varied with the district. Now, as it happened, this number was constantly decreased all the way to Yunnanfu, so that if I wished to buy something at Tengyuen for a hundred cash I had to hand over a string containing eighty-nine coins, whereas a similar transaction at Talifu required only seventy odd, and near Yunnansen forty-six if I remember right. I was consequently always having to take off coins from my original strings. The number of my strings therefore increased as I went along, although I was spending freely. In this way I became continually richer.

To conclude the financial question. This system broke up suddenly and completely on arrival at Yunnansen. Here the French were trying to extend their influence from Tonkin in pursuance of which object they had flooded the city with agents who were trying to force the French dollar into circulation. Opposed to them were the two old systems; valuing sliver by weight, the tael; and the Mexican dollar, which had hitherto been the universal currency of the coast. (The Mexican dollar was itself guaranteed by being stamped by the mark or initials of some responsible firm of merchants.) Peking had just begun to coin a dollar of its own with the imperial dragon. This is one of the most beautiful coins I have ever seen.

The result of the contention of the currencies was that in Yunnansen one could buy things at an absurdly low price, provided that one would pay with the dollars which the merchant was being subsidized to accept. "When thieves fall out, honest men come by their own." It is certainly amusing to watch them cutting their own throats in order to cut ours more efficiently later on. I only wish we could stop the second part of the process.

We reached Yunchangfu on the fifth day from Tengyueh. Our first march took us up the valley of the Shweli, which we crossed on a floating bamboo bridge. The road from there to Pingho winds uphill for about five thousand feet. The road was nowhere really bad, but in some places so steep that riding was difficult. The third day took us to Lu Chiang Chiao, in the valley of the Salween. The gorge is indescribably sublime. It is sentinelled by magnificent hills of splendid and seductive shapes. The air was mild yet fresh. No menace of chill, yet no taint of oppression. The road was not steep as on the other side of the watershed and the descent afforded a series of superb views.

The Salween has the reputation of being the most deadly river in the world. Its only rivals are in New Guinea and, at an earlier day, the Amazon, the Niger and the Congo. It is supposed to have a specially fatal form of malaria which kills most people outright and from which on one ever wholly

recovers. No doubt, some of the lower reaches are extremely pestilential; but in this section one might establish an ideal sanatorium. The course of the Salween had not at that time been completely explored. There is not only fever but massacre in that romantic ravine. Part of it is inhabited by the Lolos (they are not vaudeville artists but tribes) reported to be exceedingly primitive and addicted to head hunting, kidney chasing, phallus fishing and testicle trapping, so that their cooks are famous for stewed spleen, pancreas puddings and appendix on toast.

I met a number of these tribesmen; they reminded me very much of some of the wandering peoples of Central Asia and various folks of the low country of Mexico; and I was reminded of them in turn by many of the nomads of the Sahara. They were very different from the Chinese ion costume, manner and appearance. In character, I found them charmingly childlike. Of course, it was easy enough to imagine that a tactless traveller might alarm them in all sorts of ways without intending to do so, and that they would react as naturally and innocently as any other creatures of the wild might do. But they were entirely free from the malignant envy, the panic born of prejudice and the perverse passions produced by hypocritically pretending to suppress natural instincts, which one associates with tradesmen in the West End of London and ministers of religion.

Litton's idea of a holiday had been to explore the upper reaches of this river. He had in fact wanted to reach that very spot which I had myself picked out for my objective, where the Salween, Mekong and Yangtze Kiang run parallel to within a space of forty miles, while at their mouths the distance between each is two thousand miles instead of twenty. At each village Litton was received with the utmost courtesy and goodwill; but when he disclosed his intention of proceeding northwards, it created panic. They told him that to the north were no men but devils only; accursed races of the pit whose only methods of communicating ideas were envenomed arrows, pitfalls and the poisonous fluff of the bamboo which acts more subtly than ground glass.

I thought this story extraordinarily typical of human thought in general. Everyone admits that we have reached the summit of wisdom, scaled the loftiest pinnacles of morality, put the crown of perfection upon the cranium of progress, and everyone knows perfectly well how this remarkable result has been achieved. But at the first hint that anyone proposes to take a step farther on this road, he is universally set down as a lunatic of the most dangerous type. However, the most savage Lolos are content with that diagnosis, whereas the most enlightened English add that the pioneer is not only a lunatic but a pervert, degenerate, anarchist and the rest of it — whatever terms

of abuse chance to be in fashion. The abolition of slavery, humane treatment of the insane, the restriction of the death penalty to serious offences, and of indiscriminate flogging, the admission of Jews, Catholics, Dissenters and women as citizens, the introduction of the use of chloroform and antiseptics, the application of stem to travel, and of mechanical principles to such arts as spinning and printing, the systematic study of nature, the extension of the term poetry to metres other than the heroic, the recognition of painting other than voluptuous coloured photographs as art, and of music other than classical melody as art — these and a thousand similar innovations have all been denounced as chimerical, blasphemous, obscene, seditious, anti-social and what not.

We crossed the Salween by means of a bridge ornamented with shrines and a delightful and romantically beautiful house for the toll-keeper. Caesar, when he crossed the Rubicon, had less aesthetic attractions and less expense. I did not envy him, and as for the bridge, it did not seem aware of its responsibilities, which is perhaps the best state of mind in which a bridge can be.

The road was in unexpectedly good condition from the Salween to Pu Pa'o, a long stage rendered unpleasant towards the end by threatening rain, which carried out its fell designs in the course of the night. For the first time we experienced native curiosity in wholesale form. We had been recommended to avoid this by secretiveness. This strange wild beast, a white woman, was to be camouflaged in Chinese clothes and bundled out of sight as soon as possible.

I adopted exactly opposite tactics. I said to the people, "Come and see, enlarge your minds, increase your experience, take the fullest advantage of this opportunity." They were so accustomed to conventional European cowardice that at first they were inclined to be unruly and even suspicious. Can it be a trap? But a few minutes convinced them of my absolute faith and friendliness, so that everyone became good-tempered and frank. Their instinct and good manners, which nearly all men outside civilization possess, soon told them what conduct was really annoying and offensive; and they abstained immediately.

Europeans too often make up their minds to resent certain actions which are really quite harmless and natural. They persuade themselves that everything which their grandmothers would not do in Sunday School must be resented with the utmost rigour. This attitude is the root of at least nine-tenths of the trouble about "foreign devils". The only unpleasantness between local natives and alleged whites which came under my notice during this journey was when some travelling missionary, instead of attending to his

own affairs, took it upon himself to insult (in wretchedly and comically illiterate Chinese) some villagers who happened to be carrying an idol in procession as part of the festivities of New Year's Day (January 25th). He might as well have spoiled a children's party on the ground that the fairy stories which amused them were not strictly true.

The action was morally indistinguishable from brawling in church. I may not believe in the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius, but I see no reason for inflicting my incredulity on the people of Naples. The villagers naturally resented the ill manners of this brainless boor and told him to shut up. He immediately began to scream that he was being martyred for Christ's sake. I told him that if I could have brought myself to touch him, I would have thrashed him within an inch of his life. He did not understand my attitude; but I don't suppose there is much in this funny world that he did understand.

On the twenty-third we came to Yungchangfu. The road during this march was in excellent repair. It bordered on a lovely lake, which interested me extremely as having no obvious outlet unless through a curious rocky cave; but I could not be sure of this, no current of any sort being visible.

On arrival in the town I was greeted by the Tao Tai, who sent a deputation of brilliantly clad and highly dignified servants with presents. These of course I returned with the exception of one or two trifles which I retained in order to avoid discourtesy, and on my part bestowed goods of European manufacture.

The next act was an interview with the mandarin in his hall of state where we sat side by side, low down, leaving the place of honour for the Son of Heaven and his immediate satellites. Having exchanged polite generalities about philosophy and virtue (he seemed to think that I was no mean authority on the latter subject) we dealt lightly with more mundane topics and proceeded to extricate ourselves from each other's presence in accordance with the most elaborate etiquette. He concluded by inviting me to share with him the offal which had been rejected by the dogs and kites and I expressed my humble rapture at being permitted to partake of the celestial banquet which his heavenly hospitality had prepared for the meanest and mouldiest of mankind.

The mandarin was one of the most beautiful men I have ever seen. I use the word beautiful in its strictly aesthetic sense. He was, I judge, between thirty-five and forty years old; his features were astonishingly perfect and their expression full of noble intelligence and lofty benevolence, harmonized by a placidity due to a consciousness of his superiority so unbroken and un-

questioned that it had been absorbed into subconsciousness. He was a miracle of art and that art perfectly concealed. His complexion had more than the smoothness of the most exquisite southern European types; yet all this impeccability of excellence was not marred, as is too often the case with Greek sculpture, but lacking that touch of the bizarre which Goethe postulates as essential to supreme beauty. He possessed that peace which I believe is intended to inform images of the Buddha, but which nearly always appears as a mere lack of any positive passion. The mandarin of Yungchang radiated royalty.

It was easy to read his history; that he had been exiled to so remote and barbarous a city bore witness to the heinousness of the offence which had incurred so severe a sentence. On subsequent inquiry I was told that he had been accused of "failing in respect towards the imperial swans". My informant did not say in what his error of ritual consisted. (Another rumour, so absurd as to be credible, is that he was not criminal at all but insane; that he had the delusion that he was a Fellow of St. John's College, whether Cambridge or Oxford, I did not learn; and from all accounts it makes little difference.) The superb epicureanism of his expression was equally indicative of his spiritual superiority to even such blasting disaster as the wrath of the emperor and his divine mother.

The banquet was worthy of the man. Beginning at high noon, it ended only when Kephra the Beetle passed through the pylon of midnight; and during thee twelve hours, there was no intermission in the arrival of new dishes and entertainments. The opulence of Trimalchio was concealed beneath the refinement of Lucullus and the culture of Horace.

Of late years Chinese cooking has become popular, though not nearly as popular as it deserves to be, in New York, Paris and London. In New York it is the best food; in Amurrka, outside New York, it is the only food (bar seafood) fit for human consumption save in the Indian Grill Room in Los Angeles, Chez Antoine in New Orleans, and one or two other remote oases in the wilderness of canned abominations. In London, the vulgarity of the idea of a square meal has destroyed oriental delicacy; in Paris the refinement of French epicureanism combines with the charm of China.

But nowhere in Europe or America is the Chinese cook able to convey the essence of his excellence. One can no more understand a Chinese dish in Europe than one can enjoy an Egyptian cigarette. As to cross running water destroys the enchantment of witches, or to traverse black seas destroys the cast of the Brahmin, so the flavour of Chinese food is bounded by the Great Wall. I well understand why the exiled Mongol feels that he cannot rest in

peace in any other than the sacred soil. The dishes too which one obtains at Beem Nom Low's or at the Taverne Pascal are not those esoteric — shall we say Eleusinian? — ecstasies which interpret the soul of the Wonderland of Flowers.

I may mention a condiment composed exclusively of rose petals from which, by a subtle process, all those elements which are capable of nourishing the human body have been abstracted. But for the most part I dare not even describe some of the dainties which make Yungchang, to this day, a fragrant memory in my mind. To do so would be to draw a culinary parallel with *Le Jardin des Supplices*. Not that the book is the real China; it is rather a wish phantasm of China by the delirium of a degenerate.

Yungchang is noted for its temples. In one of those is a superb delineation of some of the Buddhist hells, where the penalties for various vices are depicted with what is sometimes very startling realism. I was sorry not to have been able to stay longer in this perfumed paradise of beauty and pleasure, where every element of art and nature were harmoniously woven as if endeavouring to echo the melody of the personality of the mandarin.

The next day took us over superbly swelling hills upon whose bosom slumbered a lake. Here once more I was mystified as to its outlet. At the end of a delicious day we slept in a temple. It was the first day of the year and everyone but the missionary was rejoicing. Crackers clustered on long poles of bamboo and gay ornaments of coloured paper were the principal offerings to the eye, while the ear was delighted with all kinds of instrumental and vocal music. Strange delicate cakes and comfits tempted the tongue, while faint perfumes stirred the nostrils. The breeze was sweet with burning sandalwood and subtle with the sweat of dainty dancers. Even the sense of touch vibrated with virile joy as one's nerves trembled beneath the beatitude of innocent people swarming on every side.

I have noted about this day's march, "Roads everywhere good." "Good" is a relative term. The Chinese have a proverb that a road is good for ten years and bad for ten thousand; most of the particular road I estimated at not less than eight thousand. I actually proposed to being home one bit of it; if the weight had not been prohibitive, it would have been well worthwhile. This was a slab of granite about fifteen feet long, three broad and three thick, and holes had been bored completely through it by the hoofs of the pack animals, so that the mud was visible clean through the stone.

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The day after New Year we crossed the Mekong. The river flows through a superb gorge with extremely steep banks. Inscriptions of all kinds were carved on the naked cliffs. I was aware of a very curious sensation in crossing both this river and the Salween. I can only describe it by saying that I seemed to be aware of the genius loci. At night, the wild beauty of the scenery was further enhanced. A house in the adjacent fields, several acres in extent, caught fire. This warm glow in the midst of the cold vastness of the plateau and the stars was very weird; and the silhouettes of the excited peasants who were trying to keep the fire from spreading seemed to dance in front of the flickering flames gigantically. It was a sort of opium dream of hell.

Talking of opium, I purchased the necessary apparatus and began to learn to smoke. I have already described the fiasco with laudanum in Kandy, and somewhere in Burma I had made an equally futile experiment with powered opium, taking thirty grains or so with no greater profit than making myself suddenly and painlessly sick. I found smoking the drug equally unavailing. I smoked twenty-five pipes in five hours with no result whatever. It now appears that I was not inhaling properly; but (for all that) I might have got something out of twenty-five pipes! The fact is that I have an idiosyncrasy with regard to this drug. I sometimes wonder whether I did not use up all my capacities in that respect in a previous incarnation; possibly I was Ko Hs'uen.

East of the Mekong, the path becomes much less satisfactory, partly owing to the geological differences. The whole country between Sha Yang and Chu Tung is across a steep wide range. There are innumerable barrancas, with which Mexico had made me familiar. The atmosphere of China had by this time begun to soak into my soul. Chinese art explained itself as inspired by Chinese nature. There is a vast, free, pale, delicate expanse of colour and form, whose lines are visibly determined by the very structure of the globe itself. There is an infinite harmony and ease in a journey such as I was making.

The physical geography is even more vast in its own way that that of the Himalayas; and the country seems somehow less definite, less specialized yet equally ineluctable! Small vivid patches of colour are associated rather with the works of man that those of nature, and if I were to endeavour to give a name to the poetic quintessence of the province of Yunnan I should content myself with one word — space. The Sahara Desert itself and the sea do not exceed this district in this respect, for they obtain their effects by what I may call the brutal method of sheer magnitude. Here the country is as diversified as Cumberland or Switzerland; the effect of immensity, of almost formless immensity, is obtained by slightly increasing the scale of quite normal types of hill, forest, lake and river, so that man and his ant heaps appear absurdly diminutive by means of delicate satire rather than drastic demonstration.

The character of the journey constantly changes. The steep and desolate range scarred by barrancas gave place in a single march to the loveliest wooded hills, yet the slight magnification of everything produced a sense of tedium. To enjoy China fully, one must allow one's soul to expand to the scale of the scenery and this cannot be cone by ardour, as it can among great glaciers. It must be a gently beatific and philosophical adaptation of oneself to one's environment. During this month, my poetic genius was lulling itself by means of an ineffably beautiful rhythm and rime scheme. On this whole journey I composed only tow poems, and for the first time in my life I did not write them down, so to speak, automatically; I made up the verses in my head and only took pen when they were complete. The second of the poems, "The King Ghost", is most peculiar psychologically. It is as if I had been stripped to the skin of my infinite mentality. It refers to the country south of Yunnanfu where the North Wind, or rather North Draught, was the dominant demon of the desert.

These sensuous yet savage uplands conveyed a peculiar spiritual exaltation such as I have experienced nowhere else and I translated them into "The Opium Smoker". In all these months I succeeded in completing only tow sections; the other six were invented and written down later.

My diary from Mekong to Talifu is very meagre. The most interesting entry is this, "Saw child saved from missionary (one eye lost) showing marks of gouging." I do not remember at this distance of time what the incident was. It was nothing unusual. Medical missionaries in remote districts tend to become sadistically insane from the boredom of their lives. Being brainless, they cannot endure it; and take advantage of their circumstances to vivisect the poor far more freely than is done in London hospitals.

Almost every day blesses the traveller with some delightful geographical surprises. I recall, for instance, plodding wearily up a pass of decidedly rugged character. It was natural to expect that the other side of the pass would be not very dissimilar. I reached the top — and was stupefied. Instead of looking down into a valley, I saw the ground stretching away from me perfectly level, a shallow oblong with a rim of grassy mounds. It was highly cultivated land, paddy fields and plantations of white poppy ablaze in the sunlight with straight narrow channels of pure pale green and pale blue water marking off one meadow from another. Similar surprises constantly crop up. Their unexpectedness suggests the atmosphere of *Alice in Wonderland*, while their formal beauty reminds one of the character visions of the "alchemical plant". A less accurate but perhaps more intelligible analogy is that of the curiously luminous, exquisite and irrational landscapes which were used as backgrounds by such painters as Mantegna, Memling and Leonardo da Vinci.

On February 1st we entered a magnificent gorge. The culminating ecstasy is the approach to Hsia-Kuan but means of a natural rock bridge amid rock walls. It is as if one had come suddenly upon the "dark tower" of Childe Roland, a fortress built by titanic gnomes when the planet was a semi-liquid flux of lava.

The road to Talifu, the second greatest city of the province and the most picturesquely situated and historically important, breaks off from the main road across China and runs sharply northward for eight miles across wild desolate moorlands. Every weak spot in the defences of the wilderness has been seized upon by the industry of the Chinese and turned into a glowing patch of cultivated soil. The approach to Tali itself inspires the stranger with a certain awe, for life is seen wrestling with death in a supreme spasm. The pullulating towers and temples of the town seem literally to quake amid the rotten and restless ruins with which they are interspersed. And thereby hangs a tale.

During eighteen years the province of Yunnan had been the theatre of civil war. Tali was the greatest stronghold of the Mohammedans, their opponents being (more or less) Mahayana Buddhists. There was not really, I fancy, much to choose between them. The outward and visible sign of Islam in these parts is that the door of a Moslem is protected from malignant demons by a poster inscribed with sacred characters instead of a fierce-looking genius. Also he objects to pork. The cause of the war was in fact either that the Mohammedans raided the pork butchers or that the Pork Trust wished to extend its market by force. I do not remember how many million men were said to have been killed in the course of these struggles, but something like two

thirds of the whole area of Talifu (some estimates gave three quarters) had been razed to the ground in the final storming of the stronghold.

Dr. Clark, the medical missionary of Talifu, received us with great courtesy and hospitality. I found him a sincere and earnest man; more, even an enlightened man, so far as it is possible for a missionary to be so; but that is not very far. I found him totally ignorant both of canonical Buddhism and of local beliefs. I tried to point out to him that he could hardly hope to show the natives the errors of their way of thinking, unless he knew that that was. But he declined to see the point. He was so cocksure that his own sect of Christianity held truth in utter purity and entirety that he could not imagine that the Chinese had any way of thinking at all. He regarded their refusal to follow him as a mixture of sheer dullness and sheer wickedness.

I forget the figures with regard to the converts at Talifu. In Yunnanfu the staff of six missionaries claimed four converts in four years and I imagine that these four were rice Christians at that. The truth seems to be that there are two main types of non-Christian religion. The first may be described as philosophical. In this category I place the more intelligent classes of Buddhist, Hindu and Mohammedan. To convert these people it would obviously be necessary to show them that Christianity offers them a more satisfactory explanation of the universe than their own; and not only have I never met a missionary who was capable of doing this, but not even one who admitted the desirability of it or attempting it.

The other type is the superstitious to which belong the fetish- worshipping varieties of Buddhist and Hindu and pagan (Equatorial Africa and Polynesia) with their paraphernalia of miracles, sacrifices, priestcraft, penance, vicarious atonements and the like. It is up to the missionary to show that the Christian form of such things is superior to the local variety and the difficulty is usually insuperable. The native can produce much bigger and more improbable miracles, a much more terrifying demonology, a far more fascinating pantheon, with a more alluring (and, so to say, actual) ritual than even the papist. The native perhaps seems little reason why he should not accept Christianity, but certainly none at all why he should discard his own beliefs which seem to him more vivid and more veracious, better adapted and better attested than the new. It is in fact only among the very lowest class of superstitious savages that Christianity makes any headway. Where Christian and Moslem missions are in direct rivalry, Islam collects the higher and Christianity the lower sections of the society.

Disappointed about learning Chinese ideas at first hand in this remote region, I hoped at least to get available information about the effects of opium

smoking. Dr. Clark informed me that these effects were appalling — the usual scaremonger story. He said it was the curse of the country and that his clinic was full of victims; "Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds," he groaned, "physical and moral wrecks from the habit." "I should like to see one," I replied with the appropriate sigh and shudder. "Well, you have only to come down to my clinic any morning," re returned: "there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds." He groaned again. Well, I went down to his clinic and he went on groaning that there were hundreds and hundreds and hundreds, and I went on sighing that I should like to see one.

During my whole journey, I never saw a man whom I could call definitely the worse for opium. My wife's chair coolies were cases in point. They had smoked from twelve years old or thereabouts; and when I say smoked, I mean smoked. Every night on reaching the inn, temple or camp, as the case may be, they cooked their rice and started to smoke directly they had eaten it, continuing till they went to sleep. In the morning again they smoked before starting. The chair (with Rose and the baby, and the books which I like to have handy to read at odd moments without unpacking my valise) weighed over one hundred and sixty pounds.

Each man had therefore to carry forty pounds. Not much, but a load of this kind is very different to dead weight. Each man had to keep in step with the rest and shake the chair as little as possible; and this over rough hilly toads, often slippery with mud; perhaps against a head wind, in which case the furniture of the chair offered a large surface. One of these coolies, the heaviest the most inveterate smoker of the quartet, cannot have been less than sixty years old. I timed the men under the worst conditions; a road mostly uphill, driving sleet — half a gale — dead ahead, streaming slippery cobbles, and they did eight miles without a rest in two hours dead. If those men were "physical wrecks from abuse of opium", I should like to see the animal in his undamaged state!

There are of course men who have injured their health by opium; and one can see such on the coast, where the affair is complicated with alcohol and European vices. But on the whole, the search for an opium fiend in China is on all fours with the search for the man with tobacco amblyopia in England. Consular reports and independent medical opinion are unanimous that opium smoking does little or no harm to the Chinese. Dr. Thomas Stevenson, in his special article in Quain's *Dictionary of Medicine*, sits on the fence as follows: "Great differences of opinion exist as to the pernicious or other effects of opium smoking. Some would have us believe that the practice is pernicious, not to say deadly; but debasing it often is. The pictures drawn

as to its effects are evidently coloured by the bias of the observer. On the other hand some would persuade us that the practice is harmless, not to say beneficial. Doubtless neither view is absolutely correct, and whilst opium smoking is pernicious, the evils have been greatly exaggerated." These remarks strike me on the whole as fair.

I have myself made extensive and elaborate studies of the effects of indulgence in stimulants and narcotics. (See my "The Psychology of Hashish", "Cocaine", "The Green Goddess", *The Diary of a Drug Fiend* etc.) I have a vast quantity of unpublished data. I am convinced that personal idiosyncrasy counts for more in this matter than all the other factors put together. The philosophical phlegmatic temperament of the Chinese finds opium sympathetic. But the effect of opium on a vivacious, nervous, mean, cowardly Frenchman, on an Englishman with his congenital guilty conscience or on an American with his passion for pushing everything to extremes is very different; the drug is almost certain to produce disaster.

Similarly, hashish, which excites certain types of Arab, Indian, Malay or Mexican to indiscriminate murder, whose motive is often religious insanity, has no such effect on quietly disposed, refined and philosophical people, especially if they happen to possess the faculty of self-analysis. In brief, generalization about such exceptionally subtle problems is a snare.

On one point, however, I must admit to thinking and feeling somewhat strongly. Dr. Clark told me that the missionaries treated the opium habit with injections of morphia; and in other parts of China I learnt that they had taught the Chinese, with the same laudable intention, to sniff cocaine.

The British government has acted with incredible folly. The economic prosperity of India is largely bound up with the export of opium. Whilst I was in China a petition against "the accursed traffic" had been presented. It was signed by many of the most eminent and enlightened men in China, to say nothing of the sister-in-law (I think it was) of the emperor whom they had persuaded to declare herself a Christian so as to have a foot in the enemy's camp. The fact was the most of the petitioners were themselves opium growers whose business was damaged by the competition of the Indian product. In the same way, of course, many of the missionaries were employed by the manufacturers of morphia and cocaine to introduce these drugs instead of the practically harmless and even beneficial YEN.

China has been the most civilized country in the world; from the time of Lao Tzu and Confucius, the fringe of its culture has been torn by the claws of commerce, but it will survive the collapse of Europe. And in Yunnan the contamination of the foreign devil had not gone very far; in fact, it had not

yet reached the asymptote of its own curve. However, the clearing of the ground had long been complete. There are practically no wild animals in the province. I did not even see one of those famous pheasants which I was anxious to shoot. I had hitherto bagged nothing but occasional pigeons for the pot.

At Talifu, nevertheless, there is great sport to be had. From the great deserts to the north, across the mighty mountains, migrate many magnificent birds, especially cranes and geese. I went out from the city northwards, for these birds migrate at this time of the year from the terrible highlands of Central Asia to the warm valleys and plains of the low country. I used to lie behind an embankment which was perhaps at one time part of the fortifications of the city, and shoot them as they came over. It was very difficult sport. The birds flew very high and at a tremendous pace. Some idea may be gained from the fact that a grouse shot clean through the head would fall as much as a quarter of a mile from the embankment. The geese are admirable eating, but the flesh of the crane is very coarse and fishy.

Talking of shooting, I may as well sum up the subject by saying that the part of China through which I travelled offers very poor sport on the whole; there is usually the chance of a pigeon for the pot, but that is all one can get without taking a great deal of pins. I had heard so much of the gorgeous beauty of the Chinese pheasant and looked forward to bagging a few, but never so much as saw one during the whole march. As for quadrupeds, I never set eyes on as much as a rabbit or a marmot, let alone a deer. Foxes abound; but they did not come my way. Chinese civilization is so systematic that wild animals have been abolished on principle. That at least is the only explanation that suggests itself to me.

We had been told that we should find ample supplies of fresh food of all sorts everywhere. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. We could get no fresh milk, the Chinese considering it obscene to extract it; but strangely enough, in even the smallest villages, we were able to buy an excellent brand of evaporated cream which some enterprising drummer had managed to unload along the track. There was no mutton to be had; and it was only seldom that we managed to but a goat or kid. Poultry and eggs were fairly plentiful in most places; rice of an inferior quality and the most suspicious-looking kind of pork were the staple food of the people. Flour was rarely available and of course there was no butter.

Salama was in great distress at the difference between the local rice and the Indian variety to which he was accustomed, while as a Moslem he abhorred pork. I too would not eat it, valuing the respect in which he held me,

as a sahib who partook not of the abominations of my race. Luckily, distrusting my informant, I had supplied myself with a considerable stock of canned provisions before starting, and I increased this at Tengyueh, buying some of Litton's stores from his widow. Even so, we were running very short before we reached Yunnanfu.

At this hour, seventeen years later, I recall almost more vividly than any other incident of the journey, an absurd little tragedy in this connection. We had some tins of coffee and milk, and we had come to the last portion of the last tin. We treasured it for days, looking forward to enjoying it on some great occasion as never an epicure looked forward to a bottle of rare wine. The moment came, we prepared the great drink with almost reverential care. And just as we were going to drink it, my wife shifted her position and spilled it. It would be hopeless to try to express the bitterness of our disappointment. Stay-at-home people can form no idea of the strength of the obsession which trifles impose. Conrad in "An Outpost of Progress" tells of a murder and suicide beginning in a quarrel between two close friends, traders up-river, over a few lumps of sugar.

During our short stay in Talifu, we saw the biggest pageant with which the Chinese welcome spring. I did not know enough Chinese to understand the details of the ceremony; and the missionaries regarded the while business as a blasphemous pagan orgy from which all righteous people should avert their gaze. I could see clearly, however, that the central figure was an ox. He was evidently the hero of the occasion because he was going to help them out with their ploughing. It was a gay, spontaneous, harmless piece of merriment; to see idolatry in it is sheer morbid prejudice.

We left Tali on February 6th and got back to the main road. The following day was without interest, but on the eighth, the latter part of the march led through a delightful valley of the most surprising beauty. It was an altogether new type of scenery. China is full of these delicious revelations. It has always some new delicate splendour to show the traveller. The variety is infinite, not as Alpine peaks or Scottish locks differ, merely in detail; in China, one is always discovering a totally strange fairyland. The spirit of a man is reborn with every such vision. It is not even possible to compare and contrast these beauties; each is entirely individual, lord of its own atmosphere; the points of similarity with other places such as geological formations, the flora, the villages and the people seem to possess infinitesimal importance.

On the ninth there was a novelty of another kind. The dignity of Johnny White as interpreter entitled him to ride on horseback; but naturally he had to be content with a somewhat sorry screw, wile my own pony was a fairly

decent animal. He thought the time ripe to attempt to force me to "lose face": that is, to become an object of ridicule to the coolies. If he had succeeded, I need hardly point out, there would have been and end of all discipline and we should probably have been robbed and murdered in short order. His idea was to start out ahead of us on my pony. I did not find out what had happened for some time.

When I did, I set out on foot at top speed after him. In two or three hours I came up with the culprit. As luck would have it, he was crossing a steep hillside; below the path were gigantic thorn bushes. I came up quietly and unperceived, put my left hand under his right foot and with one deft jerk flung him from the saddle into a thorn bush. It was quite impossible for him to extricate himself, the bush being very large and elastic, the thorns long and persuasive. So I waited, peacefully smoking, until the coolies began to arrive, when I got up and gave him a whack with my whalebone hip as each man passed. When all had gone by, I mounted my pony and followed. Johnny White was rescued by a subsequent caravan and turned up during the halt for tiffin. It was not I who had "lost face" with the coolies! And I had no more trouble of any kind for the rest of the journey to Yunnanfu.

This march was very long and dull, its monotony relieved only by a fine view of lakes and hills. But the next six days were utterly uninteresting. Not until the sixteenth did the featureless plateau give way to the grand wooded gorges which caress Tatz'assa Tang. The village has no good inn, so we went on to a lovely glade which afforded a delightful and romantic place for a camp. I fell ill, I don't know of what, for the next three days. Whatever scenery there may have been I was too sick to observe.

We reached Yunnanfu on the twentieth. Mr. Wilkinson, the consul general, wrote that he was very sorry not to be able to offer hospitality, but the Bengali blackguard of Tengyueh had pout in a complaint that I had assaulted him, so that his relations with me must be strictly official until the matter was settled. We found accommodation in the *dépendance* of the French Hospital; an admirable place run by a Dr. Barbezieux and a Parisian head nurse, both of them really too much accomplished and delightful to be wasted on such a cesspool as this city. I called on Wilkinson and told him my side of the story of Litton's death. Steps were taken to make it hot for the doctor; but as my assault was not denied, the consul general had to regard it as a technical offence, which was duly purged by the payment of a small fine.

The approach to Yunnanfu is worthy of remark. The city is situated in the centre of a plain ringed round by hills. The suggestion is almost of a crater, like Mexico City. There is no adequate drainage for the rainfall. The

town itself seems, from a distance, to be perched on a huge mound some fifty to a hundred feet in height. But on investigation one discovers that this mound is composed of the refuse of the city; the accumulation of centuries of indescribable dirt. It inclined one to accept the theory that bubonic plague first appeared here and spread hence throughout the world.

On the twenty-third I paid the inevitable visit to the inevitable missionary. This specimen was more bigoted and less intelligent than any I had previously met. I had not thought this possible. Six missionaries in four years working in this populous city did one even claim more than four converts. They attributed their failure, of course, to the personal activity of the devil. It never occurred to them that there might be something wrong with their methods. Roughly speaking, any man with energy and enthusiasm ought to be able to bring at least a dozen others round to his opinion in the course of a year, no matter how absurd that opinion might be. We see every day in politics, in business, in social life, large masses of people brought to embrace the most revolutionary ideas, sometimes within a few days. It is all a question of getting hold of them in the right way and working on their weak points.

I enjoyed my ten days in Yunnanfu immensely. I picked up quite a lot of old prints at prices so low that I could hardly believe my ears. The city had never been ransacked by bric-à-brac hounds.

Having settled my little official affair with the consul general, we were free to become excellent friends. He was a distinguished and delightful man, though I could well understand that Litton had been a thorn in his side. He wanted everything done elegantly and correctly, while Litton cared nothing for routine. He was always imposing his tameless personal genius on the province, with the result that he was always achieving unexpected successes when Wilkinson expected him to be filling up forms and docketing reports.

For various reasons, I decided to abandon my original design to descend the Yangtze; for one thing, the delays at Bhamo and Tengyueh had robbed me of time. I was anxious to get to Europe in good time to prepare a new expedition to Kangchenjunga for 1907. I had the mountain, so to speak, in my pocket. A part of average strength could make as certain of strolling to the top as if it were the Strand. I decided, therefore, to turn south and make for Tonkin.

On March 2nd, after breakfast and tiffin with the consul general, who was unfortunately short of stores and could only spare us a couple of tins of butter, we started along the cobbled track, lively with cherry blossoms. The walking soon became very difficult; the paths were rough, wet and slippery. On the fourth we came to a pass in the mountains guarded southwards by

fine cliffs. At nightfall we reached a lake by whose side we camped. The weather for the first five days of this journey was bitterly cold. The wind, shifting from south-east to south-west, literally took the skin off our faces, even mine, which I had thought inured to all the possible devilishness of nature.

Later, this wind dropped and was replaced by a much more deadly device; a steady draught from the north was infernally icy as when it started its career in the ghastly deserts of Siberia. It had the same quality as the north wind which we had on Chogo Ri; it took no notice whatever of poshtin (coats lined with sheepskin), sweaters, flannel shirts and vests. One felt as if one were absolutely naked. There was no shelter from it. One might crouch behind a wall or a house, but although that prevented the wind from blowing on one, it did not hinder the draught from drawing from one. The effect was just as bad; it simply exhausted one bodily and mentally; it sucked out all vitality and courage.

On the sixth we came out suddenly on the edge of a plateau with a descent of some three thousand feet in front of us, through a fine gorge. But I was hardly in a mood to appreciate nature. For three days we had practically nothing to eat but soup and Worchester Sauce. When we asked for eggs, we created something not far shot of a scandal. Even rice was scanty. The villages on this route are few, far apart and poverty-stricken.

Of one thing we had plenty — tea. I had heard marvellous stories of the so-called "brick tea" that hails from these parts; and laid in a large stock of various brands to take back to England. The bricks are usually in the shape of a flat cone, somewhat hollow beneath. It reminds one of the straw hats of Japanese coolies. The diameter is from eight inches to one foot and the thicknesses from two to four inches. The flavour is excellent, very subtle and aromatic; but it possesses a property not usually associated with tea, the desirability of which depends on the physiological condition of the drinker, for it acts as a powerful laxative and a purgative when strongly infused and consumed in excess. When I reached home and could compare it with the finest caravan teas, its flavour seemed less admirable, yet it retained its distinction and was always worth its place in the caddy as a curiosity. For myself, too, it was a potent spell to evoke most vivid memories of this weirdly fascinating journey.

To return to the march to Mengtsz. There is little to see that is impressive. My one memory is of a big pagoda perched on the crest of a mountain that looked as if it had been cleft in twain by a wizard. I was heartily glad on

the tenth when Mengtsz came into sight; a French outpost with all the civilization, culture and cooking that heart of man can wish. The inspector of customs, Mr. Brewitt Taylor, very kindly asked us to stay in his house, though at first sight he could hardly believe that I was an Englishman. The journey had reduced me to rags; I had no chance of washing or trimming my beard; the skin of my face was torn by the wind. I must have looked simply frightful. (I still do.)

We only stayed three days in Mengtsz in spite of the attractions of the little French colony. Everyone invited us everywhere, including a garden party where I played lawn tennis for the first time in ten years. I will play once more — when I return.

There is one ghastly tale to be told. The French intended to run a railway up to Yunnan to extend their sphere of influence. They had surveyed the route satisfactorily and proceeded to import eight thousand coolies. With unbelievable stupidity, they got them from Manchuria. Naturally enough, the men could not stand the climate, especially as no proper accommodations had been provided to house them. In six months only five hundred were left.

On March 14th we left Mengtsz for Manhao on the Red River —three days' easy travelling. The very first night, an unpleasant incident took place. Wilkinson had made me promise on no account to strike any of the men but to rely on him to punish any misconduct when they returned to Yunnanfu. It seemed as if they knew of this compact and the Great God Wilkinson seemed very far off to them. I could feel instinctively that the respect, akin to godly fear, which I had previously inspired was less powerful as an inhibition.

We slept on the fourteenth at a serai, dirty and entirely comfortless. I paid the host more than liberally; but he was insolent and I had no means of abating the nuisance. This emboldened my own coolies to be mutinous; and in the course of a squabble with my wife (I being ahead out of sight) one of them struck the baby. I ground my teeth; but resolved to keep my temper and my promise to the consul.

The fifteenth was a long march over muddy cobbles full of holes where my horse constantly slipped and stumbled. It blew great guns and poured blue cats all day. We reached a village with an alleged European hotel; the 'Sino-France", a wattled hotel, unspeakably foul; the worst place I had yet struck in all Asia.

Manhao is a fine village situated on the banks of the Red River — a torrent which competes with the Salween for pre-eminence in deadliness, both from disease and demons. The Chinese refuse to sleep even a single night in

the valley; but I saw no cachectics in the village any more than I had seen victims of opium elsewhere.

The Red River at this point runs through a deep and narrow gorge. We found it stiflingly hot, after our long exposure to the icy winds of the plateau. I had hired a dup-out to take us down the rapids to Hokow, and her I saw my chance of getting even with the coolies. Having got everything aboard, I proceeded to pay the head man the exact sum due to him — less certain fines. Then the band played. They started to threaten the crew and prevented them from casting off the ropes. They incited the bystanders to take their part; and presently we had thirty or forty yelling maniacs preparing to stone us. I got out my .400 Cordite Express and told Salama to wade ashore and untie the ropes. But like all Kashmiris, thoughtlessly brave in the face of elemental dangers, he was an absolute coward when opposed to men. I told him that unless be obeyed at once I would begin by shooting him. He saw I meant it and did his duty; while I covered the crowd with my rifle. Not a stone was thrown; three minutes later the fierce current had swept us away from the rioters.

The real danger now began. This was the only part of the journey where we encountered any serious risk of disaster. The Red River, though broad and deep, has all the characteristics of the wildest mountain torrents. It falls in a succession of dangerous rapids, all the more perilous for the sudden sharp curves of the channel. At almost every corner we saw one or more wrecks, a far from reassuring spectacle. I was given to understand, however, that disaster rarely overtook boats going down stream. It is when they are being towed by insufficient power up the rapids that they get out of control and are dashed upon the rocks. For all that, we managed to hit two nasty snags in the course of the day; one of them ripped a hole in us amidships; but the men managed to stop the leak with tarpaulin nailed in place by short boards with extraordinary speed and efficiency. They were evidently well accustomed to similar jobs.

We reached Hokow on the eighteenth and struck a forlorn Englishman who gave us tiffin and dined with us. We all got gloriously drunk celebrating the success of a journey which in the opinion of all reasonable people was a crazy escapade, doomed from the first to disaster. Another bubble had burst! The awe-inspiring adventure had proved as safe as a bus ride from the Bank to Battersea.

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I have had little occasion to mention my wife and child. It is a case of "happy the nation that has no history". Rose had proved an ideally perfect companion. Since the nurse's elopement she had had no one to help her with the baby. There was also a good deal for her to do in camp. We often travelled over twelve hours a day in really trying conditions; we encountered more than a little hardship, what with fatigue, cold, lack of food and general discomfort; she never gave in, she never complained, she never failed to do more than her her share of the work and she never made a mistake. She was in a class by herself as a comrade. Even Eckenstein was not so competent all round or so uniformly exultant.

We had been over four months away from civilization; and she had not only stood it but flourished exceedingly. When we started, she had been rather empty-headed and frivolous; while physically, though healthy, she could not be called an athlete. At the end she had acquired the kind of soul that is evoked by intimate contact with naked nature. Her figure was straight and supple, scorning corsets. Her limbs were lithe; her eyes bright and eager; her face aflame with the joy of perfect physical well-being and her heart exulting with the expectation of producing a new token of our tenderness before the end of the year.

In these four months I had been mildly indisposed with indigestion for two days. Rose had had one slight touch of fever, and a baby a cold in the head which lasted three days, and some minor digestive trouble during our stay in Yunnanfu. Not many families living in the most hygienic conditions in England could show a cleaner bill of health. We had good reason for rejoicing and may be excused for feeling decidedly proud.

The next day we went on the Lao Kay, where there is a good hotel, and more mosquitoes than I had seen for many a month. We hurried on by train to Yen Bay, a filthy hole with no redeeming feature. The whole country and its people are monotonously reddish brown; skin, clothes, food, roofs — everything but the grass and the trees, which are all the same shade of dull green.

The whole forms a curiously harmonious picture, very low in tone and undeniably depressing. The sky itself was uniformly leaden, though I suppose this was a question of the time of the year. There are few features in the scenery; a damp warmth broods upon the general dullness.

On the twentieth we reached Hanoi, the capital, but only stayed for lunch. There is nothing particularly interesting about the town to people who have been uninterruptedly intoxicated for months upon the beauty and grandeur of one of the wildest and noblest countries of the earth. We took the after noon train to Haiphong, the seaport of Tonkin, and put up at the Hotel du Commerce. Haiphong is much like any other Eastern port. There is the usual colonial atmosphere and the variety of races like so much jetsam flung upon the shores of the island of officialdom.

One deliciously colonial incident must be related. It gives the very atmosphere of Claude Farrère's *Les Civilisés*. A large corner building on the main street had been condemned and had to be blown up. The boss of the gang in charge went for instructions to the city engineer. He ran him to earth after prolonged search in a combination of drinking-hole and house of ill-fame. He was up to his neck in absinthe, which is not really a wholesome drink in that climate; but he was able to talk and readily agreed to calculate the charge of dynamite required for the house breaking. He took a stub of pencil and worked it out on the marble slab of his table. Strange as it may seem, he shifted a decimal point two place to the right without adequate excuse — unless we accept the absinthe as an apology. The boss went off with his figures and put in a charge just a hundred times too big. The whole block was completely wrecked; and they were still clearing the street when we arrived.

We were lucky to find a ship on the twenty-second for Hong Kong, after which she was named. The boat was a dirty tramp tub; her skipper a drunken Italian who lived in flannel pyjamas which could not have seen a laundry for months and spent all his time in the smoke room, gambling and boozing. He came athwart my hawser once, refusing to listen to the complaint of Salama about the way he was treated in the fo'c'sle. I told him that I would throw him off his own ship unless he did what I said p. d. q. He cringed and complied.

How this ship ever made a voyage is a mystery. The chief engineer, a worn-out melancholy Scot, was as puzzled as I. He said his engines were "as rotten as the captain's guts". They moved like a one-legged man with St. Vitus' Dance and they sounded like tea trays being beaten, chains being rattled and fire irons being thrown about, all at once.

We could not even get clear of our moorings without tearing away the port companion. Twenty-four hours later we stopped. The captain freely admitted that he had lost his reckoning, didn't know where he was, didn't know how to find out and didn't see why he should worry about it. He went back to his cards, leaving a junior officer to get entangled with the sextant and chronometer. Whether he obtained any results will never be known, for during the day we drifted in sight of Hoihow. By some weird coincidence, this was our first port of call. There being no harbour, we stood half a mile out to sea, rolling and bucking sickeningly while boats came from shore bringing our cargo; pigs in wicker crates which were stacked all over the ship three deep; and large baskets of poultry. It became quite impossible to move about the main deck at all, and even on the upper deck there was considerable crowding. The stench created by these animals, a number of which died on the voyage, was the limit.

In the afternoon there appeared a magnificent Fata Morgana stretching from west to south. There was a perfectly clear double image in the sky at an elevation of from ten to twenty degrees. The lower image of the shipping was upright and then close above it was the image reversed.

The rough sea and the utter incompetence of everybody concerned combined to keep up over four days hanging about off the islands. We got away on the twenty-seventh and made our way through a choppy sea, in horribly cold damp weather, to Hong Kong.

We were now in the midst of comfort and could lay our plans for the future. We decided the Rose should return to England by way of India, so as to pick up the baggage we had left at Calcutta; while I was to go via New York in the hope of interesting people there in the proposed expedition to Kangchenjunga. I accordingly left for Shanghai by my old friend the *Nippon Maru* on April 3rd. The further interest of my journey is concerned principally with my Magical career which is described in another chapter. There are, however, one or two tales to be told.

Our most distinguished passenger was a venerable missionary returning to America after many years labouring in the Lord's vineyard. He had just become celebrated, a riot having taken place in which his mission was destroyed. His wife and children, his native teachers and his converts were mostly murdered. He himself had, however, been preserved for the Lord's service by the direct interposition of the Almighty, who had warned him at the first rumour of trouble to leave his family and block to their fate and flee to a convenient cavern where he could hide with only his head above water — he could duck it when strangers looked in — till order was restored. He

was absolutely cock-a-whoop over this. It never occurred to him for a moment that his conduct was open to criticism, though for my part I could hardly believe my ears; that any man should tell such a story of himself and boast of it was beyond my experience.

In Shanghai I brought off a very remarkable test of the value of the Tarot in divination. The German postmaster, calling on my hostess, was very much upset by the loss of a packet containing eighty thousand roubles in notes sent by a bank in Peking to its head office in Shanghai. I offered to investigate the matter by the Tarot. I described accurately the two principal clerks who alone had access to the safe in which the postmaster had himself put the parcel immediately on its arrival and whence it had disappeared less than an hour later. That Tarot told me that the senior clerk was a steady-going conscientious man, saving a fixed sum out of his salary, devoted to his work, free from vices and in no financial embarrassment. His junior was a careless youth, mixed up with women and known to be gambling heavily on the races. The postmaster confirmed this estimate of their characters.

I inquired further and found that the junior clerk was responsible for the disappearance of the packet; which seemed reasonable enough. But then the cards apparently went crazy. They said that this clerk should not suffer for his act. The postmaster admitted that it might indeed be difficult to bring the theft home to him; but so much the worse, since he himself would be held responsible for the loss. I inquired further and was met with another facer which completed the circle of impossibilities. They said that the postmaster would not suffer in reputation. The situation became inexplicable. I was frankly annoyed that, after so accurate a beginning, the divination should have turned out so as to insult our reason. I could only apologize, shrug my shoulders and say, "Well, they insist that it is all right for you."

A few days later, the mystery was cleared up. The return mail left for Peking one half-hour after its arrival, and the junior clerk, in his haste, had accidentally slipped the parcel into the mail bag, so that it went safely to the bank in Peking. The Tarot had vindicated itself in the most striking way. The junior clerk was responsible for the disappearance, yet he did not suffer in consequence, nor did the postmaster.

I was in some doubt as the whether to go to America via Honolulu or by the northern Pacific route to Vancouver. I longed to see Oahu again, and yet I felt it a sort of duty to cover fresh ground. While I hesitated, fate decided. The last berth for San Francisco via the Sandwich Islands was sold over my head. Alas! — had I only known! A quarter of an hour's delay caused me to miss what might have been the most dramatic moment of my life. The ship I

should have sailed by left Honolulu in due course and fetched up four days later outside the golden Gate — to find San Francisco a raging flower of flame.

I sailed on April 21st by *The Empress of India*, took a flying glance at Japan and put out into the Pacific.

> A savage sea without a sail,
> Grey *gulphs* and green aglittering.

We never sighted the slightest suggestion of life all the way to Vancouver, twelve days of chilly boredom, though there was a certain impressiveness in the very dreariness and desolation. There was a hint of the curious horror that emptiness always evokes, whether it is a space of starless night or a bleak and barren waste of land. The one exception is the Sahara Desert where, for some reason that I cannot name, the suggestion is not in the least of vacancy and barrenness, but rather of some subtle and secret spring of life.

Vancouver presents no interest to the casual visitor. It is severely Scotch. Its beauties lie in its surroundings.

I was very disappointed with the Rockies, of which I had heard such eloquent encomiums. They are singularly shapeless; and their proportions are unpleasing. There is too much colourless and brutal base; too little snowy shapely summit. As for the ghastly monotony of the wilderness beyond them, through Calgary and Winnipeg right on to Toronto — words fortunately fail. The manners of the people are crude and offensive. They seem to resent the existence of civilized men; and show it by gratuitous insolence, which they mistake for a mark of manly independence. The whole country and its people are somehow cold and ill-favoured. The character of the mountains struck me as significant. Contrast them with the Alps where every peak is ringed by smug hamlets, hearty and hospitable, and every available approach is either a flowery meadow, a pasture pregnant with peaceful flocks and herds, or a centre of cultivation. In the Rockies, barren and treeless plains are suddenly blocked by ugly walls of rock. Nothing less inviting can be imagined. Contrast them again with the Himalayas. There we find no green Alps, no clustering cottages; but their stupendous sublimity takes the mind away from any expectation or desire of thoughts connected with humanity. The Rockies have no majesty; they do not elevate the mind to contemplation of Almighty God any more than they warm the heart by seeming sentinels to watch over the habitations of one's fellow men.

Toronto as a city carries out the idea of Canada as a country. It is a calculated crime both against the aspirations o the soul and the affections of the heart. I had been fed vilely on the train. I thought I would treat myself to a really first-class dinner. But all I could get was high-tea — they had never heard the name of wine! Of all the loveless, lifeless lands that writhe beneath the wrath of God, commend me to Canada! (I understand that the eastern cities, having known French culture, are comparatively habitable. Not having been there I cannot say.)

I hustled on to Buffalo to see Niagara. Here I first struck the American newspaper reporter in full bloom, in his native haunts. Before I had been half an hour in my hotel I was tackled by a half a dozen enthusiastic scribes. I naturally supposed that they had somehow heard of my Himalayan or Chinese adventures, and talked accordingly. It gradually dawned on me that somehow I was failing to fill the bill; and I presently discovered that they had mistaken me for some English lieutenant who was supposed to have crossed form Canada and from whom they wanted information about some local foolishness.

I took a pretty good look at Niagara. It is absurd to shriek at the desecration cause by building a few houses in the vicinity. It seemed to me that they helped rather than hindered one's appreciation. They supplied a standard of comparison. All that has been said of the falls is, as the sayers admit, ridiculously below the reality. In their way they challenge comparison with the mountains of Asia themselves. They have the same air of being out of all proportion with the observer. They belong to a different scale; and they impress one with the same idea of utter indifference by nature. They fascinate, as all things vast beyond computation invariably do. I felt that if I lived with them for even a short time they would completely obsess me and possibly lure me to end my life with their eternity. I felt the same about the mountains of India, the expanse of China, the solitude of the Sahara. I feel as if the better part of me belonged to them, as if my dearest destiny would be to live and die with them.

I went on to New York on May 15th and spent a rather hectic ten days sampling the restaurants and theatres. But as for interesting people in the Himalayas, I might as well have joined the china Inland Mission. Nobody in New York had even heard of them, unless as meaningless items in his hated geography lessons. No one could see any sport in mountaineering at all, or any scientific object to be obtained by reaching great heights. After the first days I could not even find a listener. The town had gone completely mad; first over Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* which had made canned food a drug on

the market, though there was practically nothing else to eat; and secondly by the shooting of Stanford White, which let loose all the suppressed sexual hysteria of the whole population.

They would talk of nothing else. Everyone screamed in public and in private about satyrs and angel children, and vampires, and the unwritten law, and men higher up, and stamping out impurity. For the first time in my life I came into contact with mob madness. Modern morality and manners suppress all natural instincts, keep people ignorant of the facts of nature and make them fighting drunk on bogey tales. They consequently seize upon every incident of this kind to let off steam. Knowing nothing and fearing everything, they rant and rave and riot like so many maniacs. The subject does not matter. Any idea which gives them an excuse of getting excited will serve. They look for a victim to chivy, and howl him down, and finally lynch him in a sheer storm of sexual frenzy which they honestly imagine to be moral indignation, patriotic passion or some equally avowable emotion. It may be an innocent Negro, a Jew like Leo Frank, a harmless half-witted German; a Christ-like idealist of the type of Debs, an enthusiastic reformer like Emma Goldman or even a doctor whose views displease the Medial Trust.

I sailed for England in the *Campania* on May 26th, arriving in Liverpool on June 2nd after a pleasant voyage, during the latter part of which I wrote most of *Rosa Coeli*, to find letters awaiting me to tell me of the tragedy of which I have given an account elsewhere.

From the moment of landing I struck a sequence of physical shocks. As I struggled to my feet after the blasting bolt of my bereavement, I found myself with an infected gland in the groin which required excision. The first day I left the nursing home I got a chill in the right eye which obstructed a nasal duct and required a whole series of extremely painful operations which proved unsuccessful. In the course of these, I got neuralgia; this continued day and night for months, so violently that I felt myself going mad. After a bare month's comparative health I acquired an ulcerated throat which knocked me out completely until the end of the year.

On the top of all this came the discovery that my wife was an hereditary dipsomaniac. When our baby was born it lay almost lifeless for more than three days and tat three weeks old nearly died of bronchitis. I had the sense to send for oxygen before the doctor arrived and this precaution probably saved the child's life. I fought like a fiend against death. The doctor gave the strictest orders that not more than one person should be in the sick room at one time. My mother-in-law refused to obey. I thought I had suffered enough. It was her hypocrisy that had sought to justify her tippling by giving

her children a share of the champagne and thus implanted in Rose the infernal impulse which had wrecked her life and love, and mine. I made no bones about it; I took the hag by the shoulders and ran her out of the flat, assisting her down the stairs with my boot lest she should misinterpret my meaning.

So Lola Zaza lives today. May her life prove worth the pains I took to preserve it.

During my illness at Bournemouth, I wrote down from memory the bulk of *Liber 777*, the table of correspondences showing equivalents of the religious ideas and symbols of various peoples. Of course this rough draft needed considerable revision and additions. It was in fact two years in the press. But it stands today as the standard book of reference on the subject. I must admit to be thoroughly dissatisfied with it. It is my eager wish to issue a revised edition with an adequate comment and a key to its practical use. I refuse to feel any satisfaction at knowing that, published at ten shillings, it is now quoted at three pounds fifteen shillings as a minimum. (Then why mention it! Oh, shut up.)

In October of this year I began *Clouds without Water*, fully described elsewhere. But apart from these two books and a very few old lyrics, the year was barren in respect of literature. I was too intensely concentrated on the performance of the Operation of the Sacred Magick of Abra-Melin the Mage; perhaps too deeply shaken by my experience of the Abyss; and certainly too much occupied with the actualities of life to have the leisure or even to feel the impulse to distil from life that quintessence, limpid truth, opalescent with lyrical light, which constitutes poetry. Not until sickness and sorrow had sobered my spirit did I once again find myself free to extract the elixir of ecstasy from experience and fulfil my faculties by expressing myself in rhythm.

I close this chapter with a sigh. For ten years my life had been a delirious dance to a maddening music with incarnate passion for my partner, and the boundless plain of the possible vibrating with the fervour of my feet. I had come through a thousand crises to the climax of my career. I had attained all my ambitions, proved myself at every point, dared every danger, enjoyed every ecstasy that earth has to offer; the rest of my life recedes from romance in that boyish idea of what romance should be. From this time, though much lay in store for me to accomplish, summit soaring beyond summit of spiritual success, giant ranged behind giant for me to challenge, I now learnt to look upon life with enlightened eyes. I had sought and I had found. I must now seek them who seek that they might also find. I must aspire, act and achieve, not only for myself to perfect my personality, but for my fellow men in whom alone I could possibly fulfil myself since I knew myself at last, not to be

Aleister Crowley, an individual independent of the communion of cosmic consciousness, but merely one manifestation of the Universal Mind whose thought must be sterile unless sown broadcast to blossom and bear fruit in every acre of God's vineyard.

1. Aleister Crowley:
"Equinox, volume I, number I"

2. Aleister Crowley:
"The Holy Books of Thelema"

3. Aleister Crowley:
"The Confessions"

4. Dušan Trajković:
"Anatomy of the Abyss – The Probationer's Compendium"

5. Dušan Trajković:
"Anatomy of the Abyss – The Neophyte's Compendium"

6. Dušan Trajković:
"Sleeping Self - a lucid dreaming, astral projection, and scrying manual"