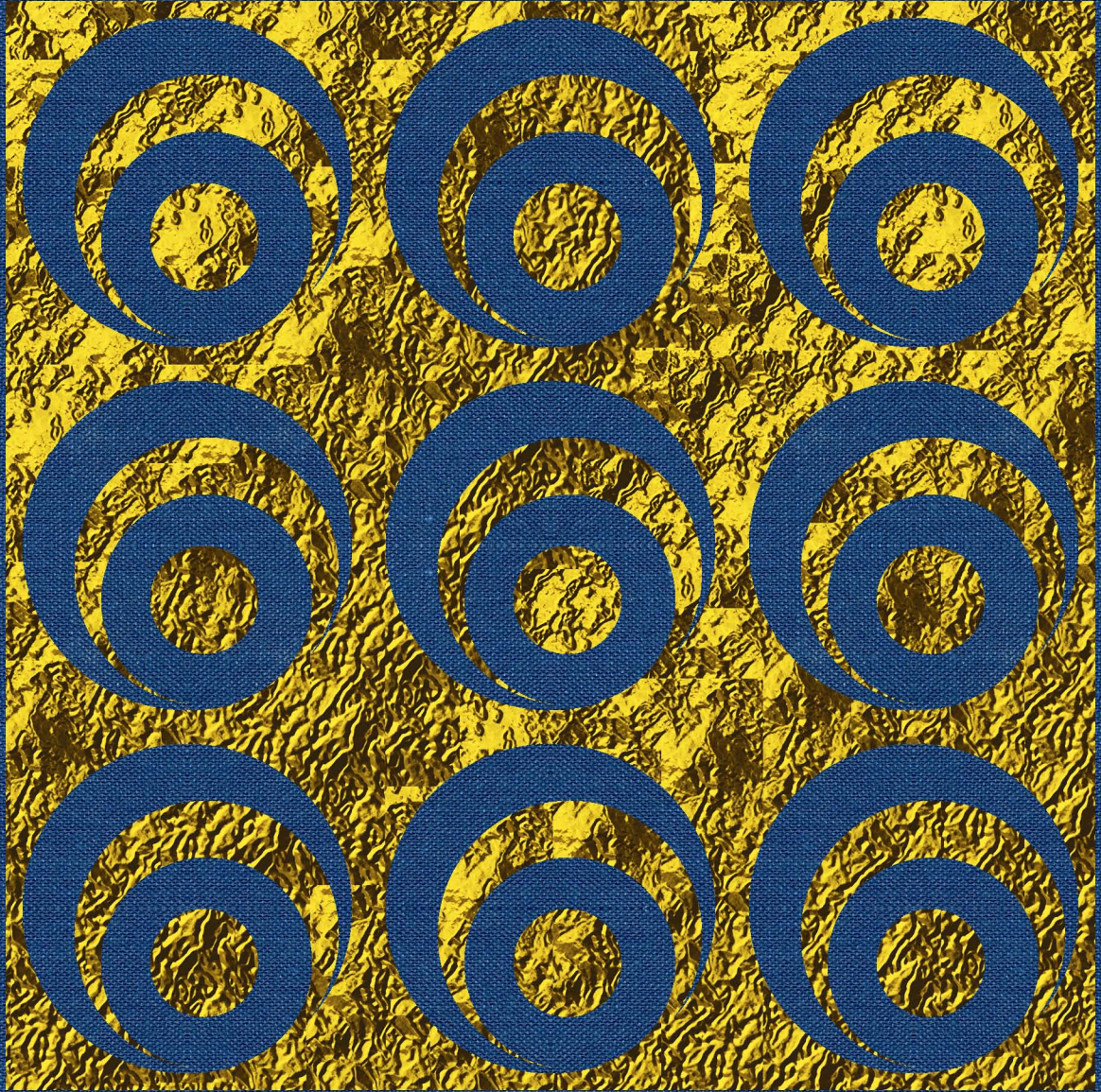


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# THE SWORD OF SONG

“YOU are sad!” the Knight said, in an anxious tone: “let me sing you a song to comfort you.”\*

“Is it very long?” Alice asked.

“It’s long,” said the Knight, but it’s *very very* beautiful. The name of the song is called ‘The Book of the Beast.’ ”

“Oh! how ugly” cried Alice.

“Never mind,” said the mild creature. “*Some* people call it ‘Reason in Rhyme.’ ”

“But which *is* the name of the song?” Alice said, trying not to seem too interested.

“Ah, you don’t understand,” the Knight said, looking a little vexed. “That’s what the name is *called*. The name really *is* ‘Ascension Day and Pentecost; with some Prose Essays and an Epilogue,’ just as the title is ‘The Sword of Song’ you know, just in the same way, just in the same way, just in the same way . . .”

Alice put her fingers in her ears and gave a little scream. “Oh, dear me! That’s harder than ever!” she said to herself, and then, looking determinedly intelligent: “So *that’s* what the song is called. I see. But what *is* the song?”

“You must be a perfect fool,” said the Knight, irritably. “The song is called ‘Stout Doubt; or the Agnostic Anthology,’ by the author of ‘Gas Manipulation,’ ‘Solutions,’ ‘The Management of Retorts,’ and other physical works of the first order—but that’s only what it’s *called*, you know.”

“Well, what *is* the song then?” said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.

“If I wished to be obscure, child,” said the Knight, rather contemptuously, “I should tell you that the Name of the Title was ‘What a man of 95 ought to know,’ as endorsed by eminent divines, and that . . .” Seeing that she only begin to cry, he broke off and continued in a gentler tone: “it *means*, my dear . . .” He stopped short, for she was taking no notice; but as her figure was bent by sobs into something very like a note of interrogation: “You want to know what it *is*, I suppose!” continued the Knight, in a superior, but rather offended voice.

“If you would, please, sir!”

“Well, *that*,” pronounced the Knight, with the air of having thoroughly studied the question and reached a conclusion absolutely final and irreversible, “*that*, Goodness only knows. But I will sing it to you.”

\* This passage is a parody on one in *Alice through the Looking-Glass*.

THE SWORD OF SONG

CALLED BY CHRISTIANS

THE BOOK OF THE BEAST

ALEISTER CROWLEY

Leeds

CELEPHAÏS PRESS

2019

TO MY OLD FRIEND AND COMRADE IN THE ART  
**BHIKKU ANANDA METTEYA**  
AND TO THOSE  
**FOOLS**  
WHO BY THEIR SHORT-SIGHTED STUPIDITY IN  
ATTEMPTING TO BOYCOTT THIS BOOK  
HAVE WITLESSLY AIDED THE  
CAUSE OF TRUTH  
I DEDICATE THESE MY BEST WORDS

[This book is so full of recondite knowledge of various kinds that it seems quite ineffective to annotate every obscure passage. Where references and explanations can be concisely given this has been done.]

PRELIMINARY INVOCATION  
NOTHUNG.\*

THE crowns of Gods and mortals wither;  
    Moons fade where constellations shone;  
Numberless aeons brought us hither;  
    Numberless aeons beckon us on.  
The world is old, and I am strong—  
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Here, in the Dusk of Gods, I linger;  
    The world awaits a Word of Truth.  
Kindle, O lyre, beneath my finger!  
    Evoke the age's awful youth!  
To arms against the inveterate wrong!  
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Sand-founded reels the House of Faith;  
    Up screams the howl of ruining sect;  
Out from the shrine flits the lost Wraith;  
    “God hath forsaken His elect!”  
Confusion sweeps upon the throng—  
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

\* The name of Siegfried's sword.

Awake to wound, awake to heal  
By wounding, thou resistless sword!  
Raise the prone priestcrafts that appeal  
In agony to their prostrate Lord!  
Raise the duped herd—they have suffered long  
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

My strength this agony of the age  
Win through; my music charm the old  
Sorrow of years: my warfare wage  
By iron to an age of gold:—  
The world is old, and I am strong—  
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

ASCENSION DAY  
AND PENTECOST



## INTRODUCTION TO “ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST”

NOT a word to introduce my introduction! Let me instantly launch the Boat of Discourse on the Sea of Religious Speculation, in danger of the Rocks of Authority and the Quicksands of Private Interpretation, Scylla and Charybdis. Here is the strait; what God shall save us from shipwreck? If we choose to understand the Christian (or any other) religion literally, we are at once overwhelmed by its inherent impossibility. Our credulity is outraged, our moral sense shocked, the holiest foundations of our inmost selves assailed by no ardent warrior in triple steel, but by a loathy and disgusting worm. That this is so, the apologists for the religion in question, whichever it may be, sufficiently indicate (as a rule) by the very method of their apology. The alternative is to take the religion symbolically, esoterically; but to move one step in this direction is to start on a journey whose end cannot be determined. The religion, ceasing to be a tangible thing, an object uniform for all sane eyes, becomes rather that mist whereon the sun of the soul casts up, like Brocken spectres, certain vast and vague images of the beholder himself, with or without a glory en-compassing them. The function of the facts is then quite passive: it matters little or nothing whether the cloud be the red mist of Christianity, or the glimmering silver-white of Celtic Paganism; the hard grey dim-gilded of Buddhism, the fleecy opacity of Islam, or the mysterious medium of those ancient faiths which come up in as many colours as their investigator has moods.\*

\* “In order to get over the ethical difficulties presented by the naïve naturalism of many parts of those Scriptures, in the divine authority of which he firmly believed, Philo borrowed from the Stoics (who had been in like straits in respect of Greek mythology) that great Excalibur which they had forged with infinite pains and skill—the method of allegorical interpretation. This mighty ‘two handed engine at the door’ of the theologian is warranted to make a speedy end of any and every moral or intellectual difficulty, by showing that, taken allegorically, or, as it is otherwise said ‘poetically’ or ‘in a spiritual sense,’ the plainest words

If the student has advanced spiritually so that he can internally, infallibly perceive what is Truth, he will find it equally well symbolised in most external faiths.

It is curious that Browning never turns his wonderful faculty of analysis upon the fundamental problems of religion, as it were an axe laid to the root of the Tree of Life. It seems quite clear that he knew what would result if he did so. We cannot help fancying that he was unwilling to do this. The proof of his knowledge I find in the following lines:—

“I have read much, thought much, experienced much,  
Yet would rather die than avow my fear  
The Naples’ liquefaction may be false . . .  
I hear you recommend, I might at least  
Eliminate, degrassify my faith  
Since I adopt it: keeping what I must  
And leaving what I can; such points as this . . .  
Still, when you bid me purify the same,  
To such a process I discern no end . . .  
First cut the liquefaction, what comes last  
But Fichte’s clever cut at God himself? . . .  
I trust nor hand, nor eye, nor heart, nor brain  
To stop betimes: they all get drunk alike.  
The first step, I am master not to take.”

This is surely the apotheosis of wilful ignorance! We may think, perhaps, that Browning is “hedging” when, in the last paragraph, he says: “For Blougram, he believed, say, half he spoke,”\* and hints at some deeper ground. It is useless to say, “This is Blougram and not Browning.” Browning could hardly have described the dilemma without seeing it. What he really believes is, perhaps, a mystery.

That Browning, however, believes in universal salvation, though he nowhere (so far as I know) gives his reasons, save as they are summarised in

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mean whatever a pious interpreter desires they should mean.” (Huxley, “Evolution of Theology”). — A.C.

\* Probably a record for a bishop.—A.C.

the last lines of the below-quoted passage, is evident from the last stanza of “Apparent Failure,” and from his final pronouncement of the Pope on Guido, represented in Browning’s master-piece as a Judas without the decency to hang himself.

“ So (*i.e.*, by suddenness of fate) may the truth be flashed out by one blow,  
 And Guido see one instant and be saved.  
 Else I avert my face nor follow him  
 Into that sad obscure sequestered state  
 Where God unmakes but to remake the soul  
 He else made first in vain: which must not be.”

This may be purgatory, but it sounds not unlike reincarnation.

It is at least a denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment.

As for myself, I took the first step years ago, quite in ignorance of what the last would lead to. God is indeed cut away—a cancer from the breast of truth.

Of those philosophers, who from unassailable premisses draw by righteous deduction a conclusion against God, and then for His sake overturn their whole structure by an act of will, like a child breaking an ingenious toy, I take Mansel as my type.\*

Now, however, let us consider the esoteric idea-mongers of Christianity, Swedenborg, Anna Kingsford, Deussen and the like, of whom I have taken Caird as my example. I wish to unmask these people: I perfectly agree with nearly everything they say, but their claim to be Christians is utterly confusing, and lends a lustre to Christianity which is quite foreign. Deussen, for example, coolly discards nearly all the Old Testament, and, picking a few New Testament passages, often out of their context, claims his system as Christianity. Luther discards James. Kingsford calls Paul the Arch Heretic. My friend the “Christian Clergyman” accepted Mark and Acts—until pushed. Yet Deussen is honest enough to admit that Vedanta teaching is identical, but clearer! and he quite clearly and sensibly defines Faith—surely the most essential quality for the adherent to Christian dogma—as “being convinced on insufficient evidence.” Similarly the dying-to-live idea of Hegel (and

\* As represented by his *Encyclopædia* article; not in such works as “Limits of Religious Thought.”—A.C.

Schopenhauer) claimed by Caird as the central spirit of Christianity is far older, in the Osiris Myth of the Egyptians. These ideas are all right, but they have no more to do with Christianity than the Metric System with the Great Pyramid. But see Piazzzi Smyth!\* Henry Morley has even the audacity to claim Shelley—Shelley!—as a Christian “in spirit.”

Talking of Shelley:—With regard to my open denial of the personal Christian God, may it not be laid to my charge that I have dared to voice in bald language what Shelley sang in words of surpassing beauty: for of course the thought in one or two passages of this poem is practically identical with that in certain parts of “Queen Mab” and “Prometheus unbound.” But the very beauty of these poems (especially the latter) is its weakness: it is possible that the mind of the reader, lost in the sensuous, nay! even in the moral beauty of the words, may fail to be impressed by their most important meaning. Shelley himself recognised this later: hence the direct and simple vigour of the “Masque of Anarchy.”

It has often puzzled atheists that a man of Milton’s genius could have written as he did of Christianity. But we must not forget that Milton lived immediately after the most important Revolution in Religion and Politics of modern times: Shelley on the brink of such another Political upheaval. Shakespeare alone sat enthroned above it all like a god, and is not lost in the mire of controversy.† This, also, though “I’m no Shakespeare, as too probable,” I have endeavored to avoid: yet I cannot but express the hope that my own enquiries into religion may be the reflection of the spirit of the age; and that plunged as we are in the midst of jingoism and religious revival, we may be standing on the edge of some gigantic precipice, over which we may cast all our impedimenta of lies and trickeries, political, social, moral and religious, and (ourselves) take wings and fly. The comparison between myself and the masters of English thought I have named is unintentional though

\* An astronomer whose brain gave way. He prophesied the end of the world in 1881, from measurements made in the Great Pyramid.

† So it is usually supposed. Maybe I shall one day find words to combat, perhaps to overthrow, this position. P.S. As, for example, the Note to this Introduction. As a promise-keeper I am the original eleven stone three Peacherine.—A.C.

perhaps unavoidable; and though the presumption is, of course, absurd, yet a straw will show which way the wind blows as well as the most beautiful and elaborate vane: and in this sense it is my most eager hope that I may not unjustly draw a comparison between myself and the great reformers of eighty years ago.

I must apologise (perhaps) for the new note of frivolity in my work: due doubtless to the frivolity of my subject: these poems being written when I was an Advaitist and could not see why—everything being an illusion—there should be any particular object in doing or thinking anything. How I have found the answer will be evident from my essay on the subject.\* I must indeed apologise to the illustrious Shade of Robert Browning for my audacious parody in title, style, and matter of his “Christmas Eve and Easter Day.” The more I read it the eventual anticlimax of that wonderful poem irritated me only the more. But there is hardly any poet living or dead who so commands alike my personal affection and moral admiration. My desire to find the Truth will be my pardon with him, whose sole life was spent in admiration of the Truth, though he never turned its formidable engines against the Citadel of the Almighty.

If I be appealed of blasphemy or irreverence in my treatment of these subjects, I will take refuge in Browning’s own apology, from the very poem I am attacking:

“ I have done: and if any blames me,  
Thinking that merely to touch in brevity  
The topics I dwell on were unlawful—  
Or worse, that I trench with undue levity  
On the bounds of the holy and the awful—  
I praise the heart and pity the head of him,  
And refer myself to Thee, instead of him,  
Who head and heart alike discernest,  
Looking below light speech we utter  
Where frothy spume and frequent splutter  
Prove that the soul’s depths boil in earnest!”

\* *Vide infra*, “Berashith.”

But I have after all little fear that I am seriously wrong. That I show to my critics the open door to the above city of refuge may be taken as merely another gesture of contemptuous pity, the last insult which may lead my antagonists to that surrender which is the truest victory.

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS

ASCENSION DAY

Curious position of poet.

I FLUNG out of chapel<sup>1\*</sup> and church,  
Temple and hall and meeting-room,  
Venus' Bower and Osiris' Tomb,<sup>2</sup>  
And left the devil in the lurch,  
While God<sup>3</sup> got lost in the crowd of gods,<sup>4</sup>  
And soul went down<sup>5</sup> in the turbid tide  
Of the metaphysical lotus-eyed,<sup>6</sup>  
And I was—anyhow, what's the odds?

5

What is Truth?  
said jesting  
Pilate: but  
Crowley waits  
for an answer.†

The life to live? The thought to think? Shall I take refuge  
In a tower like once Childe Roland‡ found, blind, deaf, huge,  
Or in that forest of two hundred thousand  
Trees,<sup>8</sup> fit alike to shelter man and mouse, and—  
Shall I say God? Be patient, your Reverence,<sup>9</sup>  
I warrant you'll journey a wiser man ever hence!  
Let's tap (like the negro who gets a good juice of it,  
Cares nought if that be, or be not, God's right use of it),<sup>10</sup>  
In all that forest of verses one tree<sup>11</sup>  
Yclept "Red Cotton Nightcap Country":  
How a goldsmith, between the Ravishing Virgin  
And a leman too rotten to put a purge in,  
Day by day and hour by hour,  
In a Browningsque forest of thoughts having lost himself,  
Expecting a miracle, solemnly tossed himself  
Off from the top of tower.

10

15

20

25

\* The numbered notes are given at p. 65.

† Bacon, "Essay on Truth," line 1.

‡ "Childe Roland to the dark Tower came."—BROWNING.

- 25 Moral: don't spoil such an excellent sport as an  
Ample estate with a church and a courtesan!
- “Truth, that's the gold”<sup>12</sup> But don't worry about it!  
I, you, or Simpkin<sup>13</sup> can get on without it!  
If life's task be work and love's (the soft-lippèd) ease,  
30 Death be God's glory? discuss with Euripides!  
Or, cradle be hardship, and finally coffin, ease,  
Love being filth? let us ask Aristophanes!  
Or, heaven's sun bake us, while Earth's bugs and fleas kill us  
Love the God's scourge? I refer you to Aeschylus!  
35 (Nay! that's a slip! Say we “Earth's grim device, cool  
loss!—”  
Better the old Greek orthography!—Aischulos!<sup>14</sup>  
Or, love be God's champagne's foam; death in man's  
trough, hock lees,  
Pathos our port's beeswing? what answers Sophocles?  
Brief, with love's medicine let's draught, bolus, globule us!  
40 Wise and succinct bids, I think, Aristobulus.<sup>15</sup>  
Whether my Muse be Euterpe or Clio,  
Life, Death, and Love are all Batrachomyo<sup>16</sup>—  
Machia, what? ho! old extinct Alcibiades?  
For me, do ut—God true, be mannikin liar!—des!
- 45 It's rather hard, isn't it, sir, to make sense of it?  
Mine of so many pounds—pouch even pence of it?<sup>17</sup>  
Try something easier,<sup>18</sup> where the bard seems to me  
Seeking that light, which I find comes in dreams to me.  
Even as he takes to feasts to enlarge upon,  
50 So will I do too to launch my old barge upon  
Analyse, get hints from Newton<sup>19</sup> or Faraday,<sup>20</sup>  
Use every weapon—love, scorn, reason, parody!

Alternative  
theories of  
Greek authors.  
Browning's  
summary.

Apology of  
poet.  
Skeleton of  
poem. Valu-  
able fact for  
use of lovers.  
Invocation.

Just where he worships? Ah me! shall his soul,  
 Far in some glory, take hurt from a mole  
 Grubbing i' th' ground? Shall his spirit not see, 55  
 Lightning to lightning, the spirit in me?  
 Parody? Shall not his spirit forgive  
 Me, who shall love him as long as I live?  
 Love's at its height in pure love? Nay, but after  
 When the song's light dissolves gently in laughter! 60  
 Then and then only the lovers may know  
 Nothing can part them for ever. And so,  
 Muse, hover o'er me! Apollo, above her!

Imperfect  
 scholastic at-  
 tainments of  
 author reme-  
 died by his  
 great spiritual  
 insight. His  
 intention.  
 His achieve-  
 ment.  
 Plan of poem  
 "Conspuez  
 Dieu!"

I, of the Moderns, have let alone Greek.<sup>21</sup>  
 Out of the way Intuition shall shove her. 65  
 Spirit and Truth in my darkness I seek.  
 Little by little they bubble and leak;  
 Such as I have to the world I discover.  
 Words—are they weak ones at best? They shall speak!  
 Shields? Be they paper, paint, lath? They shall cover 70  
 Well as they may, the big heart of a lover!  
 Swords? Let the lightning of Truth strike the fortress  
 Frowning of God! I will sever one more tress  
 Off the White Beard<sup>22</sup> with his son's blood besprinkled,  
 Carve one more gash in the forehead<sup>23</sup> hate-wrinkled:— 75  
 So, using little arms, earn one day better ones;  
 Cutting the small chains,<sup>24</sup> learn soon to unfetter one's  
 Limbs from the large ones, walk forth and be free!—  
 So much for Browning! and so much for me!

Apology for  
 manner of  
 poem.  
 A chance for  
 Tibet.

Pray do not ask me where I stand! 80  
 "Who asks, doth err."<sup>25</sup> At least demand  
 No folly such as answer means!  
 "But if" (you<sup>26</sup> say) "your spirit weans

85      Itself of milk-and-water pap,  
 And one religion as another  
 O'erleaps itself and falls on the other;<sup>27</sup>  
 You'll tell me why at least, mayhap,  
 Our Christianity excites  
 Especially such petty spites  
 90      As these you strew throughout your verse."  
 The chance of birth! I choose to curse  
 (Writing in English<sup>28</sup>) just the yoke  
 Of faith that tortures English folk.  
 I cannot write<sup>29</sup> a poem yet  
 95      To please the people in Tibet;  
 But when I can, Christ shall not lack  
 Peace, while their Buddha I attack.<sup>30</sup>

Yet by-and-by I hope to weave  
 A song of Anti-Christmas Eve  
 100     And First- and Second- Beast-er Day.  
 There's one<sup>\*31</sup> who loves me dearly (vrai!)  
 Who yet believes me sprung from Tophet,  
 Either the Beast or the False Prophet;  
 And by all sorts of monkey tricks  
 105     Adds up my name to Six Six Six.  
 Retire, good Gallup!<sup>32</sup> In such strife her  
 Superior skill makes *you* a cipher!  
 Ho! I adopt the number. Look  
 At the quaint wrapper of this book!†  
 110     I will deserve it if I can:  
 It is the number of a Man.<sup>33</sup>

Hopes. Identity of poet.  
 Attention drawn to my highly decorative cover.

\* Crowley's mother.

† It had a design of 666 and Crowley's name in Hebrew (which, like most names, adds up to that figure) on the reverse.

Necessity of  
poem.

So since in England Christ still stands  
With iron nails in bloody hands  
Not pierced, but grasping! to hoist high  
Children on cross of agony,  
I find him real for English lives.  
Up with my pretty pair of fives!<sup>34</sup>  
I fight no ghosts.

115

Mysticism *v.*  
literal interpret-  
ation. Former  
excused..

“But why revile”  
(You urge me) “in that vicious style  
The very faith whose truths you seem  
(Elsewhere)<sup>35</sup> to hold, to hymn supreme  
In your own soul?” Perhaps you know  
How mystic doctrines melt the snow  
Of any faith: redeem it to  
A fountain of reviving dew.  
So I with Christ: but few receive  
The Qabalistic Balm,<sup>36</sup> believe  
Nothing—and choose to know instead.  
But, to that terror vague and dread,  
External worship; all my life—  
War to the knife! War to the knife!

120

125

130

Buddha rebukes  
poet. Detailed  
scheme of  
modified poem.

No! on the other hand the Buddha  
Says: “I’m surprised at you! How could a  
Person accept my law and still  
Use hatred, the sole means of ill,  
In Truth’s defence? In praise of light?”  
Well! Well! I guess Brer Buddha’s right!  
I am no brutal Cain<sup>37</sup> to smash an Abel:  
I hear that blasphemy’s unfashionable:  
So in the quietest way we’ll chat about it;

135

140

No need to show teeth, claws of cat about it!  
 With gentle words—fiat exordium;  
 Exeat dolor, intret gaudium!

145 We'll have the ham to logic's sandwich  
 Of indignation: last bread bland, which  
 After our scorn of God's lust, terror, hate,  
 Prometheus-fired, we'll butter, perorate  
 With oiled indifference, laughter's silver:  
 150 "Omne hoc verbum valet nil, vir"!

Let me help Babu Chander Grish up!  
 As by a posset of Hunyadi<sup>38</sup>  
 Clear mind! Was Soudan of the Mahdi  
 Not cleared by Kitchener? Ah, Tchhup!  
 155 Such nonsense for sound truth you dish up,  
 Were I magician, no mere cadì,  
 Not Samuel's ghost you'd make me wish up,  
 Nor Saul's (the mighty son of Kish) up,  
 But Ingersoll's or Bradlaugh's, pardie!  
 160 By spells and caldron stews that squish up,  
 Or purifying of the Nadi<sup>39</sup>  
 Till Stradivarius or Amati  
 Shriek in my stomach! Sarasate,  
 Such strains! Such music as once Sadi  
 165 Made Persia ring with! I who fish up  
 No such from soul may yet cry: Vade  
 Retro, Satanas! Tom Bond Bishop!<sup>40</sup>

You old screw, Pegasus! Gee (Swish!) up!  
 (To any who correctly rhymes<sup>41</sup>  
 170 With Bishop more than seven times  
 I hereby offer as emolum-  
 Ent, a bound copy of this volume.)

Aim of poet.  
 Indignation of  
 poet. Poet  
 defies his uncle.

Whip and spur.  
 Sporting offer.  
 The Times  
 Competition  
 outdone.

Sub-species of  
genus Christian  
included in  
poet's strictures.

These strictures must include the liar  
Copleston,<sup>42</sup> Reverend F. B. Meyer,  
(The cock of the Dissenter's midden, he!) 175

And others of the self-same kidney:—  
How different from Sir Philip Sidney!  
But "cave os, et claude id, ne  
Vituperasse inventus sim."  
In English let me render him! 180

'Ware mug, and snap potato-trap!  
Or elsely it may haply hap  
Panel\* in libel I bewail me!  
(Funny how English seems to fail me!)  
So, as a surgeon to a man, sir, 185  
Let me excise your Christian cancer  
Impersonally, without vanity,  
Just in pure love of poor humanity!

Ascension Day.  
Moral aspect  
of Christianity  
to be discussed  
to prejudice of  
the metaphysic-  
cal.

Here's just the chance you'd have! Behold  
The warm sun tint with early gold 190  
Yon spire: to-day's event provide  
My text of wrath—Ascension-tide!  
Oh! 'tis a worthy day to wrest  
Hate's diadem from Jesus' Crest!

Ascends he? 'Tis the very test 195  
By which we men may fairly judge,  
From the rough roads we mortals trudge  
Or God's paths paved with heliotrope,  
The morals of the crucified.

(Both standpoints joined in one, I hope, 200  
In metaphysic's stereoscope!)  
But for the moment be denied

\* Scots legal term for defendant.

A metaphysical inspection—  
 Bring out the antiseptic soap!—  
 205 We'll judge the Christ by simple section,  
 And strictly on the moral side.

But first; I must insist on taking  
 The ordinary substantial creed  
 Your clergy preach from desk and pulpit  
 210 Each Sunday; all the Bible, shaking  
 Its boards with laughter as you read  
 Each Sunday. Ibsen<sup>43</sup> to a full pit  
 May play in the moon. If (lunars they)  
 They thought themselves to be the play,  
 215 It's little the applause he'd get.

Orthodoxy to  
 be our doxy.\*

I met a Christian clergyman,†  
 The nicest man I ever met.  
 We argued of the Cosmic plan.  
 I was Lord Roberts, he De Wet.<sup>44</sup>  
 220ξ He tells me when I cite the "Fall"  
 "But those are legends after all."  
 He has a hundred hills<sup>45</sup> to lie in,  
 But finds no final ditch<sup>46</sup> to die in.  
 "Samuel was man; the Holy Spook  
 225 Did not dictate the Pentateuch."  
 With cunning feint he lures me on  
 To loose my pompoms on Saint John;  
 And, that hill being shelled, doth swear  
 His forces never had been there.

Parson and  
 poet. Fugitive  
 nature of  
 dogma in these  
 latter days.  
 The Higher  
 Criticism.

\* A Romany word for woman.

† The Rev. J. Bowley. The conversation described actually occurred in Mr. Gerald Kelly's studio in Paris.

I got disgusted, called a parley, 230  
 (Here comes a white-flag treachery!)  
 Asked: "Is there anything you value,  
 Will hold to?" He laughed, "Chase me, Charlie!"  
 But seeing in his mind that I  
 Would no be so converted, "Shall you," 235  
 He added, "grope in utter dark?  
 The Book of Acts and that of Mark  
 Are now considered genuine."  
 I snatch a Testament, begin  
 Reading at random the first page;— 240  
 He stops me with a gesture sage:  
 "You must not think, because I say  
 St. Mark is genuine, I would lay  
 Such stress unjust upon its text,  
 As base thereon opinion. Next?" 245  
 I gave it up. He escaped. Ah me!  
 But so did Christianity.

Lord George  
 Sanger\* on the  
 Unknowable.  
 How the crea-  
 tures talk.

As for a quiet talk on physics sane ac  
 Lente, I hear the British Don  
 Spout sentiments more bovine than a sane yak 250  
 Ever would ruminare upon,  
 Half Sabbatarian and half Khakimaniac,  
 Built up from Paul and John,  
 With not a little tincture of Leviticus  
 Gabbled pro formâ, jaldi, † à la Psittacus 255  
 To aid the appalling hotch-potch; lyre and lute  
 Replaced by liar and loot, the harp and flute  
 Are dumb, the drum doth come and make us mute:

\* Proprietor of a circus and menagerie.

† Hindustani: quickly.

The Englishman, half huckster and half brute,  
 260 Raves through his silk hat of the Absolute.  
 The British Don, half pedant and half hermit,  
 Begins: “The Ding an sich<sup>\*—</sup>as Germans term it—”  
 We stop him short; he readjusts his glasses,  
 Turns to his folio—’twill eclipse all precedent,  
 265 Reveal God’s nature, every dent a blessed dent!  
 The Donkey: written by an ass, for asses.

So, with permission, let us be  
 Orthodox to our finger-ends;  
 What the bulk hold, High Church or Friends,  
 270 Or Hard—shall Baptists—and we’ll see.

Basis of poem  
 to be that of  
 the Compro-  
 mise of 1870.

I will not now invite attack  
 By proving white a shade of black,  
 Or Christ (as some<sup>47</sup> have lately tried)  
 An epileptic mania,  
 275 Citing some case, “where a dose  
 Of Bromide duly given in time  
 Drags a distemper so morose  
 At last to visions less sublime;  
 Soft breezes stir the lyre Aeolian,  
 280 No more the equinoctial gales;  
 The patient reefs his mental sails;  
 His Panic din that shocked the Tmolian<sup>48</sup>  
 Admits a softer run of scales—  
 Seems no more God, but mere Napoleon  
 285 Or possibly the Prince of Wales”:—  
 Concluding such a half-cured case  
 With the remark “where Bromide fails!—

Non-medical  
 nature of poem.  
 Crowley J.

\* *Vide infra*, “Science and Buddhism”, and the writings of Immanuel Kant and his successors.

But Bromide people did not know  
 Those 1900 years ago.”  
 I think we may concede to Crowley an  
 Impartial attitude. 290

No mention  
 will be made  
 of the Figs and  
 the Figs.

And so  
 I scorn the thousand subtle points  
 Wherein a man might find a fulcrum  
 (Ex utero Matris ad sepulcrum,  
 Et præter—such as Huxley tells) 295  
 I'll pierce your rotten harness-joints,  
 Dissolve your diabolic spells,  
 With the quick truth and nothing else.

Christian pre-  
 misses ac-  
 cepted. Severe  
 mental strain  
 involved in  
 reading poem.

So not one word derogatory 300  
 To your own version of the story!  
 I take your Christ, your God's creation,  
 Just at their own sweet valuation,  
 For by this culminating scene,  
 Close of that wondrous life of woe 305  
 Before and after death, we know  
 How to esteme the Nazarene.  
 Where's the wet towel?

The Ascension  
 at last! This  
 is a common  
 feat. Prana-  
 yama.

Let us first  
 Destroy the argument of fools, 310  
 From Paul right downward to the Schools,  
 That the Ascension's self rehearsed  
 Christ's Godhead by its miracle.  
 Grand!—but the power is mine as well!  
 In India levitation counts 315  
 No tithe of the immense amounts

Of powers demanded by the wise  
 From Chela ere the Chela rise  
 To knowledge. Fairy-tales? Well, first,  
 320 Sit down a week and hold your breath  
 As masters teach<sup>49</sup>—until you burst,  
 Or nearly—in a week, one saith,  
 A month, perchance a year for you,  
 Hard practice, and yourself may fly—  
 325 Yes! I have done it! you may too!

Thus, in Ascension, you and I  
 Stand as Christ's peers and therefore fit  
 To judge him—"Stay, friend, wait a bit!"  
 (You cry) "Your Indian Yogis fall  
 330 Back to the planet after all,  
 Never attain to heaven and stand  
 (Stephen) or sit (Paul)<sup>50</sup> at the hand  
 Of the Most High!—And that alone  
 That question of the Great White Throne,  
 335 Is the sole point that we debate."  
 I answer, Here in India wait  
 Samadhi-Dak,<sup>51</sup> convenient  
 To travel to Maha Meru,<sup>52</sup>  
 Or Gaurisankar's<sup>53</sup> keen white wedge  
 340 Spearing the mighty dome of blue,  
 Or Chogo's<sup>54</sup> mighty flying edge  
 Shearing across the firmament,—  
 But, first, to that exact event  
 You Christians celebrate to-day.  
 345 We stand where the disciples stood  
 And see the Master float away  
 Into that cloudlet heavenly-hued

Difference between David Douglas Home, Sir Swami Sabapati Vamadeva Bhaskarananda Saraswait and the Christ.. Latter compared to Madame Humbert. Former compared to Kerubim; as it is written, Running and Returning.

Receiving him from mortal sight.  
 Which of his sayings prove the true,  
 Lightning-bescrawled athwart the blue? 350  
 I say not, Which in hearts aright  
 Are treasured? but, What after ages  
 Engrave on history's iron pages?  
 This is the one word of "Our Lord";  
 "I bring not peace; I bring a sword." 355  
 In this the history of the West<sup>55</sup>  
 Bears him out well. How stands the test?  
 One-third a century's life of pain—  
 He lives, he dies, he lives again,  
 And rises to eternal rest 360  
 Of bliss with Saints—an endless reign!  
 Leaving the world to centuries torn  
 By every agony and scorn,  
 And every wickedness and shame  
 Taking their refuge in his Name. 365  
*No Yogi shot his Chandra<sup>56</sup> so.*  
**Will Christ return? What ho? What ho!**  
 What? What? "He meditates above  
 Still with his Sire for mercy, love,—"  
 And other trifles! Far enough 370  
 That Father's purpose from such stuff!

John iii. 16.\*  
 Its importance.  
 Its implied  
 meaning.

You see, when I was young, they said:  
 "Whate'er you ponder in your head,  
 Or make the rest of Scripture mean,  
 You can't evade John iii. 16." 375

\* "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Exactly! Grown my mental stature,  
 I ponder much: but never yet  
 Can I get over or forget  
 That bitter text's accursed nature,  
 380 The subtle devilish omission,<sup>57</sup>  
 The cruel antithesis implied,  
 The irony, the curse-fruition,  
 The calm assumption of Hell's fevers  
 As fit, as just, for unbelievers—  
 385 These are the things that stick beside  
 And hamper my quite serious wish  
 To harbour kind thoughts of the "Fish."<sup>58</sup>

Here goes my arrow to the gold!  
 I'll make no magpies! Though I hold  
 390 Your Christianity a lie,  
 Abortion and iniquity,  
 The most immoral and absurd  
 —(A priest's invention, in a word)—  
 Of all religions, I have hope  
 395 In the good Dhamma's<sup>59</sup> wider scope,  
 Nay, certainty! that all at last,  
 However came they in the past,  
 Move, up or down—who knows, my friend?—  
 But yet with no uncertain trend  
 400 Unto Nibbana in the end.  
 I do not even dare despise  
 Your doctrines, prayers, and ceremonies!  
 Far from the word "you'll go to hell!"  
 I dare not say "you do not well!"  
 405 I must obey my mind's own laws  
 Accept its limits, seek its cause:

My own vague  
 optimism. Im-  
 possibility of  
 tracing cause  
 back or effect  
 forward to the  
 ultimate.  
 Ethics  
 individual.

My meat may be your poison! I  
 Hope to convert you by-and-by?  
 Never! I cannot trace the chain<sup>60</sup>  
 That brought us here, shall part again 410  
 Our lives—perhance for aye! I bring  
 My hand down on this table-thing,<sup>61</sup>  
 And that commotion widens thus  
 And shakes the nerves of Sirius!  
 To calculate one hour's result 415  
 I find surpassing difficult;  
 One year's effect, one moment's cause;  
 What mind could estimate such laws?  
 Who then (much more!) may act aright  
 Judged by and in ten centuries' sight? 420  
 (Yet I believe, whate'er we do  
 Is best for me and best for you  
 And best for all: I line no brow  
 With wrinkles, meditating how.)

Caird's inter-  
 pretation of  
 Hegel. His  
 identification  
 of it with Chris-  
 tianity proved  
 to be mystical.  
 His interpreta-  
 tion false.

Well, but another way remains. 425  
 Shall we expound the cosmic plan  
 By symbolising God and man  
 And nature thus? As man contains  
 Cells, nerves, grey matter in his brains,  
 Each cell a life, self-centred, free 430  
 Yet self-subordinate to the whole  
 For its own sake—expand!—so we  
 Molecules of a central soul,  
 Time's sons, judged by Eternity.  
 Nature is gone—our joys, our pains, 435  
 Our little lives—and God remains.

Were this the truth—why! worship then  
 Were not so imbecile for men!  
 But that's no Christian faith! For where  
 440 Enters the dogma of despair?  
 Despite his logic's silver flow  
 I must count Caird<sup>62</sup> a mystic! No!  
 You Christians shall not mask me so  
 The plain words of your sacred books  
 445 Behind friend Swedenborg his spooks!  
 Says Huxley<sup>63</sup> in his works (q. v.)  
 "The microcosmic lives change daily  
 In state or body"—yet you gaily  
 Arm a false Hegel cap-à-pie—  
 450 Your self, his weapons—make him wear  
 False favours of a ladye fayre  
 (The scarlet woman!) bray and blare  
 A false note on the trumpet, shout:  
 "A champion? Faith's defender! Out!  
 455 Sceptic and sinner! See me! Quail I?"  
 I cite the Little-go. You stare,  
 And have no further use for Paley!

But if you drink your mystic fill  
 Under the good tree Igdrasil<sup>64</sup>  
 460 Where is at all your use for Christ?  
 Hath Krishna not at all sufficed?  
 I hereby guarantee to pull  
 A faith as quaint and beautiful  
 As much attractive to an ass,  
 465 And setting reason at defiance,  
 As Zionism, Christian Science,

Mysticism does  
 not need Christ.  
 Krishna will  
 serve, or the  
 Carpenter.  
 The Sacred  
 Walrus.  
 God, some  
 Vestments, and  
 Lady Wim-  
 borne.

Or Ladies' Leage,<sup>65</sup> "Keep off the Grass!"  
From "Alice through the Looking-Glass."

Fearful aspect  
of John iii. 16..

Hence I account no promise worse,  
Fail to conceive a fiercer curse 470  
Than John's third chapter (sixteenth verse).

Universalism.  
Will God get  
the bara\* slam.

But now (you say) broad-minded folk  
Think that those words the Master spoke  
Should save all men at last. But mind!  
The text says nothing of the kind! 475  
Read the next verses!<sup>†</sup>

Then—one third

Of all humanity are steady  
In a belief in Buddha's word,  
Possess eternal life already, 480  
And shun delights, laborious days  
Of labour living (Milton's phrase)  
In strenuous purpose to—? to cease!  
"A fig for God's eternal peace!  
True peace is to annihilate 485  
The chain of causes men call Fate,  
So that no Sattva<sup>66</sup> may renew  
Once death has run life's shuttle through."  
(Their sages put it somewhat thus)  
What's fun to them is death to us! 490  
That's clear at least.

Dogma of  
Belief.

But never mind!

Call them idolaters and blind!  
We'll talk of Christ. As Shelley sang,  
"Shall an eternal issue hang 495

\* Great slam—a term of Bridge-Whist. Bara is Hindustani for great.  
† John iii. 18, "He that believeth not is condemned already."

On just belief or unbelief;  
 And an involuntary act  
 Make difference infinite in fact  
 Between the right and left-hand thief?  
 500 Belief is not an act of will!"

I think, Sir, that I have you still,  
 Even allowing (much indeed!)  
 That any will at all is freed,  
 And is not merely the result  
 505 Of sex, environment, and cult,  
 Habit and climate, health and mind,  
 And twenty thousand other things!  
 So many a metaphysic sings.  
 (I wish they did indeed: I find  
 510 Their prose the hardest of hard reading.)

Free Will.  
 Herbert  
 Spencer.

"But if," you cry, "the world's designed  
 As a mere mirage in the mind,  
 Up jumps free will." But all I'm pleading  
 Is against pain and hell. Freewill  
 515 Then can damn man? No fearful mill,  
 Grinding catastrophe, is speeding  
 Outside—some whence, some whither? And<sup>67</sup>  
 I think we easier understand  
 Where Schelling (to the Buddha leading)  
 520 Calls real not-self. In any case  
 There is not, there can never be  
 A soul, or sword or armour needing,  
 Incapable in time or space  
 Or to inflict or suffer. We  
 525 I think are gradually weeding

If there is free  
 will how can  
 there be pain  
 or damnation?  
 not-self being  
 an illusion.  
 Self or not-Self  
 real? Chute  
 d'Icare.

The soil of dualism. Pheugh!  
Drop to the common Christian's view!

I have pity:  
had Christ  
any? The  
Sheep and the  
Goats..

This is my point; the world lies bleeding:—  
(Result of sin?)—I do not care;  
I will admit you anywhere! 530

I take your premisses themselves  
And, like the droll deceitful elves  
They are, they yet outwit your plan.  
I will prove Christ a wicked man.  
(Granting him Godhead) merciless 535

To all the anguish and distress  
About him—save to him it clung  
And prayed. Give me omnipotence?  
I am no fool that I should fence  
That power, demanding every tongue 540

To call me God—I would exert  
That power to heal creation's hurt;  
Not to divide my devotees  
From those who scorned me to the close:  
A worm, a fire, a thirst for these; 545  
A harp-resounding heaven for those!

Will Satan be  
saved? Who  
pardons Judas?

And though you claim Salvation sure  
For all the heathen<sup>68</sup>—there again  
New Christians give the lie to plain  
Scripture, those words which must endure! 550

(The Vedas say the same!) and though  
His mercy widens ever so,  
I never met a man (this shocks,  
What I now press, so heterodox,  
Anglican, Roman, Methodist, 555

Peculiar Person—all the list!—  
 I never met a man who called  
 Himself a Christian, but appalled  
 Shrank when I dared suggest the hope  
 560 God's mercy could expand its scope,  
 Extend, or bend, or spread, or straighten  
 So far as to encompass Satan  
 Or even poor Iscariot.

Yet God created (did he not?)  
 565 Both these. Omnisciently, we know!  
 Benevolently? Even so!  
 Created from Himself distinct  
 (Note that!—it is not meet for you  
 To plead me Schelling and his crew)  
 570 These souls, foreknowing how were linked  
 The chains in either's Destiny.  
 "You pose me the eternal Why?"  
 Not I? Again, "Who asks doth err."  
 But this one thing I say. Perhance  
 575 There lies a purpose in advance.  
 Tending to final bliss—to stir  
 Some life to better life, this pain  
 Is needful: that I grant again.  
 Did they at last in glory live,  
 580 Satan and Judas<sup>69</sup> might forgive  
 The middle time of misery,  
 Forgive the wrong creation first  
 Or evolution's iron key  
 Did them—provided they are passed  
 585 Beyond all change and pain at last  
 Out of this universe accurst.

God's fore-  
 knowledge of  
 Satan's fall and  
 eternal misery  
 makes him re-  
 sponsible for it.  
 If he and  
 Judas are  
 finally re-  
 deemed, we  
 might perhaps  
 look over the  
 matter this  
 once. Poert  
 books his seat.  
 Creator in  
 heaven suffers  
 Hell's pangs,  
 owing to re-  
 proach of  
 bard.

But otherwise! I lift my voice,  
 Deliberately take my choice  
 Promethean, eager to rejoice,  
 In the grim protest's joy to revel 590  
 Betwixt Iscariot and the Devil,  
 Throned in their midst! No pain to feel,  
 Tossed on some burning bed of steel,  
 But theirs: my soul of love should swell  
 And, on those piteous floors they trod, 595  
 Feel, and make God feel, out of Hell,  
 Across the gulf impassable,  
 That He was damned and I was God!

Ethical and  
 eloquent de-  
 nunciation of  
 Christian Cos-  
 mogony.

Ay! Let him rise and answer me  
 That false creative Deity, 600  
 Whence came his right to rack the Earth  
 With pangs of death,<sup>70</sup> disease, and birth:  
 No joy unmarred by pain and grief:  
 Insult on injury heaped high  
 In that quack-doctor infamy 605  
 The Panacea of—Belief!  
 Only the selfish soul of man  
 Could ever have conceived a plan  
 Man only of all life to embrace,  
 One planet of all stars to place 610  
 Alone before the Father's face;  
 Forgetful of creation's stain,  
 Forgetful of creation's pain  
 Not dumb!—forgetful of the pangs  
 Whereby each life laments and hangs, 615  
 (Now as I speak a lizard<sup>71</sup> lies  
 In wait for light-bewildered flies)

Each life bound over to the wheel<sup>72</sup>  
 Ay, and each being—we may guess  
 620 Now that the very crystals feel!—  
 For them no harp-reasounding court,  
 No palm, no crown, but none the less  
 A cross, be sure! The worst man's thought  
 In hell itself, bereft of bliss,  
 625 Were less unmerciful than this!  
 No! for material things, I hear,  
 Will burn away, and cease to be—  
 (Nibbanna! Ah! Thou shoreless Sea!)  
 Man, man alone, is doomed to fear,  
 630 To suffer the eternal woe,  
 Or else, to meet man's subtle foe,  
 God—and oh! infamy of terror!  
 Be like him—like him! And for ever!  
 At least I make not such an error:  
 635 My soul must utterly dissever  
 Its very silliest thought, belief,  
 From such a God as possible,  
 Its vilest from his worship. Never!  
 Avaunt, abominable chief  
 640 Of Hate's grim legions; let me well  
 Gird up my loins and make endeavour,  
 And seek a refuge from my grief,  
 O never in Heaven—but in Hell!

645 “Oh, very well!” I think you say,  
 “Wait only till your dying day!  
 See whether then you kiss the rod,  
 And bow that proud soul down to God!”  
 I perfectly admit the fact;

Death-bed of  
 poet. Effect of  
 body on mind.

Quite likely that I so shall act!  
 Here's why Creation jumps at prayer. 650  
 You Christians quote me in a breath  
 This, that, the other atheist's death;<sup>73</sup>  
 How they sought God! Of course! Impair  
 By just a touch of fever, chill,  
 My health—where flies my vivid will? 655  
 My carcase with quinine is crammed;  
 I wish South India were damned;  
 I wish I had my mother's nursing,  
 Find precious little use in cursing,  
 And slide to leaning on another, 660  
 God, or the doctor, or my mother.  
 But dare you quote my fevered word  
 For better than my health averred?  
 The brainish fancies of a man  
 Hovering on delerium's brink:  
*Shall these be classed his utmost span?* 666  
 All that he can or ought to think?  
 No! the strong man and self-reliant  
 Is the true spiritual giant.  
 I blame no weaklings, but decline 670  
 To take their maunderings for mine.

Poem does not  
 treat of Palae-  
 ontology: nor  
 of poet's youth:  
 nor of Christian  
 infamies. Poet  
 forced to mystic  
 position.

You see I do not base my thesis  
 On your Book's being torn to pieces  
 By knowledge: nor invoke the shade  
 Of my own boyhood's agony. 675  
 Soul, shudder not! Advance the blade  
 Of fearless fact and probe the scar!  
 You know my first-class memory?  
 Well, in my life two years there are

680 Twelve years back—not so very far!  
Two years whereof no memory stays.  
One ageless anguish filled my days  
So that no item, like a star  
Sole in the supreme night, above  
685 Stands up for hope, or joy, or love.  
Nay, not one ignis fatuus glides  
Sole in that marsh, one agony  
To make the rest look light. Abides  
The thick sepulchral changeless shape  
690 Shapeless, continuous misery  
Whereof no smoke-wreaths might escape  
To show me whither lay the end,  
Whence the beginning. All is black,  
Void of all cause, all aim; unkenned,  
695 As if I had been dead indeed—  
All in Christ's name! And I look back,  
And then and long time after lack  
Courage or strength to hurl the creed  
Down to the heaven it sprang from! No!  
700 Not this inspires the indignant blow  
At the whole fabric—nor the seas  
Filled with those innocent agonies  
Of Pagan Martyrs that once bled,  
Of Christian Martyrs damned and dead  
In inter-Christian bickering  
705 Where hate exults and torture springs,  
A lion on anguished flesh and blood,  
A vulture on ill-omen wings,  
A cannibal<sup>74</sup> on human food.  
Nor do I cry the scoffer's cry  
That Christians live and look the lie

Their faith has taught them: none of these  
 Inspire my life, disturb my peace.  
 I go beneath the outward faith  
 Find it a devil or a wraith, 715  
 Just as my mood or temper tends!

Mystical meaning of "Ascension Day."  
 Futility of whole discussion, in view of facts.

And thus to-day that "Christ ascends,"  
 I take the symbol, leave the fact  
 Decline to make the smallest pact  
 With your creative Deity, 720  
 And say: The Christhood-soul in me,  
 Risen of late, is now quite clear  
 Even of the smallest taint of Earth.  
 Supplanting God, the Man has birth  
 ("New Birth" you'll call the same, I fear,) 725  
 Transcends the ordinary sphere  
 And flies in the direction "x."  
 (There lies the fourth dimension.) Vex  
 My soul no more with mistranslations 730  
 From Genesis to Revelations,  
 But leave me with the Flaming Star,<sup>75</sup>  
 Jeheshua (See thou Zohar!)<sup>76</sup>  
 And thus our formidable Pigeon-<sup>77</sup>  
 Lamb-and-Old-Gentleman religion 735  
 Fizzles in smoke, and I am found  
 Attacking nothing. Here's the ground,  
 Pistols, and coffee—three in one,  
 (Alas, O Rabbi Schimeon!)  
 But never a duellist—no Son, 740  
 No Father, and (to please us most)  
 Decency pleads—no Holy Ghost!  
 All vanish at the touch of truth,

A cobweb trio—like, in sooth,  
 That worthy Yankee millionaire,  
 745 And wealthy nephews, young and fair,  
 The pleasing Crawfords! Lost! Lost! Lost!<sup>78</sup>  
 “The Holy Spirit, friend! beware!”

Ah! ten days yet to Pentecost!  
 Come that, I promise you—but stay!  
 750 At present ’tis Ascension Day!

The reader  
 may hope.

At least your faith should be content.  
 I quarrel not with this event.  
 The supernatural element?  
 I deny nothing—at the term  
 755 It is just Nothing I affirm.  
 The fool (with whom is wisdom, deem  
 The Scriptures—rightly!) in his heart  
 Saith (silent, to himself, apart)  
 This secret: “אין אלהים”<sup>79</sup>  
 760 See the good Psalm! And thus, my friend!  
 My diatribes approach the end  
 And find us hardly quarelling.  
 And yet—you seem not satisfied?  
 The literal mistranslated thing  
 Must not by sinners be denied.  
 765 Go to your Chapel then to pray!  
 (I promise Mr. Chesterton<sup>80</sup>  
 Before the Muse and I have done  
 A grand ap-pre-ci-a-ti-on  
 Of Brixton on Ascension Day.)

Summary.  
 Reader dis-  
 missed to  
 chapel.

Future plans of  
poet. Jesus  
dismissed with  
a jest.

He's gone—his belly filled enough!  
This Robert-Browning-manqué stuff!  
'Twill serve—Mercutio's scratch!—to show  
Where God and I are disagreed.  
There! I have let my feelings go 775  
This once. Again? I deem not so.  
Once for my fellow-creature's need!  
The rest of life, for self-control,<sup>81</sup>  
For liberation of the soul!<sup>82</sup>  
This once, the truth! In future, best 780  
Dismissing Jesus with a jest.

The Jest.

Ah! Christ ascends?<sup>83</sup> Ascension day?  
Old wonders bear the bell<sup>84</sup> away?  
Santos-Dumont, though! Who can say?



# P E N T E C O S T

Poem dissimilar to its predecessor. Will it lead somewhere this time?

Reflections on the weather, proper to beginning a conversation in English.

Autobiography of bard.  
Lehrjahre.  
Wanderjahre.  
"The magician of Paris."

How clever I am!

To-day thrice halves the lunar week,  
Since you, indignant, heard me speak  
Indignant. Then I seemed to be  
So far from Christianity!

5

Now, other celebrations fit  
The time, another song shall flit  
Responsive to another tune.

September's shadow falls on June,  
But dull November's darkest day  
Is lighted by the sun of May.

10

Here's now I got a better learning.  
It's a long lane that has no turning!  
Mad as a woman-hunted Urning,  
The lie-chased alethephilist:\*

Sorcery's maw gulps the beginner:

15

In Pain's mill neophytes are grist:

Disciples ache upon the rack.

Five years I sought: I miss and lack;

Agony hounds lagoon twist;

I peak and struggle and grow thinner,

20

And get to hate the sight of dinner.

With sacred thirst, I, soul-hydroptic,<sup>1</sup>

Read Levi<sup>2</sup> and the cryptic Coptic;<sup>3</sup>

With ANET' HER-K UAA EN RA,<sup>4</sup>

And **כפרה רצניעהה**

25

While good MacGregor<sup>5</sup> (who taught freely us)

Bade us investigate Cornelius

Agrippa and the sorceries black

\* Truth-lover.

Of grim Honorius and Abramelin;<sup>6</sup>  
 30 While, fertile as the teeming spawn  
 Of pickled lax or stickleback,  
 Came ancient rituals,<sup>7</sup> whack! whack!  
 Of Rosy Cross and Golden Dawn.<sup>8</sup>  
 I lived, Elijah-like, Mt. Carmel in:  
 35 All gave me nothing. I slid back  
 To common sense, as reason bids,  
 And “hence,” my friend, “the Pyramids.”

At last I met a maniac  
 With mild eyes full of love, and tresses  
 40 Blanched in those lonely wildernesses  
 Where he found wisdom, and long hands  
 Gentle, pale olive 'gainst the sand's  
 Amber and gold. At sight, I knew him;  
 Swifter than light I flashed, ran to him,  
 45 And at his holy feet prostrated  
 My head; then, all my being sated  
 With love, cried “Master! I must know.  
 Already I can love.” E'en so.

The sage saluted me राम । राम ।<sup>9</sup>

50 लमबा पडाव की बडी दाम ।  
 जानी यह सब से मुशकिल काम  
 है । वाह शावाश । तुमहार नाम  
 सितारों में सीने से लिखा है ।  
 हमारे पास आप चेले । हम दवाई  
 55 चित्ता के वास्ते देगे ॥ हां , said I:

“I'm game to work through all eternity  
 Your holiness the Guru Swami!”\* Thus  
 I studied with him till he told me बस ॥<sup>10</sup>

My Mahatma.  
 What price  
 Kut Humi?

????? Oh, how  
 wise Grampa  
 must have been,  
 Bobbie!

\* The correct form of address from a pupil to his teacher. See Sabhapaty Swami's pamphlet on Yoga.

He taught the A B C of Yoga:  
 I asked कि वास्ते ।<sup>11</sup> क्या होगा ॥<sup>12</sup> 60  
 In strange and painful attitude,<sup>13</sup>  
 I sat while he was very rude.<sup>14</sup>  
 With eyes well fixed on my proboscis<sup>15</sup>  
 I soon absorbed the Yogi Gnosis.  
 He taught me to steer clear of vices 65  
 The giddy waltz, the tuneful aria,  
 Those fatal foes of Brahma-charya;<sup>16</sup>  
 And said, "How very mild and nice is  
 One's luck to lop out truth in slices,  
 And chance to chop up cosmic crises!" 70  
 He taught me A, he taught me B,  
 He stopped my baccy<sup>17</sup> and my tea.  
 He taught me Y, he taught me Z,  
 He made strange noises in my head.  
 He taught me that, he taught me this, 75  
 He spoke of knowledge, life, and bliss.  
 He taught me this, he taught me that,  
 He grew me mangoes in his hat<sup>18</sup>  
 I brought him corn: he made good grist of it:—  
 And here, my Christian friend, 's the gist of it! 80

The philo-  
 sophical im-  
 passe. Practi-  
 cal advice.  
 Advice to poet's  
 fat friend.

First, here's philosophy's despair  
 The cynic scorn of self. I think  
 At times the search is worth no worry,  
 And hasten earthward in a hurry,  
 Close spirit's eyes, or bid them blink, 85  
 Go back to Swinburne's<sup>19</sup> counsel rare,  
 Kissing the universe its rod,  
 As thus he sings "For this is God;  
 Be man with might, at any rate,

- 90 In strength of spirit growing straight  
 And life as light a-living out!"  
 So Swinburne doth sublimely state,  
 And he is right beyond a doubt.  
 So, I'm a poet or a rhymer;
- 95 A mountaineer or mountain climber.  
 So much for Crowley's vital primer.  
 The inward life of soul and heart,  
 That is a thing occult, apart:  
 But yet his metier or his kismet
- 100 As much as these you have of his met.  
 So—you be butcher; you be baker;  
 You, Plymouth Brother, and you, Quaker;  
 You, Mountebank, you, corset-maker:—  
 While for you, my big beauty,<sup>20</sup> (Chicago packs pork)
- 105 I'll teach you the trick to be hen-of-the-walk.  
 Shriek a music-hall song with a double ong-tong!  
 Dance a sprightly can-can at Paree or Bolong!  
 Or the dance of Algiers—try your stomach at that!  
 It's quite in your line, and would bring down your fat.
- 110 You've a very fine voice—could you only control it!  
 And an emerald ring—and I know where you stole it!  
 But for goodness sake give up attempting Brünnhilde;  
 Try a boarding-house cook, or a coster's Matilda!  
 Still you're young yet, scarce forty—we'll hope at three  
 score
- 115 You'll be more of a singer, and less of a whore.

Each to his trade! live out your life!  
 Fondle your child, and buss your wife!  
 Trust not, fear not, street straight and strong!  
 Don't worry, but just get along.

Live out thy  
 life! Character  
 of Balti. His  
 religious  
 sincerity. Re-  
 lations of poet

and the Egyptian God of Wisdom. Crowley dismissed with a jest.

I used to envy all my Balti coolies<sup>21</sup> 120  
 In an inverse kind of religious hysteria,  
 Though every one a perfect fool is,  
 To judge by philosophic criteria,  
 My Lord Archbishop. The name of Winchester,  
 Harrow, or Eton<sup>22</sup> makes them not two inches stir. 125  
 They know not Trinity, Merton, or Christchurch;  
 They worship, but not at your back-pews-high-priced  
 Church.  
 I've seen them at twenty thousand feet  
 On the ice, in a snow-storm, at night fall, repeat  
 Their prayers<sup>23</sup>—will your Grace do as much for your Three 130  
 As they do for their One? I have seen—may you see!  
 They sleep and know not what a mat is;  
 Seem to enjoy their cold chapaties;\*  
 Are healthy, strong—and some are old.  
 They do not care a damn<sup>24</sup> for cold, 135  
 Behave like children, trust in Allah;  
 (Flies in Mohammed's spider-parlour!)  
 They may not think: at least they dare  
 Live out their lives, and little care  
 Worries their souls—worse fools they seem 140  
 Than even Christians. Do I dream?  
 Probing philosophy to marrow,  
 What thought darts in its poisoned arrow  
 But this? (my wisdom, even to me,  
 Seems folly) may their folly be 145  
 True Wisdom? O esteemed Tahuti!<sup>25</sup>  
 You are, you are, you are a beauty!

\* A flat cake of unleavened bread. As a matter of fact they do not enjoy and indeed will not eat them, preferring “dok,” a paste of coarse flour and water, wrapped round a hot stone. It cooks gradually, and remains warm all day.

If after all these years of worship  
 You hail Ra<sup>26</sup> his bark or Nuit<sup>27</sup> her ship  
 150 And sail—"the waters wild a-wenting  
 Over your child! The left lamenting"  
 (Campbell).<sup>28</sup> The Ibis head,<sup>29</sup> unsuited  
 To grin, perhaps, yet does its best  
 To show its strong appreciation  
 155 Of the humour of the situation—  
 In short, dismiss me, jeered and hooted,  
 Who thought I sported Roland's crest,<sup>30</sup>  
 With wisdom saddled, spurred, and booted,  
 (As I my Jesus) with a jest.<sup>31</sup>  
 160 So here is my tribute—a jolly good strong 'un—  
 To the eunuch, the faddist, the fool, and the wrong 'un!  
 It's fun when you say "A mysterious way"<sup>32</sup>  
 God moves in to fix up his Maskelyne tricks.  
 He trots on the tides, on the tempest he rides  
 165 (Like Cosmo); and as for his pace, we bethought us  
 Achilles could never catch up with that tortoise!"  
 No flyer, but very "Who's Griffiths?"\* No jackpot!  
 I straddle the blind, age! At hymns I'm a moral;  
 In Sankey, your kettle may call me a black pot.  
 170 Here's diamond for coke, and pink pearl for pale coral.  
 Though his mills may grind slowly—what says the old hymn?<sup>33</sup>  
 Tune, Limerick! Author? My memory's dim.  
 The corn said "You sluggard!"  
 The mill "You may tug hard," (or lug hard, or plug hard;  
 175 I forgot the exact Rhyme; that's a fact  
 "If I want to grind slowly I shall,"  
 A quainter old fable one rarely is able

Slowness of  
 Divine Justice.  
 Poet pockets  
 Piety Stakes.  
 National An-  
 them of Natal.

\* "Who's Griffiths? The safe man." A well-known advertisement, hence "Who's Griffiths" = safe.

To drag from its haunt in the—smoke room or stable!  
 You see (vide supra) I've brought to the test a ton  
 Of tolerance, broadness. Approve me, friend Chesteron! 180

But this talk is  
 all indigestion.  
 Now for  
 health.

So much when philosophy's lacteal river  
 Turns sour through a trifle of bile on the liver.  
 But now for the sane and the succulent milk  
 Of truth—may it slip down as smoothly as silk.

Reason for  
 undertaking  
 the task.

“How very hard it is to be”<sup>34</sup> 185  
 A Yogi! Let our spirits see  
 At least what primal need of thought  
 This end to its career has brought:  
 Why, in a word, I seek to gain

A different knowledge. Why retain 190  
 The husk of flesh, yet seek to merit  
 The influx of the Holy Spirit?  
 And, swift as caddies pat and cap a tee,  
 Gain the great prize all mortals snap at, he-  
 Roic guerdon of Srotapatti?<sup>35</sup> 195

Our logical  
 method. Clas-  
 sical allusion,  
 demonstrating  
 erudition of  
 poet.

With calm and philosophic mind,  
 No fears, no hopes, devotions blind  
 To hamper, soberly we'll state  
 The problem, and investigate  
 In purely scientific mood 200

The sheer Ananke of the mind,  
 A temper for our steel to find  
 Whereby those brazen nails subdued  
 Against our door-post may in vain  
 Ring. We'll examine, to be plain, 205  
 By logic's intellectual prism  
 The spiritual Syllogism.

We know what fools (only) call  
 Divine and Supernatural  
 210 And what they name material  
 Are really one, not two, the line  
 By which divide they and define  
 Being a shadowy sort of test;  
 A verbal lusus at the best,  
 215 At worst a wicked lie devised  
 To bind men's thoughts; but we must work  
 With our own instruments, nor shirk  
 Discarding what we erstwhile prized;  
 Should we perceive it disagree  
 220 With the first-born necessity.

Whether or not  
 spirit and  
 matter are dis-  
 tinct, let us in-  
 vestigate the  
 fundamental  
 necessities of  
 thought.

I come to tell you why I shun  
 The sight of men, the life and fun  
 You know I can enjoy so well,  
 The Nature that I love as none  
 225 (I think) before me ever loved.  
 You know I scorn the fear of Hell  
 By worship and all else unmoved  
 You know for me the soul is nought<sup>36</sup>  
 Save a mere phantom in the thought,  
 230 That thought itself impermanent,  
 Save as a casual element  
 With such another may combine  
 To form now water and now wine;  
 The element itself may be  
 235 Changeless to all eternity,  
 But compounds ever fluctuate  
 With time or space or various state.  
 (Ask chemists else!) So I must claim

Impermanence  
 of the soul.

Spirit and matter are the same<sup>37</sup>  
 Or else the prey of putrefaction. 240  
 This matters to the present action  
 Little or nothing. Here's your theories!  
 Think if you like: I find it wearies!

Recapitulations  
 of principal cos-  
 mic theories.

It matters little whether we  
 With Fichte and the Brahmins preach 245  
 That Ego-Atman sole must be;  
 With Schelling and the Buddha own  
 No-Ego-Skandhas are alone;  
 With Hegel and the—Christian? teach  
 That which compels, includes, absorbs 250  
 Both mighty unrevolving orbs  
 In one informing masterless  
 Master-idea of consciousness—  
 All differences as these indeed  
 Are chess play, conjuring. “Proceed!” 255  
 Nay! I'll go back. The exposition  
 Above, has points. But simple fission  
 Has reproduced a different bliss,  
 At last a heterogenesis!

Bard check-  
 mates himself.  
 Consciousness  
 and Christianity  
 Dhyana and  
 Hinduism.  
 Sammasamadhi  
 and Buddhism.

The metaphysics of these verses 260  
 Is perfectly absurd. My curse is  
 No sooner in an iron word  
 I formulate my thought than I  
 Perceive the same to be absurd  
 (Tannhäuser). So for this, Sir, why! 265  
 Your metaphysics in your teeth!  
 Confer A. Crowley, “Berashith.”  
 But hear! The Christian is a Dualist;

Such view our normal consciousness  
 270 Tells us. I'll quote now if you list  
 From Tennyson. It isn't much;  
 (Skip this and 'twill be even less)  
 He say: "I am not what I see,<sup>38</sup>  
 And other than the things I touch."<sup>\*</sup>  
 275 How lucid is our Alfred T.!  
 The Hindu, an Advaitist,  
 Crosses off Maya from the list;  
 Believes in one—exactly so,  
 Dhyana-consciousness, you know!  
 280 May it not be that one step further  
 "Tis lotused Buddha roaring murther!"<sup>39</sup>  
 Nibbana is the state above you  
 Christians and them Hindus—Lord love you!—  
 Where Nothing is perceived as such.  
 285 This clever thought doth please me much.  
 But if das Essen ist das Nichts—  
 Ha! Hegel's window! Ancient Lichts!  
 And two is one and one is two—  
 "Bother this nonsense! Go on, do!"  
 290 My wandering thoughts you well recall!  
 I focus logic's perfect prism:  
 Lo! the informing syllogism!  
 The premiss major. Life at best  
 Is but a sorry sort of jest;  
 295 At worst, a play of fiends uncouth,  
 Mocking the soul foredoomed to pain.  
 In any case, its run must range  
 Through countless miseries of change

Bard is pleased  
 with himself.  
 Poetee mani-  
 fests a natural  
 irritation.

Sabbé pi Duk-  
 kham!†

\* *In Memoriam.*

† All is Sorrow.

So far, no farther, gentle youth!  
 The mind can see. So much, no more. 300  
 So runs the premiss major plain;  
 Identical, the Noble truth  
 First of the Buddha's Noble Four!

Beyond  
 thought, is  
 there hope?  
 Maya again.  
 Vision of the  
 Visible Image  
 of the Soul of  
 Nature, whose  
 Name is Fat-  
 ality.

The premiss minor. I deplore  
 These limitations of the mind 305  
 I strain my eyes until they're blind,  
 And cannot pierce the awful veil  
 That masks the primal cause of being.  
 With all respect to Buddha, fleeing  
 The dreadful problem with the word 310  
 "Who answers, as who asks, hath erred,"  
 I must decidedly insist  
 On asking why these things exist.  
 My mind refuses to admit  
 All-Power can be all-Wickedness. 315  
 —Nay! but it may! What shadows flit  
 Across the awful veil of mist?  
 What thoughts invade, insult, impress?  
 There comes a lightning of my wit  
 And sees—nor good nor ill address 320  
 Itself to task, creation's ill,  
 But a mere law without a will,<sup>40</sup>  
 Nothing resolved in something, fit  
 Phantom of dull stupidity,  
 And evolution's endless stress 325  
 All the inanity to knit  
 Thence: such a dark device I see!  
 Nor lull my soul in the caress  
 Of Buddha's "Maya fashioned it."<sup>41</sup>

330 My mind seems ready to agree;  
 But still my senses worry me.  
 Nor can I see what sort of gain  
 God finds in this creating pain;  
 Nor do the Vedas help me here.  
 335 Why should the Paramatma cease<sup>42</sup>  
 From its eternity of peace,  
 Develop this disgusting drear  
 System of stars, to gather again  
 Involving, all the realm of pain,  
 340 Time, space, to that eternal calm?  
 Blavatsky's Himalayan Balm<sup>43</sup>  
 Aids us no whit—if to improve  
 Thus the All-light, All-life, All-love,  
 By evolution's myrrh and gall,  
 345 It would not then have been the All.  
 Thus all conceptions fail and fall.  
 But see the Cyclopædia-article  
 On "Metaphysics"; miss no particle  
 Of thought! How ends the brave B.D.,  
 350 Summarising Ontology?  
 "This talk of 'Real' is a wraith.  
 Our minds are lost in war of word;  
 The whole affair is quite absurd—  
 Behold! the righteous claims of Faith!"  
 355 (He does not rhyme you quite so neatly;  
 But that's the sense of it, completely.)  
 I do not feel myself inclined  
 In spite of my irreverent mind,  
 So lightly to pass by the schemes  
 360 Of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel (one,

Futility of all  
 investigations  
 of the Mind  
 into the First  
 Cause.

Faith our only  
 alternative to  
 Despair? So  
 says Mansel.

The Advaitist  
 position.

Small though the apparent unison),  
 As if they were mere drunken dreams;  
 For the first word in India here  
 From Koromandl to Kashmir  
 Says the same thing these Germans said: 365  
 “Ekam Advaita!”<sup>44</sup> one, not two!  
 Thus East and West from A to Z  
 Agree—Alas! so do not you?  
 (It matters nothing—you, I find,  
 Are but a mode of my own mind.) 370

Mind's superior  
 functions.

As far as normal reasoning goes,  
 I must admit my concepts close  
 Exactly where my worthy friend,  
 Great Mansel, says they ought to end.  
 But here's the whole thing in a word: 375  
 Olympus in a nutshell! I  
 Have a superior faculty  
 To reasoning, which makes absurd,  
 Unthinkable and wicked too,  
 A great deal that I know is true! 380  
 In short, the mind is capable,  
 Besides mere ratiocination,  
 Of twenty other things as well,  
 The first of which is concentration!

Does truth make  
 itself instantly  
 apparent? Not  
 reason. But the  
 results of concen-  
 tration do so.

Here most philosophers agree; 385  
 Claim that the truth must so intend,  
 Explain at once all agony  
 Of doubt, make people comprehend  
 As by a lightning flash, solve doubt  
 And turn all Nature inside out: 390

And, if such potency of might  
 Hath Truth, once state the truth aright,  
 Whence came the use for all these pages  
 Millions together—mighty sages  
 395 Whom the least obstacle enrages?  
 Condemn the mystic if he prove  
 Thinking less valuable than love?  
 Well, let them try their various plans!  
 Do they resolve that doubt of man's?  
 400 How many are Hegelians?  
 This, though I hold him mostly true.  
 But, to teach others that same view?  
 Surely long years develop reason.<sup>45</sup>  
 After long years, too, in thy season  
 405 Bloom, Concentration's midnight flower!  
 After much practice to this end  
 I gain at last the long sought power  
 (Which you believe you have this hour,  
 But certainly have not, my friend!)  
 410 Of keeping close the mind to one  
 Thing at a time—suppose, the Sun.  
 I gain this (Reverence to Ganesh'!)<sup>46</sup>  
 And at that instant comprehend  
 (The past and future tenses vanish)  
 415 What Fichte comprehends. Division,  
 Thought, wisdom, drop away. I see  
 The absolute identity  
 Of the beholder and the vision.  
 There is a lake\* amid the snows  
 420 Wherein five glaciers merge and break.

Some poetry.

\* This simile for the mind and its impressions, which must be stilled before the sun of the soul can be reflected, is common in Hindu literature. The five glaciers are, of course, the senses.

Oh! the deep brilliance of the lake!  
 The roar of ice that cracks and goes  
 Crashing within the water! Glows  
 The pale pure water, shakes and slides  
 The glittering sun through emerald tides, 425  
 So that faint ripples of young light  
 Laugh on the green. Is there a night  
 So still and cold, a frost so chill,  
 That all the glaciers be still?  
 Yet in its peace no frost. 430

Arise!

Over the mountains steady stand,  
 O sun of glory, in the skies  
 Alone, above, unmoving! Brand  
 Thy sigil, thy resistless might, 435  
 The abundant imminence of light!  
 Ah!

O in the silence, in the dark,  
 In the intangible, unperfumed,  
 In gust abyss, abide and mark 440  
 The mind's magnificence assumed  
 In the soul's splendour! Hear is peace;  
 Here earnest of assured release.  
 Here is the formless all-pervading  
 Spirit of the World, rising, fading 445  
 Into a glory subtler still.  
 Here the intense abode of Will  
 Closes its gates, and in the hall  
 Is solemn sleep of festival.  
 Peace! Peace! Silence of peace! 450  
 O visionless abode! Cease! Cease!  
 Through the dark veil press on! The veil

Is rent asunder, the stars pale,  
 The suns vanish, the moon drops,  
 455 The chorus of the spirit stops,  
 But one note swells. Mightiest souls  
 Of bard and music maker, rolls  
 Over your loftiest crowns the wheel  
 Of that abiding bliss. Life flees  
 460 Down corridors of centuries  
 Pillar by pillar, and is lost.  
 Life after life in wild appeal  
 Cries to the master; he remains  
 And thinks not.

465                   The polluting tides  
 Of sense roll shoreward. Arid plains  
 Of wave-swept sea confront me. Nay!  
 Looms yet the glory through the grey,  
 And in the darkest hours of youth  
 470 I yet perceive the essential truth,  
 Known as I know my consciousness,  
 That all division's hosts confess  
 A master, for I know and see  
 The absolute identity  
 475 Of the beholder and the vision.

How easy to excite derision  
 In the man's mind! Why, fool, I think  
 I am as clever as yourself,  
 At least as skilled to wake the elf  
 480 Of jest and mockery in a wink.  
 I can dismiss with sneers as cheap  
 As your this fabric of mine own,  
 One banner of my mind o'erthrown

Fact replacing  
 folklore, the  
 Christian snig-  
 gers. Let him  
 beware,

Just at my will. How true and deep  
 Is Carroll<sup>47</sup> when his Alice cries: 485  
 “It’s nothing but a pack of cards!”  
 There’s the true refuge of the wise;  
 To overthrow the temple guards,  
 Deny reality.

For I speak  
 subtly.

And now 490  
 (I’ll quote you scripture anyhow)  
 What did the Sage mean when he wrote  
 (I am the Devil when I quote)  
 “The mere terrestrial-minded man  
 Knows not the Things of God, nor can 495  
 Their subtle meaning understand?”  
 A sage, I say, although he mentions  
 Perhaps the best of his inventions,  
 God.

Results of prac-  
 tice. The poet  
 abandons all to  
 find Truth.

For at first this practice tends 500  
 To holy thoughts (the holy deeds  
 Precede success) and reverent gaze  
 Upon the Ancient One of Days,  
 Beyond which fancy lies the Truth.  
 To find which I have left my youth, 505  
 All I held dear, and sit alone  
 Still meditating, on my throne  
 Of Kusha-grass,<sup>48</sup> and count my beads,  
 Murmur my mantra,<sup>49</sup> till recedes  
 The world of sense and thought—I sink 510  
 To—what abyss’s dizzy brink?  
 And fall! And I have ceased to think!  
 That is, have conquered and made still  
 Mind’s lower powers by utter Will.

515 It may be that pure Nought will fail  
Quite to assuage the needs of thought;  
But—who can tell me whether Nought  
Untried, will or will not avail?

Nothing. The  
Apotheosis of  
Realism and  
Idealism alike.

Aum! Let us meditate aright<sup>50</sup>

Gayatri.

520 On that adorable One Light,  
Divine Savitri! So may She  
Illume our minds! So mote it be!

I find some folks think me (for one)  
So great a fool that I disclaim

Is “The Soul  
of Osiris” a  
Hymn Book?  
How verse is  
written.  
Prayer.

525 Indeed Jehovah’s hate for shame  
That man to-day should not be weaned  
Of worshipping so foul a fiend  
In presence of the living Sun,  
And yet replace him oiled and cleaned

530 By the Egyptian Pantheon,  
The same thing by another name.  
Thus when of late Egyptian Gods  
Evoked ecstatic periods  
In verse of mine, you thought I praised

535 Or worshipped them—I stand amazed.  
I merely wished to chant in verse  
Some aspects of the Universe,  
Summed up these subtle forces finely,  
And sang of them (I think divinely)

540 In name and form: a fault perhaps—  
Reviewers are such funny chaps!  
I think that ordinary folk,  
Though, understood the things I spoke.  
For Gods, and devils too, I find

545 Are merely modes of my own mind!

The poet needs enthusiasm!  
 Verse-making is a sort of spasm,  
 Degeneration of the mind,  
 And things of that unpleasant kind.  
 So to the laws all bards obey 550  
 I bend, and seek in my own way  
 By false things to expound the real.  
 But never think I shall appeal  
 To Gods. What folly can compare  
 With such stupidity as prayer? 555

Marvellous an-  
 swer to prayer.  
 Prayer and  
 averages.

Some years ago I thought to try  
 Prayer<sup>51</sup>—test its efficacy.  
 I fished by a Norwegian lake.  
 “O God,” I prayed, “for Jesus’ sake  
 Grant thy poor servant all his wish! 560  
 For every prayer produce a fish!”  
 Nine times the prayer went up the spout,  
 And eight times—what a thumping trout!  
 (This is the only true fish-story  
 I ever heard—give God the glory!) 565  
 The thing seems cruel now, of course.  
 Still, it’s a grand case of God’s force!  
 But, modern Christians, do you dare  
 With common prudence to compare  
 The efficacy of prayer? 570  
 Who will affirm of Christian sages  
 That prayer can alter averages?  
 The individual case allows  
 Some chance to operate, and thus  
 Destroys its value quite for us. 575  
 So that is why I knit my brows

And think—and find no thing to say  
Or do, so foolish as to pray.

“So much for this absurd affair<sup>52</sup>

580 About” validity of prayer.

But back! Let once again address  
Ourselves to super-consciousness!

You weary me with proof enough  
That all this meditation stuff

585 Is self-hypnosis. Be it so!

Do you suppose I did not know?

Still, to be accurate, I fear

The symptoms are entirely strange.

If I were hard, I’d make it clear

590 That criticism must arrange

An explanation different

For this particular event.

Though surely I may find it queer

That you should talk of self-hypnosis,

595 When your own faith so very close is

To similar experience;

Lies, in a word, beneath suspicion

To ordinary common sense

And logic’s emery attrition.

600 I take, however, as before

Your own opinion, and demand

Some test by which to understand

Huxley’s piano-talk,\* and find

If my hypnosis may not score

605 A point against the normal mind.

Are the results  
of meditation  
due to auto-  
hypnosis?

\* See his remarks upon the Rational piano, and the conclusions to which the evidence of its senses would lead it.

(As you are please to term it, though!  
I gather that you do not know;  
Merely infer it.)

A test. The  
artist's concen-  
tration on his  
work.

Here's a test!

What in your whole life is the best 610

Of all your memories? They say

You paint—I think you should one day

Take me to seek your Studio—

Tell me, when all your work goes right,

Painted to match some inner light, 615

What of the outer world you know!

Surely, your best work always finds

Itself sole object of the mind's.

In vain you ply the brush, distracted

By something you have heard or acted. 620

Expect some tedious visitor—

Your eye runs furtive to the door;

Your hand refuses to obey;

You throw the useless brush away.

I think I hear the Word you say! 625

Yogi but a  
more vigorous  
artist. Indig-  
nation of poet  
suppressed by  
Yogi and philo-  
sopher alike.

I practice then, with conscious power

Watching my mind, each thought controlling,

Hurling to nothingness, while rolling

The thunders after lightning's flower.

Destroying passion, feeling, thought, 630

The very practice you have sought

Unconscious, when you work the best,

I carry on one step firm-pressed

Further than you the path, and you

For all my trouble, comment: "True! 635

"Auto-hypnosis. Very quaint!"<sup>53</sup>

No one supposes me a Saint—<sup>54</sup>  
 Some Saints to wrath would be inclined  
 With such a provocation pecked!

640 But I remember and reflect  
 That anger makes a person blind,  
 And my own “Chittam” I’d neglect.  
 Besides, it’s you, and you, I find,  
 Are but a mode of my own mind.

645 But then you argue, and with sense;  
 “I have this worthy evidence  
 That things are real, since I cease  
 The painter’s ecstasy of peace,  
 And find them all unchanged.” To-day

650 I cannot brush that doubt away;  
 It leads to tedious argument  
 Uncertain, in the best event:  
 Unless, indeed, I should invoke  
 The fourth dimension, clear the smoke

655 Psychology still leaves. This question  
 Needs a more adequate digestion.  
 Yet I may answer that the universe  
 Of meditation suffers less  
 From time’s insufferable stress

660 Than that of matter. On, thou puny verse!  
 Weak tide of rhyme! Another argument  
 Will block the railway train of blague you meant  
 To run me over with. This world  
 Or that? We’ll keep the question furled.

But, surely, (let me corner you!)  
 666 *You wish the painter-mood were true!*  
 To leave the hateful world, and see

Objectivity of  
 universe not  
 discussed.

Preferability of  
 concentration-  
 state to the  
 normal.

Perish the whole Academy;  
 So you remain for ever sated,  
 On your own picture concentrated! 670

Fifty years of  
 Europe worth  
 a cycle of  
 Cathay.  
 Method of  
 Christ. The  
 poet a Chris-  
 tian.

But as for me I have a test  
 Of better than the very best.  
*Respice finem!* Judge the end;  
 The man, and not the child, my friend!  
 First ecstasy of Pentecost, 675

(You now perceive my sermon's text.)  
 First leap to Sunward flings you vexed  
 By glory of its own riposte  
 Back to your mind. But gathering strength  
 And never, you come (ah light!) at length 680

To dwell awhile in the caress  
 Of that strange super-consciousness.  
 After one memory—O abide!  
 Vivid Savitri lightning-eyed!—  
 Nothing is worth a thought beside. 685

One hint of Amrita<sup>55</sup> to taste  
 And all earth's wine may run to waste!  
 For by this very means Christ gained<sup>56</sup>  
 His glimpse into that world above  
 Which he denominated "Love." 690

Indeed I think the man attained  
 By some such means—I have not strained  
 Out mind by chance of sense or sex  
 To find a way less iron-brained  
 Determining direction *x*;<sup>57</sup> 695

I know not if these Hindu methods  
 Be best ('tis no such life and death odds,  
 Since suffering souls to save or damn

Never existed). So I fall  
 700 Confessing: Well, perchance I am  
 Myself a Christian after all!  
  
 So far at least. I must concede  
 Christ did attain in every deed;  
 Yet, being an illiterate man,  
 705 Not his to balance or to scan,  
 To call God stupid or unjust!  
 He took the universe on trust:  
 He reconciled the world below  
 With that above; rolled eloquence  
 710 Steel-tired<sup>58</sup> o'er reason's "why?" and "whence?"  
 Discarded all proportion just  
 And thundered in our ears "I know,"  
 And bellowed in our brains "ye must."  
  
 Such reservations—and I class  
 715 Myself a Christian: let us pass  
 Back to the text whose thread we lost,  
 And see what means this "Pentecost."  
  
 This, then, is what I seem occurred  
 According to our Saviour's word)  
 720 That all the Saints at Pentecost  
 Received the gift—the Holy Ghost;  
 Such gift implying, as I guess  
 This very super-consciousness.<sup>59</sup>  
 Miracles follow as a dower;  
 725 But ah! they used that fatal power  
 And lost the Spirit in the act.  
 This may be fancy or a fact;  
 At least it squares with super-sense  
 Or "spiritual experience."

With reservations. Deus in machinâ. Pontius Pilate as a Surrey Magistrate.

Mystic meaning of Pentecost.

Super-consciousness is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Poet not a  
materialist.  
Mohammed's  
ideas.

You do not well to swell the list 730  
Of horrid things to me imputed  
By calling me “materialist.”  
At least this thought is better suited  
To Western minds than is embalmed  
Among the doctrines of Mohammed, 735  
The dogma parthenogenetic\*  
As told me by a fat ascetic.  
He said: “Your worthy friends may lack you late,  
But learn how Mary was immaculate!”

Verbatim re-  
port of Moslem  
account of the  
Annunciation.

I sat in vague expectant bliss. 740  
The story as it runs is thus:  
(I quote my Eastern friend<sup>60</sup> verbatim!)  
*The Virgin, going to the bath,*  
*Found a young fellow in her path,*  
*And turned, prepared to scold and rate him!* 745  
*“How dare you be on me encroaching?”*  
*The beautiful young gentleman,*  
*With perfect courtesy approaching,*  
*Bowed deeply, and at once began:*  
*“Fear nothing, Mary! All is well!* 750  
*I am the angel Gabriel.”*  
*She bared her right breast; (query why?)*  
*The angel Gabriel let fly*  
*Out of a silver Tube a Dart*  
*Shooting God’s Spirit to her heart—<sup>61</sup>* 755  
This beats the orthodox Dove-Suitor!  
What explanation could be cuter  
Than—Gabriel with a pea-shooter?

\* Concerning conception of a virgin.

In such a conflict I stand neuter.  
 760 But oh! mistake not gold for pewter!  
 The plain fact is: materialise  
 What spiritual fact you choose,  
 And all such turn to folly—lose  
 The subtle splendour, and the wise  
 765 Love and dear bliss of truth. Beware  
 Lest your lewd laughter set a snare  
 For any! Thus and only thus  
 Will I admit a difference  
 'Twixt spirit and the things of sense.  
 770 What is the quarrel between us?  
 Why do our thoughts so idly clatter?  
 I do not care one jot for matter,  
 One jot for spirit, while you say  
 One is pure ether, one pure clay.

715 I've talked too long: you're very good—  
 I only hope you've understood!  
 Remember that "conversion" lurks  
 Nowhere behind my words and works.  
 Go home and think! my talk refined  
 720 To the sheer needs of your own mind.  
 You cannot bring God in the compass  
 Of human thought? Up stick and thump ass!  
 Let human thought itself expand—  
 Bright Sun of Knowledge, in me rise!  
 725 Lead me to these exalted skies  
 To live and love and understand!  
 Paying no price, accepting nought—  
 The Giver and the Gift are one  
 With the Receiver—O thou Sun

Degradation of symbols. Essential identity of all forms of existence.

Practical advice.

Of thought, of bliss transcending thought, 790  
 Rise where divison dies! Absorb  
 In glory of the glowing orb  
 Self and its shadow!

Christian  
 mystics not  
 true Christians.  
 What think ye  
 of Crowley?  
 His interlocuter  
 dismissed, not  
 with a jest, but  
 with a warning.

Now who dares

Call me no Christian? And, who cares? 795  
 Read; you will find the Master of Balliol,  
 Discarding Berkeley, Locke, and Paley'll  
 Resume such thoughts and label clear  
 "My Christianity lies here!"

With such religion who finds fault? 800  
 Star, it seems foolish to exalt  
 Religion to such heights as these,  
 Refine the mystic agonies

To nothing, lest the mystic jeer  
 "So logic bends its line severe 805  
 Back to my involuted curve!"

These are my thoughts. I shall not swerve.  
 Take them, and see what dooms deserve  
 Their rugged grandeur—heaven or hell?  
 Mind the dark doorway there!<sup>62</sup> Farewell! 810

Poet yawns.

How tedious I always find  
 That special manner of my mind!

Aum!

Aum! let us meditate aright  
 On that adorable One Light,  
 Divine Savitri! So may She 815  
 Illume our minds! So mote it be!



N O T E S   T O  
A S C E N S I O N   D A Y  
A N D   P E N T E C O S T

“Blind Chesterton is sure to err,  
And scan my work in vain;  
I am my own interpreter,  
And I will make it plain.”

## NOTE TO INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
AN APPRECIATION

BY ALEISTER CROWLEY.\*

It is a lamentable circumstance that so many colossal brains (W. H. Mallock, &c.) have been hitherto thrown away in attacking what is after all a problem of mere academic interest, the authorship of the plays our fathers accepted as those of Shakespeare. To me it seems of immediate and vital importance to do for Shakespeare what Verrall has done so ably for Euripides. The third tabernacle must be filled; Shaw and “the Human” must have their Superhuman companion. (This is not a scale: pithecanthropoid innuendo is to be deprecated.)

Till now—as I write the sun bursts forth suddenly from a cloud, as if heralding the literary somersault of the twentieth century—we have been content to accept Shakespeare as orthodox, with common sense; moral to a fault, with certain Rabelasian leanings: a healthy tone (we say) pervades his work. Never believe it! The sex problem is his Speciality; a morbid decadence (so-called) is hidden i’ th’ heart o’ th’ rose. In other words, the divine William is the morning star to Ibsen’s dawn and Bernard Shaw’s effulgence.

The superficial, the cynical, the misanthropic will demand proof of such a statement. Let it be our contemptuous indulgence to afford them what they ask.

May I premise that, mentally obsessed, mono-maniac indeed, as we must now consider Shakespeare to have been on these points, he was yet artful enough to have concealed his advanced views—an imperative necessity, if we consider the political situation, and the virginal mask under which Queen Bess hid the grotesque and hideous features of a Messaline. Clearly so, since but for this concealment even our Shakespearian scholars would have discovered so patent a fact. In some plays, too, of course, the poet deals with less dangerous topics. These are truly conventional, no doubt; we may pass them by; they are foreign to our purpose; but we will take that stupendous example of literary subterfuge—*King Lear*.

Let my digress to the history of my own conversion.

Syllogistically,—all great men (*e.g.* Shaw) are agnostics and subverters of morals. Shakespeare was a great man. Therefore Shakespeare was an agnostic and a subverter of morals.

*À priori* this is then certain. But—

Who killed Rousseau?  
I, said Huxley  
(Like Robinson Crusoe),  
With arguments true,—so  
I killed Rousseau!

Beware of *à priori*! Let us find our facts, guided in the search by *à priori* methods, no doubt; but the result will this time justify us.

Where would a man naturally hide his greatest treasure? In his most perfect treasure-house.

\* The lamented decease of the above gentleman forbids all hope (save through the courtesy of Sir Oliver Lodge) of the appearance of the companion article.—A.C.

Where shall we look for the truest thought of a great poet? In his greatest poem.

What is Shakespeare's greatest play? *King Lear*.

In *King Lear*, then, we may expect the final statement of the poet's mind. The passage that first put me on the track of the amazing discovery for which the world has to thank me is to be found in Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 132-149:—

“This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on; an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under *ursa major*; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. 'Sfoot! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing.”

If there is one sound philosophical dictum in the play, it is this. (I am not going to argue with astrologers in the twentieth century.)

It is one we can test. On questions of morality and religion opinions veer; but if Shakespeare was a leader of thought, he saw through the humbug of the star-gazers; if not, he was a credulous fool; not the one man of his time, not a “debauched genius” (for Sir R. Burton in this phrase has in a sense anticipated my discovery) but a mere Elizabethan.

This the greatest poet of all time? Then we must believe that Gloucester was right, and that eclipses caused the fall of Lear! Observe that before this Shakespeare has had a sly dig or two at magic. In *King John*, “My lord, they say five moons were seen to-night” —but there is no eyewitness. So in *Macbeth*. In a host of spiritual suggestion there is always the rational sober explanation alongside to discredit the folly of the supernatural.

Shakespeare is like his own Touchstone; he uses his folly as a stalking-horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

Here, however, the mask is thrown off for any but the utterly besotted; Edmund's speech stands up in the face of all time as truth; it challenges the acclamation of the centuries.

Edmund is then the hero; more, he is Shakespeare's own portrait of himself; his ways are dark—(and, alas! his tricks are vain!)—for why? For the fear of the conventional world about him.

He is illegitimate: Shakespeare is no true child of that age, but born in defiance of it and its prejudices.

Having taken this important step, let us slew round the rest of the play to fit it. If it fits, the law of probability comes to our aid; every coincidence multiplies the chance of our correctness in increasing proportion. We shall see—and you may look up your Proctor—that if the stars are placed just so by chance not law, then also it may be possible that Shakespeare was the wool-combing, knock-kneed, camel-backed, church-going, plaster-of-Paris, stick-in-the-mud our scholars have always made him.

Edmund being the hero, Regan and Goneril must be the heroines. So nearly equal are their virtues and beauties that our poet cannot make up his mind which shall possess him—besides which, he wishes to drive home his arguments in favour of polygamy.

But the great theme of the play is of course filial duty; on this everything will turn. Here is a test:

*Whenever the question is discussed, let us see who speaks the language of sense, and who that of draggle-tailed emotionalism and tepid melodrama.*

In the first scene the heroines, who do not care for the old fool their father—as how could any sane women? Remember Shakespeare is here about to show the folly of filial love as such—feel compelled, by an act of gracious generosity to a man they despise, yet pity, to say what they think will please the dotard's vanity. Also no doubt the sound commercial instinct was touched by Lear's promise to make acres vary as words, and they determined to make a final effort to get some parsnips buttered after all.

Shakespeare (it is our English boast) was no long-haired squiggle self-yclept bard; but a business man—see Bishop Blougram's appreciation of him as such.

Shall we suppose him to have deliberately blackguarded in another his own best qualities?

Note, too, the simple honesty of the divine sisters! Others, more subtle, would have suspected a trap, arguing that such idiocy as Lear's could not be genuine—Cordelia, the Madame Humbert of the play, does so; her over-cleverness leaves her stranded: yet by a certain sliminess of dissimulation, the oiliness of frankness, the pride that apes humility, she *does* catch the best king going. Yet it avails her little. She is hanged like the foul Vivien she is.\*

Cordelia's farewell to her sisters shows up the characters of the three in strong relief. Cordelia—without a scrap of evidence to go on—accuses her sisters of hypocrisy and cruelty. (This could not have previously existed, or Lear would not have been deceived.)

Regan gravely rebukes her; recommends, as it were, a course of Six Easy Lessons in Minding Her Own Business; and surely it was unparalleled insolence on the part of a dismissed girl to lecture her more favourite sister on the very point for which she herself was at that moment being punished. It is the spite of baffled dissimulation against triumphant honesty. Goneril adds a word of positive advice. "You," she says in effect, "who prate of duty thus, see you show it to him unto whom you owe it."

That this advice is wasted is clear from Act V. Sc. iii., where the King of France takes the first trivial opportunity† to be free of the vile creature he had so foolishly married.

Cordelia goes, and the sisters talk together. Theirs is the language of quiet sorrow for an old man's failing mind; yet a most righteous determination not to allow the happiness of the English people to depend upon his whims. Bad women would have rejoiced in the banishment of Kent, whom they already knew to be their enemy; these truly good women regret it. "Such unconstant stars are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment" (Act I. Sc. i. ll. 304-5).

In Scene ii. Edmund is shown; he feels himself a man, more than Edgar: a clear-headed, brave, honourable man; but with no maggots. The injustice of his situation strikes him; he determines not to submit.‡

This is the attitude of a strong man, and a righteous one. Primogeniture is wrong enough; the other shame, no fault of his, would make the blood of any free man boil.

Gloucester enters, and exhibits himself as a prize fool by shouting in disjointed phrases what everybody knew. Great news it is, of course, and on discovering Edmund, he can think of nothing more sensible than to ask for more! "Kent banished thus! And France in choler parted! And the king

\* I use the word Vivien provisionally, pending the appearance of an essay to prove that Lord Tennyson was in secret a reformer of our lax modern morals. No doubt, there is room for this. Vivien was perfectly right about the "cycle of strumpets and scoundels whom Mr. Tennyson has set revolving round the figure of his central wittol," and she was the only one with the courage to say so, and the brains to strip of the barbarous glitter from an idiotic and phantom chivalry.

† He leaves her in charge of Marshal Le Fer, whom alone he could trust to be impervious to her wiles, he being devoted to another; for as an invaluable contemporary MS. has it, "Seccotine colle même Le Fer."

‡ This may be, but I think should not be, used as an argument to prove the poet an illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth.

gone to-night! subscrib'd his power! Confin'd to exhibition! All this done upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?" (Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 23-26).

Edmund "forces a card" by the simple device of a prodigious hurry to hide it. Gloucester gives vent to his astrological futilities, and falls to axiomania in its crudest form,—“We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our grave” (Sc. ii. ll. 125-127).

Edmund, once rid of him, gives us the plainest sense we are likely to here for the rest of our lives; then, with the prettiest humour in the world takes the cue of his father's absurdity, and actually plays it on his enemy. Edgar's leg is not so easily pulled—(“How long have you been a sectary astronomical?” ll. 169, 170)—and the bastard hero, taking alarm, gets right down to business.

In Scene iii. we find Lear's senile dementia taking the peculiarly loathesome form familiar to alienists—this part of my subject is so unpleasant that I must skim over it; I only mention it to show how anxious Shakespeare is to show his hidden meaning, otherwise his naturally delicate mind would have avoided the depiction of such phenomena.

All this prepares us for Scene iv., in which we get a glimpse of the way Lear's attendants habitually behave. Oswald, who treats Lear throughout with perfect respect, and only shows honest independence in refusing to obey a man who is not his master, is insulted in language worthier of a bargee than a king; and when he remonstrates in dignified and temperate language is set upon by the ruffianly Kent.

Are decent English people to complain when Goneril insists that this sort of thing shall not occur in a royal house? She does so, in language nobly indignant, yet restrained: Lear, in the hideous, impotent rage of senility, calls her—his own daughter—a bastard (no insult to her, but to himself or his wife, mark ye well!). Albany enters—a simple, orderly-minded man; he must not be confused with Cornwall; he is at the last Lear's dog; yet even he in decent measured speech sides with his wife. Is Lear quieted? No! He utters the most horrible curse, not excepting that of Count Cenci, that a father ever pronounced. Incoherent threats succeed to the boilings-over of the hideous malice of a beastly mind; but a hundred knights are a hundred knights, and a threat is a threat. Goneril had not fulfilled her duty to herself, to her people, had she allowed this monster of mania to go on.

I appeal to the medical profession; if one doctor will answer me that a man using Lear's language should be allowed control of a hundred armed ruffians [in the face of Kent's behaviour we know what weight to attach to Lear's defence: “Detested kite! thou liest” (I. iv. ll. 286)], should ever be allowed outside a regularly appointed madhouse, I will cede the point, and retire myself into an asylum.

In fact, Lear is going mad; the tottering intellect, at no time strong (“'Tis the infirmity of age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself,” I. i. ll. 296-7), is utterly cast down by drink and debauchery: he even sees it himself, and with a pointless bestiality from the Fool, fit companion for the—king—and in that word we see all the concentrated loathing of the true Shakespeare for a despotism, massed in one lurid flame, phantasmagoric horror, the grim First Act rolls down.

## II.

Act II. Sc. i. adds little new to our thesis, save that in line 80 we see Gloucester (ignorant of his own son's handwriting!) accept the forged letter as genuine, as final proof, with not even the intervention of a Bertillon to excuse so palpable a folly, so egregious a crime. What father of to-day would disinherit, would hunt down to death, a beloved son, on such evidence? Or are we to take it that the eclipse gave proof unshakable of a phenomenon so portentous?

In Scene ii. we have another taste of Kent's gentlemanly demeanour; let our conventionalist interpreters defend this unwarrantable bullying if they dare! Another might be so gross, so cowardly; but not our greatest poet! A good portion of this play, as will be shown later, is devoted to a bitter assault upon the essentially English notion that the pugilist is the supreme device of the Creator for furthering human happiness. (See "Cashel Byron's Profession" for a similar, though more logical and better-worded, attack.) Coarse and violent language continues to disgrace Lear's follower; only Gloucester, the unconscionable ass and villain of Scene i., has a word to say in his defence.

In Scene iii. we have a taste of Edgar's quality. Had this despicable youth the consciousness of innocence, or even common courage, he had surely stood to his trial. Not he! He plays the coward's part—and his disguise is not even decent.

In Scene iv. we are shown the heroic sisters in their painful task of restraining, always with the utmost gentleness of word and demeanour, the headstrong passions of the miserable king. Lear, at first quiet in stating his fancied wrongs "*Reg.* 'I am glad to see your highness.' *Lear.* 'Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulchring an adult'ress. (*To Kent*). O! are you free? Some other time for that. Beloved Regan, Thy sister's naught: O Regan! she hath tied Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here: (*Points to his heart*). I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe with how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!' *Reg.* 'I pray you sir, take patience. I have hope.' ") (ll. 130-139), an excusable speech, at the first hint that he is not to have it all his own way, falls a-cursing again like the veriest drab or scullion Hamlet ever heard.

Here is a man, deprived on just cause of half a useless company of retainers. Is this wrong (even were it wrong) such as to justify the horrible curses of ll. 164-168, "All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones, You taking airs, with lameness! You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames Into her scornful eyes!" With this he makes his age contemptible by the drivel-pathos of ll. 156-158, "Dear daughter, I confess that I am old; Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg (*Kneeling*) That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food," begging what none ever thought to deny him.

Yet such is the patience of Goneril that even when goaded by all this infamous Billingsgate into speech, her rebuke is the temperate and modest ll. 198-200. "Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended? All's not offence that indiscretion finds And dotage terms so." If we ask a parallel for such meekness under insult, calumny, and foul abuse, we must seek it not in a human story, but a divine.

The heroines see that no half measures will do, and Lear is stripped of all the murderous retinue—what scum they are is shown by the fact that not one of them draws sword for him, or even follows him into the storm—to which his bad heart clings; yet for him—for him in spite of all his loathsomeness, his hatred, his revengefulness—is Regan's gentle and loving,

"For his particular, I'll receive him gladly."

### III.

In Act III. we have another illustration of the morality that passed current with the Tudors, and which only a Shakespeare had the courage to attack. Kent does not stick at treachery—he makes one gulp of treason—straining at the gnat of discipline, he swallows the camel of civil war.

It was then, and is even now, the practice of some—for example, the emigrés of the French Revolution—to invite foreign invasion as a means of securing domestic reaction. The blackguardism implied is beyond language: Shakespeare was perhaps thinking of the proposal, in Mary's reign, to

react to Romanism by the aid of Spanish troops. But he will go further than this, will our greatest poet; it were ill that the life of even one child should atone for mere indignity or discomfort to another, were he the greatest in the realm. To-day we all agree; we smile or sneer if any one should differ.

“King Lear got caught in the rain—let us go and kill a million men!” is an argument not much understood of Radical Clubs, and even Jingos would pause, did they but take the precaution of indulging in a mild aperient before recording their opinions.

In Scenes iii., vi., and vii., Edmund, disgusted beyond all measure with Gloucester’s infamies, honourably and patriotically denounces him.

The other scenes depict the miseries which follow the foolish and the unjust; and Nemesis falls upon the ill-minded Gloucester. Yet Shakespeare is so appreciative of the virtue of compassion (for Shakespeare was, as I shall hope to prove one day, a Buddhist) that Cornwall, the somewhat cruel instrument of eternal Justice, is killed by his servant. Regan avenges her husband promptly, and I have little doubt that this act of excessive courtesy towards a man she did not love is the moral cause of her unhappy end.

I would not that we should not attempt to draw any opinions as to the author’s design from the conversation of the vulgar; even had we not Coriolanus to show us what he thought.

#### IV.

Act IV. develops the plot and is little germane to our matter, save that we catch a glimpse of the unspeakably vile Cordelia, with no pity for her father’s serious condition (though no doubt he deserved all he got, he was now harmless and should have inspired compassion), hanging to him in the hope that he would no reverse his banishment and make her (after a bloody victory) sole heiress of great England.

And were any doubt left in our minds as to who really was the hero of the play, the partizanship of France should settle it. Shakespeare has never any word but ridicule for the French; never aught but praise of England and love for her: are we to suppose that in his best play he is to stultify all his other work and insult the English for the benefit of the ridiculed and hated Frenchmen?

Moreover, Cordelia reckons without her host. The British bulldogs make short work of the invaders and rebels, doubtless with the connivance of the King of France, who, with great and praiseworthy acuteness, foresees that Cordelia will be hanged, thus liberating him from his “most filthy bargain”: there is but one alarum, and the whole set of scoundrels surrender. Note this well; it is not by brute force that the battle is won; for even if we exonerate the King of France, we may easily believe that the moral strength of the sisters cowed the French.

This is the more evident, since in Act V. Shakespeare strikes his final blow at the absurdity of the duel, when Edmund is dishonestly slain by the beast Edgar. Yet the poet’s faith is still strong: wound up as his muse is to tragedy, he retains in Edmund the sublime heroism, the simple honesty, of the true Christian; at the death of his beloved mistresses he cries,

“ I was contracted to them both: all three  
Now marry in an instant——”

At the moment of death his great nature (self-accusatory, as the finest so often are) asserts itself, and he forgives even the vilest of the human race,—“I pant for life: some good I mean to do Despite of mine

own nature.\* Quickly send, Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ Is on the life Lear and on Cordelia. Nay, send in time.” (ll. 245-249).

And in that last supreme hour of agony he claims Regan as his wife, as if by accident; it is not the passionate assertion of a thing doubtful, but the natural reference to a thing well known and indisputable.

And in the moment of his despair; confronted with the dead bodies of the splendid sisters, the catafalque of all his hopes, he can exclaim in spiritual triumph over material disaster—the victory of a true man’s spirit over Fate—

“Yet Edmund was beloved.”

Edgar is left alive with Albany, alone of all that crew; and if remorse could touch their brutal and callous souls (for the degeneration of the weakling, well-meaning Albany, is a minor tragedy), what hell could be more horrible than the dragging out of a cancerous existence in the bestial world of hate their hideous hearts had made, now, even for better men, for ever dark and gloomy, robbed of the glory of the glowing Goneril, the royal Regan, and only partially redeemed by the absence of the harlot Cordelia and the monster Lear.

## V.

It may possibly be objected by the censorious, by the effete parasites of a grim conventionalism, that I have proved too much. Even by conventional standards Edmund, Goneril, and Regan appear angels. Even on the moral point, the sisters, instead of settling down to an enlightened and by no means overcrowded polygamy, prefer to employ poison. This is perhaps true, of Goneril at least; Regan is, if one may distinguish between star and star, somewhat the finer character.

This criticism is perhaps true in part; but I will not insult the intelligence of my readers. I will leave it to them to take the obvious step and work backwards to the re-exaltation of Lear, Cordelia, Edgar and company, to the heroic fields of their putty Elysium (putty, not Putney) in their newly-demonstrated capacity as “unnatural” sons, daughters, fathers, and so on.

But I leave it. I am content—my work will have been well done—if this trifling essay be accepted as a just instalment towards a saner criticism of our holiest writers, a juster appreciation of the glories of our greatest poet, a possibly jejune yet assuredly historic attempt to place of the first time William Shakespeare on his proper pedestal as an early disciple of Mr. George Bernard Shaw; and by consequence to carve myself a little niche in the same temple: the smallest contributions will be thankfully received.

## NOTES TO ASCENSION DAY

1. *I flung out of chapel*.<sup>1</sup>—Browning, *Xmas Eve*, III. last line.

3. *Venus’ Bower and Osiris’ Tomb*.<sup>2</sup>—Crowley, *Tannhaüser*.

5. *God*.<sup>3</sup>—Hebrew, אֱלֹהִים, Gen. iii. 5.

5. *gods*.<sup>4</sup>—Hebrew, אֱלֹהִים, Gen. iii. 5.

The Revisers, seeing this most awkward juxtaposition, have gone yet one step lower and translated both words by “God.” In other passages, however, they have been compelled to disclose their own dishonesty and translate אֱלֹהִים by “gods.”

\* This may merely mean “despite the fact that I am dying—though I am almost too weak to speak.” If so, the one phrase in the play which seems to refute our theory is disposed of. Execution of such criminals would be a matter of routine at the period of the play.

For evidence of this the reader may look up such passages as Ex. xviii. 11; Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. lxxxii. [in particular where the word appears twice, as also the word **ḡḡ**. But the revisers twice employ the word “God” and once the word “gods.” The A.V. has “mighty” in one case]; Gen. xx. 13, where again the verb is plural; Sam. xxviii. 13, and so on.

See the Hebrew Dictionary of Gesenius (trans. Tregelles), Bagster, 1859, *s.v.*, for proof that the Author is on the way to the true interpretation of these conflicting facts, as now established—see Huxley, H. Spencer, Kuenen, Reuss, Lippert, and others—and his orthodox translator’s infuriated snarls (in brackets) when he suspects this tendency to accept facts as facts.

6. *Soul went down.*<sup>5</sup>—*The Questions of King Milinda*, 40–45, 48, 67, 86–89, III, 132.

7. *The metaphysical lotus-eyed.*<sup>6</sup>—Gautama Buddha.

10. *Childe Roland.*<sup>7</sup>—Browning, *Dramatic Romances*.

11. *Two hundred thousand Trees.*<sup>8</sup>—Browning wrote about 200,000 lines.

13. *Your Reverence.*<sup>9</sup>—The imaginary Aunt Sally for the poetic cocoanut.\*

16. “*God’s right use of it.*”<sup>10</sup>—“And many an eel, though no adept In God’s right reason for it, kept Gnawing his kidneys half a year.”—Shelley, *Peter Bell the Third*.

17. *One Tree.*<sup>11</sup>—Note the altered value of the metaphor, such elasticity having led Prof. Blümengarten to surmise them to be india-rubber trees.

27. “*Truth, that’s the gold.*”<sup>12</sup>—*Two Poets of Croisic*, clii. 1, and elsewhere.

28. “*I, you, or Simpkin.*”<sup>13</sup>—*Imm Album*, l. 143. “Simpkin” has nothing to do with the foaming grape of Eastern France.

36. *Aischulos.*<sup>14</sup>—See Agamemnon (Browning’s translation), Preface.

40. *Aristobulus.*<sup>15</sup>—May be scanned elsehow by pedants. Cf. Swinburne’s curious scansion Ἀριστοφᾶνῆς. But the scansion adopted here gives a more credible rhyme.

42. Βατραχομουμαχία.<sup>16</sup>—Aristophanes Batrachoi.

46. *Mine of so many pounds—pouch even pence of it?*<sup>17</sup>—This line was suggested to me by a large holder of Westralians.

47. *Something easier.*<sup>18</sup>—*Christmas Eve and Easter Day*.

51. *Newton.*<sup>19</sup>—Mathematician and physicist of repute.

51. *Faraday.*<sup>20</sup>—See Dictionary of National Biography.

64. *I, of the Moderns, have let alone Greek.*<sup>21</sup>—As far as they would let me. I know some.

74. *Beard.*<sup>22</sup>—“150. A Barba Senioris Sanctissimi pendet omnis ornatus omnium: & influenza; nam omnia appellantur ab illa barba, Influentia.

“151. Hic est ornatus omnium ornatum: Influentie superiores & inferiores omnes respiciunt istam Influentiam.

“152. Ab ista influenza dependet vita omnium.

“153. Ab hac influenza dependet cœli & terra; pluvix beneplaciti; & alimenta omnium.

“154. Ab hac influenza venit providentia omnium. Ab hac influenza dependent omnes exercitus superiores & inferiores.

“155. Tredecim fontes olei magnificentix boni, dependent a barba hujus influentix gloriosæ; & omnes emanant in Microprosopum.

“156. Ne dicas omnes; sed novem ex iis inveniuntur ad inflectenda judicia.

“157. Et quando hæc influenza æqualiter pendet usque ad præcordia omnes Sanctitates Sanctitatum Sanctitatis ab illa dependent.

\* Crowley confuses two common pastoral amusements—throwing wooden balls at cocoanuts and sticks at Aunt Sally.

“158. In istam influentiam extenditur expansio aporrhœæ supernæ, quæ est caput omnium capitum: quod non cognoscitur nec perficitur, quodque non norunt nec superi, nec inferi: propterea omnia ab ista influentia dependent.

“159. In hanc barbam tria capita de quibus diximus, expandantur, & omnia consociantur in hac influentia, & inveniuntur in ea.

“160. Et propterea omnis ornatus ornatuum ab ista influentia dependent.

“161. Istæ literæ, quæ dependent ab hoc Seniore, omnes pendent in ista barba, & consociantur in ista influentia.

“162. Et pendent in ea ad stabiliendas literas alteras.

“163. Nisi enim illæ literæ ascenderunt in Seniore, reliquæ istæ literæ non stabilirentur.

“164. Et propterea dicit Moses cum opus esset: Tetragrammaton, Tetragrammaton bis: & ita ut accentus distinguat utrumque.

“165. Certe enim ab influentia omnia dependent.

“166. Ab ista influentia ad reverentiam adiguntur superna & inferna, & flectuntur coram ea.

“167. Beatus ille, qui ad hanc usque per tingit.”

*Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor. Sectio VI.*

75. *Forehead.*<sup>23</sup>—“496. Frons Cranii est frons ad visitandum: (Al. ad eradicandum) peccatoras.

“497. Et cum ista frons detegitur tunc excitantur Domini Judiciorum, contra illos qui non erubescunt in operibus suis.

“498. Hæc frons ruborem habet roseum. Sed illo tempore, cum frons Senioris erga hanc frontem detegitur, hæc apparet alba ut nix.

“499. Et illa hora vocatur Tempus beneplaciti pro omnibus.

“500. In libro Dissertationis Scholæ Raf Jebha Senis dicitur: Frons est receptaculum frontis Senioris. Sin minus, litera Cheth inter duas reliquas interponitur, juxta illud: (Num. xxiv. 17) וַיִּכְרַחֵם וְיִפְרֹץ וְיִשְׁבֹּר וְיִפְרֹץ וְיִשְׁבֹּר וְיִפְרֹץ et confringet angulos Moab.

“501. Et alibi diximus, quod etiam vocatur נִצְוָה, literis vicinis permutatis: id est, superatio.

“502. Multæ autem sunt Superationes: ita ut Superatio alia elevata sit in locum alium: & aliæ dentur Superationes quæ extenduntur in totum corpus.

“503. Die Sabbathi autem tempore precum pomeridianarum, ne excitentur judicia, detegitur frons Senioris Sanctissimi.

“504. Et omnia judicia subiguntur; & quamvis extent, tamen non exercentur. (Al. et sedantur.)

“505. Ab hac fronte dependent viginti quatuor tribunalia, pro omnibus illis, qui protervi sunt in operibus.

“506. Sicut scriptum est: (Ps. lxxiii. 11) Et dixerunt: quomodo sit Deus? Et estne scientia in excelso?

“507. At vero viginti saltem sunt, cur adduntur quatuor? nimirum respectu suppliciorum, tribunalium inferiorum, quæ a supernis dependent.

“508. Remanent ergo viginti. Et propterea neminem supplico capitali afficiunt, donec compleverit & ascenderit ad viginti annos; respectu viginti horum tribunalium.

“509. Sed in thesi nostra arcana docuimus, per ista respici viginti quatuor libros qui continentur in Lege.”

*Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor. Sectio XIII.*

77. *Chains.*<sup>24</sup>—Sakkâha-ditthi, Vikikikkhâ, silabbata-parâmâsa, kâma, patigha, rûparâga, arûparâga, mâno, uddhakka, aviggâ.

81. “Who asks doth err.”<sup>25</sup>—Arnold, *Light of Asia*.

83. *You*.<sup>26</sup>—You!

86. “*O’erleaps itself and falls on the other.*”<sup>27</sup>—*Macbeth*, I. vii. 27.

92. *English*.<sup>28</sup>—This poem is written in English.

94. *I cannot write*.<sup>29</sup>—This is not quite true. For instance:

ལ། ལམ་སོང་རིང་མོ་དང་ལུང་པོ་  
 ལུང་མོ་སོང་  
 ལྷ་མ་སོང་སྟོང་པོ་དང་ལྷ་  
 པོ་དང་སོང་  
 ཡི་མ་ནི་ལག་སྟོང་ཅིག་ཅིག་  
 བར་དྲ་ཅིས་  
 ལྷེ་པ་ཡིན་ཐོབ་ཐལ་དྲ་  
 ཅ་ལྱལ།

This, the opening stanza of my masterly poem on Ladak, reads:—“The way was long, and the wind was cold: the Lama was infirm and advanced in years; his prayer-wheel, to revolve which was his only pleasure, was carried by a disciple, an orphan.”

There is a reminiscence of some previous incarnation about this: European critics may possibly even identify the passage. But at least the Tibetans should be pleased.\*

97. *While their Buddha I attack*.<sup>30</sup>—Many Buddhists think I fill the bill with the following remarks on—

#### PANSIL.

Unwilling as I am to sap the foundations of the Buddhist religion by the introduction of Porphyry’s terrible catapult, Allegory, I am yet compelled by the more fearful ballista of Aristotle, Dilemma. This is the two-handed engine spoken of by the prophet Milton!†

This is the horn of the prophet Zeruiah, and with this am I, though no Syrian, utterly pushed, till I find myself back against the dead wall of Dogma. Only now realising how dead a wall that is, do I turn and try the effect of a hair of the dog that bit me, till the orthodox “literary”‡ school of Buddhists, as grown at Rangoon, exclaim with Lear: “How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is To have an intellect!” How is this? Listen, and hear!

I find myself confronted with the crux: that a Buddhist, convinced intellectually and philosophically of the truth of the teaching of Gotama; a man to whom Buddhism is the equivalent of scientific methods of Thought; an expert in dialectic whose logical faculty is bewildered, whose critical admiration is extorted by the subtle vigour of Buddhist reasoning; I am yet forced to admit that, this being so, the Five Precepts§ are mere nonsense. If the Buddha spoke scientifically, not popularly, not rhetorically, then his precepts are

\* They were; thence the pacific character of the British expedition of 1904.—A.C.

† *Lycidas*, line 130.

‡ The school whose Buddhism is derived from the Canon, and who ignore the degradation of the professors of the religion, as seen in practice.

§ The obvious caveat which logicians will enter against these remarks is that Pansil is the Five Virtues rather than Precepts. Etymologically this is so. However, we may regard this as a clause on my side of the argument, not against it; for in my view these are virtues, and the impossibility of attaining them is the cancer of existence. Indeed, I support the etymology as against the futile bigotry of certain senile Buddhists of to-day. And, since it is the current interpretation of Buddhist thought that I attack, I but show myself the better Buddhist in the act.—A.C.

not his. We must reject them or we must interpret them. We must inquire: Are they meant to be obeyed? Or—and this is my theory—are they sarcastic and biting criticisms on existence, illustrations of the First Noble Truth; *reasons*, as it were, for the apotheosis of annihilation? I shall so that this is so. Let me consider them “precept upon precept,” if the introduction of the Hebrew visionary is not too strong meat for the Little Mary\* of a Buddhist audience.

#### THE FIRST PRECEPT.

This forbids the taking of life in any form.† What we have to note is the impossibility of performing this; if we can prove it to be so, either Buddha was a fool, or his command was rhetorical, like those of Yahweh to Job, or of Tannhäuser to himself—

“ Go! seek the stars and count them and explore  
Go! sift the sands beyond a starless sea!”

Let us consider what the words can mean. The “taking of life” can only mean the reduction of living protoplasm to dead matter: or, in a truer and more psychological sense, the destruction of personality.

Now, in the chemical changes involved in Buddha’s speaking this command, living protoplasm was changed into dead matter. Or, on the other horn, the fact (insisted upon most strongly by the Buddha himself, the central and cardinal point of his doctrine, the shrine of that Metaphysic which isolates it absolutely from all other religious metaphysic, which allies it with Agnostic Metaphysics) that the Buddha who had spoken this command was not the same as the Buddha before he had spoken it, lies the proof that the Buddha, by speaking this command, violated it. More, not only did he slay himself; he breathed in millions of living organisms and slew them. He could not eat nor drink nor breathe without murder implicit in each act. Huxley cites the “pitiless microscopist” who showed a drop of water to the Brahmin who boasted himself “Ahimsa”—harmless. So among the “rights” of a Bhikkhu is medicine. He who takes quinine does so with the deliberate intention of destroying innumerable living beings; whether this is done by stimulating the phagocytes, or directly, is morally indifferent.

How such a fiend incarnate, my dear brother Ananda Maitriya, can call him “cruel and cowardly” who only kills a tiger, is a study in the philosophy of the mote and the beam!‡

Far be it from me to suggest that this is a defence of breathing, eating and drinking. By no means; in all these ways we bring suffering and death to others, as to ourselves. But since these are inevitable acts, since suicide would be a still more cruel alternative (especially in case something should subsist below mere Rupa), the command is not to achieve the impossible, the already violated in the act of commanding, but a bitter commentary on the foul evil of this aimless, hopeless universe, this compact of misery, meanness, and cruelty. Let us pass on.

#### THE SECOND PRECEPT

The Second Precept is directed against theft. Theft is the appropriation to one’s own use of that to which another has a right. Let us see therefore whether or no the Buddha was a thief. The answer is of course in the affirmative. For to issue a command is to attempt to deprive another of his most precious possession—the right to do as he will; that is, unless, with the predestinarians, we hold that

\* A catch word for the stomach, from J.M. Barrie’s play “Little Mary.”

† Fielding, in “The Soul of a People,” has reluctantly to confess that he can find no trace of this idea in Buddha’s own work, and called the superstition the “echo of an older Faith.”—A.C.

‡ The argument that the “animals are our brothers” is merely intended to mislead one who has never been in a Buddhist country. The average Buddhist would, of course, kill his brother for five rupees, or less.—A. C.

action is determined absolutely, in which case, of course, a command is as absurd as it is unavoidable. Excluding this folly, therefore, we may conclude that if the command be obeyed—and those of Buddha have gained a far larger share of obedience than those of any other teacher—the Enlightened One was not only a potential but an actual thief. Further, all voluntary action limits in some degree, however minute, the volition of others. If I breathe, I diminish the stock of oxygen available on the planet. In those far distant ages when Earth shall be as dead as the moon is to-day, my breathing now will have robbed some being then living of the dearest necessity of life.

That the theft is minute, incalculably trifling, is no answer to the moralist, to whom degree is not known; nor to the scientist, who sees the chain of nature miss no link.

If, on the other hand, the store of energy in the universe be indeed constant (whether infinite or no), if personality be indeed delusion, then theft becomes impossible, and to forbid it is absurd. We may argue that even so temporary theft may exist; and that this is so is to my mind no doubt the case. All theft is temporary, since even a millionaire must die; also it is universal, since even a Buddha must breathe.

### THE THIRD PRECEPT

This precept, against adultery, I shall touch but lightly. Not that I consider the subject unpleasant—far from it!—but since the English section of my readers, having unclean minds, will otherwise find a fulcrum therein for their favourite game of slander. Let it suffice if I say that the Buddha—in spite of the ridiculous membrane legend,\* one of those foul follies which idiot devotees invent only too freely—was a confirmed and habitual adulterer. It would be easy to argue with Hegel-Huxley that he who thinks of an act commits it (cf. Jesus also in this connection, though he only knows the creative value of desire), and that since A and not-A are mutually limiting, therefore interdependent, therefore identical, he who forbids an act commits it; but I feel that this is no place for metaphysical hair-splitting; let us prove what we have to prove in the plainest way.

I would premise in the first place that to commit adultery in the Divorce Court sense is not here in question.

It assumes too much proprietary right of a man over a woman, that root of all abomination!—the whole machinery of inheritance, property, and all the labyrinth of law.

We may more readily assume that the Buddha was (apparently at least) condemning incontinence.

We know that Buddha had abandoned his home; true, but Nature has to be reckoned with. Volition is no necessary condition of offence. “I didn’t mean to” is a poor excuse for an officer failing to obey an order.

Enough of this—in any case a minor question; since even on the lowest moral grounds—and we, I trust, soar higher!—the error in question may be resolved into a mixture of murder, theft and intoxication. (We consider the last under the Fifth Precept.)

### THE FOURTH PRECEPT

Here we come to what in a way is the fundamental joke of these precepts. A command is not a lie, of course; possibly cannot be; yet surely an allegorical order is one in essence, and I have no longer a shadow of a doubt that these so-called “precepts” are a species of savage practical joke.

Apart from this there can hardly be much doubt, when critical exegesis has done its damndest on the Logia of our Lord, that Buddha did at some time commit himself to some statement. “(Something called) Consciousness exists” is, said Huxley, the irreducible minimum of the pseudo-syllogism, false even for an enthymeme, “Cogito, ergo sum!” This proposition he bolsters up by stating that whoso should pretend to

\* *Membrum virile illius in membrana inclusum esse aiunt, ne copulare posset.*

doubt it, would thereby but confirm it. Yet might it not be said “(Something called) Consciousness appears to itself to exist,” since Consciousness is itself the only witness to that confirmation? Not that even now we can deny some kind of existence to consciousness, but that it should be a more real existence than that of a reflection is doubtful, incredible, even inconceivable. If by consciousness we mean the normal consciousness, it is definitely untrue, since the Dhyanic consciousness includes it and denies it. No doubt “something called” acts as a kind of caveat to the would-be sceptic, though the phrase is bad, implying a “calling.” But we can guess what Huxley means.

No doubt Buddha’s scepticism does not openly go quite so far as mine—it must be remembered that “scepticism” is merely the indication of a possible attitude, not a belief, as so many good fool folk thing; but Buddha not only denies “Cogito, ergo sum”; but “Cogito, ergo non sum.” See *Sabbasava Sutta*, par. 10.

At any rate, Sakkyaditthi, the delusion of personality, is in the very forefront of his doctrines; and it is this delusion that is constantly and inevitably affirmed in all normal consciousness. That Dhyanic thought avoids it is doubtful; even so, Buddha is here represented as giving precepts to ordinary people. And if personality be delusion, a lie is involved in the command of one to another. In short, we all lie all the time; we are compelled to it by the nature of things themselves—paradoxical as that seems—and the Buddha knew it!

#### THE FIFTH PRECEPT.

At last we arrive at the end of our weary journey—surely in this weather we may have a drink! East of Suez,† Trombone-Macaulay (as I may surely say, when Browning writes Banjo-Byron‡) tells us, a man may raise a Thirst. No, shrieks the Blessed One, the Perfected One, the Enlightened One, do not drink! It is like the streets of Paris when they were placarded with rival posters—

Ne buvez pas de l’Alcool!  
L’Alcool est un poison!

and

Buvez de l’Alcool!  
L’Alcool est un aliment!

We know now that alcohol is a food up to a certain amount; the precept, good enough for a rough rule as it stands, will not bear close inspection. What Buddha really commands with that grim humour of his, is: Avoid Intoxication.

But what is intoxication? unless it be the loss of power to use perfectly a truth-telling set of faculties. If I walk unsteadily it is owing to nervous lies—and so for all the phenomena of drunkenness. But a lie involves the assumption of some true standard, and this can no-where be found. A doctor would tell you, moreover, that all food intoxicates: all, here as in all the universe, of every subject and in every predicate, is a matter of degree.

Our faculties never tell us true; our eyes say flat when our fingers say round; our tongue sends a set of impressions to our brain which our hearing declares non-existent—and so on.

\* Quoted in “Science and Buddhism”, s. IV., note.

† “Ship me somewhere East of Suez, where a man can raise a thirst.”—R. KIPLING.

‡ “While as for Quilp Hop o’ my Thumb there  
Banjo-Byron that twangs the strum-strum there.  
—BROWNING, *Pachiarotto* (said of A. Austin)†

What is this delusion of personality but a profound and centrally-seating intoxication of the consciousness? I am intoxicated as I address these words; you are drunk—beastly drunk!—as you read them; Buddha was as drunk as a British officer when he uttered his besotted command. There, my dear children, is the conclusion to which we are brought if you insist that he was serious!

I answer No! Alone among men then living, the Buddha was sober, and saw Truth. He, who was freed from the coils of the great serpent Theli coiled round the universe, he knew how deep the slaver of that snake had entered into us, infecting us, rotting our very bones with poisonous drunkenness. And so his cutting irony—drink no intoxicating drinks!

\* \* \* \* \*

When I go to take Pansil,\* it is in no spirit of servile morality; it is with keen sorrow gnawing at my heart. These five causes of sorrow are indeed the heads of the serpent of Desire. Four at least of them snap their fans on me in and by virtue of my very act of receiving the commands, and of promising to obey them; if there is a little difficulty about the fifth, it is an omission easily rectified—and I think we should all make a point about that; there is great virtue in completeness.

Yes! Do not believe that the Buddha was a fool; that he asked men to perform the impossible or the unwise.† Do not believe that the sorrow of existence is so trivial that easy rules easily interpreted (as all Buddhists do interpret the Precepts) can avail against them; do not mop up the Ganges with a duster; nor stop the revolution of the stars with a lever of lath.

Awake, awake only! let there be ever remembrance that Existence is sorrow, sorrow by the inherent necessity of the way it is made; sorrow not by volition, not by malice, not by carelessness, but by nature, by ineradicable tendency, by the incurable disease of Desire, its Creator, is it so, and the way to destroy it is by the uprooting of Desire; nor is a task so formidable accomplished by any threepenny-bit-in-the-plate-on-Sunday morality, the “deceive others and self-deception will take care of itself” uprightness, but by the severe roads of austere self-mastery, of arduous scientific research, which constitute the Noble Eightfold Path.

101-105. *There's one... Six Six Six.*<sup>31</sup>—This opinion has most recently (and most opportunely) been confirmed by the Rev. Father Simons, Roman Catholic Missionary (and head of the Corner in Kashmir Stamps), Baramulla, Kashmir.

106. Gallup.<sup>32</sup>—For information apply to Mr. Sidney Lee.

111. “*It is the number of a Man.*”<sup>33</sup>—Rev. xiii. 18.

117. *Fives.*<sup>34</sup>—Dukes.

122. (*Elsewhere.*)<sup>35</sup>—See “Songs of the Spirit” and other works.

128. *The Qabalistic Balm.*<sup>36</sup>—May be studied in “The Kabbalah (*sic*) Unveiled” (Redway). It is much to be wished that some one would undertake the preparation of an English translation of Rabbi Jischak Ben Loria’s “De Revolutionibus Animarum,” and of the book “Beth Elohim.”

139. *Cain.*<sup>37</sup>—Gen. iv. 8.

\* To “take Pansil” is to vow obedience to these Precepts.

† I do not propose to dilate on the moral truth which Ibsen has so long laboured to make clear: that no hard and fast rule of life can be universally applicable. Also, as in the famous case of the lady who saved (successively) the lives of her husband, her father, and her brother, the precepts clash. To allow to die is to kill—all this is obvious to the most ordinary thinkers. These precepts are of course excellent general guides for the vulgar and ignorant, but you and I, dear reader, are wise and clever, and know better. Nichtwar?

Excuse my being so buried in “dear Immanuel Kant” (as my friend Miss Br . c .<sup>1</sup> would say) that this biting and pregnant phrase slipped out unaware. As a rule, of course, I hate the introduction of foreign tongues into an English essay.—A.C.

<sup>1</sup> A fast woman who posed as a bluestocking.

152. *Hunyadi*.<sup>38</sup>—Hunyadi Janos, a Hungarian table water.

161. *Nadi*.<sup>39</sup>—For this difficult subject refer to the late Swami Vivekananda's "Raja Yoga."

167. *Tom Bond Bishop*.<sup>40</sup>—Founder of the "Children's Scripture Union" (an Association for the Dissemination of Lies among Young People) and otherwise known as a philanthropist. His relationship to the author (that of uncle) has procured him this rather disagreeable immortality.

He was, let us hope, no relation to George Archibald Bishop, the remarkable preface to whose dreadfully conventionally psychopathic works is this.

#### PREFACE\*

In the fevered days and nights under the Empire that perished in the struggle of 1870, that whirling tumult of pleasure, scheming, success, and despair, the minds of men had a trying ordeal to pass through. In Zola's "La Curée" we see how such ordinary and natural characters as those of Saccard, Maxime, and the incestuous heroine, were twisted and distorted from their normal sanity, and sent whirl-ing into the jaws of a hell far more affrayant than the mere cheap and nasty brimstone Sheol which is a Shibboleth for the dissenter, and with which all classes of religious humbug, from the Pope to the Salvation ranter, from the Mormon and the Jesuit to that mongrol mixture of the worst features of both, the Plymouth Brother, have scared their illiterate, since hypocrisy was born, with Abel, and spiritual tyranny with Jehovah! Society, in the long run, is eminently sane and practical; under the Second Empire it ran mad. If these things are done in the green tree of Society, what shall be done in the dry tree of Bohemianism? Art always has a suspicion to fight against; always some poor mad Max Nordau is handy to call everything outside the kitchen the asylum. Here, however, there is a substratum of truth. Consider the intolerable long roll of names, all tainted with glorious madness. Baudelaire, the diabolist, debauchee of sadism, whose dreams are nightmares and whose waking hours delirium; Rollinat the necrophile, the poet of phthisis, the anxiomaniac; Péledan, the high priest—of nonsense; Mendés, frivolous and scoffing sensualist; besides a host of others, most alike in this, that, below the cloak of madness and depravity, the true heart of genius burns. No more terrible period than this is to be found in literature; so many great minds, of which hardly one comes to fruition; such seed of genius, such a harvest of—whirlwind! Even a barren waste of sea is less saddening than one strewn with wreckage.

In England such wild song found few followers of any worth or melody. Swinburne stands on his solitary pedestal above the vulgar crowds of priapistic plagiarists; he alone caught the fierce frenzy of Baudelaire's brandied shrieks, and his First Series of Poems and Ballads was the legitimate echo of that not fierier note. But English Art as a whole was unmoved, at any rate not stirred to any depth, by this wave of debauchery. The great thinkers maintained the even keel, and the windy waters lay not for their frailer barks to cross. There is one exception of note, till this day unsuspected, in the person of George Archibald Bishop. In a corner of Paris this young poet (for in his nature the flower of poesy did spring, did even take root and give some promise of a brighter bloom, till stricken and blasted in latter years by the lightning of his own sins) was steadily writing day after day, night after night, often working forty hours at a time, work which he destined to entrance the world. All England should ring with his praises; by-and-by the whole world should know his name. Of these works none of the longer and more ambitious remains. How they were lost, and how those fragments we possess were saved, is best told by relating the romantic and almost incredible story of his life.

\* To a collection of MSS illustrating the "Psychopathia Sexualis" of von Kraft-Ebing. [Crowley's *White Stains*.] The names of the parties have been changed.

The known facts of this life are few, vague, and unsatisfactory; the more definite statements lack corroboration, and almost the only source at the disposal of the biographer is the letters of Mathilde Doriac to Mdme. J. S., who has kindly placed her portfolio at my service. A letter dated October 15, 1866, indicates that our author was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of that month. The father and mother of George, were, at least on the surface, of an extraordinary religious turn of mind. Mathilde's version of the story, which has its source in our friend himself, agrees almost word for word with a letter of the Rev. Edw. Turlé to Mrs. Cope, recommending the child to her care. The substance of the story is as follows.

The parents of George carried their religious ideas to the point of never consummating their marriage!<sup>1</sup> This arrangement does not seem to have been greatly appreciated by the wife; at least one fine morning she was found to be enceinte. The foolish father never thought of the hypothesis which commends itself most readily to a man of the world, not to say a man of science, and adopted that of a second Messiah! He took the utmost pains to conceal the birth of the child, treated everybody who came to the house as an emissary of Herod, and finally made up his mind to flee into Egypt! Like most religious maniacs, he never had an idea of his own, but distorted the beautiful and edifying events of the Bible into insane and ridiculous ones, which he proceeded to plagiarise.

On the voyage out the virgin mother became enamoured, as was her wont, of the nearest male, in this case a fellow-traveller. He, being well able to support her in the luxury which she desired, easily persuaded her to leave the boat with him by stealth. A small sailing vessel conveyed them to Malta, where they disappeared. The only trace left in the books of earth records that this fascinating character was accused, four years later, in Vienna, of poisoning her paramour, but thanks to the wealth and influence of her newer lover, she escaped.

The legal father, left by himself with a squalling child to amuse, to appease in his tantrums, and to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, was not a little perplexed by the sudden disappearance of his wife. At first he supposed that she had been translated, but, finding that she had not left behind the traditional mantle behind her, he abandoned this supposition in favour of quite a different, and indeed a more plausible one. He now believed her to be the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse, with variations. On arrival in Egypt he hired an old native nurse, and sailed for Odessa. Once in Russia he could find Gog and Magog, and present to them the child as Antichrist. For he was now persuaded that he himself was the First Beast, and would ask the sceptic to count his seven heads and ten horns. The heads, however, rarely totted up accurately.

At this point the accounts of Mr. Turlé and Mathilde diverge slightly. The cleric affirms that he was induced by a Tartar lady, of an honourable and ancient profession, to accompany her to Tibet "to be initiated into the mysteries." He was, of course, robbed and murdered with due punctuality, in the town of Kiev. Mathilde's story is that he travelled to Kiev on the original quest, and died of typhoid or cholera. In any case, he died at Kiev in 1839. This fixes the date of the child's birth at 1837. His faithful nurse conveyed him safely to England, where his relatives provided for his maintenance and education.

With the close of this romantic chapter in his early history we lose all reliable traces for some years. One flash alone illumines the darkness of his boyhood; in 1853, after being prepared for confirmation, he cried out in full assembly, instead of kneeling to receive the blessing of the officiating bishop, "I renounce for ever this idolatrous church;" and was quietly removed.

He told Mathilde Doriac that he had been to Eton and Cambridge—neither institution, however, preserves any record of such admission. The imagination of George, indeed, is tremendously fertile with

\* Will it be believed that a clergyman (turned Plymouth Brother and schoolmaster) actually made an identical confession to a boy of ten years old?

regard to events in his own life. His own story is that he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1856, and was sent down two years later for an article which he had contributed to some University or College Magazine. No confirmation of any sort is to be found anywhere with regard to these or any other statements of our author. There is, however, no doubt that in 1861 he quarrelled with his family; went over to Paris, where he settled down, at first, like every tuffthead, somewhere in the Quartier Latin; later, with Mathilde Doriac, the noble woman who became his mistress and held to him through all the terrible tragedy of his moral, mental, and physical life, in the Rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière. At his house there the frightful scene of '68 took place, and it was there too that he was apprehended after the murders which he describes so faithfully in "Abysmos." He had just finished this poem with a shriek of triumph, and had read it through to the appalled Mathilde "avec des yeux de flamme et de gestes incohérentes," when, foaming at the mouth, and "hurlant de blasphèmes indicibles," he fell upon her with extraordinary violence of passion; the door opened, officers appeared, the arrest was effected. He was committed to an asylum, for there could be no longer any doubt of his complete insanity; for three weeks he had been raving with absinthe and satyriasis. He survived his confinement no long time; the burning of the asylum with its inmates was one of the most terrible events of the war of 1870. So died one of the most talented Englishmen of his century, a man who for wide knowledge of men and things was truly to be envied, yet one who sold his birthright for a mess of beastlier pottage than ever Esau guzzled, who sold soul and body to Satan for sheer love of sin, whose mere lust of perversion is so intense that it seems to absorb every other emotion and interest. Never since God woke light from chaos has such a tragedy been unrolled before men, step after step toward the lake of Fire!

At his house all his writings were seized, and, it is believed, destroyed. The single most fortunate exception is that of a superbly jewelled writing-case, now in the possession of the present editor, in which were found the MSS. which are here published. Mathilde, who knew how he treasured its contents, pre-served it by saying to the officer, "But, sir, that is mine." On opening this it was found to contain, besides these MSS., his literary will. All MSS. were to be published thirty years after his death, not before. He would gain no spurious popularity as a reflection of the age he lived in. "Tennyson," he says, "will die before sixty years are gone by: if I am to be beloved of men, it shall be because my work is for all times and all men, because it is greater than all the gods of chance and change, because it has the heart of the human race beating in every line." This is a patch of magenta to mauve, undoubtedly; but —! The present collection of verses will hardly be popular; if the lost works turn up, of course it may be that there may be found "shelter for songs that recede." Still, even here, one is, on the whole, more attracted than repelled; the author has enormous power, and he never scruples to use it, to drive us half mad with horror, or, as in his earlier most exquisite works, to move us to the noblest thoughts and deeds. True, his debt to contemporary writers is a little obvious here and there; but these are small blemish on a series of poems whose originality is always striking, and often dreadful, in its broader features.

We cannot leave George Bishop without a word of inquiry as to what became of the heroic figure of Mathilde Doriac. It is a bitter task to have to write in cold blood the dreadful truth about her death. She had the misfortune to contract, in the last few days of her life with him, the same terrible disease which he described in the last poem of his collection. This shock, coming so soon after, and, as it were, as an unholy perpetual reminder of the madness and sequestration of her lover, no less than his infidelity, unhinged her mind, and she shot herself on July 5, 1869. Her last letter to Madame J— S— is one of the tenderest and most pathetic ever written. She seems to have been really loved by George, in his wild, infidel fashion: "All Night" and "Victory," among others, are obviously inspired by her beauty; and her devotion to him, the abasement of soul, the prostitution of body, she

underwent for and with him, is one of the noblest stories life has known. She seems to have dived with him, yet ever trying to raise his soul from the quagmire; if God is just at all, she shall stand more near to His right hand than the vaunted virgins who would soil no hem of vesture to save their brother from the worm that dieth not!

The Works of George Archibald Bishop will speak for themselves; it would be both impertinent and superfluous in me to point out in detail their many and varied excellences, or their obvious faults. The *raison d'être*, though, of their publication, is worthy of especial notice. I refer to their psychological sequence, which agrees with their chronological order. His life-history, as well as his literary remains, gives us an idea of the progression of diabolism as it really is, not as it is painted. Note also, (1) the increase of selfishness in pleasure, (2) the diminution of his sensibility to physical charms. Pure and sane is his early work; then he is carried into the outer current of the great vortex of Sin, and whirls lazily through the sleepy waters of mere sensualism; the pace quickens, he grows fierce in the mysteries of Sapphism and the cult of Venus Aversa with women; later of the same forms of vice with men, all mingled with wild talk of religious dogma and a general exaltation of Priapism at the expense, in particular, of Christianity, in which religion, however, he is undoubtedly a believer till the last (the pious will quote James ii. 19, and the infidel will observe that he died in an asylum); then the full swing of the tide catches him, the mysteries of death become more and more an obsession, and he is flung headlong into Sadism, Necrophilia, all the maddest, fiercest vices that the mind of fiends ever brought up from the pit. But always to the very end his power is un-exhausted, immense, terrible. His delirium does not amuse; it appals! A man who could conceive as he did must himself have had some glorious chord in his heart vibrating to the eternal principle of Boundless Love. That this love was wrecked is for me, in some sort a relative of his, a real and bitter sorrow. He might have been so great! He missed Heaven! Think kindly of him!

169. *Correctly rhymes.*<sup>41</sup>—Such lines, however noble in sentiment, as: “À bas les Anglais! The Irish up!” will not be admitted to the competition. Irish is accented on the penultimate—bad cess to the bloody Saxons that made it so!

The same with Tarshish (see Browning, *Pippa Passes*, II., in the long speech of Blu-phocks) and many others.

173. *The liar Copleston.*<sup>42\*</sup>—Bishop of Calcutta. While holding the see of Ceylon he wrote a book in which “Buddhism” is described as consisting of “devil-dances.” Now, when a man, in a position to

\* Copies were sent to any living persons mentioned in the “Sword of Song,” accompanied by the following letter:

Letters and Telegrams: BOLESKINE FOYERS is sufficient address.

Bills, Writs, Summonses, etc.: CAMP XI, THE BALTORO GLACIER, BALTISTAN

O Millionaire!	My lord Marquis,
Mr. Editor!	My lord Viscount,
Dear Mrs Eddy,	My lord Earl,
Your Holiness the Pope!	My lord,
Your Imperial Majesty!	My lord Bishop,
Your Majesty!	Reverend sir,
Your Royal Highness!	Sir,
Dear Miss Corelli,	Fellow,
Your Serene Highness,	Dog!
My lord Cardinal,	Mr. Congressman,
My lord Archbishop,	Mr. Senator,
My lord Duke,	Mr President

(or the feminine of any of these), as shown by underlining it,

Courtesy demands, in view of the

(a) tribute to your genius

know the facts, writes a book of the subscription-cadging type, whose value for the purpose depends on the suppression of these facts, I think I am to be commended for my moderation in using the term "liar."

212. *Ibsen*.<sup>42</sup>—Norwegian dramatist. This and the next sentence have nineteen distinct meanings. As, however, all (with one doubtful exception) are true, and taken together synthetically connote my concept, I have let the passage stand.

219. *I was Lord Roberts, he De Wet*.<sup>44</sup>—*Vide* Sir A. Conan Doyle's masterly fiction, "The Great Boer War."

222. *Hill*.<sup>45</sup>—An archaic phrase signifying kopje.

223. *Ditch*.<sup>46</sup>—Probably an obsolete slang term for spruit.

273. *Some*.<sup>47</sup>—The reader may search modern periodicals for this theory.

282. *The Tmolian*.<sup>48</sup>—Tmolus, who decided the musical contest between Pan and Apollo in favour of the latter.

321. *As masters teach*.<sup>49</sup>—Consult Vivekananda, *op. cit.*, or the *Hathayoga Pradipika*. Unfortunately, I am unable to say where (or even whether) a copy of this latter work exists.

331, 332. *Stand (Stephen) or sit (Paul)*.<sup>50</sup>—Acts vii. 36; Heb. xii, 2.

337. *Samadhi-Dak*.<sup>51</sup>—"Ecstasy-of-meditation mail."

338. *Maha-Meru*.<sup>52</sup>—The "mystic mountain" of the Hindus. See Southey's *Curse of Kehama*.

339. *Gaurisankar*.<sup>53</sup>—Called also Chomokankar, Devadhunga, and Everest.

341. *Chogo*.<sup>54</sup>—The Giant. This is the native name of "K<sup>2</sup>"; or Mount Godwin-Austen, as Col. Godwin-Austen would call it. It is the second highest known mountain in the world, as Devadhunga is the first.

356. *The History of the West*.<sup>55</sup>—

De Acosta (José)	. . .	Natural and Moral History of the Indies.
Alison, Sir A.	. . .	History of Scotland.
Benzoni	. . .	History of the New World.
Buckle	. . .	History of Civilisation.
Burton, J. H.	. . .	History of Scotland.
Carlyle	. . .	History of Frederick the Great.
Carlyle	. . .	Oliver Cromwell.
Carlyle	. . .	Past and Present.
Cheruel, A.	. . .	Dictionnaire historique de la France.
Christian, P.	. . .	Histoire de la Magie

- (b) attack on your (1) political  
 (2) moral  
 (3) social  
 (4) mental  
 (5) physical character

- (c) homage to your grandeur  
 (d) reference to your conduct  
 (e) appeal to your finer feelings

on page \_\_\_\_\_ of my masterpiece, "The Sword of Song," that I should send you a copy, as I do here-with, to give you an opportunity of defending yourself against my monstrous assertions, thanking me for the advertisement, or—in short, replying as may best seem to you to suit the case.

Your humble, obedient servant,

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

- Clarendon, Ld. . . History of the Great Rebellion.  
 De Comines, P. . . Chronicle.  
 Edwards, Bryan . . History of the British Colonies in the W. Indies.  
 Elton, C . . . Origins of English History.  
 Erdmann . . . History of Philosophy, Vol. II.  
 Froude . . . History of England.  
 Fyffe, C. A. . . History of Modern Europe.  
 Gardiner, S. R. . . History of the Civil War in England.  
 Gibbon . . . Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.  
 Green, J.R. . . . A History of the English People.  
 Guizot . . . Histoire de la Civilisation.  
 Hallam, H. . . . State of Europe in the Middle Ages.  
 Hugo, V. . . . Napoléon le Petit.  
 Innes, Prof. C. . . Scotland in the Middle Ages.  
 Kingscote . . . History of the War in the Crimea.  
 Levi, E. . . . Historie de la Magie.  
 Macaulay, Ld. . . History of England.  
 McCarthy, J.. . . A History of our Own Times.  
 Maistre, Jos. . . . Œuvres.  
 Michelet . . . Histoire de la Templiers.  
 Migne, Abbé . . . Œuvres.  
 Montalembert . . The Monks of the West.  
 Morley, J. . . . Life of Mr. Gladstone.  
 Motley . . . History of the Dutch Republic.  
 Napier . . . History of the Peninsular War.  
 Prescott . . . History of the Conquest of Mexico.  
 Prescott . . . History of the Conquest of Peru.  
 Renan . . . Vie de Jésus.  
 Robertson, E.W. . Historical Essays.  
 Rosebery, Ld. . . Napoleon.  
 Shakespeare . . . Histories.  
 Society for the  
     P r o p a g a t i o n  
     of Religious Truth Transactions, Vols. I.-DCLXVI.  
 Stevenson, R. L. . . A Footnote to History  
 Thornton, Ethelred,  
     Rev. . . . History of the Jesuits  
 Waite, A. E. . . . The Real History of the Rosicrucians.  
 Wolseley, Ld. . . Marlborough.

The above works and many others of less importance were carefully consulted by the Author before passing these lines for the press. Their substantial accuracy is further guaranteed by the Professors of History at Cambridge, Oxford, Berlin, Harvard, Paris, Moscow, and London.

366. *Shot his Chandra.*<sup>56</sup>—Anglicé, shot the moon.

388. *The subtle devilish omission.*<sup>57</sup>—But what are we to say of Christian dialecticians who quote “All things work together for good” out of its context, and call this verse “Christian optimism?” See Caird’s “Hegel.”

Hegel knew how to defend himself, though. As Goethe wrote of him:

“ They thought the master too  
 Inclined to fuss and finick.  
 The students’ anger grew  
 To frenzy Paganinic.  
 They vowed they’d make him rue  
 His work in Jena’s clinic.  
 They came, the unholy crew,  
 The mystic and the cynic:  
 He had scoffed at God’s battue,  
 The flood for mortal’s sin—Ic-  
 thyosaurian Waterloo!  
 They eyed the sage askew;  
 They searched him through and through  
 With violet rays actinic  
 They asked him ‘Wer bist du?’  
 He answered slowly ‘Bin ich?’ ”

387. *The Fish*.<sup>58</sup>—Because of *ἰχθυς*, which means Fish, And very aptly symbolises Christ. — *Ring and Book* (The Pope), ll. 89, 90.

395. *Dharma*.<sup>59</sup>—Consult the Tripitaka.

409. *I cannot trace the chain*.<sup>60</sup>—“How vain, indeed, are human calculations!”—*The Auto-biography of a Flea*, p. 136.

412. *Table-thing*.<sup>61</sup>—“Ere the stuff grow a ring-thing right to wear.”—*The Ring and the Book*, i. 17.

“This pebble-thing, o’ the boy-thing.”

—CALVERLY, *The Cock and the Bull*.

442. *Caird*.<sup>62</sup>—See his “Hegel.”

446. *Says Huxley*.<sup>63</sup>—See “Ethics and Evolution.”

459. *Iqdrasil*.<sup>64</sup>—The Otz Chiim of the Scandinavians.

467. *Ladies’ League*.<sup>65</sup>—Mrs. J.S. Crowley says: “The Ladies’ League Was Formed For The Promotion And Defence of the Reformed Faith Of The Church of England.” (The capitals are hers.) I think we may accept this statement. She probably knows, and has no obvious reasons for misleading.

487. *Sattva*.<sup>66</sup>—The Buddhists, denying an Atman or Soul (an idea of changeless, eternal, knowledge, being and bliss) represent the fictitious Ego of a man (or a dog) as a temporary agglomeration of particles. Reincarnation only knocks off, as it were, some of the corners of the mass, so that for several births the Ego is constant within limits; hence the possibility of the “magical memory.” The “Sattva” is this agglomeration. See my “Science and Buddhism,” *infra*, for a full discussion of this point.

518. *And*.<sup>67</sup>—Note the correct stress upon this word. Previously, Mr. W. S. Gilbert has done this in his superb lines:

“ Except the plot of freehold land  
 That held the cot, and Mary, and—”

But his demonstration is vitiated by the bad iambic “and Ma-”; unless indeed the juxtaposition is intentional, as exposing the sophistries of our official prosodists.

548. *The heathen*.<sup>68</sup>—“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

\* Paginini, a famous violinist.

580. *Satan and Judas*.<sup>69</sup>—At the moment of passing the final proofs I am informed that the character of Judas has been rehabilitated by Mr. Stead (and rightly: is Mr. Abington\* paid with a rope?) and the defence of Satan undertaken by a young society lady authoress—a Miss Corelli—who represents him as an Angel of Light, *i.e.* one who has been introduced to the Prince of Wales.

But surely there is some one who is the object of universal reprobation among Christians? Permit me to offer myself as a candidate. Sink, I beseech you, these sectarian differences, and combine to declare me at least Anathema Maranatha.

602. *Pangs of Death*.<sup>70</sup>—Dr. Maudsley demands a panegyric upon Death. It is true that evolution may bring us a moral sense of astonishing delicacy and beauty. But we are not there yet. A talented but debauched Irishman has composed the following, which I can deplore, but not refute, for this type of man is probably more prone to reproduce his species than any other. He called it “Summa Spes.”

I.  
Existence being sorrow,  
The cause of it deisre,  
A merry tune I borrow  
To light upon the lyre:  
If death destroy me quite,  
Then, I cannot lament it;  
I've lived, kept life alight,  
And—damned if I repent it!  
*Refrain.*  
Let me die in a ditch,  
Damnably drunk,  
Or lipping a punk,  
Or in bed with a bitch!  
I was ever a hog;  
Muck? I am one with it!  
Let me die like a dog;  
Die, and be done with it!

II.  
As far as reason goes,  
There's hope for mortals yet:  
When nothing is that knows,  
What is there to regret?  
Our consciousness depends  
On matter in the brain;  
When that rots out, and ends,  
There ends the hour of pain.  
*Refrain*

III.  
If we can trust to this,  
Why, dance and drink and revel!  
Great scarlet mouths to kiss,  
And sorrow to the devil!  
If pangs ataxic creep,  
Or gout, or stone, annoy us,  
Queen Morphia, grant thy sleep!  
Let worms, the dears, enjoy us!  
*Refrain*

IV.  
But since a chance remains  
That “I” survives the body  
(So talk the men whose brains  
Are made of smut and shoddy),  
I'll stop it if I can.  
(Ah Jesus, if Thou couldst!)  
I'll go to Martaban  
To make myself a Buddhist.  
*Refrain*

V.  
And yet: the bigger chance  
Lies with annihilation.  
Follow the lead of France,  
Freedom's enlightened nation!  
Off! sacerdotal stealth  
Of faith and fraud and gnosis!  
Come, drink me: Here's thy health,  
Arterio-sclerosis!†  
*Refrain*

616. *A lizard*.<sup>71</sup>—A short account of the genesis of these poems seems not out of place here. The design of an elaborate parody on Browning to be called “Ascension Day and Pentecost” was

\* Famous Adelphi villain.

† The hardening of the arteries, which is the pre-disposing cause of senile decay; thus taken as the one positive assurance of death.

conceived (and resolved upon) on Friday, November 15, 1901. On that day I left Ceylon, where I had been for several months, practising Hindu meditations, and exposing the dishonesty of the Missionaries, in the intervals of big game shooting. The following day I wrote "Ascension Day," and "Pentecost" on the Sunday, sitting outside the dak-bangala at Madura. These original drafts were small as compared to the present poems.

Ascension Day consisted of:—

- l. 2,\* I flung . . .
- l. 80, Pray do . . .
- l. 119, "But why . . .
- l. 189, Here's just . . .
- l. 271, I will . . .
- to l. 643, . . . but in Hell! . . .
- l. 672, You see . . . to end.

Pentecost consisted of:—

- l. 1, To-day . . .
- l. 185, How very hard . . .
- to l. 255, "Proceed!" . . .
- l. 328, Nor lull my soul . . .
- to l. 418, . . . and the vision.
- l. 476, How easy . . . to end.

"Berashith" was written at Delhi, March 20 and 21, 1902. Its original title was "Crowleymas Day." It was issued privately in Paris in January 1903. It and "Science and Buddhism" are added to complete the logical sequence from 1898 till now. All, however, has been repeatedly revised. Wherever there seemed a lacuna in the argument an insertion was made, till all appeared a perfect chrysolite. Most of this was done, while the weary hours of the summer (save the mark!) of 1902 rolled over Camp Misery and Camp Despair on the Chogo Ri Glacier, in those rare intervals when one's preoccupation with lice, tinned food, malaria, insoaking water, general soreness, mental misery, and the everlasting snowstorm gave place to a momentary glimmer of any higher form of intelligence than that ever necessarily concentrated on the actual business of camp life. The rest, and the final revision, occupied a good deal of my time during the winter of 1902-1903. The MS. was accepted by the S. P. R. T. in May of this year, and after a post-final revision, rendered necessary by my Irish descent, went to press.

618. *Each life bound over to the wheel.*<sup>72</sup>—Cf. Whatley, "Revelation of a Future State."

652. *This, that, the other atheist's death*<sup>73</sup>—Their stories are usually untrue; but let us follow our plan, and grant them all they ask.

709. *A cannibal.*<sup>74</sup>—This word is inept, as it predicates humanity of Christian-hate-Christian.

J'accuse the English language: *anthropophagous* must always remain a comic word.

731. *The Flaming Star.*<sup>75</sup>—Or Pentagram, mystically referred to Jeheshua.

732. *Zohar.*<sup>76</sup>—"Splendour," the three Central Books of the Dogmatic Qabalah.

733. *Pigeon.*<sup>77</sup>—Says an old writer, whom I translate roughly:

"Thou to thy Lamb and Dove devoutly bow,  
But leave me, pritheer, yet my Hawk and Cow:  
And I approve thy Greybeard dotard's smile,  
If thou wilt that of Egypt's crocodile."

746. *Lost! Lost! Lost!*<sup>78</sup>—See *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

\* [In the print editions these were given as page references; I have changed them to line numbers. — T.S.]

759. *Ain Elohim*.<sup>79</sup>—"There is no God!" so our Bible. But this is really the most sublime affirmation of the Qabalist. "Ain is God"

For the meaning of Ain, and of this idea, see "Berashith," *infra*. The "fool" is He of the Tarot, to whom the number 0 is attached, to make the meaning patent to a child.

"I insult your idol," quoth the good missionary; "he is but of dead stone. He does not avenge himself. He does not punish me." "I insult your god," replied the Hindu; "he is invisible. He does not avenge himself, nor punish me."

"My God will punish you when you die!"

"So, when you die, will my idol punish you!"

No earnest student of religion or draw poker should fail to commit this anecdote to memory.

767. *Mr Chesterton*.<sup>80</sup>—I must take this opportunity to protest against the charge brought by Mr. Chesterton against the Englishmen "who write philosophical essays on the splendour of Eastern thought."

If he confines his strictures to the translators of that well-known Eastern work the "Old Testament" I am with him; any modern Biblical critic will tell him what I mean. It took a long time, too, for the missionaries (and Tommy Atkins) to discover that "Budd" was not a "great Gawd." But then they did not want to, and in any case sympathy and intelligence are not precisely the most salient qualities in either soldiers or missionaries. But nothing is more absurd than to compare men like Sir W. Jones, Sir R. Burton, Von Hammer-Purgstall, Sir E. Arnold, Prof. Max Müller, Me, Prof. Rhys Davis, Lane, and the rest of our illustrious Orientalists to the poor and ignorant Hindus whose letters occasionally delight the readers of the *Sporting Times*, such letters being usually written by public scribes for a few pice in the native bazaar. As to "Babus" (Babu, I may mention, is the equivalent to our "Mister," and not the name of a savage tribe), Mr. Chesterton, from his Brixton Brahmaloaka, may look forth and see that the "Babu" cannot understand Western ideas; but a distinguished civil servant in the Madras Presidency, second wrangler in a very good year, assured me that he had met a native whose mathematical knowledge was superior to that of the average senior wrangler, and that he had met several others who approached that standard. His specific attack on Madame Blavatsky is equally unjust, as many natives, not theosophists, have spoken to me of her in the highest terms. "Honest Hindus" cannot be expected to think as Mr. Chesterton deems likely, as he is unfortunately himself a Western, and in the same quagmire of misapprehension as Prof. Max Müller and the rest. Madame Blavatsky's work was to remind the Hindus of the excellence of their own shastras, to show that some Westerns held identical ideas, and thus to countermine the dishonest representations of the missionaries. I am sufficiently well known as a bitter opponent of "Theosophy" to risk nothing in making these remarks.

I trust that the sense of public duty which inspires these strictures will not be taken as incompatible with the gratitude I owe to him for his exceedingly sympathetic and dispassionate review of my "Soul of Osiris."

I would counsel him, however, to leave alone the Brixton Chapel, and to "work up from his appreciation of the 'Soul of Osiris' to that loftier and wider work of the human imagination, the appreciation of the *Sporting Times!*"

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr Chesterton thinks it funny that I should call upon "Shu." Has he forgotten that the Christian God may be most suitably invoked by the name "Yah"? I should be sorry if God were to mistake his religious enthusiasms for the derisive ribaldry of the London "gamin." Similar remarks apply to "El" and other Hebrai-Christian deities.

\* Sacred Books.

This note is hardly intelligible without the review referred to. I therefore reprint the portion thereof which is germane to my matter from the *Daily News*, June 18, 1901:—

To the side of a mind concerned with idle merriment (*sic!*) there is certainly something a little funny in Mr. Crowley's passionate devotion to deities who bear such names as Mout and Nuit, and Ra and Shu, and Hormakhou. They do not seem to the English mind to lend themselves to pious exhilaration. Mr Crowley says in the same poem:

The burden is too hard to bear,  
I took too adamant a cross;  
This sackcloth rends my soul to wear,  
My self-denial is as dross.  
O, Shu, that holdest up the sky,  
Hold up thy servant, lest he die!

We have all possible respect for Mr. Crowley's religious symbols, and we do not object to his calling upon Shu at any hour of the night. Only it would be unreasonable of him to complain if his religious exercises were generally mistaken for an effort to drive away cats.

\* \* \*

Moreover, the poets of Mr. Crowley's school have, among all their merits, some genuine intellectual dangers from this tendency to import religions, this free trade in gods. That all creeds are significant and all gods divine we willingly agree. But this is rather a reason for being content with our own than for attempting to steal other people's. That affectation in many modern mystics of adopting an Oriental civilisation and mode of thought must cause much harmless merriment among the actual Orientals. The notion that a turban and a few vows will make an Englishman a Hindu is quite on a par with the idea that a black hat and an Oxford degree will make a Hindu an Englishman. We wonder whether our Buddhistic philosophers have ever read a florid letter in Baboo English. We suspect that the said type of document is in reality exceedingly like the philosophic essays written by Englishmen about the splendour of Eastern thought. Sometimes European mystics deserve something worse than mere laughter at the hands (*sic!*) of Orientals. If there was one person whom honest Hindus would ever have been justified in tearing to pieces it was Madame Blavatsky.

\* \* \*

That our world-worn men of art should believe for a moment that moral salvation is possible and supremely important is an unmixed benefit. But to believe for a moment that it is to be found by going to particular places or reading particular books or joining particular societies is to make for the thousandth time the mistake that is at once materialism and superstition. If Mr. Crowley and the new mystics think for one moment that an Egyptian desert is more mystic than an English meadow, that a palm tree is more poetic than a Sussex beech, that a broken temple of Osiris is more supernatural than a Baptist chapel in Brixton, then they are sectarians, and only sectarians of no more value to humanity than those who think that the English soil is the only soil worth defending, and the Baptist chapel the only chapel worth of worship (*sic*). But Mr. Crowley is a strong and genuine poet, and we have little doubt that he will work up from his appreciation of the Temple of Osiris to that loftier and wider work of the human imagination, the appreciation of the Brixton chapel.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

778, 779. *The rest of life, for self-control,  
For liberation of the soul.*<sup>81</sup>

Who said Rats? Thanks for your advice, Tony Veller, but it came in vain. As the ex-monk\* (that shook the bookstall) wrote in confidence to the publisher:

“ Existence is mis’ry  
I’ th’ month Tisri  
At th’ fu’ o’ th’ moon  
I were shot wi’ a goon.  
(Goon is no Scots,  
But Greek, Meester Watts.)  
We’re awa’ tae Burma,  
Whaur th’ groond be firmer  
Tae speer th’ Mekong,  
Chin Chin! Sae long.  
[Long sald be lang:  
She’ll no care a whang,  
Ye’re Rautional babe,  
Audra M<sup>e</sup>Abe.”

Note the curious confusion of personality. This shows Absence of Ego, in Pali Anatta, and will seem to my poor spiritually-mind friends an excuse for a course of action they do not understand, and whose nature is beyond them.

782. *Christ ascends.*<sup>82</sup>—And I tell you frankly that if he does not come back by the time I have finished reading these proofs, I shall give him up.

783. *Bell.*<sup>83</sup>—The folios have “bun.”

## NOTES TO PENTECOST

22. *With sacred thirst.*<sup>1</sup>—“He, soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst.” A Grammarian’s Funeral.

23. *Levi.*<sup>2</sup>—Ceremonial magic is not quite so silly as it sounds. Witness the following masterly elucidation of its inner quintessence:—

### THE INITIATED INTERPRETATION OF CEREMONIAL MAGIC †

It is loftily amusing to the student of magical literature who is not quite a fool—and rare is such a combination!—to note the criticism directed by the Philestine against the citadel of his science. Truly, since our childhood has ingrained into us not only literal belief in the Bible, but also substantial belief in Alf Laylah wa Laylah, ‡ and only adolescence can cure us, we are only too liable, in the rush and energy of dawning manhood, to overturn roughly and rashly both these classics, to regard them both on the same level, as interesting documents from the standpoint of folk-lore and anthropology, and as nothing more.

Even when we learn that the Bible, by a profound and minute study of the text, may be forced to yield up Qabalistic arcana of cosmic scope and importance, we are too often slow to apply a similar restorative to the companion volume, even if we are the lucky holders of Burton’s veritable edition.

To me, then, it remains to raise the Alf Laylah wa Laylah into its proper place once more.

\* Joseph McCabe, who became a Rationalist writer. The allusion is to Crowley’s marriage and subsequent return to the East.

† This essay forms the introduction an edition of the “Goetia” of King Solomon.

‡ “A Thousand and One Nights,” commonly called “Arabian Nights.”

I am not concerned to deny the objective reality of all “magical” phenomena; if they are illusions, they are at least as real as many unquestioned facts of daily life; and, if we follow Herbert Spencer, they are at least evidence of *some* cause.\*

Now, this fact is our base. What is the cause of my illusion of seeing a spirit in the triangle of Art? Every smatterer, every expert in psychology, will answer: “That cause lies in your brain.”

English children are taught (*pace* the Education Act) that the Universe lies in infinite Space; Hindu children, in the Akasa, which is the same thing.

Those Europeans who go a little deeper learn from Fichte, that the phenomenal Universe is the creation of the Ego; Hindus, or Europeans studying under Hindu Gurus, are told, that by Akasa is mean the Chitakasa. The Chitakasa is situated in the “Third Eye,” *i.e.*, in the brain. By assuming higher dimensions of space, we can assimilate this face to Realism; but we have no need to take so much trouble.

This being true for the ordinary Universe, that all sense-impressions are dependent on changes in the brain,† we must include illusions, which are after all sense-impressions as much as “realities” are, in the class of “phenomena dependent on brain-changes.”

Magical phenomna, however, come under a special sub-class, since they are willed, and their cause is the series of “real” phenomena called the operations of ceremonial Magic.

These consist of:

- (1) Sight. The circle, square, triangle, vessels, lamps, robes, implements, etc.
- (2) Sound. The invocations.
- (3) Smell. The perfumes.
- (4) Taste. The Sacraments.
- (5) Touch. As under (1)
- (6) Mind. The combination of all these and reflection on their significance.

These unusual impressions (1-5) produce unusual brain-changes; hence their summary (6) is of unusual kind. Its projection back into the apparently phenomenal world is therefore unusual.

Herein then consists the reality of the operations and effects of ceremonial magic,‡ and I conceive that the apology is ample, so far as the “effects” refer only to those phenomena which appear to the magician himself, the appearance of the spirit, his conversation, possible shocks from imprudence, and so on, even to ecstasy on the one hand, and death or madness on the other.

But can any of the effects described in this our book Goetia be obtained, and if so, can you give a rational explanation of the circumstances? Say you so?

I can, and will.

The spirits of the Goetia are portions of the human brain.

Their seals therefore represent (Mr. Spencer’s projected cube) methods of stimulating or regulating those particular spots (through the eye).

The names of God are vibrations calculated to establish:

- (a) General control of the brain. (Establishment of functions relative to the subtle world).
- (b) Control over the brain in detail. (Rank or type of the Spirit).
- (c) Control over one special portion. (Name of the Spirit.)

\* This, incidentally, is perhaps the greatest argument we possess, pushed to its extreme, against the Advaitist theories.—A.C.

† Thought is a secretion of the brain (Weissman). Consciousness is a function of the brain (Huxley).—A.C.

‡ Apart from its value in obtaining one-pointedness. On this subject consult **בראשית**, *infra*.—A. C.

The perfumes aid this through smell. Usually the perfume will only tend to control a large area; but there is an attribution of perfumes to letters of the alphabet enabling one, by a Qabalistic formula, to spell out the Spirit's name.

I need not enter into more particular discussion of these points; the intelligent reader can easily fill in what is lacking.

If, then, I say, with Solomon:

“The Spirit Cimieries teaches logic,” what I mean is:

“Those portions of my brain which subserve the logical faculty may be stimulated and developed by following out the process called ‘The Invocation of Cimieries.’ ”

And this is a purely materialistic rational statement; it is independent of any objective hierarchy at all. Philosophy has nothing to say; and Science can only suspend judgement, pending a proper and methodical investigation of the facts alleged.

Unfortunately, we cannot stop there. Solomon promises us that we can (1) obtain information; (2) destroy our enemies; (3) understand the voices of nature; (4) obtain treasure; (5) heal diseases, etc. I have taken these five powers at random; considerations of space forbid me to explain all.

(1) Brings up facts from sub-consciousness.

(2) Here we come to an interesting fact. It is curious to note the contrast between the noble means and the apparently vile ends of magical rituals. The latter are disguises for sublime truths. “To destroy our enemies” is to realise the illusion of duality, to excite compassion.

(Ah! Mr. Waite, the world of Magic is a mirror, wherein who sees muck is muck.)

(3) A careful naturalist will understand much from the voices of the animals he has studied long. Even a child knows the difference between a cat's miauling and purring. The faculty may be greatly developed.

(4) Business capacity may be stimulated.

(5) Abnormal states of the body may be corrected, and the involved tissues brought back to tone, in obedience to currents started from the brain.

So for all the other phenomena. There is no effect which is truly and necessarily miraculous.

Our Ceremonial Magic fines down, then, to a series of minute, though of course empirical, physiological experiments, and whoso will carry them through intelligently need not fear the result.

I have all the health, and treasure, and logic I need; I have no time to waste. “There is a lion in the way.” For me these practices are useless; but for the benefit of others less fortunate I give them to the world, together with this explanation of, and apology for, them.

I trust that this explanation will enable many students who have hitherto, by a puerile objectivity in their view of the question, obtained no results, to succeed; that the apology may impress upon our scornful men of science that the study of the bacillus should give place to that of the baculum, the little to the great—how great one only realises when one identifies the wand with the Mahalingam,† up which Brahma flew at the rate of 84,000 yojanas a second for 84,000 mahakalpas, down which Vishnu flew at the rate of 84,000 crores of yojanas a second for 84,000 crores of mahakalpas—yet neither reached an end.

But I reach an end.

23. *The cryptic Coptic*.<sup>3</sup>—Vide the Papyrus of Bruce.

24. *ANET' AER-K, etc.*<sup>4</sup>—Invocation of Ra. From the Papyrus of Harris.

\* A poet of great ability. He edited a book called “Of Black Magic and of Pacts” in which he vilifies the same.

† The Phallus of Shiva the Destroyer. It is really identical with the Qabalistic “Middle Pillar” of the “Tree of Life.”

26. *MacGregor*.<sup>5</sup>—The Mage.  
 29. *Abramelin*.<sup>6</sup>—The Mage.  
 32. *Ancient Rituals*.<sup>7</sup>—From the Papyrus of MRS. Harris.\*  
 33. *Golden Dawn*.<sup>8</sup>—These rituals were later annexed by Madame Horos,† that superior Swami. The earnest seeker is liable to some pretty severe shocks. To see one's "Obligation" printed in the *Daily Mail*!!! Luckily, I have no nerves.

49. राम । राम ॥ *etc.*<sup>9</sup>—"Thou, as I, art God (*for this is the esoteric meaning of the common Hindu salutation*). A long road and a heavy price! To know is always a difficult work . . . Hullo! Bravo! Thy name (I have seen) is written in the stars. Come with me, pupil! I will give thee medicine for the mind."

Cf. Macbeth: "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

58. बस ॥<sup>10</sup>—Enough.

60. कि वास्ते ।<sup>11</sup>—Why?

60. क्या होगा ॥<sup>12</sup>—What will it be?

61. *Strange and painful attitude*.<sup>13</sup>—Siddhasana.

62. *He was very rude*.<sup>14</sup>—The following is a sample:—

"O Devatas! behold this yogi! O Chela! Accursèd abode of Tamas art thou! Eater of Beef, guzzling as an Herd of Swine! Sleeper of a thousand sleeps, as an Harlot heavy with Wine! Void of Will! Sensualist! Enraged Sheep! Blasphemer of the Names of Shiva and of Devi! Christian in disguise! Thou shalt be reborn in the lowest Avitch! Fast! Walk! Wake! these are the keys of the King-dom! Peace be with thy Beard! Aum!"

This sort of talk did me much good: I hope it may do as much for you.

63. *With eyes well fixed on my proboscis*.<sup>15</sup>— See Bhagavad-Gita, Atmasamyamog.

67. *Brahma-charya*.<sup>16</sup>—Right conduct, and in particular, chastity in the highest sense.

72. *Baccy*.<sup>17</sup>—A poisonous plant used by nicotomanics in their orgies and debauches. "The filthy tobacco habit," says "Elijah the Restorer" of Zion, late of Sydney and Chicago. That colossal genius-donkey, Shaw, is another of them. But see Calverly.

78. *His hat*.<sup>18</sup>—It may be objected that Western, but never Eastern, magicians turn their headgear into a cornucopia or Pandora's box. But I must submit that the Hat Question is still *sub judice*. Here's a health to Lord Ronald Gower!

86. *Swinburne*.<sup>19</sup>—

" But this thing is God,  
 To be man with thy might,

To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light."—*Hertha*.

104. *My big beauty*.<sup>20</sup>—Pink on Spot; Player Green, in Hand. But I have "starred" since I went down in *that* pocket.

120. *My Balti coolies*.<sup>21</sup>—See my "The higher the Fewer."‡

125. *Eton*.<sup>22</sup>—A school, noted for its breed of cads. The battle of Waterloo (1815) was won on its playing-fields.

128-30. *I've seen them*.<sup>23</sup>—Sir J. Maundevill, "Voilage and Travill," ch. xvi., recounts a similar incident, and, Christian as he is, puts a similar poser.

135. *A—What?*<sup>24</sup>—I beg your pardon. It was a slip.

\* An imaginary lady to whom Sairey Gamp in Dickens' "Martin Chuzzlewit" used to appeal.

† *Vide* the daily papers of June-July 1901.

‡ Title of a (forthcoming) collection of papers on mountain exploration, etc. [Unpublished – T.S.]

146. *Tahuti*.<sup>25</sup>—In Coptic, Thoth.  
 149. *Ra*.<sup>26</sup>—The Sun-God.  
 149. *Nuit*.<sup>27</sup>—The Star-Goddess.  
 152. *Campbell*.<sup>28</sup>—“The waters wild went o’er his child, And he was left lamenting.”  
 152. *The Ibis Head*.<sup>29</sup>—Characteristic of Tahuti.  
 157. *Roland’s crest*.<sup>30</sup>—See “Two poets of Croisic,” xci.  
 159. *A jest*.<sup>31</sup>—See above: Ascension Day.  
 162. *A mysterious way*.<sup>32</sup>—

“ God moves in a mysterious way  
 His wonders to perform;  
 He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
 And rides upon the storm.”

Intentional species?

171. *The old hymn*.<sup>33</sup>—This hymn, quoted I fear with some failure of memory—I have not the documents at hand—is attributed to the late Bishop of Natal, though I doubt this, as the consistent and trustful piety of its sentiment is ill-suited to the author of those disastrous criticisms of the Pentateuch. The hymn is still popular in Durban.

Its extraordinary beauty, for a fragment, is only surpassed by Sappho’s matchless.

— ∪ — ∪ — ∪ ∪ — ∪  
 — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ ∪ — ∪  
 — ∪ — ∪ ’εῦνεα κ’ εἴε-  
 κοντα ∪ — —

185. “*How very hard*.”<sup>34</sup>—

“ How very hard it is to be  
 A Christian!”—*Easter Day*, I. i. 2.

195. *Srotapatti*.<sup>35</sup>—One who has “entered the stream” of Nirvana.

For the advantages of doing so, see the appended Jataka story, which I have just translated from a Cingalese Palm-leaf MS. See Appendix I.

228. *You know for me, etc*.<sup>36</sup>—See Huxley, Hume, 199, 200.

239. *Spirit and matter are the same*.<sup>37</sup>—See Huxley’s reply to Lilly.

273. “*I am not what I see*.”<sup>38</sup>—*In Memoriam*. But see H. Spencer, “Principles of Psychology,” General Analysis, ch. vi.

281. “*’Tis lotused Buddha*.”<sup>39</sup>—

“ Hark! that sad groan! Proceed no further!  
 ’Tis laurelled Martial roaring murder.”  
 —BURNS, *Epigram*.

But Buddha cannot really roar, since he has passed away by that kind of passing away which leaves nothing whatever behind.

322. *A mere law without a will*.<sup>40</sup>—I must not be supposed to take any absurd view of the meaning of the word “law.” This passage denies any knowledge of ultimate causes, not asserts it. But it tends to deny benevolent fore-sight, and *a fortiori* benevolent omnipotence.

Cf. Zoroaster, *Oracles*: “Look not upon the visible image of the Soul of Nature, for her name is Fatality.”

Ambrosius is very clear on this point. I append his famous MS. complete in its English Translation, as it is so rare. How rare will be appreciated when I say that no copy either of original or translation occurs in the British Museum; the only known copy, that in the Bodleian, is concealed by the pre-Adamite system of cataloguing in vogue at that hoary but unvenerable institution. For convenience the English has been modernised. See Appendix II.

329. *Maya fashioned it.*<sup>41</sup>—Sir E. Arnold, *Light of Asia*.

335. *Why should the Paramatma cease.*<sup>42</sup>—The Universe is represented by orthodox Hin-dus as alternating between Evolution and Involution. But apparently, in either state, it is the other which appears desirable, since the change is operated by Will, not by Necessity.

341. *Blavatsky's Himalayan Balm.*<sup>43</sup>—See the corkscrew theories of A. P. Sinnet in that masterpiece of confusion of thought—and nomenclature!—"Esoteric Buddhism." Also see the "Voice of the Silence, or, The Butler's Revenge." Not Bp. Butler.

366. *Ekam Advaita.*<sup>44</sup>—Of course I now reject this utterly. But it is, I believe, a stage of thought necessary for many or most of us. The bulk of these poems was written when I was an Advaitist, incredible as the retrospect now appears. My revision has borne Buddhist fruits, but some of the Advaita blossom is left. Look, for example, at the dreadfully Papistical tendency of my celebrated essay:

#### AFTER AGNOSTICISM

Allow me to introduce myself as the original Irishman whose first question on landing at New York was, "Is there a Government in this country?" and on being told "Yes," instantly replied, "Then I'm agin it." For after some years of consistent Agnosticism, being at last asked to contribute to an Agnostic organ, for the life of me I can think of nothing better than to attack my hosts! Insidious cuckoo! Ungrateful Banyan! My shame drives me to Semitic analogy, and I sadly reflect that if I had been Balaam, I should not have needed an ass other than myself to tell me to do the precise contrary of what is expected of me.

For this is my position; while the postulate of Agnosticism are in one sense eternal, I believe that the conclusions of Agnosticism are daily to be pushed back. We know our ignorance; with that fact we are twitted by those who do not know enough to understand even what we mean when we say so; but the limits of knowledge, slowly receding, yet never so far as to permit us to unveil the awful and impenetrable adytum of consciousness, or that of matter, must one day be suddenly widened by the forging of a new weapon.

Huxley and Tyndall have prophesied this before I was born; sometimes in vague language, once or twice clearly enough; to me it is a source of the utmost concern that their successors should not always see eye to eye with them in this respect.

Professor Ray Lankester, in crushing the unhappy theists of the recent *Times* controversy, does not hesitate to say that Science *can never* throw any light on certain mysteries.

Even the theist is justified in retorting that Science, if this be so, may as well be discarded; for these are problems which must ever intrude upon the human mind—upon the mind of the scientist most of all.

To dismiss them by an act of will is at once heroic and puerile: courage is as necessary to progress as any quality that we possess; and as courage is in either case required, the courage of ignorance (necessarily sterile, though wanted badly enough when our garden was choked by theological weeds) is less desirable than the courage which embarks on the always desperate philosophical problem.

Time and again, in the history of Science, a period has arrived when, gorged with facts, she has sunk into a lethargy of reflection accompanied by appalling nightmares in the shape of impossible

theories. Such a night-mare now rides us; once again philosophy has said its last word, and arrived at a dead-lock. Aristotle, in reducing to the fundamental contradictions-in-terms which they involve the figments of the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, the Platonists, the Pyrrhonists; Kant, in his *reductio ad absurdam* of the Thomists, the Scotists, the Wolffians,—all the warring brood, alike only in the inability to reconcile the ultimate antinomies of a cosmogony only grosser for its pinchbeck spirituality; have, I take it, found their modern parallel in the ghastly laughter of Herbert Spencer, as fleshed upon the corpses of Berkeley and the Idealists from Fichte and Hartman to Lotze and Trendelenburg he drives the reeking fangs of his imagination into the palpitating vitals of his own grim masterpiece of reconciliation, self-deluded and yet self-conscious of its own delusion.

History affirms that such a deadlock is invariably the prelude to a new enlightenment: by such steps we have advanced, by such we shall advance. The “horror of great darkness” which is scepticism must ever be broken by some heroic master-soul, intolerant of the cosmic agony.

We then await his dawn.

May I go one step further, and lift up my voice and prophesy? I would indicate the direction in which this darkness must break. Evolutionists will remember that nature cannot rest. Nor can society. Still less the brain of man.

“ Audax omnia perpeti  
Gens human ruit per vetitum nefas.”\*

We have destroyed the meaning of *vetitum nefas* and are in no fear of an imaginary cohort of ills and terrors. Having perfected one weapon, reason, and found it destructive to all falsehood, we have been (some of us) a little apt to go out to fight with no other weapon. “FitzJames’s blade was sword and shield,”† and that served him against the murderous bludgeon-sword of the ruffianly Highlander he happened to meet; but he would have fared ill had he called a Western Sheriff a liar, or gone off Boer-sticking on Spion Kop.

Reason has done its utmost; theory has glutted us, and the motion of the ship is a little trying; mixed metaphor—excellent in a short essay like this—is no panacea for all mental infirmities; we must seek another guide. All the facts science has so busily collected, varied as they seem to be, are in reality all of the same kind. If we are to have one salient fact, a fact for a real advance, it must be a fact of a different *order*.

Have we such a fact to hand? We have.

First, what do we mean by a fact of a different order? Let me take an example; the most impossible being the best for our purpose. The Spiritualists, let us suppose, go mad and begin to talk sense. (I can only imagine that such would be the result.) All their “facts” are proved. We prove a world of spirits, the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, etc. But, with all that, we are not really one step advanced into the heart of the inquiry which lies at the heart of philosophy, “What *is* anything?”

I see a cat.

Dr. Johnson says it is a cat.

Berkeley says it is a group of sensations.

Cankaracharya says it is an illusion, an incarnation, or God, according to the hat he has got on, and is talking through.

Spencer says it is a mode of the Unknowable.

\* Horace, *Odes*, I. 3.

† Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*.

But none of them seriously doubt the fact that I exist; that a cat exists; that one sees the other, All—bar Johnson—hint—but oh! how dimly!—at what I now know to be—*true?*—no, not necessarily true, but *nearer the truth*. Huxley goes deeper in his demolition of Descartes. With him, “I see a cat,” proves “some-thing called consciousness exists.” He denies the assertion of duality: he has no datum to assert the denial of duality. I have.

Consciousness, as we know it, has one essential quality: the opposition of subject and object. Reason has attacked this and secured that complete and barren victory of convincing without producing conviction.\* It has one quality apparently not essential, that of exceeding impermanence. If we examine what we call steady thought, we shall find that its rate of change is in reality inconceivably swift. To consider it, to watch it, is bewildering, and to some people becomes intensely terrifying. It is as if the solid earth were suddenly swept away from under one, and there were some dread awakening in outer space amid the rush of incessant meteors—lost in the void.

All this is old knowledge; but who has taken steps to alter it? The answer is forbidding: truth compels me to say, the mystics of all lands.

Their endeavour has been to slow the rate of change; their methods perfect quietude of body and mind, produce in varied and too often vicious ways. Regularisation of the breathing is the best known formula. Their results are contemptible, we must admit; but only so because empirical. An unwarranted reverence has overlaid the watchfulness which science would have enjoined, and the result is muck and misery, the wreck of a noble study.

But what is the one fact on which all agree? The one fact whose knowledge has been since religion began the all-sufficient passport to their doubtfully-desirable company?

This: that “I see a cat” is not only an unwarrantable assumption but a lie; that the duality of consciousness ceases suddenly, once the rate of change has been sufficiently slowed down, so that, even for a few seconds, the relation of subject and object remains impregnable.

It is a circumstance of little interest to the present essayist that this annihilation of duality is associated with intense and passionless peace and delight; the fact has been a bribe to the unwary, a bait for the charlatan, a hindrance to the philosopher; let us discard it.†

More, though the establishment of this new estate of consciousness seems to open the door to a new world, a world where the axioms of Euclid may be absurd, and the propositions of Keynes‡ untenable, let us not fall into the error of the mystics, by supposing that in this world is necessarily a final truth, or even a certain and definite gain of knowledge.

But that a field for research is opened up no sane man may doubt. Nor may one question that the very first fact is of a nature disruptive of difficulty philosophical and reasonable; since the phenomenon does not invoke the assent of the reasoning faculty. The arguments which reason may bring to bear against it are self-destructive; reason has given consciousness the lie, but consciousness survives and smiles. Reason is a part of consciousness and can never be greater than the whole; this Spencer sees; but reason is not even any part of this new consciousness (which I, and many others, have too rarely achieved) and therefore can never touch it: this I see, and this will I hope be patent to those ardent and

\* Hume, and Kant in the “Prolegomena,” discuss this phenomenon unsatisfactorily.—A. C.

† It is this rapture which has ever been the bond between mystics of all shades; and the obstacle to any accurate observation of the phenomenon, its true causes, and so on. This must always be a stumbling-block to more impressionable minds; but there is no doubt as to the fact—it is a fact—and its present isolation is to be utterly deplored. May I entreat men of Science to conquer the prejudices natural to them when the justly despised ideas of mysticism are mentioned, and to attack the problem *ab initio* on the severely critical and austere arduous lines which have distinguished their labours in other fields? — A. C.

‡ Author of a text-book on “Formal Logic.”

spiritually-minded agnostics of whom Huxley and Tyndall are for all history-time the prototypes. Know or doubt! is the alternative of the highwayman Huxley; "Believe" is not to be admitted; this is fundamental; in this agnosticism can never change; this must ever command our moral as well as our intellectual assent.

But I assert my strong conviction that ere long we shall have done enough of what is after all the schoolmaster work of correcting the inky and ill-spelt exercises of the theological dunces in that great class-room, the world; and found a little peace—while they play—in the intimate solitude of the laboratory and the passionless rapture of research—research into those very mysteries of nature which our dunces have solved by a rule of thumb; determining the nature of a bee by stamping on it, and shouting "bee"; while we patiently set to work with microscopes, and say nothing till we know, nor more than need be when we do.

But I am myself found guilty of this rôle of schoolmaster: I will now therefore shut the doors and retire again into the laboratory where my true life lies.

403, 405. *Reason and concentration*.<sup>45</sup>—The results of reasoning are always assailable: those of concentration are vivid and certain, since they are directly presented to consciousness. And they are more certain than consciousness itself, since one who has experienced them may, with consciousness, doubt consciousness, but can in no state doubt them.

412. *Ganesh*.<sup>46</sup>—The elephant-headed God, son of Shiva and Bhavani. He presides over obstacles.

The prosodist will note the "false quantity" of this word. But this is as it should be, for Ganesh pertains to Shiva, and with Shiva all quantity is false, since, as Parameshvara, he is without quantity or quality.

485. *Carroll*.<sup>47</sup>—See "Alice in Wonderland," Cap. Ult.

508. *Kusha-grass*.<sup>48</sup>—The sacred grass of the Hindus.

509. *Mantra*.<sup>49</sup>—A sacred verse, suitable for constant repetition, with a view to quieting the thought. Any one can see how simple and effective a means this is.

519. *Gayatri*.<sup>50</sup>—This is the translation of the most holy verse of the Hindus. The gender of Savitri has been the subject of much discussion and I believe grammatically it is masculine. But for mystical reasons I have made it otherwise. Fool!

557. *Prayer*.<sup>51</sup>—This fish-story is literally true. The condition was that the Almighty should have the odds of an unusually long line,—the place was really a swift stream, just debouching into a lake—and of an unusual slowness of drawing in the cast.

But what does any miracle prove? If the Affaire Cana were proved to me, I should merely record the facts: Water may under certain unknown conditions become wine. It is a pity that the owner of the secret remains silent, and entirely lamentable that he should attempt to deduce from his scientific knowledge cosmic theories which have nothing whatever to do with it.

Suppose Edison, having perfected the phonograph, had said, "I alone can make dumb things speak; argal, I am God." What would the world have said if telegraphy had been exploited for miracle-mongering purposes? Are these miracles less or greater than those of the Gospels?

Before we accept Mrs. Piper,\* we want to know most exactly the conditions of the experiment, and to have some guarantee of the reliability of the witnesses.

At Cana of Galilee the conditions of the transformation are not stated—save that they give loopholes innumerable for chicanery—and the witnesses are all drunk! (thou hast kept the good wine *till now*: *i.e.* till men have well drunk—Greek, μεθυσθωσι, *are well drunk*).

\* A twentieth century medium.

Am I to believe this, and a glaring *non sequitur* as to Christ's deity, on the evidence, not even of the inebriated eye-witnesses, but of MSS. of doubtful authorship and date, bearing all the ear-marks of dishonesty. For we must not forget that the absurdities of to-day were most cunning proofs for the poor folk of seventeen centuries ago.

Talking of fish-stories, read John xxi. 1-6 or Luke V. 1-7 (comparisons are odious). But once I met a man by a lake and told him that I had toiled all the morning and had caught nothing, and he advised me to try the other side of the lake; and I caught many fish. But I knew not that it was the Lord.

In Australia they were praying for rain in the churches. The *Sydney Bulletin* very sensibly pointed out how much more reverent and practical it would be, if, instead of constantly worrying the Almighty about trifles, they would pray once and for all for a big range of mountains in Central Australia, which would of course supply rain automatically. No new act of creation would be necessary; faith, we are expressly told, can remove mountains, and there is ice and snow and especially moraine on and about the Baltoro Glacier to build a very fine range; we could well have spared it this last summer.

579. *So much for this absurd affair.*<sup>52</sup>—“About Lieutenant-Colonel Flare.”—Gilbert, *Bab Ballads*.

636. *Auto-hypnosis.*<sup>53</sup>—The scientific adversary has more sense than to talk of auto-hypnosis. He bases his objection upon the general danger of the practice, considered as a habit of long standing. In fact,

*Lyre and Lancet.*

*Recipe for Curried Eggs.*

The physiologist reproaches  
 Poor Mr. Crowley. “This encroaches  
 Upon your frail cerebral cortex,  
 And turns its fairway to a vortex.  
 Your cerebellum with cockroaches  
 Is crammed; your lobes that thought they caught “X”  
 Are like mere eggs a person poaches.  
 But soon from yoga, business worries,  
 And (frankly I suspect the rubble  
 Is riddled by specific trouble!)  
 Will grow like eggs a person curries.”  
 This line, no doubt, requires an answer.

*The last Ditch.*

First. “Here's a johnny with a cancer;  
 An operation may be useless,  
 May even harm his constitution,  
 Or cause his instant dissolution:  
 Let the worm die, 'tis but a goose less!”  
 Not you! You up and take by storm him.  
 You tie him down and chloroform him.  
 You do not pray to Thoth or Horus,  
 But make one dash for his pylorus:—  
 And if ten years elapse, and he  
 Complains, “O doctor, pity me!  
 Your cruel 'ands, for goodness sakes  
 Gave me such 'orrid stomach-aches.  
 You write him, with a face of flint,  
 An order for some soda-mint.

So Yoga. Life's a carcinoma,  
 Its cause uncertain, not to check.  
 In vain you cry to Isis: "O ma!  
 I've got it fairly in the neck."  
 The surgeon Crowley, with his trocar,  
 Says you a poor but silly bloke are,  
 Advises concentration's knife  
 Quick to the horny growth called life.  
 "Yoga? There's danger in the biz!  
 But, it's the only chance there is!"  
 (For life, if left alone, is sorrow,  
 And only fools hope God's to-morrow.)

*Up, Guards, and at 'em!*

Second, your facts are neatly put;  
 —Stay! In that mouth there lurks a foot!  
 One surgeon saw so many claps  
 He thought: "One-third per cent., perhaps,  
 Of mortals 'scape its woes that knock us,  
 And bilk the wily gonococcus."  
 So he is but a simple cynic  
 Who takes the world to match his clinic;  
 And he assuredly may err  
 Who, keeping cats, think birds have fur.  
 You say: "There's Berridge, Felkin, Mathers,  
 Hysterics, epileptoids, blathers,  
 Guttersnipe, psychopath, and mattoid,  
 With ceremonial magic that toyed."  
 Granted. Astronomy's no myth,  
 But it produced Piazzi Smyth.  
 What crazes actors? Why do surgeons  
 Go mad and cut up men like sturgeons?  
 (The questions are the late Chas. Spurgeon's.)  
 Of yogi I could quote you hundreds  
 In science, law, art, commerce noted.  
 They fear no lunacy: their one dread's  
 Not for their noddles doom-devoted.  
 They are not like black bulls (that shunned reds  
 In vain) that madly charge the goathead  
 Of rural Pan, because some gay puss  
 Had smeared with blood his stone Priapus.  
 They are as sane as politicians  
 And people who subscribe to missions.  
 This says but little; a long way are  
 Yogi more sane than such as they are.  
 You have conceived your dreadful bogey,  
 From seeing many a raving Yogi.  
 These haunt your clinic; but the sound

Lurk in an unsuspected ground,  
 Dine with you, lecture in your schools,  
 Share your intolerance of fools,  
 And, while the Yogi you condemn,  
 Listen, say nothing, barely smile.  
 O if you but suspected them  
 Your silence would match their awhile!

*A Classical Research.* [Protectionists may serve if the supply of Hottentots gives out.]

I took three Hottentots alive.  
 Their scale was one, two, three, four, five,  
 Infinity. To think of men so  
 I could not bear: a new Colenso  
 I bought them to assuage their plight,  
 Also a book by Hall and Knight  
 On Algebra. I hired wise men  
 To teach them six, seven, eight, nine, ten.  
 One of the Hottentots succeeded.  
 Few schoolboys know as much as he did!  
 The others sank beneath the strain:  
 It broke, not fortified, the brain.

*The Bard a Brainy Beggar.*

Now (higher on the Human Ladder)  
 Lodge is called mad, and Crowley madder.  
 (The shafts of Science who may dodge?  
 I've not a word to say for Lodge.)  
 Yet may not Crowley be the one  
 Who safely does what most should shun?

*Alpine Analogy.*

Take Oscar Eckenstein—he climbs  
 Alone, unroped, a thousand times.  
 He scales his peak, he makes his pass;  
 He does not fall in a crevasse!  
 But if the Alpine Club should seek  
 To follow him on pass or peak—  
 (Their cowardice, their mental rot,  
 Are balanced nicely—they will not.)  
 —I see the Alpine Journal's border  
 Of black grow broader, broader, broader,  
 Until the Editor himself  
 Falls from some broad and easy shelf,  
 And in his death the Journal dies.  
 Ah! bombast, footle, simple lies!  
 Where would you then appear in type?

*The Poet "retires up." His attitude undignified, his pleasure momentary, the after results quite disproportionate. He contemplates his end.*

Therefore poor Crowley lights his pipe,  
 Maintains: "The small-shot kills the snipe,

But spares the tiger;" goes on joking,  
 And goes on smirking, on invoking,  
 On climbing, meditating,—failing to think  
 of a suitable rhyme at a critical juncture,  
 Ah!—goes on working, goes on smoking,  
 Until he goes right on to Woking.

637. *No one supposes me a Saint.*<sup>54</sup>—On inquiry, however, I find that some do.

686. *Amrita.*<sup>55</sup>—The Elixir of Life: the Dew of Immortality.

688. *Christ.*<sup>56</sup>—See Shri Parananda, "Commentaries on Matthew and John."

695. *Direction x.*<sup>57</sup>—*Vide supra*, "Ascension Day."

710. *Steel-tired.*<sup>58</sup>

For Dunlop people did not know  
 Those nineteen hundred years ago.

723. *Super-consciousness.*<sup>59</sup>—The Christians also claim an ecstasy. But they all admit, and indeed boast, that it is the result of long periods of worry and anxiety about the safety of their precious souls: therefore their ecstasy is clearly a diseased process. The Yogic ecstasy requires absolute calm and health of mind and body. It is useless and dangerous under other conditions even to begin the most elementary practices.

742. *My Eastern Friend.*<sup>60</sup>—Abdul Hamid, of the Fort, Colombo, on whom be peace.

755. *Heart.*<sup>61</sup>—

Heart is a trifling misquotation:  
 This poem is for publication.

810. *Mind the dark doorway there!*<sup>62</sup>—This, like so many other (perhaps all) lines in these poems, is pregnant with a host of hidden meanings. Not only is it physical, of saying good-bye to a friend: but mental, of the darkness of metaphysics; occult, of the mystical darkness of the Threshold of Initiation: and physiological, containing allusions to a whole group of phenomena, which those who have begun meditation will recognise.

Similarly, a single word may be a mnemonic key to an entire line of philosophical argument.

If the reader chooses, in short, he will find the entire mass of Initiated Wisdom between the covers of this unpretending volume.



## THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS

“LISTEN to the Jataka!” said the Buddha. And all they gave ear. “Long ago, when King Brahmadata reign’d in Benares,<sup>1</sup> it came to pass that there lived under his admirable government a weaver named Suraj Ju<sup>2</sup> and his wife Chandi.<sup>3</sup> And in the fulness of her time did she give birth to a man child, and they called him Perdu’ R Abu.<sup>4</sup> Now the child grew, and the tears of the mother fell, and the wrath of the father waxed: for by no means would the boy strive in his trade of weaving. The loom went merrily, but to the rhythm of a mantra; and the silk slipped through his hands, but as if one told his beads. Wherefore the work was marred, and the hearts of the parents were woe because of him. But it is written that misfortune knoweth not the hour to cease, and that the seed of sorrow is as the seed of the Banyan Tree. It groweth and is of stature as a mountain, and, ay me! it shooteth down fresh roots into the aching earth. For the boy grew and became a man; and his eyes kindled with the lust of life and love; and the desire stirred him to see the round world and its many marvels. Wherefore he went forth, taking his father’s store of gold, laid up for him against that bitter day, and he took fair maidens, and was their servant. And he builded a fine house and dwelt therein. And he took no thought. But he said: Here is a change indeed!

“Now it came to pass that after many years he looked upon his love, the bride of his heart, the rose of his garden, the jewel of his rosary; and behold, the olive loveliness of smooth skin was darkened, and the flesh lay loose, and the firm breasts drooped, and the eyes had lost alike the gleam of joy and the sparkle of laughter and the soft glow of love. And he was mindful of his word, and said in sorrow, ‘Here is then a change indeed!’ And he turned his thought to himself, and saw that in his heart was also a change: so that he cried, ‘Who then am I?’ And he saw that all this was sorrow. And he turned his thought without and saw that all things were alike in this; that nought might escape the threefold misery. ‘The soul,’ he said, ‘the soul, the I, is as all of these; it is impermanent as the ephemeral flower of beauty in the water that is born and shines and dies ere sun be risen and set again.’

“And he humiliated his heart and sang the following verse:

Brahma, and Vishnu, and great Shiva! Truly  
I see the Trinity in all things dwell,  
Some rightly tinged of Heaven, others dully  
Pitched down the steep and precipice of Hell.  
Nay, not your glory ye from fable borrow!  
These three I see in spirit and in sense,  
These three, O miserable see! Sorrow,  
Absence of ego, and impermanence!

<sup>1</sup> The common formula for beginning a “Jataka,” or story of a previous incarnation of the Buddha. Brahmadata reigned 120,000 years.

<sup>2</sup> The Sun.

<sup>3</sup> The Moon.

<sup>4</sup> Perdurabo. Crowley’s motto.

And at the rhythm he swooned, for his old mantra surged up in the long-sealed vessels of sub-conscious memory, and he fell into the calm ocean of a great Meditation.

## II.

“Jehjaour<sup>1</sup> was a mighty magician; his soul was dark and evil; and his lust was of life and power and of the wreaking of hatred upon the innocent. And it came to pass that he gazed upon a ball of crystal wherein were shown him all the fears of the time unborn as yet on earth. And by his art he saw Perdu’ R Abu, who had been his friend: for do what he would, the crystal showed always that sensual and frivolous youth as a Fear to him: even to him the Mighty One! But the selfish and evil are cowards; they fear shadows, and Jehjaour scorned not his art. ‘Roll on in time, thou ball!’ he cried. ‘Move down the stream of years, timeless and hideous servant of my will! Taph! Tath! Arath!’<sup>2</sup> He sounded the triple summons, the mysterious syllables that bound the spirit to the stone.

“Then suddenly the crystal grew a blank; and thereby the foiled wizard knew that which threatened his power, his very life, was so high and holy that the evil spirit could perceive it not. ‘Avaunt!’ he shrieked, ‘false soul of darkness!’ And the crystal flashed up red, the swarthy red of hate in a man’s cheek, and darkened utterly.

“Foaming at the mouth the wretched Jehjaour clutched at air and fell prone.

## III.

“To what God should he appeal? His own, Hanuman, was silent. Sacrifice, prayer, all were in vain. So Jehjaour gnashed his teeth, and his whole force went out in a mighty current of hate towards his former friend.

“Now hate hath power, though not the power of love. So it came about that in his despair he fell into a trance; and in the trance Mara<sup>3</sup> appeared to him. Never before had his spells availed to call so fearful a potency from the abyss of matter. ‘Son’ cried the Accursèd One, ‘seven days of hate unmarred by passion milder, seven days without one thought of pity, these avail to call me forth.’ ‘Slay me my enemy!’ howled the wretch. But Mara trembled, ‘Enquire of Ganesha concerning him!’ faltered at last the fiend.

“Jehjaour awoke.

## IV.

“‘Yes!’ said Ganesha gloomily, ‘the young man has given me up altogether. He tells me I am as mortal as he is, and he doesn’t mean to worry about me any more.’ ‘Alas!’ sighed the deceitful Jehjaour, who cared no more for Ganesha and any indignities that might be offered him than his enemy did. ‘One of my best devotees too!’ muttered, or rather trumpeted, the elephantine anachronism. ‘You see,’ said the wily wizard, ‘I saw Perdu’ R Abu the other day, and he said that he had become Srotapatti. Now that’s pretty serious. In seven births only, if

<sup>1</sup> Allan MacGregor Bennett (whose motto in the “Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn,” was *Iehi Aour*, *i.e.* “Let there be Light”), now Ananda Metteya, to whom the volume in which this story was issued is inscribed.

<sup>2</sup> Taphtharath [*sic.*, *s.b.* Taphthartharath —T.S.], the spirit of Mercury.

<sup>3</sup> The archdevil of the Buddhists.

he but pursue the path, will he cease to be reborn. So you have only that time in which to win him back to your worship.' The cunning sorcerer did not mention that within that time also must his own ruin be accomplished. 'What do you advise?' asked the irritated and powerful, but unintelligent deity. 'Time is our friend,' said the enchanter. 'Let your influence be used in the Halls of Birth that each birth may be as long as possible. Now the elephant is the longest lived of all beasts—' 'Done with you!' said Ganesha in great glee, for the idea struck him as ingenious. And he lumbered off to clinch the affair at once.

"And Perdu' R Abu died.

#### V.

"Now the great elephant strode with lordly footsteps in the forest, and Jehjaour shut himself up with his caldrons and things and felt quite happy, for he knew his danger was not near till the approaching of Perdu' R Abu's Arahatsip. But in spite of the young gently-ambling cows which Ganesha took care to throw in his way, in spite of the tender shoots of green and the soft cocoanuts, this elephant was not as other elephants. The seasons spoke to him of change—the forest is ever full of sorrow—and nobody need preach to him the absence of an ego, for the brutes have had more sense than ever to imagine there was one. So the tusker was usually to be found, still as a rock, in some secluded place, meditating on the Three Characteristics. And when Ganesha appeared in all his glory, he found him to his disgust quite free from elephantomorphism. In fact, he quietly asked the God to leave him alone.

"Now he was still quite a young elephant when there came into the jungle, tripping merrily along, with a light-hearted song in its nucleolus, no less than a Bacillus.

"And the elephant died. He was only seventeen years old."

#### VI.

"A brief consultation; and the Srotapatti was reincarnated as a parrot. For the parrot, said the wicked Jehjaour, may live 500 years and never feel it.

"So a grey wonder of wings flitted into the jungle. So joyous a bird, thought the God, could not but be influenced by the ordinary passions and yield to such majesty as his own.

"But one day there came into the jungle a strange wild figure. He was a man dressed in the weird Tibetan fashion. He had red robes and hat, and thought dark things. He whirled a prayer-wheel in his hands; and ever as he went he muttered the mystic words 'Aum Mani Padme Hum.'<sup>1</sup> The parrot, who had never heard human speech, tried to mimic the old Lama, and was amazed at his success. Pride first seized the bird, but it was not long before the words had their own effect, and it was in meditation upon the conditions of existence that he eternally repeated the formula.

\*

\* \*

"A home at distant Inglistan. An old lady, and a grey parrot in a cage. The parrot was still muttering inaudibly the sacred mantra. Now, now, the moment of Destiny was at hand! The Four Noble Truths shone out in that parrot's mind; the Three Characteristics appeared

<sup>1</sup> "O the Jewel in the Lotus! Aum!" The most famous of the Buddhist formularies.

luminous, like three spectres on a murderer's grave: unable to contain himself he recited aloud the mysterious sentence.

"The old lady, whatever may have been her faults, could act promptly. She rang the bell. 'Sarah!' said she, 'take away that dreadful creature! Its language is positively awful.' 'What shall I do with it, mum?' asked the 'general.' 'Aum Mani Padme Hum,' said the parrot. The old lady stopped her ears. 'Wring its neck!' she said.

"The parrot was only eight years old.

## VII.

"'You're a muddle and an idiot!' said the infuriated God. 'Why not make him a spiritual thing? A Nat<sup>1</sup> lives 10,000 years.' 'Make him a Nat then!' said the magician, already beginning to fear that fate would be too strong for him, in spite of all his cunning. 'There's some one working against us on the physical plane. We must transcend it.' No sooner said than done: a family of Nats in a big tree at Anuradhapura had a little stranger, very welcome to Mamma and Papa Nat.

"Blessed indeed was the family. Five-and-forty feet<sup>2</sup> away stood a most ancient and holy dagoba: and the children of light would gather round it in the cool of the evening, or in the misty glamour of dawn, and turn forth in love and pity towards all mankind—nay, to the smallest grain of dust tossed on the utmost storms of the Sahara!

"Blessed and more blessed! For one day came a holy Bikkhu from the land of the Peacock,<sup>3</sup> and would take up his abode in the hollow of their very tree. And little Perdu' R Abu used to keep the mosquitoes away with the gossamer of his wings, so that the good man might be at peace.

"Now the British Government abode in that land, and when it heard that there was a Bhikkhu living in a tree, and that the village folk brought him rice and onions and gramophones, it saw that it must not be.

"And little Perdu' R Abu heard them talk; and learnt the great secret of Impermanence, and of Sorrow, and the mystery of Unsubstantiality.

"And the Government evicted the Bhikkhu; and set guard, quite like the end of Genesis iii., and cut down the tree, and all the Nats perished.

"Jehjaour heard and trembled. Perdu' R Abu was only three years old.

## VIII.

"It really seemed as if fate was against him. Poor Jehjaour! In despair he cried to his partner, 'O Ganesha, in the world of Gods only we shall be safe. Let him be born as a flute-girl before Indra's throne!' 'Difficult is the task,' replied the alarmed deity, 'but I will use all my influence. I know a thing or two about Indra, for example—'

<sup>1</sup> The Burmese name for an elemental spirit.

<sup>2</sup> The Government, in the interests of Buddhists themselves, reserves all ground within 50 feet of a dagoba. The incident described in this section actually occurred in 1901.

<sup>3</sup> Siam.

“It was done. Beautiful was the young girl’s face as she sprang mature from the womb of Matter, on her life-journey of an hundred thousand years. Of all Indra’s flute-girls she played and sang the sweetest. Yet ever some remembrance, dim as a pallid ghost that fleets down the long avenues of deodar and moonlight, stole in her brain; and her song was ever of love and death and music from beyond.

“And one day as she sang thus the deep truth stole into being and she knew the Noble Truths. So she turned her flute to the new song, when—horror!—there was a mosquito in the flute. ‘Tootle! Tootle!’ she began. ‘Buzz! Buzz!’ went the mosquito from the very vitals of her delicate tube.

“Indra was not unprovided with a disc.<sup>1</sup> Alas! Jehjaour, art thou already in the toils? She had only lived eight months.

## IX.

“ ‘How you bungle!’ growled Ganesha. ‘Fortunately we are better off this time. Indra has been guillotined for his dastardly murder; so his place is vacant.’ ‘Eurekas!’ yelled the magus, ‘his very virtue will save him from his predecessor’s fate.’

“Behold Perdu’ R Abu then as Indra! But oh, dear me! what a memory he was getting! ‘It seems to me,’ he mused, ‘that I’ve been changing a lot lately. Well, I am virtuous—and I read in Crowley’s new translation of the Dhammapada<sup>2</sup> that virtue is the thing to keep one steady. So I think I may look forward to a tenure of my mahakalpa in almost Arcadian simplicity. Lady Bhavani, did you say, boy? Yes, I am at home. Bring the betel!’ ‘Jeldi!’ he added, with some dim recollection of the British Government, when he was a baby Nat.

“The Queen of Heaven and the Lord of the Gods chewed betel for quite a long time, conversed of the weather, the crops, the affaire Humbert, and the law in relation to motor-cars, with ease and affability. But far was it from Indra’s pious mind to flirt with his distinguished guest! Rather, he thought of the hollow nature of the Safe, the change of money and of position; the sorrow of the too confiding bankers, and above all the absence of an Ego in the Brothers Crawford.

“While he was thus musing, Bhavani got fairly mad at him. The Spretæ Injuria Formæ gnawed her vitals with pangs unassuageable: so, shaking him roughly by the arm, she Put It To Him Straight. ‘O Madam!’ said Indra.

“This part of the story has been told before—about Joseph; but Bhavani simply lolled her tongue out, opened her mouth, and gulped him down at a swallow.

“Jehjaour simply wallowed. Indra had passed in seven days.

<sup>1</sup> A whirling disc is Indra’s symbolic weapon.

<sup>2</sup> He abandoned this. A few fragments are reprinted in his *Oracles*.

## X.

“‘There is only one more birth,’ he groaned. ‘This time we must win or die.’ ‘Goetia<sup>1</sup> expects every God to do his duty,’ he excitedly lunographed to Swarga.<sup>2</sup> But Ganesha was already on his way.

“The elephant-headed God was in great spirits. ‘Never say die!’ he cried genially, on beholding the downcast appearance of his fellow-conspirator. ‘This’ll break the slate. There is no change in the Arupa-Brahma-Loka!’<sup>3</sup> ‘Rupe me no rupes!’ howled the necromancer. ‘Get up, fool!’ roared the God. ‘I have got Perdu R’ Abu elected Maha Brahma.’ ‘Oh Lord, have you really?’ said the wizard, looking a little less glum. ‘Ay!’ cried Ganesha impassively, ‘let Æon follow Æon down the vaulted and echoing corridors of Eternity: pile Mahakalpa upon Mahakalpa until an Asankhya<sup>4</sup> of Crores<sup>5</sup> have passed away; and Maha Brahma will still sit lone and meditate upon his lotus throne.’ ‘Good, good!’ said the magus, ‘though there seems a reminiscence of the Bhagavad-Gita and the Light of Asia somewhere. Surely you don’t read Edwin Arnold?’ ‘I do,’ said the God disconsolately, ‘we Hindu Gods have to. It’s the only way we can get any clear idea of who we really are.’

“Well, here was Perdu’ R Abu, after his latest fiasco, installed as a Worthy, Respect-able, Perfect, Ancient and Accepted, Just, Regular Mahabrahma. His only business was to meditate, for as long as he did this, the worlds—the whole system of 10,000 worlds—would go on peaceably. Nobody had better read the lesson of the Bible—the horrible results to mankind of ill-timed, though possibly well-intentioned, interference on the part of a deity.

“Well, he curled himself up, which was rather clever for a formless abstraction, and began. There was a grave difficulty in his mind—an obstacle right away from the word ‘Jump!’ Of course there was really a good deal: he didn’t know where the four elements ceased, for example:<sup>6</sup> but his own identity was the real worry. The other questions he could have stilled; but this was too near his pet Chakra.<sup>7</sup> ‘Here I am,’ he meditated, ‘above all change; and yet an hour ago I was Indra; and before that his flute-girl; and then a Nat; and then a parrot; and then a Hathi—“Oh, the Hathis pilin’ teak in the sludgy, sjudgy creek!” sang Parameshvara. Why, it goes back and back, like a biograph out of order, and there’s no sort of connection between one and the other. Hullo, what’s that? Why, there’s a holy man near that Bo-Tree. He’ll tell me what it all means.’ Poor silly old Lord of the Universe! Had he carried his memory back one more step he’d have known all about Jehjaour and the conspiracy, and that he was a Srotapatti and had only one more birth; and might well have put in the 311,040,000,000,000 myriads of æons which would elapse before lunch in rejoicing over his imminent annihilation.

<sup>1</sup> The world of black magic.

<sup>2</sup> Heaven.

<sup>3</sup> The highest heaven of the Hindu. “Formless place of Brahma” is its name.

<sup>4</sup> “Innumerable,” the highest unit of the fantastic Hindu arithmetic.

<sup>5</sup> 100,000,000.

<sup>6</sup> See the witty legend in the Questions of King Milinda.

<sup>7</sup> Meditation may be performed on any of seven “Chakras” (wheels or centres) in the body.

“‘Venerable Sir!’ said Mahabrahma, who had assumed the guise of a cowherd, ‘I kiss your worshipful Trilbies:<sup>1</sup> I prostrate myself before your eminent respectability.’ ‘Sir,’ said the holy man, none other than Our Lord Himself! ‘thou seekest illumination!’ Mahabrahma smirked and admitted it. ‘From negative to positive,’ explained the Thrice-Honoured One, ‘through Potential Existence eternally vibrates the Divine Absolute of the Hidden Unity of processional form masked in the Eternal Abyss of the Unknowable, the synthetic hieroglyph of an illimitable, pastless, futureless PRESENT.

“‘To the uttermost bounds of space rushes the voice of Ages unheard of save in the concentrated unity of the thought-formulated Abstract; and eternally that voice formulates a word which is glyphed in the vast ocean of limitless life.<sup>2</sup> Do I make myself clear?’ ‘Perfectly. Who would have thought it was all so simple?’ The God cleared his throat, and rather diffidently, even shamefacedly, went on:

“‘But what I really wished to know was about my incarnation. How is it I have so suddenly risen from change and death to the unchangeable?’

“‘Child!’ answered Gautama, ‘your facts are wrong—you can hardly expect to make correct deductions.’ ‘Yes, you can, if only your logical methods are unsound. That’s the Christian way of getting truth.’ ‘True!’ replied the sage, ‘but precious little they get. Learn, O Mahabrahma (for I penetrate this disguise), that all existing things, even from thee unto this grain of sand, possess Three Characteristics. These are Mutability, Sorrow, and Unsubstantiality.’

“‘All right for the sand, but how about Me? Why, they *define* me as unchangeable.’ ‘You can define a quirk as being a two-sided triangle,’ retorted the Saviour, ‘but that does not prove the actual existence of any such oxymoron.<sup>3</sup> The truth is that you’re a very spiritual sort of being and a prey to longevity. Men’s lives are so short that yours seems eternal in comparison. But —why, *you’re* a nice one to talk! You’ll be dead in a week from now.’

“‘I quite appreciate the force of your remarks!’ said the seeming cowherd; ‘that about the Characteristics is very clever; and curiously enough, my perception of this had always just preceded my death for the last six goes.’

“‘Well, so long, old chap,’ said Gautama, ‘I must really be off. I have an appointment with Brother Mara at the Bo-Tree. He has promised to introduce his charming daughters—’

“‘Good-bye, and don’t do anything rash!’

“‘Rejoice! our Lord wended unto the Tree!’<sup>4</sup> As blank verse this scan but ill, but it clearly shows what happened.

<sup>1</sup> Feet.

<sup>2</sup> This astonishing piece of bombastic drivel is verbatim from a note by S.L. Mathers to the “Kabbalah Unveiled.” [Idra Zuta Qadisha, s. 65.]

<sup>3</sup> A contradiction in terms.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold, “Light of Asia.”

## XI.

“The ‘Nineteenth Mahakalpa’ brought ought its April Number. There was a paper by Huxlananda Swami.

“Mahabrahma had never been much more than an idea. He had only lived six days.

## XII.

“At the hour of the great Initiation,” continued the Buddha, in the midst of the Five Hundred Thousand Arahats, “the wicked Jehjaour had joined himself with Mara to prevent the discovery of the truth. And in Mara’s fall he fell. At that moment all the currents of his continued and concentrated Hate recoiled upon him and he fell into the Abyss of Being. And in the Halls of Birth he was cast out into the Lowest Hell—he became a clergyman of the Church of England, further than he had ever been before from Truth and Light and Peace and Love; deeper and deeper enmeshed in the net of Circumstance, bogged in the mire of Tanha<sup>1</sup> and Avigga<sup>2</sup> and all things base and vile. False Vichi-Kichi<sup>3</sup> had caught him at last!

## XIII.

“Aye! The hour was at hand. Perdu’ R Abu was reincarnated as a child of Western parents, ignorant of all his wonderful past. But a strange fate has brought him to this village.” The Buddha paused, probably for effect.

A young man there, sole among them not yet an Arahata, turned pale. He alone was of Western birth in all that multitude.

“Brother Abhavananda,<sup>4</sup> little friend,” said the Buddha, “what can we predicate of all existing things?” “Lord!” replied the neophyte, “they are unstable, everything is sorrow, in them is no inward Principle, as some pretend, that can avoid, that can hold itself aloof from, the forces of decay.”

“And how do you know that, little Brother?” smiled the Thrice-Honoured One.

“Lord, I perceive this Truth whenever I consider the Universe. More, its consciousness seems ingrained in my very nature, perhaps through my having known this for many incarnations. I have never thought otherwise.”

“Rise, Sir Abhavananda, I dub thee Arahata!” cried the Buddha, striking the neophyte gently on the back with the flat of his ear.<sup>5</sup>

And he perceived.

<sup>1</sup> Thirst: *i.e.* desire in its evil sense.

<sup>2</sup> Ignorance.

<sup>3</sup> Doubt.

<sup>4</sup> “Bliss-of-non-existence.” One of Crowley’s eastern names.

<sup>5</sup> The Buddha had such long ears that he could cover the whole of his face with them. Ears are referred to Spirit in Hindu symbolism, so that the legend means he could conceal the lower elements and dwell in this alone.

When the applause and praise and glory had a little faded, the Buddha, in that golden delight of sunset, explained these marvellous events. “Thou, Abhavananda,” he said, “art the Perdu’ R Abu of my lengthy tale. The wicked Jehjaour has got something lingering with boiling oil in it, while waiting for his clerical clothes: while, as for me, I myself was the Bacillus in the forest of Lanka: I was the old Lady: I was (he shuddered) the British Government: I was the mosquito that buzzed in the girl’s flute: I was Bhavani: I was Huxlananda Swami; and at the last, at this blessed hour, I am—that I am.”

“But, Lord,” said the Five Hundred Thousand and One Arahats in a breath, “thou art then guilty of six violent deaths! Nay, thou hast hounded one soul from death to death through all these incarnations! What of this First Precept<sup>1</sup> of yours?”

“Children,” answered the Glorious One, “do not be so foolish as to think that death is necessarily an evil. I have not come to found a Hundred Years Club, and to include mosquitoes in the membership. In this case to have kept Perdu’ R Abu alive was to have played into the hands of his enemies. My First Precept is merely a general rule.<sup>2</sup> In the bulk of cases one should certainly abstain from destroying life, that is, wantonly and wilfully: but I cannot drink a glass of water without killing countless myriads of living beings. If you knew as I do, the conditions of existence: struggle deadly and inevitable, every form of life the inherent and immitigable foe of every other form, with few, few exceptions, you would not only cease to talk of the wickedness of causing death, but you would perceive the First Noble Truth, that no existence can be free from sorrow; the second, that the desire for existence only leads to sorrow; that the ceasing from existence is the ceasing of sorrow (the third); and you would seek in the fourth the Way, the Noble Eightfold Path.

“I know, O Arahats, that you do not need this instruction: but my words will not stay here: they will go forth and illuminate the whole system of ten thousand worlds, where Arahats do not grow on every tree. Little brothers, the night is fallen: it were well to sleep.”

<sup>1</sup> Here is the little rift within the lute which alienated Crowley from active work on Buddhist lines; the orthodox failing to see his attitude.

<sup>2</sup> A more likely idea that the brilliantly logical nonsense of “Pansil,” *supra*.

## AMBROSII MAGI HORTUS ROSARUM\*

Translated into English by Christeos Luciftias. Printed by W. Black, at the Wheatsheaf in Newgate, and sold at the Three Keys in Nags-Head Court, Gracechurch St.

**Opus** IT is fitting that I, Ambrose, called I.A.O., should set down the life of our great Father (who now is not, yet whose name must never be spoken among men), in order that the Brethren may know what journeys he undertook in pursuit of that Knowledge whose attainment is their constant study.

**Prima Materia A.O.** It was at his 119th year,<sup>2</sup> the Star Suaconch<sup>3</sup> being in the sign of the Lion, that our Father set out from his Castle of Ug<sup>4</sup> to attain the Quintessence or Philosophical Tincture. The way being dark and the Golden Dawn at hand, he did call forth four servants to keep him in the midst of the way, and the Lion roared before him to bid the opposers beware of his coming. On the Bull he rode, and on his left hand and his right marched the Eagle and the Man. But his back was uncovered, seeing that he would not turn.

**Custodes.<sup>1</sup>**

**Sapiens dom-  
inabitur astris.** And the Spirit of the Path met him. It was a young girl of two and twenty years, and she warned him that without the Serpent<sup>5</sup> his ways were but as wool cast into the dyer's vat. Two-and-twenty scales had the Serpent, and every scale was a path, and every path was alike an enemy and a friend. **S.S.D.D.** So he set out, and the darkness grew upon him. Yet could he well perceive a young maiden<sup>6</sup> having a necklace of two-and-seventy pearls, big and round like the breasts of a sea-nymph; and they gleamed round like moons. She

\* It would require many pages to give even a sketch of this remarkable document. The Qabalistic knowledge is as authentic as it is profound, but there are also allusions to contemporary occult students, and a certain very small amount of mere absence of meaning. The main satire is of course on the "Chymical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz." A few only of the serious problems are elucidated in footnotes.

<sup>1</sup> The Kerubim.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.* when 118 = change, a ferment, strength. Also = before he was 120, the mystic age of a Rosicrucian.

<sup>3</sup> Her-shell = Herschell, or Uranus, the planet which was ascending (in Leo) at Crowley's birth.

<sup>4</sup> Vau and Gimel, the Hierophant and High-Priestess in the Tarot. Hence "from his Castle of Ug" means "from his initiation." We cannot in future do more than indicate the allusions.

<sup>5</sup> See Table of Correspondences. [A Table of Correspondences was intended to form an appendix to the first volume of Crowley's *Collected Works*, but did not in fact appear in any print edition. See 777 instead – T.S.]

<sup>6</sup> The 22<sup>nd</sup> Key of the Tarot. The other Tarot symbols can be traced by any one who possesses, and to some degree understands, a pack of the cards. The occult views of the nature of these symbols are in some cases Crowley's own.

held in leash the four Beasts, but he strode boldly to her, and kissed her full on the lips. Wherefore she signed and fell back a space, and he pressed on. Now at the end of the darkness a fire glowed: she would have hindered him: clung she to his neck and wept. But the fire grew and the light dazzled her; **Intellectus.** so that with a shriek she fell. But the beasts flung themselves against the burning gateway of iron, and it gave way. Our Father passed into the fire. Some say that it consumed him utterly and that he died; howbeit, it is certain that he rose from a sarcophagus, and in the skies stood an angel with a **Deus.** trumpet, and on that trumpet he blew so mighty a blast that the dead rose all from their tombs, and our Father among them. "Now away!" he cried. "I would look upon the sun!" And with that the fire hissed like a myriad of serpents and went out suddenly. It was a green sward golden with buttercups; and in his way lay a high wall. Before it were two children, and with **H. et S.V.A.** obscene gestures they embraced, and laughed aloud, with filthy words and acts unspeakable. Over all of which stood the sun calm and radiant, and was glad to be. Now, think ye well, was our Father perplexed; and he knew not what he would do. For the children left their foulness and came soliciting with shameless words his acquiescence in their sport; and he, knowing the law of courtesy and pity, rebuked them not. But master ever of himself he abode alone, about and above. So he saw his virginity deflowered, and his thoughts were elsewhere. Now loosed they his body; he bade it leap the wall. The giant flower of ocean bloomed above him! He had fallen headlong into the great deep. As the green and crimson gloom departed somewhat before his eyes, he was aware of a Beetle that steadily and earnestly moved **Luna.** across the floor of that Sea unutterable. Him he followed; "for I wit well," thought the Adept, "that he goeth not back to the gross sun of earth. And if the sun hath become a beetle, may the beetle transform unto a bird." Wherewith he came to land. Night shone by lamp of wining moon upon a misty landscape. Two paths led him to two towers; and jackals howled on either. Now the jackal he knew; and the tower he knew not yet. Not two would he conquer—that were easy: to victory over one did he aspire. Made he therefore toward the moon. Rough was the hillside and the shadows deep and treacherous; as he advanced the towers seemed to approach one another closer and closer yet. He drew his sword: with a crash they came together; and he fell with wrath upon a single fortress. Three windows had the tower; and against it ten cannons thundered. Eleven bricks had fallen dislodged by **Deo Duce** lightning: it was no house wherein our Father might abide. But there he **Comite Ferro.** must abide. "To destroy it I am come," he said. And through he passed out therewithal, yet 'twas his home until he had attained. So at last he came to a river, and sailing to its source he found a fair woman all naked, and she filled **Vestigia Nulla** the river from two vessels of pure water. "She-devil," he cried, "have I gone **Retrorsum.** back one step?" For the Star Venus burned above. And with his sword he clave her from the head to the feet, that she fell clean asunder. Cried the

Adest Rosa  
Secreta Eros.

echo: “Ah! thou hast slain hope now!” Our Father gladdened at that word, and wiping his blade he kissed it and went on, knowing that his luck should now be ill. And ill it was, for a temple was set up in his way, and there he saw the grisly Goat enthroned. But he knew better than to judge a goat from a goat’s head and hoofs. And the first week he sacrificed to that goat<sup>1</sup> a crown every day. The second a phallus. The third a silver vase of blood. The fourth a royal sceptre. The fifth a sword. The sixth a heart. The seventh a garland of flowers. The eighth a grass-snake. The ninth a sickle. And the tenth week did he daily offer up his own body. Said the goat: “Though I be not an ox, yet am I a sword.” “Masked, O God!” cried the Adept. “Verily, an thou hadst not sacrificed—” There was silence. And under the Goat’s throne was a rainbow<sup>2</sup> of seven colours: our Father fitted himself as an arrow to the string (and the string was waxed well, dipped in a leaden pot wherein boiled amber and wine) and shot through stormy heavens. And they that saw him saw a woman wondrous fair<sup>3</sup> robed in flames of hair, moon-sandalled, sun-belted, with torch and vase of fire and water. And he trailed comet-clouds of glory upward.

Hermaphro-  
ditus.

Mors Janua  
Vitæ.


Thus came our Father (Blessed be his name!) to Death,<sup>4</sup> who stood, scythe in hand, opposed. And ever and anon he swept round, and men fell before him. “Look,” said Death, “my sickle hath a cross-handle. See how they grow like flowers!” “Give me salt!” quoth our Father. And with sulphur (that the Goat had given him) and with salt did he bestrew the ground. “I see we shall have ado together,” says Death. “Aye!” and with that he lops off Death’s cross-handle. Now Death was wroth indeed, for he saw that our Father had wit of his designs (and they were right foul!), but he bade him pass forthwith through his dominion. And our Father could not at that time stay him: though for himself had he cut off the grip, yet for others—well, let each man take his sword! The way went through a forest. Now between two trees hung a man by one heel (Love was that tree).<sup>5</sup> Crossed were his legs, and his arms behind his head, that hung ever downwards, the fingers locked. “Who art thou?” quoth our Father. “He that came before thee.” “Who am I?” “He that cometh after me.” With that worshipped our Father, and took a present of a great jewel from him, and went his ways. And he was bitterly a-cold, for that was the great Water he had passed. But our Father’s paps glittered with cold, black light, and likewise his navel. Wherefore he was comforted. Now came the sudden twittering of heart lest the firmament beneath him were not stable, and lo! he danceth up and down as a very cork

Terræ Ultor  
Anima Terræ.



Adeptus.

<sup>1</sup> The sacrifices are the ten Sephiroth.

<sup>2</sup> See Table.

<sup>3</sup> Ancient form of the Key of .

<sup>4</sup> Considered as the agent of resurrection.

<sup>5</sup> In the true key of  the tree is shaped like the letter  = Venus or love. The figure of the man forms a cross above a triangle, with apex upwards, the sign of redemption.

on waters of wailing. “Woman,” he bade sternly, “be still. Cleave that with thy sword: or that must I well work?” But she cleft the cords, bitter-faced, smiling goddess as she was; and he went on. “Leave thine ox-goad,”<sup>1</sup> quoth he, “till I come back an ox!” And she laughed and let him pass. Now is our Father come to the Unstable Lands, ‘Od wot, for the Wheel whereon he poised was ever turning. Sworded was the Sphinx, but he out-dared her in riddling: deeper pierced his sword: he cut her into twain: her place was his. But that would he not, my Brethren; to the centre he clomb ever: and having won thither, he vanished. As a hermit ever he travelled and the lamp and wand were his. In his path a lion roared, but to it ran a maiden, strong as a young elephant, and held its cruel jaws. By force he ran to her: he freed the lion—one buffet of his hand dashed her back six paces!—and with another blow smote its head from its body. And he ran to her and by force embraced her. Struggled she and fought him: savagely she bit, but it was of no avail: she lay ravished and exhausted on the Lybian plain. Across the mouth he smote her for a kiss, while she cried: “O! thou hast begotten on me twins. And mine also is the Serpent, and thou shalt conquer it and it shall serve thee: and they, they also for a guide!” She ceased; and he, having come to the world’s end, prepared his chariot. Foresquare he builded it, and that double: he harnessed the two sphinxes that he had made from one, and sailed, crab-fashion, backwards, through the amber skies of even. Wherefore he attained to see his children. Lovers they were and lovely, those twins of rape. One was above them, joining their hands. “That is well,” said our Father, and for seven nights he slept in seven starry palaces, and a sword to guard him. Note well also that these children, and those others, are two, being four. And on the sixth day (for the seven days were past) he rose and came into his ancient temple, a temple of our Holy Order, O my Brethren, wherein sat that Hierophant who had initiated him of old. Now read he well the riddle of the Goat (Blessed be his name among us for ever! Nay, not for ever!), and therewith the Teacher made him a master of Sixfold Chamber, and an ardent Sufferer toward the Blazing Star. For the Sword, said the Teacher, is but the Star unfurled.<sup>2</sup> And our Father being cunning to place Aleph over Tau read this reverse, and so beheld Eden, even now and in the flesh.

Sapientiae Lux  
Viris Baculum

Femina Rapta  
Inspirat  
Gaudium.

Pleiades.

Dignitates.

Whence he sojourned far, and came to a great Emperor, by whom he was well received, and from whom he gat great gifts. And the Emperor (who is Solomon) told him of Sheba’s Land and of one fairest of women there enthroned. So he journeyed thither, and for four years and seven months abode with her as paramour and light-of-love, for she was gracious to him and showed him those things that the Emperor had hidden; even the cubical

Amicitia.

Amor.

<sup>1</sup> Lamed means ox-goad; Aleph, an ox. Lamed Aleph means No, the denial of Aleph Lamed, El, God.

<sup>2</sup> Read reverse, the Star [= the Will and the Great Work] is to fold up the Sephiroth; *i.e.* to attain Nirvana.

stone and the cross beneath the triangle that were his and un-revealed. And on the third day he left her and came to Her who had initiated him before he was initiated; and with he he abode eight days and twenty days:<sup>1</sup> and she gave him gifts.

The first day, a camel;  
 The second day, a kiss;  
 The third day, a star-glass;  
 The fourth day, a beetle's wing;  
 The fifth day, a crab;  
 The sixth day, a bow;  
 The seventh day, a quiver;  
 The eighth day, a stag;  
 The ninth day, an horn;  
 The tenth day, a sandal of silver;  
 The eleventh day, a silver box of white sandal wood;  
 The twelfth day, a whisper;  
 The thirteenth day, a black cat;  
 The fourteenth day, a phial of white gold;  
 The fifteenth day, an egg-shell cut in two;  
 The sixteenth day, a glance;  
 The seventeenth day, an honeycomb;  
 The eighteenth day, a dream;  
 The nineteenth day, a nightmare;  
 The twentieth day, a wolf, black-muzzled;  
 The twenty-first day, a sorrow;  
 The twenty-second day, a bundle of herbs;  
 The twenty-third day, a piece of camphor;  
 The twenty-fourth day, a moonstone;  
 The twenty-fifth day, a sigh;  
 The twenty-sixth day, a refusal;

*Dona Virginis.*

*Puella Urget  
 Sophiam Sod-  
 alibus.*

*The Sophic  
 Suggler.*

The twenty-seventh day, a consent; and the last night she gave him all herself, so that the moon was eclipsed and earth was utterly darkened. And the marriage of that virgin was on this wise: She had three arrows, yet but two flanks, and the wise men said that who knew two was three,<sup>2</sup> should know three was eight,<sup>3</sup> if the circle were but squared; and this also one day shall ye know, my Brethren! And she gave him the great and perfect gift of Magic, so that he fared forth right comely and well-provided. Now at that great wedding was a Suggler,<sup>4</sup> a riddler: for he said, "Thou hast beasts: I will give

<sup>1</sup> The houses of the Moon. All the gifts are lunar symbols.

<sup>2</sup> 3, the number of ♋. 2, the number of the card g.

<sup>3</sup> The equality of three and eight is attributed to Binah, a high grade of Theurgic attainment.

<sup>4</sup> *Scil.* Juggler, the 1st Key. The magical weapons correspond to the Kerubim.

thee weapons one for one.” For the Lion did our Father win a little fiery wand like a flame, and for his Eagle a cup of ever flowing water: for his Man the Suggler gave him a golden-hilted dagger (yet this was the worst of all his bargains, for it could not strike other, but him-self only), while for a curious coin he bartered his good Bull. Alas for our Father! Now the Suggler mocks him and cries: “Four fool’s bargains hast thou made, and thou art fit to go forth and meet a fool<sup>1</sup> for thy mate.” But our Father counted thrice seven and cried: “One for the fool,” seeing the Serpent should be his at last. “None for the fool,” they laughed back—nay, even his maiden queen. For she would not any should know thereof. Yet all were right, both he and they. But truth ran quickly about; for that was the House of Truth; and Mercury stood far from the Sun. Yet the Suggler was ever in the Sign of Sorrow, and the Fig Tree was not far. So went our Father to the Fool’s Paradise of Air. But it is not lawful that I should write to you, brethren, of what there came to him at that place and time; nor indeed is it true, if it were written. For alway doth this Arcanum differ from itself on this wise, that the Not and the Amen,<sup>2</sup> passing, are void either on the one side or the other, and Who shall tell their ways?

Hammer of  
Thor.

Arcanum.

So our Father, having won the Serpent Crown, the Uræus of Antient Khem, did bind it upon his head, and rejoiced in that Kingdom for the space of two hundred and thirty and one days<sup>3</sup> and nights, and turned him toward the Flaming Sword.<sup>4</sup> Now the Sword governeth ten mighty King-doms, and evil, and above them is the ninefold lotus, and a virgin came forth unto him in the hour of his rejoicing and propounded her riddle.

The first riddle:<sup>5</sup>

Griphus I.

The maiden is blind.

Our Father: She shall be what she doth not.

And a second virgin came forth to him and said:

Griphus II.

The second riddle: Detegitur Yod.

Quoth our Father: The moon is full.

Griphus III.

So also a third virgin the third riddle:

Man and woman: O fountain of the balance!

To whom our Father answered with a swift flash of his sword, so swift she saw it not.

Came a fourth virgin, having a fourth riddle:

Griphus IV.

What egg hath no shell?

<sup>1</sup> The Key marked *o* and applied to Aleph, *ı*.

<sup>2</sup> This is obscure.

<sup>3</sup>  $0 + 1 + 2 + \dots + 21 = 231$ .

<sup>4</sup> The Sepiroth.

<sup>5</sup> The maiden (Malkuth) is blind (unredeemed). Answer: She shall be what she doth not, *i.e.*, see. She shall be the sea, *i.e.*, “exalted to the throne of Binah” (the great sea), the Qabalistic phrase to express her redemption. We leave it to the reader’s ingenuity to solve the rest. Each refers to the Sephira indicated by the number, but going upward.

- And our Father pondered a while and then said:  
On a wave of the sea: on a shell of the wave: blessed be her name!
- Griphus V.** The fifth virgin issued suddenly and said:  
I have four arms and six sides: red I am, and gold. To whom our Father:  
Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!  
(For wit ye well, there be two Arcana therein.)
- Griphus VI.** Then saith the sixth virgin openly:  
Power lieth in the river of fire.  
And our Father laughed aloud and answered: I am come from the waterfall.
- Griphus VII.** So at that the seventh virgin came forth: and her countenance was troubled.  
The seventh riddle:  
The oldest said to the most beautiful: What doest thou here?  
Our Father:  
And she answered him: I am in the place of the bridge. Go thou up higher: go thou where these are not.
- Griphus VIII.** Thereat was commotion and bitter wailing, and the eighth virgin came forth with rent attire and cried the eighth riddle:  
The sea hath conceived.  
Our Father raised his head, and there was a great darkness.
- Griphus IX.** The ninth virgin, sobbing at his feet, the ninth riddle:  
By wisdom.  
Then our Father touched his crown and they all rejoiced: but laughing he put them aside and he said: Nay! By six hundred and twenty<sup>1</sup> do ye exceed!
- Griphus X.** Whereat they wept, and the tenth virgin came forth, bearing a royal crown having twelve jewels: and she had but one eye, and from that the eyelid had been torn. A prodigious beard had she, and all of white: and they wist he would have smitten her with his sword. But he would not, and she propounded unto him the tenth riddle:
- Culpua Urbium**  
**Nota Terræ.** Countenance beheld not countenance.  
So thereto he answered: Our Father, blessed be thou!—  
Countenance?  
Then they brought him the Sword and bade him smite withal: but he said:  
If countenance behold not countenance, then let the ten be five. And they wist that he but mocked them; for he did bend the sword fivefold and fashioned therefrom a Star, and they all vanished in that light; yet the lotus abode nine-petalled and he cried, “Before the wheel, the axle.” So he chained the Sun,<sup>2</sup> and slew the Bull, and exhausted the Air, breathing it

<sup>1</sup> Kether adds up to 620.

<sup>2</sup> These are the letters of Ain Soph Aur, the last two of which he destroys so as to leave only Ain, Not, or Nothing.

deep into his lungs: then he broke down the ancient tower, that which he had made his home, will he nill he, for so long, and he slew the other Bull, and he broke the arrow in twain; after that he was silent, for they grew again in sixfold order, so that this latter work was double: but unto the first three he laid not his hand, neither for the first time, nor for the second time, nor for the third time. So to them he added<sup>1</sup> that spiritual flame (for they were one, and ten, and fifty, thrice, and again) and that was the Beast, the Living One that is Lifan. Let us be silent, therefore, my brethren, worshipping the holy sixfold Ox<sup>2</sup> that was our Father in his peace that he had won into, and that so hardly. For of this shall no man speak.

Now therefore let it be spoken of our Father's journeyings in the land of Vo<sup>3</sup> and of his sufferin therein, and of the founding of our holy and illustrious Order.

Our Father, Brethren, having attained the mature age of three hundred and fifty and eight years,<sup>4</sup> set forth upon a journey into the Mystic Mountain of the Caves. He took with him his Son,<sup>5</sup> a Lamb, Life, and Strength, for these four were the Keys of that Mountain. So by ten days and fifty days and two hundred days and yet ten days he went forth. After ten days fell a thunderbolt, whirling through black clouds of rain: after sixty the road split in two, but he travelled on both at once: after two hundred and sixty, the sun drove away the rain, and the Star shone in the day-time, making it Night. After the last day came his Mother, his Redeemer, and Himself; and joining together they were even as I am who write unto you. Seventeen they were, the three Fathers: with the three Mothers they were thirty-two, and sixfold therein, being as countenance and countenance. Yet, being seventeen, they were but one, and that one none, as before hath been showed. And this enumeration is a great *Mysterium* of our art. Whence a light hidden in a Cross. Now therefore having brooded upon the ocean, and smitten with the Sword, and the Pyramid being builded in just proportion, was that Light fixed even in the Vault of the Caverns. With one stroke he rent asunder the Veil; with one stroke he closed the same. And entering the Sarcophagus of that Royal Tomb he laid him down to sleep. Four guarded him, and One in the four; Seven enwalled him, and One in the seven, yet were the seven ten, and One in the ten. Now therefore his disciples came unto the Vault of that Mystic Mountain, and with the Keys they opened the Portal and came to him and woke him. But during his long sleep the roses had grown over him, crimson and flaming with interior fire, so that he could not escape. Yet they

*Nechesh..*

*Abiegnus.*

*Mysterium  
I.N.R.I..*

*Mysterium  
LVX.*

*Pastos.*

<sup>1</sup> To (1 + 10 + 50) 3 × 2 he adds 300, Shin, the flame of the Spirit = 666.

<sup>2</sup> 666 = 6 × 111. 111 = Aleph, the Ox.

<sup>3</sup> His journeys as Initiator.

<sup>4</sup> Nechesh the Serpent and Messiach the Redeemer.

<sup>5</sup> Abigenos, Abiagnus, Biagenos, Abiegnus, metatheses of the name of the Mystic Mountain of Initiation. The next paragraph has been explained in the essay "Qabalistic Dogma."

withered at his glance; withat he knew what fearful task was before him. But slaying his disciples with long Nails, he interred them there, so that they were right sorrowful in their hearts. May we all die so! And what further befell him ye shall also know, but not at this time.

**Trinitas.** Going forth of that Mountain he met also the Fool. Then the discourse of that Fool, my Brethren; it shall repay your pains. They think they are a triangle,<sup>1</sup> he said, they think as the Picture-Folk. Base they are, and little infinitely.

Ain Elohim.

**Unitas.** They think, being many, they are one.<sup>2</sup> They think as the Rhine-Folk think. Many and none.

Ain Elohim.

**Serpentes.** They think the erect<sup>3</sup> is the twined, and the twined is the coiled, and the coiled is the twin, and the twin are the stoopers. They think as the Big-Nose-Folk. Save us, O Lord!

Ain Elohim.

**Abacadabra.**<sup>4</sup> The Chariot. Four hundred and eighteen. Five are one, and six are diverse, five in the midst and three on each side. The Word of Power, double in the Voice of the Master.

Ain Elohim.

**Amethsh.** Four sounds of four force. O the Snake hath a long tail! Amen.

Ain Elohim.

Sudden death: thick darkness: ho! the ox!

**Ye Fylfat †** One, and one, and one: Creator, Preserver, Destroyer, ho! the Redeemer! Thunder-stone: whirlpool: lotus-flower: ho! for the gold of the sages!

Ain Elohim.

And he was silent for a great while, and so departed our Father from Him.

**Mysterium Matris.**<sup>5</sup> Forth he went along the dusty desert and met an antient woman bearing a bright crown of gold, studded with gems, one on each knee. Dressed in rags she was, and squatted clumsily on the sand. A horn grew from her forehead; and she spat black foam and froth. Foul was the hag and evil, yet our Father bowed down flat on his face to the earth. "Holy Virgin of God," said he, "what dost thou here? What wilt thou with thy servant?" At that she stank so that the air gasped about her, like a fish brought out of the sea. So she told him she was gathering simples for her daughter that had died to bury her withal. Now no simples grew in the desert. Therefore our Father drew with

**Evocatio.**

<sup>1</sup> The belief in a Trinity—ignorance of Daath.

<sup>2</sup> Belief in Monism, or rather Advaitism. Crowley was a Monist only in the modern scientific sense of that word.

<sup>3</sup> Confusion of the various mystic serpents. The Big-Nose-Folk = the Jews. We leave the rest to the insight of the reader.

<sup>4</sup> [Given the adjacent text, possibly an typesetter's error for 'Abrahadabra' — T.S.]

<sup>5</sup> This is all obscure.

his sword lines of power in the sand, so that a black and terrible demon appeared squeezing up in thin flat plates of flesh along the sword-lines. So our Father cried: "Simples, O Axcaxrabortarax, for my mother!" Then the demon was wroth and shrieked: "Thy mother to black hell! She is mine!" So the old hag confessed straight that she had given her body for love to that fiend of the pit. But our Father paid no heed thereto and bade the demon to do his will, so that he brought him herbs many, and good, with which our Father planted a great grove that grew about him (for the sun was now waxen bitter hot) wherein he worshipped, offering in vessels of clay these seven offerings:<sup>1</sup>

The first offering, dust;  
 The second offering, ashes;  
 The third offering, sand;  
 The fourth offering, bay-leaves;  
 The fifth offering, gold;  
 The sixth offering, dung;  
 The seventh offering, poison.

With the dust he gave a sickle to gather the harvest of that dust.  
 With the ashes he gave a sceptre, that one might rule them aright.  
 With the sand he gave a sword, to cut that sand withal.  
 With the bay-leaves he gave a sun, to wither them  
 With the gold he gave a garland of sores, and that was for luck.  
 With the dung he gave a Rod of Life to quicken it.  
 With the poison he gave also in offering a stag and a maiden.

But about the noon came one shining unto our Father and gave him to drink from a dull and heavy bowl. And this was a liquor potent and heavy, by'r lady! So that our Father sank into deep sleep and dreamed a dream, and in that mirific dream it seemed unto him that the walls of all things slid into and across each other, so that he feared greatly, for the stability of the universe is the great enemy; the unstable being the ever-lasting, saith Adhou Bim Aram, the Arab. O Elmen Zata, our Sophic Pilaster! Further in the dream there was let down from heaven a mighty tesseract, bounded by eight cubes, whereon sat a mighty dolphin having eight senses. Further, he beheld a cavern full of most ancient bones of men, and therein a lion with the voice of a dog. Then came a voice: "Thirteen<sup>2</sup> are they, who are one. Once is a oneness: twice is the Name: thrice let us say not: by four is the Son: by five is the Sword: by six is the Holy Oil of the most Excellent Beard, and the leaves of the Book are by six: by seven is that great Amen." Then our Father saw one hundred and four horses that drove an ivory car over a sea of pearl, and they received him therein and bade him be comforted. With that he awoke

Somnium Auri  
Potabilis.

Tredecim  
Voces.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the planets.

<sup>2</sup> Achad, unity, adds to thirteen. There follow attributions of the "thirteen times table."

Ordinis  
Inceptio.

and saw that he would have all his desire. In the morning therefore he arose and went his way into the desert. There he clomb an high rock and called forth the eagles, that their shadow floating over the desert should be as a book that men might read it. The shadows wrote and the sun recorded; and on this wise cometh it to pass, O my Brethren, that by darkness and by sunlight ye will still learn ever these the Arcana of our Science. Lo! who learneth by moonlight, he is the lucky one! So our Father, having thus founded the Order, and our sacred Book being opened, rested awhile and beheld many wonders, the like of which were never yet told. But ever chiefly his study was to reduce unto eight things his many.

And thus, O Brethren of our Venerable Order, he at last succeeded. Those who know not will learn little herein: yet that they may be shamed all shall be put forth at this time clearly before them all, with no obscurity nor obfuscation in the exposition thereof.

Writing this, saith our Father to me, the Humblest and oldest of all his disciples, write as the story of my Quintessential Quest, my Spagyric Wandering, my Philosophical Going. Write plainly unto the Brethren, quoth he, for many be little and weak; and thy hard words and much learning may confound them.

Therefore I write thus plainly to you. Mark well that ye read me aright!

Vitæ.

Our Father (blessed be his name!) entered the Path on this wise. He cut off three from ten:<sup>1</sup> thus he left seven. He cut and left three: he cut and left one: he cut and became. Thus fourfold. Eightfold.<sup>2</sup> He opened his eyes: he cleansed his heart: he chained his tongue: he fixed his flesh: he turned to his trade: he put forth his strength: he drew all to a point: he delighted.

Via.

Therefore he is not, having become that which he was not. Mark ye all: it is declared. Now of the last adventure of our Father and of his going into the land of Apes, that is, England, and of what he did there, it is not fitting that I, the poor fool who loved him, shall now discourse. But it is most necessary that I should speak of his holy death and of his funeral and of the bruit thereof, for that is gone into diverse lands as a false and lying report, whereby much harm and ill-luck come to the Brethren. In this place, therefore, will I set down the exact truth of all that happened.

Mirabilia.

In the year of the Great Passing Over were signs and wonders seen of all men, O my Brethren, as it is written, and well known unto this day. And the first sign was of dancing: for every woman that was under the moon began to dance and was mad, so that headlong and hot-mouthed she flung herself down, desirous. Whence the second sign, that of musical inventions; for in that year, and of Rosewomen, came A and U and M,<sup>3</sup> the mighty musicians! And the third sign likewise, namely, of animals: for in that year every sheep

I. Signum.

II. Signum.

III. Signum.

<sup>1</sup> These are the Buddhist "paths of enlightenment."

<sup>2</sup> The eightfold path. The rest is very obscure.

<sup>3</sup> Aum! The sacred word.

had lambs thirteen, and every cart<sup>1</sup> was delivered of a wheel! And other *Alia Signa*. wonders innumerable: they are well known, insomuch that that year is yet held notable.

Now our Father, being very old, came into the venerable Grove of our August Fraternity and abode there. And so old was he and feeble that he could scarce lift his hands in benediction upon us. And all we waited about him, both by day and night; lest one word should fall, and we not hear the same. But he spake never unto us, though his lips moved and his eyes sought ever that which we could not see. At last, on the day of D., the mother of P.,<sup>2</sup> he straightened himself up and spake. This his final discourse was written down then by the dying lions in their own blood, traced willingly on the desert sands about the Grove of the Illustrious. Also here set down: but who will confirm the same, let him seek it on the sands.

Children of my Will, said our Father, from whose grey eyes fell gentlest tears, it is about the hour. The chariot (Ch.)<sup>3</sup> is not, and the chariot (H.) is at hand. Yet I, who have been car-borne through the blue air by sphinxes, shall never be carried away, not by the whitest horses of the world. To you I have no word to say. All is written in the sacred Book. To that look ye well!

Ambrose, old friend, he said, turning to me—and I wept ever sore—do thou write for the little ones, the children of my children, for them that understand not easily our high Mysteries; for in thy pen is, as it were, a river of clear water; without vagueness, without ambiguity, without show of learning, without needless darkening of counsel and word, dost thou ever reveal the sacred Heights of our Mystic Mountain. For, as for him that understandeth not thy writing, and that easily and well, be ye well assured all that he is a vile man and a losel of little worth or worship; a dog, an unclean swine, a worm of filth, a festering sore in the vitals of earth: such an one is liar and murderer, debauched, drunken, sexless and spatulate; an ape-dropping, a lousy, flat-backed knave: from such an one keep ye well away! Use hath he little: ornament maketh he nothing; let him be cast out on the dunghills beyond Jordan; let him pass into the S. P. P., and that utterly!

With that our Father sighed deep and laid back his reverend head, and was silent. But from his heart came a subtle voice of tenderest farewell, so that we knew him well dead. But for seventy days and seventy nights we touched him not, but abode ever about him: and the smile changed not on his face, and the whole grove was filled with sweet and subtle perfumes. Now on the 71st day arose there a great dispute about his body; for the angels and spirits and demons did contend about it, that they might possess it. But

<sup>1</sup> Qy. ꝛ (the cart) becomes O (a wheel). The commentators who have suspected the horrid blasphemy implied by the explanation “becomes ꝛ, the Wheel of Fortune,” are certainly in error.

<sup>2</sup> Demeter and Persephone.

<sup>3</sup> Ch = ꝛ; H = Hades. See the Tarot cards, and classical mythology, for the symbols.

our eldest brother V. N. bade all be still; and thus he apportioned the sacred relics of our Father.

**Partitio.**

To the Angel Agbagal, the fore part of the skull;  
 To the demon Ozoz, the back left part of the skull;  
 To the demon Olcot,<sup>1</sup> the back right part of the skull;  
 To ten thousand myriads of spirits of fire, each one hair;  
 To ten thousand myriads of spirits of water, each one hair;  
 To ten thousand myriads of spirits of earth, each one hair;  
 To ten thousand myriads of spirits of air, each one hair;  
 To the archangel Zazelazel, the brain;  
 To the angel Usbusolat, the medulla;  
 To the demon Ululomis, the right nostril;  
 To the angel Opael, the left nostril;  
 To the spirit Kuiphiah, the membrane of the nose;  
 To the spirit Pugrah, the bridge of the nose;  
 To eleven thousand spirits of spirit, the hairs of the nose, one each;  
 To the archangel Tuphtuptuphal,<sup>2</sup> the right eye;  
 To the archdevil Upsusph, the left eye;

The parts thereof in trust to be divided among their servitors; as the right cornea, to Aphlek; the left, to Urnbal;—mighty spirits are they, and bold!

To the archdevil Rama,<sup>3</sup> the right ear and its parts;  
 To the archangel Umumatis, the left ear and its parts;

The teeth to two-and-thirty letters of the sixfold Name: one to the air, and fifteen to the rain and the ram, and ten to the virgin, and six to the Bull;

The mouth to the archangels Alalal and Bikarak, lip and lip;

The tongue to that devil of all devils Yehowou.<sup>4</sup> Ho, devil! canst thou speak?

The pharynx to Mahabonisbash, the great angel;

To seven-and-thirty myriads of legions of planetary spirits the hairs of the moustache, to each one;

To ninety and one myriads of the Elohim, the hairs of the beard; to each thirteen, and the oil to ease the world;

To Shalach, the archdevil, the chin.

So also with the lesser relics; of which are notable only: to the Order, the heart of our Father: to the Book of the Law, his venerable lung-space to serve as a shrine thereunto: to the devil Aot, the liver, to be divided: to the angel Exarpt and his followers, the great intestine: to Bitom the devil and his crew, the little intestine: to Aub, Aud, and Aur, the venerable Phallus of our Father: to Ash the little bone of the same: to our children K., C., B., C., G., T., N.,

<sup>1</sup> Col. Olcott, the theosophist.

<sup>2</sup>? the spirt of motor-cars.

<sup>3</sup> Vishnu, the preserver.

<sup>4</sup> Jehova.

H., I., and M., his illustrious finger-nails, and the toe-nails to be in trust for their children after them: and so for all the rest; is it not written in our archives? As to his magical weapons, all vanished utterly at the moment of his Passing Over. Therefore they carried away our Father's body piece by piece and that with reverence and in order, so that there was not left of all one hair, nor one nerve, nor one little pore of the skin. Thus was there no funeral pomp; they that say other are liars and blasphemers against a fame untarnished. May the red plague rot their vitals!

Thus, O my Brethren, thus and not otherwise was the Passing Over of that **Amen.** Great and Wonderful Magician, our Father and Founder. May the dew of his admirable memory moisten the grass of our minds, that we may bring forth tender shoots of energy in the Great Work of Works. So mote it be!

BENEDICTVS DOMINVS DEVS

NOSTER QVI NOBIS DEDIT

SIGNVM

R. C.



# בְּרֵאשִׁית

AN ESSAY IN ONTOLOGY  
WITH SOME REMARKS  
ON CEREMONIAL MAGIC





O Man, of a daring nature, thou subtle production!  
Thou wilt not comprehend it, as when understanding some  
common thing.

ORACLES OF ZOROASTER.

IN presenting this theory of the Universe to the world, I have but one hope of making any profound impression, viz.—that my theory has the merit of explaining the divergences between the three great forms of religion now existing in the world—Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, and of adapting them to ontological science by conclusions not mystical but mathematical. Of Mohammedism I shall not now treat, as, in whatever light we may decide to regard it (and its esoteric schools are often orthodox), in any case it must fall under one of the three heads of Nihilism, Advaitism, and Dvaitism.

Taking the ordinary hypothesis of the universe, that of its infinity, or at any rate that of the infinity of God, or of the infinity of some substance or idea actually existing, we first come to the question of the possibility of the co-existence of God and man.

The Christians, in the category of the existent, enumerate among other things, whose consideration we may discard for the purposes of this argument, God, an infinite being; man; Satan and his angels; man certainly, Satan presumably, finite beings. These are not aspects of one being, but separate and even antagonistic existences. All are equally real; we cannot accept mystics of the type of Caird as being orthodox exponents of the religion of Christ.

The Hindus enumerate Brahm, infinite in all dimensions and directions—indistinguishable from the Pleroma of the Gnostics—and Maya, illusion. This is in a sense the ante-thesis of noumenon and phenomenon, noumenon being negated of all predicates until it becomes almost extinguished in the Nichts under the title of the Alles. (Cf. Max Müller on the metaphysical Nirvana, in his Dhammapada, Introductory Essay.) The Buddhists express no opinion.

Let us consider the force-quality in the existences conceived of by those two religions respectively, remembering that the God of the Christian is infinite, and yet discussing the alternative if we could suppose him to be a finite God. In any equilibrated system of forces, we may sum and represent them as a triangle or series of triangles which again resolve into one. In any moving system, if the resultant motion be applied in a contrary direction, the equilibrium can also thus be represented. And if any one of the original forces in such a system may be considered, that one is equal to the resultant of the remainder. Let  $x$ , the purpose of the universe, be the resultant of the forces  $G$ ,  $S$ , and  $M$  (God, Satan, and Man). Then  $M$  is also the resultant of  $G$ ,  $S$ , and  $-x$ . So that we can regard either of our forces as supreme, and there is no reason for worshipping one rather than the other. All are finite. This argument the Christians clearly see: hence the development of God from the petty joss of Genesis to the intangible, but self-contradictory spectre of to-day. But if  $G$  be infinite, the other forces can have no possible effect on it. As Whewell says, in the strange accident by which he anticipates the metre of *In Memoriam*: "No force on earth, however great, can stretch a cord, however fine, into a horizontal line that shall be absolutely straight."

The definition of God as infinite therefore denies man implicitly; while if he be finite, there is an end of the usual Christian reasons for worship, though I daresay I could myself discover some reasonably good ones. [I hardly expect to be asked, somehow.]

The resulting equilibrium of God and man, destructive of worship, is of course absurd. We must reject it, unless we want to fall into Positivism, Materialism, or something of the sort. But if, then, we call God infinite, how are we to regard man, and Satan? (the latter, at the very least, surely no integral part of him). The fallacy lies not in my demonstration (which is also that of orthodoxy) that a finite God is absurd, but in the assumption that man has any real force.<sup>1</sup>

In our mechanical system (as I have hinted above), if one of the forces be infinite, the others, however great, are both relatively and absolutely nothing.

<sup>1</sup> Lully, Descartes, Spinoza, Schelling. See their works.

In any category, infinity excludes finity, unless that finity be an identical part of that infinity.

In the category of existing things, space being infinite, for on that hypothesis we are still working, either matter fills or does not fill it. If the former, matter is infinitely great; if the latter, infinitely small. Whether the matter-universe be  $10^{10000}$  light-years in diameter or half a mile makes no difference; it is infinitely small—in effect, Nothing. The unmathematical illusion that it does exist is what the Hindus call Maya.

If, on the other hand, the matter-universe is infinite, Brahm and God are crowded out, and the possibility of religion is equally excluded.

We may now shift our objective. The Hindus cannot account intelligibly, though they try hard, for Maya, the cause of all suffering. Their position is radically weak, but at least we may say for them that they have tried to square their religion with their common sense. The Christians, on the other hand, though they saw whither the Manichean Heresy<sup>1</sup> must lead, and crushed it, have not officially admitted the precisely similar conclusion with regard to man, and denied the existence of the human soul as distinct from the divine soul.

Trismegistus, Iamblichus, Porphyry, Boehme, and the mystics generally have of course substantially done so, though occasionally with rather inexplicable reservations, similar to those made in some cases by the Vedantists themselves.

Man then being disproved, God the Person disappears for ever, and becomes Atman, Pleroma, Ain Soph, what name you will, infinite in all directions and in all categories—to deny one is to destroy the entire argument and throw us back on to our old Dvaitistic bases.

I entirely sympathise with my unhappy friend Rev. Mansel, B.D.,<sup>2</sup> in his piteous and pitiful complaints against the logical results of the Advaitist School. But, on his basal hypothesis of an infinite God, infinite space, time, and so on, no other conclusion is possible. Dean Mansel is found in the impossible

<sup>1</sup> The conception of Satan as a positive evil force; the lower triangle of the Hexagram.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Art. Metaphysics.

position of one who will neither give up his premisses nor dispute the validity of his logical processes, but who shrinks in horror from the inevitable conclusion; he supposes there must be something wrong somewhere, and concludes that the sole use of reason is to discover its own inferiority to faith. As Deussen<sup>1</sup> well points out, faith in the Christian sense merely amounts to being convinced on insufficient grounds.<sup>2</sup> This is surely the last refuge of incompetence.

But though, always on the original hypo-thesis of the infinity of space, &c., the Advaitist position of the Vedantists and the great Germans is unassailable, yet on practical grounds the Dvaitists have all the advantage. Fichte and the others exhaust themselves trying to turn the simple and obvious position that: “If the Ego alone exists, where is any place, not only for morals and religion, which we can very well do without, but for the most essential and continuous acts of life? Why should an infinite Ego fill a non-existent body with imaginary food cooked in thought only over an illusionary fire by a cook who is not there? Why should infinite power use such finite means, and very often fail even then?”

What is the sum total of the Vedantist position? “I am an illusion, externally. In reality, the true ‘I’ am the Infinite, and if the illusionary ‘I’ could only realise Who ‘I’ really am, how very happy we should all be!” And here we have Karma, rebirth, all the mighty laws of nature operating nowhere in nothing!

There is no room for worship or for morality in the Advaitist system. All the specious pleas of the Bhagavad-Gita, and the ethical works of Western Advaitist philosophers, are more or less consciously confusion of thought. But no subtlety can turn the practical argument; the grinning mouths of the Dvaitist guns keep the fort of Ethics, and warn metaphysics to keep off the rather green grass of religion.

<sup>1</sup> “The Principles of Metaphysics.” Macmillan.

<sup>2</sup> Or, as the Sunday-school boy said: “Faith is the power of believing what we know to be untrue.” I quote Deussen with the more pleasure, because it is about the only sentence in all his writings with which I am in accord.—A.C.

That its apologists should have devoted so much time, thought, scholarship and ingenuity to this question is the best proof of the fatuity of the Advaita position.

There is then a flaw somewhere. I boldly take up the glove against all previous wisdom, revert to the most elementary ideas of cannibal savages, challenge all the most vital premisses and axiomata that have passed current coin with philosophy for centuries, and present my theory.

I clearly foresee the one difficulty, and will discuss it in advance. If my conclusions on this point are not accepted, we may at once get back to our previous irritable agnosticism, and look for our Messiah elsewhere. But if we can see together on this one point, I think things will go fairly smoothly afterwards.

Consider<sup>1</sup> Darkness! Can we philosophically or actually regard as different the darkness produced by interference of light and that existing in the mere absence of light?

Is Unity really identical with .9 recurring?

Do we not mean different things when we speak respectively of  $2 \sin 60^\circ$  and of  $\sqrt{3}$ ?

Charcoal and diamond are obviously different in the categories of colour, crystallisation, hardness, and so on; but are they not really so even in that of existence?

The third example is to my mind the best.  $2 \sin 60^\circ$  and  $\sqrt{3}$  are unreal and therefore never conceivable, at least to the present constitution of our human intelligences. Worked out, neither has meaning; un-worked, both have meaning, and that a different meaning in one case and the other.

We have thus two terms, both unreal, both inconceivable, yet both representing intelligible and diverse ideas to our minds (and this is the point!) though identical in reality and convertible by a process of reason which

<sup>1</sup> Ratiocination may perhaps not take us far. But a continuous and attentive study of these quaint points of distinction may give us an intuition, or direct mind-apperception of what we want, one way or the other.—A.C.

simulates or replaces that apprehension which we can never (one may suppose) attain to.

Let us apply this idea to the Beginning of all things, about which the Christians lie frankly, the Hindus prevaricate, and the Buddhists are discreetly silent, while not contradicting even the gross and ridiculous accounts of the more fantastic Hindu visionaries.

The Qabalists explain the “First Cause”<sup>1</sup> by the phrase: “From 0 to 1, as the circle opening out into the line.” The Christian dogma is really identical, for both conceive of a previous and eternally existing God, though the Qabalists hedge by describing this latent Deity as “Not.” Later commentators, notably the illustrious<sup>2</sup> MacGregor-Mathers, have explained this Not as “negatively-existing.” Profound as is my respect for the intellectual and spiritual attainments of him whom I am proud to have been permitted to call my master,<sup>2</sup> I am bound to express my view that when the Qabalists said Not, they meant Not, and nothing else. In fact, I really claim to have re-discovered the long-lost and central Arcanum of those divine philosophers.

I have no serious objection to a finite god, or gods, distinct from men and things. In fact, personally, I believe in them all, and admit them to possess inconceivable though not infinite power.

The Buddhists admit the existence of Maha-Brahma, but his power and knowledge are limited; and his agelong day must end. I find evidence everywhere, even in our garbled and mutilated version of the Hebrew Scriptures, that Jehovah’s power was limited in all sorts of ways. At the Fall, for instance, Tetragrammaton Elohim has to summon his angels hastily to guard the Tree of Life, lest he should be proved a liar. For had it occurred to Adam to eat of that Tree before their transgression was discovered, or had the Serpent been aware of its properties, Adam would indeed have lived and not died. So that a mere accident saved the remnants of the already be-smirched reputation of the Hebrew tribal Fetich.

<sup>1</sup> An expression they carefully avoid using.— A.C.

<sup>2</sup> I retain this sly joke from the first edition.

When Buddha was asked how things came to be, he took refuge in silence, which his disciples very conveniently interpreted as meaning that the question tended not to edification.

I take it that the Buddha (ignorant, doubtless, of algebra) had sufficiently studied philosophy and possessed enough worldly wisdom to be well aware that any system he might promulgate would be instantly attacked and annihilated by the acumen of his numerous and versatile opponents.

Such teaching as he gave on the point may be summed up as follows. “Whence, whither, why, we know not; but we do know that we are here, that we dislike being here, that there is a way out of the whole loathsome affair—let us make haste and take it!”

I am not so retiring in disposition; I persist in my inquiries, and at last the appalling question is answered, and the past ceases to intrude its problems upon my mind.

Here you are! Three shies a penny! Change all bad arguments.

I ASSERT THE ABSOLUTENESS OF THE QABALISTIC ZERO.

When we say that the Cosmos sprang from  $o$ , what kind of  $o$  do we mean? By  $o$  in the ordinary sense of the term we mean “absence of extension in any of the categories.”

When I say “No cat has two tails,” I do not mean, as the old fallacy runs, that “Absence-of-cat possesses two tails”; but that “In the category of two-tailed things, there is no extension of cat.”

Nothingness is that about which no positive proposition is valid. We cannot truly affirm: “Nothingness is green, or heavy, or sweet.”

Let us call time, space, being, heaviness, hunger, the categories.<sup>11</sup> If a man be heavy and hungry, he is extended in all these, besides, of course, many more. But let us suppose that these five are all. Call the man X; his formula is then  $X^{t+s+b+h+l}$ . If he now eat; he will cease to be extended in hunger; if he be cut off from time and gravitation as well, he will now be represented by the

<sup>1</sup> I cannot here discuss the propriety of representing the categories as dimensions. It will be obvious to any student of the integral calculus, or to any one who appreciates the geometrical significance of the term  $x^4$ .—A.C.

formula  $X^{s+b}$ . Should he cease to occupy space and to exist, his formula would then be  $X^0$ . This expression is equal to 1; whatever  $X$  may represent, if it be raised to the power of 0 (this meaning mathematically “if it be extended in no dimension or category”), the result is Unity, and the unknown factor  $X$  is eliminated.

This is the Advaitist idea of the future of man; his personality, bereft of all qualities, disappears and is lost, while in its place arises the impersonal Unity, The Pleroma, Parabrahma, or the Allah of the Unity-adoring followers of Mohammed. (To the Musulman fakir, Allah is by no means a personal God.)

Unity is thus unaffected, whether or no it be extended in any of the categories. But we have already agreed to look to 0 for the Uncaused.

Now if there was in truth 0 “before the beginning of years,” THAT 0 WAS EXTENDED IN NONE OF THE CATEGORIES, FOR THERE COULD HAVE BEEN NO CATEGORIES IN WHICH IT COULD EXTEND! If our 0 was the ordinary 0 of mathematics, there was not truly absolute 0, for 0 is, as I have shown, dependent on the idea of categories. If these existed, then the whole question is merely thrown back; we must reach a state in which this 0 is absolute. Not only must we get rid of all subjects, but of all predicates. By 0 (in mathematics) we really mean  $0^n$ , where  $n$  is the final term of a natural scale of dimensions, categories, or predicates. Our Cosmic Egg, then, from which the present universe arose, was Nothingness, extended in no categories, or graphically,  $0^0$ . This expression is in its present form meaningless. Let us discover its value by a simple mathematical process!

$$0^0 = 0^{1-1} = \frac{0^1}{0^1} \left[ \text{Multiply by } 1 = \frac{n}{n} \right]$$

$$\text{Then } \frac{0^1}{n} \times \frac{n}{0^1} = 0 \times \infty.$$

Now the multiplying of the infinitely great by the infinitely small results in SOME UNKNOWN FINITE NUMBER EXTENDED IN AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF CATEGORIES. It happened, when this our Great Inversion took place, from the essence of all nothingness to finity extended in innumerable categories, that an incalculably vast system was produced. Merely

by chance, chance in the truest sense of the term, we are found with gods, men, stars, planets, devils, colours, forces, and all the materials of the Cosmos: and with time, space, and causality, the conditions limiting and involving them all.<sup>1</sup>

Remember that it is not true to say that our  $o^0$  existed; nor that it did not exist. The idea of existence was just as much unformulated as that of toasted cheese.

But  $o^0$  is a finite expression, or has a finite phase, and our universe is a finite universe; its categories are themselves finite, and the expression “infinite space” is a contradiction in terms. The idea of an absolute and of an infinite<sup>2</sup> God is relegated to the limbo of all similar idle and pernicious perversions of truth. Infinity remains, but only as a mathematical conception as impossible in nature as the square root of  $-1$ . Against all this mathematical, or semi-mathematical, reasoning, it may doubtless be objected that our whole system of numbers, and of manipulating them, is merely a series of conventions. When I say that the square root of three is unreal, I know quite well that it is only so in relation to the series 1, 2, 3, &c., and that this series is equally unreal if I make  $\sqrt{3}$ ,  $\pi$ ,  $\sqrt[3]{50}$  the members of a ternary scale. But this, theoretically true, is practically absurd. If I mean “the number of a, b, and c,” it does not matter if I write 3 or  $\sqrt[3]{50}$ ; the idea is a definite one; and it is the fundamental ideas of consciousness of which we are treating, and to which we are compelled to refer everything, whether proximately or ultimately.

So also my equation, fantastic as it may seem, has a perfect and absolute parallel in logic. Thus: let us convert twice the pro-position “some books are on the table.” By negating both terms we get “Absence-of-book is not on the table,” which is precisely my equation backwards, and a thinkable thing. To reverse the process, what do I mean when I say “some pigs, but not the black pig, are not in the sty”? I imply that the black pig is in the sty. All I

<sup>1</sup> Compare and contrast this doctrine with that of Herbert Spencer (“First Principles,” Pt. I.), and see my “Science and Buddhism” for a full discussion of the difference involved.—A.C.

<sup>2</sup> If by “infinitely great” we only mean “indefinitely great,” as a mathematician would perhaps tell us, we of course begin at the very point I am aiming at, viz., *Ecrasez l’Infini*.—A.C.

have done is to represent the conversion as a change, rather than as merely another way of expressing the same thing. And “change” is really not my meaning either; for change, to our minds, involves the idea of time. But the whole thing is inconceivable—to ratiocination, though not to thought. Note well too that if I say “Absence-of-books is not on the table,” I cannot convert it only “All books are on the table” but only to “some books are on the table.” The proposition is an “I” and not an “A” proposition. It is the Advaita blunder to make it so; and many a schoolboy has fed off the mantelpiece for less.

There is yet another proof—the proof by exclusion. I have shown, and metaphysicians practically admit, the falsity alike of Dvaitism and Advaitism. The third, the only remaining theory, *this* theory, must, however antecedently improbable, however difficult to assimilate, be true.<sup>1</sup>

“My friend, my young friend,” I think I hear some Christian cleric say, with an air of profound wisdom, not untinged with pity, condescending to pose beardless and brainless impertinence: “where is the *Cause* for this truly remarkable change?”

That is exactly where the theory rears to heaven its stoutest bastion! There is not, and could not be, any cause. Had  $o^0$  been extended in causality, no change could have taken place.<sup>2</sup>

Here then, are we, finite beings in a finite universe, time, space, and causality them-selves finite (inconceivable as it may seem) with our individuality, and all the “illusions” of the Advaitists, just as real as they practically are to our normal consciousness.

As Schopenhauer, following Buddha, points out, suffering is a necessary condition of this existence.<sup>3</sup> The war of the contending forces as they grind themselves down to the final resultant must cause endless agony. We may one day be able to transform the categories of emotion as certainly and easily as we

<sup>1</sup> I may remark that the distinction between this theory and the normal one of the Immanence of the Universe, is trivial, perhaps even verbal only. Its advantage, however, is that, by hypostatizing nothing, we avoid the necessity of any explanation. How did nothing come to be? is a question which requires no answer.

<sup>2</sup> See the Questions of King Milinda, vol. ii. p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> See also Huxley, “Evolution and Ethics.”

now transform the categories of force, so that in a few years Chicago may be importing suffering in the raw state and turning it into tinned salmon: but at present the reverse process is alone practicable.

How, then, shall we escape? Can we expect the entire universe to resolve itself back into the phase of  $o^0$ ? Surely not. In the first place there is no reason why the whole should do so;  $\frac{x}{y}$  is just as convertible as  $x$ . But worse, the category of causality has already been formed, and its inertia is sufficient to oppose a most serious stumbling-block to so gigantic a process.

The task before us is consequently of a terrible nature. It is easy to let things slide, to grin and bear it in fact, until everything is merged in the ultimate unity, which may or may not be decently tolerable. But while we wait?

There now arises the question of freewill. Causality is probably not fully extended in its own category,<sup>1</sup> a circumstance which gives room for a fractional amount of freewill. If this be not so, it matters little; for if I find myself in a good state, that merely proves that my destiny took me there. We are, as Herbert Spencer observes, self-deluded with the idea of freewill; but if this be so, nothing matters at all. If, however, Herbert Spencer is mistaken (unlikely as it must appear), then our reason is valid, and we should seek out the right path and pursue it. The question therefore need not trouble us at all.

Here then we see the use of morals and of religion, and all the rest of the bag of tricks. All these are methods, bad or good, for extricating ourselves from the universe.

Closely connected with this question is that of the will of God. People argue that an Infinite intelligence must have been at work on this cosmos. I reply No! There is no intelligence at work worthy of the name. The Laws of Nature may be generalised in one—the Law of Inertia. Everything moves in the direction determined by the path of least resistance; species arise, develop, and die as their collective inertia determines; to this Law there is no exception

<sup>1</sup> Causality is itself a secondary, and in its limitation as applied to volition, an inconceivable idea. H. Spencer, *op. cit.* This consideration alone should add great weight to the agnostic, and *à fortiori* to the Buddhist, position.

but the doubtful one of Free-will; the Law of Destiny itself is formally and really identical with it.<sup>1</sup>

As to an *infinite* intelligence, all philosophers of any standing are agreed that all-love and all-power are incompatible. The existence of the universe is a standing proof of this.

The Deist needs the Optimist to keep him company; over their firesides all goes well, but it is a sad shipwreck they suffer on emerging into the cold world.

This is why those who seek to buttress up religion are so anxious to prove that the universe has no real existence, or only a temporary and relatively unimportant one; the result is of course the usual self-destructive Advaitist muddle.

The precepts of morality and religion are thus of use, of vital use to us, in restraining the more violent forces alike of nature and of man. For unless law and order prevail, we have not the necessary quiet and re-sources for investigating, and learning to bring under our control, all the divergent phenomena of our prison, a work which we undertake that at last we may be able to break down the walls, and find that freedom which an inconsiderate Inversion has denied.

The mystical precepts of pseudo-Zoroaster, Buddha, Çankaracharya, pseudo-Christ and the rest, are for advanced students only, for direct attack on the problem. Our servants, the soldiers, lawyers, all forms of government, make this our nobler work possible, and it is the gravest possible mistake to sneer at those humble but faithful followers of the great minds of the world.

What, then, are the best, easiest, directed methods to attain our result? And how shall we, in mortal language, convey to the minds of others the nature of a result so beyond language, baffling even imagination eagle-pinioned? It may help us if we endeavour to outline the distinction between the Hindu and Buddhist methods and aims of the Great Work.

<sup>1</sup> See H. Spencer, "First Principles," "The Knowable," for a fair summary of the facts underlying this generalisation; which indeed he comes within an ace of making in so many words. It may be observed that this law is nearly if not quite axiomatic, its contrary being enormously difficult if not impossible to formulate mentally.

The Hindu method is really mystical in the truest sense; for, as I have shown, the Atman is not infinite and eternal: one day it must sink down with the other forces. But by creating in thought an infinite Impersonal Personality, by *defining* it as such, all religions except the Buddhist and, as I believe, the Qabalistic, have sought to annihilate their own personality. The Buddhist aims directly at extinction; the Hindu denies and abolished his own finity by the creation of an absolute.

As this cannot be done in reality, the process is illusory; yet it is useful in the early stages—as far, at any rate, as the fourth stage of Dhyana, where the Buddha places it, though the Yogis claim to attain to Nirvikalpa-Samadhi, and that Moksha is identical with Nirvana; the former claim I see no reason to deny them; the latter statement I must decline at present to accept.

The task of the Buddhist recluse is roughly as follows. He must plunge every particle of his being into one idea: right views, aspirations, word, deed, life, will-power, medi-tation, rapture, such are the stages of his liberation, which resolves itself into a struggle against the laws of causality. He cannot prevent past causes taking effect, but he can prevent present causes from having any future results. The exoteric Christian and Hindu rather rely on another person to do this for them, and are further blinded by the thirst for life and individual existence, the most formidable obstacle of all, in fact a negation of the very object of all religion. Schopenhauer shows that life is assured to the will-to-live, and unless Christ (or Krishna, as the case may be) destroys these folk by superior power—a task from which almightiness might well recoil baffled!—I much fear that eternal life, and consequently eternal suffering, joy, and change of all kinds, will be their melancholy fate. Such persons are in truth their own real enemies. Many of them, however, believing erroneously that they are being “unselfish,” do fill their hearts with devotion for the beloved Saviour, and this process is, in its ultimatum, so similar to the earlier stages of the Great Work itself, that some confusion has, stupidly enough, arisen; but for all that the practice has been the means of bringing some devotees on to the true Path of the Wise, unpromising as such material must sound to intelligent ears.

The esoteric Christian or Hindu adopts a middle path. Having projected the Absolute from his mind, he endeavours to unite his consciousness with that of his Absolute and of course his personality is destroyed in the process. Yet it is to be feared that such an adept too often starts on the path with the intention of aggrandising his personality to the utmost. But his method is so near to the true one that this tendency is soon corrected, as it were automatically.

(The mathematical analogue of this process is to procure for yourself the realisation of the nothingness of yourself by keeping the fourth dimension ever present to your mind.)

The illusory nature of this idea of an in-finite Atman is well shown by the very proof which that most distinguished Vedantist, the late Swami Vivekananda (no connection with the firm of a similar name<sup>1</sup> across the street), gives of the existence of the infinite. "Think of a circle!" says he. "You will in a moment become conscious of an infinite circle around your original small one." The fallacy is obvious. The big circle is not infinite at all, but is itself limited by the little one. But to take away the little circle, that is the method of the esoteric Christian or the mystic. But the process is never perfect, because however small the little circle becomes, its relation with the big circle is still finite. But even allowing for a moment that the Absolute is really attainable, is the nothingness of the finity related to it really identical with that attained directly by the Buddhist Arahats? This, consistently with my former attitude, I feel constrained to deny. The consciousness of the Absolute-wala<sup>2</sup> is really extended infinitely rather than diminished infinitely, as he will himself assure you. True, Hegel says: "Pure being is pure nothing!" and it is true that the infinite heat and cold, joy and sorrow, light and darkness, and all the other pairs of opposites,<sup>3</sup> cancel one another out: yet I feel rather afraid of this

<sup>1</sup> The Swami Vive Ananda, Madame Horos, for whose history consult the Criminal Law Reports.

<sup>2</sup> Wala, one whose business is connected with anything. *E.g.* Jangli-wala, one who lives in, or has business with, a jungle, *i.e.* a wild man, or a Forest Conservator.

<sup>3</sup> The Hindus see this as well as any one, and call Atman *Sat-chit-ananda*, these being above the pairs of opposites, rather on the Hegelian lines of the reconciliation (rather than the identity) of opposites in a master-idea. We have dismissed infinity as the figment of a morbid mathematic: but in any case the same disproof applies to it as to God.—A.C.

Absolute! Maybe its joy and sorrow are represented in phases, just as  $o^0$  and finity are phases of an identical expression, and I have an even chance only of being on the right side of the fence!

The Buddhist leaves no chances of this kind; in all his categories he is infinitely unextended; though the categories themselves exist; he is in fact  $o^{A+B+C+D+E+...+N}$  and capable of no conceivable change, unless we imagine Nirvana to be incomprehensibly divided by Nirvana, which would (supposing the two Nirvanas to possess identical categories) result in the production of the original  $o^0$ . But a further change would be necessary even then before serious mischief could result. In short, I think we may dismiss from our minds any alarm in respect of this contingency.

On mature consideration, therefore, I confidently and deliberately take my refuge in the Triple Gem.

Namo Tasso Bhagavato Arahato Samma-sambuddhasa!<sup>1</sup>

Let there be hereafter no discussion of the classical problems of philosophy and religion! In the light of this exposition the antitheses of noumenon and phenomenon, unity and multiplicity, and their kind, are all reconciled, and the only question that remains is that of finding the most satisfactory means of attaining Nirvana—extinction of all that exists, knows, or feels; extinction final and complete, utter and absolute extinction. For by these words only can we indicate Nirvana: a state which transcends thought cannot be described in thought's language. But from the point of view of thought extinction is complete: we have no data for discussing that which is unthinkable, and must decline to do so. This is the answer to those who accuse the Buddha of hurling his Arahats (and himself) from Samma Samadhi to annihilation.

Pray observe in the first place that my solution of the Great Problem permits the co-existence of an indefinite number of means: they need not even be compatible; Karma, rebirth, Providence, prayer, sacrifice, baptism, there is room for all. On the old and, I hope, now finally discredited hypothesis of an infinite being, the supporters of these various ideas, while explicitly affirming them, implicitly denied. Similarly, note that the Qabalistic idea of a supreme

<sup>1</sup> Hail unto Thee, the Blessed One, the Perfect One, the Enlightened One!

God (and innumerable hierarchies) is quite compatible with this theory, provided that the supreme God is not infinite.

Now as to our weapons. The more advanced Yogis of the East, like the Nonconformists at home, have practically abandoned ceremonial as idle. I have yet to learn, however, by what dissenters have replaced it! I take this to be an error, except in the case of a very advanced Yogi. For there exists a true magical ceremonial, vital and direct, whose purpose has, however, at any rate of recent times, been hopelessly misunderstood.

Nobody any longer supposes that any means but that of meditation is of avail to grasp the immediate causes of our being; if some person retort that he prefers to rely on a Glorified Redeemer, I simply answer that he is the very nobody to whom I now refer.

Meditation is then the means; but only the supreme means. The agony column of the *Times* is the supreme means of meeting with the gentleman in the brown billycock and frock coat, wearing a green tie and chewing a straw, who was at the soirée of the Carlton Club last Monday night; no doubt! but this means is seldom or never used in the similar contingency of a cow-elephant desiring her bull in the jungles of Ceylon.

Meditation is not within the reach of every one; not all possess the ability; very few indeed (in the West at least) have the opportunity.

In any case what the Easterns call "one-pointedness" is an essential preliminary to even early stages of true meditation. And iron will-power is a still earlier qualification.

By meditation I do not mean merely "thinking about" anything, however profoundly, but the absolute restraint of the mind to the contemplation of a single object, whether gross, fine, or altogether spiritual.

Now true magical ceremony is entirely directed to attain this end, and forms a magnificent gymnasium for those who are not already finished mental athletes. By act, word, and thought, both in quantity and quality, the one object of the ceremony is being constantly indicated. Every fumigation, purification, banishing, invocation, evocation, is chiefly a reminder of the single purpose, until the supreme moment arrives, and every fibre of the body, every

force-channel of the mind, is strained out in one overwhelming rush of the Will in the direction desired. Such is the real purport of all the apparently fantastic directions of Solomon, Abramelin, and other sages of repute. When a man has evoked and mastered such forces as Taphtarath, Belial, Amaimon, and the great powers of the elements, then he may be safely be permitted to begin to try to stop thinking. For, needless to say, the universe, including the thinker, exists only by virtue of the thinker's thought.<sup>1</sup>

In yet one other way is magic a capital training ground for the Arahat. True symbols do really awake those macrocosmic forces of which they are the eidola, and it is possible in this manner very largely to increase the magical "potential" to borrow a term from electrical science.

Of course, there are bad and invalid processes, which tend rather to disperse or to excite the mind-stuff than to control it; these we must discard. But there is a true magical ceremonial, the central Arcanum alike of Eastern and Western practical transcendentalism. Needless to observe, if I knew it, I should not disclose it.

I therefore affirm the validity of the Qabalistic tradition in its practical part as well as in those exalted regions of thought through which we have to recently, and so hardly, travelled.

Eight are the limbs of Yoga: morality and virtue, control of body, thought, and force, leading to concentration, meditation, and rapture.

<sup>1</sup> See Berkeley and his expounders, for the Western shape of this Eastern commonplace. Huxley, however, curiously enough, states the fact in almost these words.—A.C.

<sup>2</sup> A possible mystic transfiguration of the Vedanta system has been suggested to me on the lines of the Syllogism—

God = Being (Patanjali).

Being = Nothing (Hegel).

God = Nothing (Buddhism).

Or, in the language of religion:

Every one may admit that monotheism, exalted by the introduction of the  $\infty$  symbol, is equivalent to pantheism. Pantheism and atheism are really identical, as the opponents of both are the first to admit.

If this be really taught, I must tender my apologies, for the reconciliation is of course complete.—A.C.

Only when the last of these has been attained, and itself refined upon by removing the gross and even the fine objects of its sphere, can the causes, subtle and coarse, the unborn causes whose seed is hardly sown, of continued existence be grasped and annihilated, so that the Arahat is sure of being abolished in the utter extinction of Nirvana, while even in this world of pain, where he must remain until the ancient causes, those which have already germinated, are utterly worked out (for even the Buddha himself could not swing back the Wheel of the Law) his certain anticipation of the approach of Nirvana is so intense as to bathe him constantly in the unfathomable ocean of apprehension of immediate bliss.

AUM MANI PADME HUM

S C I E N C E   A N D  
B U D D H I S M



## SCIENCE AND BUDDHISM

*(Inscribed to the revered Memory of Thomas Henry Huxley)*

### I.

THE purpose of this essay is to draw a strict comparison between the modern scientific conceptions of Phenomena and their explanation, where such exists, and the ancient ideas of the Buddhists; to show that Buddhism, alike in theory and practice, is a scientific religion; a logical superstructure on a basis of experimentally verifiable truth; and that its method is identical with that of science. We must resolutely exclude the accidental features of both, especially of Buddhism; and unfortunately in both cases we have to deal with dishonest and shameless attempts to foist on either opinions for which neither is willing to stand sponsor. Professor Huxley has dealt with one in his “Pseudo-Scientific Realism”; Professor Rhys Davids has demolished the other in that one biting comment on “Esoteric Buddhism” that it was “not Esoteric and certainly not Buddhism.” But some of the Theosophic mud still sticks to the Buddhist chariot; and there are still people who believe that sane science has at least a friendly greeting for Atheism and Materialism in their grosser and more militant forms.

Let it be understood then, from the outset, that if in Science I include metaphysics, and in Buddhism meditation-practices, I lend myself neither to the whittlers or “reconcilers” on the one hand, nor to the Animistic jugglers on the other. Apart from the Theosophic rubbish, we find Sir Edwin Arnold writing:

“Whoever saith Nirvana is to cease,  
Say unto such they lie.”

Lie is a strong word and should read “translate correctly.”<sup>1</sup>

I suppose it would not scan, nor rhyme: but Sir Edwin is the last person to be deterred by a little thing like that.

<sup>1</sup> See Childers, *Pali Dictionary*, s.v. Nibbana.

Dr. Paul Carus, too, in the "Gospel of Buddha," is pleased to represent Nirvana as a parallel for the Heaven of the Christian. It is sufficient if I reiterate the unanimous opinion of competent scholars, that there is no fragment of evidence in any canonical book sufficient to establish such interpretations in the teeth of Buddhist tradition and practice; and that any person who persists in tuning Buddhism to his own Jew's harp in this way is risking his reputation, either for scholarship or good faith. Scientific men are common enough in the West, if Buddhists are not; and I may safely leave in their hands the task of castigating the sneak-thieves of the Physical area.

## II.

The essential features of Buddhism have been summed up by the Buddha himself. To me, of course, what the Buddha said or did not say is immaterial; a thing is true or not true, whoever said it. We believe Mr. Savage Landor when he affirms that Lhasa is an important town in Tibet. Where only probabilities are concerned we are of course influenced by the moral character and mental attainments of the speaker, but here I have nothing to do with what is uncertain.<sup>1</sup>

There is an excellent test for the value of any passage in a Buddhist book. We are, I think, justified in discarding passages which are clearly Oriental fiction, just as modern criticism, however secretly Theistic, discards the Story of Hasisadra or of Noah. In justice to Buddhism, let us not charge its Scripture with the Sisyphean task of seriously upholding the literal interpretation of obviously fantastic passages.<sup>2</sup> May our Buddhist zealots be warned by the fate

<sup>1</sup> See Huxley's classical example of the horse, zebra and centaur.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, where Buddhist parables are of a mystical nature, where a complicated symbolism of numbers (for example) is intended to shadow a truth, we must discard them. My experience of mysticism is somewhat large; its final dictum is that the parable  $x$  may be equated to  $a, b, c, d . . . z$  by six-and-twenty different persons, or by one person in six-and-twenty different moods. Even had we a strong traditional explanation I should maintain my position. The weapons of the Higher Criticism, supplemented by Common Sense, are perfectly valid and inevitably destructive against any such structure. But I am surely in danger of becoming ridiculous in writing thus to the scientific world. What I really wish to show is that one need not look for all the Buddhist fancy dishes to the peril of the scientific digestion. And by a backhanded stroke I wish to impress as deeply as possible upon my

of old-fashioned English orthodoxy! But when Buddhism condescends to be vulgarly scientific; to observe, to classify, to *think*; I conceive we may take the matter seriously, and accord a reasonable investigation to its assertions. Examples of such succinctness and clarity may be found in The Four Noble Truths; The Three Characteristics; The Ten Fetters; and there is clearly a definite theory in the idea of Karma. Such ideas are basic, and are as a thread on which the beads of Arabian-Night-Entertainment are strung.<sup>1</sup>

I propose therefore to deal with these and some other minor points of the Buddhist metaphysics, and trace out their scientific analogies, or, as I hope to show, more often identities.

First then let us examine that great Summary of the Buddhist Faith, the Four Noble Truths.

### III.

#### THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS.

(1) SORROW.—Existence is Sorrow. This means that “no known form of Existence is separable from Sorrow.” This truth is stated by Huxley, almost in so many words, in *Evolution and Ethics*. “It was no less plain to some of these antique philosophers than to the fathers of modern philosophy that suffering is the badge of all the tribe of sentient things; that it is no accidental accompaniment, but an essential constituent of the Cosmic Process.” And in the same essay, though he is disposed to deny more than the rudiments of consciousness to the lower forms of life, he is quite clear that pain varies directly (to put it loosely) with the degree of consciousness. Cf. also “*Animal Automatism*,” pp. 236-237.

(2) SORROW'S CAUSE.—The cause of sorrow is desire. I take desire here to include such a phenomenon as the tendency of two molecules of hydrogen and chlorine to combine under certain conditions. If death be painful to me, it is presumably so to a molecule; if we represent one operation as pleasant, the

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Buddhist friends that too much zeal for the accidentals of our religion will surely result in the overwhelming of its essentials in the tide of justly scornful or justly casuistic criticism.—A. C.

<sup>1</sup> See Prof. Rhys Davids on the “Jataka.”

converse is presumably painful. Though I am not conscious of the individual pain of the countless deaths involved in this my act of writing, it may be there. And what I call "fatigue" may be the echo in my central consciousness of the shriek of a peripheral anguish. Here we leave the domain of fact; but at least as far our knowledge extends, all or nearly all the operations of Nature are vanity and vexation of spirit. Consider food, the desire for which periodically arises in all conscious beings.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of these desires, or rather necessities, which I realise to be mine, is unpleasant. It is this desire inherent in me for continued consciousness that is responsible for it all, and this leads us to the Third Noble Truth.

(3) SORROW'S CEASING.—The cessation of desire is the cessation of sorrow. This is a simple logical inference from the second Truth, and needs no comment.

(4) THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH.—There is a way, to be considered later, of realising the Third Truth. But we must, before we can perceive its possibility on the one hand, or its necessity on the other, form a clear idea of what are the Buddhist tenets with regard to the Cosmos; and, in particular, to man.<sup>2</sup>

#### IV.

##### THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS.

The Three Characteristics (which we may predicate of all known existing things:

- |                        |         |
|------------------------|---------|
| (a) Change.            | Anikka. |
| (b) Sorrow.            | Dukkha. |
| (c) Absence of an Ego. | Anatta. |

This is the Buddhist assertion. What does Science say?

<sup>1</sup> Change is the great enemy, the immediate cause of pain. Unable to arrest it, I slow the process, and render it temporarily painless, by eating. This is a concession to weakness, no doubt, in one sense. Do I eat really in order to check change, or to maintain my ego-consciousness? Change I desire, for my present condition is sorrow. I really desire the impossible; completely to retain my present egoity with all its conditions reversed.—A. C.

<sup>2</sup> For an able and luminous exposition of "The Four Noble Truths" I refer the reader to the pamphlet bearing that title by my old friend Bikkhu Ananda Maitriya, published by the Buddhasasana Samagama, 1 Pagoda Road, Rangoon.—A. C.

(a) Huxley, "Evolution and Ethics":

"As no man fording a swift stream can dip his foot twice into the same water, so no man can, with exactness, affirm of anything in the sensible world that it is. As he utters the words, nay, as he thinks them, the predicate ceases to be applicable; the present has become the past; the 'is' should be 'was.' And the more we learn of the nature of things the more evident is it that what we call rest is only unperceived activity; that seeming peace is silent but strenuous battle. In every part, at every moment, the state of the cosmos is the expression of a transitory adjustment of contending forces, a scene of strife, in which all the combatants fall in turn. What is true of each part is true of the whole. Natural knowledge tends more and more to the conclusion that "all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth" are the transitory forms of parcels of cosmic substance wending along the road of evolution, from nebulous potentiality, through endless growths of sun and planet and satellite, through all varieties of matter; through infinite diversities of life and thought, possibly, through modes of being of which we neither have a conception, nor are competent to form any, back to the indefinable latency from which they arose. Thus the most obvious attribute of the cosmos is its impermanence. It assumes the aspect not so much of a permanent entity as of a changeful process, in which naught endures save the flow of energy and the rational order which pervades it."

This is an admirable summary of the Buddhist doctrine.

(b) See above on the First Noble Truth.

(c) This is the grand position which Buddha carried against the Hindu philosophers. In our own country it is the argument of Hume, following Berkeley to a place where Berkeley certainly never meant to go—a curious parallel fulfilment of Christ's curse against Peter (John xxi.). The Bishop demolishes the idea of a substratum of matter, and Hume follows by applying an identical process of reasoning to the phenomena of mind.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Buddhist position *may* be interpreted as agnostic in this matter, these arguments being directed against, and destructive of, the unwarranted assumptions of the Hindus; but no more. See *Sabbasava Sutta*, 10.

Let us consider the Hindu theory. They classify the phenomena (whether well or ill matters nothing), but represent them all as pictured in, but not affecting, a certain changeless, omniscient, blissful existence called Atman. Holding to Theism, the existence of evil forces them to the Fichtean position that “the Ego posits the Non-Ego,” and we learn that nothing really exists after all but Brahm. They then distinguish between Jivatma, the soul-conditioned, and Paramatma, the soul free; the former being the basis of our normal consciousness; the latter of the Nirvikalpa-Samadhi conscious-ness; this being the sole condition on which morals, religion, and fees to priests can continue. For the Deist has only to advance his fundamental idea to be forced round in a vicious circle of absurdities.<sup>1</sup>

The Buddhist makes a clean sweep of all this sort of nonsense. He analyses the phenomena of mind, adopting Berkeley’s paradox that “matter is immaterial,” in a sane and orderly way. The “common-sense Philosopher,” whom I leave to chew the bitter leaves of Professor Huxley’s Essay “On Sensation and the Unity of the Structure of Sensiferous Organs,” observes, on

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“In him, thus unwisely considering, there springs up one or other of the six (absurd) notions.

“As something real and true he gets the notion, ‘I have a self.’

“As something real and true he gets the notion, ‘I have not a self.’

“As something real and true he gets the notion, ‘By my self, I am conscious of my self.’

“As something real and true he gets the notion, ‘By my self, I am conscious of my non-self.’

“Or again, he gets the notion, ‘This soul of mine can be perceived, it has experienced the result of good or evil actions committed here and there; now this soul of mine is permanent, lasting, eternal, has the inherent quality of never changing, and will continue for ever and ever!’

“This, brethren, is called the walking in delusion, the jungle of delusion, the wilderness of delusion, the puppet-show of delusion, the writhing of delusion, the fetter of delusion.”

There are, it may be noted, only five (not six) notions mentioned, unless we take the last as double. Or we may consider the sixth as the contrary of the fifth, and correct. The whole passage is highly technical, perhaps untrustworthy; in any case, this is not the place to discuss it. The sun of Agnosticism breaking through the cloud of Anatta is the phenomenon to which I wished to call attention.—A. C.

<sup>1</sup> As Bishop Butler so conclusively showed.

lifting his arm, "I lift my arm." The Buddhist examines this proposition closely, and begins:

"There is a lifting of an arm."

By this terminology he avoids Teutonic discussions concerning the Ego and Non-ego.<sup>1</sup> But how does he know this proposition to be true? By sensation. The fact is therefore:

"There is a sensation of the lifting of an arm."

But how does he know that? By perception. Therefore he says:

"There is a perception of a sensation, &c."

And why this perception? From the inherent tendency.

(Note carefully the determinist standpoint involved in the enunciation of his Fourth Skandha; and that it comes lower than Viññanam.)

"There is a tendency to perceive the sensation, &c."

And how does he know that there is a tendency? By consciousness. The final analysis reads:

"There is a consciousness of a tendency to perceive the sensation of a lifting of an arm."

He does not, for he cannot, go further back. He will not suppose, on no sort of evidence, the substratum of Atman uniting consciousness to consciousness by its eternity, while it fixes a great gulf between them by its changelessness. He states the knowable, states it accurately, and leaves it there. But there is a practical application of this analysis which I will treat of later. (See VIII. *Maha-satipatthana*.)

We are told that the memory is a proof of some real "I." But how treacherous is this ground! Did a past event in my life not happen because I have forgotten it? O the analogy of the river water given above is most valid! I who write this am not I who read it over and correct it. Do I desire to play with lead soldiers? Am I the doddering old cripple who must be wheeled about and fed on whisky and bread and milk? And is my difference from them so

<sup>1</sup> I may incidentally remark that a very few hours' practice (see Section VIII.) cause "I lift my arm" to be intuitively denied.—A. C.

conspicuously less than from the body lying dead of which those who see it will say. "This was Aleister Crowley"?

What rubbish it is to suppose that an eternal substance, sentient or not, omniscient or not, depends for its information on so absurd a series of bodies as are groups under that "Crowley"!

Yet the Buddhist meets all arguments of the spiritual order with a simple statement which, if not certain, is at least not improbable. There is, he will tell you, a "spiritual" world, or to avoid any (most unjustifiable) misunderstandings, let us say a world of subtler matter than the visible and tangible, which has its own laws (analogous to, if not identical with, those laws of matter with which we are acquainted) and whose inhabitants change, and die, and are re-born very much as ordinary mortal beings. But as they are of subtler matter, the cycle is less rapid.<sup>1</sup>

As a nominalist, I hope not to be misunderstood when I compare this to the relative mutability of the individual and the species.<sup>2</sup> We have enough examples free from such possibility of misinterpretation in our own bodies. Compare the longevity of a bone with that of a corpuscle. But it is this "Substratum" universe, which must not be confounded with the substratum, the arguments for whose existence Berkeley so utterly shattered,<sup>3</sup> which may

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Huxley, cited *supra*, "possibly, through modes of being of which we neither have a conception, nor are competent to form any. . . ."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Evolution and Ethics," note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Without an elaborate analysis of the ideas involved in the Ding an sich of Kant, and of H. Spencer's definition of all things as Modes of the Unknowable, I may point out in passing that all these hypotheses are as sterile as the "vital principle" in biology, or "phlogiston" in chemistry. They lead literally nowhere. That the phenomenal world is an illusion is all very well; one girds up one's loins to seek reality: but to prove reality unknowable is to shut all avenues to the truth-loving man, and open all to the sensualist. And, if we accept either of the above philosophies, it does not matter. That we feel it does matter is sufficient refutation, for we must obey the sentence awarded on our own testimony, whether we like it or not.

I am aware that this is a somewhat cowardly way of dealing with the question; I prefer to insist that if we once admit that the unknowable (by reason) to consciousness may be known (by concentration) to super-consciousness, the difficulty vanishes.

I think Huxley goes too far in speaking of a man "self-hypnotised into cataleptic trances" without medical evidence of a large number of cases. Edward Carpenter, who has met Yogis, and talked long and learnedly with them, tells a different story.

conserve memory for a period greatly exceeding that of one of its particular avatars. Hence the "Jataka." But the doctrine is not very essential; its chief value is to show what serious difficulties confront us, and to supply a reason to struggle to some better state. For if nothing survives death, what does it matter to us? Why are we to be so altruistic as to avoid the reincarnation of a being in all points different from ourselves? As the small boy said, "What has posterity done for me?" But something does persist; something changing, though less slowly. What evidence have we after all that an animal does not remember his man-incarnation? Or, as Levi says, "In the suns they remember, and in the planets they forget." I think it unlikely (may be), but in the total absence of all evidence for or against—at least with regard to the latter hypothesis!—I suspend my judgement, leave the question alone, and proceed to more practical points that are offered by these interesting but not over-useful metaphysical speculations.

## V.

## KARMA.

The Law of Causation is formally identical with this. Karma means "that which is made," and I think it should be considered with strict etymological accuracy. If I place a stone on the roof of a house, it is sure to fall sooner or later; *i.e.*, as soon as the conditions permit. Also, in its ultimatum, the doctrine of Karma is identical with determinism. On this subject much wisdom, with an infinite amount of rubbish, has been written. I therefore dismiss it in these few words, confident that the established identity can never be shaken.

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Even had we a large body of evidence from Anglo-Indian medical men, the proof would still be lacking. They might not be the real men. The Indian native would take intense delight in bringing round the village idiot to be inspected in the character of a holy man by the "Doctor Sahib."

The Anglo-Indian is a fool; a minimum medical education is in most cases insufficient to abate the symptoms to nil, though perhaps it must always diminish them. The Hindu is the Sphinx of civilisation; nearly all that has been written on him is worthless; those who know him best know this fact best.—A. C.

## VI.

## THE TEN FETTERS OR SANYOGANAS.

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. Sakkaya-ditthi.     | Belief in a "soul."                               |
| 2. Vikikikkha.         | Doubt.  |
| 3. Silabbata-parâ mâsa | Reliance on the efficacy of rites and ceremonies. |
| 4. Kama.               | Bodily Desires.                                   |
| 5. Patigha.            | Hatred.   |
| 6. Ruparaga.           | Desire for bodily immortality.                    |
| 7. Aruparaga.          | Desire for spiritual immortality.                 |
| 8. Mano.               | Pride.  |
| 9. Udhakka.            | Self-righteousness.                               |
| 10. Avigga             | Ignorance.  |

(1) For this is a *petitio principii*.

(2) This, to a scientist, is apparently anathema. But it only means, I think, that if we are not settled in our minds we cannot work. And this is unquestionable. Suppose a chemist to set to work to determine the boiling-point of a new organic substance. Does he stop in the midst, struck by the fear that his thermometer is inaccurate? No! he has, unless he is a fool, tested it previously. We must have our principia fixed before we can do research work.

(3) A scientist hardly requires conviction on this point!

(4) Do you think to combine Newton and Caligula? The passions, allowed to dominate, interfere with the concentration of the mind.

(5) Does brooding on your dislikes help you to accurate observation? I admit that a controversy may stir you up to perform prodigies of work, but while you are actually working you do not suffer the concentration of your mind to be interfered with.

(6 & 7) This Fetter and the next are contingent on your having perceived the suffering of all forms of conscious existence.

(8) Needs no comment. Pride, like humility, is a form of delusion.

(9) Is like unto it, but on the moral plane.

(10) The great enemy. Theists alone have found the infamous audacity to extol the merits of this badge of servitude.

We see, then, that in this classification a scientist will concur. We need not discuss the question whether or no he would find others to add. Buddhism may not be complete, but, as far as it goes, it is accurate.

## VII.

### THE RELATIVE REALITY OF CERTAIN STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Whether we adopt Herbert Spencer's dictum that the primary testimony of consciousness is to the existence of externality, or no;<sup>1</sup> whether or no we fly to the extreme idealistic position; there is no question that, to our normal consciousness, things as they present themselves—apart from obvious illusion, if even we dare to except this—are undisprovable to the immediate apprehension. Whatever our reason may tell us, we act precisely as through Berkeley had never lived, and the herculean Kant had been strangled while yet in his cradle by the twin serpents of his own perversity and terminology.

What criterion shall we apply to the relative realities of normal and dream consciousness? Why do I confidently assert that the dream state is transitory and unreal?

In that state I am equally confident that my normal consciousness is invalid. But as my dreams occupy a relatively small portion of my time, and as the law of causation seems suspended, and as their vividness is less than that of ordinary consciousness, and above all, as in the great majority of cases I can show a cause, dating from my waking hours, for the dream, I have four strong reasons (the first explanatory to some extent of my reasons for accepting the others) for concluding that the dream is fictitious.

But what of the "dreamless" state? To the dreamer his normal faculties and memories arise at times, and are regarded as fragmentary and absurd, even as the remembrance of a dream is to the waking man. Can we not conceive then

<sup>1</sup> *Mahasatipatthana* (Sec. VIII.) does admit this perhaps. Yet its very object is to correct consciousness on the lines indicated by reason.

of a “dreamless” life, of which our dreams are the vague and disturbed transition to normal consciousness?

The physiological evidence goes literally for nothing. Even were it proved that the recipio-motor apparatus of a “dreamless” sleeper was relatively quiescent, would that supply any valid argument against the theory I have suggested? Suggested, for I admit that our present position is completely agnostic in respect to it, since we have no evidence which throws light on the matter; and study of the subject would appear to be mere waste of time.

But the suggestion is valuable as affording us a possibly rational explanation, conformable to the waking man, which the dreamer would indignantly reject.

Suppose, however, a dream so vivid that the whole waking man is abased before its memory, that his consciousness of it appears a thousand times more real than that of the things about him; suppose that his whole life is moulded to fit the new facts thus revealed to him; that he would cheerfully renounce years of normal life to obtain minutes of that dream-life; that his time sense is uprooted as never before, and that these influences are permanent. Then, you will say, delirium tremens (and the intoxication of hashish, in respect more particularly of the time sense) afford us a parallel. But the phenomena of delirium tremens do not occur in the healthy. As for the suggestion of auto-hypnosis, the memory of the “dream” is a sufficient reply. However this may be, the simple fact of the superior apparent reality—a conviction unshakable, *inépuisable* (for the English has no word), is a sufficient test. And if we condescend to argue, it is for pleasure, and aside from the vital fact; a skirmish, and not a pitched battle.

This “dream” I have thus described is the state called Dhyana by the Hindus and Buddhists. The method of attaining it is sane, healthy, and scientific. I would not take the pains to describe that method, had not illiterate, and too often mystical advocates of the practice obscured the simple grandeur of our edifice by jimcrack pinnacles of stucco—as who should hang the Taj Mahal with fairy lamps and chintz.

It is simple. The mind is compelled to fix its attention on a single thought; while the controlling power is exercised and a profound watchfulness kept up

lest the thought should for a moment stray.<sup>1</sup> The latter portion is, to my mind, the essential one. The work is comparable to that of an electrician who should sit for hours with his finger on a delicately adjusted resistance-box and his eye on the spot of light of a galvanometer, charged with the duty of keeping the spot still, at least that it should never move beyond a certain number of degrees, and of recording the more important details of his experiment. Our work is identical in design, though worked with subtler—if less complex—means. For the finger on the resistance-box we substitute the Will; and its control extends but to the Mind; for the eye we substitute the Introspective Faculty with its keen observation of the most minute disturbance, while the spot of light is the Consciousness itself, the central point of the galvanometer scale the predetermined object, and the other figures on the scale, other objects, connected with the primary by order and degree, sometimes obviously, sometimes obscurely, perhaps even untraceably, so that we have no real right to predicate their connection.<sup>2</sup>

How any sane person can describe this process as delusive and unhealthy passes my comprehension; that any scientist should do so implies an ignorance on his part of the facts.

I may add that the most rigid necessity exists for perfect health of body and mind before this practice can begin; asceticism is as sternly discouraged as indulgence. How would the electrician do his work after a Guildhall Banquet? The strain of watching would be too much, and he would go off to

<sup>1</sup> Huxley, *Essays*, V., 136.

<sup>2</sup> This last sentence will be best understood by those who have practised up to a certain point. At first it is easy to trace back by a connected chain of thoughts from the thought which awakes us to the fact that we are wandering to the original thought. Later, and notably as we improve, this becomes first difficult, then impossible. At first sight this fact suggests that we are injuring our brains by the practice, but the explanation is as follows: Suppose we figure the central consciousness as the Sun, intent on seeing that nothing falls into him. First the near planets are carefully arranged, so that no collision can occur; afterwards Jupiter and Saturn, until his whole system is safe. If then any body fall upon the Sun, he knows that it is not from any of those planets with which he is familiar, and, lord of his own system, cannot trace the course or divine the cause of the accident which has disturbed him. And he will accept this ignorance as a proof of how well his own system is going, since he no longer receives shocks from it.—A. C.

sleep. So with the meditator. If, on the other hand, he had been without food for twenty-four hours, he might—indeed, it has been done often—perform prodigies of work for the necessary period; but a reaction must follow of proportionate severity. Nobody will pretend that the best work is done starving.<sup>1</sup>

Now to such an observer certain phenomena present themselves sooner or later which have the qualities above predicated of our imaginary “dream” preceded by a transition-state very like total loss of consciousness. Are these fatigue phenomena? Is it that this practice for some as yet unknown reason stimulates some special nerve-centre? Perhaps; the subject requires investigation; I am not a physiologist. Whatever physiology may say, it is at least clear that if this state is accompanied with an intense and passionless bliss beyond anything that the normal man can conceive of, and unaccompanied with the slightest prejudice to the mental and physical health, it is most highly desirable. And to the scientist is presents a magnificent field of research.

Of the metaphysical and religious theories which have been built upon the facts here stated, I have nothing to say in this place. The facts are not at the disposition of all; from the nature of the subject each man must be his own witness. I was once twitted by some shallow-pated person with the fact that my position cannot be demonstrated in the laboratory, and that therefore (save the mark!) I must be a mystic, an occultist, a theosophist, a mystery-monger, and what not. I am none of these. The above criticism applies to every psychologist that ever wrote, and to the man who makes the criticism by the fact of his making it. I can only say: “You have your own laboratory and apparatus, your mind; and if the room is dirty and the apparatus ill put together, you have certainly not me to blame for it.”

The facts being of individual importance, then, there is little use if I detail the results of my own experience. And the reason for this reticence—for I plead guilty to reticence—that to explain would damage the very apparatus

<sup>1</sup> Hallucination especially is to be feared. Light-headedness from want of food is quite sufficient explanation for many “Mystic raptures.” I do not care to invoke hysteria and epilepsy without positive evidence.—A. C.

whose use I am advocating. For did I say that such and such a practice leads one to see a blue pig, the suggestion is sufficient to cause one class of people to see a blue pig where none existed, and another to deny or suspect the blue pig when it really appeared, though the latter alternative is unlikely. The conscious phenomenon, and the bliss, is of so stupendous and well-defined a nature that I cannot imagine any preconceived idea powerful enough to diminish it appreciably. But for the sake of the former class I hold my tongue.<sup>1</sup>

I trust it is now perfectly clear, if my statements are accepted—and I can only most seriously assure you that honest laborious experiment will be found to verify them in every particular—that whatever arguments are brought forward destructive of the reality of Dhyana, apply with far more force to the normal state, and it is evident that to deny the latter seriously is *ipso facto* to become unserious. Whether the normal testimony may be attacked from above, by insisting on the superior reality of Dhyana—and *à fortiori* of Samadhi, which I have not experienced, and consequently do not treat of, being content to accept the highly probably statements of those who profess to know, and who have so far not deceived me (*i.e.* as to Dhyana), is a question which it is not pertinent to the present argument to discuss.<sup>2</sup> I shall, however, suggest certain ideas in the following section, in which I propose to discuss the most famous of the Buddhist meditations (Mahasatipatthana, its method, object, and results.

<sup>1</sup> On the advisability of so doing I am open to conviction. The scientific mind, I might argue, will not readily fall into that error; and for the others, they will be useless as a research phalanx, and may as well see blue pigs and be happy as not. In the past, no doubt, research has been choked by the multitude of pseudo-blue-pig-people, from the "T.S." to the "G.D." We must distinguish by methods, not by results.—A. C.

<sup>2</sup> The gravest doubts assail me on further examination of this point. I am now (1906) convinced that the experiences to which I refer constitute Samadhi. The accursed pedantry of the pundits has led to the introduction of a thousand useless subtleties in philosophical terminology, the despair alike of the translator and the investigator, until he realises that it is pedantry, and as worthless as the rest of oriental literature in all matters of exactitude.—A. C.

## VIII.

## MAHASATIPATTHANA.

This meditation differs fundamentally from the usual Hindu methods by the fact that the mind is not restrained to the contemplation of a single object, and there is no interference with the natural functions of the body as there is, *e.g.*, in Pranayama. It is essentially an observation-practice, which later assumes an analytic aspect in regard to the question, "What is it that is really observed?"

The Ego-idea is resolutely excluded from the start, and so far Mr. Herbert Spencer will have nothing to object ("Principles of Psychology," ii. 404). The breathing, motions of walking, &c., are merely observed and recording; for instance, one may sit down quietly and say: "There is an indrawing of the breath." "There is an expiration," &c. Or, walking, "There is a raising of the right foot," and so on, just as it happens. The thought is of course not quick enough to note all the movements or their subtle causes. For example, we cannot describe the complicated muscular contractions, &c.; but this is not necessary. Concentrate on some series of simple movements.

When this through habit becomes intuitive so that the thought is *really* "There is a raising," as opposed to "I raise" (the latter being in reality a complex and adult idea, as philosophers have often shown, ever since Descartes fell into the trap), one may begin to analyse, as explained above, and the second stage is "There is a sensation (Vedana) of a raising, &c." Sensations are further classed as pleasant or unpleasant.

When this is the true intuitive instantaneous testimony of consciousness (so that "There is a raising, &c." is rejected as a palpable lie),<sup>1</sup> we proceed to Sañña, perception.

"There is a perception of a (pleasant or unpleasant) sensation of a raising, &c."

<sup>1</sup> "Why should you expect Vedana to make Rupa appear illusory?" asked a friend of mine, on reading through the MS. of this essay. The reason of my omission to explain is that to me it had seemed obvious. The fact had been assimilated. To meditate on anything is to perceive its unreal nature. Notably this is so in concentrating on parts of the body, such as the nose. On this phenomenon the Hindus have based their famous aphorism, "That which can be thought is not true."—A. C.

When this has become intuitive—why! here’s a strange result! The emotions of pain and pleasure have vanished. They are subincluded in the lesser skandha of Vedana, and Sañña is free from them. And to him who can live in this third stage, and live so for ever, there is no more pain; only an intense interest similar to that which has enabled men of science to watch and note the progress of their own death-agony. Unfortunately the living in such a state is conditional on sound mental health, and terminable by disease or death at any moment. Were it not so, the First Noble Truth would be a lie.

The two further stages Sankhara and Viññanam pursue the analysis to its ultimatum, “There is a consciousness of a tendency to perceive the (pleasant or unpleasant) sensation of a raising of a right foot” being the final form. And I suppose no psychologist of any standing will quarrel with this.<sup>1</sup> Reasoning in fact leads us to this analysis; the Buddhist goes further only in so far as he may be said to knock down the scaffolding of reasoning processes, and to assimilate the actual truth of the matter.

It is the difference between the schoolboy who painfully construes “Balbus murum ædificavit,” and the Roman who announces that historic fact without a thought of his grammar.

I have called this meditation the most famous of the Buddhist meditations, because it is stated by the Buddha himself that if one practices it honestly and intelligently a result is certain. And he says this of no other.

I have personally not found the time to devote myself seriously to this Mahasatipatthana, and the statements here made are those derived from reason and not from experience. But I can say that the unreality of the grosser (rupa) relative to the sublter Vedana and still more subtle Sañña becomes rapidly apparent, and I can only conclude that with time and trouble the process would continue.

What will occur when one reaches the final stage of Viññanam, and finds no Atman behind it? Surely the Viññanam stage will soon seem as unreal as the former have become. It is idle to speculate; but if I may escape the imputation of explaining the obscure by the more obscure, I may hint that

<sup>1</sup> I deal with Mr. Spencer and “Transfigured Realism” in a note at the end of this section. —A. C.

such a person must be very near the state called Nirvana, whatever may be meant by this term. And I am convinced in my own mind that the Ananda (bliss) of Dhyana will surely arise long before one has passed even up to Sankhara.

And for the reality, 'twill be a brave jest, my masters, to fling back on the materialists that terrible gibe of Voltaire's at the mystery-mongers of his day: "Il nient ce qui est, et expliquent ce qui n'est pas."

NOTE TO SECTION VIII.

*Transfigured Realism.*

I will not waste my own time and that of my readers by any lengthy discussion of Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Transfigured Realism." I will not point out in greater detail how he proposes, by a chain of reasoning, to overthrow the conclusions he admits as being those of reason.

But his statement that Idealism is but verbally intelligible is for my purpose the most admirable thing he could have said.

He is wrong in saying that idealists are bewildered by their own terminology; the fact is that idealist conclusions are presented directly to consciousness, when that consciousness is Dhyanic. (*Cf.* Section XI.)

Nothing is clearer to my mind than that the great difficulty habitually experienced by the normal mind in the assimilation of meta-physics is due to the actual lack of experience in the mind of the reader of the phenomena discussed. I will go so far as to say that perhaps Mr. Spencer himself is so bitter because he himself has actual experience of "Transfigured Realism" as a directly presented phenomenon; for if he supposes that the normal healthy mind can perceive what he perceives, Berkeley's arguments must seem to him mere wanton stupidity.

I class the Hindu philosophy with the Idealist; the Bhuddistic with that of Mr. Herbert Spencer; the great difference between the two being that the Buddhists recognise clearly these (or similar) conclusions as phenomena, Mr. Spencer, inconsistently enough, only as truths verified by a higher and more correct reasoning than that of his opponents.

We recognise, with Berkeley, that reason teaches us that the testimony of consciousness is untrue; it is absurd, with Spencer, to refute reason; instead we take means to bring consciousness to a sense of its improbity. Now our (empiric) diagnosis is that it is the dissipation of mind that is chiefly responsible for its untruthfulness. We seek (also by empiric means, alas!) to control it, to concentrate it, to observe more accurately—has this source of possible error been sufficiently recognised?—what its testimony really is.

Experience has taught me, so far as I have been able to go, that Reason and Consciousness have met together; Apprehension and Analysis have kissed one another. The reconciliation (in fact, remember, and not in words) is at least so nearly perfect that I can confidently predict that a further pursuit of the (empirically-indicated) path will surely lead to a still further and higher unity.

The realisation of the hopes held out by the hypothesis is then of clear evidential value in support of that hypothesis, empiric as it was, and is. But with the growth and gathering-together, classifying, criticism of our facts, we are well on the way to erect a surer structure on a broader basis.

## IX.

### AGNOSTICISM.

It should be clearly understood, and well remembered, that throughout all these meditations and ideas, there is no necessary way to any orthodox ontology whatever. As to the way of salvation, we are not to rely on the Buddha; the vicious lie of vicarious atonement finds no place here. The Buddha himself does not escape the law of causation; if this be metaphysics, so far Buddhism is metaphysical, but no further. While denying obvious lies, it does not set up dogmas; all its statements are susceptible of proof—a child can assent to all the more important. And this is Agnosticism. We have a scientific religion. How far would Newton have got if he had stuck to Tycho Brahe as the One Guide? How far the Buddha had he revered the Vedas with blind faith? Or how far can we proceed even from partial truth, unless a perfectly open mind be kept regarding it, aware that some new phenomenon may possibly overthrow our most fundamental hypotheses! Give me a

reasonable proof of some (intelligent) existence which is not liable to sorrow, and I will throw the First Noble Truth to the dogs without a pang. And, knowing this, how splendid is it to read the grand words uttered more than two thousand years ago: "Therefore, O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refugee to the truth. Look not for refuge to any one besides yourselves." (Mahaparanibbana Sutta, ii. 33.) And to such seekers only does the Buddha promise "the very topmost Height"—if only they are "anxious to learn." This is the corner-stone of Buddhism; can scientific men deny their assent to these words when they look back on the history of Thought in the West; the torture of Bruno, the shame of Galileo, the obscurantism of the Schoolmen, the "mystery" of the hard-pressed priests, the weapons carnal and spiritual of stake and rack, the labyrinths of lying and vile intrigue by which Science, the child, was deformed, distorted, stunted, in the interest of the contrary proposition?

If you ask me why you should be Buddhists and not indifferentists, as you are now, I tell you that I come, however unworthy, to take up the sword that Huxley wielded; I tell you that the Oppressor of Science in her girlhood is already at work to ravish her virginity; that a moment's hesitation, idleness, security may force us back from the positions so hardly won. Are we never to go forward, moreover? Are our children still to be taught as facts the stupid and indecent fables of the Old Testament, fables that the Archbishop of Canterbury himself would indignantly repudiate? Are minds to be warped early, the scientific method and imagination checked, the logical faculty thwarted—thousands of workers lost each year to Science?

And the way to do this is not only through the negative common-sense of indifference; organise, organise, organise! For a flag we offer you the stainless lotus-banner of the Buddha, in defence of which no drop of blood has ever been, nor ever will be shed, a banner under which you will join forces with five hundred millions of your fellow-men. And you will not be privates in the army; for you the highest place, the place of leaders, waits; as far as the triumphs of the intellect are concerned, it is to Western Science that we look. Your

achievements have shattered the battle-array of dogma and despotism; your columns roll in triumphant power through the breaches of false meta-physics and baseless logic; you have fought that battle, and the laurels are on your brows. The battle was fought by us more than two thousand years ago; the authority of the Vedas, the restrictions of caste, were shattered by the invulnerable sword of truth in Buddha's hand; we are your brothers. But in the race of intellect we have fallen behind a little; will you take no interest in us, who have been your comrades? To Science Buddhism cries: Lead us, reform us, give us clear ideas of Nature and her laws; give us that basis of irrefragable logic and wide knowledge that we need, and march with us into the Universe!

The Buddhist faith is not a blind faith; its truths are obvious to all who are not blinded by the spectacles of bibliolatry and deafened by the clamour of priests, presbyters, ministers: whatever name they choose for themselves, we can at least put them aside in one great class, the Thought-stiflers; and these truths are those which we have long accepted and to which you have recently and hardly won.

It is to men of your stamp, men of independent thought, of keen ecstasy of love of knowledge, of practical training, that the Buddhasanana Samagama<sup>1</sup> appeals; it is time that Buddhism reformed itself from within; though its truths be held untarnished (and even this is not everywhere the case), its methods, its organisation, are sadly in need of repair; research must be done, men must be perfected, error must be fought. And if in the West a great Buddhist society is built up of men of intellect, of the men in whose hands the future lies, there is then an awakening, a true redemption, of the weary and forgetful Empires of the East.

## X.

### THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

To return from our little digression to the original plan of our essay. It is time to note the "Noble Eightfold Path," referred to and its consideration deferred, in Section III.

<sup>1</sup> Or International Buddhist Society, founded in Rangoon in 1903.

In this Fourth Noble Truth we approach the true *direction* of Buddhism; progress is but another word for change; is it possible to move in a direction whose goal is the changeless? The answer is Yea and Amen! and it is detailed in the Noble Eightfold Path, of which I propose to give a short resumé. First, however, of the goal. It may be readily syllogised:

All existing things are (by nature, inevitably) subject to change.

In Nirvana is no change.

∴ No existing thing is or can be in Nirvana.

Now here is the great difficulty; for this syllogism is perfectly sound, and yet we speak of attaining Nirvana, tasting Nirvana, &c.

[We must distinguish the Hindu Nirvana, which means Cessation of Existence in certain Lokas; never absolute Cessation, as the Buddhist tradition, the etymology, and the logical value alike require for the word as applied to the Buddhist goal. See Chidders, Pali Dictionary, *sub voce* Nibbana.]

The explanation is really as follows: only by this term Nirvana can we foreshadow to you the reality; for even as the Dawn of Dhyana is indescribable in language, *à fortiori* Nirvana is so. To give an example, for that something of the sort is necessary I freely admit, to defend so apparently mystical a statement, I may give the following from my own experience.

In a certain meditation one day I recorded:

“I was (a) conscious of external things seen behind after my nose had vanished. (b) Conscious that I was *not* conscious of these things. These (a) and (b) were simultaneous.”

I subsequently discovered this peculiar state of consciousness classified in the Abhidhamma. That it is a contradiction in terms I am perfectly aware; to assign any meaning to it is frankly beyond me; but I am as certain that such a state once existed in me as I am of anything.

Similarly with Nirvana and its definition. The Arahāt knows what it is, and describes it by its accidentals, such as bliss. I must raise, very reluctantly, a protest against the idea of Professor Rhys Davids (if I have understood him aright) that Nirvana is the mental state resulting from the continuous practice of all the virtues and methods of thought characteristic of Buddhism. No; Nirvana is a state belonging to a different plane, to a higher dimension than

anything we can at present conceive of. It has perhaps its analogies and correspondences on the normal planes, and so shall we find of the steps as well as of the Goal. Even the simple first step, which every true Buddhist has taken, Sammaditthi, is a very different thing from the point of view of an Arahat. The Buddha stated expressly that none but an Arahat could really comprehend the Dhamma.

And so for all the Eight Stages; as regards their obvious meaning on the moral plane, I can do no better than quote my friend Bhikku Ananda Maitriya, in his "Four Noble Truths."

"He who has attained, by force of pure understanding, to the realisation of the Four Noble Truths, who has realised the fact that depends from that understanding, namely that all the constituents of being are by nature endowed with the Three Characteristics of Sorrow, Transitoriness, and Absence of any immortal principle or Atma—such a one is said to be Sammaditthi, to hold right views, and the term has come to mean one of the Buddhist Faith. We may not have taken the other and higher steps on the Noble Eightfold Path; but must have realised those Four Truths and their sequential three Characteristics. He who has attained Sammaditthi has at least entered upon the Holy Way, and, if he but try, there will come to him the power to overcome the other fetters that restrict his progress. But first of all he must abandon all those false hopes and beliefs; and one who has done this is called a Buddhist. And this holding of Right Views, in Pali Sammaditthi, is the first step upon the Noble Eightfold Path.

"The second stage is Right Aspiration—Sammāsankappo. Having realised the woe and transitoriness and soullessness of all life, there rises in the mind this Right Aspiration. When all things suffer, we at least will not increase their burden, so we aspire to become pitiful and loving, to cherish ill-will toward none, to retire from those pleasures of sense which are the fruitful cause of woe. The will, we all know, is ever readier than the mind, and so, though we aspire to renounce the pleasures of sense, to love and pity all that lives, yet perhaps we often fail in the accomplishment of our aspiration. But if the desire to become pitiful and pure be but honest and earnest, we have gained the Second Step upon the Path—Sammāsankappo, Right Aspiration.

“He whose motives are pure has no need to conceal the Truth—he who truly loves and who has a malice towards none, will ever speak only fair and soft words. By a man’s speech do we learn his nature, and that one whose Right Aspirations are bearing fruit attains to the Third Step, Right Speech, *Sammavāca*. Speaking only the Truth in all things, never speaking harshly or unkindly, in his speech realising the love and pity that is in his heart—that man has attained to Stage the Third.

“And because of the great power of a man’s thoughts and words to change his being, because by thinking of the pitiful our acts grow full of mercy, therefore is Stage the Fourth called Right Conduct. To him who has gained this Fourth Stage, his intense aspiration, his right understanding, his carefully guarded speech—perhaps for many years of self-control—have at last borne outward fruit, till all his acts are loving, and pure, and done without hope of gain, he has attained the Fourth Step, called *Sammakammanto*.

“And when, growing yet holier, that habit of Right Action grows firm and inalienable, when his whole life is lived for the Faith that is in him, when every act of his daily life, yea, of his sleep also, is set to a holy purpose, when not one thought or deed that is cruel or unpitiful can stain his being—when, not even as a duty, will he inflict pain by deed, word, or thought—then he has gained the Fifth High Path, the Living of the Life that’s Right—*Sammá ajivo*. Abstaining from all that can cause pain, he has become blameless, and can live only by such occupations as can bring no sorrow in their train.<sup>1</sup>

“To him who has lived so, say the Holy Books, there comes a power which is unknown to ordinary men. Long training and restraint have given him conquest of his mind, he can now bring all his powers with tremendous force to bear upon any one object he may have in view, and this ability so to use the energies of his being to put forth a constant and tremendous effort of the will, marks the attainment of the Sixth Stage, *Sammāvayamo*, usually translated Right Effort, but perhaps Right Will-Power would come nearer to the meaning, or Right Energy, for effort has been made even to attain to

<sup>1</sup> From my point of view, this is of course impossible. See Sec. III. If wilful infliction of pain only is meant, our state becomes moral, or even worse!—mystical. I should prefer to cancel this sentence. Cf. Appendix I, *supra*.—A. C.

Sammaditthi.<sup>1</sup> And this power being gained by its use he is enabled to concentrate all his thoughts and hold them always upon one object—waking or sleeping, he remembers who he is and what his high aim in life—and this constant recollection and keeping in mind of holy things, is the Seventh Stage, Sammasati. And by the power of this transcendent faculty, rising through the Eight High Trances to the very threshold of Nirvana, he at last, in the Trance called Nirodha Samapatti, attains, even in this life, to the Deathless Shore of Nirvana, by the power of Sammasamadhi, Right Concentration. Such a one has finished the Path—he has destroyed the cause of all his chain of lives, and has become Araham, a Saint, a Buddha himself.”

But none knows better than the venerable Bhikkhu himself, as indeed he makes clear with regard to the steps Sammāvayamo and above, that these interpretations are but reflections of those upon a higher plane—the scientific plane. They are (I have little doubt) for those who have attained to them mnemonic keys to whole classes of phenomena of the order anciently denominated magical, phenomena which, since the human mind has had its present constitution, have been translated into language, classified, sought after, always above language, but not beyond a sane and scientific classification, a rigid and satisfactory method, as I most firmly believe. It is to establish such a method; to record in the language, not of the temple, but of the laboratory, its results, that I make this appeal; that I seek to enlist genuine, not pseudo-scientific men in the Research; so that our children may be as far in advance of us in the study of the supernormal phenomena of the mind as we are in advance of our fathers in the sciences of the physical world.<sup>2</sup>

Note carefully this practical sense of my intention. I care nothing for the academic meanings of the steps in the Path; what they meant to the Arahats of

<sup>1</sup> It is of course a special kind of effort, not mere struggle.

<sup>2</sup> A few weeks after writing these words I came across the following passage in Tyndall's "Scientific Materialism" which I had not previously read: "Two-thirds of the rays emitted by the sun fail to arouse the sense of vision. The rays exist, but the visual organ requisite for their translation into light does not exist. And so, from this region of darkness and mystery which now surrounds us, rays may now be darting, which require but the development of the proper intellectual organs to translate them into knowledge as far surpassing ours as ours surpasses that of the wallowing reptiles which once held possession of this planet."—A. C.

old is indifferent to me. "Let the dead past bury its dead!" What I require is an advance in the Knowledge of the Great Problem, derived no longer from hearsay revelation, from exalted fanaticism, from hysteria and intoxication; but from method and research.

Shut the temple; open the laboratory!

## XI.

### THE TWILIGHT OF THE GERMANS.<sup>1</sup>

It is a commonplace of scientific men that metaphysics is mostly moonshine; that it is largely an argument in a circle cannot easily be disputed; that the advance since Aristotle is principally verbal none may doubt; that no parallel advance to that of science has been made in the last fifty years is certain.

The reason is obvious.

Philosophy has had two legitimate weapons —introspection and reason; and introspection is not experiment.

The mind is a machine that reasons; here are its results. Very good; can it do anything else? This is the question not only of the Buddhist; but of the Hindu, of the Mohammedan, of the Mystic. All try their various methods; all attain results of sorts; none have had the genuine training which would have enabled them to record those results in an intelligible, orderly form.

Others deliberately set their face against such an attempt. I am not of them; humanity has grown up; if the knowledge be dangerous in unexpected ways, what of bacteriology? I have obtained one result; a result striking at the very condition of consciousness; which I may formulate as follows:

"If a single state of consciousness persist unchanged for a period exceeding a very few seconds, its duality is annihilated; its nature is violently overthrown; this phenomenon is accompanied by an indescribable sensation of bliss."

Very well! but I want this formula verified a hundred times, a thousand times, by independent investigators. I want it better stated; its conditions modified, defined exactly. I want it to leave its humble station as my observation, and put into the class of regular phenomena.

<sup>1</sup> A Note showing the necessity and scope of the Work in question.

But I am verging back towards Hindu philosophy, and it is a reminder well needed at this moment. For this experience of the destruction of duality, this first phenomenon in the series, has, in all its illusory beauty, been seized upon, generalised from, by philosophers, and it is to this basis of partial and therefore deceptive fact that we owe the systems of Vedanta and Idealism, with their grotesque assumptions and muddle-headed “reconcilements” all complete.

One fact, O Sri Çankaracharya, does not make a theory; let us remember your fate, and avoid generalising on insufficient evidence. With this word of warning, I leave the metaphysician to wallow in his mire, and look toward better times for the great problems of philosophy. Remember that when the solution is attained it is not the solution of one learned man for his fellows, but one realised and assimilated by every man in his own consciousness.

And what the solution may be none of us can foreshadow. To hoist the problem on to the horns of a dilemma will avail nothing when  $A=A$  may be no longer true; and this by no Hegelian word-juggle; but by direct apperception as clear as the sun at noon.

Therefore; no work more, but—to the work!

## XII.

### THE THREE REFUGES.

*Buddham Saranangachami.*

*Dhammam Saranangachami.*

*Sangham Saranangachami.*

I take my refuge in the Buddha.

I take my refuge in the Dhamma.

I take my refuge in the Sangha.

This formula of adhesion to Buddhism is daily repeated by countless millions of humanity; what does it mean? It is no vain profession of reliance on others; no cowardly shirking of burdens—burdens which cannot be shirked. It is a plain estimate of our auxiliaries in the battle; the cosmic facts on which we may rely, just as a scientist “relies” on the conservation of energy in making an experiment.

Were that principle of uncertain application, the simplest quantitative experiment would break hopelessly down.

So for the Buddhist.

I take my refuge in the Buddha. That there was once a man who found the Way is my encouragement.

I take my refuge in the Dhamma. The Law underlying phenomena and its unchanging certainty; the Law given by the Buddha to show us the Way, the inevitable tendency to Persistence in Motion or Rest—and Persistence, even in Motion, negates change in consciousness—these observed orders of fact are our bases.

I take my refuge in the Sangha.

These are not isolated efforts on my part; although in one sense isolation is eternally perfect and can never be overcome,<sup>1</sup> in another sense associates are possible and desirable. One third of humanity are Buddhists; add men of Science and we form an absolute majority; among Buddhists a very large proportion have deliberately gone out from social life of any kind to tread these paths of Research.

Is the Way very hard? Is the brain tired? The results slow to come? Others are working, failing, struggling, crowned here and there with rare garlands of success. Success for ourselves, success for others; is it not *Compassion* that binds us closer than all earthly ties? Ay, in joy and in sorrow, in weakness and in strength, do I take my refuge in the Sangha.

### XIII.

#### CONCLUSION

Let me give a rapid resumé of what we have gone through.

(a) We have stripped Science and Buddhism of their accidental garments, and administered a rebuke to those who so swathe them.

(b) We have shown the identity of Science and Buddhism in respect of:

- (1) Their fact.
- (2) Their theory.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, on normal planes.

- (3) Their method.
- (4) Their enemies.

(c) While thus admitting Buddhism to be merely a branch of Science, we have shown it to be a most important branch, since its promise is to break down the walls at which Science stops.

When Professor Ray Lankester has to write, “The whole order of nature, including living and lifeless matter—man, animal, and gas—is a network of mechanism, the main features and many details of which have been made more or less obvious to the wondering intelligence of mankind by the labour and ingenuity of scientific investigators. But no sane man has ever pretended, since science became a definite body of doctrine, that we know or ever can hope to know or conceive of the possibility of knowing, whence this mechanism has come, why it is there, whither it is going, and what there may or may not be beyond and beside it which our senses are incapable of appreciating. These things are not ‘explained’ by science, and never can be,” he gives a curious example of that quaint scientific pride which knows the limits of its powers, and refuses to entertain the hope of transcending them. Unfortunately, he is as one who, a hundred years ago, should have declared any knowledge of the chemistry of the fixed stars impossible. To invent new methods, and to revolutionise the functions of the senses by training or otherwise is the routine work of to-morrow.<sup>1</sup> But, alas! he goes even further.

“Similarly we seek by the study of cerebral disease to trace the genesis of the phenomena which are supposed by some physicists who have strayed into biological fields to justify them in announcing the ‘discovery’ of ‘Telepathy’ and a belief in ghosts.”

To talk of cerebral disease as the characteristic of one who merely differs from you (and that because he has more knowledge than yourself) is itself a symptom familiar to alienists. (I may say I hold no brief for Professor Lodge, here attacked. I am not even interested in any of his results, as such of them as I am acquainted with deal with objective and trivial phenomena.)

Of course, as long as what Darwin called variation is called disease by Professor Ray Lankester, we shall (if we accept his views, and it will go hard

<sup>1</sup> See note p. 167.

with us if we do not!) regard all progress in any direction as morbid. So (as with Lombroso) “disease” will become a mere word, like its predecessor “infidelity,” and cease to carry any obloquy.

If Science is never to go beyond its present limits; if the barriers which metaphysical speculation shows to exist are never to be transcended, then indeed we are thrown back on faith, and all the rest of the nauseous mess of medieval superstition, and we may just as well have vital principle and creative power as not, for Science cannot help us. True, if we do not use all the methods at our disposal! But we go beyond. We admit that all mental methods known are singularly liable to illusion and inaccuracy of any sort. So were the early determinations of specific heat. Even biologists have erred. But to the true scientist every failure is a stepping-stone to success; every mistake is the key to a new truth.

And the history of our Science is the history of all Science. If you choose to ape Christendom and put the pioneers of rational investigation into the nature of consciousness on the rack (*i.e.* into lunatic asylums) I doubt not we shall find our Bruno. But it will add an additional pang that persecution should come from the house of our friends.

Let us, however, turn away from the aspect of criticism which an accidental controversy has thus caused me to notice, and so to anticipate the obvious line of attack which the more frivolous type of critic will employ, and return to our proper business, the summary of our own position with regard to Buddhism.

Buddhism is a logical development of the observed facts; whoso is with me so far is *Sammaditthi*, and has taken the first step on the Noble Eightfold Path.

Let him aspire to knowledge, and the Second Step is under his feet.

The rest lies with Research.

Aum! I take my refuge holy in the Light and Peace of Buddh.

Aum! I take my refuge, slowly working out His Law of Good.

Aum! I take my refuge lowly in His Pitying Brotherhood.



### *Note to the Celephaïs Press edition.*

*The Sword of Song* was first published in 1904, in an edition of around 100 copies, on Crowley's "Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth" imprint (an earlier version of the essay "Berashith" had been issued as a pamphlet the year before.). I have only seen images of the covers and a few pages of this edition. The texts in it were reprinted on pp. 140-221 of vol. ii of Crowley's *Collected Works* (1906), with some additional notes, mostly due to his friend Ivor Back who edited that edition. Thus, footnotes to the texts, when not initialled "A.C.," as well as some of the remarks in square brackets (*e.g.* below the main dedication) probably originate with this edition, save for a few notes in square brackets initialled "T.S." which are by the present editor and are confined to purely textual issues.

In the 1913 "Syllabus of the Official Instructions of A.:A.:" *The Sword of Song* was declared to be Liber LXVII (67 = 𐄂𐄃, a sword) in Class C, and described as "A critical study of various philosophies. An account of Buddhism." Prior to this, Crowley had placed it on the A.:A.: Student reading list, and in the 1919 "Curriculum" added it to an examinable reading list for the grade of Practicus.

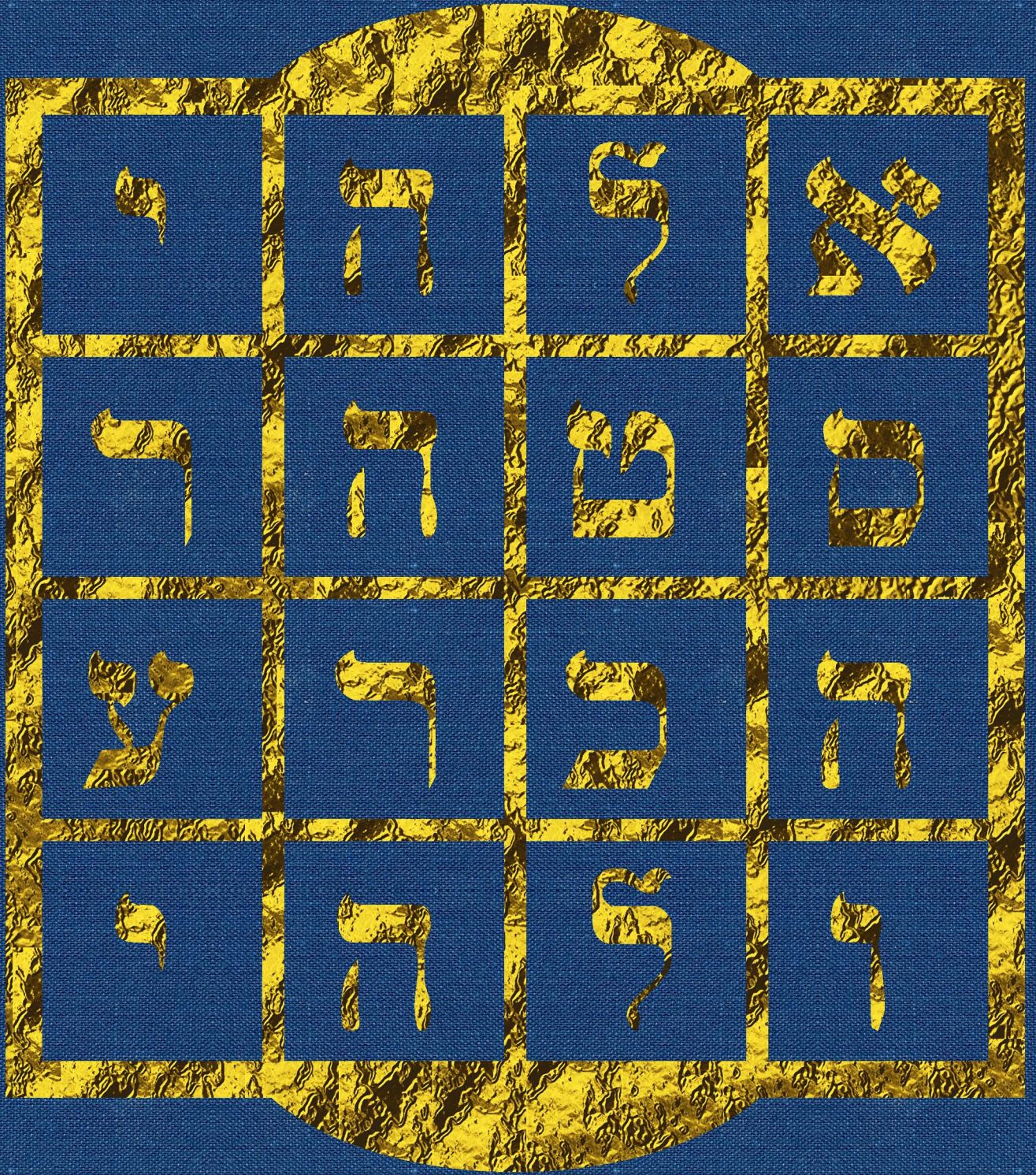
Use of rubrication for headers, headings, sidebars &c. follows the first edition. Otherwise, pagination, layout and style does not follow either print edition exactly.

An earlier version of this electronic edition was produced in 2001 for Sunwheel Oasis O.T.O., with a slightly upgraded re-issue on the Celephaïs Press imprint in 2003. I key-entered it from a reprint of *Collected Works* and attempted to reproduce the layout of that edition. The present release corrects a very large number of transcription errors (apparently I typed it on a keyboard with a dodgy 'g' key) in previous releases, various iterations of which still occasionally show up online.

T.S.

Leeds, England.

October 2019 e.v.



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