

# A SURVEY OF THE OCCULT

Edited by  
JULIAN FRANKLYN

with contributions by  
DR. F. E. BUDD, Ph.D.  
Lecturer in English in the University of London

J. H. MOZLEY, M.A. Camb.  
Lecturer in Classics in the University of London

S. G. SOAL, M.A., B.Sc.  
Member of the Executive of the University of London Council for  
Psychical Investigation; Member of the Council of the Society for  
Psychical Research

and  
ALASTAIR BAXTER



Elecbook Classics, 2000  
The Electric Book Company  
20 Cambridge Drive  
London SE12 8AJ  
[www.elecbook.com](http://www.elecbook.com)

From the first edition, 1935  
Arthur Barker Limited

## PREFACE

THERE are several encyclopædias of the occult, but there has existed none that is abreast of modern science and modern psychology: this is the gap which the publishers have aimed to fill.

Although the five contributors have attempted, not to achieve exhaustive comprehensiveness, but to present the case for enlightenment, yet they hope that this volume will, as a reference-book, serve all practical purposes.

The credit for suggesting the scope of this work is Alastair Baxter's; that for determining the manner of treatment, Julian Franklyn's. I should also like to thank Dr. Budd, Mr. Mozley, and Mr. Soal (with all of whom I once had the pleasure of being a colleague at Queen Mary College, University of London) for rallying so generously to the cause of intelligent enlightenment.

E. P.

September 3, 1935.  
London.

## Contents

*(Click on number to go to page)*

<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>ALCHEMY</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Etymology.....	14
Origin of Alchemy.....	14
Physical Aspect of Alchemy .....	18
Mystical Aspect of Alchemy .....	21
<b>The Alchemists</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Hermes Trismegetus.....	25
Geber the Arab .....	26
Michael Scot.....	28
Albertus Magnus .....	28
Thomas Aquinas.....	29
Roger Bacon.....	30
Arnold de Villanova.....	31
Raymond Lully or Raimon Lull .....	32
Peter Bonus.....	33
Nicholas Flamel .....	34
Basil Valentine.....	35
Glues de Laval.....	36
Bernard Trévisan .....	37
Sir George Ripley .....	38
Paracelsus.....	38
John Dee .....	41
H. Khunrath .....	43

	10
Michael Sandivogius .....	44
Michael Maier .....	47
J. B. Van Helmont .....	49
J. F. Helvetius .....	51
Thomas Vaughan.....	52
“Eirenaeus Philalethes” .....	53
Robert Boyle (1627-91).....	53
Dr. James Price, F.R.S.....	55
Dr. S. H. Emmens.....	55
<b>Was Transmutation Effected?.....</b>	<b>56</b>
Modern Alchemy .....	58
The Elixir of Life.....	60
Rejuvenation .....	62
<b>ASTROLOGY .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>BLACK MAGIC.....</b>	<b>94</b>
The Knights Templars.....	98
Bluebeard .....	100
Infernal Necromancy .....	103
A Pact with Lucifer .....	106
The Hand of Glory.....	110
Modern Maleficium.....	111
<b>BUDDHIST OCCULTISM .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>CHINESE OCCULTISM.....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>DEVIL-WORSHIP .....</b>	<b>140</b>
<b>ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THE OCCULT.....</b>	<b>148</b>
Poetry .....	149
Drama.....	156

Prose.....	160
<b>FAIRIES.....</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>GHOSTS.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>HISTORY OF OCCULT IDEAS.....</b>	<b>192</b>
Hunger, Birth, Death.....	192
The Mother Cult.....	196
The Divine Cow.....	199
The Lunar Cult.....	201
The Solar Cult.....	203
The Book of the Dead.....	206
Lord of the Earth.....	210
Abram, Son of Terah.....	212
Ishtar and Tammuz.....	214
Divination and Astrology.....	215
Kali, the Black One.....	217
Yoga.....	220
Bon Pa.....	222
Kuei Shen.....	223
The Double Axe.....	225
Philosophers.....	229
Oracles.....	230
“She of the Seven Hills”.....	232
The Hammer of Thor.....	234
The Melting-Pot.....	236
Hoa-Haka-Nana-Ia.....	240
The Feathered Snake.....	243
The Spirit Guide.....	245
<b>ILLUSION AND HALLUCINATION.....</b>	<b>248</b>

INCUBUS AND SUCCUBUS .....	256
INDIAN OCCULTISM .....	258
LITERATURE OF OCCULTISM.....	270
THE MANDRAKE.....	290
MOSLEM OCCULTISM.....	301
OCCULTISM IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME .....	312
PSYCHO-THERAPY AND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA.....	324
SPIRITUALISM.....	348
Introduction .....	348
Part I: Early Spiritualism in the United States .....	350
Early Spiritualism in England.....	359
Early Materialization Phenomena.....	364
Part II: The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism.....	368
Telekinetic Phenomena.....	368
Teleplasm and Telekinetic Structures.....	379
Telekinetic Structures .....	381
Spirit Lights .....	384
Spirit-Photography .....	386
Direct Voice.....	393
Poltergeist Phenomena .....	396
Part III: The Mental Phenomena of Spiritualism.....	399
The Mediumistic Trance .....	399
Attempts to Prove Survival.....	415

Other Attempts to Prove Survival .....	431
By Sealed Envelopes.....	431
The Method of Cross-Correspondences.....	433
Spirit-Identification by means of Thumb- prints .....	435
The Spirit Hypothesis versus Alternative Theories .....	439
THE VAMPIRE .....	448
THE WEREWOLF .....	460
WHITE MAGIC .....	467
WITCHCRAFT .....	479

# ALCHEMY

Alastair Baxter

## ***Etymology***

§ 1. Divergent views are held concerning the etymology of the term *alchemy*. According to Sir Walls Budge, the eminent Egyptologist, it is derived from *khemein*, an Egyptian word meaning “the preparation of the black ore or powder” used in transmutations. Another writer asserts that the art owes its name to the fact that Egypt was once known as Khem—the country of dark soil and home of chemistry. To this name was added the Arabic article *at*, “the,” and so the hermetical art became known as *al-khem* and later to the Western world as *alkhemia*—a likely explanation. A third writer claims that “alchemy” has its root in the Greek word meaning “to pour out” or “mix.” (See especially Professor Weekley, *Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*.)

## ***Origin of Alchemy***

§ 2. There is abundant evidence to prove that the ancient Egyptians were thoroughly skilled in the arts of metallurgy, enamelling, dyeing, and glass-tinting; and were fully conversant with the use of mercury in the process of separating gold and silver from the native matrix. Arising out of this process, there was created an oxide for which one claimed wonderful properties. This oxide became mystically identified with the god Osiris, and was regarded with superstitious reverence. In addition to its power of transmuting base metals into gold or silver, it was said to be a very potent agent in the healing of all diseases and to have rejuvenating

powers also. The ideas surrounding the Philosophers' Stone may have developed from this. As to whether the transmutation of base metals into gold or silver was successfully performed by the ancient Egyptians no proof is available. But they certainly possessed a very sound practical knowledge of what we term "synthetic chemistry." And in the manufacture of gold alloys and artificial precious stones they were remarkably proficient. In his *Les Origines d'Alchimie*, the late Professor Berthelot drew attention to a papyrus of workshop recipes found in the tomb of an Egyptian mummy, and he quoted the statement made by John of Antioch that Diocletian had ordered all Egyptian works on the subject of gold-making to be burnt. Yet, despite all this, some writers claim that alchemy was known in China in remote ages: long before the rest of the world knew the art. In a treatise on alchemy, written by the Chinese philosopher Pao P'u. Tzu, who lived in the 4th century A.D., three important alchemical processes are outlined.

1. The preparation of a liquid gold ensuring longevity.
2. The production of artificial cinnabar, the life-giving red pigment, for use in gold-making.
3. The transmutation of base metals into gold.

§ 3. Later on (it was in the 10th century), practical alchemy in China became merged in mysticism: the souls or essences of copper, mercury, and sulphur bearing much the same relationship to other metallic substances as the Taoist or adept bears to ordinary mortals. Towards the end of the 11th century, various parts of the human body were associated with formulas for transmutation. In their striking resemblance to the beliefs held by

European alchemists, these ideas appear to have a common origin. Possibly trading ships brought the knowledge of alchemy from Egypt to China, although it is said that all the ideas concerning the Philosophers' Stone, or Stone of Wisdom as the Taoists called it, are purely Chinese in origin. On the other hand, it has been argued that Babylon, the home of magic in the ancient world, first discovered alchemy. Alexandria, too, has been named as its birthplace. An Indian writer<sup>1</sup> on the subject states that the art was first studied about 1,950,000,000 years ago! Nevertheless, in spite of all these conflicting opinions, it is now generally assumed that alchemy was first practised in Egypt and transmitted to Europe via Spain through the agency of trading vessels, picking up on its way fresh knowledge from other countries such as India and China. Greek scientific thought at Alexandria also added its quota. Spain, from the 9th to the 11th century, became the home of alchemy. Robert of Chester, who, along with Hermann of Carinthia, had been engaged upon the translation of the Koran at Toledo in 1143, is credited with having, in 1144, translated the first work on alchemy from the Arabic.

§ 4. But unfortunately this manuscript has not survived. The earliest collections in existence date from the second half of the 13th century. In western Europe very little was known about alchemy until the 12th century, while numerous small laboratories in England, France and Germany sprang into existence in the next century, and a large number of treatises were written at this period. In the Middle Ages Germany seems to have become the

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bhudeb Mookerji, M.A., author of *Rasa-Jala-Nidhi: Ocean of Indian Alchemy*.

centre of alchemical knowledge in Europe, and gave birth to the mystical type of alchemist—men such as Khunrath, Maier and Boehme. Yet throughout the ages the basic principles underlying the hermetic art have remained unchanged. Much that is puzzling in alchemy becomes clear if we grasp the theory held by the alchemists: that metals possess both a body and a soul like mankind.

§ 5. It is constantly affirmed, too, in symbolical language that Nature always intended to produce gold; the existence of inferior metals is ascribed to arrested development owing to unsuitable environment. Chiefly owing to the operations of numerous quacks and charlatans who exploited the art for financial gain, alchemy fell into disrepute towards the end of the 17th century. But interest in the doctrine of transmutation was revived during the 19th century, when the late Sir William Ramsay announced that he transmuted copper into lithium. The discovery of the phenomena of radioactivity and the disintegration of certain elements have definitely proved that some transmutations do occur. A new school sprang into existence, with positive alchemy (which rules out supernatural causes) as the basis of its teaching.

§ 6. A society named L'Association Alchimiste de France was founded in France with Paris as its headquarters. Many distinguished people were numbered amongst its members, including Camille Flammarion, the great astronomer. Dr. S. H. Emmens was, later on, admitted to membership. This society met annually, and carefully investigated and discussed all claims in positive alchemy, or what is better understood as chemical science.

§ 7. M. Jolivet Castelot, who became a president of the society,

definitely stated on one occasion that he had transmuted silver into gold. He mixed twenty-two grains of silver with three grains of orpiment (native yellow sulphuret of arsenic) and fused them together at a high temperature for about three-quarters of an hour, this process being repeated for a few minutes at intervals, with further additions of orpiment. After this mass had cooled, it was subjected to the action of pure sulphide of antimony for five minutes. This caused the whole to turn a dark yellow and exhibit all the properties of gold.

§ 8. A Japanese professor claimed, some years ago, that by purifying brass twenty-eight times he had produced gold.

§ 9. Dr. Bhudeb Mookerji, an authority on Indian alchemy, asserts that transmutation can be effected in the following manner. A piece of lead is rubbed for six hours with pharabaha or bibhitake wood, and afterwards mixed with certain juices and ignited and re-treated 108 times, when the lead will be reduced to “ashes.” A portion of these “ashes” mixed with copper will create silver, and, with the addition of more “ashes,” will create gold. Tiffereau, a Frenchman, claimed that he had changed silver into gold by means of a combined treatment of nitric acid and solar rays. All these claims may or may not be genuine, but efforts have been made by scientists to repeat these transmutations; without success—if we except the experiments carried out by Sir William Rutherford in breaking up the nitrogen atom. Strictly speaking, there is a wide difference between the Hermetic Art and Modern Science, particularly so when we go into details.

### ***Physical Aspect of Alchemy***

§ 10. Aristotle propounded the theory that earth, air, fire and

water composed the four chief elements. These four elements were associated with three principles, sulphur, mercury and salt; and out of this association countless forms and combinations of matter were created. The Aristotelean theory gave way gradually to the doctrine of “phlogiston”: which taught that a fiery essence permeated all combustible substances. Other principles were introduced to support this theory—the main idea of which was that when a body was heated, a wonderful essence entered into it, and that, on cooling, this essence escaped.

§ 11. Later on, more accurate knowledge based upon the researches of Lavoisier and Priestley showed the utter falsity of these crude notions. But amongst the ancient alchemists the Aristotelean theory died hard. Seven metals were known to them, namely, gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, lead, and zinc; and they were also acquainted with arsenic, bismuth, mercury, and sulphur. They held the *idée fixe* that all metals grew from seed in the ground like organic matter. Nature aimed to produce gold, the perfection of all metals, but very often, owing to unsuitable environment, this design was frustrated.

§ 12. To quote one<sup>1</sup> of the alchemists: “All metallic seed is the seed of gold: for gold is the intention of Nature with regard to all metals. If the base metals are not gold, it is only through some accidental hindrance: they are all potentially gold.”

§ 13. The intensive studies of the alchemists were directed towards wresting from Nature what was regarded as one of her

---

<sup>1</sup> “Eirenæus Philalethes”—supposed by some writers to be George Starkey, a reputed alchemist of the 16th century; by others to be Thomas Vaughan, the mystic.

greatest secrets, and towards acquiring the power of creating within a short space of time what takes centuries to accomplish in the natural order of evolution. They spent lifetimes, in addition to fortunes, trying to solve this great problem, and although several of them aimed to have performed the miracle of transmutation, these claims are not substantiated. Yet in their picturesque conception of “The Soul of the World,”—a phrase they coined to describe that Divine Spirit or Essence which they believed to pervade all matter,—they certainly grasped the fundamental truth of the cosmos—what is termed “radio-activity” by modern scientists. And in their simple attempts to define the nature of matter, they approached pretty near to Dalton’s theory that the atomic structure of all matter is closely akin.

§ 14. To a large extent, modern science confirms some of the ideas held by the alchemists. A recent writer says: “Man in spirit, body and mind is one with physical nature. . . . Spirit is no external, isolated thing, but is reality itself; inherent in all matter, animate or inanimate.” The majority of the alchemists appear to have grasped certain truths, and then distorted them to fit in with their fantastical theories concerning metals. Modern science does not reject the possibility of transmutation of metals—theoretically; but until a way is found of breaking up the atom it will remain—just a theory. Students of the occult may find fault with us for introducing modern science, but we feel that the subject of alchemy would be incomplete without a comparison with its present-day counterpart. Indeed, a distinguished American professor<sup>1</sup> goes so far as to say that radium may ultimately prove

---

<sup>1</sup> Prof. F. Paneth, non-resident lecturer in chemistry at Cornell

to be the Philosopher's stone: "In a way, radium possesses the first and principal property ascribed to the Philosophers' Stone; it has the power of transmuting elements—if not metals. And even in its second property of being a valuable aid in the curing of diseases, radium seems to be closely related to its fabulous predecessor. So in a very remarkable degree, radium reproduces the twofold effects of the Philosophers' Stone—transmutation and healing."

§ 15. Belief in the immutability of the elements has waned in scientific circles: the day is not far distant when the transmutation of metals will be accomplished, and the dream of the ancient alchemists become a reality. Why not? Science has made enormous progress within the past half-century; in fact, it has performed and is still continuing to perform far greater miracles than that of transmutation. At one time it was commonly believed that some vital force was required to produce the molecules of which living bodies are formed. To-day all kinds of phenomena attributed to this so-called vital force are being traced to ordinary processes of physics and chemistry.

### ***Mystical Aspect of Alchemy***

§ 16. Although it cannot be denied that modern chemistry owes its beginning to the practical labours of the ancient alchemists and not to their mystical beliefs; nevertheless, relating to these beliefs, there are certain peculiar facts which cannot be explained in purely physical terms. The alchemists were often abused, even persecuted, for introducing into their works so much religious imagery expressed in symbolical language. Yet we must concede

that a high sense of sincere veneration often inspired these allegorical conceptions, many of which are beautiful. They reveal the profound earnestness with which the alchemists approached the subject. In the light of modern science, many of the theories advanced by the alchemists appear childish or even absurd. But it must not be forgotten that these early pioneers lived in an age when superstition was rife, and belief in the powers of the supernatural almost universal. Viewed in a correct perspective, alchemy was a curious blend of religion, occult philosophy and natural science, carried out by deep-thinking, learned men who implicitly believed in the truth of their theories concerning the nature of matter and things spiritual. Nearly all of them belonged to some religious order or other, and this probably explains much of the mystical language employed in their writings. The majority of these men lived the lives of ascetics while they pursued their experiments; uplifted by the idea that eventually their strict adherence to Christian principles would result in their efforts being rewarded with the Great Secret.

§ 17. They thoroughly believed that by a prescribed series of purifying courses Man could be purged of gross materialism and thus allow his spiritual nature to ascend into those realms of the Divine where nothing is hidden from the eyes of the adept, and that, by an analogous method, base metals also could be cleansed and freed from the impure matter which prevented them from becoming pure gold or silver. Alongside of the material aspect there was, ever-present, the idea of a moral and spiritual regeneration of mankind. To quote Basil Valentine: "First there should be the invocation of God, flowing from the depths of a pure and sincere heart, and a conscience which should be free from all ambition,

hypocrisy, and vice, as also from all cognate faults, such as arrogance, pride, boldness, luxury, worldly vanity, oppression of the poor, and similar iniquities, which should all be rooted up out of the heart so that when a man appears before the Throne of Grace, to regain the health of his body, he may come with a conscience weeded of all tares and be changed into a pure temple of God cleansed of all that defiles.”

§ 18. The writings of the alchemists are highly symbolical. Gold and Silver are represented as the King and Queen: Mercury is depicted as a winged and bearded Hermaphrodite: Sulphur as the Flying Eagle: Salt as the Winged Dragon: molten metals are Lions of various hues. And the Work was symbolized in its entirety by the Pelican or the Phoenix. Astrological signs were also introduced to denote the seven metals. Gold was the Sun; Silver, the Moon or Luna; Iron was Mars; Tin was Jupiter; Lead, Saturn; and so on.

§ 19. *Athanor* was the name given to the furnace in which the alchemists heated their crucibles; *Azoth* or *Od* to the Astral Light or Secret Fire supposed to be used in the *Athanor*. Eliphaz Levi said that this Secret Fire was really electricity equilibrated by magnetic force which was concentrated in the *Athanor* by the operator. The *Grand Arcanum* was synonymous with the Great Work—the actual creation of the human Word initiated into the power of the Word of God Himself. The *Great Agent* represented universal magical power, the Astral Light or Secret Fire already referred to: the living and philosophical fire. According to Levi, the Hermetic Art was essentially a magical operation, the highest of all, for it presupposes the absolute in science and in volition, and uses chemistry only as a secondary instrument. The *Philosophers' Stone* which is so often mentioned in alchemical

writings was the miracle-working substance that would in a short period of time transmute base metals into gold or silver. It was also called the Powder of Projection: The Tincture: the Stone of Wisdom (Chinese): the Stone of Live Metal (Burmese): etc. The Red Stone and the White Stone of the philosophers, stones referred to in numerous works on alchemy, possessed distinctive powers. The Red Stone would transmute base metals into gold: while the White Stone, also known as the White Daughter of the philosophers, had the power of conferring immunity from disease, if a small dose were taken. To find the Philosophers' Stone was the grand aim of the hermetic art: the supreme quest to which hosts of learned men of science and religion dedicated their whole lives. It was really the search for the Absolute: the true Salt, the true Mercury, and the true Sulphur of the philosophers. To quote Levi,—“For the Absolute is that which admits of no errors; it is the fixation of the volatile; it is the immutable law of reason and truth—the Absolute Reason which is essential to being.” Elaborate instructions are given in alchemical works on how to prepare the Philosophers' Stone, but they are mostly unintelligible in any physical sense.

§ 20. Paracelsus alone appears to have endeavoured to guide his disciples into the right path. An examination of his writings translated by A. E. Waite reveals that three oils, the oil of sulphur, the oil of mercury, and the oil of copper, are essential to make the Stone. These three oils must be crystallized and fused together to form the Stone. In the section entitled Modern Alchemy, an account<sup>1</sup> is given of how two American alchemists followed out the

---

<sup>1</sup> This account is entitled *Elixir of Life*, although it might be considered as

instructions of Paracelsus and succeeded in preparing both the Red and the White Stone of the philosophers.

### **The Alchemists**

§ 21. In the ranks of the ancient alchemists are to be found not only impostors and charlatans of the type of Comte de Cagliostro, who thoroughly exploited the weakness and credulity of their dupes: but also men of the highest standing, men absolutely honest and profoundly sincere in their efforts to solve the mighty problem of transmutation. The difficulty of this problem was not lessened by the primitive nature of the apparatus used by these early chemists. Yet in their blind gropings, in their weird experimenting with every conceivable kind of matter, they unlocked many doors and made many new discoveries in chemical science, all of far greater value, be it said, than that secret which they so highly prized, so ardently pursued.

### ***Hermes Trimegetus***

§ 22. Hermes Trimegetus, an Egyptian who is said to have lived in the time of Moses, is considered to be the founder of the art of alchemy. His name has supplied us with a synonymous term for the art, *Hermetic*, meaning “closed” or “concealed.” According to numerous writers, Hermes is the materialistic conception of the Egyptian god of science and learning, Thoth. Whether he was a mythical personage or not, several works on alchemy are attributed to him, the most important being *The Divine Pymander*

---

belonging to Rejuvenation.

and *The Golden Tractate*. Both of these are written in that mystical language which constitutes so marked a feature in nearly all alchemical works. Alexander the Great is supposed to have discovered the tomb of Hermes in a cave near Hebron. The tomb contained an emerald tablet, now famous as the Smaragdine Tablet, upon which was engraved, in ancient Phœnician characters, what is generally considered to be the essence or basic doctrine of alchemy. "Thou shalt separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently, with great industry. It rises from earth to heaven, and it receives the power of things above and of things below. By this means shalt thou obtain the glory of the whole world, and all darkness shall depart from thee. It is the strong power of every power, for it will overcome all that is subtle and penetrate all that is solid. Thus was the world created."

### ***Geber the Arab***

§ 23. Geber or Jaber, also known as Abou Moussah Djafar, is held to be the first practical alchemist. He lived in or about the years 720-50 and is said to have been a native of Haman, in Mesopotamia. Although little is known concerning his life, yet there is little, or no doubt, as to his knowledge of alchemy. He seems to have experimented largely in metallurgy and in chemistry for the purpose of discovering the true nature of metals; and it is of interest to note that he did discover such important things as nitric acid, oxide of mercury and some other chemicals. It is, then, hardly astonishing that numerous treatises have been fathered on him, but they are mostly suspected to have been written by a pseudo-chemist who assumed his name. Two books, written in Latin, *Summa Perfectionis* (*The Sum of Perfection*) and

*De Investigatione Perfectionis Metallorum* (*Investigation into the Perfection of Metals*), are his most important works, a complete edition of which was published in the *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa* of Magnetus at Cologne in 1702. The late Professor Berthelot, to whom we owe the publication of many of the treatises written by the early alchemists, published in 1906 a large portion of a work attributed to Geber, *Liber Divinitatis de Septuaginta* (a treatise in seventy parts). Geber professes to draw his inspiration from earlier writers on the subject but as alchemy was then in a primitive stage, this appears unlikely. We are informed by Geber that only by strict adherence to natural laws can success in alchemy be attained. The construction of the athanor or philosophical furnace is explained in detail, along with a description of the philosopher's vessel, but these details are unintelligible. It is interesting to add here that Dr. Johnson attributed the origin<sup>1</sup> of the word "gibberish" to the author of *Summa Perfectionis* because the work contains so much jargon. It is also worthy of note that there is no mention of supernatural aid being required to accomplish the various alchemical processes. Geber not only believed that gold was the perfection of all metals; but also held the idea that all metals except gold possessed a dual nature, that is, each metal has an inner nature with properties diametrically opposite to those of its outer nature. Lead in its interior is gold, and copper is silver, and this inner nature should be educible by correct methods. This theory of Geber's contrasts violently with the mercury-sulphur-salt theory held by later alchemists. Geber also believed, like Bacon, that potable gold (i.e.

---

<sup>1</sup> Said to be erroneous.

gold dissolved in nitro-hydrochloric acid or aqua regia) was the Elixir of Life. His practical knowledge of chemistry appears to have been considerable, judging by the innumerable compounds and processes he describes. Professor Berthelot sought to prove that *Summa Perfectionis* was not one of the true writings of Geber, but a forgery executed at a much later date.

### **Michael Scot**

§ 24. Michael Scot (1175-1234), astrologer, magician, and alchemist, is mentioned by Dante in his “Inferno,” and by Sir Walter Scott in “The Lay of the Last Minstrel.” Boccaccio also mentions him. Scot studied at Oxford University and afterwards in Paris. After residing in Bologna and Palermo, he settled for a time in Toledo for the purpose of studying Arabic, a language which he mastered. He then visited Sicily, where he became attached to the court of Ferdinand II as court astrologer. In 1223 Pope Honorius III wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking him to procure an English living for Scot. It is recorded that the Archbishopric of Cashel in Ireland was offered to him, but declined on account of his ignorance of the Erse language. Scot returned to England in 1230, bringing with him the works of Aristotle, which were then unknown in this country. Local tradition at Melrose claims that Scot died there in his old age and was buried in the neighbourhood. He wrote several works on the subjects of magic, natural philosophy, and alchemy.

### **Albertus Magnus**

§ 25. Albertus Magnus was born at Lauringen or Larvingen on the Danube about 1193. He was stupid as a boy, but in later years

became one of the most brilliant men of his time. A vision of the Madonna having appeared to him, he decided to enter the clerical profession; he joined the Dominican Order. He taught publicly in Paris and other places and was made Bishop of Ratisbon; a post he resigned within a few years to retire to a house in Cologne, where he devoted himself to the study of science and philosophy. Albertus, however, did not escape the charge usually levelled at all alchemists in those days, of being in league with the devil and acquainted with the black art. According to Maier, Albertus did succeed in discovering the Philosopher's Stone, and shortly before his death handed it to Thomas Aquinas, the celebrated Dominican, who was one of his pupils, and who probably gained his alchemistic knowledge from Albertus. It seems odd that Albertus himself does not, in his numerous works, confirm this discovery of the Stone; but he does tell of gold which an alchemist had created by transmutation, and which successfully passed all tests. Whether this account is true or not, Albertus was regarded as a great scientist, although the authenticity of several works bearing his name has been questioned. He died about the year 1280.

### ***Thomas Aquinas***

§ 26. Thomas Aquinas, one of the greatest scholars and theologians of his day, was educated in his youth by the monks of Monte Cassino and later by the University of Naples. At the age of seventeen he joined the Society of Preaching Friars. On learning this, his mother tried to persuade him to change his mind, but in vain. So she got his two brothers to waylay him near Paris. They carried him back to his home, the castle of Aquino, where they

kept him in close confinement for two years. Then he escaped, with the assistance of some of his former Dominican friends. St. Thomas Aquinas (he was canonized after his death) exceeded all men in religious fervour and became known as the Seraphic Doctor. As previously stated, he studied under Albertus Magnus, and it is said that his profound knowledge of the occult arts was acquired from this teacher. A story told concerning Aquinas is that he was so much irritated by the noise of horses exercising on the road beneath his study window, that he made a small brass image of a horse according to certain laws of magic, and buried this underneath the road. Afterwards, in spite of being coaxed and whipped, no horse would pass along this road, and the grooms were compelled to exercise them elsewhere. Although many of the alchemical works attributed to him are regarded as spurious, he is credited with having coined the term “amalgam” to describe the alloying of mercury with other metals.

### ***Roger Bacon***

§ 27. Roger Bacon, the most famous of the English alchemists, first saw the light of day near Ilchester in Somerset about 1214. In his boyhood he revealed something of the brilliant qualities he truly possessed. He studied mathematics and science at Oxford and in Paris, and turned his attention to theology also. On his return from Paris, he became interested in philosophy and astronomy; indeed, it is said that the telescope came into being through his knowledge of lenses. His experiments with nitre entitled him to a large share in the doubtful distinction of having invented gunpowder. Bacon considered that in experimental science lay the best method of checking results by mathematical

processes; a theory which led to more important discoveries. In various ways, he anticipated ideas held by modern scientists. He stated, for example, that radiant force can proceed independently of man's power to perceive it. This theory has been fulfilled in astonishing fashion by the discovery of the X-rays. He predicted boats propelled without oars, cars moving without horses, and even flying-machines. Many valuable discoveries in chemistry are due to Bacon's researches. In his alchemical studies, he formed the opinion that by the aid of the Philosopher's Stone, gold could be purified to a high degree; and that by the same agency, disease could be banished and life prolonged far beyond the ordinary span of human existence. Unfortunately, these opinions caused the brethren of St. Francis, an order he had entered in his youth, to regard him as a sorcerer, and they expelled him. He returned to Paris, but was forbidden to write by Pope Clement IV until 1266, when this ban was removed. Bacon, despite great poverty, completed his *Opus Majus*, *Opus Minus*, and *Opus Tertium*, works which so pleased Pope Clement that he allowed him to return to Oxford to continue his studies. He began writing a book on philosophy, but again incurred the wrath of his rulers, for he was seized and cast into prison, where he remained fourteen years. He died in 1294. Bacon thoroughly believed in the Mercury-Sulphur theory, and that Nature intended to make Gold of all metals.

### ***Arnold de Villanova***

§ 28. Arnold de Villanova, physician and alchemist, was born about the middle of the 13th century. There is a degree of uncertainty regarding his birthplace, but it has been assumed that he was brought up near Paris. At any rate, he studied medicine at

the Sorbonne, which in medieval times was the centre for all physicians in Europe. He was on the point of settling down in Paris when he heard that a friend had been seized by the Inquisition and he fled to Naples. Villanova lived for some time in Naples studying and writing several treatises of a scientific nature. At a later date he received the appointment of physician-in-ordinary to Pope Clement V and passed the rest of his life in Rome. His great interest in alchemy having become widely known, he was suspected of being a sorcerer, and but for the intervention of the Pope he would have been severely dealt with by the authorities. Whatever faults Villanova may have possessed, there is no doubt about his religious zeal. He died in or about the year 1310, and shortly after his death the Inquisition ordered certain of his manuscripts to be burnt. Arnold de Villanova reveals considerable knowledge of chemistry in his existing works, the most important of which are the *Speculum Alchemiae Perfectum* and the *Rosarium Philosophorum*. An edition of his works was issued in 1520, while other treatises of his are contained in the *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa* of Magnetus, 1702.

### ***Raymond Lully or Raimon Lull***

§ 29. Raymond Lully was the son of a Spanish nobleman owning an estate in the island of Majorca, where Raymond was born in 1230. In his youth he was rather wild; history records how he became infatuated with a married woman, an infatuation which suddenly ended when he learned that this lady was suffering from cancer. So shocked was Lully by this affair that he decided to become chaste and to enter the Church. But the inactivity of a monastic existence soon palled, and he proceeded to study Arabic

with a view to embarking upon a mission to convert the Mussulmans to Christianity. Failing to secure the Papal consent to this scheme, he set out on his own for Tunis, where he launched his campaign, but was fiercely persecuted and finally banished. He returned to Europe, his ardour undaunted, and secured the assistance of many devout Christians to support him in a fresh expedition. Then he ventured as far as Algiers, but was soon compelled to retreat again to Tunis, where he was imprisoned. He lay in prison a long time, until some merchants secured his release and took him back to Italy. But Lully was determined to succeed in his self-appointed task and landed in Tunis again, only to be brutally attacked and so severely injured that he died shortly afterwards in 1315. Although he had never obtained the Pope's consent to his missions, many people were so filled with admiration for his religious zeal that they sought to have him canonized, but without success. The reason for the Pope's refusal was that Lully had interested himself in alchemy. Yet it is maintained that Lully's only purpose in studying the alchemical art was the laudable one of obtaining funds for his missions. Whatever the motive, his writings on the subject were voluminous, the three most notable of his works being, *De Secretis Medicina Magna*, *De Conservatione Vitae* and *Alchemia Magic Naturalis*. A great number of treatises attributed to Lully are generally considered to be forgeries.

### **Peter Bonus**

§ 30. Peter Bonus, an English alchemist who lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but about whom there is little information, left a manuscript on the subject entitled "Magarita Pretiosa," which was

translated by Mr. A. E. Waite in 1894. "Each metal," according to Bonus, "differs from all the rest, and has a certain perfection and completeness of its own. But none, except gold, has reached that highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. For all common metals there is a transient and a perfect state of inward completeness, and this perfect state they attain either through the slow operation of Nature, or through the sudden transformatory power of our Stone. We must add, however, that the imperfect metals form part of the great plan and design of Nature, through they are in course of transformation into gold. For a large number of very useful and indispensable tools and utensils could not be provided at all if there were no copper, iron, tin, or lead, and if all metals were either silver or gold. For this beneficent reason Nature has furnished us with the metallic substance in all its different stages of development, from iron, or the lowest, to gold, or the highest state of metallic perfection." Very sound views compared with those of some of the other alchemists.

### ***Nicholas Flamel***

§ 31. Nicholas Flamel, born at Pontoise sometime in 1330, carried on the trade of a bookseller and had a stall near the columns of Saint Jacques la Boucherie. Copyists and illuminators worked there; and he himself gave a few writing lessons to nobles who could only sign their names with a cross. Nicholas Flamel had acquired some knowledge of alchemy, for the hermetic art had penetrated Christian countries. We are told that he dreamed one night that an angel stood before him with a book in his hands and said, "Look well at this book. At first you will understand nothing in it, neither you nor any other man. But one day you will see in it

that which no other man will be able to see.” Flamel stretched out his hand to receive the book, and the whole vision disappeared. Some time after this a stranger came to the bookseller’s shop with a manuscript to sell. The manuscript was elaborately bound and illuminated with curious diagrams and strange characters. Flamel recognized it as the book he had seen in his dream and paid two forms for it. On the first page was inscribed the name of the author, Abraham the Jew, astrologer, and philosopher. Flamel was more or less acquainted with symbolical language, but this book baffled him. Twenty-one years passed, and then a learned old man in Spain helped him to interpret the strange writings. Flamel returned to Paris, and after a few experiments he succeeded in transmuting half a pound of mercury into gold. He became enormously wealthy, but he learnt how to despise gold for its own sake, only making it to provide hospitals and almshouses for the poor, or to build churches and convents. He died at the age of eighty, spending the last years of his life studying and writing books on alchemy. After his death people searched his residence to find some of the projection powder he used or the vast hoard of gold he was supposed to possess. Flamel’s tombstone, which is now in the Musée de Cluny, is typical of this alchemist. It was made during his lifetime. On this stone, in the middle of various figures, there is carved a sun above a key and a closed book. Several works bearing his name are forgeries. His leading treatise—*A Short Tract*—is in the Hermetic Museum.

### ***Basil Valentine***

§ 32. “Basil Valentine,” an alchemist about whose actual personality little is known, describes himself as a Benedictine

monk in his most important work, *The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*. In another of his works (*Practica*) he tells of his resolve to renounce the world and enter the service of God, And after entering a monastery he took up the study of alchemy to pass away the time, and eventually—so it is said—discovered the Philosopher’s Stone. Valentine speaks in the highest terms of the value of antimonial preparations and reveals a very expert knowledge of chemistry. Within recent years, his authorship of these works has become suspect.

### ***Glues de Laval***

§ 33. Gilles de Laval, Marshal of France, born about 1420, had reached the age of twenty when his father died and left him enormous wealth and power. Gilles, who was handsome and charming in manner, began to entertain on a huge scale and to indulge in the wildest extravagances. This conduct soon reduced his immense resources, so in order to obtain fresh riches he became interested in alchemy and magic. He fell a prey to unscrupulous charlatans who, whilst pretending to initiate him into occult mysteries, lived riotously at his expense. After a year of vain alchemical experiments, Gilles was persuaded to embark upon a course of Black Magic to secure the wealth he so ardently desired. It is said that in the performances of the diabolical Black Mass by Gilles and his associates nearly one hundred young children were murdered. When his revolting crimes were discovered Gilles was seized, tried, and condemned to be burnt at the stake. But on account of his high rank as Marshal he was strangled before being consigned to the flames. He is credited with being the original Bluebeard of legend. (See also, and more

importantly, the section on *Black Magic*.)

### **Bernard Trévisan**

§ 34. Bernard Trévisan, Comte de Marche, Italian alchemist, son of a physician, born at Padua in 1406, began to study alchemy seriously in his youth, and devoted much time to the writings of Geber. In his anxiety to discover the Philosopher's Stone he became the prey of numerous charlatans who, under the pretence of initiating him into the great secret, fleeced him of much wealth. Trévisan's anger was so roused by their barefaced plundering that he abandoned his studies. But his passion returned stronger than ever, and he visited Britain, Holland, and Spain, seeking new knowledge and enlightenment from other devotees of the hermetic art. He even wandered as far afield as Egypt and Palestine in his quest, but without success. Finally, owing to his reckless expenditure, he was compelled to sell his ancestral estates, and retired to the Island of Rhodes, where he made the acquaintance of a priest, who, according to tradition, revealed to him the true method of preparing the Philosopher's Stone. Trévisan died not long afterwards. An octavo volume of his writings was published in 1643, called the *Le Bernard d'Alchmague cum Bernard Treviso*. It is said that he devoted much time to prayer, hoping by his piety to gain his desire. Another work with which this alchemist is credited, namely, *La Philosophie Naturelle des Métaux*, is largely of an obscure nature.

**Sir George Ripley<sup>1</sup>**

§ 35. Sir George Ripley was born in the early part of the 15th century at Ripley in Yorkshire. After joining the Augustinian Order he became Canon of Bridlington. His clerical duties did not prevent him from travelling on the Continent in pursuit of his alchemical studies. In Rome the Pope bestowed further honours upon him, and he returned home to retire to a priory near Boston, where he died in 1490. Ripley is credited with being one of the first writers to publish the alchemical works of Raymond Lully; and he himself wrote a number of treatises on the subject, *Medulla Alchimia* and *The Treatise of Mercury* being the best known. It is also of interest to note that Ripley is said to have made a vast amount of gold, through transmutation, for the knights of St. John of Jerusalem. A writer,<sup>2</sup> under the pseudonym of “Eugenius Philalethes,” wrote a treatise that Ripley revived in 1678.

**Paracelsus**

§ 36. One of the greatest and most illuminated minds of the Middle Ages! That is how one writer describes Phillippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombast of Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus, alchemist and mystic. He was born in 1493 near a village called Maria-Einsiedeln, not far from Zurich. His father, William Bombast, had, in his capacity of physician, established himself near the abbey hospital and eventually married the matron. Paracelsus, their only child, was in his early youth instructed by his father in the sciences of surgery, medicine and

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Literature of Occultism*, § 19.

<sup>2</sup> Supposed by some to have been Thomas Vaughan; cf. § 52, note.

alchemy. The relations between father and son were always of a happy nature, and throughout his lifetime Paracelsus never omitted to refer to his father in the highest terms. His education was continued afterwards in the monastery of St. Andrew in the valley of the Savon under the guidance of the bishops. At the age of sixteen he was sent to the university at Basle. Soon after his university career, he was initiated into the mysteries of magic, alchemy and astrology by the Abbot of St. Jacob at Wurzburg, one of the greatest adepts in occult knowledge. It was entirely due to this teacher that his passion for occultism was brought into practical use. This same love for the occult sciences caused him to enter the laboratory of the wealthy Sigismund Fugger, at Schwatz, a clever alchemist, who probably taught his zealous pupil many valuable secrets. Later on Paracelsus travelled a good deal, visiting many European countries. It is said that he even went to India, where he was taken prisoner by the Tartars and brought before the Khan; the latter was so impressed by his knowledge that he gave him his freedom. No student of the works of Paracelsus can fail to notice the striking similarity between his system for attaining adeptship and the systems practised by Eastern adepts. He speaks of the qualities of the astral body, the earth-bound elementals and other things which were unknown at that time to the Western world. According to Van Helmont, Paracelsus stayed among the Tartars between 1513 and 1521, and in the latter year came to Constantinople, where he received the Philosopher's Stone from an adept in alchemy named Solomon Trismosinus or Pfeiffe, a countryman of his. It is also claimed that this adept possessed the Universal-Panacea or Elixir of Life. And it is further asserted that he had been seen still alive at the end of

the 17th century. (This sounds something like the story of the Wandering Jew.) In his European travels Paracelsus collected a vast amount of information, not only from physicians and alchemists but from gipsies and shepherds. Having wandered about in this fashion for over ten years, exercising his skill as a physician or teaching or studying alchemy and magic, he returned, at the age of thirty-two, to Germany, where he soon became famous on account of the numerous cures he performed. He was appointed a professor of physic, medicine and surgery at a large salary by the Basle City Council in 1527. But a desire to improve upon the medical science of his time, by denouncing the teachings of Galen and Avicenna, then regarded as authorities on the subject, brought him into conflict with the rest of the physicians: he departed from Basle to resume his wanderings. He died in 1541 at the early age of forty-eight—an event which was eagerly seized upon by his critics to disprove his claims that he had found the Philosopher's Stone or the Elixir of Life. A strange figure he will always remain in the history of alchemy and the occult sciences. It is said that insobriety was the cause of his early death, but this is denied by certain writers, who assert that it was a slander invented by his enemies, as was the suspicion regarding his sex, because he was proof against the weakness of love. For, to quote Levi, magic is an instrument of divine goodness or demoniacal pride, but it always means the annihilation of earthly joys and the pleasures of mortal life. The truth is, that Paracelsus exhausted himself by his tremendous efforts to wrest from Nature her most cherished secrets. Many of the successes in healing performed by Paracelsus were due to his knowledge of magnetism, a knowledge he arrived at long before Mesmer

startled the world with his discoveries. His treatise, cutitled *The Chemical Pathway* or *Manual of Paracelsus*, is preserved in the library of the Vatican; and a translation of *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings*<sup>1</sup> of Paracelsus, by Mr. A. E. Waite, in two volumes, is now available in many public libraries. Paracelsus was among the first to teach that the chief object of chemistry is not to make gold but to prepare medicines; and in pursuance of this he founded the school of Medical Chemistry. The main theme of the doctrine of Paracelsus is that every body is composed of four elements; and that the essence compounded of these four elements forms a fifth, which is the “soul” of the four elements—or its “mercury” or “quintessence.” And he describes, in mystical language interwoven with astrological signs, some elaborate methods of extracting this “quintessence.”

### **John Dee**

§ 37. John Dee, English alchemist and mystic, was the son of that gentleman-in-waiting at the court of Henry VIII who claimed to be a direct descendant of Roderick, Prince of Wales. He was born in the year 1527. At the age of fifteen he proceeded to Cambridge, where, after two years' study, he took his B.A. degree. Later on he went abroad to study astronomy and other sciences. He resided for some time in Louvain and Paris and gave lectures on geometry. In 1551 he returned to England and became Rector of Upton-on-Severn, Worcs. Dee had hardly settled down in his new life when he was accused of trying to take the life of the reigning sovereign, Queen Mary, by magical means. He was seized

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Modern Alchemy* at end of section.

and cast into prison, but he obtained his liberty soon afterwards. Dee appears to have immediately gone abroad on his release. He was not heard of again until the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when he returned and took up residence at Mortlake, where he rapidly won fame as an astronomer. It is said that on the appearance of a comet, Queen Elizabeth paid him a visit to hear his opinion regarding it. Dee became absorbed in the study of crystallo-mancy, and between this art, alchemy and astronomy, he seems to have divided his time. He began to record his occult experiences in a diary and, under the date of November, 1582, he relates how he beheld the vision of the angel Uriel. Dee appears to have fallen a victim to self-delusion as a result of his studies. In this state of mind he engaged a man named Kelley to assist him in his work. Edward Kelley, a native of Lancashire and a person who had gained some sort of a reputation as an alchemist and sorcerer, was thoroughly unscrupulous and evidently determined to exploit the weakness of John Dee for his own base ends. He pretended to see wonderful visions in the crystal, and Dee, already a victim to his own foolish delusions, fell an easy prey to this scoundrel; he even recorded these visions in his diary. Edward Kelley claimed to have a document written by St. Dunstan giving the recipes for the preparation of the Red and the White Stone of the Philosophers. In his diary Dee mentions a transmutation performed by Kelley on 19 December 1586. And in another entry made on 10 May 1588, Dee says, "Edward Kelley did open the great secret to me, God be thanked." John Dee and his assistant next became acquainted with a Polish nobleman named Laski, who took them with him to his estate in Poland to initiate him into the secrets of alchemy. In 1589 Kelley was imprisoned by the Emperor Rudolph because he

would not reveal the secret of transmutation. He died in 1595, owing to an accident incurred while trying to escape. During his incarceration, Kelley wrote a book entitled *The Stone of the Philosophers*—a work largely consisting of quotations from other alchemical treatises. John Dee died in 1608. His principal contribution to alchemical literature consists of a work published in 1576. It is entitled *An Account of The Manner in which a certain Coppersmith in the Land of Moores and a certayn Moore transmuted Copper to Gold*.

### **H. Khunrath**

§ 38. Heinrich Khunrath, physician, alchemist and mystic, was born in Saxony round about the year 1560. At the age of twenty-eight he graduated in medicine at Basle University and became a disciple of Paracelsus. He practised in Hamburg, and later in Dresden, where he died in poverty in 1601. Although a firm believer in the physical theory of alchemy, he apparently also recognized its mystical aspect, for his most outstanding work, *Amphitheatrum Sapienticr Æternæ*, contains folding plates covered with mystical figures and magical inscriptions. One of the pentacles represents the Philosopher's Stone erected in the midst of a fortress which is surrounded by a wall containing twenty gates. The right of entry into this fortress or sanctuary can be obtained through one gate only. Above the Stone there is a triangle supported by a winged dragon, and on the Stone itself the name of Christ is engraved. Khunrath explains this by saying, "It is by Him alone that thou canst obtain the Universal Medicine." And he further states that every man who is obsessed by prejudices or fears is incapable of concentrating or coagulating the

Astral Light or soul of the earth.

### **Michael Sandivogius**

§ 39. Michael Sandivogius (or Sendivogius) was born in Moravia about the year 1566. He devoted a great part of his life to the study of alchemy and the quest for the Philosopher's Stone. In 1602 he was living in Dresden when a Scottish alchemist named Alexander Seton passing through that city was thrown into prison by the young Elector, Christian II, who, in order to extort the inner secrets of alchemy from him, put him to the torture, but without success. Sandivogius secured permission to visit Seton and offered to assist him to escape if he would lend his aid in the pursuit of the alchemical art, to which proposal Seton gladly agreed. Sandivogius expended large sums of money in bribes to effect Seton's escape from prison; but although grateful, Seton steadfastly refused to reveal the arch-secrets of his art to his rescuer. Before his death, however, he relented and gave him about an ounce of the powder for transmutation. Sandivogius soon exhausted this powder in his transmutation experiments, and it is said he married Seton's widow in the hope that she possessed the formula for making this powder. But he was sorely disappointed, for she knew nothing about the subject. However, she handed him the manuscript of a work written by her late husband, which was later published at Prague by Sandivogius as his own composition. It is entitled *A New Light of Alchymie*, and considered a valuable contribution to the bibliography of the Hermetic Art. At the end of this book there appears a treatise on Sulphur and a glossary of the various terms employed throughout. These are said to be the genuine contributions of Sandivogius. He was twice imprisoned

and every attempt was made to force him to divulge the knowledge of alchemy he claimed to possess. There is no record of his having done so, he on the first occasion escaping, and on the second securing his release from the Emperor. He died in 1646. The first part of *The New Light of Alchymie* deals at length with the generation of metals. In the tenth treatise of his work Sandivogius says, "We have treated of things, which Nature makes, and which God hath made; that the Searchers of Art might the more easily understand the possibility of Nature. But to delay no longer, I will now enter upon the Manner, and Art how to make the Philosopher's Stone. The Philosopher's Stone or tincture is nothing else, but Gold digested to the highest degree: For vulgar Gold is like an herb without seed, when it is ripe it brings forth seed: so Gold when it is ripe yields seed, or tincture. But, will some ask, Why doth not Gold, or any other Metall bring forth seed? the reason given is this, because it cannot be ripe, by reason of the crudity of the aire, it hath not sufficient heat, and it happens, that in some places, there is found pure Gold, which nature would have perfected, but was hindered by the crude aire." So Sandivogius proceeds by analogy to define how, when the conditions are favourable, Nature will always produce gold, that being her ultimate aim in all metals. In the eleventh treatise he reveals how to make the Philosopher's Stone. "Take of our earth, through eleven degrees, eleven graines, of our Gold, and not of the vulgar, one graine of our Lune,<sup>1</sup> not the vulgar, two graines: but be thou well advised, that thou takest not common Gold and Silver, for these are dead, take ours which are living: then put them into our

---

<sup>1</sup> Silver.

fire, and let there be made of them a dry liquor: first of all the earth will be resolved into water, which is called the Mercury of the Philosophers: and that water shall resolve those bodies of Gold, and Silver, and shall consume them so, that there shall remain but the tenth part with one part; and this shall be the radical moisture of Metalls. Then take water of salt-nitre, which comes from the earth, in which there is a river of living water, if thou diggest the pit knee deep, therefore take water out of that, but take that which is deer; upon this put that radical moisture; and set it over the fire of putrefaction, and generation, not on such a one as thou didst in the first operation: govern all things with a great deal of discretion, until colours appear like a Peacock's tail: govern it by digesting it, and be not weary, until these colours be ended, and there appears throughout the whole one green colour, and so of the rest; and when thou shalt see in the bottome ashes of a fiery colour, and the water almost red, open the vessel, dip in a pen, and smear some iron with it, if it tinge, have in readiness that water, which afterwards I shall speak of, and put in so much of that water as the cold aire was, which went in, boil it again with the former fire, until it tinge again. So far reached my experience, I can doe no more, I found out no more. Now that water must be the menstruum of the world, out of the sphere of the Moon, so often rectified until it can calcine Gold: I have been willing here to discover to thee all things: and if thou shalt understand my meaning<sup>1</sup> sometimes, and not the letter, I have revealed all things: especially in the first and second work. Now it remains that we

---

<sup>1</sup> Sandivogius is obviously referring to the mystical nature of the language he employs in his treatises.

speak next of the fire. The first fire, or of the first operation, is a fire of one degree, continually, which goes round the matter; the second is a naturall fire, which digests and fixeth the matter.” These two extracts from *The New Light of Alchymie* are thoroughly typical of the majority of alchemical works. They not only serve to show how enigmatical and vague the authors were (purposely so, perhaps) in describing their operations, but also reveal the *idée fixe* of the ancient alchemists that Nature always intended to make gold of all metals, but was often prevented by unfavourable conditions from executing this design.

### **Michael Maier**

§ 40. Michael Maier, a German, was born at Rindsberg in 1568. He studied medicine and was later appointed chief physician to Emperor Rudolf II. Being attracted to alchemy, he scoured all Germany to interview people who were credited with possessing alchemical knowledge; and spared neither health nor wealth for this purpose. He published several works on Rosicrucianism and formed a secret society of his own founded upon the form of the Fama Fraternalibus. It is, however, believed that in his declining years, he was admitted into the real Order of Rosicrucians. He was a very learned man and the literature of alchemy is enriched by numerous works of his, but they abound in allegories of a fantastic nature. In common with the majority of alchemists, he regarded mercury with great veneration. In his *Lusus Serius*, he exalts its virtues in these words: “Thou art the miracle, splendour and light of the world. Thou art the glory, ornament, and supporter of the Earth. Thou art the Asyle, Anchor and tye of the Universe. Next to the minde of man, God created nothing more Noble, more

Glorious, or more Profitable.”

*Jacob Boehme*

§ 41. Born in 1570 Jacob Boehme, the German mystic and philosopher, was in his youth apprenticed to a shoemaker at Görlitz in Saxony. While working in his master’s shop, we are told, a stranger spoke to him one day about his spiritual well-being, and this incident is supposed to have inspired him to devote more attention to religious matters. So as time went on, he became deeply interested in all things spiritual. He married in 1594 a butcher’s daughter, who bore him four sons, all of whom he brought up to follow his own trade. In 1612 he wrote his first work, *The Aurora*, containing his visions and theories concerning God. But a copy of this manuscript happening to fall into the hands of the authorities of Görlitz, he was publicly denounced from the pulpit by the Primate, Gregory Richter, for heresy. In an “Apology,” which is really a defence of his views, Boehme says: “You say that I will search out the Deity and you call it devilish; thereby you shew your ignorance to the daylight, that you understand nothing of the Book of Nature, and also do not read the New Testament, for St. Paul saith, “The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”” He was forbidden to write any more, an order which he obeyed for six years until the dictates of his mind led him to disregard this ban. But he was compelled to leave Görlitz owing to persecution and to take up residence in Dresden, where he remained until his death in 1624. His dying words were “Now I go hence into Paradise.” Boehme’s literary output was prodigious: between the years 1618 and 1624 he wrote no fewer than thirty-one works, all dealing with mysticism and

philosophy. He had a solution to offer for almost every problem in the natural as well as the spiritual world; and in the art of alchemy he took a profound interest, although there is no record of his having attempted any transmutations. His writings on the subject reveal an acquaintance with the works of Paracelsus. Concerning the preparation of the Tincture or Philosopher's Stone, Boehme states: "Unless a man first becomes that which he seeketh therein (gold), no skill or art availeth." This mystical conception of alchemy pervades all his writings. Sir Issac Newton and Hegel are both said to have learned much from this great mystic.

### **J. B. Van Helmont**

§ 42. Jean Baptiste Van Helmont was born in Brussels in 1577. He studied medicine and chemistry and was regarded as one of the most brilliant men of his day. Of a religious temperament, in his alchemical writings he reveals a strong leaning towards mysticism. His contempt for the pseudo-chemists is expressed in his caustic reference to them as a "diabolical crew of gold and silver sucking leeches." Yet he himself firmly believed in the transmutation of metals and claimed to have performed it, in an account said to be written by him and which can be seen in *Geschichte der Alchemie*, by Karl Christopher Schneider, published in 1832. He says: "For truly I have divers times seen it,<sup>1</sup> and have handled it with my hands: but it was of colour, such as is in Saffron in its powder, yet weighty, and shining like powdered glass. There was once given unto me one-fourth part of one Grain: But I call a grain the six-hundredth part of an Ounce. This quarter

---

<sup>1</sup> The Philosopher's Stone.

of one Grain therefore, being rolled up in Paper, I projected upon eight Ounces of Quicksilver made hot in a Crucible; and straightway all the Quicksilver, with a certain degree of Noise, stood still from flowing, and being congealed, settled like unto a yellow Lump: but after pouring it out, the Bellows blowing, there were found eight Ounces and a little less than eleven grains of the purest Gold. Therefore, only one Grain of that Powder had transchanged 19,186 parts of Quicksilver, equal to itself, into the best Gold." Van Helmont goes on to state, like Helvetius, that the Stone was handed to him by a stranger whom he met one night. But a writer named Figuer suggests that Van Helmont was deceived through unwittingly using quicksilver which was really an amalgam of mercury and gold. One can hardly believe, however, that an expert chemist such as Van Helmont could make this blunder. True, many of the theories he propounded were peculiar. For instance, he considered that water was the first element, out of which all things were created; and did not believe in the sulphur-mercury theory relating to matter. Owing to his success in alchemy, he became an ardent supporter of the art, and when a son was born later, he named him Mercurius. This son proved to be even more enthusiastic about alchemy than his sire; for he devoted his whole life to the search for the Philosopher's Stone, and although there is no record of his having found it, it is said that he died firmly believing in its existence. Like his father, he had many queer ideas concerning life and matter, and also believed in metempsychosis—the migration' of the soul after death, through different bodies.

**J. F. Helvetius**

§ 43. Johann Frederick Helvetius, who was chief physician to the Prince of Orange and who bore a high reputation as a chemist, published a treatise in 1667, entitled—*The Brief of the Golden Calf; Discovering the Rarest Miracle in Nature*. This contained a carefully detailed, somewhat tedious account of a transmutation performed by the author at The Hague in the year 1666. Like Van Helmont, he receives a piece of the Philosopher's Stone from a stranger, and his description of the Stone tallies with that of Van Helmont. He relates how, in the absence of his benefactor, he decided to try out the Stone. "So I asked my wife to put the Tincture in wax, and myself, in the meantime, prepared six drachms of lead: I then cast the Tincture, enveloped in wax, on to the lead: as soon as it was melted, there was a hissing sound and a slight effervescence, and after a quarter of an hour I found that the whole mass of lead had been turned into the finest gold. Before this transmutation took place, the compound became intensely green, but as soon as I had poured it into the melting pot it assumed a hue like blood. When it cooled it glittered and shone like gold." Then he continues his story of how, the rumour having passed through the city like wild-fire, many illustrious students of the Art called upon him to behold this marvel; and the Master of the Mint also visited him to request a small piece of the gold for testing purposes. Several tests were carried out, from which the transmuted lead emerged triumphant. Helvetius concludes his remarkable narrative by heaping blessings upon the man who gave him a piece of the Philosopher's Stone. "May the Holy Angels of God watch over him wherever he is, and long preserve him as a source of blessing to all Christendom." It is interesting to add, that

this account of a transmutation performed by Helvetius is corroborated by that eminent man, Baruch Spinoza, the philosopher.

### **Thomas Vaughan**

§ 44. Thomas Vaughan was the younger twin-brother of Henry Vaughan the Silurist, and was born in Newton in Brecknockshire in 1622. He graduated as a B.A. at Jesus College, Oxford, and became a fellow of the college in 1642. He remained in Oxford for some years, although he held the living of St. Bridget in his native parish, from which he was expelled in 1649 upon charges of immorality and of bearing arms for King Charles. After this, he appears to have spent his time between his brother's farm at Newton and a house in London studying alchemy and kindred subjects. Sir Robert Murray became one of his patrons and Vaughan fled to Oxford from London with this gentleman during the plague of 1665. Vaughan continued his alchemical studies and actually met his death through accidentally inhaling the fumes of mercury at a friend's house in Albury on 27 February 1666. Vaughan, although guilty of youthful indiscretions, became deeply religious in his later years, and his writings are highly mystical. He likened the Philosopher's Stone to the Scriptural Rock in the wilderness: to the Stone of Fire mentioned in Ezekiel; and to the White Stone bearing a new name in Revelation. His outstanding works are *Anima Magica Abscondita*, *The Antiquitie of Magic*, *Nollicus' Chemical Key*, and *A Brief Natural History*. Vaughan is also supposed to have written alchemical treatises under the pseudonym of Eirenaeus Philalethes.

**“Eirenaeus Philalethes”**

§ 45. Although there is a considerable amount of alchemical writings in existence bearing this name, the real identity of the author has never been established. It may have been Thomas Vaughan. Other writers claim that George Starkey, an empiric, copied some of Vaughan’s writings and published them as his own under the title, *The Marrow of Alchemy*, by Eirenaeus Philoponus. Philalethes died about 1660.

**Robert Boyle (1627-91)**

§ 46. Robert Boyle, natural philosopher and alchemist, was born at Lismore Castle, in the Province of Munster, Ireland. In his youth he mastered Latin and French, and after spending three years at Eton, he travelled abroad with a tutor. Two years were spent in Geneva, and a visit paid to Italy, where he met Galileo. Returning to England in 1644, Boyle decided to devote his life to scientific research and played a prominent part in the proceedings of the “Invisible College” which later, in 1663, became the Royal Society of London under a charter granted by Charles II. The law bearing his name was discovered in 1662. He suffered from failing health for some years previous to his death in 1691. Robert Boyle is regarded as the founder of modern chemistry. He was a man of a patient inquiring mind, and had a passion for facts of scientific importance. A man who disdained fantastic theories, as witness his critical remarks concerning “vulgar Spagyristis who are wont to endeavour to evince their Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury to be the true Principles of Things” in his work, *The Sceptical Chemist*, published in 1661. He thoroughly believed in the possibility of transmutation and carried out many experiments. This belief

moved him to petition William of Orange for the repeal of a statute of King Henry IV., one that decreed dire penalties upon anyone found guilty of multiplying gold, and in this he was successful. Boyle published a pamphlet in 1672 giving an account of an experiment in alchemy. This account, somewhat tedious, describes how a mythical personage named “Pyrophilus” fell in with a mysterious foreigner who had, in the East, met chemists who were most skilful. And before they parted, the foreigner handed Pyrophilus a tiny piece of paper containing a dark-red powder about one-eighth of a grain in weight, accompanied with dark hints as to the wonderful powers possessed by this substance. With an assistant, Boyle,—who was really “Pyrophilus,”—afterwards melted two drachms of gold in a crucible and added the dark-red powder. When the crucible had cooled, they discovered that the gold had not changed in weight, but was greatly altered in appearance. It was dirty, and coated with what Boyle describes as “half-vitrified litharge.” This debased gold, when tested, revealed more silver than gold. Boyle formed the opinion that this powder possessed the power to transmute a thousand times its weight in gold. And the account concludes—“I have not (because I must not do it) as yet acquainted you with the strangest Effect of our admirable Powder.” This account is similar in its main details to the stories related by other alchemists. In each instance, the wonder-working substance is obtained in mysterious fashion and it is all used up in the process of transmutation, leaving no trace of its original nature for analysis. But applied chemistry is indebted to Boyle for improved methods and for extended knowledge. His writings are voluminous. They were published in five folio volumes in 1744. Besides being a

natural philosopher, Boyle studied theology, and was regarded as an authority on the subject.

***Dr. James Price, F.R.S.***

§ 47. Dr. James Price, F.R.S., was born in London in 1752. He matriculated at Oxford, and in 1781 his maternal uncle died, leaving him a considerable fortune. Price, determining to devote his life to chemical research, purchased a house near Guildford; this he fitted up with a laboratory. He appears to have turned his attention to alchemy and published a pamphlet on the subject in 1782. This pamphlet reveals that Price had arrived at the same conclusion as the alchemists of old, that all metals were merely variants of the same substance. In the presence of several witnesses he performed a transmutation in his own laboratory in May 1782, using certain white and red powders. This experiment aroused great public interest and was succeeded by several others. Even King George III was shown some of the transmuted metal. Then the Royal Society, of which Dr. Price was a member, requested definite proof of these transmutations. Apparently Price was unable to comply with this request: suffering from a keen sense of disgrace, he committed suicide by poisoning himself with prussic acid in August 1783.

***Dr. S. H. Emmens***

§ 48. America was startled in 1899 when the *New York Herald* announced that a scientist named Dr. S. H. Emmens of New York had not only succeeded in making gold but had been selling the manufactured metal to the United States Assay Office for over two years. "Argentaurum gold," as its discoverer called it, was not

produced by any alchemical process, but simply created out of silver, as its name implies. Emmens used as his material Mexican silver dollars, certified by the United States Mint to contain about 1/10,000th part of gold. These coins were placed in a special kind of press called a force-engine and subjected to constant hammering while cold air blowing upon them prevented heat from generating. Several other processes were involved, but according to Emmens, the mechanical treatment was the *causa causans*. Sir William Crookes became interested in the matter and, as the result of some correspondence between him and Dr. Emmens, he gave the idea a trial; without success. Emmens pointed out that his failure was entirely due to the fact that Crookes used pure silver, which does not contain the slightest trace of gold. An interesting theory propounded by Dr. Emmens was that gold and silver are closely akin; that, in the course of natural chemical evolution, silver becomes transmuted into gold or vice versa; and that some third substance exists which was neither gold nor silver.

### **Was Transmutation Effected?**

§ 49. The question has often been asked and may also arise in the mind of the reader—Did the ancient alchemists ever achieve their goal? Did any one of them ever perform successfully, beyond all shadow of doubt, the transmutation of base metals into gold or silver? True, several interesting accounts are given by trustworthy men such as Van Helmont and Helvetius, testifying to having succeeded in bringing about the miracle; but there is a lack of

definite proof in all these accounts.<sup>1</sup> It is an old truth that we believe only what we wish to believe. The practical part of nearly all alchemical works seems to teach a method of obtaining either a gold alloy or a coating of gold on brass or copper.

§ 50. And it is worthy of note that one of the oldest processes known to the jewellery trade is that described as mercury-gilding or fire-gilding. This consists of coating articles made of base metals with gold amalgam and subsequently volatilizing the mercury by heat, leaving a thin coating of gold on the articles treated. The nature of this process ensures a fairly thick coating of gold being deposited; in fact, articles that have been well gilded by this method have withstood wear for years and have frequently been mistaken for solid gold until melting them down revealed their true nature. Now, the earliest known manuscripts dealing with alchemy are full of recipes written in Greek outlining various methods of manufacturing gold alloys, imitations of gold, and artificial precious stones. These ancient textbooks appear to make no distinction between gold alloys and imitation gold; so one is forced to the conclusion that their users knew no difference. And it is quite possible that the medieval alchemists unknowingly deceived themselves into believing what they wished to believe—that the transmutation of base metal into gold or silver had actually taken place, when in reality only the external appearance of the metal had been changed, i.e., coated with silver or gold. It must not be forgotten, either, that experimental testing was very primitive in those days, compared with our present searching methods of establishing scientific facts in the laboratory. Magnus,

---

<sup>1</sup> Scientific proof is wanting.

the German alchemist, in his *De Mineralibus*, frankly states that alchemy cannot change the nature of metals, but merely imitates them by colouring them white like silver, and yellow like gold. He also adds, that he tested gold made by alchemists and found that it would not withstand six or seven exposures to fire.

§ 51. This scepticism may perhaps be offset by Roger Bacon's assertion that with a small amount of the Philosopher's Stone he could transmute a million times as much base metal into gold.

### **Modern Alchemy**

§ 52. At Munich in 1924, a German named Tausend became famous on account of his gold-making demonstrations. He placed lead in his furnaces and out came—gold. Thousands of people—and pounds—were attracted to him: he became a vogue. Even General Ludendorff was interested. Strangely enough, although Tausend was arrested, found guilty of fraud, and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, his method remained a secret. The mystery has never been solved, but one feasible explanation put forward by a chemist is that a certain crystalline compound used by Tausend in his transmutations was nothing but chloride of gold, a chemical which possesses the property of reverting back to pure gold when heat is applied, causing the chlorine to evaporate. Yet this very sound explanation does not altogether clear up the mystery. In fact, many people still believe that Tausend was a true alchemist. Whatever may be said regarding Tausend's alchemical claims, another German, a miner in the Erzgebirge, appears to have sounder claims. This man actually extracts gold from a copper ore named *Glimmerschiefer*. First of all, he dissolved the ore in *aqua regia* and evaporated it to dryness. The residue was

extracted with hot water, then treated with alcohol and acetic acid and heated. An iron rod was placed in the copper to precipitate the copper together with any gold. The precipitate, after treatment with nitric acid, yielded a deposit of fine gold. This gold was pronounced pure by assayers who were unable to detect in it any trace of the original ore; so that this miner, who worked on medieval lines, was a true alchemist.

§ 53. It is, however, impossible to leave the fascinating subject of alchemy without briefly referring to the marvellous progress,<sup>1</sup> made by modern alchemists, or scientists, if you like, in the metallurgical world of to-day.

§ 54. Almost unbelievable feats of magic are being performed with the aid of blacklight microscopes, radium torches, spectographs, and X-rays; feats which if it were possible for the alchemists of the past to see, would fill them with speechless amazement. For modern scientists have learnt how to rearrange the atoms into other patterns, thus making new metals of old. Metals like gold, platinum, copper and aluminium can be hardened to the strength of steel. New properties have been found in super-refined zinc, aluminium, and manganese. Then there are mysterious metals long sought by science to fill blank gaps in the table of elements and now for the first time isolated and put to practical use.

§ 55. Queerer still, there are man-made metals one can see through, synthetic metals built atom by atom into films so thin that they are almost invisible; and new alloys, used as units in building new combinations of metals with properties as yet

---

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from the *Popular Science Monthly*, with thanks.

unknown. All metals become as transparent as glass to a new radium torch used at the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory. Containing a tiny bit of radium in a brass container less than 1/8th of an inch long, it possesses the power to penetrate steel 10 inches thick. This simple device takes the place of a cumbersome X-ray apparatus requiring enormous voltage to operate.

§ 56. Modern metallurgical alchemists have created a new metal by adding 13 per cent. of chromium to steel; they have thus obtained an alloy that is stainless and rust-proof. From this simple discovery have proceeded scores of practical applications too numerous to recount.

### ***The Elixir of Life***

§ 57. A remarkable account of alchemical experiments carried out within recent times is given in that monthly journal formerly known as *The Occult Review*, now the *London Forum*, in October 1928. A Mr. and Mrs. Ingalese decided to settle in California in 1910 and study alchemy.

§ 58. They possess a considerable reputation as authors and co-authors of several works dealing with occultism. It is commonly understood that the main objective of the ancient alchemists was to transmute base metals into gold; but very often the quest for the Elixir of Life, the Universal Panacea that would banish disease, conquer death, and restore youth to aged bodies, became of greater importance. At first the search for the significant secret of transmutation would be paramount; but as the years passed, and the alchemist found himself growing old without being any nearer his goal, he naturally desired youthful vigour to enable him to

continue his studies. So he sought for the Universal Medicine—the Elixir of Life. Both Mr. and Mrs. Ingalese rightly formed the opinion that the manufacture of gold was of little value compared to the discovery of the Philosophers' Stone.

§ 59. They began an intensive study of the *Hermetical and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus*, translated by A. E. Waite. These writings state that all metals contain essential oils, a theory modern chemistry does not accept. Work was started on gold, but finding this expensive, they turned to copper, and after three years of painstaking effort succeeded in extracting the red oil of copper. Two more years passed before they obtained the oil of sulphur; and a year later the oil of mercury, which is the basis of all alchemy, was secured. They were now in possession of the three oils necessary to make the Philosophers' Stone; but fifty more weeks went by before they managed to crystallize and fuse them together. The White Stone of the Philosophers was made in 1917 and tried out in traditional fashion—on the cat. Puss developed a friskiness which encouraged them to try it on themselves. With beneficial results. Two physicians testified to the power of the Stone upon Mr. and Mrs. Ingalese. First, renewed strength and greater endurance were noted; then a better circulation of blood, stronger heartbeats, and an increase of red corpuscles. Next they decided to make the Red Stone or Earth of the Philosophers, the one so often mentioned in alchemical works. It took them three years to accomplish this. The “Red Stone” is intensely bitter, but soon absorbed by the tongue. Immunity from disease for five years, it is claimed, results when the Stone has been tasted.

§ 60. A doctor's wife died, and had apparently been dead for half an hour, when a small dose of the White Stone dissolved in

brandy was placed upon her tongue and repeated at intervals of fifteen minutes three times, when the woman opened her eyes. She lived seven years after this.

§ 61. This Elixir of Life is, however, linked closely, not only with the transmutation of base metals into gold but with rejuvenation.

### **Rejuvenation**

§ 62. With the majority of the alchemists, the search for the Elixir of Life, the Universal Medicine, kept pace with the quest for the secret of transmutation. To be rich for ever: to die never—is how Levi somewhat poetically describes the aims of the devotees of the hermetic art—the reason for their intensive studies. But this explanation is hardly a true one. As the years rolled by and the alchemist found himself growing old, without being any nearer his ardently-desired goal, he suddenly realized the need for renewed bodily vigour to enable him to continue his experiments. So he transferred his attention to discovering some magic potion that would restore virility and youth.

§ 63. How the idea originated that the Philosophers' Stone, in addition to its primary power of transmuting base metals into gold, also had a secondary power of rejuvenating the human body, no one can say.<sup>1</sup> It seems shrouded in antiquity. The Philosophers' Stone or egg was the symbol of creation to both the ancient Egyptians and to the Babylonians; it symbolized the four elements to the ancient Greeks. One may assume that, by analogous reasoning, the alchemists arrived at the opinion that such a miracle-

---

<sup>1</sup> It is averred by certain writers that the idea of extracting an Elixir of Life from the Philosophers' Stone arose in China.

working substance as the Philosophers' Stone, which could, according to their common belief, almost in the twinkling of an eye, change common metals into the perfection of gold,—must possess within itself the unique power of triumphing over Nature and arresting the natural processes of senile decay and death. Paracelsus the Great in his writings constantly reiterates this belief, and claims that some of the primitive Egyptian philosophers lived, by means of a tincture distilled from the Philosophers' Stone, for one hundred and fifty years, and that the lives of many had been prolonged several centuries. “For its power is so remarkable that it extends the life of the body beyond what is possible to its congenial nature, and keeps it so firmly in that condition that it lives on in safety from all infirmities. And although, indeed, the body at length comes to old age, nevertheless, it still appears as though it were established in its primal youth. The Tincture of the Philosophers is a Universal Medicine, and consumes all diseases, by whatsoever name they are called, just like an invisible fire. The dose is very small, but the effect is very powerful.”

§ 64. Another theory postulated by Paracelsus was that by bringing the various elements of the human body into harmony with the four chief elements of nature (fire, earth, water and air), old age and death could be indefinitely postponed. He also prepared, by a series of elaborate processes, an extract—the “quintessence” of balm-mint—a few drops of which dissolved in wine would secure immortality. But, sad to say, after vaunting the marvellous rejuvenating powers of his Elixir of Life, Paracelsus

died at an early age.<sup>1</sup> Ideas regarding the composition of the Elixir appear to vary somewhat. The most popular one was that the precipitation of the Philosophers' Stone into mercurial water would create it. Others again asserted that pure gold dissolved in *aqua regia* and then drunk would confer immortality. Geber and Roger Bacon both believed in this idea. Even at the present day in India a strong belief exists in the rejuvenating, health-giving properties of gold, if eaten. Trithemius, the son of a German vine-grower, who died in 1516, left a recipe which he claimed would prolong life. It contains, along with other ingredients, coral, tartar, mace, nard, aniseed, calomel, cinnamon and gentian—a formidable assortment. But he, too, was not an old man when he died—unless history lies. Aristeus, a sorcerer who lived in the time of Cræsus and who is reputed to have lived for centuries, attributed his abnormal longevity to a mystical treatment of the atmosphere, which had to be congealed and distilled until it developed the divine sparkle and to be subsequently liquefied. An exalted kind of heavenly dew. It was afterwards subjected to heat and underwent several other processes before it yielded the life-giving elixir.

§ 65. The ancients appear to have devoted much time and thought to the question of rejuvenation apart from alchemy.

§ 66. Arnold de Villanova, in a work dealing with the subject, says: "The stag, eagle and sparrow-hawk renew their youth. Aldrovandus has written on the rejuvenescence of the eagle. Among the birds of the air, we are told by Pliny that the raven and

---

<sup>1</sup> See § 36, towards the end.

the phoenix<sup>1</sup> live, each of them, 600 years. No one denies that the stag is renewed by feeding on vipers and serpents, while the apes of Caucasus, whose diet is pepper, prove a sovereign remedy for the lion who grows young by devouring their flesh. Those who have written of the elephant, maintain that his normal life is extended through three centuries, while the horse, which alone participates in the natures of man, of the lion, of the ox, the sheep, the mule, the stag, the wolf, the fox, the serpent and the hare, from each deriving three of its qualities, has occasionally survived with undiminished vigour the lapse of a hundred years. The serpent, who is instrumental in the rejuvenescence of the stag, himself renews his youth at the shedding of his scales, from all of which considerations, it follows that it is not beyond belief that a like prodigy may be found in the superior order of the same productions, whence man has been himself derived, for man is assuredly not in a worse condition than the beasts whom he rules." The most of this extract is sheer nonsense, but it serves to show what an extraordinary amount of interest was taken in rejuvenation by the alchemists. It is, indeed, a truism that the possibility of prolonging life beyond the natural span has attracted men throughout the ages.

§ 67. It is not a selfish desire, this yearning to extend the period of youth; more especially when one loves life in all its fullness and beauty. Old age is often a dreadful thing; particularly so, when it is made manifest, as it often is, in the loss of vigour, elasticity and strength: when the eyesight fails: the hearing becomes dull: the

---

<sup>1</sup> That fabulous bird: emblem of immortality, which, let us repeat, is said to exist single and to rise again from its own ashes.

memory less reliable. When the body becomes bent: the limbs tottering: the teeth decayed: the hair scanty: and the skin wrinkled, even withered. The human mind fears old age, not without some reason. Philosophers, magicians, alchemists, and physicians, too, have all striven hard to find a certain method of prolonging youth, the springtime of life.

§ 68. The Tree of Knowledge mentioned in the Bible gave rise to the thought that there existed somewhere one particular kind of tree, plant or herb which contained within it the power of rejuvenating the human body. So men searched everywhere for this precious thing. The aloe and cedar, the amber flora, and innumerable herbs became the basis of so-called rejuvenating balsams and infusions. When these failed, alchemy was studied to see if it would yield some youth-restoring specific. And so there arose the idea that an Elixir of Life could be distilled from the Philosophers' Stone. Others came to the conclusion that the sun was the source of life—a reasonable thought—and placed open jars in the sunlight from the spring to the autumn. These jars collected dust which was considered to be solar powder containing life-giving qualities. During the Middle Ages the marvellous rejuvenating properties ascribed to the Elixir of Life assumed paramount importance: and the quest for this priceless fluid almost eclipsed the search for the secret of transmutation. What is the use of riches, anyway, when the capacity to enjoy the pleasures of life has vanished?

§ 69. Another ancient belief was that the breath of innocent children, if it were inhaled, would create new strength in the aged. According to Biblical history, King David was benefited by this method. In the 17th century people spoke about blood-transfusion

as a means of rejuvenation. It is said that Louis XI of France was rejuvenated by drinking the blood of young people.

§ 70. In the world of medical science nothing was really known concerning successful rejuvenation until the year 1889, when a well-known biologist, Brown-Sequard, informed the School of Biology in Paris, that he had discovered an elixir of life. He had prepared an extract from the generative gland of an animal and then injected it into his own body. The effects were remarkable. His muscular power increased, his brain functioned more rapidly, and his bodily endurance became greater. Another doctor tested Brown-Sequard's elixir by treating a number of aged persons who were totally ignorant of its effects. They were renewed in health and strength as a result of the experiment. Paris became tremendously excited over the discovery and would-be rejuvenates besieged the discoverer's residence until he fled to London to avoid them. Quacks and charlatans reaped handsome profits until it was proved that the effects of this treatment were only temporary.

§ 71. No further progress in scientific rejuvenation occurred until 1909, when Ilya Mechnikoff, the eminent Russian savant, announced that he had found the real cause and the cure of senile decay. His theory was that all the infirmities of old age were due to auto-intoxication which caused putrefaction in the large intestine. The pathogenic bacteria created by this condition, he stated, could be destroyed by the lactic acid bacillus contained in soured milk. Mechnikoff based this theory upon the fact that he had discovered that peasants in Bulgaria, whose chief article of diet was cheese made from sour milk (*koumiss* it is called), attained great ages.

§ 72. "Man does not die naturally; he poisons himself," declared

this scientist significantly. Reinehardt, an authority on diet, expresses the same view. Within recent years, two surgical methods of rejuvenation have attracted public attention. We refer to the gland-grafting treatment of Voronoff and to the Steinach operation known as vaso-ligature. Both of these are reported to be highly successful, but, when all is said and done, these methods are purely artificial. Plastic surgery, better known as “face-lifting,” whilst ensuring a youthful appearance externally, cannot retard the natural effects of old age upon the organs and tissues of the body. The acquirement of a youthful face and figure is only possible when we realize that our bodies are governed by Nature: and only by living in complete harmony with the laws of Nature, can bodily vigour, health, and mental alertness be maintained, even at an advanced age.

§ 73. The mind, to a large extent, rules the body. By keeping mentally young we can contrive to keep the terrors of old age at bay. But it must never be forgotten that Nature cannot be violated with impunity. The seeds of many illnesses in late life are often wantonly sown in our youth.

§ 74. Reverting to the occult aspect of the subject, we may mention that certain Buddhist monks in the Himalayas are credited with possessing the secret of youth. They are said to have attained great ages, while still remaining outwardly youthful and mentally brilliant. A few years ago there died a Chinaman who was reputed to have reached the abnormal age of 250 years! But a writer in a physical culture journal capped this by assuring readers that a Hindu fakir was still alive at the age of 600 years!

§ 75. We do not know whether these stories are true, but there are undoubtedly several well-authenticated cases of people who

exceeded a century by many years. In British history two striking examples are Thomas Parr, “Old Parr,” who died in 1635 aged 152 years; and the Irish Countess of Desmond, who died in 1604, at the ripe age of 140. Abroad we find a Norwegian, Drakenburg by name, who bears the reputation of living for over 146 years, and whose body lay in state for a long time prior to 1840. The quite recent instance of the celebrated Turk supposed to be 150 years old, along with the examples cited above, appears to bear out the statement attributed to Voronoff that the normal span of Man’s existence should be 150 years—not threescore and ten. There is a good deal of truth in this. Man from time immemorial has limited his life to seventy years and anyone who considerably outlives this period is regarded as either a marvel or a freak.

§ 76. But the very fact that numerous people have lived to be one hundred years old, clearly proves that longer life is a possibility: always provided that certain laws of Nature are obeyed. For it should be noted that, consciously or subconsciously, those who attained great ages have adhered to these same laws. That is the simple explanation of their abnormal—if you like to term it such—their abnormal longevity.

§ 77. In relation to rejuvenation and longevity, it may be recorded that one of the strangest and most romantic figures in occult history is that of the Comte de Saint-Germain. Concerning his origin, many attempts have been made to clear up the mystery surrounding it. According to the late Miss Annie Besant, he was one of the sons of Francis Racoczi II, Prince of Transylvania. The children of this prince were brought up by the Emperor of Austria, but one of them was placed under the guardianship of the last

descendant of the Medici family, who reared him in Italy. He took the name of Saint-Germain from the little town of San Germano where he had spent some of his childhood and where his father owned an estate. In appearance he was of medium height, strongly built, and dressed with extreme simplicity. A simplicity that contrasted oddly with the many costly jewels he wore and of which he possessed an extensive collection. Indeed, his passion for jewels was so great, that in some pictures he painted, the figures were covered with them.

§ 78. He suddenly presented himself at the court of Louis XV and soon became firmly established in the good graces of that pleasure-loving monarch. And, incidentally, aroused the envy and jealous hatred of the less favoured ones. It is stated by some writers that the Comte de Saint-Germain was really a very clever spy whom the French monarch entrusted with diplomatic missions. Others maintain that Saint-Germain was an adept in occult science, a master-mind who simply swayed Louis XV—a weak, credulous ruler at the best of times—to his will. Whatever the Comte may have been in reality—spy, diplomat, adept, or just a clever adventurer—there is not the slightest doubt about his superior gifts, his outstanding accomplishments. His knowledge of chemistry was considerable, and it was said that his huge wealth had been derived from the transmutation of base metals into gold and from the manufacture of precious stones.

§ 79. But the most astounding feature of this queer man was his claim to immortality. Like Cagliostro,<sup>1</sup> he claimed to have lived centuries; and to have known both King Solomon and the Queen

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Psychotherapy and Psychic Phenomena*, § 8.

of Sheba. He may have been merely a charlatan, like Cagliostro, but he never betrayed it in any way. Whether this amazing person really possessed the secret of immortality no one can tell, but his outward appearance certainly remained unchanged, despite the passage of time. He spoke several languages; his conversation was always witty and entertaining; and his charm of manner absolutely free from any trace of mystery. Voltaire describes him as “a man who knows everything and who never dies.”

§ 80. Like a typical man of the world, he enjoyed the society of beautiful women. It is said that he became the lover of Mlle Lambert, daughter of Chevalier Lambert of Paris, and afterwards fell in love with a lady in Holland as rich as himself. The Comte was the beau-ideal of the aristocracy of his time; fond of company, he apparently enjoyed life. But it was noticeable that although he attended banquets frequently, he never ate any food in public. Whatever the real reason for this rigid abstinence, the public duly decided that it was part of some secret regimen the Comte strictly observed as a means of prolonging his life. Probably there was more than a grain of truth in this opinion, for in those days, the use of poison was a fashionable means of getting rid of undesirable persons—and Saint-Germain had many enemies—people who envied the powerful influence he wielded at the French court.

§ 81. Louis XV must have known who the Comte really was, for he allotted him rooms in the Château of Chambord, where he spent whole evenings with him and Madame Pompadour. He always referred to the Comte as a person of distinguished birth, and never seemed tired of discussing him at any time. The Landgrave Charles of Hesse-Cassel, with whom Saint-Germain lived previous to his death or disappearance in 1784, may have

learned the secret of his birth, for he was closely associated with the Comte in many alchemical experiments, and had charge of documents relating to his private affairs.

§ 82. Horace Walpole speaks of the Comte de Saint-Germain as a man who married a wealthy heiress in Mexico and ran away with her jewels. The Comte is said to have resided for a while in 1743 in London, where he was arrested as a Jacobite spy, and shortly afterwards released. Cagliostro asserted that Saint-Germain was the founder of freemasonry, but such an assertion coming from a man like Balsamo must be accepted with reserve. It is quite possible, however, that the Comte was a member of that illustrious order, and had thus obtained exclusive knowledge of certain natural secrets which he put into actual practice.

#### APPENDIX: ALCHEMY IN BURMA

§ 83. In Burma, alchemical beliefs are widespread, even at the present time. The Burmese definition of an alchemist is “zaw-gyee,” and the alchemist receives this title only after he has introduced into his body certain metallic compounds derived from mercury or iron. At a certain point in these experiments “a stone of live metal” is obtained. Any person in possession of this stone, according to tradition, can fly through the air or travel underground and will live for hundreds of years, i.e. so long as he retains possession of this wonderful stone. This “stone of live metal” will also, it is claimed, turn lead into silver and brass into gold by mere contact, and cure all diseases, too, in a similar way. These Burmese beliefs are akin to European ideas concerning the Philosophers’ Stone.

A. B.

Book recommended:

REDGROVE, H. S., *Alchemy, Ancient and Modern* (Rider, 1911).

ALARM-STAFF. A staff with an arrangement of jingling rings attached. It is carried by Chinese Buddhist priests for the purposes (1) of scaring off small creatures that they may not be stepped upon, and so killed, and (2) to keep the ugly noise of the world away.

ANTHROPOMANCY. Divination by the entrails of a human being (generally offered in sacrifice).

ASTRAL BODY. A slightly less material body than the physical frame. See Spiritualism, Part 1, § 14.

## ASTROLOGY

Julian Franklyn

§ 1. The astrologers term astrology “the soul of astronomy.” The astronomers describe astrology as “baseless nonsense.” Both are correct; but they are by no means good friends about the matter—probably because the astronomers experienced so much difficulty in shaking the astrologers’ superstitions out of their science. In fact, they had barely succeeded by the year A.D. 1600. Astrologers base their system on the erroneous supposition that the heavenly bodies have “character” and exert an influence over the earth, affecting both men and things. The belief is of Babylonian origin<sup>1</sup> and has been handed on from one nation to another until the present day, as our Sunday newspapers make very clear. Each nation that has handled the subject has inflated and decorated it; each new theory, each scientific fact has been perverted and tacked on to it. Every practitioner has rationalized and justified these additions by a process of false logic. In 1933 R. H. Naylor published a book, *Home Astrology*, in which he remarks (p. 13): “The Modern ‘Scientific’ thinker, observing the co-relation between the Moon and the tides, says boldly that the Moon causes the tides. Having done so, he is perfectly satisfied that he is stating the truth. But he says, too, that when the ancients assumed a connection between the Moon and the feminine functions (just as obvious as between the Moon and the tides), they were talking through their prehistoric hats! . . . ‘Logic’ and ‘reason’ are only too

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *History of Occult Ideas*, §§ 42-3.

often processes by which we disprove things that are not convenient to believe.” In this last clause Mr. Naylor is referring to false logic, which is exactly the type he is making use of himself. Scientific thinkers observing an *apparent* relationship between moon and tide take steps to *prove* the connection before stating it as a fact. The menstrual periodicity to which Mr. Naylor points in the above highly intellectual paragraph, is actually not very different from the periods of œstrus displayed by the lower animals. Scientific thinkers are of the opinion that this peculiarity is a result of life having originated in the sea, where living things were very materially affected by the tides—a much more reasonable contention than the belief that an occult influence is exercised over creatures by the extinct moon, which is merely a piece of volcanic rock, no matter how big or beautiful it appears. It must be remembered also, that a full moon and a spring tide invariably coincide, the lunar gravitational pull being mathematically demonstrable; but not every human female functions at that time, nor all of them at the same time.

§ 2. The visit of a comet is considered to presage evil—or at least, momentous events. In the famous Bayeux Tapestry a comet is depicted in the heavens; and below, a group of terrified people are shown within doors. After the appearance of the comet thus recorded, William of Normandy defeated Harold the Saxon at Senlac, near Hastings, in the year A.D. 1066. Plagues, earthquakes, wars and death of royalty always follow the advent of a comet; in fact, on one such occasion all the cats in Pomerania were sick! The untrained human mind seems so constructed as inevitably to argue *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (after that, therefore because of that) it is, therefore, very difficult to demonstrate that the

sequence of events is not a matter of cause and effect.

§ 3. It is on this fallacious form of argument that all superstition is based, and there is as much sympathetic magic in astrology as in the belief that one may kill an enemy by roasting his image.<sup>1</sup> For instance, the stars emit a lustre, so do metals; hence protohistoric man, knowing of seven metals and seven planets, saw a connection that did not exist. He equated gold to the Sun, silver to the Moon, iron to Mars, quicksilver to Mercury, tin to Jupiter, copper to Venus, and lead to Saturn, using the same cryptic symbol to designate both the metal and the planet; thus every alchemist needed to be an astrologer.

§ 4. The Zodiac is the path in the sky that the sun, moon, and planets apparently journey along. It is divided into twelve “signs,” each given a name and a symbol, as follows: Aries, the Ram ,♈; Taurus, the Bull ♉; Gemini, the Twins ♊; Cancer, the Crab ♋; Leo, the Lion ♌; Virgo, the Virgin ♍; Libra, the Balance ♎; Scorpio, the Scorpion ♏; Sagittarius, the Archer ♐; Capricornus, the Goat ♑; Aquarius, the Water Carrier ♒; and Pisces, the Fishes ♓. The signs are actually geometrical divisions thirty degrees apart. The rotation of the earth leads to the delusion that the entire heavens swing round the pole-star; hence the astrologers mapped out a stationary celestial equator divided into twelve parts corresponding to the twelve signs of the Zodiac. These sections are termed “houses,” and numbered from the east downward towards the west, and from the west upward towards the east, because the astrologer’s interest is centred in the rising stars and the rising signs. Having fixed houses and mobile signs, it necessitates a term

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Black Magic*, §§ 5-7.

denoting their relative position: “aspects” is made to serve this end. Planets in the same sign and the same house are said to be in conjunction; those in signs and houses opposite to each other, in opposition. The character of the houses is as follows: 1, life; 2, riches; 3, brothers; 4, parents; 5, children; 6, health; 7, marriage; 8, death; 9, religion; 10, dignities; 11, friendship; 12, enmity.

§ 5. The foregoing indicates the basis on which astrological prognostications are made; but, viewing the entire system, we find that there is hardly a more ramified and complicated set of errors known to man. William Wilson, in his book, *Astrology—An Effort at Simplification*, published 1928, says (pp. 72-3): “The other forces are mainly the Signs ascending in the East at the time of birth, the influence of which is scarcely less strong on the Personality; the Moon and seven planets have also to be reckoned with. In order to ascertain these it is necessary to erect a figure, map, chart, or horoscope, as it is called a record of the conditions at the *hour* of birth, taken from the Ephemeris, or Planetary Almanac, and this is not a formidable undertaking. Students are recommended not to confuse themselves at the outset by a wish to understand all about Sidereal Time, Right Ascension and Wrong Ascension, the Geocentric versus the Heliocentric System: in short, the many Astronomical and other questions which continually press themselves forward to distract attention.” No wonder astronomers weep and calendarians gnash their teeth! Matters that can be measured merely distract the student’s attention from the all-important truths that persons born under Aries (20 March to 20 April), which rules the head, are “busy-brained, interested in matters educational, executive, excitable, independent. . . . Aries gives strong bones . . . a wiry neck, hair strong and warm in colour.”

Those born in Taurus (20 April to 20 May), which “rules the neck and lower brain of man,” will have bull-like characters, and “hair (which) is characteristic, gracefully waving, very impatient of bondage with generally a prominent wayward lock above the forehead.” It may, in passing, be of interest to note that the quality of the hair is a matter of race and racial admixture: a pure negro has negro-type hair, no matter which season he is born in. However, ignoring such facts which serve only to distract the student’s attention, we learn that Gemini (20 May to 20 June) rules the arms, bronchials and shoulders, and that persons born in this sign are “humane, courteous, harmonious, interested in the arts . . .” and, at this point we receive a streak of astrological inspiration (irrespective of our birthday!) and state most emphatically that they are always born in pairs. Cancer (21 June to 23 July) rules the breast and stomach: that, no doubt, is why the disease so named settles commonly in these organs. Leo (23 July to 23 August) rules the region of the heart, and, as we would expect, persons born between these dates are “proud, imperious, punctilious, . . . ambitious and great-hearted. There is a certain dignity in the personality, which is lithe and broad, with a notably well-formed back and leonine hair.” Virgo (23 August to 23 September) rules solar plexus, liver and bowels; it is the sign of eternal youth. Libra (23 September to 23 October) rules loins and kidneys (astrologers used to add “the reins” till the word went quite out of common usage). Natives of this sign borrow money without the intention or ability to repay; hence it follows one should always ascertain a person’s birthday before lending. Scorpio (23 October to 22 November) rules the “generative and neighbouring organs.” Persons born in this sign have dark crisp curling hair; so we

suppose it is the favourable season for negroes. Sagittarius (22 November to 22 December) rules the thighs, and produces persons who are “noble, generous and laudable,” with an instinct that guides them aright if left to themselves. Capricorn (22 December to 29 January) rules the knees; Aquarius (20 January to 19 February) rules the legs; and last, but not least, Pisces (19 February to 29 March), which we learn “seems to cause some unusual formation of, or weakness in the feet”; nevertheless, Mr. Wilson (to whom we are indebted for much of the above enlightenment, though it was many hundreds of years old before he rehashed it) says, only twelve lines below, “His foot is put down with Olympian firmness . . .,” so evidently weakness and strength are synonymous in astrology. As a grand finale he says: “We are apt to forget that we are part of a great whole and not merely individuals. Mars and Saturn, the authors of destruction, also provide the renewal of supply. Jupiterians have money; their children squander it (*unless they, too, are Juperiterians, we presume!*). Propagation is absolutely needful (*why?*); so there is always seed in abundance. Birds feed upon it and so keep it down (*ambiguous this!*). Fish are the ocean’s scavengers; most animals, probably all, have similar work to do (*we have seen elephants using brooms in the Zoological Gardens*); so the machinery is never clogged. Worms help to bury cities when their usefulness has ceased . . . (*an elevated task for the humble earthworm!*). Masses of people make conditions that cause impurities, which wind and rain help to remove (*the elements having been designed solely for that purpose*); ships are wrecked, books destroyed, fashions changed in order that work may be provided We read no more but sing praises of the astrologers, who have discovered why ships

are wrecked and books destroyed. What can the astronomers boast in the face of that? What is a new star—or even Einstein's Theory?

§ 6. Concerning the planets, those mundane astronomers would have us believe that Mercury, on the side facing the sun, has a temperature exceeding six hundred degrees Fahrenheit—a fieriness sufficient to keep tin and lead running in streams; that Venus is continuously obscured by clouds, and therefore nothing is known of its surface. It is called the earth's twin sister because its density, which is higher than that of the earth, proves it to have a solid centre. Mars has a smoother surface than the earth, an atmosphere like the earth's, a diameter of about half that of the earth, and consequently a much lower gravitational pull. It has polar caps of ice which melt in summer (that is the Martian summer), but still there is a dearth of water so that its most fertile plains are as arid as our Sahara. The Martian canals are not, as popularly supposed, akin to those of Venice; the word "canal" in this instance is simply a mistranslation of "canali," the Italian for "channel." They are not cut by man, or any creature like him, being, according to the latest theories, merely geological "faults" that appear as a network of straight lines. Mars has two satellites, Phobos (Fear) and Deimos (Terror), which names are but names—with nothing in them. Jupiter is very large and very soft—that is, it seems to be composed entirely of fluid matter; and if it has a core of dense material, this core is small in comparison with its bulk. The liquid and vaporous condition is not due to the planet's heat, for Jupiter's temperature is about *minus* two hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Saturn, almost as large, as Jupiter, and some thirty-eight degrees colder, is distinguished by a ring of stones or

pebbles revolving round its equator. We also know a little of Uranus and Neptune, and are beginning to believe in the existence of another planet—Pluto.

§ 7. The foregoing are facts of the kind that astrologers do not deny, but regard as matters that distract the student's attention. The divine astrologers tell us, concerning these same planets, that "Mercury, the seventh planet, is considered masculine or feminine according to his conjunction with other planets. He is cold, dry and melancholy, and is associated with wit, liveliness, ingenuity and invention." He (or she) governs diseases that attack the brain and head; governs also more than a hundred plants, including trees, one of these being the walnut; and numerous animals, among them the dog, ape, weasel and fox. "He rules schools, colleges, markets, exchanges, warehouses, and all places of learning and commerce," and has numerous precious and semi-precious stones in his keeping. He influences stormy weather, and possesses or is possessed by the angel Raphael. Venus, the "Queen of Pleasure," is temperate, cold and moist. Her animals are the goat, the panther, the dove, the sparrow and the thrush. Her stones are emerald and beryl. Her plants number two hundred and include the fig, the myrtle and the pomegranate. She sends us wet warm weather, and her diseases are those of the genital system (including hysteria!). She, too, has an angel, named Hanael. Mars influences "all fevers, plagues, flux, smallpox, St. Anthony's fire, carbuncles, fistulas, ringworm, jaundice, stone in the bladder and kidneys, injuries by fire and sword, and all diseases of the left ear." He is a masculine, hot, dry planet, the ruler of "iron, arsenic, antimony, sulphur, . . . and among beasts, the tiger, wolf, (and) mastiff. . . . The birds under him are the

hawk, kite, raven, (and) vulture. . . . Of precious stones, the ruby, garnet, bloodstone and jasper are affected by him . . .”; also, slaughter-houses, battle-fields, blacksmiths’ shops and brick-kilns are his happy hunting-ground. He is connected (or confused) with an angel, Samael. Jupiter is “masculine, moist, airy and sanguine,” and governs a hundred and seventy-two plants, including the oak and apple-tree. His stones are the topaz, amethyst and hyacinth; his animals, the horse, the ox, the elephant, the whale, the dolphin, the eagle, the peacock, and pheasant. His occupations are the Church and the Law; his diseases are those of the liver, lungs, hands, and arteries, but he shares the left ear with Mars, and has an angel, Zadkiel. Saturn is by nature cold and dry, melancholy, masculine and malevolent. His animals are cats, asses, hares, mules, mice, wolves, bears, crocodiles, serpents, eels and shellfish, bats and owls. His gems are the sapphire and lapis lazuli. The occupations he governs are those of the husbandman, the day-labourer, the monk, the Jesuit, sextons and dyers. His weather (or, at least, the weather he sends us) is “dark and cloudy, cold and hurtful,” therefore his diseases are ague and rheumatism. Cassel is his angel.

§ 8. Uranus and Neptune were not discovered till respectively the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, the former in 1781 by Herschel; the latter in 1843 by Adams; nevertheless, the astrologers, nothing daunted, seized them in a grip of iron, declaring Uranus to be the influencing planet of “strange, sudden and extraordinary events,” and Neptune the “significator of great crises.” Pluto, if it is really discovered, belongs to the twentieth century and is so far the exclusive property of Percy Lowell (whose initials P.L. form the first two letters of the trans-

Neptunian planet's name). If Pluto does not prove to be a comet, or some other casual inhabitant of the heavens, then his mystic powers will surely be added to him by a modern astrologer and the Lowellites will lose him. However, anticipating a confirmation of the planet's existence, we will ourselves allot to him aerial and poison-gas warfare, wireless telephony, television, and infra-red photography; the india-rubber plant; chromium-plated goods, and all objects manufactured from synthetic resin (e.g. Bakelite); and of diseases, disturbances to the hormonopoietic system. Precious gems: the imitation pearl. Angel: Pilot.

§ 9. If the stars exercised their influence over both diseases and plants, then it followed that there must be a close connection between the plants and the diseases, hence an astrological pharmacopœia was evolved; every astrologer considered himself a physician, and not a few physicians embraced astrology. To cure apoplexies by astrological medicine, the patient was dosed with a brew of mistletoe, lavender, lily, sage, marjoram, and fennel. As a remedy for sore throat (even though the soreness might have been diphtheric), a drench compounded from ground-ivy, pellitory, vine, elder-flowers, barley, woodbine, and golden-rod, was administered. A sixteenth-century document states: "The end of the physician's employment is the cure of the patient, that he may accomplish this desirable end . . . astrology is very necessary" (spelling modernized). The author, an astrologer, then proceeds to teach the physician his trade, and accompanies his words of wisdom with a chart showing "What Every House Signifies in Case of Sickness or Otherwise." The moon was considered to affect lunatics; but modern research reveals that this, too, is only an astrological truth. The cacodemons, native to the twelfth house,

do not get possession of patients at full moon, neither do they disturb sane sleepers and induce in them bad dreams. However, the astrologers, even in this enlightened age, derive a livelihood from astrology; therefore they will fight tooth and nail to retain their territory, and superstition concerning the dream-life is part of it.

§ 10. R. H. Naylor, who is most up to date, says: "Ever since printing was invented, dream books have appeared." This is passable if we include the Bible among dream books, on the strength of Joseph's exploit in oneiromancy. He further states: "German scientists have . . . discovered a 'scientific' method of dream interpretation. Their system is a very simple one; it is entirely based on the sex instinct. We need not pause to examine the theories. . . . Let us turn to a more wholesome Astrological System of dream interpretation" (*op. cit.*, p. 197). This may be a piece of crass ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation, and cannot remain uncontested. In the first place it is quite impossible to identify these "German scientists," because they do not exist, and there is no very simple system based entirely on the sexual instinct. It is obvious that the writer is referring to the Freudian system of dream analysis, but Freud is an Austrian—not a German. His system is extremely complicated and would require a pause of several years to examine it adequately; and, most important, it is not based on the sexual instinct at all. It is based on an analytical method of discovering the content of the unconscious mind; and, if such reveals sexual trends it simply means that the patient, or dreamer, is a living organism. The Freudian method cannot possibly appeal to an astrologer because, apart from having a tendency to put him out of business, it is scientific, and

therefore must be as repellent as astronomy.

§ 11. “Let us turn to a more wholesome Astrological System” and learn the “General Rules for Dream Interpretation,” the first of which is, “if it occurs between retiring and midnight, then, its interpretation will probably work out in terms of health, love affairs, speculation, home, family or parents.” This being a fairly safe and extensive assortment, we turn to rule 2 and find it gives an equally safe and extensive assortment for the hours “between midnight and getting up.” Rule 3 has no restraining influence on the all-embracing premises; and rule 4 lays down that “Dreams which occur near the new or full Moon often directly or indirectly foreshadow events or experiences which will occur within one month’s time”; which is again fairly safe and non-committal. Statistics are quoted next. The familiar dream of falling “should never be taken seriously, for, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, such dreams result from purely physical causes. . . .” We should like to ask on what authority the figures are given, who compiled them, and by what method? And, presuming for the moment (seeing we can get no answer) that they are “correct for all practical purposes,” or “as near as no matter,” we should like to point out that only the thousandth case is of any importance or interest; for obviously he is the person who *should* take it seriously, and we wish to know why.

§ 12. After some facetious remarks concerning dream symbolism, we are given an outline of “twelve great groups of symbolic dreams,” and reading them through carefully we come to the conclusion that there is so much to say that it is perhaps best to say nothing at all, and to allow our astrologer to say his own say, which is: “I would warn readers, however, to think twice before

accepting the meaning attached to symbols in popular Dream Books. They are nearly always wrong"! And we would warn our readers to think thrice before accepting the "wholesome astrological" interpretations, as they are always wrong without the mitigating "nearly."

§ 13. Bad though that may be, it is not astrology at its worst. An Indian gentleman named Rangil Lakshmidasa Sutaria has produced a work entitled *Astrology of the Race Course*. After a lofty quotation from the Bhagawadgita, on the title page, and the assurance in the preface that "astrology is as good a science as medicine, law, or logic," he commences the work with the words, "When I speak of racing I mean horse-racing. I want you to understand that, because modern civilization has devised other forms of racing, too; boat or yacht racing is a point in instance." A few lines farther down we learn that racing (horse-racing understood!) is a "comparatively modern idea imported into this country by the sporting Britisher who may, with pride, give it the pride of place. . . ." This gentleman, boasting the academic distinction of Bachelor of Arts, is a great recommendation for all those who do not; and he increases one's admiration of the pious Mohammedan, who refrains from dealing in books on astrology, in obedience to the passage in the Koran which forbids true believers to sell valueless goods.

§ 14. This is an age of scientific accuracy; the stars have been analysed, and the surface temperature of the planets taken; also, Jupiter's minute ninth satellite has been discovered and described (though from the surface of the planet itself it would be invisible to The naked eye), so there is no possible excuse to be found for those who believe in astrology; but up to fifteen, or even sixteen

hundred A.D., men of brilliant intellect had no alternative but to believe. Even Copernicus (1473-1543), who was one of the world's greatest astronomers, was not entirely uncontaminated by superstition; and Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), who in 1572 discovered a new star, thus elevating himself to the rank of a great astronomer, said of that star, "[It portends] a period of wars, seditions, captivity, the deaths of Princes and destruction of Cities, together with drought and fiery meteors in the air, bringing pestilence and venomous snakes, want, death, imprisonment, and all kinds of sad things." He, like many other great men, found that "We cannot deny the influence of the stars, without disbelieving in the wisdom of God," which is as much a comment on the religious persecution and bigotry of the time, as upon stellar influence. He was also an alchemist and an astrological physician; in fact, he may be further described as the first plastic surgeon, for, losing a portion of his nose in a duel, he built the organ up with a gold and silver amalgam.

§ 15. Paracelsus<sup>1</sup> (1490-1541), the great physician, believed that the elements constituting the body of man were held together by occult forces situated in the stomach, consequently he became an alchemist and an astrologer, because in his opinion "a physician should know the physiology and anatomy of heaven as well as that of man, to understand the cause and cure of astralic diseases, because he may vainly try his remedies as long as his patient is under the ascending influence of an evil star. . . . Every metal and every plant possesses qualities that may attract corresponding planetary influences, and if we know the influence of the star, the

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Alchemy*, §§ 20, 36, 38, 59, 64.

conjunction of the planets, and the qualities of our drugs, we will know what remedy to give to attract such influences as may act beneficially on the patient.”

§ 16. Queen Elizabeth’s Court Astrologer was Dr. John Dee,<sup>1</sup> who brought himself into disgrace by attempting, with Edward Kelley, to practise necromancy. It is related of Dee, that as a result of his indiscretion he became so poor that he “oft-times sold a book to buy a meal.” This speaks very highly of the book-dealers of the period; to-day, many books would be required. Dee was a man of learning, a mathematician, and no disgrace intellectually to his university (St. John’s, Cambridge), but his successor in astrology was William Lilly, an uneducated person, who commenced life as a kitchen-scullion, learned legerdemain from a magician named Evans, and brought himself into prominence by attempting to find treasure in Westminster Abbey, with the aid of divining-rods. Instead of gold he found demons who nearly blew the building down (or perhaps it happened to be a stormy night), and the disappointed diviner spent the rest of the night working spells to lay the furies he had raised. He continued the “great work” by publishing prophetic almanacs which sold very well, and have continued to sell very well, in forms to suit the age, down to this day. John Gadbury, a contemporary and rival astrologer, described him as “that grand but fortunate impostor, Mr. William Lilly.”

§ 17. Lilly’s adopted son, Henry Coley, was more of the mathematician than the astrologer, though he published a book or two on the latter subject, and continued the business of almanac-

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 37; and *Black Magic*, § 13.

making. The seventeenth century abounded in astrological charlatans—men who were not above common cheating, prophets who rigged the stage that their predictions might be fulfilled; occasionally they overstepped themselves and were put in the pillory for fraud.

§ 18. The eighteenth century commenced with a fortune-teller or quack doctor in almost every alley in the city of London. These villains published broadsheets denouncing and insulting each other; and the truth is, there was nothing to choose between them. Even qualified doctors of medicine had to join in the handbill battles, issuing their warning, “beware who you consult in Physick for it is becoming a common cheat to profess it.” Ebenezer Sibley stands out from this welter of insolence battenning upon ignorance. He was a qualified doctor of medicine, but genuinely believed in and made a study of astrology. Dubbing himself an “Astrophilosopher,” he published numerous books, setting forth nothing new, it is true, but faithfully recapitulating all that had gone before, and thereby proving at least that he was a sincere and industrious, if misguided scholar.

§ 19. The nineteenth century was not without its astrologers, who for the greater part had the niceness to disguise their identity under stellar pseudonyms; they were not encouraged; the nineteenth century was respectable. It was also level-headed, and determined to make a fortune in the City, which it did.

§ 20. The twentieth century, strange as it may seem, has regressed into a state of mental puerility so far as astrology is concerned, and there are now more firm believers than there were a century ago. No mid-Victorian newspaper, even though published on Sunday, would have dared devote a page to

astrological matters, as our contemporary press, to its shame, does. It should be emphasized that these articles appearing are not intended to be humorous either by the writer of the article or by the editor of the paper.

§ 21. Judicial astrology, which purports to read the fate and fortune of all and sundry; horary astrology, which claims to learn from the stars the correct answer to any question; natural astrology, whereby prophecies are made concerning anything ranging between the forthcoming weather and the fall of empires; and even esoteric astrology, by the practice of which astrologers discover why and how the universe was created,—all are manipulated by the same method. The practitioner casts a horoscope, that is, he draws a chart consisting of geometric divisions, in each of which he inscribes the symbols employed to designate stars, planets, houses, signs of the Zodiac, and the like, so that the relative positions of all these appear in diagrammatic form. All kinds of questions were, and probably still are, put to the astrologers. Grinling Gibbons, the famous woodcarver, consulted them that he might find the propitious hour in which to start a business proposition; and” horary figures,” showing when “the lost money will be found,” are plentiful. The most common type of horoscope is the nativity—a figure outlining a person’s fate and fortune from birth. To construct this, the astrologer should know the exact hour of birth, yet nowadays they unblushingly cast them per post for the sum of five shillings, without knowing anything more accurate than the day; and as obviously the signs, stars, and planets, each with their influences, characters, plants, diseases and metals, must “move” in relation to the earth very considerably in the course of the twenty-four hours covered by any specific

date, such laxity savours very strongly of common fraud; for no conscientious astrologer who really believed in stellar influence (no matter how mistakenly) could possibly work on such slender data.

J. F.

See also:

*History of Occult Ideas*, §§ 42-3, and *Occultism in Ancient Greece and Rome*, § 5.

ATLANTIS. A land-mass of continental dimensions, which, according to certain modern theorists, occupied the area now covered by the Atlantic Ocean. From the evidence afforded by spirit-whispers, automatic-writing, and the like, these theorists claim that it was to Atlantis that the human race came when it decided to grace with its presence this planet. It is even claimed by the supporters of this extravagant notion, that Ancient Egypt and the Early Maya Settlements were but colonies founded by the inhabitants of Atlantis, which latter contention is “proved by persons purporting to have deciphered the Mayan Scripts; needless to add, these experts have not bothered to blush when the same scripts have, in the hands of recognized authorities, turned out to be simply calendars!

§ 2. The well-established facts of such sciences as biology, palæontology and cultural anthropology, indicate that the “Atlantis Theory” is utterly invalid; and from geological facts we perceive that if a considerable land-mass ever did occupy the position claimed for Atlantis, it must have disappeared before the end of the Pabeozoic Era—a little matter of at *least* thirty million years before the human race was evolved.

See also *History of Occult Ideas*.

AURA. A psychic fluid or force, supposed to envelop all living creatures. It is conceived of as a nebulous mass of colour, the shade varying with the personality: all animals are supposed to “sense” it—but only such human beings as are psychically advanced can do likewise.

BARHAM, REV. R. H., Author of *The Ingoldsby Legends*. A collection of amusing tales in elegant prose and eccentric verse, dealing with the occult—to its detriment.

BEAUMONT, JOHN. A psychopathic person with severe hallucinations, who wrote an amusing book, *Treatise on Spirits, Apparitions, etc.*, 1705.

BERGMONCK. A terrible figure of a gigantic monk, haunting treasure-bearing mines (German origin). Treasure mines all over the world are said to be haunted by some kind of demon.

BLACK ART, THE, is translated from nigromancy, a perversion of necromancy (q.v.). The same misunderstanding has passed into most European languages, and has led to the parallel adoption of white in white magic. (Vide *Ernest Weekly, Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, 1921.)

## BLACK MAGIC

§ 1. The fundamental difference between an Australian aborigine, considered by many European and American “whites” to be the most lowly specimen of mankind, and those same “whites” who consider themselves the highest specimens of mankind—is, that whilst *alt* Australian black-fellows believe that by pointing a bone at a neighbour and repeating a magical formula the while, they can cast a spell, not *quite* all “whites” give credence to the power of “the evil eye” and the potency of curses.

§ 2. This distinction, however, could not have been made in the Middle Ages, for at that time Europe was steeped in sorcery and black magic from hovels to palaces; peasants, princes and prelates all being involved. Those who were not actively engaged in casting spells, invoking demons, and entering into pacts with the Devil, were for ever on the alert protecting themselves against the furies—to which end they purchased amulets, relics, and sacred medallions whilst the emissaries of the Church of Rome, when not busily engaged in detecting and punishing sorcerers, were exorcising and casting demons out of the possessed members of the flock. If the sorcerers were black magicians, the priests were certainly white magicians, though no very hard and fast line can be drawn between the two. A. E. Waite, in *The Book of Black Magic*, says: “Each of the occult sciences was, however, liable to that species of abuse which is technically known as Black Magic. Astrology . . . could be perverted into the composition of malefic talismans . . . Esoteric Medicine . . . produced in its malpractices the secret of poisoning . . . Divination became debased into

*Black Magic*

Witchcraft, and Ceremonial Magic into dealing with Devils. White, Ceremonial Magic is, by the terms of its definition, an attempt to communicate with Good Spirits for a good, or at least an innocent purpose. Black Magic is an attempt to communicate with Evil Spirits for an Evil purpose.” It must, however, be added that when the white magician calls (or attempts to call) up an evil spirit for the purpose of compelling it to perform good works, his activities are at once besmuted with the smoke of hell.

§ 3. Although the performance of black magic often involves a pact with the Devil, or one of his numerous agents, the practitioner is not necessarily a Devil-worshipper; in fact, the evil spirit called to assist may be bullied and insulted by the magician. Spirits of evil are generally invoked when the object of the magician cannot be gained by sympathetic magic of either the homeopathic or the contagious variety, though the one or the other of these is usually considered potent enough to produce disease in, or even bring death to an enemy. The aid of spirits is enlisted when the magician wishes to acquire treasure or to gain a difficult or forbidden sexual object. Dr. Faustus, in Christopher Marlowe’s great drama, desired Helen of Troy; and when his familiar spirit summoned her from the nether regions he greeted her with the immortal words:

Is this the face that launched a thousand ships  
And burned the topless towers of Ilium?

Faustus, as a magician, was not powerful enough to invoke Helen without diabolic aid.

§ 4. The spells, incantations, and rites used in the performance

*Black Magic*

of maleficium (that is, malicious magic) are in the main much less gory, coprophilic, and revolting than the ritualistic acts employed in the larger lunacy of veritable human demons like Gilles de Laval; but no matter how complex the magical practice may be in performance, and how involved the system of beliefs behind it, analysis reveals that magic is based on two, and only two principles: "First, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed" (Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*).

§ 5. It is to the first principle that the "classical" act of black magic, namely, the destruction of an enemy by the destruction of his image, belongs. In the words of Sir James Frazer again: ". . . Thousands of years ago it was known to the sorcerers of ancient India, Babylon, and Egypt, as well as of Greece and Rome, and at this day it is still resorted to by cunning and malignant savages in Australia, Africa and Scotland." The first necessity is to construct a puppet of wax, wood, wool, or any perishable material. If the hair, nail-parings, spittle or anything that has been in contact with the intended victim's body is incorporated into the figure of the puppet, then the charm is more powerful in so much that the second principle, contagion, comes into play. The image, having been successfully manufactured, the next step is to baptize it with the name of the intended victim so that there can be no mistake concerning the identity of the person who is to suffer. By this act the image becomes as violable as the living being it represents, and the tortures may commence at midnight. Slow roasting is the commonest method, and accompanying it is the repetition, over

*Black Magic*

and over again, of words to this effect: “It is not wax that is roasting here, but the heart and blood, the stomach and liver and lungs of so-and-so.” This has to be repeated every night, and sure enough within seven days of the spell being commenced the victim will fall sick, generally of a “strange malady” or “a fever that seems consuming all within.” It is useless for physicians to attempt a cure, the patient will waste away, growing thinner and suffering mental and physical agonies till merciful death supervenes.

§ 6. If the above amiable course is embarked upon purely as a matter of revenge, naturally enough no attempt will be made to speed the process up, in fact the slower the fire the finer the fun; but should there be a little matter of a legacy, for instance, and impatient creditors—then, provided that the roasting has been continued for not less than seven nights, the victim may be dispatched rapidly by either dropping the image into the fire and so burning it to ash, or by driving a nail—preferably a rusty one—into the heart, or lung, or stomach, meanwhile explaining that not the heart or lung or stomach of the image is being pierced but the corresponding organ of so-and-so. The result is that, with or without a scream of bitterest anguish, so-and-so drops dead from a sudden fatal attack in the organ thus miraculously destroyed. Driving nails, not too deep, but very close together is another way of torturing the victim, the pains under such treatment being of the “pricking” rather than the “burning” variety.

§ 7. The foregoing could be put into practice by any ordinary person with sufficient malice, and carried through by patience and powerful concentration during the roasting. If it did not work, it was because the victim had somehow become cognizant of the

*Black Magic*

procedure, and was himself working counter-spells. The ill-success was not qualitative but quantitative; hence, in the pursuit of stronger and yet stronger spells, the ancient grimoires were closely studied, the evil principle of every obsolete religion called upon by name, and the blood of innocent victims poured upon the altar of the Devil.

***The Knights Templars***

§ 8. In 1118-19 Geoffrey de Saint-Omer and Hugh de Payens, together with seven other crusading Knights, formed the Order of the Knights Templars of the Temple of Solomon, for the overt purpose of offering protection to Christian pilgrims journeying to the Holy Land. Their secret object, so it is (or was) said, was to rebuild the Temple of Solomon. The Sword and Trowel were part of their insignia. They attracted numerous members and became exceedingly rich, not only because many wealthy men were among the recruits, but also because they developed into a vast trading concern—in fact, were the main source of commercial intercourse between the East and the West. They converted themselves into a “secret” Order and held their meetings at night, behind closed and closely guarded doors. Popular opinion associated them with indulgence, intemperance and luxury, hence catch-phrases of the day ran, “as drunk as a Templar” and “avoid the Templar’s kiss.” This reputation resulted in their unpopularity: rumour piled up upon rumour; their secret meetings were considered Devil-worshipping rites; and at last King Philip IV of France, together with Pope Clement V, arranged for the arrest of one hundred of the leaders. The trial dragged out to the length such affairs were apt to do at that period, and accompanied by torture, resulted in

*Black Magic*

many confessing to the practice of black magic. It appeared that initiates were requested to renounce Christ and spit upon the Cross; to strip naked and both give and receive the *osculum obscænum*, and to indulge in homosexual practices. The Order possessed an idol named Baphomet, the effigy of a human head, with glittering eyes. Of this it has been said that it was of wood and that it was of metal; that it had a beard, and that it had no beard; that it possessed three faces and that it possessed only one; and that it was not an idol but a picture. The fact is that there were many heads of Baphomet; no less than four in England alone. The idol, standing as a symbol of the “Baptism of Wisdom,” represented deity. Neophytes in the Order were informed that this was the true God and that in future their prayers must be addressed to him. Further accusations against the Templars were that their idol was meant to represent Mahomet, and that they were an extension of the sect of Assassins, intent on raising Islam over Christianity; that at their secret sessions they worshipped a great black cat which was really the Devil personified; that they murdered children to use their blood and fat in grim demonological rites; that etc., etc., etc. Their possession of great wealth was very much against them because, in the first place, it was the main object of both King and Pope to obtain this; and in the second, black magic was notoriously practised for the purpose of obtaining treasure, so that a suspect’s wealth was generally regarded as sufficient proof of his sorcery. Some of the accusations against the Order were certainly well founded, with the result that many of the Templars were executed and their treasure, no matter how ill-gotten, escheated to the Crown—and shared with the Mitre. Rumour has it that those who were pardoned banded

*Black Magic*

themselves together again into the secret societies that still exist. “. . . Before dying, the Grand Master of the Temple organized Esoteric Masonry. Within the walls of his prison he provided four Metropolitan Lodges—at Naples for the East, Edinburgh for the West, Stockholm for the North, and Paris for the South. . . . In breaking the Sword of the Templars it was converted into a dagger and their proscribed Trowels henceforth were utilized only in the erection of tombs” (Eliphas Levi, *History of Magic*, p. 271).

***Bluebeard***

§ 9. Gilles de Laval,<sup>1</sup> Lord of Rais, Marshal of Brittany—the Bluebeard of fairy-story—was one of the members of the Court that tried Joan of Arc for witchcraft; soon after, he had to face charges of sorcery brought against himself. He was known as Bluebeard on account of his facial hair being of a blue-black hue. The fairy-tale version of his exploits, horrible as it may be, is perhaps the most thoroughly expurgated narrative in literature.

§ 10. Whenever the Lord of Rais appeared in public he was preceded by banner and cross, accompanied by chaplains attired in cloth of gold, and surrounded by choir-boys who also were expensively bedecked. It was considered a piece of good fortune by the peasants of the district to have their boys chosen for the choir of his lordship; and though he demanded that the parents should never see their offspring again, the sacrifice was deemed worth-while, for the Lord of Rais always promised that the boys should be advanced in the service and ultimately placed in the first positions in the land. Laval’s castle at Machecoul was

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 33.

possessed of a sombre ivy-clad tower, the entrance to which was bricked up because the owner declared it to be in a ruinous condition within and likely to collapse at any moment. In spite of this report the newly wed Madame de Rais, who lived in great terror of her husband, had from time to time seen weird red lights appearing in an upper aperture, but had of course never dared to inform anyone, or herself ask questions concerning the phenomenon.

§ 11. Easter, 1440, the Lord of Rais, having attended divine service in his private chapel, announced his intention of proceeding to the Holy Land. His wife, being with child, begged that her sister might be allowed to come and remain with her during his absence, in which arrangement her husband acquiesced. Left together, the two women discussed the strange character of Monsieur de Rais, commented upon the fact of his constantly engaging new choir-boys who seemed to disappear, and speculated much concerning the ruinous tower out of which red lights sometimes came by night. Prompted by curiosity, they sought about, and at last came upon a secret door which gave entrance to the mysterious tower. Far from being in a dilapidated condition, the staircase revealed traces of comparatively recent repairs. Ascending, the adventuresses found themselves in a chapel set out with all the appurtenances necessary to Devil-worship. Above this was a chamber furnished with retorts, crucibles, bottles and jars; in the centre of the room was a large hearth fitted with bellows like a forge. It was clear that Laval here worked as an alchemist, endeavouring to transmute base metals into gold, and that his nocturnal activities about the furnace would amply account for the weird red lights. Ascending yet higher, the

*Black Magic*

sisters found themselves in a room the walls of which were lined with vessels containing blood, each bearing the name of the victim and the date of slaughter. In the centre was a slab of black marble and upon it the body of a recently murdered choir-boy. So far, there is nothing in the narrative calling for rejection. The Devil-worship, the alchemistic laboratory, and the slaughter-chamber are all in keeping with the general practice of black magic; it is also possible that the curiosity of Madame got the better of her discretion when she found herself supported by her sister; but romance surely enters in when the husband makes a dramatic return just in time to find the two of them trespassing in the forbidden tower. It is more probable that the women left the nauseating place quite safely and made no mention of their discovery at the time. To resume: Gilles had not gone to Palestine, but had only made a journey to consult a renegade priest who was an accomplice in the magical practice. Possibly the priest was the worse knave of the two and the leader in the unsavoury practices, and, finding himself unable to transmute metals by the use of choir-boys' blood, and fearing that before long Laval would turn upon him with physical violence (which it is interesting to note, simple and commonplace though it is, cannot be combated by black magic), had made up his mind to back out by demanding something that he suspected Laval would refuse to grant—namely, the blood of his own unborn child. There was nothing squeamish about the Lord of Rais, however, and, according to legend, finding his wife in the tower upon his return, he took her presence as an omen of good luck and success. Sister Ann had already run up to the battlements from whence she saw the brothers coming, and so the murder was averted in the nick of

time.

§ 12. This is too romantic by far. It is more likely that sister Ann went away at the termination of her visit, without any trouble, and subsequently told the brothers of Laval's profane activities, whereupon they rode over to interview him, primarily to advise him to cease terrifying their sister. It was certainly the brothers-in-law who effected Laval's arrest, probably after investigating the tower for themselves during the master's absence. Madame de Laval and her unborn child were not sacrificed to alchemistic experiment, but had the arrest not been accomplished in time there can be no doubt there would have been that double murder added to the list of charges brought against Gilles de Laval. At the trial he stoutly denied all knowledge of black magic, which was only to be expected, but he pleaded guilty to the murder of the boys: indeed, numerous skeletons were produced in evidence against him. Questioned why he had committed these outrages if not for magical purposes, he declared that it had been simply for pleasure. Needless to add, he and his accomplices went to the stake, where they were strangled and then burnt to ashes, being found guilty on all counts. Later, there was a rumour set afoot that the entire story was false and had been engineered against him for political reasons. Whilst this latter aspect is far from inadmissible, it is important to note that in the light of modern knowledge the sadistic elements in the case point to Laval's insanity, and the practice of black magic with its megalomaniacal delusions is quite in keeping.

### ***Infernal Necromancy***

§ 13. "I can call spirits from the vasty deep," says Owen

Glendower, and Hotspur replies:

“Why, so can I, or so can any man,  
But will they come when you do call for them?”

It is presumable that Shakespeare believed if not in Glendower’s occult powers, at least in those of Dr. Dee,<sup>1</sup> who was Good Queen Bess’s Court Magician. Dee, a scholar and a keen student, had earned a bad name for himself at the university by studying through those hours which his contemporaries spent in riotous living. Later, in contriving some striking stage effects, he was stigmatized as a magician; but his reputation is, on the whole, fairly free from blemish. Although his house at Mortlake was a veritable alchemistic laboratory, he did little more in the black art than read the future in a crystal, an occupation so innocent that it might even be considered as white magic. It is to Edward Kelley,<sup>1</sup> rather than John Dee, that the practice of infernal necromancy may be attributed, and in almost every illustrated book dealing with occultism, there is to be found a reproduction of an old print—“Edward Kelley, a Magician, in the Act of invoking the Spirit of a Deceased Person.” In a churchyard, beneath a sombre yew-tree dark with foliage, the two experimenters stand—so close together that at first glance they appear like one man with two heads—in the centre of a magical diagram. One of them holds aloft a flaming torch while the other points downwards with his wand to those signs of the Zodiac and those names of the archangels of which the diagram is composed. The scene is illuminated by a

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Alchemy*, § 37.

*Black Magic*

waning moon shining through a rift in heavy clouds, and a jagged flash of lightning adds a stark brilliance. The Norman-towered church looks very silent indeed, the tombstones lean at all angles, while, in answer to the summons of the two sorcerers, a figure clad in mouldy cerements stand stiffly before them.

§ 14. Modern spiritualism claims to have communication with the spirits of the departed; but between necromancy and present-day psychic experimentation is a gulf as wide as the ages. Spiritualism comes into the category of white magic; necromancy is most definitely black. Blood of a living and bones of a dead person are necessary to its successful practice. The proceedings must commence at midnight. First, an aperture needs to be made in the grave; next, the Zodiacal circle must be described and the flaming brand turned in the direction of each of the cardinal points; then, striking three times on the tomb, the sorcerer chants: "By the virtue of the Holy Resurrection, and the torments of the damned, I conjure and exorcise thee, Spirit of [name] deceased, to answer my liege demands, being obedient to these Sacred ceremonies, on pain of everlasting torment and distress. Berald, Beroald, Balbin, Gab, Gabor, Agaba, Arize, Arize, I charge and command thee." After this the ghost comes forth from the grave and obligingly answers questions, provided the person named has died a natural death. In the case of suicide the procedure is different: the wand must be decorated with the head of an owl and a bunch of St. John's-wort, and the tomb or burial-place must be struck nine times, a different cantrip being repeated over it. The practice of infernal necromancy was always for some unhallowed purpose, generally to obtain the direction to the hiding-place of buried or concealed treasure; hence misers, or reputed misers,

*Black Magic*

were more likely to be subjected to such post-mortem disturbances. The conjuration used to this end reads: “I adjure and command thee, Human Spirit, to appear before me under the similitude of fire. By the ineffable Name Jehovah . . . by the power of His justice, which expelled the demons, enchaining them in the infernal abyss. . . . By the ineffable name Tetragrammaton, inscribed on this rod, answer me without deception or equivocation. . . . I command thee by the most holy name of God, who hath condemned thee to frequent this place wherein thou hast buried thy treasure. . . . Colpriziana, Offina, Alta, Nestera, Fuaro . . . Omgroma, Epyn, Seyok . . . Galliganon, Zogogen, Ferstifon . . .,” etc., etc.

§ 15. These meaningless words were favourites with sorcerers; it seems the more polysyllabic and senseless they were the greater the power they possessed. Abracadabra, now degenerated into the magic word used by the “principal boy” in almost any Christmas pantomime, was once taken very seriously, and, written in triangular acrostic form, considered first among the sorcerers’ “words of power.” Not only meaningless words and signs of the Zodiac, but geometrical figures and childish diagrams, called sigils (i.e., seals), were considered of great virtue in the performance of profane miracles.

***A Pact with Lucifer***

§ 16. Any person who is sufficiently ambitious may become possessed of treasure by entering into a pact with the Devil—this is generally acknowledged. However, many enterprising young men are unaware of the manner in which to open negotiations. Actually it is a very simple matter. Begin by cutting with a new

*Black Magic*

and unused knife a rod of wild hazel that has never borne fruit. This operation must be performed immediately the sun appears on the horizon. Next, select a quiet room or the vaults of a ruinous castle, repair there at midnight, describe a triangle and set two burning candles beside it; then write the Holy Name round the triangle, stand within, and, holding the hazel-wand, say: "Emperor Lucifer, Master of all the revolted Spirits, I entreat thee to favour me in the adjuration which I address to thy mighty minister Lucifuge Rofocale, being desirous to make a pact with him. I beg thee also, O Prince Beelzebuth, to protect me in my undertaking. O Count Astarot! be propitious to me, and grant that to-night the great Lucifuge may appear to me under human form, and free from evil smell. . . Obey promptly, or thou shalt be eternally tormented by the power of the potent words. . . . Aglow, Tetragram, . . . Stimulamaton, . . .," etc., etc. Lucifuge has no choice, he must appear and will enter into a pact whereunder he is obliged to open the coffers of the world's wealth, in return for the body and soul of the supplicant in twenty years' time. A very fair bargain. The contract must be written on virgin parchment, the signatory's own blood being used for ink. All that remains to be done is follow the fiend wherever he may lead—up the chimney—through the air—anywhere—for the journey will end safely before a heap of concealed treasure, be it doubloons, pieces-of-eight, ingots of silver, or glittering gems. The parchment must be cast upon the top of this pile, and as much treasure as can be conveniently carried may be taken away. Lucifuge, on command, will convey the newly-created nabob back to the meeting-place, arriving whence, he must walk backward into the charmed triangle before dismissing the fiend. This process may be repeated

*Black Magic*

at frequent intervals: for once the pact has been duly signed, Lucifuge, like a man of his word, will appear whenever called during the period covered by the contract, at the termination of which he will arrive with a flourish, unbidden, to claim his just reward. But, according to Dr. Louis Berman (*Food and Character*, p. 124), the average human body is worth only about four shillings, and a soul that has been familiar with the fiend for twenty years cannot be worth much more; hence Lucifuge, at the best, gets a very poor recompense for his faithful, valuable and unfailing service. At the worst he gets nothing, for by describing the correct sigil, and repeating the appropriate cantrip, the signatory may at the last moment renounce the Devil and then be rebaptized. This piece of belated piety, however, savours so very strongly of sharp practice that neither the diagram nor the words will be revealed here. A. E. Waite, in his *Book of Black Magic* (privately printed), gives all formulas in full, and foolish and childish though they are, Montague Summers says (*History of Witchcraft*, p. 68): "In several grimoires and books of Magic, such as *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts* . . . may be found goetic rituals as well as invocations, and if these, fortunately for the operators, are occasionally bootless, it can only be said that Divine Power holds in check the evil intelligences. . . Any such pact which may be entered into with the demon is not in the slightest degree binding. Such is the authoritative opinion of S. Alphonsus, who lays down that a necromancer or person who has intercourse with evil spirits now wishing to give up his sorceries is bound: (1) to abjure and to renounce any formal contract or any sort of commerce whatsoever he may have entered into with demonic intelligences; (2) to burn all such books, writings, amulets, talismans, and other instruments

*Black Magic*

as appertain to the Black Art (i.e. crystals, planchettes, ouija-boards, pagan periapts, and the like); (3) to burn the written contract if it be in his possession, but if it be believed that it is held by the Demon, there is no need to demand its restoration since it is wholly annulled by penitence. . . .”

Yet, in spite of the authoritative and good St. Aiphonsus, we repeat that from the demonological point of view, the Devil must *first* be renounced through a specific sigil and cantrip—failing which, all the penitence in life cannot help! In fact, if such a case came before the English courts, the Devil would get judgment in his favour on a point of equity.

§ 17. It must, however, in support of St. Alphonsus and Montague Summers, be acknowledged that the Devil is notoriously easy to cheat, which suggests that he is in the main a rather naïve, simple-hearted, good-natured fellow. Dr. Ernest Jones says (*On Nightmare*, p. 175): “A favourite device was to bargain with the Devil for the sale of a soul on condition that he carried out some work before cock-crow, and then at the last moment make a cock crow by pinching it. . . . In all these stories the Devil was circumvented by guile, never by force”; hence, when the old woman at Aberystwyth lost her cow, and saw it on the other side of the Afon Mynach gorge, she entered into a pact with the Devil—in one of his favourite disguises, a monk’s habit—that he should throw a bridge across, and in return receive the first living thing to pass over. It was done—instantly! “Won’t you try its strength, madam?” asked Satan, but the crafty old beldam, tossing a stone along the newly and miraculously constructed path, commanded her dog—“Go—fetch it!” In this case of the Devil’s bridge, one cannot feel sorry for the Evil One (the careless making

of contracts is always reprehensible), but the R.S.P.C.A. might take action.

§ 18. Malice and money, two powerful motivators of black magic, figure no less largely in the annals of sorcery than do sexual aims. It was part of every witch's business to supply love-potions, and not a magician practised his art without working spells to attract women; in fact, these performances hardly called for active and unequivocal magicianship. Homœopathic magic was the underlying principle, and the only apparatus needed was the effigy fashioned in wax—not to be tortured by fire and iron nails, as in the malefic usage, but caressed and crooned over with the intention of influencing the person it represented. Only when the desire was of a perverted nature, or the object difficult of attainment because of social barriers, was the assistance of demons invoked, for in these circumstances supreme skill in the infernal art was necessary.

### ***The Hand of Glory***

§ 19. Those magicians who did not relish the idea of entering into a pact with the Evil One, but nevertheless wished for an accumulation of wealth, were accustomed either to obtain for themselves invisibility (a somewhat long and complicated process requiring the head of a dead man, five black beans, a bottle of virgin brandy, and much knowledge, skill and patience), or, alternatively, to equip themselves with a Hand of Glory, both being invaluable accessories to housebreaking. For the manufacture of this latter appurtenance, the hand of a gibbeted felon is requisite. It might prove rather difficult to obtain nowadays, but in the good old times there was almost sure to be a

*Black Magic*

miscreant hanging in chains on the local heath. The extremity, when procured, had to be wrapped in a piece of winding-sheet and well squeezed to drive out any blood that might remain—after which, covered in salt and spices, it was kept in an earthenware jar for a period of fifteen days and then dried in the sun. The extracted fat, mixed with wax and formed into a candle, could cast a glow which petrified all whom it fell upon, thus making entry to any building a safe proceeding. Traces of this ghoulish practice linger to-day, and recent reports have been received of cases occurring in Russia, murder being committed to obtain the fat of a virgin for the purpose of manufacturing such magic candles. Thus we see that the demoniac layer of human nature is just beneath our skin the whole time, and such manifestations are but the flash of frightening flame issuing from the inferno of our superstitions. All over Asia and Europe there is evidence of this smouldering menace to civilization, and the very widespread belief in the power of the evil eye may be regarded as the lurid danger signal.

***Modern Maleficium***

§ 20. The conviction that an envious or malicious person can contrive disaster for one by a mere glance charged with malign magic, is not confined to ignorant peasants: highly successful men—millionaires—have been known to dread it to such an extent, that though consciously superior to the wearing of a talisman for protection, their unconscious mind has produced a hypochondriacal illness in them. “He is a millionaire, but he’s a sick man—I don’t envy him!” thinks the beggar, brimming with health and vigour—so Cræsus feels safe. The evil eye is not always a conscious or cherished possession. The owner may have

*Black Magic*

received the reputation much against his or her will or intention, a few coincidences being sufficient to cause the application of the stigma. In the East, the passage of a person so branded will set all and sundry running to hide, while domestic animals will be hastily driven away or their heads covered. In Europe, as a means of protection, charms and amulets inscribed with words of a highly obscene character are carried upon the person; and, in the event of such a talisman having been lost or mislaid, a believer in the evil eye will, in the presence of a reputed possessor, take the precaution of making a lewd gesture. This very prevalent modern superstition is essentially no different from the medieval belief in black magic. The comforting belief that “such things cannot happen nowadays” is false. Sir James Frazer, in *Man, God and Immortality* (p. 206), says: “The theory of inspiration or possession is commonly invoked to explain all abnormal mental states, particularly insanity, or states of mind bordering on it, so that persons more or less crazed in their wits, and particularly hysterical or epileptic patients, are for that very reason thought to be particularly favoured by the spirits and are therefore consulted as oracles, their wild and whirling words passing for the revelation of a higher power, whether a god or a ghost, who considerately screens his too dazzling light under a thick veil of dark sayings and mysterious ejaculations.” “Revivalist” meetings often end in a hysterical epidemic, demanding police and even military action to check the contagion. The raw material of belief in black magic is plentiful, and very present in our midst. Wireless telephony and aeronautics are too commonly understood to feed man’s craving for the mysterious. The very concrete fear of a future war is insufficient to swamp his dread of the unknown. We are still as

*Black Magic*

children, brave in the face of grave danger, but filled with the exquisitely painful enjoyment of a formless, self-created fear.

J. F.

Book recommended:

BLACKWOOD, A., *Ancient Sorceries* (Collins, 1927).

[Mr. James Branch Cabell writes amusing fiction with a demonological background. Notably, *Jurgen* (1933), *Figures of Earth* (1921), and *The Cream of the Jest* (1923), all published by John Long.]

BLAVATSKY, MADAME. “Of theosophical fame, we find that those who knew her intimately state she was possessed of the most conflicting characteristics possible to imagine; the reason being, according to occult knowledge, that she possessed the power of vacating her own body, so that other entities—and sometimes ones of a very high order such as Adepts—could enter in and so function through ‘her’” [Cyril Scott, in *The Adept of Galilee* (Routledge, 1920)]. In the language of rationalism, Blavatsky would be termed “emotionally unstable”—to make the very least of it. In the above-mentioned book, Scott maintains the thesis that Jesus Christ was a Yogi.

BOGGART (or -ARD). In North England, a type of demon supposed to haunt the scene of violence, or a gloomy spot.

*Black Magic*

BOGY, BOGEY. A spectre, usually of terrifying appearance.

BOOK OF ENOCH. Supposed to have been written in Hebrew about 100 B.C., giving a legend of the Angels' descent to Earth and their teaching magic to men. Translated into English by Archbishop Lawrence, 1821.

BOOTHBY, Guy, dealt with the occult in the following novels: *Dr. Nikola* (Ward Lock, 1896), *Dr. Nikola's Experiment* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1899), and *Farewell, Nikola* (Ward Lock & Co., 1901).

BUDDHA'S HAND. An inedible citron terminating in finger-like processes, called Po Shou in China. It has a fragrant odour, and is offered up to household gods at the New Year Festival.

## BUDDHIST OCCULTISM

§ 1. The founder of Buddhism, Siddartha, of the Gautama family (chiefs of the Sakya clan), was born about 625 B.C. His mother, Queen Mahamaya, is supposed to have dreamed of a white elephant before his birth, hence the white elephant became, and still is regarded as, a sacred animal. The birth took place in the Lambini Grove, near the town of Kapilavastu, the ruins of which lie just over the British border of the United Provinces. The place is marked by a pillar erected as an act of piety by the Emperor Asoka, and the carved inscription is as clear to-day as when it was cut. Before Gautama's birth a prophecy was uttered that he would become either a universal monarch or a monk; besides that, there were "earthquakes . . . flowers bloomed . . . out of season . . . and the ocean lost its saltiness and became sweet and refreshing." The new-born child's body bore the thirty-two auspicious marks, so his future greatness was settled.

§ 2. The exploits of his infancy are of a legendary nature, but there is no doubt of his having been brought up in great luxury, living in a palace surrounded by a garden, and in entire ignorance of the ugliness and misery attending human destiny. A soothsayer announced that the boy would begin his saintly career after seeing the "four signs—a decrepit old man, a diseased man, a dead man, and a monk"; whereupon the king placed a strong guard round the garden, so that the four signs might not enter in. However, Siddartha, on four successive occasions, went beyond the wall, and each time beheld one sign. Another story of his conversion is that having been brought up in ignorance of the existence of

*Buddhist Occultism*

death, he was puzzled one day at finding a dead rabbit (in some versions, a pigeon) in the garden. His tutors were obliged to enlighten him concerning the creature's condition, and from that hour he entered upon a course of meditation and prayer.

§ 3. Whatever the influences that launched him on his holy path, he commenced in the approved Hindu fashion by the practice of asceticism, till at the end of six years, with an emaciated body he fell senseless and was mistaken for dead. Recovering from the trance, he declared the ascetic path to be the wrong one, that it was "like time spent in endeavouring to tie knots in air." Resuming a normal diet, he left his companions in austerity, and went forth again in search of the complete enlightenment, which is said to have come upon him after spending some time living on alms beneath a sacred tree. He then assumed the name of Sakyamuni, that is, monk of the Sakya clan."

§ 4. The dharma (doctrine) of Buddha can hardly be styled a religion, in so much that it denies the existence of all gods and demons, and teaches that man can reach perfection by living a simple, self-restraining life till nirvana, an emotionless, blissful state, is reached. He set up an ethical standard, the only system of rewards and punishments being represented by karma, or the natural law of cause and effect. He also denied the individual personality of man, regarding each person as only a register of universal perception (a point of view now being reached by modern science, by way of Einstein, and the atomic theory). Nothing could be more transcendental than this simple teaching of the Buddha, but man is constituted to enjoy complications: even before the Master's death (at the age of eighty), the Hindu philosophy of transmigration and reincarnation had become

*Buddhist Occultism*

confounded with karma so that it came to mean, not “cause and effect” but “the maturing of deeds” (karmavipaka), which implies an infinitude of rewards and punishments. Contamination did not end here: the system was expanded to include all the Hindu gods and devils, who were represented as suffering or being rewarded for previously bad or good karma. After this, the great Buddhist schism occurred: the Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle, endeavoured to adhere to the enlightened, non-theistic, passive teaching of the Master; the Mahayana, or Greater Vehicle, became a species of Theosophy embracing “all castes, creeds, colours”—and superstitions, witchcraft, demonology and sorcery of the countries to which it travelled. The Mahayana’s priests soon evolved a pantheon, based on old lunar and solar cults, with Amitabha Buddha, a personification of the principle of Enlightenment, as chief deity. So the system that aimed at the destruction of superstitions became instead a preserving medium for them.

§ 5. Mahayanistic Buddhism, spread in the one direction to include gods and demons, balances the addition by embracing animals, plants, and even inanimate objects. The dharma of Buddha, the Universal Law, or Light of the World, shines for all things: a stone may be reincarnated a creature, and creatures rise in the scale to human beings, and they, by following the Noble Eightfold Path, may rise again in holy works, through stages of initiation, to Buddha-ship.

§ 6. All the laws and principles, all the commandments and sermons, are contained in a book called *The Sutra or the Net of Brahma*. Very early in the history of Buddhism this was translated into Chinese and re-titled the *Fan-wang king*. In China the new religion found favour, and as it is there believed that sacred

*Buddhist Occultism*

writings avert evil from mankind, it was considered a virtue to increase the number of such scripts. For this purpose monks from China went on long pilgrimages into India, where they learned Sanscrit and Pali, translated Buddhist literature into their native language, and also contributed a great many volumes of original matter on Buddhist philosophy. A catalogue dating from A.D. 518 gives details of 2,213 works.

§ 7. Although Mahayanistic Buddhism is debased in comparison with the teaching of the Master, these books make it clear that a very high moral code was the warp and woof of Brahma's net. Compassion, disinterestedness, and altruism are its three major virtues. The interdiction against killing is absolute, therefore no Buddhist may eat meat or fish; it is even forbidden to buy or sell animals, or keep cats and dogs as pets, because they are carnivorous. No Buddhist may trade in weapons or sharp implements that might be used as weapons; neither may he, though in a high State appointment, act as an ambassador, in case, through his medium, a war should ensue. The Buddhist version of "Thou shalt not steal" includes the giving of short weight. The interdiction against lying includes also the discussing of other people's faults. The spirit of revenge may not be entertained—even against the murderer of one's parents; and slave-trading and -keeping was prohibited over fifteen hundred years ago.

§ 8. These humanitarian and moral recommendations should have made of Buddhism a world religion; however, quite the contrary is the case. In India it has been utterly crushed and destroyed by the demon-worshipping cults that gibber dangerously behind Hinduism. In China, in the year A.D. 845, Confucianism gained the ascendancy, and about forty-five

*Buddhist Occultism*

thousand Buddhist monasteries were demolished and the inmates forced to return to the secular life in obedience to the Emperor Wu Tsung's decree. After this, the Ta-Ts'ing Luh Li code of anti-Buddhist laws was drawn up and remains in force to this day, forbidding a person, under any circumstances, to become a Buddhist at an earlier age than forty, nor even then without State sanction; hence, in the whole of vast China, only a few dozen official Buddhist monasteries are now to be found. Nevertheless, Buddhist sects abound everywhere, and owing to the severity of the Ta-Ts'ing Luh Li, they take the form of secret societies, and without adequate spiritual guidance exercise only Tantric Buddhism. This is actually not Buddhism at all, but a form of witchcraft, as practised in Tibet. A secret society, and more especially one with a demonological background, is always useful to political agitators, who can easily represent sedition, revolution, and bloodshed as divine work; consequently, the lifeblood of China is drained away through the very arteries that should supply its strength.

§ 9. Tantric Buddhism is of two kinds: a cultus of the right hand, equivalent to white magic, and a cultus of the left hand, equivalent to black magic. The Tantrism of the right hand is not very different in purpose and practice from the Yogism of India; however, it very rarely, if ever, exists alone, and is in effect simply a series of students' exercises in preparation for left-hand Tantrism. The ultimate manifestation of Tantric ability is the performance of a Sadhana (i.e., the evocation of a god). The instructor in Tantrism is the guru, who is believed to be an incarnation of the Buddha, and must be worshipped as a god by his pupil. After years of asceticism, and propitiation to one or

*Buddhist Occultism*

more of the numerous demoniac deities, the Tantrika becomes a master of breath-control and trance. He then, “On a chosen day . . . goes to a solitary place, either auspicious—a wood or the bank of the river—or loathsome—a cemetery—according to the purpose. He sits there at ease in a purified spot and fulfils in order the different acts of . . . offering up flowers and perfumes, either mental or real, to the host of Buddhas . . . He continues in the same style . . . by dwelling on the essential voidness of all things [and so acquires] both merit (punya) and wisdom (jnana): all this is only a preparation to the rite itself.” In such magic, as in all other kinds, great importance is attached to the knowledge of the potent word or sentence. In this case it is both: the word is called bija, or “seed,” meaning seed of the god; and the sentence is termed a vidya; its repetition is a force too great for the god invoked, and he is controlled by it in the same way that a hypnotized person is influenced by the operator. The Tantric rite commences by meditation on the bija of the god chosen. Yama is the god of death. He may be destroyed by the demon-god, Yainantaka, whose bija is “hum.” This syllable is written on a disk and the contraption revolved rapidly about a spindle, the Tantrika concentrating on, and repeating, the sound till “the ascetic causes to arise from ‘hum’ the fearful form of the god Yamantaka, hair bristling, blue, with six faces, six arms and six feet, riding astride a wild bull, adorned with a garland of skulls—exceedingly frightful.” The preliminary and the first part of the rite thus accomplished, the second part begins. Having the demi-god before him, under complete control, the ascetic meditates upon himself and the god, imagining that he is himself the god, until he is convinced that identity exists between them. This is a curious metaphysical twist

*Buddhist Occultism*

of reasoning, but nevertheless it is sound enough, for so soon as the delusion of identity is complete, the ascetic possesses all the powers that properly belong exclusively to the deity. He has but to utter a wish in the voice of, and couched in the terms that would be employed by the god, for that wish to be immediately fulfilled.

§ 10. A. Foucher, from whose learned study the foregoing description of the Tantric rite is quoted, points out that the practitioner of such magic runs a grave danger of invoking the wrong deity, for he is enabled to visualize the god only from the description given in the Tantric treatises, and any slight misreading, and consequent mental misrepresentation, would be fatal.

§ 11. The supreme morality of Hinayanic Buddhism does not appear in Tantrism. Instead of an absolute prohibition of alcohol, a mild form of drunkenness is permitted in the rites; rigid vegetarianism is not considered necessary, and the Linga (phallus) is an object of worship. There exists also a set of rites called *stripuja*, or the worship of women, in which obscene and criminal acts are performed, and regarded as expressive of the highest virtue. This is justified in much the same manner as Christian profligate sects (which have arisen from time to time, the Russian Rasputin's being among the latest) have rationalized their reprehensible behaviour: the divine nature is represented as erotic, therefore erotic excess is in imitation of the godhead.

§ 12. According to G. Willoughby Mead, Tantrism in its extreme form is not practised in China, but is confined to Tibet and India; however, the Japanese sect of Shin-gon-shu practise at least the right-hand cultus, and express the idea of erotic union in the intertwining of the fingers during meditation. Right-hand

*Buddhist Occultism*

Tantrism demands the threefold purification, namely, consecration of the limbs, purification of the voice, and control of the thoughts. These three mysteries have not yet been fully explained to Western scholars, and the written records of the Shin-gon-shu sect are far too meagre to afford material for adequate research.

§ 13. The earliest occult practice in Japan was obeisance to the Kami, which signifies deity but was applied indiscriminately to any natural phenomena that might arouse a feeling of awe or wonderment in the beholders; thus men, beasts, birds, plants, seas, rivers, mountains, wind and rain, all came to be deified and worshipped: devils and goblins inhabited every conceivable corner, and any untoward occurrence was attributed to their intervention. This primitive form of pantheism soon developed into an ancestor-worship cult called Shintoism, and the entire mixture absorbed Buddhism as a dry sponge absorbs water. In A.D. 538 the Buddhist king of Korea sent a royal present to the Japanese Court consisting of an image of the Buddha, a set of sacred books, and the polite message that the dharma was the most excellent of all laws and that it brought immeasurable benefit to all believers. Two hostile Court parties began to battle politically with the new faith in hand, and meanwhile missionaries, magicians, and articles of Buddhist ritual were pouring in from China. In A.D. 593, Prince Shotoku defeated Mononobe, and this marked the beginning of Buddhist ascendancy. He drew up a constitution proclaiming the “Triune Treasure” (i.e., Buddhist single-heartedness) to be the ultimate object of human existence. He built temples, pagodas, colleges and hospitals, and the new faith appeared to be making great headway

*Buddhist Occultism*

with all classes of the population. By AD. 749-69, under the Empress Koken, the ecclesiastical body had assumed political power, which overshadowed imperial authority, Yuge-no-Dokyo, an abbot and prime minister, almost succeeded in usurping the throne, but the heroic royalist, Wake-no-Kiyomaro, overthrew him. At about the same period there were earthquakes, floods, and plagues, so the time was ripe for the royalists to put their foot down firmly on the revolutionaries. All these calamities, they said, were the direct result of the imported religion, and the old Kamis were angry. This did not have the effect of stamping out Buddhism, for an ingenious priest, Gyoki, argued successfully that Buddha was really a manifestation of Amaterasu, the Shinto ancestor goddess, and the blending process was continued for a period of about fifty years. After this, affairs of Church and State ran very smoothly, till Dengyo (767-822), an eminent Buddhist, went to China and came home with the news that religious beliefs in Japan were all wrong. He forthwith set about organizing the Tendai-shu sect, which recognizes Buddha as the full measure of divine enlightenment. Dengyo was popular at Court, and under him Buddhism in Japan took a turn towards something more in accordance with the teaching of Gautama Sakyamuni; but as no great man may live to do unalloyed good without arousing envy and the spirit of competition, Kobo (774-835), who was something of a genius in engineering, and through this practical resourcefulness won for himself favour at Court, founded the Shin-gon-shu sect of Tantric Buddhists. Tantrism easily embraced Shintoism, and the two systems remained wedded from about 850 until 1868, when the new régime appointed a Bureau of Ecclesiastical Affairs (Jingi Jimukyoku), the first act of which was

*Buddhist Occultism*

to declare a complete separation of Shintoism and Buddhism. The former was stated to be the foundation of Japanese national morality, and must henceforth be regarded as the State religion. Shinto priests received official rank; Buddhist images were destroyed and the monks forced to return to secular life. By 1872 such enthusiasm had burned its fuel; the Jingi Jimukyoku went up in smoke and the Kyobusho (Ecclesiastical Department) was formed. Under this organization Buddhism revived because both Shinto and Buddhist priests were proclaimed to be of equal rank and were styled Kyodoshoku—that is, “official moral instructors of the masses.”

§ 14. From about 1850 onward, Christianity flowed into Japan, and by 1889 a special law was passed permitting official Christianity. This stirred the slumbering Buddhists to forget their Master (if they knew anything about him) and revengefully inaugurate a “Royalist Buddhist Union,” which was nothing more or less than a disguised anti-Christian campaign, and therefore joined by the Shintoists also. Japanese Christianity replied by becoming nationalized and sending missionaries into the hinterland. Before long there were twenty-two Protestant denominations in Japan, each having numerous adherents. The Buddhists, remembering their Master (or learning about him in the meantime), ceased to attack the Christians and set to work with “New Buddhism,” a pietistic movement, putting the grand morality of Buddhism into practice, and the dharma made converts every day while the Christian sects experienced a corresponding decline. Then came the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), which gave the Shintoists an excuse to emphasize the great necessity for adhesion to the old gods, loyalty to the emperor and

*Buddhist Occultism*

the ancestral spirits, and filial dutifulness. However, this movement died a natural death, and at present Buddhism and Christianity seem to be blending in a manner very comfortably fitting to the Japanese mind.

J. F.

Book recommended:

NARASU, P. L., *The Essence of Buddhism* (Madras, 1912).

CARMOT. The substance from which the Philosophers' Stone is supposed to be made.

CEPHALOMANCY. Divination by boiling an animal's (generally an ass's) head. [In 1807 Southey mentioned that the practice still flourished in England.]

CHAGRIN (also COGRINO and HARGINN). An evil spirit in the form of a large yellow hedgehog, believed in by the gipsies.

CHAKRA. A wheel. The wheel of time, or the period of one of its revolutions.

CHARING CROSS SPIRITUAL CIRCLE. The first spiritualist Society formed in London. "London Spiritualistic Union" absorbed it in 1857.

## CHINESE OCCULTISM

§ 1. About the middle of the thirteenth century, the two Venetian brothers, Nicolo and Maffeo Polo, who were wealthy and enterprising merchants, made their way into old Cathay and met the mighty Kubla Khan. They were the first Europeans to have penetrated China, and the great Khan was so favourably impressed that he requested them to call again and bring with them Christian missionaries. Arriving home, they found Pope Clement IV dead, and no successor appointed. They waited patiently, but the papal interregnum was an unconscionably long one, so, returning to China, they took young Marco, Nicolo's son, with them. The result was that the Chinese did not become Christians, but the Europeans were enriched by a fascinating book. Actually, the great Khan favoured the European religion for political, not conscientious reasons: the Christian, with only one soul, appeared spiritually inferior to the Chinaman, who has two. The higher soul is called Hun, and is equated to the Shen, or good spirits; the lower soul is called P'o, and is equated to the Kuei, or evil spirits. The Chinaman also believes in two great world-principles, Yang and Yin. The former is positive, masculine, good and bright; the latter, negative, feminine, evil and dark. The perpetual interaction of the two constitutes the entire universe: everything that exists is a mixture of Yang and Yin in varying proportions. This curious occult mechanism is applied by the educated, to science and philosophy; but such lofty logic does not come near the average Chinaman. His interest is centred in his home and his family, the approval of his ancestral spirits, and the

goodwill of his neighbours; he entertains no theory of transmigration, but he very firmly believes in a host of dragons, goblins, ghouls and demons.

§ 2. Ancestral spirits are Shen, of Yang origin, and therefore good, although they are sometimes delegated to punish wrongdoers. The Kuei, though capable of good, are always connected with death, darkness and misfortune because they are of Yin nature. Foreigners, being “foreign devils,” are Kuei, and any supreme skill in conjuring, or even in craftsmanship, is Kuei-work. Extremely beautiful and intricate carvings in ivory or jade are so described. Unfriendly spirits that have never been human are called Mo, and any supernatural occurrence is Yao. There are perhaps twenty distinct varieties of ghosts and demons, and hundreds of sub-varieties not always easily distinguishable one from another; but Kuei, Shen, Mo and Yao are sufficiently diverse in their application to render the full list dispensable.

§ 3. No self-respecting Chinaman fears the supernatural. As a righteous man he knows that spirits visiting him are more likely to be benign than malignant, so if a ghost calls upon him he simply continues the work or recreation he is engaged upon, and calmly awaits developments. If it so happens that the visitant is a Kuei, then he boldly faces it, using a weapon of steel or iron, and goes to the attack with prayer on his lips. It is not pious to curse or be disrespectful in any way to even a Kuei, but strangely enough one may “kill” them—and though they are spirits they “die.” Chinese ghost-stories are particularly horrifying because the dénouement may be very unexpected. For instance: a virtuous man, travelling with his wife and family, stopped at an inn a large section of which was locked up and disused because it was haunted by a Yao Kuei.

The traveller offered to stay up all night and destroy the ghost, and sitting fearlessly sword in hand, at about midnight, was confronted by a venerable old gentleman with a long white beard. The armed man rose to his feet, accused the newcomer of being an evil demon and made ready to slay him. The old man smiled and explained that he was not a Kuei, but the guardian spirit of the district, and had called in person to thank the traveller for his kindness—"Your arrival has disposed of the Yao Kuei . . . but should they return before morning, have at them with your sword!" The old gentleman departed and the traveller remained on guard. Soon, a strange black-faced creature entered the room—he struck off its head. Later he had the same experience with a white-faced creature; and so it continued at intervals till cock-crow, when he called the people of the inn to witness his victory. Each brought a lantern and the haunted room was soon filled with light. The walls were splashed and the floor streaming with blood, and there in a heap lay the decapitated corpses of the traveller's wife, children, and servants. "The Yao Kuei has tricked me!" he cried, and fell dead.

§ 4. A mandarin, or a Confucian scholar, is believed to have power over many forms of Kuei. Hence, when a certain student found one of his servants possessed, he sent for a magician, who ordered a mandarin's vermilion writing-brush to be procured, vermilion being a Kuei-scaring Yang colour. When this implement was brought, the magician instructed the student to trace specific characters on the sick man's body: over his heart "rectitude"; upon his neck "sword"; and on each hand "fire." As soon as the character for fire was traced the second time, a voice screamed out, "No! do not burn me—let me go!" The Kuei fled and the

possessed man recovered. Just as evil spirits and ambassadors of the Devil in Europe are reputed to be foolish and easily outwitted so they are in China. The story is told of a reckless young man, a rare toper, who on his way home from the tavern, just out of bravado invoked an evil spirit and invited it to have a drink. Much to his surprise—and horror—a demon appeared and accepted the invitation. There was nothing for it but to go through with the business, so together the man and the demon entered a handy tavern, where they sat drinking, the human being chatting desperately to his unnatural guest, that none but himself could see. Soon everyone thought he was quite mad, but he was wiser than he seemed, for while he was making himself affable he was scheming to escape. At length he removed his hat and put it on the table. “Excuse me—don’t get up—I’ll be back in a moment,” he said; and once outside he fled. The demon sat on for hours, looking at the hat, which he regarded as a proof that his victim would return. However, at closing time the potman, observing that the apparently crazy customer had left a nice new hat behind him, decided to keep it: and next day, when he put it on, he was killed by the Kuei, who stupidly thought it must be the original owner who was wearing it.

§ 5. The illiterate Chinaman treats any piece of written or printed paper with respect, for it may contain a wise maxim. To destroy a book is a very great sin, and no one in China, in possession of his senses, would do it; besides, a sacred book is considered to have power over Kuei. When a venerable scholar sitting up late at his reading was attacked by a big white demon, he simply struck it with the Buddhist book he was reading and the Kuei changed into a sheet of paper. This he shut in the book.

Later in the night he was attacked by two little black demons, so he treated them to a whack with the book, and folded two more sheets of paper between its pages. In the middle of the night he was roused by a weeping woman who charged him with having imprisoned her husband and two sons in the volume. "I have but three pieces of paper there," said the scholar; and at last the woman was forced to confess that her husband and sons were sorcerers, and their souls were in the paper. Out of compassion, the scholar returned one son to look after her, and inquiring in the morning learned that a local man and his son had both died suddenly during the night, leaving a widow and a young boy.

§ 6. The Shen never let a good deed go unrewarded. Once, when a poor student fording a river saw the body of a drowned woman, and went to the trouble and expense of having it recovered from the water and buried, he was recompensed the next night by a very beautiful dream, in which the soul of the woman sang him an exquisitely melodious and enthralling song about the Purple Mansions (heaven). Every word of it haunted his memory, and lo! when in due season he travelled to the Capital to sit for the highest literary examination, he found that the ghost-song made adequate answer to the question set, and so he passed with fullest honours.

§ 7. Taoism, before Christ, before Confucius, and before Buddha, was a religio-philosophical system that induced men to live as hermits in the wilderness and become one with nature, which they did to such good effect that they developed all the powers attributed to the Indian Yogis. They also commercialized their abilities and slowly but surely sank to the level of common fortune-tellers and conjurers; nevertheless, they have to their

credit, besides the artistic renaissance of the T'ang Dynasty, many marvellous stories; and if Taoism is no longer the official religion of China, it still possesses its devotees and priests.

§ 8. It was a poor and ragged Taoist priest that begged a pear from a well-to-do peasant who, having a glut, brought them to town on a hand-cart and offered them for sale in the market-place. This peasant, a surly fellow, instead of giving the fruit to the holy man or at least refusing politely, began to curse and swear and make himself very unpleasant indeed. The priest stood his ground, rebuked him for his unnecessary passion, and gave him a chance to atone by again asking for a pear. By this time a crowd had gathered, but the peasant, even more annoyed at being exposed before so many folk, again refused. The onlookers were hostile to so bad a man, and, at last, one of them bought a pear for the poor priest. When he had finished eating it he thanked the assembly for their sympathy and kindness, and said if they would all now step across the other side of the market-place he would make a return gift. The entire gathering, including the surly peasant, followed the priest, who took the pips from the core, made a little hole in the ground, buried them, and with incantations poured water on the place. Immediately a pear-tree grew, blossomed, and then bore an abundance of luscious fruit, to which the priest invited all present to help themselves. When the tree was at last bare, he took his knife, slashed off a branch and walked away with it in his hand. The people naturally enough stood about discussing the miracle, so some time elapsed before the fruit vendor (who felt that now his business was quite spoiled) returned to his cart. He could scarcely believe his eyes—he rubbed them hard and looked again—but it was true enough: there was the cart, empty, with one

of the handles broken off! He ran off quickly after the priest, but all he found was the broken handle of his cart on the ground.

§ 9. D. D. Home, the famous spirit-medium of the Victorian era, must have learned his tricks from a Taoist priest, for as far back as 1000 B.C., “The Wizard of the West,” a Taoist, performed before the Emperor Muh. He gave demonstrations of his ability to float through the air; to walk through fire, and on water: to pass through solids, and also to assume immediately the form of any animal that the audience cared to name. He spoke of a dazzling heaven higher up than the sun and moon, and no sooner did the emperor express a desire to visit this paradise than the wizard conveyed him there. Together they remained aloft for three years, but we are not informed whether the monarch spent the time engaged solely in pleasurable pursuits, or in the study of statecraft; however, upon his return to earth, conditions in his domain had not changed, for the long holiday had occupied but a few seconds of terrestrial time, and he was still sitting at the banquet surrounded by his courtiers, none of whom had seen him move or look in any way disturbed. Asked for an explanation, the wizard replied that the mind could be freed, and rendered independent, of both time and space, which were only illusions.

§ 10. It is a common act of piety in China for persons to have printed, and then distribute gratis, a little book called *T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien*, which means, “The Exalted One’s Response and Retribution Tract.” The Exalted One is Lao Tzu, an early Taoist leader, but the booklet is actually of much later date, containing Confucian and Buddhist moral principles, mixed with Taoist maxims. There is sufficient wisdom in it to guide a family in virtue to prosperity. A poor scholar once pawned his clothing to print

and distribute this little book, and soon after, one of his own compositions, a piece of verse, took the emperor's eye. The scholar was sent for and created a petty official, for which stroke of luck he thanked the gods, only to learn from them that it was a reward for his piety. Taoist occultism, at its best period, was not devoid of utilitarian results, and we learn from documents over two thousand years old, that Taoist priests in their practice of magic made lenses to use as burning-glasses; and two thousand five hundred years ago, Pien Ch'iao, the Taoist physician, studied the pulse-rate of his patients, and performed an operation on a person under an anæsthetic.

§ 11. Such achievements, at so early a date, amply counter-balance the belief in dragons which still occupies a prominent place in Chinese occult thought; but, unlike European dragons, those in China do not subsist upon a diet of flaxen-haired maidens. It is a dragon that brings the rain to the fields; this is the Shen Lung. Another, called the T'an, is always painted on the wall of court-houses, to warn magistrates not to take bribes. T'ien Lung, the celestial dragon, guards the abode of the gods; Ssu Lung Wang guards the seas; and many other of these monsters appear each with an allotted task. As it is generally considered lucky, the dragon motif creeps into all Chinese landscape-gardening: curved walls are made like dragons; zigzag bridges are supposed to be dragons; bushes are clipped dragon-shape; and in the town, the posts that support shopkeepers' signs are carved dragon-fashion. In the *T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien*, there is an account of a bad man who oppressed the poor: ultimately a scarlet dragon came along and destroyed him. It is also on record that when Wu Tao Tzu, the celebrated artist (8th cent. A.D.), painted a dragon on an unsightly

blank wall, he had no sooner put the finishing touches to it, than it spread its wings and flew away, leaving the wall blank—as before. An emperor once wished to consult a dragon, and when one kindly appeared it was hardly as long as a man's arm. The emperor was naturally disappointed, saying that he had expected something rather larger; whereupon the offended creature grew and grew, then flew up into the sky and swallowed the sun! The result was that the emperor and his courtiers were put to a great deal of apologizing and obeisance to get the luminary returned to the sky, but at last they succeeded; hence when there is an eclipse it is necessary, if the sun is to return, for the population to apologize and make obeisance to the dragon.

§ 12. Next to dragons, the carp is respected most among creatures. They are usually kept in temple ponds, where they live hundreds of years and grow to huge dimensions. It is considered an act of piety to feed these fish, and with a view to assisting visitors to this end, and also to increase the income of the religious institution, a stall is provided where the necessary sustenance may be purchased. There are stories of virtuous people being carried up to heaven on a giant carp's back.

§ 13. The tortoise is a descendant of the first dragon, and is therefore regarded as a holy creature. About 2850 B.C. there was a rebellion under Kung Kung, and the havoc wrought completely upset the world. Nu Kua, a demi-goddess, partly a serpent, was detailed to put things right, and she set the world up again on the four feet of a tortoise.

§ 14. The hare, too, figures as a magical creature in the Chinese mind. Legend has it that when Buddha was hungry, a hare voluntarily leapt into a pot and so cooked itself for the Master, who

rewarded such extreme self-sacrifice by conferring on the entire race the gift of longevity, allotting to each a thousand years of life on earth, and an eternity on the moon, where they occupy themselves gathering and preparing the herbs from which the elixir of life is brewed.

§ 15. The oldest method of divination practised in China is by means of tortoise-shell, which is heated over a slow fire and the future read from the cracks that appear; but a much more favoured method of prophecy is afforded by the *I Ching*, “The Sacred Book of Permutations,” generally shortened to the “Book of Changes.” It is very old, and profoundly venerated, and quite unintelligible. No native or foreign scholar has been able to give a rational explanation of its contents, hence it becomes the fortune-teller’s pinnacle of authority. It contains the “Eight Diagrams,” each of which consists of three parallel lines, some of them continuous, and others broken by a little gap. The unbroken lines are Yang, the broken ones Yin. The first diagram means heaven; the second vapour; the third fire; the fourth thunder; the fifth wind; the sixth water; the seventh mountains; and the eighth earth. Besides this they mean divers directions, the sun, moon, stars and planets, and in short there is very little that they do not mean. All the secrets of the universe (which, after all, is composed of Yang and Yin) are contained in these lines, which can be recombined in about sixteen million different ways. The soothsayer’s outfit consists of, besides a copy of the *I Ching*, fifty stalks of a magic plant. In operation one stalk is set up on end to represent the Great Ultimate, the One and Original Principle; the remaining forty-nine are held above the head and divided at random into two handfuls. The right-hand bundle is placed on the

table and one stick from it wedged between the fingers of the left hand. The three groups now represent heaven, earth and man. The left-hand group is counted out in sets of eight until a remainder of less than eight indicates the number of the *I Ching* diagram to be consulted. The same performance is also gone through with the right-hand bundle, and the two diagrams thus indicated are combined to give the prophecies. In principle it is not very different from cartomancy.

§ 16. Chinese geomancy is called Feng Shui (literally, “wind and water”). The system is employed to find out if a given site is propitious for the erection of a building. The most important edifice in any Chinese town is the pagoda, which stands as a sentinel, night and day, on guard against Kuei, and drought, and even earthquakes; therefore it would be rash to build such an important structure without first consulting the geomancer. If the tower

stood on the wrong side of the town it might attract the very terrors it is intended to disperse. Feng Shui is also applied before deciding on the construction of a private house, or even a tomb. The general rules of the system are fairly well known; for instance, a mountain with three peaks indicates a learned man with eminent sons and grandsons, therefore aspiring scholars choose such a place for their dwelling. An old saying, “The stars in heaven above and the contours of the earth beneath correspond to one another,” necessitates each geomancer being also an astrologer, and the entire magical mixture is under the control of the unintelligible *I Ching*.

§ 17. Divination by means of the planchette is also practised, generally by Taoist priests. The Chinese instrument consists of a

V-shaped twig, something like a European divining-rod, with the difference that another twig *is* fixed in the point of the V at right angles to it, so that when the bifurcated stick is taken horizontally in two hands, the “pencil” is vertical. It is held over a tray of sand, and as the characters are traced they are copied down on a sheet of paper. The Chinese spirits are less prosaic if no more reliable than those consulted in Europe, for though the message is often foolish, it is always in verse. A domestic planchette is arranged by inverting a sieve over a plate containing flour, and pushing a chopstick through the mesh. The professional spirit-medium in China is called a Wu, and all stories of their exploits are parallel with the doings of European mediums. Ectoplasmic materializations were known in China hundreds of years B.C., and there, as in Europe, the spirits never give any revelation that is absolutely new knowledge: the occasional words of wisdom that the Wu gives tongue to in a trance-state may be found written in Taoist, Confucian, or Buddhist books. The Wu is very often female, and it is on record that in the 9th century A.D. a lady made herself famous as a Wu, and on being questioned concerning her powers, by a high official, she confessed that there are two kinds of spirits, healthy and unhealthy; the former can speak direct with men if they wish, but the latter require the services of a medium.

§ 18. When an Occidental spirit-medium once published a book written “automatically” and alleged it to have been dictated by the spirit of a dead author, the surviving relations of the ghost brought an action under copyright law: either the work was from the dead writer, or it was not. If the former was true, the rights and consequent income must go to the executors; if the latter, then the book was a forgery, and they demanded either its withdrawal from

circulation or the medium's own name on the title-page. "Automatic" writing also occurs in China, and the story is told of a young man who communed with an unknown spirit who influenced his literary work. As time went on he became famous, and critics declared his style to be comparable to that of the long-departed Ch'ien Hsi, a great scholar of the Ming Period. The young man asked the spirit, through the planchette, if he was indeed Ch'ien Hsi, and, receiving an affirmative answer, ever after addressed him as "Master"; but it is not on record that he openly declared his work to be that of the Ming scholar.

§ 19. In China, a righteous man may be his own medium, and the professionals are not regarded with favour. They are patronized chiefly by women, and frequently get into trouble for fraud, blackmail, and even for causing riots. Their utterances are, as elsewhere, generally trivial and vulgar; in fact, a pious Confucian would not care to allow a Wu across his threshold, because, according to him, the spirits invoked would undoubtedly be Kuei. The mediums themselves endorse this condemnation, for when Chinese ladies engage a Wu to entertain them at a tea-party, it is always stipulated that sacred writings (which are, of course, Yang, and very Kuei-scaring) shall be removed from the house.

See also *History of Occult Ideas*, §§ 54-6.

J. F.

Book recommended:

MEAD, G. W., *Chinese Ghouls and Goblins* (Constable, 1928).

COCKATRICE. A cock that lays eggs. In mythology it is provided with a dragon's tail, but the cockatrice has an objective existence insomuch that hens attacked by a wasting disease of the ovaries become governed by the masculine hormone, develop a comb, etc., and begin to crow lustily. They go so far as to "tread" hens, but they do not lay eggs. However, such an occurrence on any farm scares the rustics for miles round, and the stories become more weird than the actual occurrence.

COCK LANE GHOST. Poltergeist outbreaks in 1762, which attracted a great deal of attention on account of an alleged attempt of blackmail by Parsons, the occupant of the house.

COLE-PROPHET (also COL- and COLL-). From Cole, a conjuring trick before 1579. One who pretends to predict the future by means of magic. A fortuneteller.

CORPSE-CANDLE. Lambent flame sometimes seen in churchyards and regarded as an omen of death.

DAVENPORT BROS. Two American "mediums" who from 1860 to 1870 made a great deal of money by performing conjurers' tricks with musical instruments. They were exposed by a Lancashire weaver who knew how to tie a "Tom Fool" knot. This they were unable to loosen, hence they remained bound in the "Cabinet," and the "Spirits" gave no musical performance.

## DEVIL-WORSHIP

§ 1. Apart from the worship of demons practised by semi-civilized peoples, there are two forms of Devil-worship. Primary Satanism, founded on Christianity, acknowledges that the Devil is a fallen angel, but, because "Nature is one with rapine" and man, having been created with animal lusts, is cruelly treated by a God demanding their suppression, they abandon Him, and in despair pay allegiance to His Enemy. It does not appear why persons holding the opinion that the God of the Christians has betrayed His followers, should find it necessary to swell the Enemy's ranks. They might with a great deal more comfort remain neutral: and as, naturally enough, they produce no literature on the subject, it is impossible to know whether an organized Church of Satan actually does, or ever did exist in Europe.

§ 2. The secondary type of European Devil-worship is known as the Cultus of Lucifer. Adherents to this creed regard Lucifer, the Light-Bearer, Son of the Morning, as the true personification of Goodness, whilst Adonai, Jehovah, is the representative of Evil, reigning by artifice. These personages form the two First Principles and are equal in status. Adonai in his ascendancy is leading men through misery to destruction: the worshippers of Lucifer are public benefactors insomuch as their mission is to raise the Standard of the Son of the Morning and enable Him to secure triumph over Adonai. This accomplished, He will send to earth the true Saviour, Antichrist. There is no dearth of literature on and around this secondary diabolic cult, but very little is authentic, the bulk being either imaginative or wilfully misleading. The Roman

Catholic Church, as the official earthly representative, as it were of Adonai, not only believes that the Church of Lucifer is well established on earth, and has many adherents, but that it is highly if secretly organized, and includes the Freemasons.

§ 3. It is a fact that consecrated Hosts are occasionally abstracted from Roman Catholic Cathedrals, which goes far to suggest that diabolism is practised, for the desecration of the Host is part of its ritual; also, the circumstances of the thefts prove that in each case the wafers, and not the vessels containing them, had been the object of the miscreants.

§ 4. The charge of Devil-worship brought against the brotherhood of Freemasons is, needless to say, stoutly denied by them. The denial is in turn combated by the accusers who declare that the ordinary Freemason is not expected to know anything concerning the secret activities of the high officials. This secret inner cult of Masons is alleged to admit women members, and to have been founded by one Albert Pyke at Charleston, U.S.A. Pyke, Isaac Long, the Jew who has been accused of carrying an idol called “the original image of Baphomet” (the “god” of the Knights Templars) to the town, and the anti-Catholic Italian patriot, Mazzini, are all bracketed together as the leaders of devil-worshipping Masonry. Long founded the Lodge and became chief in “The 33rd and last degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scotch Rite”; Pyke entered into a pact with the Devil and Mazzini, and between them the Scotch Rite became an occult, inner fraternity with worldwide powers. Lucifer apparently took up his earthly abode in the Masonic headquarters at Charleston. Miss Diana Vaughan, who was a member of this band of brothers, becoming converted, or reconverted, to Catholicism, wrote a book (*Memoirs*

*of an ex-Palladist*, 1895) exposing the entire diabolical conspiracy, and there are few literary works in which more insanity was made manifest. It is as undignified for the Freemasons to brand her as an instrument of the Roman Catholic Church, as it is for the latter institution to regard her as a reclaimed soul and enemy of Satan. In fact, there is some reason to believe that the book was a forgery and “Miss Vaughan” but a pseudonym.

§ 5. The ritual of Devil-worship consists of the complete inversion of the Roman Catholic rites. The Black Mass of St. Secoine, as the diabolic ceremony is called, is carried out at midnight in a ruined church with a renegade priest officiating. His assistants must be public prostitutes, and the Holy Eucharist befouled with human excrement. He wears a black surplice cut in three points, and burns black candles. The “holy water” must have been used to drown an unbaptized, newly-born bastard, and the altar decorated with owls, bats, toads, and creatures of like ill-omen. Standing with the left foot forward, the officiating priest reads the Roman Catholic Mass backwards, after which the congregation indulges in all kinds of orgies and excesses. A crucifix is usually trampled and spat upon, and sexual perversions performed before the altar.

§ 6. It stands to reason that these “ideal” conditions can rarely, if ever, be fulfilled, therefore it is possible for the Devil-worshippers to employ substitutes. The “holy water,” for instance, may consist of urine, or ordinary water in which a doll has been immersed; the owls, bats, toads, and the like may be of clay, provided it has been blended with excrement, or rendered foul in some other way. As it is most obvious that no wholly sane person would adhere to such a cultus, and as the majority of complete and

semi-lunatics are suffering from sexual disturbances, it is not impertinent to assume that the orgies succeeding the ceremony are the attraction, and the Devil, as an object of worship, not taken seriously. This is a two-edged sword, for Mr. Montague Summers contends that all sexual perverts are Devil-worshippers; also, not without some logical justification it must be admitted, this authority would include in the ranks of Satan, night-club habitués, nudists, theosophists, spiritualists, and numerous others. At the same time he admits that the Devil who appears at the celebrations is but a human substitute representing His Satanic Majesty—the vicar of the local “black parish,” as it were. Summers says (*History of Witchcraft and Demonology*, p. 7): “There is ample proof that ‘the Devil’ . . . was very frequently a human being, the Grand Master of the district, and since his officers and immediate attendants were also termed ‘Devils’ . . . some confusion has on occasion ensued. In a few cases where sufficient details are given it is possible actually to identify ‘the Devil’ by name. Thus, among a list of suspected persons . . . we have ‘Ould Birtles, the great devil, Roger Birtles and his wife and Anne Birtles.’

§ 7. It is interesting to note that Montague Summers, a Roman Catholic, uses the expression “Grand Master” to describe the president of the Devil Cult covens. Grand Master is a masonic title (albeit inherited or purloined from the Knights Templars), a fact which influences one to accept Summers’s implication; but surely, if the Grand Masters of that international Friendly Society were actually plotting to elevate the Standard of Lucifer, the respectable grocers and commercial travellers in the ranks would get some inkling of the activity, and register their disapproval in a multitude of secret signs. The Roman Catholic Church regards all

heresy and anarchy as demonological, whilst of course the vast majority of sects and societies have no extra-mundane interest of any kind, either demonological or theological; however, there is ample evidence to indicate that four or five hundred years ago, persons belonging to secret societies were not above suspicion, and the Black Mass of St. Secoine was celebrated much more frequently than most people would nowadays suppose. As time progressed, people began to stay away from church without fear of eternal damnation in hell's fires, and Devil-worship also lost adherents. The Cultus of Lucifer became more of a perversion and less of a religion; later still, it degenerated into a farce, a piece of dare-devil nonsense for young men about town; hence, we hear the following anecdote concerning the notorious John Wilkes, the politician, con temporary with Dr. Johnson, and as immoral as the worthy doctor was pious.

§ 8. As a member of the "Secret Society" known as the Medmenham Monks, he attended the Black Mass held at St. Mary's Abbey, Medmenham, and during Lord Oxford's supplication to Lucifer, calling upon the archfiend to appear among them, Wilkes pulling a string allowed a monkey to escape from a cage which he had previously planted beneath the altar; whereupon his lordship received so great a shock, believing the monkey to be the Evil One incarnate, that he was taken seriously ill and his sanity despaired of, whilst several of the other "monks" were thrown into a panic—in fact, the only two really amused at the jest were Wilkes and his monkey! The somewhat tragic termination to this piece of buffoonery on Wilkes's part proves conclusively that the persons attending the "mass" did not take their Devil-worship at all seriously, and expected the Watch to

appear rather than Satan. Nevertheless, it does not exclude the probability of there existing, contemporaneously, sincere Devil-worshipping societies.

§ 9. If the Devil receives worship, the theologians are surely a little to blame, for according to their own findings the Devil is not always the enemy but sometimes is the agent of God—in so far as he discovers the weaklings by tempting them to sin, and then punishes them for falling. As the Jews combined the principles of both good and evil in one divine personality, so the early Christians were not quite clear upon the absolute division. Dr. Ernest Jones says (*On Nightmare*, p. 178): “. . . Identification with God is at times very close indeed, and it is interesting to note that it was deliberately striven for by the Devil, who copied God to a truly remarkable extent. As until the past half-century the worship of Christ has been on the whole more prominent than that of God the Father, it is not astonishing that the Devil’s resemblance to the Son has been greater than that to the Father. His physical appearance was first depicted as beautiful and majestic, often closely resembling Christ’s; in that deed, he sometimes actually appeared in the exact form of Christ. It was only in the Middle Ages that he became invested with ugly and grotesque traits. Like Jesus, the Devil had twelve disciples, descended into hell and was born again, had his home in special Churches, was worshipped at regularly recurring festivals, and had his followers baptized, while the details of the Devil’s Sabbath caricatured the Holy Mass so closely that the resemblance greatly angered the theologians. . . . The Devil even had a special Bible of his own; it was written in Bohemia and is now in the Royal Library in Stockholm. Further, he copied the Trinitarian conception itself. It is little wonder that

this habit of caricaturing earned him the title of ‘God’s Ape.’”

§ 10. Orthodox religion, by officially believing in the existence of a Devil, sets him upon a pedestal; and if the Church declares that he is there, certain mentally unsound persons will make of him an object of worship, and an excuse for perverted sexual trends; therefore, the consecrated wafers will continue to be stolen, and the Black Mass celebrated, until the Devil is officially declared extinct.

J. F.

Book recommended:

THOMPSON, R. L., *History of the Devil* (Kegan Paul, 1929).

DOOR GODS. When the Chinese Emperor T'ai Tsung was disturbed at night by ghosts banging on his door, two brave warriors, Ch'in and Yu, volunteered to keep guard. This they did, and the ghosts remained at a distance. "But," said the kindly emperor, "you have had no sleep!" So he ordered their portraits to be painted and hung up outside the door. This device was a great success, and Ch'in and Yu became tutelary deities of the door for all time.

DOYLE, SIR A. CONAN (1859-1931), began life as a doctor and during the period 1885-8, under the influence of one of his patients, a certain General Grayson, he became interested in spiritualism. Some of his literary works on the subject are: PAMPHLETS—*In Quest of Truth* (Watts, 1914); *Our Reply to the Cleric* (Spiritualists' Union, 1920); *A Debate with Dr. Joseph McCabe* (Watts, 1920); *Spiritualism and Rationalism* (Hodder &

Stoughton, 1920); *Psychic Experience* (Putnam, 1925); *The Early Christian Church and Modern Spiritualism. What does Spiritualism Actually Teach and Stand for?*, and *A Word of Warning* (all three, Psychic Press—no date).

After Doyle's death a book was published, the title page of which reads: "*Thy Kingdom Come . . .*" A Presentation of the Whence, Why and Wherefore of Man. A Record of messages received from one of the White Brotherhood, believed to have been Known on Earth as Arthur Conan Doyle, arranged and edited by Ivan Cooke" (Wright & Brown—no date).

A bibliography of Doyle's writings from 1879 to 1928, compiled by Harold Locke, was published by D. Webster in 1928.

Doyle received his Knighthood in 1922.

See also *English Literature and the Occult*, § 19.

**DRUMMER OF TEDWORTH.** A poltergeist outbreak about 1661, described by Joseph Glanvil in *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, i668.

**EIGHT STAGES OF YOGA.** 1, Yama, Restraint; 2, Niyama, Religious observance, fasting, prayer, etc.; 3, Asana, Contortionism; 4, Pranayama, Breath-control; 5, Pratyahara, Withdrawal of consciousness; 6, Dharana, Concentration; 7, Dhyana, Meditation; 8, Samadhi, Union with Divinity.

## ENGLISH LITERATURE AND THE OCCULT

F. E. Budd

§ 1. The story of the occult in English literature is, in point of time, co-extensive with the story of English literature itself. Magic, witchcraft, ghosts, fairies and such-like supernatural manifestations—for the term “occult” is here held to embrace all these—have undoubtedly been more extensively exploited at some periods than at others; yet at no time have writers been wholly dead to their direct imaginative appeal or to their power of stimulating those spiritual qualities in man which persuade him that his destiny is of vital concern to a world beyond the present. This continuity is due in part to the fact that the literary effect of the supernatural is largely independent of belief in it. Provided that an author has sufficient artistry to induce the “willing suspension of disbelief” aimed at by Coleridge, the sceptical reader will react as satisfactorily as the credulous to the old-established phenomena. The supernatural, indeed, has no call for modernization. Unconsciously we judge a modern treatment of the supernatural by the degree to which it recaptures the atmosphere of our favourites of the past. The supernatural science of some present-day literature we may tolerate for its apparent novelty, but juggling with over-advanced chemistry or the fourth dimension is apt to be deficient in charm.

§ 2. The space available forbids more than a conspectus of the field. Only a fraction of the many titles which might be fully discussed can be even mentioned. Of the several methods of grouping that presented themselves, a triple division according to

the literary medium employed has been adopted. A survey on these lines suggests, as a rough generalization, that the supernatural found itself most at home in *poetry* during the later medieval period and the Romantic Revival, in *drama* during Shakespeare's age, and in *prose* during the last hundred years. It should, however, be observed that the exponents of the notable revival of supernaturalism at present manifest avail themselves of all three media.

### **Poetry**

§ 3. The beginning of the story of the occult in English literature takes us back some 1,200 years to the early productions of Old English poetry. Particularly interesting are those supernatural manifestations which rest upon the original pagan beliefs and folklore of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. Christianity may provide a superficial veneer to the poems in which they occur, but their appeal is to the literary and spiritual associations of a deep-seated paganism. Thus in the *Charms* are preserved spells, incantations and exorcisms that reach back to remote Indo-Germanic superstition. The main plot of the epic *Beowulf* (c. A.D. 750) consists of three fabulous exploits drawn from the ample store of Scandinavian folk-lore. Beowulf, ostensibly trusting in the Christian God, rids the world of three monsters unknown to Christian demonology—Grendel and his mother, two murderous alien spirits who leave their mysterious dwelling beneath a mere to work havoc in the court of the Danish king Hrothgar, and a fire-breathing dragon, defender of an ancient treasure-hoard. These monsters are objective realities, creatures of flesh and blood, of vast age, yet mortal. That they are not cast in the modern

supernatural mould is no argument against their imaginative effectiveness in the age which gave them to literature. In a different vein is the *Later Genesis* (10th cent. A.D.), a religious poem on the theme of the Fall of the Angels. Nowhere else in Old English poetry is Satan endowed with such heroic proportions, and the briefest adequate comment on the supernaturalism of this poem is that it is thoroughly Miltonic both in conception and in execution.

§ 4. The irresistible fascination of the supernatural is, however, first exercised to the full in the romances of the Middle English period, more particularly in the Arthurian romances. Although some of its manifestations may appear to be almost childishly naïve in essence, their employment is highly artificial; one cannot attribute their striking poetic and imaginative effect to a happy accident. Indeed, to a world of

inchantments drear,

Where more is meant than meets the ear,

magic beakers, enchanted girdles, shape-shifting, optical illusions, prophecies, portents and their like appear the inevitable accessories. Wholly delightful is their use in the English adaptations of Breton lais, which display, with a brevity and freshness suggestive of the ballad rather than of leisurely romance, the wonder-working Celtic imagination at its most delicate. The best known of these is Chaucer's Franklin's Tale, a Breton lai of "gentillesse." Chaucer is again concerned with magic—a "virtuous Ring and Glass" and a "wondrous Hors of Brass"—in his exquisite Squire's Tale, and in The Wife of Bath's

Tale he retells the story of The Wedding of Sir Gawain, wherein the hideous Dame Ragnell proves, on disenchantment, to be a lovely lady who had suffered transformation through the malice of a step-mother. This shape-shifting motive is nowhere more consistently employed than in the cycle of romances woven around Sir Gawain, the finest of which is Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Another, The Awntyrs (Adventures) of Arthur at the Tarn Wathelyn, presents the objective ghost of Guinevere's mother to the startled eyes of Gawain and the Queen. Malory's prose redaction of Arthurian story, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, may perhaps be cited as most conveniently representing the variety of supernatural devices at the service of the medieval romancer. Giants and wizards abound; Galahad's birth is attributed to enchantment; Arthur is magically assisted by the soothsayer Merlin and by Nimue, the damsel of the lake; a mysterious hand appears above the lake to receive the sword Excalibur; and three shadowy queens receive the dying Arthur into their keeping, to conduct him to the Vale of Avalon, from whence his return was long expected. With none of such things would we dispense, but they lack the psychological subtlety of the wholly subjective ghost of Gawain, which appears to Arthur to warn him not to fight that day, nor have they the spiritually stimulating quality of the manifestation of the Holy Grail. The sustained beauty of the story of the Quest for this symbol of the living Christ reveals at its best the quality of romantic supernaturalism wedded to the service of medieval mysticism. Moreover Malory achieves the intangible supernaturalism of Greek and Elizabethan tragedy in his suggestion of the destiny which shapes Arthur's end. Criminally begotten, he passes his life in the shadow of a curse. Ignorant of

the facts of his parentage, he unwittingly repeats his father's crime, and the offspring of his incestuous love, Mordred, becomes the instrument of fate. Even his marriage to Guinevere is entered upon in defiance of the prophetic warning of the woes that it will bring upon him.

§ 5. The supernatural machinery of Arthurian romance is adapted to the purposes of moral allegory in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Spenser may pretend to defend the existence of "that happy land of Faery" over which his Fairy Queen reigns, and he is certainly no niggard in his use of dragons and enchanters—Archimago and Busirane, Duessa and Acrasia are brought in to supplement Merlin and Morgan la Fay—but there is a falling-off in freshness and charm. One suspects that Arthurian romance is here in the first stage of becoming a literary convention, and later stages are perceptible in Sir Richard Blackmore's *Prince Arthur* and *King Arthur*, and in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. Milton might have recaptured its original brightness, but, after considering the subject for epic treatment, he relinquished it in favour of his supreme presentation of the conflict between the divine and the satanic in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. The supernaturalism of these poems, like that of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, defies brief analysis. In *Comus*, however, he affords us an opportunity of judging his poetic treatment of what might, by comparison, be called the more homely type of supernaturalism—the evil enchanter Comus and his crew and, at the opposite extreme, Sabrina and her water-nymphs.

§ 6. After Milton there was no considerable use of the supernatural in poetry until the latter half of the 18th century. It could scarcely hope to flourish in an age of rationalism, where

poetry was largely devoted to the “town.” But the way was gradually prepared for its return. Scholars contributed by their historical inquiries into Oriental, Celtic and Scandinavian myth. Poets, imbued with a reviving sense of the mystery of natural forces, sought to reveal the hidden meaning of these old mythologies. The muse, moreover, returned to the countryside, where the supernatural finds its most congenial setting. The revival of interest in the “Gothic” past involved a revival of medieval supernaturalism. From this time onwards the supernatural bulks almost as large in literature as it had done during the flourishing of romance.

§ 7. Oriental supernaturalism, an exotic product familiarized to the Romantics by their reading of the *Arabian Nights*, was extensively cultivated by Southey, Moore and Byron. In *Thalaba the Destroyer*, Southey reworks the vein opened up by Beckford’s *Vathek*. A corpse, lashed by scorpions, is reanimated by a sorceress, magicians pay their devotions to a mummified head of loathsome appearance, and Oriental voluptuousness enters in the description of Aladdin’s false paradise. Impressive ghosts and witches appear in *The Curse of Kehama*, where use is also made of such striking devices as the elixir of life and the sorcerer’s crystal globe formed from the light of a thousand eyes. Moore’s *Lalla Rookh* caters for every taste, ranging as it does from charnel-house horrors to a delightful treatment of the Pens, the Persian counterparts of the English fairies and by some supposed to be their ancestors. Byron’s *The Giaour* bears clearly the impress of *Vathek*. Beckford’s horrors are enhanced by Byron, for his *Giaour* is doomed to play the vampire to his own daughter before entering upon his eternal punishment in the Halls of Eblis.

§ 8. The poems based upon this florid type of supernaturalism are but little read to-day. Far more appealing are those which derive their inspiration from the revived interest in the romances and ballads of medieval England. Particularly fruitful was the example of such excellent primitive ballads on supernatural themes as *The Wife of Usher's Well*, *Fair Margaret and Sweet William*, *Sweet William's Ghost*, *Clerk Saunders* and *Kemp Owyne*, and of the many later ballads dealing with fairies, ghosts, shape-shifting and magic which Percy and Scott included in their collections. There are, indeed, few supernatural poems of the late 18th and of the 19th century which do not proclaim, in spirit, substance or in form, the influence of balladry. Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci* are but the finest of its many offspring.

§ 9. The Romantic Revival led to the production of poetry involving all types of supernatural fancy and belief. The good fairies of Shakespeare and Herrick return in Bowles's *Fairy Sketch*, Keats's *Song of the Four Fairies*, Darley's *Sylvia* and Hood's *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*. The "light infantry of Satan," those malicious subterranean inhabitants especially rife in Scottish superstition, provoke terror in Burns's *Halloween*, Hogg's *Kilmeny*, Sara Coleridge's *Phantasmion*, and Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*. The sea-folk are nowhere more sensitively treated than in Tennyson's *The Merman*, *The Mermaid*, and *The Sea-Fairies*, or in Matthew Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman*. Crude witches appear in Southey's *The Witch* and *The Old Woman of Berkeley*; Burns's *Tam o' Shanter* describes with dry humour a witches' sabbath; lovely witches bring evil in their train in Scott's *Glenfinlas*, Coleridge's *Christabel*, Keats's *La Belle Dame*

and Charles Kingsley's *Weird Lady*; while akin to witches, but free from evil and pathetic in their frailty, are the beings of Keats's *Lamia* and Tennyson's *Lady of Shalott*. Ghosts abound. Many are the wind-driven spirits popularized by Macpherson's *Ossian*, the finest of which is Tennyson's adaptation of the medieval ghost of Gawain in his *Passing of Arthur*. Avenging spectres haunt the early poems of Scott, Blake and Shelley, and the shades of departed lovers return to their mortal loves in Wordsworth's *Laodamia*, Keats's *Isabella* and Beddoes's *Ghost's Moonshine*. In a different key is the indefinable unearthly quality of Keats's *Eve of St. Agnes*, recaptured later by Rossetti in *The Blessed Damozel*. Notable, too, for the subtlety of their supernatural atmosphere are Rossetti's *Sister Helen* and *Rose Mary*, where black magic provides the theme, and, to take a recent example, Mr. de la Mare's *The Listeners*, which attains its effect entirely by imaginative suggestion. Lastly, bare mention may be made of those longer philosophical poems which employ the supernatural machinery of past mythologies to symbolize the mental and spiritual evolution of man. Blake's Prophetic Books compound their symbolism from mythology and supernaturalism of many and varied sources; the fairy world proves readily amenable to Shelley's purposes in *Queen Mab*; and Hellenic myth is explored afresh in Keats's *Hyperion*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, and Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*. Hardy, believing that "the wide prevalence of the Monistic theory of the Universe forbade, in this twentieth century, the importation of Divine personages from any antique Mythology as ready-made sources or channels of Causation, even in verse," creates his own Phantom Intelligences to supply the supernatural machinery of *The Dynasts*, but their symbolical

function remains unaltered.

### **Drama**

§ 10. In tragedy the supernatural has always played an important part in evoking the emotion of awe and in creating the impression of universality by suggesting that unseen powers are at work influencing the fate of men. In the semi-religious drama of the Greeks the Fates and Furies exert their sway, the Ghost makes his appearance, and the Gods come down to intervene in human affairs. In Roman times Seneca emphasized the visible supernatural elements at the expense of their intellectual and emotional suggestiveness, using them as decorative aids to atmospheric effect. The medieval English dramatists established the native practice of employing the supernatural as an essential element in the fabric of the plot. Their choice of material from biblical story determined the nature of the supernatural beings in the miracle plays—God and his angels, Satan and his devils, and, at times, the discarnate Christ. The plays on The Fall of the Angels, The Temptation of Christ, The Transfiguration, The Harrowing of Hell and The Judgment Day well illustrate how integral a part of the plot the supernatural could be, while its use to heighten the conflict of human emotions is admirably seen in *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (Brome MS.).

§ 11. At no period in the history of English drama has the supernatural been so widely and so effectively employed as in Elizabethan and Jacobean times. The presence of the divine figures of the miracle plays could no longer be fittingly invoked, and the conflict of good and evil within a man demanded subtler expression than that afforded by the Good and Evil Angels of the

morality plays. Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, it is true, preserves the latter crudity, but it more than compensates by its admirable Mephistopheles. Faustus sells his soul to the devil in exchange for the boundless power and knowledge to which Satanic magic provides the key. Hell is transformed from a theatrical locality to a mental state. The judgment-day is particularized in Faustus's own day of reckoning, the horror of which we perceive by the anguish of his anticipation. Marlowe triumphs here because he has intellectualized the supernatural elements of the native tradition, rendered their application individual instead of generic, and endowed them with the profoundest imaginative significance. The majority of the Elizabethans, however, differ from him in borrowing their supernatural devices from Senecan tradition, although the native tradition determines the manner of their employment.

§ 12. The Senecan ghost was speedily transformed from a spectator of the action, as in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, to an active participant. Revenge usually prompts its return to earth, and the fully developed revenge ghost emerges as the most notable supernatural creation of the Elizabethan age. A certain crudity attaches to the ghosts of Marston and Chapman, but Webster, who employs both the objective and the subjective ghost, powerfully evokes from them an atmosphere of abnormal horror. The most familiar of all revenge ghosts is that of Hamlet's father. His return in spirit form is inspired not merely by the desire for personal revenge for a "foul and most unnatural murder," but by solicitude for the national welfare of Denmark and the spiritual welfare of his widow Gertrude. Shakespeare, content to make the spirit correspond to the dignified material form of the murdered king,

admits no unnatural exaggeration of the ghostly qualities. His genius is seen in the manner in which he combines the objective and the subjective in its presentation. In so far as this ghost is visible to Bernardo, Marcellus and Horatio, it is objective; but in the scene in the Queen's closet, where it is visible to Hamlet only, it is subjective. Moreover, although it is more closely involved in the dramatic action than any other Elizabethan ghost, its chief function is to support suspicions already aroused in Hamlet's "prophetic soul," and these do not ripen to conviction until the mouse-trap play confirms them. Thus Shakespeare adapts his ghost to an age when the objective supernatural was no longer a matter of unquestioning belief.

§ 13. The purely subjective apparitions of *Julius Cæsar* and *Macbeth* illustrate even more clearly the enhanced imaginative effect produced by relating the supernatural to the thoughts and emotions of the living. In *Julius Cæsar* it is the personality, rather than the ghost, of the dead Ciesar which dominates the latter half of the play, causing the conspirators to turn their swords against themselves. In *Macbeth*, Banquo's ghost, the creation of Macbeth's guilty conscience, is divorced even from the suggestion of revenge and seems instead to regulate its appearance by a fine sense of irony. Something of the same irony attaches to the prophecies of the Weird Sisters. In their subtlest aspect, they are the verbal expression of Macbeth's own ambitions and temptations. Their mouthpieces, although presented according to the popular conception of witches, do nothing to move Macbeth to evil courses or to assist him in them. Divorced from his personality, they would be of far less account than the wise women of other plays of the period, such as Middleton's *The Witch*, Dekker, Rowley and Ford's

*The Witch of Edmonton*, Heywood's *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, and Heywood and Brome's *The Late Lancashire Witches*. To-day, the interest of such plays is chiefly sociological, but Shakespeare's *Weird Sisters*, as supernatural symbols of one aspect of Macbeth's psychology, defy the passage of time and any change of attitude towards witchcraft. Shakespeare clearly realized that ghosts and witches could not of themselves guarantee the highest imaginative effect. To achieve this, he saw, it was essential to show a sensitive mind reacting to their power of suggestion, and the finer the mind the richer would be the effect. Moreover, like all great dramatists, he suggests the presence of supernatural forces without necessarily introducing the spectral. The working of fate, the use of tragic irony, and the description of such perturbations of nature as accompanied the murder of Cæsar and Duncan are among the means whereby he endows human action with more than human significance.

§ 14. It is to Shakespeare also that we must turn for the finest use of the supernatural in comedy. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the delicate fairy element is so supremely presented that even the contact of sheer realism in the "rude mechanicals" does not dispel the illusion. The supernaturalism of *The Tempest* so enhances and transforms mortal activities that the final interest of the play rests in its symbolical representation of universal truths. Romantic comedy alone admits of such achievements. In types of comedy where realism and rationalism strike the keynote, "supernatural" figures will usually prove to be mortals in disguise, as is the case with the "ghosts" of Farquhar's *Sir Harry Wildair* and Addison's *Drummer*, or they may be presented in so sceptical a spirit that their imaginative effect is nil, as in Shadwell's *Lancashire Witches*.

§ 15. Such supernatural visitants as appear in Restoration and 18th-century drama are little more than meaningless relics of the Elizabethan theatre carried over into an uninterested and uncongenial age. They excite no awe, and often they are so clumsily manipulated that they fail even to be spectacular. In the 19th century Beddoes makes a notable return to the imaginative supernaturalism of the Elizabethans in *Death's Jest Book* (1825), and the poetic drama of the age has its minor successes; but it was left for the Irish playwrights of our own day to bring back the supernatural to the theatre and to render it acceptable to modern taste. Recapturing the strangeness and beauty of Celtic superstition, they seek to create an atmosphere charged with the mystery of the unseen and the indefinable rather than to display the cruder manifestations of the supernatural. One is conscious that "more is meant than meets the ear"; one senses invisible presences as vivid, though as indefinite, as the voices of Shaw's *Saint Joan*. And it is worthy of note that in the plays of Mr. W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, Mr. Gordon Bottomley, Lord Dunsany and Mr. Sean O'Casey, the revival of the supernatural is accompanied by a revival of poetic feeling.

### **Prose**

§ 16. The supernatural was first domesticated as an element in English prose fiction by the writers of Gothic romance. Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), the earliest example of the type by a generation, sets the fashion of housing its blatantly crude spectre in a gloomy Gothic castle liberally provided with secret passages, trapdoors and dungeons, and of seeking nightmare effects by the introduction of the tolling of bells, the flitting of owls and bats,

horrid groans, unearthly music, and such accompaniments of ghostly visitation as uproar in the heavens, prodigious thunder-claps, an unnatural chill in the atmosphere and a tendency on the part of candles and lamps to burn with an eerie blue flame. Other disturbing phenomena are the armed apparition, of such vastness that even a spacious Gothic castle permits only of its appearance piecemeal; the portrait which utters deep sighs, heaves its breast, and quits its panel with a grave and melancholy air; the statue which discharges three drops of blood from its nose by way of protest against a proposed marriage and later dilates to enormous proportions in order to render more impressive its valedictory prophecy; and the praying friar who, on close examination, reveals “the fleshless jaws and empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit’s cowl.” By such devices did the Gothic romancers seek to terrorize their readers. In their own day, apparently, they succeeded, but to us their chief interest is that they prompted the delicious parody of Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* and Peacock’s *Nightmare Abbey*. Anne Radcliffe, Charles Robert Maturin, “Monk” Lewis, Clara Reeve and a few others can still be read, but with amusement rather than horror. Their supernaturalism has its importance for its effect on succeeding writers at home and abroad, but in itself it is too naïve to touch the imagination. A certain interest, however, attaches to the introduction of supernatural elements of a quasi-scientific cast, from which developed the supernatural science of later prose fiction. The elixir of life, the philosophers’ stone, satanic chemistry, and (in Mary Shelley’s genuinely awe-inspiring *Frankenstein*) the synthetic creation of a living being are effectively exploited, while semi-supernatural effects are achieved through telepathy,

hypnotism, ventriloquism and somnambulism.

§ 17. The Gothic romance, acting both directly and, through the products of German romanticism, indirectly, strongly influenced the work of Scott, De Quincey, Hawthorne and Poe. In his *Waverley Novels* and his narrative poems Scott, lover of the past, amateur of early ballads, editor and fervent admirer of *The Castle of Otranto*, and eager student of German literature of *diablerie*, achieves a fusion of most of the existing phases of romanticism. Like Walpole, he has a taste for Gothic settings and for climatic conditions that conduce to an atmosphere of nightmarish suspense, but his treatment of the supernatural in such a piece as "Wandering Willie's Tale" shows a mastery unapproached by any Gothic romancer. Scott realized that an element of naturalness is an aid to belief even when dealing with the supernatural. De Quincey makes rich use of the supernaturalism of dreams in his dream-fugues, such as *Our Ladies of Sorrow*, while his account of the Williams murders, formerly attached to the *Essay on Murder*, proves him the equal of Poe in his power of suggesting the horror of the unexpressed and that atmosphere of grim suspense which foreruns disaster. His writings consistently reveal a vivid perception of the mysterious side of even the common aspects of life, particularly night-life, and this love of the shadows is shared by Hawthorne and Poe. Hawthorne, in his own words, was "a lover of the brown twilight," of that pleasant half-light which, by softening the sharp outlines, encourages the fantasy to remould reality to its own desires. Poe, on the other hand, preferred the profounder gloom which moves the imagination chiefly to the horrible and the morbid. Often in these and succeeding writers the uncanny is largely a matter of atmosphere, but one reacts to

tales of theirs which have no objective supernatural manifestations far more readily than to many where ghosts and magic abound. It is, indeed, a very fine line that divides the “mystery and imagination” of Poe’s tales from the supernaturalism of other writers. The imaginative effect of his mesmerism, for example, is the same in kind as that of the traditional magic of some of Hawthorne’s novels.

§ 18. From this time onward the tendency to relate the supernatural to the psychology of the individual has become increasingly manifest in prose fiction. The influence of such foreign writers as De Maupassant, Gautier, Maeterlinck, Ibsen, Tolstoi, Gogol and Turgeniev encouraged this. De Maupassant, moreover, showed the virtues of brevity, with the result that the short story has become the favourite medium of modern writers. The forms which the supernatural may take are legion. Needless to say, the ghost persists, and of the making of ghost stories there is no end. Such widely separated works of fiction as Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* and Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* show that the objective ghost is still an awe-inspiring figure. Occasionally the objective ghost delegates his task to a part of his former bodily frame—the head in Wilkie Collins’s *Haunted Hotel*, the hand in Lord Lytton’s *Haunters and the Haunted*, and the eyes in his *Strange Story*. Some of Ambrose Bierce’s excellent stories of the supernatural illustrate the modern tendency to make the objective ghost correspond in every detail to the corporeal prototype; for example, in *The Middle Toe of the Right Foot* the identity of a ghost is recognized by its physical deformity. In O’Henry’s *The Furnished Room* the ghost leaves behind it a recognizable scent of perfume. W. W. Jacobs makes effective use

of ghostly sounds in *The Monkey's Paw*, but for the most part ghosts are no longer heralded by a fanfare of trumpets. The subjective ghost is frequently invoked. Algernon Blackwood's ghosts are to a great extent subjective, while the admirable ghost stories of Dr. M. R. James play subtly upon both the objective and subjective. In such a tale as *Seaton's Aunt Mr. de la Mare*, by the vivid suggestiveness of subtly created atmosphere, achieves the full imaginative effect of the ghostly without actually introducing supernatural figures. As terrifying as any ghost are the invisible beings of Bierce's *The Damned Thing* and H. G. Wells's *The Invisible Man*, or those dual personalities of Poe's *William Wilson*, Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and Kipling's *At the End of the Passage*. Modifications of the latter idea are to be seen in Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Grey* and Wells's *Story of the late Mr. Elvesham*.

§ 19. The devil and his allies reappear from time to time, sometimes jocularly, as in Washington Irving's *The Devil and Tom Walker* and Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*, but more often in grim earnest. The old werewolf motive is exploited in Hugh Walpole's *Tarnhelm*, Kipling's *The Mark of the Beast*, Bierce's *The Eyes of the Panther* and numerous other modern stories. Vampires enter such tales as E. F. Benson's *The Room in the Tower*, Blackwood's *The Transfer*, and Bram Stoker's popular *Dracula*, while a psychic vampire appears in Conan Doyle's *The Parasite*. Far more significant, however, is the concern of such writers as Arthur Machen and Charles Williams with the full mysteries of the black art, which in them is raised above question and presented as an exact science. Williams's *War in Heaven* affords a particularly striking picture of the conflict of the forces of satanic magic and of

Christianity, the latter being raffled around the Holy Grail by the reincarnate Prester John.

§ 20. The attraction of that will-o'-the-wisp, the elixir of life, shows no sign of abating. After the Gothic romancers it is employed by Hawthorne in *Septimius Felton*, *The Dolliver Romance* and *Dr. Heidigger's Experiment*; by that earnest occultist Lytton in *A Strange Story*; and by various writers on the theme of the Wandering Jew. Rider Haggard uses it in conjunction with metempsychosis in *She* and *Ayesha*, and Wells relates it to a transfer of personality in *The Story of the late Mr. Elvesham*. Judicious manipulation of modern science has, however, opened many other avenues to supernatural effect. As Miss Dorothy Scarborough says in her monograph on *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* (1917), ghost stories are now evolved from the laboratory, not the tomb. Wells represents at its most ingenious this pseudo-scientific school. In addition to those devices of his already mentioned he gives new life to the old theme of second sight in *The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes*, juggles with time by invoking the fourth dimension in *The Plaitner Case* and *The Time Machine*, creates a botanical vampire in *The Flowering of the Strange Orchid*, and exploits vivisection for supernatural ends in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. There would seem to be no limit to the marvels which can be raised upon the foundation of pseudo-science.

§ 21. The devices of "the fairy tales of science" are really little more than the modern equivalents of Chaucer's horse of brass. Present-day literature as a whole illustrates as clearly as that of medieval and Shakespearian times the unchanging fact that the primary function of the supernatural is to heighten our

imaginative sensibility by stimulating our capacity for wonder. An illusion of scientific realism is less potent an aid to this end than intangible wisps of suggestion or the presence of shadowy beings that carry complete conviction but to the eye of childhood. To the eternal child-like element in mankind these beings still appeal vividly, irrespective of intellectual belief or disbelief in them, and some of the finest pieces of supernatural writing in the language succeed by invoking no more than that shadowy world of superstition inherited from the infancy of the race. Often, however, there is combined with the evocation of the simple element of wonder a deeper purpose. To give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name may well be the first step towards penetrating the recesses of individual psychology or illuminating symbolically the wider problem of mankind's destiny in a universe abounding in perplexing phenomena. Such ends being served, the supernatural agents can be dismissed without impinging on intellectual belief. In Prospero's words:

These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff  
As dreams are made on, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep.

## **FAIRIES**

§ 1. Fairies are a race of immortal beings in human shape, but of diminutive stature—so very tiny sometimes, that they are supposed to pass in and out of the house by way of the street-door keyhole with no danger of knocking their heads. On the other hand, there is also a gigantic fairy race—rather rare—before whose towering heights the entire house appears like a toy. The common type of fairy, when fully grown, may stand anything between two and three feet in his stockinged-feet; but irrespective of size they mischievously meddle in the affairs of human beings and thereby frequently cause a great deal of trouble, although they are regarded as far more benign than malignant. The slightest insult might incur the fairies' displeasure, with the result that a baby is carried off from the cradle and in its place is left a changeling, in the shape of an ugly, wizened, little old man. Youths marrying fairy maidens (an indiscretion far from uncommon) do so at their own risk. All will be well, provided certain conditions, imposed on the occasion of the wedding, are adhered to; but alas, simple as this appears, the fulfilment of these conditions ultimately proves to demand nothing short of superhuman abilities. Visitors to Fairyland are strongly advised not to partake of refreshment there, no matter how tempting the delicacies offered, nor how pressing the host may be, for the consumption of fairy food produces an enchanted state that will for ever prevent the adventurer's return to mortal men.

§ 2. William Blake, the engraver, given to "seeing things," after one of his hallucinatory attacks, claimed to have witnessed a

fairy's funeral. W. B. Yeats, the Irish poet, hearing of this, remarked on the inferiority of English fairies, as all those in Ireland are immortal. However, leaving Mr. Blake and other "mystics" in his category out of the question, in England "grown-ups" do not, nowadays, really believe that a saucer of milk must be left standing overnight for Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, who will do all the housework in return; neither, when walking in woodland, does the adult expect to see pixies or nixies, suitably attired, careering in a ring around a large toadstool. In Scotland, however, it is quite another matter. There, brownies most unquestionably do dance in the heather. Grown men and women, even when they are sober, see them often enough;—and as for Ireland, the country is simply full of them. There the "little people" dwell in the raths (those old earthwork forts which enabled the Bronze Age Irish kings to make a stand against the Berserker vikings), from whence they come forth at all hours of the day and night to be up to their pranks—a favourite one being to let the cattle loose. They will also do a kindly service in return for a small reward. Whirls of dust are due to the fairy army marching, with pipers, and lances glittering under the moon, reminding one of the great Bronze Age herokings, who were themselves, in endurance and bravery, all but immortal.

§ 3. To Ireland, too, belongs the leprechaun, an industrious little fellow, perpetually hammering away at a pair of shoes, and avoiding company. Not one of them has ever been known to come nearer a human habitation than the back garden; on the contrary, it is the humans who trouble the leprechauns, for, due to his perpetual industry, each member of the family possesses a "crock o' gold" to which he is compelled to lead whosoever may catch him

by the beard. By some inexplicable adjustment of morality, it is not considered dishonest to steal fairy gold, but there is not much good to be got of it; it will trickle through the fingers in sheer waste.

§ 4. Persian fairy legend recognizes two kinds of beings: the *deeves* and the *pens*; the latter displaying friendly inclinations towards man. The two races wage war upon each other, and, in days gone by, from time to time a human hero was called by the *pens* to assist them against their enemy. The female *pen* is considered of such exquisite beauty that even the Persian poets cannot adequately describe her, whilst the *deeves*, of either sex, are so grotesquely ugly that the description of a sprite possessed of horns, tail and talons, conveys a comely picture by comparison.

§ 5. The Arabs have their *genii*, or *jinns*, powerful if somewhat amorphous, who can be confined in finger-rings, brazen vessels, and of course lamps, from whence they may be called forth by friction to do their owner's bidding.

§ 6. Medieval European legend abounds in fairy-lore borrowed from the Orient. Sir Lancelot was surnamed *Du Lac*, because the sorceress, *La Dame du Lac*, Merlin's paramour, carried him off in infancy. Sir *Launfal* wedded a fairy maiden named *Tryamour*, who presented him with a never-failing purse. The little fairy King *Oberon* stands as a transition stage between the romantic immortals of human stature, and the Teutonic elves. *Oberon*, with King Arthur of Round Table fame, dwelt at *Avalon*—"an enchanted isle having an enchanted castle builded in its midst." This was the entrance to *Fairyland*, and woe betide the mortal who travelled there. Rescue was impossible by valour, but it might be effected by charms; hence when King *Orfeo* of *Winchester*

called all his knights to surround the “ympe-tree” (imp-tree) beneath which his queen, Heurodis, had been bewitched, they were unable to prevent her abduction by the fairy king; consequently Orfeo abandoned his throne and became a wandering minstrel, winning back his wife by the exquisite beauty of his harp music, which cast an enrapturing spell over the fairy king.

§ 7. The Scandinavian people have their mischievous troll folk of the hills, grotesque dwarfs considered good for nothing, and near relations of the allan, or alp—a form of nightmare fiend. A very different dwarf, however, is the duergar, also a mountain sprite, distinguished by a miraculous skill in smelting and working in metals. They have short legs and long arms so that their hands and feet are all upon the ground together, reminding one of the orang-outang; but, from the finest filigree in gold and silver, to the most invincible swords and suits of armour, their superhuman skill in manufacture endeared them to gods and men alike, when men and gods fraternized in both peaceable and warlike pursuits.

§ 8. All Nordic peoples believe in elves, white and black, good and bad. The former fly on gauze wings and dance upon the meadows; the latter dwell in underground caverns from whence they hurl forth malediction on human beings. The elves are musicians, and there is a special elf-king’s tune which, though known right well to good fiddlers, must never be played because all who hear it will be bewitched into a ceaseless dance till some person comes secretly behind the fiddler and at a snip cuts all his strings. The white elves love neatness and order, and any good housemaid who strives to attain this will find the fairies assist her. A friendly elf may bestow upon one the gift of second sight, or

supply an elf-book, a sort of ready-reckoner which enables the possessor to foretell the future. Elves are sometimes termed elles, or erls. The erl-king is supposed to ride in a chariot, and guard the land. Also native to Nordic countries is the nis, or kobold—a dwarf who dresses in grey and wears a red pointed cap; no farm can prosper without a nis about it, and in fact the village church really needs a nis if it is to remain safe and free from abuses. The church nis is commonly called kirkegrim. Nisses are good fellows, provided you leave their porridge, with plenty of butter in it, in a wooden bowl beside the hearth. If you are near with the butter the nis may lose his temper, then anything can happen. He might even kill the cow!

§ 9. An altogether different creature is the neck, or river-spirit. Taking the form of a beautiful youth he sits on the surface of the stream playing upon a golden harp. He is wont to punish maidens who are fickle in love, but otherwise is harmless. Nevertheless, it is well to carry an unsheathed knife in the bottom of your boat, and so “bind the neck.” Another form of the neck is the fossegrim; and in Scotland, the kelpie, in the shape of a horse, haunts lakes and streams, with the evil intention of upsetting boats and drowning sailors.

§ 10. In Shetland the trows, and in the Orkneys the brownies, are more or less of a breed with the Nordic family of elves, possessing similar form, features and habits.

§ 11. In the *Nibelungenlied*, the dwarf Albrich plays an important rôle. Although barely as high as a warrior’s knee he was endowed, by virtue of his magic ring and girdle, with the strength, endurance and valour of four-and-twenty chosen knights—so he was invincible save by cunning. He was eventually overcome and

his treasure purloined. In modern Germany, belief is still held in a race of dwarfs, called ground-manikins, or still-people, who for the most part have no communication with men. To please them merits reward; to offend them results in their attack upon cattle. They dwell underground in little caverns lined with gold and gems. These abodes have no entrances, because the still-people can pass through solid things like rock, just as easily as mortals move through air. Sometimes, for no very apparent reason, they become visible and present themselves on some festive occasion—a wedding, for instance—and beg to join the revels. They invariably dance very well, give a great deal of sage and Christian advice, and leave a piece of money behind them.

§ 12. Dwarfs in the Hartz mountains have a bad reputation for pilfering not only from the fields but also from village shopkeepers. This is a pity, as it has resulted in their expulsion from many districts. The peasants are the losers in the long run, for what little the dwarfs stole was, surely, replaced adequately by their gifts of gold at weddings.

§ 13. In the neighbourhood of Salzburg dwell the wild-women. They make their abode in hollow hills, are rarely seen, but whenever they do appear reports of their exquisite beauty are carried back to the villagers. They are generally a pious and moral race, very fond of children, and inclined to run off with little human boys and girls if the parents do not keep a sharp look-out. A story is told of Count Otto of Oldenburg (A.D. 967), who, stopping his horse on a burning hot day, wiped his perspiring brow and said aloud, “Oh God! if one had now but a cool drink!” Immediately a wild-woman appeared and offered him a silver vessel shaped like a horn containing a liquid which the count

feared to quaff. Deliberating with himself, some of the liquid was spilled on the horse, whereupon the animal's sleek coat was miraculously dissolved, and its skin laid bare! Seeing her wiles were discovered, the enchantress demanded the horn's return, but the count galloped off with it, and preserved it as an heirloom. The Oldenburg horn, whatever its origin may have been, actually exists, and is in the King of Denmark's collection.

§ 14. Fairies are not infrequently associated with family history. The Musgraves of Eden Hall possess a glass vessel painted with gay designs and known as "The Luck of Eden Hall." It is supposed to have been snatched by a servant from a party of elves who were drawing water from St. Cuthbert's Well. In vain did the little men plead for the vessel's return, and at last going off in a huff they cried:

If that glass ever break or fall,  
Farewell the Luck of Eden Hall.

The estate has been sold, but the family preserves the vessel. Judging by its design, one would say the elves who lost it had Moorish blood in their veins.

§ 15. Another historical instance of the fairies' intercourse with men, is the case of Anne Jefferies of St. Teath in Cornwall, who, in 1696, was instructed in the art of healing by "six small people, all in green clothes." This art she applied so well that her activities attracted the attention of Dr. Fowler, Bishop of Gloucester. Anne Jefferies's fairies were called "hobgoblins," which rather distinguishes them from plain goblins, these latter folk having no streak of good in their nature—like imps, who, as is well known,

are the Devil's diminutive disciples.

§ 16. In Switzerland, the *bergmanchen*, or hill-men, are as kind and friendly to mortals as are their duplicates elsewhere. They drive home strayed lambs, supply peasants with firewood, and sometimes present them with magic cheeses, which are akin to the widow's cruse, for, when a piece is cut and eaten, the remainder grows again, becoming a whole cheese. In summertime the *bergmanchen* leave the hills and lounge about the valleys watching mortals at work. They particularly like the haymaking season, and at one time could be seen swarming around by the hundred. Nowadays they remain invisible because a foolish peasant once played a joke off on them—a painful practical joke—and they quite rightly resented it.

§ 17. In ancient Greece, wood-nymphs attended Artemis; sea-nymphs saved pious sailors from shipwreck; spring and river-nymphs poured freshness upon the earth; dryads and hamadryads personified vegetation; the oreads and oceanides haunted respectively mountain and seashore; but we have no record of a dwarf family. Rome added nothing to Greek fairy-lore; modern Italy, however, boasts its *monaciello*, a very close relation of the elf-brownie-pixie-troll family. We also hear of a race of fairies of normal human stature, though no different in nature from the dwarfs.

§ 18. It appears then, that though variously named, the fairies are of one breed throughout the world, and are especially prevalent in mountainous or marshy districts. Will-o'-the-wisp, or Jack-o'-lantern, the weird blue light of spontaneously combustible marsh-gas, is the fairy lantern in the swamp: the tiny mumbling echo of falling rills represents their voices in the fells. The Arab in

the desert sees in the dust-cloud a genie, while the Europeanized Jew still believes in *shedeem*, *shehireem*, or *mazikeen*, the vast shapeless powers which he learned to know in his desert wanderings—the jinn of the Arab in Hebrew form.

J. F.

Book recommended:

HARTLAND, E. S., *The Science of Fairy Tales* (Methuen, 1925).

FETCH. The apparition of a living person; a spiritual “double” appearing for the purpose of giving warning of approaching death.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET. A Devil. Shakespeare uses it in *Lear*.

FLYING DUTCHMAN. A phantom ship seen about the “Cape of Storms” (Cape of Good Hope), and also in the North Sea and on most other seas. The skipper is Van Straaten, or Falkenberg, who plays dice on deck with the Devil.

FOX, THE. In China he is considered to be the “horse on which ghosts ride. He is also propitiated by sacrifices, to prevent his doing mischief. Worship of the fox is thought to bring wealth.

FRANKENSTEIN. From a novel by Mary Shelley, in which a scientist named Frankenstein makes a Robot which murders him. The word is used popularly to designate the monster instead of the man. Used politically, it means a proposition that has brought its originator into disrepute; and commercially or otherwise, it

signifies a scheme that has ruined its promoters. See *English Literature and the Occult*, § 16.

**GEOMANCY.** Divination by dots made at random on paper. Also, divination by the signs offered in contours of hills, the courses of rivers, etc.

## GHOSTS

§ 1. When John Crook, the Quaker, was placed under arrest on account of his spiritual “convincement,” a friendly magistrate, instead of confining him in the local jail, offered him hospitality at his own house, at the same time apologizing for the necessity of putting him in a haunted room. In the middle of the night the conventional ghost appeared, clad in white, laden with jangling chains, and crying in sepulchral tones, “You are damned! You are damned!” Without hesitation the pious Quaker replied, “Indeed, friend, thou art a liar, for I feel this moment the sweet peace of my God flow through my heart!” The result was a confession from the ghost to the effect that he and fellow-servants were attempting to keep that part of the house unoccupied, to facilitate a robbery they had planned. This perhaps holds the record for rapid and easy “laying” of a ghost; next comes “the best authenticated ghost-story on record,” having as its protagonist none other than Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester. Staying at the country residence of a Roman Catholic family, he met on the staircase a young monk going towards the library. Not seeing him again at meals or elsewhere, Wilberforce made some inquiry of his hostess and learned that the monk was not a member of the house-party, but just the family ghost who, it appeared, had at some time been the family father confessor. At about midnight, sitting in the library, Wilberforce was disturbed at his reading by the monk entering and searching about at the bookcases—apparently in vain, for he disappeared after glancing disconsolately towards Wilberforce. At that time, the cleric did not believe in ghosts;

nevertheless, he stayed up late in the library the following night to see what he would see! The last stroke of twelve had barely finished humming in the massive old clockcase when there came an ominous creak from the stairs—the library door opened—enter the monk! Wilberforce kept cool, and as soon as the visitant was at the bookshelves he inquired in as casual a tone as possible, “What is it that you require?” Whereupon the ghost turned round, smiled, and said he was very glad someone had sufficient sense to speak to him at last, as he was not permitted to start a conversation. The fact was that some incriminating papers were hidden in the bookcase—the monk knew it, having himself concealed them—and should they come to light and get into unscrupulous hands, it might prove very unpleasant and embarrassing for the family. Further conversation resulted in Wilberforce joining in the search, and at last, mounting the library-steps at the monk’s request, he found the documents on top of the shelves. Together, the living and the shade of the dead set to work burning the papers, and as the last flicker of consuming fire leapt and faded on the blackened edge of the final sheet, the ghost disappeared—never to return. This is the world’s most authentic ghost-story, because who would presume to doubt the word of a bishop? Nevertheless, one does wonder why the monk troubled to become a ghost, and was either too stupid or too lazy to look on top of the bookcase, more especially as he must have known he put the papers there; and also, why no servant had come upon them when dusting in that place, and remarked upon the discovery. And to complete our inquisitiveness, it would be interesting to know the attitude of the family under the circumstances; a really respectable ghost being as valuable an

adjunct as an unblemished escutcheon.

§ 2. Bishop Wilberforce is not the only highly placed churchman to meet an apparition in an old mansion's library. The Rev. Dr. Jessop of Norfolk had such an experience and wrote it up for so dignified a journal as the *Athenæum*. Wishing to consult some old books in the collection of Lord Orford, he visited Mannington Hall, and working during the night saw, at about 1 am., a large white hand resting on the table near his elbow. Turning, he beheld the whole figure "dressed in what I can only describe as a kind of ecclesiastical habit of thick corded silk." Jessop decided to make a sketch of the intruder (it was part of a gentleman's education in those days—no especial skill was required), remembered he had no sketch-book with him, wondered if he should go upstairs to fetch it from his bedroom, but being afraid to lose the apparition decided not to move. However, he disturbed a book and the phantom vanished. Soon it became visible again and Jessop made up his mind to speak, but found that he could not articulate. "There he sat, and there sat I"—and so the incident ended, for finishing his work Jessop went to bed and slept without any ghostly disturbance, and, apparently, without taking the trouble to make inquiries from his host, or the servants, in the morning.

§ 3. Libraries are always to be regarded with suspicion. At Felbrigg, some ten miles from Mannington Hall, the ghost of one of the Windhams who built the place, was said by the owners, certain Miss Kettons, to haunt the book-shelves, searching for his favourite volume. Traditional ghosts are in the main rather purposeless, unless the function of presaging the demise of "his lordship" be considered useful; but the gentleman could surely be

relied upon to depart this life without “being called for.”

§ 4. Many of “the stately homes of England,” as they are generally described by the romantic, have their ghosts attached, and provided the house is old and ivy-clad, and styled a castle, grange, or manor, the weird intruder does but add value to the edifice. It is said that just after the War, when millionaire hucksters were purchasing “homes,” a ghost in a vacant country-house increased the value by thousands of pounds. A modern villa, however, must boast a clean bill of health psychically, just as it must bear sanitary authorities’ certificates concerning the state of the drains. Any person finding himself haunted in a recently constructed dwelling had better be quiet about it, for to boast, or even complain, may result in an action being brought by the owner for “slander of title.” There was, at Egham, a house in which doors opened, the knobs turned without hands upon them, and footfalls were heard; wherein a little girl beheld “a small old man creeping about the house.” Ultimately the tenant fled, and a certain daily paper made good use of the story in filling a column or two, with the result that the place could not be re-let. The landlord took legal action and the newspaper paid two hundred pounds to settle out of court. Soon after this, and no doubt on account of the publicity, the tenant of a house in Balham ceased to pay rent because of a ghost that obligingly made a sudden appearance. On this occasion the affair went into court, where it was decided that ghosts were not sufficiently good excuses, and judgment was given in favour of the landlord.

§ 5. Modern ghosts have a vogue outside of houses. A story that created a sensation in 1913 was recounted by the vicar of a Kensington church. Leaving the building after choir-practice, he

was detained by an agitated lady who implored him to accompany her at once to an address near by because a gentleman there was dying. Without ceremony she pushed him into a waiting taxi which soon took them to the house. The vicar mounted the front steps, rang the bell, and on inquiring from the butler, learned that the occupant, far from being in a dying condition, was not even ill. "But this lady—" said the clergyman turning round—only to discover that the lady, the taxi, and its driver had vanished. Not driven off, be it understood, but *vanished!* dissolved into thin air as it were. At that moment, the master of the house entered the hail, and on learning the circumstances of the visit, asked the vicar in, confessing that though he was quite well he actually did feel that he ought to consult a clergyman on certain matters of conscience. After about an hour's talk the vicar departed having arranged to call again the following evening—which he did, only to learn that in the interim the gentleman had suddenly dropped dead. Ascending the stairs to the bedroom the vicar saw, on a table beside the bed on which the corpse lay, a photograph of the lady who had summoned him in the first instance. Inquiring of the butler, he learned that it was the master's wife *who had died some fifteen years earlier*. This at least is a thoroughly human, purposive ghost, but the phantom taxi-cab takes even more swallowing than a real, rattling, oil-and petrol-fed automobile would require.

§ 6. If then, a motor vehicle can have a ghost, so can a piece of chemical apparatus, hence the oft-repeated tale of the Tower of London will bear retelling. The incident occurred in the residence of a Mr. E. L. Swifte, keeper of the Crown Jewels from 1814 to 1852. It was "written up" by him, and published in *Notes and Queries* for 1860. Late one Saturday night in October, 1817, the

keeper, his wife, their son, and Mrs. Swifte's sister were seated at supper; the doors were fast closed, the windows heavily curtained; two tall wax candles illuminated the scene. Midnight had just struck. Mrs. Swifte was about to take a sip of wine when she cried, "Good God! What is that?" Mr. Swifte, looking up, saw, hovering 'twixt table and ceiling, a large glass tube about as thick as his arm. This tube contained a viscous liquid, part of which was light blue and part white. The colours mixed and separated several times, then the giant test-tube moved slowly over, and halting above Mrs. Swifte's shoulder caused her to shout, "Oh, Christ! it has seized me!" Like a good stolid Victorian, Mr. Swifte rose to the occasion. Picking up his chair he swung it round his head and aimed a "terrific blow" which passed through the ghostly test-tube and came to rest on the wail. However, it had the desired effect, for the "thing" vanished. Young Swifte and Mrs. Swifte's sister saw nothing from first to last.

5 7. There are many notorious ghosts in the Tower of London, and also on Tower Hill. Anne Boleyn walks the hill, as well as frequenting the Tower Chapel. A certain Captain of the Guard, seeing lights shining from the windows, and inquiring of the sentry, learned that it often happened at or about midnight. Ordering a ladder to be brought, the officer mounted, and, peeping in, saw a procession led by Anne Boleyn, all "strangely illuminated." Someone (or something) somewhere switched off the psychic light, and all disappeared.

§ 8. The dim grey Norman pile which has protected London for a thousand years is surely entitled to as many ghosts as it has housed tragedies; but it seems hardly "nice" for Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw to parade in their broad-brimmed hats and swaying

cloaks, around Red Lion Square—that little patch of dusty greenery shadowed in by rather dingy old houses—even if their disinterred remains (at the time of the Restoration) rested for one night at that Red Lion Inn which formerly occupied part of the site. Nevertheless, the shades of the Protector and his peers were seen there frequently during the late war. In Bloomsbury, the living as well as the dead have been involved in cases of haunting, one of the best authenticated instances of which is connected with the British Museum Reading Room. On Thursday, 12 April 1888, Dr. W. W. Westcott made an appointment to meet the Rev. T. W. Lemon there the following morning. Friday the 13th (a sinister-sounding day!) found Dr. Westcott confined to his bed with what would now be called 'flu, but then was given the dignified appellation "feverish catarrh." However securely the doctor was tucked up, his soul went marching on, for he was seen in the Reading Room by several people. The man at the cloak-room observed him go in; one of his intimates saw him take his accustomed seat—and so it went on. But still, that "feverish catarrh" had his body, and the British Museum had it not; hence it must have been his soul that came to keep the appointment!—though it is notable that the Rev. Lemon with whom the engagement had been made did not see Dr. Westcott (but then, of course, the former was not an habitu  of the Reading Room, consequently he had not become accustomed to seeing his friend there at regular hours). Neither is that the only haunting in the British Museum: nervous old ladies not infrequently inform the attendant in the Mummy Room that one or another of the exhibits has "turned its head and stared" at them!

§ 9. After such a disturbing experience the ladies might

conceivably go to Hyde Park to recover—but even there they are far from safe, for on the walk between Marble Arch and Lancaster Gate stands “the Devil’s Elm” beneath which no tramp will sleep—because it means death. Even respectable people who have fallen into a doze there during summer afternoons have complained of nightmare! Another tree, which had a branch exactly like a human arm and hand, was, so story has it, cut down because persons sleeping under it were found dead. All trees afford shelter for spirits, but fortunately for mankind not all tree-spirits are malignant. Oriental legend abounds in stories of persons who, after sleeping soundly beneath haunted banyans, have arisen refreshed, and subsequently performed all manner of wonders.

§ 10. Where Marble Arch is now, the gallows-tree of Tyburn once stood, and that might account for “the Devil’s Elm,” and also for the haunted horse-bus which once ran from the end of Edgware Road to Notting Hill Gate. The possibility of transport being connected with ghosts makes the title, “The Moving Staircase,” all the more arresting. One springs avidly at the story, expecting it to be concerning a “Thing” on the escalator at Piccadilly, but the collection of stories in which it appears, entitled *Haunted Houses of London*, by Elliott O’Donnell, was published in 1909 when escalators, if thought of, were not in vogue. This staircase of Mr. O’Donnell’s was of “the broad oaken” variety. It led from a spacious hail to a gallery joining the east and west wings of a “large, quaint old house” bordering Wandsworth Common. The narrative is recounted by a certain Mr. Scaran, who had the misfortune to rent the house on a three years’ lease. On taking the place over, he and his wife were both “struck” by the

staircase; it was not quite central, and there were evident signs of its having been so at one time. Soon after they moved in, the staircase began its nonsense one midnight, creaking and groaning as though many folk ascended and descended. “The next night,” Mr. Scaran continues, through the medium of Mr. O’Donnell, “I happened to be out till rather late” (*which is significant!*), “and on my return found the hall in darkness, my wife and family having gone to bed. I struck a light and, walking to the staircase, candle in hand, began to mount.” At the sixth step “there was a rush of ice-cold wind” and the staircase disappeared, leaving Mr. Scaran on the hail floor, in a position that proved he had been climbing the now non-existent flight, which had once occupied the central position! If the affair had ended at that, one might take the lateness of the hour into consideration and say no more about it, but his daughter Joan, ascending the stairs a day or so later (the material ones this time), had a tray snatched from her hand; and her brother Dick, “an athletic young fellow in the sixth form at Dulwich,” was himself pushed right over the banisters by a phantom young lady. As though that were not sufficient, Molly, “our youngest,” saw the stairs slowly but surely shift themselves along the hail and become central! Then, as though annoyed at being caught in the act, “it slowly shot towards me, gliding noiselessly over the ground like some horrible, black-clad inquisitorial machine.” (A fine literary style, that, for Molly, the youngest. On account of her youth she must be forgiven the “*slowly shot*”!)

§ 11. Anyway, that staircase chased her all over the place; “its polished balustrades shining with ten-thousand times their accustomed lustre, reflected dozens of strange, distorted faces—

faces I seemed to have seen long, long ago, maybe in a previous lifetime.” Mr. Scaran and his family, like true Britons, refused to be scared away by a mad staircase, and nothing more occurred till nephew Will, “a sailor, second officer on an Anglo-Japanese liner,” came to stay. Will ought to have been first officer if his ability to pitch a yarn is any criterion of his seamanship. He stayed up late one night to finish writing a lecture he was to deliver before the Geographical Society, and, more accustomed to handling the tiller than the quill, he grew sleepy and steered a course that according to dead reckonings and the stars should have brought him snug into the harbour of bed; but alas, Will ran foul of many persons descending the staircase—almost had his timbers shivered on ladies’ fans and gentlemen’s sword-hilts. Will grew cold with the coldness that could be smelt (like the silence that can be felt). “Suddenly from the direction of the Common came the faint but unmistakable sounds of a horse’s hoofs . . .” That horse and rider passed in through the bolted door, halted in the hail a moment, then the gallant animal, spurred on, leapt up the staircase—and came the clash of swords! Will was drenched by two lots of blood—one lot hot, one lot cold. After that, the horse lost its footing and fell, rolling down the staircase. The rattle of fire-arms—frantic shrieks—and then (all this being enacted on the central phantom staircase) the whole collection dematerialized, and Will descended with a run from the main-top-gallants, landing on the deck with a thud that took the wind out of his sails. Still Mr. Scaran refused to move out, but at last “the climax . . . was reached one afternoon about twilight, when my wife . . . suddenly found herself in a crowd of phantom men . . . who, not content with kissing and otherwise insulting her, jostled and hustled her to such an extent

that she fainted. . . . That settled it; I came to an agreement with my landlord . . .” All that remains is to add that Mr. Elliott O’Donnell, in a preface to the volume, states that all the contents have “been selected expressly on account of their authenticity.”

§ 12. That veritable Black Bess leaping up the moving staircase, reminds us that animals can both see, and be ghosts. Mr. O’Donnell has produced an entire volume of them—all authentic; but the following story is not one of his. A lady had brought up from birth two Yorkshire terriers. Though both belonged to the same litter there was a vast difference between them, for, whilst Pluto was, and always had been strong and vigorous—spoiling for a fight with anything on four legs—Juno was a weakling. However, Pluto was a chivalrous fellow; no dog took liberties with poor little Juno if Pluto was about; but if Juno did not feel like finishing his dinner on the spot, Pluto considered the remainder his perquisite, and would not allow the original owner to recommence, no matter how many pathetic attempts it made; always the stronger dog gave a warning growl, albeit not an angry one, hurried forward and stood on guard. Juno died some years ago, but occasionally Pluto gives that little warning note, and runs to the plate—for now he is old and has lost a tooth or two, and sometimes leaves his own dinner. The lady who owns the animal is convinced that Pluto sees Juno’s ghost. An indulgent psychologist made some attempt to explain “conditioned reflex”: how the sight of food on a plate arouses memory, etc., but the lady will have none of it—she is sure it is Juno’s ghost. The foregoing pales somewhat before Mr. O’Donnell’s headless cat of Seely Road, Manchester, though it quite holds its own beside the numerous letters to the press from persons whose “little girl age five,” of course “a very bright child,”

and who “was ailing nothing at the time,” sees cats strolling round the house when no cat is there. Cats seen by young children usually have the faculty of walking, tail erect, behind a piece of furniture that is close against the wall. They seem like silhouettes of cats—if it were not that they are of the fourth dimension one would conclude that they were of a two-, instead of a three-dimensional nature. However, when children of tender years” see things,” be it “pussies” or just “things”—when they suffer from *pavor nocturnus* and rouse the entire neighbourhood with their nightly shrieks—it is a matter for the psycho-therapist or the endocrinologist, or possibly both. The “cats” or “things” can be dissolved from the little sufferer’s sight by a bottle of medicine or its modern hypodermic equivalent, or possibly only a correction of diet. It is nothing to write to the papers about—any more than mumps is.

§ 13. Bordering on the realms of curability, too, is the poltergeist<sup>1</sup> type of haunting. Suddenly, for no apparent purpose, a poltergeist (or racketing spirit) gets into a house, with the result that all the crockery is thrown from the kitchen dresser by an invisible hand. The fire-irons leap through the window; lumps of coal leave the cellar, get somehow to the top of the house and then drop over the banisters. Pictures fall down, and even heavy pieces of furniture begin to chase the inmates about the house. This typical set of manifestations can be reckoned a very hoary nine days’ wonder—and still is for journalists and other meddling folk who do not help to clear up the mystery; but so far as science has had opportunity to investigate, these occurrences have

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Spiritualism, Part II*, §§ 48-52.

revealed the necessary presence of an “agent,” generally an adolescent girl, sometimes a boy in that stage of development, and occasionally a mentally puerile adult. Many poltergeist cases have been proved “hysterical fraud.” They are useful in so far as they indicate the possibilities of hysteria manifesting itself in other, more “serious” instances of haunting. The poltergeist display is very definitely material—as material as the crockery, the coals, the fire-irons, and the furniture; so it is just as well to keep out of the way. Immaterial ghostly phenomena are decidedly more comfortable. A good old Irish family boasting its banshee may have in her a messenger presaging death; but that is tolerable in comparison with brickbats. Of course, the young and beautiful banshee who, loving the family, comes and sings so sweet and solemn a tune that the sufferer welcomes the approach of death, is more satisfactory than the old and ugly one who, hating the family, gives her warning in the form of a shriek of hellish glee, or a satanic chuckle of grim mirth. Yet horrible as this is, she is at least the property of the family to whom she is attached (no matter how altered in status it has become, or how far it has wandered from its native soil), and her sudden presence, though dreaded, is a phenomenon to be expected; whilst, on the other hand, the poltergeist is a heedless vagrant, popping up where it chooses, and creating havoc how it chooses—to the utter dismay of innocent folk.

§ 14. The ghosts, like the poor, are always with us. The rattling heart of the metropolis cannot dispel Cromwell and his fellows from Red Lion Square, where they parade in full view of the vulgar, so how much less likely are the spectres to leave the dim recesses of deep alcoves in country houses? If the “luck of the

line” depends upon an unburied skeleton being kept in the best bedroom, there the bones must abide, lest the offended spirit sends woe instead of male offspring.

J. F.

Book recommended:

HARPER, C. G., *Haunted Houses* (Cecil Palmer, 1927). [Illustrated by the author.]

GHOST-SEERS. A superstition that persons born during specified hours will grow up with the faculty of seeing ghosts.

GLASTONBURY SCRIPTS. A set of nine papers concerning the Abbey, supposed to have been received by automatic writing.

GONG. Used in China, (1) for frightening away evil spirits; (2) for driving off the “celestial dog” who is devouring the moon during an eclipse.

GREAT TRICK, THE. Gullible peasants are persuaded to hand a bag of money to a gipsy, who incants over it, and then buries it, with the assurance that it will become magically doubled in a few days. When the eager peasant digs it up he finds the coin changed into metal buttons—quite magic enough!

HEBDOMAD. A group of seven superhuman beings—angels or spirits. Founded on the idea of seven planets.

HELL (BUDDHIST), TORTURES OF.

(1) Lying on a board full of nails—for those who buy large quantities of rice, etc., in anticipation of a rise in the market; (2) Cutting out the tongue—for those who scrape gold-leaf off idols; (3) Flaying—for those who steal, deface, or tear books [a system that might beneficially be introduced into this country!]; (4) Cutting in halves—for those who disrespect the gods; (5) Kneeling on iron filings—for thieves; (6) Impalement—for those who raise funds for charity and keep the money, also for those who overcharge for books; (7) Gnawing by dogs and pigs—for those who cause enmity between relations; (8) Pecking by birds—for those who kill harmless creatures; (9) Boiling in oil—for those who rob graves.

There are also other forms of torture for other forms of evil behaviour.

See Buddhist Occultism, Chinese Occultism, etc.

## HISTORY OF OCCULT IDEAS

### *Hunger, Birth, Death*

§ 1. The history of occultism may rightly be regarded as the history of humanity studied from the point of view of man's behaviour in relation to the vast unknown and of his heroic endeavours to influence the titanic forces controlling, or seeming to control, his destiny—the powers holding the reins of life and death.

§ 2. Of the men who inhabited the earth during the early part of the Old Stone Age, insufficient trace is left for us to even conjecture at their spiritual achievement, but in the latter part of this long period of developmental history—in the subsection known as the Aurignacian stage of culture—men took up their abode in the awe-inspiring caves of southern France and Spain, where they left indisputable evidence of their psychic awareness. The evidence takes the form of mural engraving and painting in the dark inner recesses of the caverns. Had these works of art been intended as purely decorative devices they would surely have been placed where daylight made them visible to all corners. The fact of their being hidden, as it were, suggests a “holy of holies,” something sacred and fraught with awful power, something that must not be belittled or “taken in vain.” The pictures represent animals of two kinds, namely, those which were habitually hunted and killed for food, and those wild, carnivorous beasts which were themselves the hunters, killers and devourers of men. The cult expressed in this prehistoric art seems to have been a psychic endeavour to gain control of the external world: to lure, by magic, the food-

animals to fall a prey to pitfalls and arrows, and the fierce animals to remain at a safe distance, competing with the hunter if needs be, but not devouring him. Not only in this nutritional cult did the cave-dweller display his tendency towards occultism; he demonstrated ideas of postmortem survival in his burial customs. The dead were interred, usually in a crouching position, surrounded with red earth and often decorated with necklaces consisting of animals' teeth, shells, and pieces of stone. In some instances, where more than one burial had taken place at the same time, the bodies were orientated, that is, placed so that they all faced in the same direction. The shells and teeth were not thrown into the grave in a haphazard manner, but were placed with deliberate intent so as to form something of a pattern.

§ 3. This care of, and mystical provision for the welfare of the dead, indicates not only a belief in individual survival but also an expectation of reincarnation. To make this clear, the mural cave paintings and the funerary rites of the period must be considered as a joint manifestation of ideas concerning the supernatural. Professor Sir G. Elliot Smith has pointed out that in some of the paintings animals are depicted with wounds indicated in the region of the heart, and in others they are represented with the heart showing. This proves that these early men recognized the importance of that organ and the blood-stream in the continuance of life, and also suggests that the most common cause of death was injury, probably from a beast whilst hunting, hence, death being apparently due to loss of blood, death itself meant bloodlessness. Because of the loss of vital red fluid, red earth was placed about the body in the grave, thereby providing compensation by a process of contagious magic.

§ 4. Among the drawings are to be found representations of the human female form; but whilst the animals are depicted with a firm line and a meticulous attention to detail, and are in this respect superior to much so styled “modern” art, the human figures are without faces and grotesquely misshapen, with gross exaggeration of female functional parts. Obviously, then, on the evidence of the morphological perfection of the zoological subjects, the cave-man could, had he so desired, have drawn correct anatomy, if not correct perspective when representing the human figure. The fact of his doing otherwise indicates that these particular works were highly symbolic, and not intended in any way to be portraits.

§ 5. Here again is an occult motive. Not only death, but also birth is a subject for awesome speculation, for it is very unlikely that prehistoric man had even the vaguest inkling of his own function in the phenomenon of reproduction, just as to-day many primitive people (for instance, the Australian Blacks and the Trobriand Islanders) are unaware of it. The female was regarded as the source of life, hence in the cave paintings the maternal parts are emphasized. Birth and death, the two terminal mysteries of human existence, obtruded themselves forcibly upon our early ancestors, as subjects for occult speculation, yet they were not regarded as opposites—on the contrary, a bond of union must have presented itself in some obscure and certainly crude form of reasoning. The before-birth and the after-death suggested the same state of being, though the circle as an abstraction could not have been understood. Perhaps in the alternation of night and day, and in the recurrence of the seasons, an analogy suggestive of man’s own rebirth was drawn; but be that as it may, the terminal

mysteries most certainly were connected in the prehistoric ideology, for cowrie shells were used as symbols of birth due to their likeness on the ventral side, to the portal through which men enter this world. These shells were also buried with the dead. This belief in reincarnation, to-day made the credo of modern "religion," must have antedated belief in continued existence in another, extra-terrestrial, sphere or state, for this latter view involves a power of abstraction which prehistoric man could hardly have possessed.

§ 6. The cowrie shell is the earliest and most potent object of power. The great value man set upon it, as a result of his faith in its magical properties, is demonstrated by the fact of shells found in the burial sites in the south of France, having been brought there from the Indian Ocean—no mean feat of transport for primitive men to accomplish without the aid of pockets, to accommodate the shells and prevent inconvenience to the carrier.

§ 7. Although first among the artifacts of occultism, the cowrie shell does not stand alone. The teeth and claws of wild animals vie with it in antiquity, if not in importance. Prehistoric man wore them about his neck that they might protect him from all harm just as they protected the animal. Dr. W. J. Perry, in *The Origin of Magic and Religion*, says (p. 9): "The early men of the cave-dwelling age chose their givers of life from the fundamental facts of life and death as they knew them. . . . Likewise, the idea that what protected wild animals could be made to protect men was, in a way, logical. . . . From these simple beginnings a vast ramification issued. Considering the nature of the 'drive' that forced him on, it is not surprising to find that early man soon added fresh objects and substances to his battery of life givers." Dr. Perry

continues by explaining that all red substances became surrogates for blood—all shells became possessed of life-bestowing powers: and even to-day the cowrie-shell and the teeth of wild animals are used as amulets. The former may occasionally be seen offered for sale in “curio” shops as a “lucky wedding shell”; and one of the latter, mounted in gold and appended to the watch-chain of a menagerie worker, is considered by him to be fraught with sufficient magic to keep his charges well behaved.

### ***The Mother Cult***

§ 8. The Aurignacian artists were not only painters and engravers but sculptors. Again, in their plastic work they carved animals in a manner which arouses our admiration, yet represented the human female form most grotesquely. Professor M. Boule, describing such a “Venus,” says: “The statuette, 0.11 metre (4 1/2 in.) in height, was carved from a piece of limestone, and its surface retained some traces of red painting. It represented a nude woman of massive proportions with enormous breasts, protruding belly, and full thighs. The head is covered by a mop of hair, represented by concentric lines, and re-divided by markings at right angles to these primary lines. This coiffure almost completely conceals the face, no part of which is even indicated. The arms, which are extremely slender and are ornamented by bracelets, are folded over the chest. The thighs and legs are thick, short, and fat, and the genital region is distinctly portrayed.”

§ 9. This is sufficient evidence of early man’s supreme preoccupation with the birth mystery to cause students to look for a connection between the “Venuses” and the sacred shell. These Aurignacian sculptures do not actually bear a definite shell

character, but similar figurines of a rather later cultural phase are most definitely built up by adding arms, legs, trunk and head to a cowrie shell. This means either that the magico-religious conception of the Great Mother as the source of all good (and later of all evil as well!) resulted in the representation of the exaggerated woman to which the shell image was subsequently added, or, that the Aurignacian artist had not yet developed a technique that enabled him to combine in one figure both absolute symbolism and absolute realism. In other words, the first artists may have meant their feminine grotesques to express the shell-woman, but lacking in the power of abstraction necessary to the concrete expression of the inspiration, could pass on only the urge to create the form, and not the finished work.

§ 10. Ideas normally precede actions, hence it is reasonable to suppose that prehistoric man conceived of the protective power of the Great Mother, before he attempted to carve her as an amulet. Just as the physical earthly mother, having brought a child into the world, is impelled to feed, protect and care for it, so the abstraction, the Great Mother, could be expected to tend her devotees: not only avert famine, and bring the hunter safely home on earth, but also carry him through the unknowable 'twixt death and rebirth. In this way our cave-dwelling ancestors demonstrated spirituality, for the Mother-Goddess Cult, material though its ends might have been, did not consist of the worship of material things—on the contrary, it was a form of occultism as far removed from belief in the power of mortal man, and as convinced of the immortality of his soul, as any modern religion. The cult may possibly have possessed its shrines and secrets, its services and priests, its initiates and inner mysteries, but it must certainly have

contained the essential occult germ of ultimate truth, for the cave man's faith in, and dependence upon the higher power of the Mother Goddess survived through the early civilizations, and fundamentally is not yet extinguished in our own era.

§ 11. In spite of the fantastic theorizing both in talk and in writing (and, which is more, in print) about the lost continents of Lemuria and Atlantis,<sup>1</sup> which land masses, if they ever did exist, sank beneath the sea long before man was evolved, the recognized authorities agree that the first civilization came into being in the Valley of the Nile, and here, through Egypt's long and great history we find occultism taking a leading place in social and political life. Of the earliest period, due to the continual silting of the Delta, little is known, but those pre-dynastic graves which have yielded their contents to us, reveal only higher and more complicated forms of Palæolithic burial customs. In the British Museum (Mummy Room) we have a pre-dynastic burial, complete in a sand-pit. This exhibit is interesting, apart from the fact of the flesh being desiccated and preserved like leather about the skeleton, in so much that the deceased was buried in the crouched position, and surrounded in his grave by domestic utensils. This suggests that, with the passage of time, ideas concerning the post-mortem journey had changed: it was no longer a single stride through the dark from death to rebirth, but a more involved journey necessitating the convenience of cooking-pots, that the soul's travels might be eased by "earthly" comforts. The pre-dynastic graves, besides cooking-pots, occasionally yield images of the Mother Goddess, who, in her material representation,

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Atlantis*.

remained static; for these finds are very similar to the Aurignacian “Venuses.” However, as ideas concerning the post-mortem journey changed, those regarding the destination kept abreast. Very soon figurines of the Great Mother took a more typically Egyptian form. Complication was added to complication of earthly life; occult ideas advanced, and the Mother Cult developed to an extent that often seems to divorce it from the fundamental primary conception of protective motherhood.

### ***The Divine Cow***

§ 12. Occult ideas, seldom clearly defined, are always inclined to both overlap and blend until they ultimately result in a conglomerate mass of manifest magico-religious practice, representing deeper strivings. This tendency showed itself early in the history of occultism, the Nutritional Cult and the Great-Mother Cult becoming inextricably merged. Part of the Goddess’s function as a giver of life and a protector of men, was to feed her little ones; and as the most striking characteristic of physical motherhood is the secretion of milk to nourish the offspring, this instinct came to be regarded as a divine attribute. With the domestication of animals which came about early in Egyptian history, the cow was identified with the goddess, and the animal was regarded as an incarnation of the deity; the deity in art was henceforth depicted with cow’s head and horns, in which guise she was named Hator. Later, other givers of life in the form of material food were added to the conception of the occult giver of life, the Great Mother, and we learn of cults of the Corn Mother, the Maize Mother, and so on. Her nutritional function made her the goddess of all horned beasts, whilst her protective function set

her on high among all fanged and clawed beasts. Because the process of birth can be analogized to the act of passing through a gate, the Mother Goddess soon came to be regarded as the Guardian of the Portal, or Keeper of the City Gates. No one dared to enter or leave without performing a propitiatory rite; and the idea took further root and grew to embellish the funerary rites—the passing out of life.

§ 13. Biological functions were now beginning to be understood vaguely, and the uterus was recognized as an organ associated with birth. It was the distension and ultimate contraction of this organ that caused the gates of life to open. Mankind, endeavouring always to control the actual by the application of the metaphorical, evolved the magic wand as an object of power. Always buttressing the metaphorical with the analogy of the actual, mankind, when the masculine function in reproduction became understood, gave a phallic significance to the magic wand, and to-day, this symbol of power is carried by kings in the form of the sceptre.

§ 14. Hator, the Divine Cow, the Great Mother, the Giver of Life, soon acquired numerous other characteristics: she became, besides the Guardian of the Gates, the Helper in Childbirth, that is, the Goddess of Midwives. With the rise of industry she became “The Builder” and “The Carpenter of Mankind,” “The Lady Potter,” and last but by no means least, “The Moon.” An early Egyptian drawing represents the elevation of the cow to the sky, the moon appearing between her horns, and the stars in a line along her belly.

***The Lunar Cult***

§ 15. Woman's menstrual periodicity had influenced the identification of Hator with the moon, and throughout the history of all early civilizations, we find similar occult ideas concerning the nocturnal luminary. All goddesses are moon goddesses. Diana, the Huntress, the Goddess of Hunting (Roman), is also Diana of the moon, whilst Artemis (and the Ephesian Artemis, the multi-breasted) is the Greek prototype of Diana. All occultism fundamentally aims at securing man's physical well-being here on earth and his spiritual comfort beyond the grave. In early times, any new feat of industry, any new invention, and any fresh system of living that was beneficial to man was considered the gift of the Great Mother, and it in turn must be dedicated to her. The inspiration to create pottery was a gift from the Mother, and the manufactured pots must be made a gift to her. The goddess became the Mother of Pots, and pots were regarded as woman. Woman in turn was considered as a pot which contained the embryo—the jar from which life issued.

§ 16. The details of ritual connected with the worship of the Moon Mother in Egypt involved sacrificial rites and were connected in some way with the science of agriculture by irrigation and with the inauguration of the Lunar Calendar. Thus, in his search for the intangible, man invented the first science. In attempting to influence the uncontrollable, he took control of his food supplies. The Great Mother, so faithfully served from the Aurignacian period onward, had not neglected her children, for with this mastery of mother earth, man, to a certain extent, also became captain of his destiny. With an abundant food-supply assured him by the bounty of the Great Mother, his hands were

freed from continual serfdom to the soil. With leisure, he was at liberty to cultivate his mind and his arts and crafts, to pay attention in greater detail to the inner man, and provide for his soul's welfare. The tendency of occult ideas to fuse into a homogeneous whole showed itself once more where colour was concerned. Red, for blood, had always been considered the life-giving hue, now green came into prominence.

§ 17. The Great Mother, functioning as the Corn Mother, gave the cereal to men, through the beneficent waters of the Nile. These waters, which were themselves deified and considered as givers of life, flooded the parched land every year with a pale green inundation, which, subsiding, gave rise to the young green corn, hence, green became a giver of life. Translated into the occult sphere green, the hue itself, and all green things must have life-giving and preserving powers. Malachite, an indigenous green mineral (copper ore), was used in powder form to colour the face and so protect the wearer. Further searchings for control of the occult resulted in the reduction of malachite and the discovery of metallic copper, and so ended the Stone Age.

§ 18. Aurignacian, and probably pre-Aurignacian, man had saved himself from extinction chiefly by his tendency to occult striving. Feeling in the dark for the vast powers to propitiate for his protection, he not only gave himself the courage that comes from faith, but also developed the turn of mind that later, in early Egypt, enabled him to discover, if not the Elixir of Life, at least ways of practically preserving life, and laying the foundations of civilization as it exists to-day. The cultural history of humanity reveals on every page that political and economic affairs, important as they may be, are but superficial in comparison with

the deep heart-hunger man feels for the occult: and every phase of cultural development in Egypt and among contemporary peoples is attributable to some psychic urge that resulted in a utilitarian application. Egyptian State affairs prospered exceedingly, and collaterally, Egyptian occult ideas became diversified, complicated, highly ritualistic, and matters for contemporaneous specialization. The class system developed, rulers and priests stood in close relation to the gods, serving them, whilst the people looked to the initiated ones to intercede for them. Religion had become abstracted into the realms of morality; post-mortem continued existence was no longer earthly; there were ideas concerning a sky-world for ruler and an under-world for the people.

§ 19. The Lunar Cult was replaced by the Solar Cult. The Moon Mother waned before the dazzling brilliance of the Great God Ra. The rule of woman ended and the rule of man began.

### ***The Solar Cult***

§ 20. As the moon lived in the sky, part of man's service to the Moon Mother had been to observe the firmament, to note its ever-changing aspects, and divine, if possible, the wishes and intentions of the deity. This devotion had resulted in the foundation of a practical if crude and elementary Astronomy. The Sothic calendar, based on the star Sirius, had been devised very early, in fact it may possibly antedate the inauguration of the Solar calendar with which it coincides very closely in matters of calculation; but Sirius had insufficient virtue in heaven and too little influence on earth (influence represented by the powerful high priests of Heliopolis) to merit the distinction of chief deity over upper and lower Egypt.

§ 21. The priests of Egypt were also the magicians, and the records we have in the Bible and elsewhere of their abilities are truly startling. Much of their activity, however, must have been simply super-prestidigitation, and much more due to the possession of hypnotic powers; nevertheless their influence was second only to that of the king himself, who was supreme on account of combining in his person all the divinity of the Great God Ra, the Sun, whose son upon earth he became by a process of occult reasoning invented by the priests. According to Dr. W. J. Perry (*op. cit.*, pp. 37-8) "The God of Heliopolis, Ra, was evidently a product of speculation, for he bears no sign of having been, like Osiris, a King. He was born on New Year's Day, the day of the Nile Flood: he was born out of the primeval ocean, which may mean the flood of the Nile; he came out of an egg made by Khnum, the potter god; he was lifted on the back of Nut, in the form of the Great Cow, one of the forms of the Great Mother, to the Sky, where he is born of her every day. Thus he was pieced together from elements of thoughts already existing in Egypt, and in no way seems to be historical as was Osiris."

§ 22. Osiris was an earlier god; but because the theological system was changing, it was necessary to tack the older mythology on to the new, so we find that the king upon earth was an incarnation of Horus, the Hawk God, who, passing into the sky-world, became one with Osiris, who was identified with Ra.

§ 23. The Egyptians worshipped an anthropomorphic set of deities, individual members of which represented not only material but abstract things. Speculation, forged from fear of the unknown, had combined with reasoned observation, and produced a mesh of civilization which resulted in the building of

the Pyramids, the perfection of the process of mummification, and the elaboration of numerous arts and sciences. The king and the priest, in the performance of an ornate ritual, needed objects and substances of foreign origin; and for the overt purpose of procuring these, prospecting parties sallied forth and so carried the germs of civilization with them. The track of these early voyagers is stamped upon the face of the earth, right through Oceania to Central America, and, wherever megalithic monuments, which not infrequently take the form of stone circles (similar to our own Stonehenge) are to be found, the natives have a mythology wherein the gods and spirits seem to be based on men of flesh and blood who came “out of the sea.” Occultism was the driving force behind the voyagers—civilization was their gift to the aborigines. Throughout the history of humanity occultism has been the attraction behind material benefits. The megalithic monuments, including Stonehenge, were obviously erected as Sun Temples, and though we may see the fallacy of worshipping a burning sphere, the chemical composition of which we know to a nicety, we must take into consideration that this extra-terrestrial idea was a tremendous advance. To quote Dr. Perry again: “Between the times when the Great Mother was the sole being who could be regarded as a deity, and the times when the King of Egypt was an incarnate deity, the Son of the Sun God, there exists a great contrast. Thought had gone a long way to the development of ideas that are purely religious, ideas that, if their history were not known fairly well, would suggest an inward faculty of man for the elaboration of purely religious beliefs directly from the contemplation of Nature. When we follow in the footsteps of the priests of Heliopolis, we have planted our feet firmly on the path

that leads to the great monotheistic religions of antiquity, all of which seem to derive their inspiration from the speculations of these remarkable men. The religious beliefs of the Kings of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt, of Zoroaster of Persia, of the Brahmins of India, and last, but not least, of the prophets of Israel, bear witness to this current of thought. Man's ideas, by the elaboration of the Sun Cult, were turned from the Earth to the Heavens, where he was henceforth to look for the Great Creator and Preserver of the Universe. But man had to build a scaffolding of thought to enable him to reach the skies! he did not leap there, even in thought, at one bound."

### ***The Book of the Dead***

§ 24. This collection of illuminated papyrus may be compared to the Bible in so much as it is the Egyptian Holy Writ, containing in the form of allegory, poetry and prayer, the index to the entire ethical, religious and moral codes. It is not the work of one scribe, or priest, neither is it the production of one place or period. All Egypt is depicted in it, and all Egypt's history is reflected. Legend, myth and ritual, occult practice and religious belief, the names and portraits of the gods, kings, and great men, all are there. The object of the Book was to secure for the deceased the power to ingratiate himself with the gods and so enjoy everlasting life in the Other World.

§ 25. The famous Papyrus of Ani depicts the scene in the Hall of Judgment. Beneath the company of the gods comprising Sa, Hu, Hator, Horus, Isis and Nephthys, Nut, Seb, Tefnut, Shu, Temu, and Ra-Hormachis, who sit in judgment, we see Ani and his wife Thuthu entering the Hall. Inside, some spiritual analysis takes

place. Renenet and Meskhenet, the Goddesses of Birth, stand side by side watching the proceedings, whilst above their heads Ani's soul, in the form of a bird, crouches. Near it is Ani's Ka (his embryo or placenta). Beneath this sphinx-like image stands Ani's Luck or Destiny, in the form of a man. All are intent on watching the scales wherein Ani's heart is being weighed against the feather of Maat, emblematical of Right and Truth. Anubis, the Jackal-headed God, is in charge of operations, and bent upon one knee he narrowly scrutinizes the tongue of the balance. Behind Anubis, the crocodile-headed monster named Am-mit, the devourer of the unjustified, waits for the heart of the deceased, for it is his if found light and wanting. Close to the monster stands Thoth, the scribe of the gods, who is noting on his writing-palette, with a long reed pen, the result of this weighing. The twelve deities receive the report of their scribe, Thoth; and then Ani, accompanied by his heart and his soul, his Ka and his Destiny, together with the two Birth Goddesses, passes on in the care of Horus.

§ 26. During the enactment of this drama, Ani prays to Osiris that he may not fail in the test. “. . . And may no lies be spoken against me in the presence of the God. . . .” Thoth says: “Hear ye this judgment. . . . his [heart] hath stood as a witness for him; it hath been found true by trial in the great Balance. . . .” The Gods reply: “That which cometh forth from thy mouth shall be declared true. . . . The scribe Ani [is] victorious . . . holy and righteous. . . . Entrance into the presence of the God Osiris shall be granted unto him, together with a homestead for ever. . . .”

§ 27. Now Horus leads Ani the Justified into the presence of the God. We see Ani kneeling with his right hand raised in adoration before Osiris, who sits enthroned within a shrine built in the form

of a funeral chest. Before him, standing upon a lotus flower, are “the children of Horus,” the gods of the cardinal points of the compass. Behind him stand Nephthys, his sister; and Isis, his sister and wife.

§ 28. The foregoing is but one section of the Great Book. “The details of the Judgment Scene vary considerably in the papyri of different periods, and it seems as if every . . . artist felt himself free to follow out his own ideas of its Treatment. First, as regards the Great Balance. The beam is always exactly horizontal, a fact which proves that the Egyptian was only asked to make his heart or conscience just to counterbalance the feather of Maat. The pillar of the Balance is at times surmounted by the Ape of Thoth, at others by the head of Maat, and at others by the head of Anubis . . .”, says Sir E. A. Wallis Budge; but vary as it may in detail in its essentials it is always the same, and from the numerous “ chapters,” as they are called, springs much of the inspiration of our modern monotheistic faiths. For instance, the lotus flower on which the “children of Horus” stand, is sometimes shown growing out of water, which, in the Papyrus of Hu-nefer, forms a lake whereon the throne of Osiris is placed. “This lake was fed by the Celestial Nile, or by one of its branches, and was the source whence the beautiful, as well as the gods, drank. This scene is of considerable interest from the point of view of comparative mythology, for many Semitic writers held the opinion that the throne of the deity was placed, or rested upon, a stream of water, or a river. Even in the Book of Revelation we have a reference to a ‘pure river of water, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God’” (Sir E. A. Wallis Budge).

Under the title, “The Book of the Dead,” we include “The Book

of the Gates,” and “The Book of the Coming Forth by Day,” which, as the names imply, reveal the essentially non-pessimistic character of the Egyptian religion. The entire Song Cycle, if such it might be called, tends to identify mortal man with the Immortal Divinity, for, as a secondary *motif* running through the whole, is allusion after allusion to the soul’s triumph and to its absolute conquest of death. Man and the Holy Ape God sing hymns to Ra at sunrise; man and the Jackal and Hawk Gods sing hymns in praise of Ra at sunset. Ra himself, in the form of the Great Cat, cuts off the head of Apep, the Snake God of Darkness and Evil.

§ 29. Every culture-trend in the history of Egypt based upon this religion of Hope and Triumph, savoured of permanence, of deathlessness. The mummies have remained intact, the Pyramids have stood secure for five thousand years, and there seems little reason why these monuments to man’s occult belief in the immortality of his soul should not last as long as the planet itself.

§ 30. Not the false pride of despotic rulers, but the supreme faith in occult revelation, was the motive force that set the monuments of Egypt stone on stone. Contemporary with Egypt, the great civilizations of Elam and Sumer, Assyria and Babylon, were built up, also upon a foundation of occultism; but whereas Egypt’s artifacts were constructed to last, because of an assured faith in futurity, the Mesopotamian remains are less perfect. The Egyptian’s conceptions were universal and eternal, the Sumerian’s limited to the mental compass of the City-State and the local god; yet it was as a revolt from the religious life of Ur of the Chaldees that Abram made his journey into the wilderness and established his “Great Nation . . . in which all families shall be blessed.”

***Lord of the Earth***

§ 31. The archaic civilization of Asia Minor was, like that of Egypt, based on agriculture by irrigation; but unlike that of Egypt, the social and religious system was not unified and permanent. In seeking for Sumerian origins we find, as might be expected, that much of the occult thought was founded upon Mother-Goddess-worship. She appears always as the owner of the City, and the territory belonging to the City; the people were but the tenants of the divine landlord, and paid their rent in kind to the keeper of the Temple. One of the earliest religious monuments brought to light in the area, is the shrine of Nin Kharsag, recently unearthed at Ur. This is decorated with scenes depicting pastoral life, a cattle-shed and oxen standing near by. Here again we see a Mother-Goddess Cult closely linked up with domestication of animals; but whatever the occult ideology may have been concerning this connection, the people seem never to have developed a conception of bovine divinity compatible with Hator, the Divine Cow.

§ 32. Sumerian governmental authority was theocratic in character. The king was regarded as the incarnation of the deity, and in consequence of his superhuman nature, his commands were absolute. This enabled the complicated system of waterways to be kept in order, a feat man could not have accomplished unaided by divine injunction, for peasant, agricultural people have a tendency to isolate themselves farm by farm, each family's interest remaining centred about the hearthstone. Joint enterprise, involving the welfare of entire communities, is not, to man, the business of man. The deity alone provides for all, and service rendered to the god is, as it were, a thank-offering for his

provision, or an act of propitiation to avert his wrath. In passing, it is interesting to note that in this *motif* is to be sought the key to the fundamental insecurity of the modern Russian social order.

§ 33. The Sumerian System of City States, each self-contained and apart, renders it very difficult to piece together even the material history of the region, much less to form a very concise picture of the occult ideas possessed by the people; but it seems fairly certain that Enlil, the Lord of the Earth, who resided at Nippur, was in the position of a chief god, though the City of Nippur had no extra-territorial political influence.

§ 34. According to Christopher Dawson (*The Age of the Gods*), "Every city possessed its patron god and goddess, who were conceived respectively as the King and Mother of the territory. The goddesses were, in fact, all forms of the Mother Goddess, and their titles and attributes are not always easy to distinguish from one another. Thus, Gula, the Goddess of Life who was worshipped at Larak and Isin, is hardly distinguishable from Bau, the patroness of Lagash and Kish. The Gods, on the other hand, possess clearly defined characters, and the different provinces of the land are partitioned among them in a most systematic way. Thus Eridu on the Persian Gulf, and originally Lagash also, belonged to Ea or Enki, the Water God and patron of Civilization, and his son Ningirshu, the God of Irrigation. Ur and Larsa were dedicated respectively to the Moon and the Sun." The walls, gates and streets were named with a holy nomenclature, such as "Marduk is the Shepherd of the Land"; thus the very close religious life led by the inhabitants may be deduced. The occult life of the City States seems to have been personified in the figure of the king—the Lord of the Earth—whose divine right made him supreme. As a god he was of course

immortal—death was only a passing on—and he was buried with pomp befitting his state. With him were interred his chariots and soldiers, slaves for his service, and goblets of gold and silver, filled with delicate food—for, in the after-world he still ruled supreme over his subjects, the shades as well as those on earth, where he was represented by his son, who was henceforth regarded as the re-embodiment of his sire.

### ***Abram, Son of Terah***

§ 35. One of the most important revolutions in occult thought occurred about four thousand years ago, in the City of Ur, of the Chaldees. The twelfth chapter of Genesis tells us that “. . . the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, . . . and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” But there is no description of the form this instruction took (modern science might declare it an auditory hallucination): one would expect the injunction to issue from the lips of the corporeal representative of Enlil, or Enki, or Ea. Turning to the Talmud we learn that the young Abram “from his earliest childhood was a lover of the Lord. God had granted him a wise heart ready to comprehend and understand the majesty of the Eternal, and able to despise the vanity of idolatry.” Terah, Abram’s father, was a high official of the Court, and it is probable that Abram grew tired of the continual procession of pomp attending the daily life of the divine monarch. Further, Talmudic lore informs us that ever seeking comfort for his soul he turned first to Sun-worship, and finding that not to his taste, took up the older cult of Lunar-

worship; but “. . . when the morning dawned and the stars paled, and the moon faded into silvery whiteness and was lost in the returning glory of the sun, Abram knew God and said, ‘There is a higher power, a Supreme Being and these luminaries are but the servants, the work of his hands.’ From that day even unto the day of his death, Abram knew the Lord and walked in his ways.”

§ 36. In Abram we have the typical seer, the thinker, who, advancing one step further along occult lines, leads the way for all of mankind. His spiritual revolution took the form of divorcing thought from materialism. Abram’s conception of God was no longer the personification of an aspect of nature or of an unknown something that lived in a tree or a stone. Not the sun and not the moon, nor any carnate being, but an abstract power that created and controlled the universe. Among its early ritualistic practice the new religion retained the ancient custom of circumcision, the origin of which is lost in antiquity. It is presumable that it was basically a form of blood sacrifice to the Great Mother, and the operation is to-day performed as an initiation ceremony, not only by the seed of Abram, but by numerous other people throughout the world.

§ 37. Abram’s God, being an abstraction, was not liable to defeat in battle, as was the divine king of any of the Sumerian City States. For this reason, the new faith might have been expected to spread rapidly, but the fact remains that it was confined to Abram’s immediate family. It would have been difficult for men to abandon the old idolatry, even had the new faith appealed to them, for the entire social system was bound up in the local deity. Abram himself was forced to become a nomad, a dweller in tents, and a raiser of flocks and herds. All the building that we hear of

having taken place was confined to the construction of altars for the sacrifice of beasts to Jehovah.

§ 38. From this intellectual and spiritual revolt, and from these crude beginnings, the modern monotheistic faith of Western civilization, and incidentally, of Islam, has been built up. In its earliest form it was the religion of only one family, strictly moral, and unwaveringly just: right must be done for right's sake. We know nothing of Abram's ideas relating to the immortality of the soul; post-mortem rewards and punishments, and the conception of heaven and hell as eternal abodes of respectively the good and the evil doers, were later accretions.

### ***Ishtar and Tammuz***

§ 39. Although the City States were self-contained, and isolated one from another, there seems to have been what might be described as a key-myth permeating the religious thought and shared by all. This is the fecundity myth which tinctures the occult ideas of people throughout the world, and which in Sumer was expressed in the story of Ishtar and Tammuz.

§ 40. According to Sir James Frazer, men attempted to account for natural phenomena, by occult explanations and in speculating upon the annual change of the seasons, "They pictured to themselves the growth and decay of vegetation, the birth and death of living creatures, as effects of the waxing and waning strength of divine beings, of Gods and Goddesses, who were born and died, who married and begot children on the pattern of human life."

§ 41. The name Tammuz means "True son of the deep water." In the myth he is represented as the youthful lover of Ishtar, the

Great Mother Goddess, who is the mystic cause of all fecundity, and the reproductive powers of nature. Every year the onset of Autumn betokens that the young and beautiful god is dying, and that Ishtar is weeping for him, and about to follow “to the land from whence there is no returning, to the house of darkness, where dust lies on door and bolt.” With the departure of the goddess, love ceases to operate on earth, men and beasts alike fail to reproduce their kind and vegetation fades away. Such a calamity causes so loud a lamentation that the God Ea sends a messenger to the gloomy under-world. Allatu, the stern and forbidding queen of the dark place, is reluctant to permit Tammuz and Ishtar to return, but at last they are sprinkled with the water of life, and depart from the pit, bestowing once again upon nature the gift of fecundity. Spring has returned. This reawakening of the earth and the revival of nature is an event sufficiently impressive to strike a note of optimism and belief in continued existence into the heart of the least imaginative of mankind; and it is the currency of this myth among the Sumerians that points to their occult belief in a resurrection. We find the same Nature-Cult translated into the primitive religious idiom of all agricultural people: the Egyptian Osiris may be equated to Tammuz, and the Greek Adonis is a name formed from a misinterpretation of the Semitic word “Adonai” which literally means “My Lord.”

### ***Divination and Astrology***

§ 42. As practical and material benefits have always accrued from occult speculation, it is a matter for no surprise that “exact “ science is partly the outcome of Magical Practice. The Babylonians, though far inferior to the Egyptians in calendrical

calculation, nevertheless paid great attention to the heavens, and it is to them we owe the invention of the Zodiac, and the naming of the days of the week. Their aim was not scientific in the modern sense, but purely occult: their motive was not to establish a practical time-partition; it was to compliment the gods, and, as a reward, receive the gift of prophecy. They discovered the five planets, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, and, adding to these the sun and moon, arrived at what, to them, was the very satisfactory total—seven. This was satisfactory because seven was regarded as a powerful, or lucky number, luring them to the belief that they were on the track of the solution of infinite mysteries. Their observations were sufficiently exact to enable them to predict an eclipse, though not being possessed of the type of intellect that would permit them to comprehend the mechanism of the phenomenon, they assumed that their prophecies were whispered to them by the gods, into whose confidence they had been admitted. This led them to conclude that the will of the gods towards mortals, singly, and *en masse* could be discovered by stellar observation. Their method of naming the seven days of the week after the seven “stars” suggested that the heavenly bodies each possessed or controlled its own particular day. This idea became developed by the inclusion of mathematics, which at the period was considered a magical art. Certain numbers, deemed to possess mystic virtue, were equated to letters of the cuneiform alphabet. Then stars, figures and letters were contorted till they conformed to a set of semi-geometrical rules: and the entire heterogeneous mixture was presented as the “Science” of prophecy by Astrology. Not only by the stars did these early seekers hope to foretell the decisions of the gods, and their

intentions towards men. Hepatoscopy, or divination by observing the markings on the livers of animals offered in sacrifice to the deity, was also practised. The details of this art are known very accurately from the fact of clay models of the liver having been found; on these models the rules were written. Observation carried out on the entrails of beasts, for the purpose of occultly aiding man, was the means by which he acquired the basic knowledge underlying genuine medicine and surgery, and thereby received a great material benefit; yet so slow is the human mind to cast off the layers of fantastic belief, that even to-day in Europe, side by side with the most efficient hospitals, we find people practising folk-medicine. And though the spectroscope has analysed the stars, and planetary geography is accurately charted, prophecy by astrological means is committed blatantly, receives credulity, and the prophet his fee.

§ 43. This ability for science and superstition to exist side by side is to be seen in its extreme in India, where “We find fully qualified and even learned . . . doctors practising Greek medicine as well as English medicine, [and] astronomers who can predict eclipses, and yet who believe the eclipses are caused by a dragon swallowing the Sun . . .” (*Times Weekly Edition*, Correspondence, 24 May 1907).

### ***Kali, the Black One*<sup>1</sup>**

§ 44. Old ways, even in mundane matters like commercial enterprise, die hard in the East; and in modern India, despite the material blessings of railways and motor-cars, occultism of the

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Indian Occultism*.

earliest kind is part and parcel of everyday life. Not only the primitive inhabitants of the jungle villages, but the European-educated dwellers in the cities believe in the Great Mother Goddess. The most usual form that she takes is that of Kali, the Black One, who is regarded both as the protective and the destructive element in the world-idea. Kali in Indian art is generally portrayed as a grotesque, befanged female, clutching to her breast the skulls of the slain, and, dripping with gore, dancing upon the body of her dead husband, Mahakala, who is also Siva. The worship of the gloomy goddess involves blood, and sacrifice of beasts; even the slaughter of human beings in her honour is not unknown. There are recent cases brought before the courts, which the hard-headed European governing body insists upon calling by the ugly name—murder; but not always is the supreme sacrifice demanded. For instance, Anna Kauri, one manifestation of the Great Mother, whose special function is to “increase a man’s crops and make him rich,” demands only half the right index finger, and this her devotees gladly give. Nevertheless, Kali is “The Mother of the World and the Shelter of the Shelterless.” She has her benevolent moods, and reminds us very forcibly of the Aurignacian conception of the Great Mother with her decorative *motif* of fangs and claws. Each Indian village, more particularly in the south of the Peninsula, has its own local Mother Goddess, and these are venerated as Disease Mothers. The people propitiate the goddess to ensure good health, but at the same time she must bestow her blessings on crops and cattle. This basic occult belief pervades all forms of religion in India, and no doubt the tenacity of so extremely primitive a cult prevented Buddhism, the gentlest of religions, from striking deep roots there, though it is the land of its

birth.

§ 45. Hinduism is a comparatively modern religion in India. It was brought there by the Aryan-speaking people from the North, and overlaid the earlier, Dravidian religion which, with its repulsive and obscene rites, persists, and disturbs the placid stream of Hinduism, fed with the sacred writings, the Vedas. The adhesion, generally in secret, to this Demonological Dravidian Cult of Kali, results in a welter of occultism, out of which the fakir emerges—often totally ignorant of the Occidental wisdom, yet wise with the “wisdom of the East,” which baffles the most astute and unemotional European observers.

§ 46. The Hindu godhead is a trinity or triad personifying the continuous working of the Absolute Spirit. The members are Brahma, Visnu, and Siva; respectively representing Creation, Preservation, and Destruction; but Siva, although of the male sex, is also a manifestation of the Great Mother, and signifies the reproductive power of Nature. The keynote of the Hindu religion is reincarnation, and, though caste is rigid here on earth, a sufficient number of rebirths can at last elevate even the humblest. The Hindu does not believe in the forgiveness of sins, but he does believe in Karma, that is, “Retribution,” or more precisely Karmavipaka, “the maturing of deeds.” This belief is calculated to exercise a moralizing and restraining influence, for the result of sin may be a slowing down of the reincarnation process, so that literally thousands of years will be wasted. An ascetic earthly existence, on the other hand, considerably short-circuits the journey, hence the fakirs practise asceticism and concentration, to ensure a speedier reunion with the Supreme Being.

### **Yoga**

§ 47. The Hindu believes that mortal man is, like the godhead, a triad, and is composed of his earthly, material body with its appetites and passions; an intangible soul, which is part of the divine essence; and as an intermediary between these two, a gross soul or subtle body, which partakes of the nature of both the soul and the body. Its soul-kinship is to be found in its essentially non-material nature and its immortality; its body-kinship comes about from its tendency to take pleasure in earthly affairs. This semi-soul is called the *sukshma-sarira*; it is “pure” at birth but acquires sensual appetites during its sojourn here below. Reincarnation for the soul proper is a painful and unpleasant experience; the *sukshma-sarira*, however, remembers its good time on earth and clamours for rebirth.

§ 48. It follows that if a man lives an ascetic life, denies his appetites and mortifies his flesh, then the semi-soul cannot become contaminated and carnal, hence death will, for the ascetic, mean reunion with the godhead. Further, complete and successful concentration upon the divine nature, will give to the ascetic, during earthly life, part of the power possessed by the all-soul, and enable him to work miracles. The accomplishment of this, the supreme object of Hindu religious aspiration, involves the cultivation of apathy towards human affections and desires, and the detachment of the mind from earthly thoughts.

§ 49. The yogis endeavour mightily in this laudable pursuit and command such admiration that the system is spreading through Europe and America, where it is regarded as the highest expression of transcendentalism. Yoga consists of rules laid down

by the Mahatmas or Masters. The results obtained by the Yogis (however they are accomplished) are most spectacular. For instance, in 1895 *The Civil and Military Gazette*, a reliable Indian newspaper, reported the case of a wandering yogi who, before the eyes of the inhabitants of an entire village, built a pyre and burned himself to death. No extraordinary feat perhaps. But two days later he appeared in the same place, alive, without a hair of his head even singed! These magicians possess all the qualifications of those who practise as spirit mediums in our own country: they can deliver, to complete strangers, messages from their dead relations; move things at a distance without touching them (telekinesis); hear voices (clairaudience); see visions (clairvoyance); and, which is more, perform the “rope trick” and “mango trick,” neither of which has been successfully engineered by Europeans.

§ 50. The foundation of the Yoga sect is attributed to one, Mahandranath, though the fame of Goraknath, a disciple, has eclipsed that of the master. These are both regarded more or less as legendary figures, for the latter is identified with Siva, and Siva, too, is deemed the first Yogi. Patanjali, the sage, is also reputed to have originated the sect. Professor Weber, in *Indian Literature* (p. 239), says of Yoga: “The most flourishing epoch . . . belongs most probably to the first centuries of our era, [and] the influence it exercised on the development of Gnosticism . . . [is] unmistakable.” Because of the sublime nature of Yogism, its practice is not confined to hereditary groups. Members of all castes may become initiates, and no doubt highly virtuous people are attracted to it; but in spite of that it cannot be denied that the modern yogi is apt to dissolve into a travelling arch-conjurer, who, possessed of contortionistic abilities suggestive of bonelessness,

and stupendous hypnotic powers, trades on the credulity of the pious masses. The Kabbalah, the Hebrew book of occult practice, contains much that suggests the Yoga system, and the Kabbalah itself must be founded upon the occult practice of the Sumerian magicians, who in turn were influenced by the great miracle-working priests of Heliopolis.

### ***Bon Pa***<sup>1</sup>

§ 51. From the secret Hindu practice of sacrifice to Kali, we pass over the Himalayas to Tibet, where devil-worship and sanguinary rites are by no means hidden. The overt purpose of the Bon Cult is to protect the living from the earth- and sky-demons, and from ill-intentioned spirits. As in all demonological cults, the formula consists very largely of current local “white” cults inverted, thus the Bon priests repeat Buddhist prayers backwards, and so defeat the goblins that the prayers of the lamas, the priests of the new religion, bring into being.

§ 52. The origin of Bon Pa is unknown, but there is much in its practice, such, for instance, as the Grand Ceremony, which takes place every three years in the middle of the night, that points to its lunar bias; and the details of their sacrificial rites suggest an almost direct inheritance from the Aurignacian cave period’s blind strivings into the unknown.

§ 53. Buddhism was introduced into Tibet about the 6th century A.D., but even among the people who profess it, the original Bon Cult still has a great influence: charms and amulets are avidly sought, and crumbs dropped from a Lama’s repast are

---

<sup>1</sup> See [Buddhist Occultism](#).

considered to possess sufficient virtue to cause evil spirits to scatter in all directions. Prayer-flags are set up to flutter picturesquely in each nook and corner where a demon might lurk; and every man, woman and child is alert for omens and portents. There is scarcely a more religious nation than the Tibetans, for at all hours of the day and night they repeat their prayers, warning the demons of the Bon to keep away, and assuring them of rapid and severe punishment at the hands of Buddha's saints: in short, everyone in Tibet is engaged in occult practice at all hours; and whilst the Lamas repeat the mystic six-syllabled spell, the Bons reverse the order of the sounds, and consequently both sects feel safe.

### ***Kuei Shen***<sup>1</sup>

§ 54 The Chinaman, no less than the Tibetan, spends an anxious life closely surrounded by Kuei Shen, that is, demons and spirits, which may become spiteful if not constantly appeased. Certain authorities, supported by the evidence of the pictographic script, claim for China monotheistic ideas antedating 2250 B.C. (the approximate date of the Babylonian-type pyramids, the remains of which represent an archaic civilized settlement on the Yellow River) nevertheless, about 2852 B.C., the Chinese were offering "firstfruits" to the spirits of departed ancestors, and ancestor-worship is certainly the most popular form of occultism practised in China. The Chinese dead journey to the "dark world," where they live exactly the same kind of life as they have experienced in the "bright world." Emperors are still emperors,

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Chinese Occultism*.

and peasants are still peasants. It is only the recently departed, however, that continue to take interest in earthly affairs; therefore, the Chinaman's sacrifices and prayers are addressed to his father and grandfather, or to the last emperor. Confucius rescued China from internal strife, by travelling from State to State, and preaching to the warring sects that the country as a whole was the chief ancestor, therefore civil war was a sin. Peace resulted from the philosopher's travels, and high treason was placed beside parricide as an unforgivable transgression. One who would offend in either of these, is cut up very small, and the pieces widely separated. The reason for this is to prevent the ghost of each piece from finding his fellows and joining up in a whole ghost, which would doubtless commit high treason or parricide in the "dark world." This shadowy realm is inhabited not only by spirits of ancestors, but also by the doubles of rocks, trees, stones, rivers, and the elements; a whole race of goblins, and, which is even worse, malevolent forces, quite impersonal, which move in straight lines and need to be diverted. This can be done by placing on the roof of the house, earthenware lions, and sacred stones from the Thai mountain.

§ 55. The Chinaman's séance, though identical in theory, differs from our own in practice. His method of getting into communication with the dead, is to hang up a portrait before which sacrifices are offered. Besides the portrait, a wooden model of the tombstone is employed, to act as a "throne" upon which the ancestral spirit shall seat itself during the ceremony. In early times, at least 2000 B.C., it was usual for a living person to dress up in the clothes of the departed; and expensive offerings were made, young white bulls, goats, pigs, dogs, and, by the poorer

classes, fowls; but in modern times, paper substitutes are burned—even imitation money is cut out from tinfoil and fixed to sheets of inflammable material. It is questionable whether the frugality of this modern method indicates a spiritual advance or a decadence in the Chinese, for though the classic writings continually insist upon the inner significance of the ritual, they also declare that the ghosts “enjoy” the material offering.

§ 56. Sacrifice is not the only means employed to gauge the attitude of the ancestral spirits. Divination is also practised to that end, and we have records of its employment as far back as 2255 B.C., at which period a tortoise-shell was most frequently used. The carapace was smeared with thick ink and dried over a brazier; then, in the resultant lines and curves that formed in the caked residue, the diviner read the will of the departed. More recently a form of planchette has been the most favoured method; but no matter how the technique may change, the fundamental occult belief remains static, and even the most Europeanized Chinaman does not consider himself foolish for believing in the purposive visits of the departed souls of his ancestors.

### ***The Double Axe***

§ 57. Returning now to that veritable cradle, or rather, that womb of culture, the eastern Mediterranean, we shall follow out a complex of ideas that beginning in the Island of Crete gave rise to the Classical Greek Mythology, upon which the Roman cults were largely built, and from which much of our modern Western civilization has sprung.

§ 58. Legend tells us that every nine years the citizens of Athens were forced to pay tribute, in the form of a bevy of

beautiful youths and maidens, to be sacrificed to the Bull Monster, the Minotaur, that dwelt in the labyrinth at Knossus. Actually, Athenian fear rather perverted the facts. The youths and maidens were trained to leap and turn somersaults over the head and back of no monster, but an ordinary bull, wild it is true; and the only occasions on which they were “sacrificed” were entirely accidental—when they missed their jump and fell victim to the animal’s horns. This sport, or entertainment, was enacted to delight the great King Minos, “familiar friend of the most high God,” and his courtiers at the Great Palace of Knossus—“the Palace of the Double Axe,” so triumphantly restored by Sir Arthur Evans. According to this authority, “The intimate connection of Minoan Crete with the Nile Valley, which goes back to pre-dynastic times, has been demonstrated by such a long series of discoveries, extending from the Southern Plains of Mesara to the site of Knossus, that any criticism which excludes the probable reaction of Egyptian elements on the Early Cretan Religion stands to-day self-condemned” (*The Early Religion of Greece in the Light of Cretan Discoveries*).

§ 59. “On the other hand,” says Christopher Dawson, in *The Age of the Gods*, “the Asiatic affinities of the Ægean Culture are no less strongly marked. The Asiatic worship of the Mother Goddess and her youthful companion is characteristic of Cretan religion from the earliest times, and the symbols of their cult, especially The Double Axe, are Sumerian rather than Egyptian in origin.” The earliest occult ideas in Crete, then, centred round the figure of the Mother Goddess, who is represented there, sometimes accompanied by doves, and at other times by snakes, but always with a double axe, that is, an axe with blades facing in opposite

directions. This double axe, or labrys, is the most frequent symbol used to denote power. Its evolution is probably to be found in the combination of the magic wand, and the figure-of-eight-shaped body-shield, also a favourite design-motif of the period. The shield is a development of the feminine symbol. A pair of horns, usually termed "horns of consecration," are often shown, either drawn realistically or used in a "conventionalized" form in design. These horns may be either bull's horns, symbols of masculinity and force, or cow's horns, in which case it is legitimate to equate them to the horns of Hator, the Divine Cow.

§ 60. The Cretan Mother Goddess is a Goddess of Childbirth and is represented with arrows in her hand. These symbolize birth-pangs. She is also an earth-goddess, and to indicate this serpents are shown twined about her. As a sky-goddess she is surrounded by doves; but she is not by any means the only divinity figuring in occult thought of the period. Social and political organization was cast in the Sumerian mould. Minos, if not an incarnate deity, was at least the "son" or "familiar friend" of the god, and his palace was also the centre of religious life. Every stone of the building is marked with the sacred double axe, and when a *motif* is so prevalent and pronounced it must, in the occult ideology of the people, be possessed of immense virtue.

§ 6i. Professor G. Glotz says (*Ægean Civilization*, p. 233): "Affinity with the bull is the dominant idea of the double axe. The Minotaur is the sacred animal *par excellence*. The weapon by which his blood is shed and his horns vanquished takes his warlike strength and his procreative vigour and transmits them to men. Thus the idea attached to it is essentially that of male force." However, the previous point of view concerning the feminine

symbolism of the labrys is not inadmissible.

§ 62. The Cretans were not an agricultural people, but were among the first maritime traders, therefore we find occult ideas attaching themselves to the octopus and the dolphin, though little is known at present of the sea-ideas, which undoubtedly must have been rich and varied. The notions concerning an after-life were highly developed. Not only household goods but food and drink were buried with the dead, and the viands were renewed from time to time. With the sailor would be interred a model boat, and with the musician a lyre; these were fashioned either in ivory or clay, according to the wealth of the family. Children were supplied with feeding-bottle and toy horses, and everybody was provided with a model of the sacred double axe.

§ 63. There seems to be more Egyptian than Sumerian influence in these funerary customs, for the rulers were laid to rest with a gold face-mask that fixes their likeness for all time, reminding one of permanence in Egyptian mummification. The spiritual life of the people appears to have been freer from State control and more personal than in Sumer.

§ 64. Cretan supremacy in the Ægean ends about 1420 B.C., when a vast catastrophe overwhelmed the Island. The beautiful Palace of the Double Axe at Knossus was burned to the ground, and the entire culture appears to have perished. The double axe, redoubled, survives in the Maltese Cross, but the details of the cult are lost for ever unless the Cretan script, when deciphered, provides us with information.

***Philosophers***

§ 65. The centre of cultural activities now passes to mainland Greece, where the Olympians, those picturesque, anthropomorphic deities, had taken so firm a hold of the heavens that the inhabitants of the Greek City States, having no need to ask, “Who made the universe?”, found themselves faced with the problem, “*What* made the universe?”; and no longer “Who made me?” but, “Of what am I made?”

§ 66. These inquiries, apparently leading away from occultism into materialism, remain unanswered to-day, and the strivings that were started by the philosophers have led through physics back to metaphysics. The earth, air, fire and water “elements” of the ancients became analysed and reanalysed into the chemical elements, but the physicist, still seeking for something more elemental than matter, bisected and bisected, till at last he found that the atom, that ultimate particle which cannot be divided, is but a tension in space and not a substance.

§ 67. Mathematics and geometry expanded till Euclid’s straight line—“the shortest distance between two points”—resolved itself into “a sector of the circumference of a circle of infinitely great radius”; his “point” which had “position but not magnitude,” became “a circle of infinitely small radius”; and Space and Time in Einstein’s immortal hands reveal a composite, four-dimensional whole. Theoretically, it is possible to see inside solids and be in two places at once. More than that the occultist does not claim. Absolute and exact science has gone up in smoke, and a non-material smoke into the bargain. In the words of Sir A. S. Eddington, “We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after

another, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo ! it is our own." Except our power of perception, there is little we may be at all sure of. Earth, air, fire, water; solid, liquid, gas; electricity, space and time, or whatsoever, is all one; matter is no more material; universal concepts are no more heliocentric; life, death, and immortality, are indivisible. The Aurignacian cave-dweller, spreading his red earth about the body of a departed comrade, was as close to the mystery as we are ourselves. There is no death because there is no life: a moment of perception is this illusion of material existence; but our perception is not the whole of perception, and probably not the only type of perception.

§ 68. The Greek philosophers asking not "who?" but "what?" led man into an intellectual labyrinth from which there was no returning. He advanced slowly, step by step, always in trepidation lest he met the Minotaur; and, instead, he found himself suddenly confronted with the fact that he was simply the protagonist in a sport whereof he was also the audience. We lost our soul to gain not even the whole world, but only a new mathematics which reduces Euclid's problems down to the dimensions of the child's school-slate, leaving a residue of fact fast going out of currency.

### ***Oracles***

§ 69. Classic Greece, however, was not all intellect and art, not all materialism and loose living. Superstition had its place, and the oracles, their clients. The former were by no means priests, but merely traders, dealers in divination. The popular method was to foretell events by watching the flight of birds. The eagle was the

most general omen bird, and occult belief had it that the king of the air was sent forth by the gods, Zeus, Apollo, or Athene. No great skill and no special initiation was needed for the qualification of oracular interpretation. The professional oracle read the alleged signs with more facility than the layman, but that was all. Their greatest income was probably derived from expounding dreams, for all men dream, and most are troubled thereby. The modern "Penny Dream-book" contains nothing that the oracles of ancient Greece did not know and speak for a fee.

§ 70. The Cult of Hermes was developed from oracular practice. It was customary for the inquirer to whisper his question into the ear of the effigy of the god, then, stopping his own ears, proceed from the shrine to the town, and in the market-place removing the auditory obstruction, listen to the conversation of passers-by and be guided by the first words that could be reasonably applied to the case.

§ 71. Sneezing was regarded as an omen, and, should the act follow a statement, it was considered confirmatory. "He has sneezed, therefore he has spoken the truth." Occult ideas attached to sneezing still linger, and it is by no means uncommon to hear the words "Bless you!" follow a sneeze. In southern Europe it is taken quite seriously.

§ 72. Necromancy was also employed by the oracles, who performed all the unpleasant rites of black magic to call up the spirits. This practice is based on the Cult of the Great Mother, for it is generally performed by night, and much depends on the phases of the moon.

**“*She of the Seven Hills*”**

§ 73. Our knowledge of the beliefs in the early days of Rome is somewhat hazy, there being, prior to the Empire, neither literature nor works of art to any extent. There was a great deal of Etruscan influence, but the Etruscans are people concerning whose occult ideas we know very little owing to the fact of their script not yet being deciphered. For the rest, Roman beginnings owe much to Greece. The story of Romulus and Remus is of Greek origin.

§ 74. Our first authentic record is the *Fasti*, a religious calendar dating from the year 304 B.C. Its compilation is attributed to the Priest-King Numa; and it unmistakably bears the mark of being a religio-political document. All religious life right through the History of Rome had a State significance. Many of the festivals were connected with agriculture and may be equated to Cults of the Great Mother. For instance, on 15 April, the date of the celebration of the *Fordicidia* festival, pregnant cows were slaughtered, and the embryo removed and burnt, with a view to securing fertility for the crops. On 21 April, at the *Parilia* festival, the flocks were driven through the smoke from burning straw and laurel leaves, to purify them, in other words, to scare away any demons that might have attached themselves to the animals. The deities of the period were impersonal, and even the people themselves possessed no very clear idea of their nature. They were simply the *numina*, that is, spirits without human attributes. The king (*Rex*) was the chief priest. To assist him, and perform the sacrifices, were the *Flamines*; whilst the *Vestals* took care of the sacred fire. This system was reproduced in the home, the father, Sons and daughters each having their religious relationship to

each other.

§ 75. As Roman History progressed, the deities became more personified and less close to the hearts of the people. The religion was a State religion *par excellence*, and individual citizens took but little part in its practice, with the result that a private or family religion developed as a personal form of occult observance. The centre of each home was the hearth, the focus point of each hearth the hearth, where the household gods, Vesta and the Penates, were supposed to dwell.

§ 76. Vesta was the spirit of the fire and the hearth; part of each meal was burned in her honour. The Penates were the spirits of the family store, a sanctuary no impure person might enter, hence children were employed for the purpose. Another household god was the Genius of the paterfamilias: not his soul in our modern sense, but the spirit that working through him insured the continuance of the family.

§ 77. The Roman dead were supposed to continue to exist as spirits, and a sacred meal was always eaten over the grave as part of the funerary rites. The food was first offered to the dead and then consumed by the mourners. This ceremony was repeated every year, but its organization was taken over by the State, a sort of Bank Holiday being observed—the Roman All-Souls' Day.

§ 78. There were many agricultural rites. The farmer, to secure safety for his cattle, made offerings of meal, lard, flesh and wine, to Mars Silvanus, a ceremony which no woman might see performed. The whole Roman life was bound up in auspices and omens. Not a bird crossed the sky, not a peal of thunder reverberated, without the devout Roman stopping to consider what it might portend; in what he had offended the gods; and, if he could think of anything

offensive in his recent behaviour, he would sacrifice a pig to atone.

§ 79. In the later periods occult thought and practice became very rich and varied throughout the Roman Empire, for their conquests brought in whole nations, who were assimilated, and whose religions and superstitions became engrafted into the Roman beliefs; and further, the great religions of the East began to exert a vast influence, and to grow in popularity as the inhabitants became increasingly cosmopolitan. For instance, the Egyptian Isis had many devotees in Rome and an imposing temple on the Campus Martius.

§ 80. The State never allowed religious authority to slip altogether from its hands; ecclesiastical and civil law were one; to offend the gods was to act treasonably towards the State. When the old cults held sway in the minds of the populace, the old cults were State cults. When the exploits of emperors made them popular figures, the emperors were deified. Every form of occult practice found a foothold in Rome in the later periods, because the imperial City ceased to be the home of a people and became instead simply a centre of government—an impersonal collection of imposing buildings, soulless, but imbued with a spirit of false pride in its own vast achievement. Just as all roads led to Rome, so all religions, cults, superstitions and black arts traversed them till “she of the seven hills” was undermined by their anti-social influences.

### ***The Hammer of Thor***

§ 81. In the North lands, occult thought in early times took the form of Mother-Goddess worship. Nerthus, according to the legends, lived in a sacred grove on an island, and at intervals the

priests carried her effigy in a bullock wagon, through the land. On these occasions all strife must cease and the people give themselves up to rejoicing. She was the prototype of the later Njordr, a divine king who, ruling with his son Frey, secured peace among men and fruitfulness in fields, flocks and herds. These were the old Vegetation Gods, and their cults involved phallic rites, sacrifice, and all the ritual associated with fecundity myths and the Great Mother, throughout the world. Finally, as elsewhere, their lot was to suffer defeat at the hands of war-gods; and in later Norse History we find a triad of deities: Thor, the God of Thunder; Tyr, the God of War; and Odin, King of the Gods. The earlier family of gods is known as the Vanir, the later as the Æsir.

§ 82. The defeat of the Vanir, and the ascendancy of the Æsir, indicates the influx of a conquering people; and the study of culture-trends suggests that these conquerors were of Mediterranean origin, and that their primary object in visiting the Northern regions was to secure amber, which had been added to the collection of magical substances that the Oriental priests needed for their rites.

§ 83. Oscar Montelius, the famous scholar, has identified the hammer of Thor with the Double Axe of Minos; and the numerous circular bronze plates which have come to light from time to time, called sun-disks, suggest that a Solar Cult existed in Scandinavia.

§ 84. Thor, though friendly to man at most times, was, when they transgressed, inclined to smite them with his mighty hammer. As the oak tree was sacred to him, the acorn was used as an amulet to protect the wearer from lightning. The use of the acorn as a charm survives to-day in the custom of terminating window-blind cords, and umbrella tassels, in a wooden or ivory

model of the oak-tree's fruit. Occult ideas are thus perpetuated, either consciously or unconsciously, in numerous customs and beliefs. The 20th-century North European, with acorns on his umbrella-tassel, does not expect to be immune from the ill-effect of being struck by lightning—the Hammer of Thor; but the South European who purchases a little bag containing the ash of burnt oak certainly does expect to be protected from the majority of life's ills. The most primitive occult beliefs survive in the unconscious layers of the human mind; hence, fortunes are actually attempted to-day by marketing (in London!) gods of luck—little scraps of cast-brass that are not even correct effigies of a Buddha!

§ 85. In the 20th century, as in heathen times, the Hammer of Thor hangs poised aloft. It may at any moment descend with avenging and destructive might. It is the wrath to come; and man, miserable and alone, terribly afraid, and dreadfully ignorant, strides through the traffic-thronged streets of our modern capitals, in no better case than Aurignacian man crept through the undergrowth. Both of them ask only to control their fate, to avert disaster, to dodge death, and, when a comrade is caught up, either in the fangs of a prehistoric cave-lion, or in the meshes of a modern machine, to appease that soul set free and prevent it doing mischief. Aurignacian man and modern man are brothers under the skin; each clings to his amulet, and the latter, in times of stress, has even less to recommend him than the former.

### ***The Melting-Pot***

§ 86. Pagan Rome slowly declined, and Christianity, the flowering of Abram's spiritual revolt, crept over the face of Europe, pushing into abeyance but by no means exterminating the

old pagan tribal deities. It was impossible for the early Christian missionaries to declare the gods false; the best they could do was to contrast them with the Holy Trinity, then degrade them to the status of demons, evil spirits that must be despised by the servants of the One True God.

§ 87. Many pagan shrines were washed with holy water and converted into Christian shrines; many pagan festivals were squeezed or stretched to conform to Christian festivals; but the old ideas lived on and, driven underground, met on equal terms with even earlier cults that had previously been degraded: so, like a dark river swollen by numerous tributaries, the occult ideology of the black arts flowed on beneath the fair face of Christianity.

§ 88. Orthodox religion sets an ethical standard that no man, woman or even child (certainly in the modern Occident) can reach, or desire to reach, at all times. The yogi may lie upon his bed of nails to mortify his flesh; the Christian monk may even go so far as to attire himself in a horsehair shirt; but plain Farmer Giles wishes for a full crop and a fine herd, and his daughter demands a sweetheart. The simple-hearted farmer may crucify a hedgehog to secure his wish, and his daughter consult some old hag in the village for advice on the working of a love-charm, both obeying the call of the occult, but definitely transgressing against the canons of Christianity. They have dabbled in the black arts; and not very long ago might have been hauled before an ecclesiastical court on a serious charge of witchcraft and of having intercourse with the evil one. Both might have been found guilty and condemned to death.

§ 89. The European barbarians contemporaneous with the Cæsars were not sufficiently advanced to accept the high ideals of

Christianity, and neither are the semi-civilized inhabitants of Europe and America to-day; hence, any “new religion” is avidly snapped up: the older its cults, the more secure its stranglehold on the neophytes. Calling up spirits and asking stupid questions, as we may see from the foregoing paragraphs, is by no means new; receiving even more stupid replies and acting on them is older than the oracles of classic Athens.

§ 90. Philo of Alexandria, a Jew, could not allow that a hair’s-breadth deviation from truth was contained in the Pentateuch; but he was also rational, and learned in the materialistic philosophies of Greece. Both were truth to him, and neither might be sacrificed to the other, consequently he did very successfully what many have since tried and failed to do with even older and newer discordant ideas. He combined the two and produced a semi-factual, semi-allegorical conglomeration of physics and metaphysics which set the alchemists off in search of the Elixir of Life and the Philosophers’ Stone, to which end they dabbled in astrology, divination, and all the paraphernalia of both black and white magic. The older grimoires and accounts of wizardry and priestcraft were read and re-read, misunderstood and misapplied. Kings and princes encouraged the alchemists (it was to the interest of the secular party to have base metals transmuted to gold). Popes and prelates excommunicated them wholesale (it was not to the ecclesiastical interest to have the old cults kept green). Soothsayers and necromancers flourished exceedingly; devil-worship had almost as many adherents as God-worship, and every village in medieval Europe boasted its witch, who was loved and feared, consulted and betrayed, tried and burned, whether she was guilty or not guilty—versed in the black arts or entirely

ignorant of them.

§ 91. Such was the hubble-bubble of the medieval European melting-pot. Slowly the simmer subsided. The alchemists produced no gold. The devil and the God worshippers alike failed to procure eternal youth. Football, though illegal, was tolerated, and became a more amusing diversion than witch-baiting; but at the bottom of the slowly cooling cauldron is a precipitate of black ooze, on the top a scum of white slime, and between them the clear soup of rational, ethical behaviour is becoming palatable.

§ 92. There is no trend of occult thought that has not found a foothold in the European mind. Negro phallic fetishes are displayed in Bond Street galleries and simpered over by the adherents of the new art; nudist colonies flourish and produce their journals fully illustrated in photogravure; astrologers, palmists, phrenologists, numerologists, and a thousand other charlatans prey upon the gullibility of a spiritually-starved public.

§ 93. Troubled man, too puny and too mean-spirited to stand upon faith in the transcendental Christ, sneaks into the unseen world of his occult awareness by back-doors and kitchen-stairs. The sublime, snow-enclad peak of Christianity has scared man into the underground channels of the black arts. The witches flourish—not necessarily in the hovels of the villages, but often in expensive suites of chambers, where they may be visited by the discreet, in any major European or American city. The idea underlying the Aurignacian cave-paintings was represented by geometrical shapes in Babylon; later, the designs were decorated with numbers and letters of the alphabet; to-day, a few Sanscrit ciphers are added; and the result, be it either a horoscope or an esoteric theosophical sigil, depicts not knowledge symbolized in

formula, but fear transcending reason.

### ***Hoa-Haka-Nana-Ia***

§ 94. On the eastern end of the central platform of the colonnade of the British Museum, stands a colossal grey granite figure. The chin is thrust forward, the stern mouth closed in a firm line. The heavy brows frown down over hollow eye-sockets which, catching the light and shadows, seem to contain angry glittering orbs. It is Hoa-Haka-Nana-Ia, the effigy of a god, the representative of the wrath to come.

§ 95. This figure, brought to England from Easter Island, is the image and embodiment of a thousand mysteries and an endless romance, but for the present he must stand before us in one aspect only; as the concrete expression of the occult ideology of all primitive people. Among the native inhabitants of the Pacific Islands, including Australia, throughout Africa and pre-Conquistadorian America,—in short, wherever so-called “savages” dwell,—there are clearly defined complexes of occult ideas so closely bound up with everyday life that it is impossible to arrive at an understanding of the magico-religious practices without first knowing something of savage society. Needless to say, each ethnographic area has its peculiarities, and no two tribes have quite the same customs, but, to condense much into little and make a broad sweep involving a majority, it may be stated that savages obey a chief, who is the absolute authority in civil and military matters, and a witch-doctor, who is supreme in affairs of conscience and medicine.

§ 96. To the savage the entire world is charged with a divine energy called mana. Some objects and persons possess more of

this holy essence than others; hence, the ordinary man and his family may handle the less charged things with impunity, whilst those having more mana he may not touch, or, in some cases, even look upon. That which may not be handled is tabu, to violate which involves speedy retribution. For instance, in some parts, to eat out of a chief's food basin is forbidden, and to offend in this means death. It is on record that an Australian blackfellow who unwittingly violated this tabu, subsequently learned the ownership of the vessel and dropped dead of fright. This extreme sensitiveness to the magical properties of the common things of every day enables the witch-doctor to control the inner life of the people and also to cure many ills. He performs a ceremony over a sick man, repeating a magic formula the while, and the illness departs, unless, of course, it so happens that the malady itself has a stronger magic than that possessed by the tribal medical magician. The witch-doctors are also the midwives because they, and they alone, are able to divine which ancestor's spirit is reincarnated in the new-corner, and therefore they give the child its name. Also, it is only the witch-doctor who knows how to keep at bay the evil spirits that hover in the air, intent on harming the little one. A savage wishing for revenge upon a neighbour consults the witch-doctor who functions in this case by casting a spell, which, when the enemy learns of it, will surely take effect. The savage believes that were it not for magic worked to his undoing, he would live for ever, death is worked by spells; therefore when he falls sick, the curative process is to match magic against magic. In some areas, although the witch-doctor is endowed with supreme occult powers, each member of the community possesses a little magic of his own, both public and private. Boat-building,

house-building, and numerous industries can be performed only by the craftsman who knows the boat- or house-building magic, and this secret is jealously guarded within the family. The same applies to love-magic and beauty-magic.

§ 97. Not only men, but things, possess mana, and there are numerous spirits and gods to be appeased and appealed to. All this involves work for the witch-doctor. In times of drought it is he who must perform the ceremonies and speak the words that shall cause the rain to fall; and it is to him that the savage turns for an unguent to make his arrows fly straight to the heart of the quarry, as well as for a charm to make the food-plants grow in his garden. All primitives pay a great deal of respect to the dead, and many of them provide an annual public feast to which all ghosts are invited. A great spread is made in the centre of the village, and, whilst the living consume the material food, the ghostly guests feed upon the spirit of the meat. At the conclusion of the festival the shades are unceremoniously drummed out of the village—back to the land of the dead.

§ 98. Variations of this system are to be found all through Oceania, Africa and America; and though the foregoing is but the vaguest suggestion of a most complicated and diversified social order, it is sufficient to show that the savage lives a life in which occult ideas are uppermost. There is no moment of day or night when he is free from tabu. The occult powers are active about him constantly, producing a more self-controlled, God-fearing being than is the average inhabitant of European countries. Because primitives, with a few notable exceptions, are not historically-minded, it is impossible to gauge how long the tabu system has been in existence; but, turning once again to Hoa-Haka-Nana-Ia,

we will examine his back. Here we see numerous devices in relief, among them being two faces with the tongues extended. These tongues are in the form of cobras, which is worthy of note considering that cobras (sacred Nagas) are of Indian origin, and are not among the fauna of Easter Island. Below, about the idol's middle, an arc of a circle spans like a girdle, above which is poised a sun-disk. Hence, Hoa-Haka-Nana-Ia and our own Stonehenge are very close relations. They were apparently raised by people possessing occult ideas of like character, and, being colossal, they must have been erected by a similar engineering process. As previously stated in connection with megalithic monuments, wherever savages dwell, stories are recounted of gods who came out of the sea bringing with them magic, law, and order. These gods were Sons of the Sun, the headquarters of whose cult was Heliopolis in ancient Egypt. The priests of Ra, desiring foreign metals and gems for use in their esoteric practice, the purpose of which was to secure by occult means, everlasting life, set forces moving that have resulted not only in the production of the witch-doctor, who still cures by magic, but also, through the channels of both Babylonian and Greek culture, in the evolution of the modern European physician and surgeon, whose cures can often be described only as "nothing short of magic"; and the latest developments of medical science, psycho-therapy, is the completion of the circle. We live by faith.

### ***The Feathered Snake***

§ 99. The American coast from Alaska to Cape Horn stands like a wall along the world, and if it was possible for culture-bearing people from the ancient East to sail their ships as far into the

Pacific as to discover and colonize an isolated speck of earth such as Easter Island, then it is reasonable to assume that other voyagers from the ancient East made a landfall on the coast of Central America, an area known to archæologists as the Maya Country.

§ 100. In this area there are vast remains of civilized cities built in stone, of highly developed sculpture, of an involved hieroglyphic script which is as yet only partly deciphered; of admirable arts and crafts, of pyramids, and, above all, a Sothic calendar. July was the beginning of the Mayan New Year, and the last five days of the old year were considered unlucky, and called “days that are nameless.” During this period a god was chosen to guard the coming year. There was a choice of four to fill this office—each being a god of a cardinal point of the compass, which again takes us back to Egypt, where in the Book of the Dead we have already seen four such deities standing upon a lotus-flower before Osiris. The Mayan gods of the points were: for the east, the God of Fertility; for the north, the Sun-God; for the west, the Oldest God, God of the Moon and Fire; and for the south, the God of the Dead and Ruler of the Six Underworlds.

§ 101. The priests were called Lords of the Days, and their duty was not only to serve and make sacrifice to the gods but also to teach and enlighten the people. The occult practice included animal-sacrifice, fire-worship, and offerings to the rain-gods and Old God (i.e. the moon); but the chief god was the Feathered Snake, called Kukulcan, who was the culture hero, the divine being who taught the people to be civilized. He was a Son of the Sun, hence we may safely assume that the kings of the Mayan people were themselves related to the sun, just as the king in

Egypt was the descendant of Ra. The Mayan civilization was followed by the Toltec and Aztec in turn, and was a near neighbour of the Mexican and Peruvian people whose rulers were the Incas, likewise sun-descended divine kings.

§ 102. From this highly civilized centre all culture trends and occult ideas passed out in waves, as it were, and tintured the occult thought of the Indian tribes in both South and North America. By the Indians nearest the centre the more diversified ideas of after-life are held, and a more complicated ritual is practised, whilst those at the extremes of the country are primitive in thought and crude in expression.

### ***The Spirit Guide***

§ 103. The origin of the Mayan civilization is a vexed question over which cultural anthropologists still do battle. The Diffusionist school is of the opinion that it is of Eastern origin; the contrary opinion is that it is indigenous to the area; but all the facts are in support of the Diffusionist: and, viewing the controversy purely from the aspect of the history of occult ideas, one must favour the latter theory. Occult thought and its practice lingers near the heart of everybody and passes rapidly from people to people, not in its entirety, not fully understood; but a little sprinkling from any man's magic may have an energizing effect on one's own.

§ 104. The highly developed complex of occultism passed out from Central America and, degraded into a form of witchcraft, survived among the red men who, unable to distinguish between subjective sensation and objective experience, believed that their dream-life was as real as their waking-life, and so, together with other mysterious happenings, peopled the world about them with

spirits and discarnate beings, one of which was appointed by Manito, the chief of spirits, to accompany a Brave and direct him wherever he went.

§ 105. The European invaders, when not too busy with their guns and whisky, were learning from the red man, and the beginnings of the modern spiritualistic movement can without question be traced to the psychic experience of the Fox family, who were American; hence, spirit mediums have “guides,” and such guides are not infrequently called “red feather” or something equally Red Indian in Origin.

§ 106. The vast tide of occult thought ebbs and flows around the world, back and forth through time. From Aurignacian man we trace the mighty endeavour along the high road of hope and fear, in Egypt, Sumer, Babylon, India, Tibet, and China, the coral islands of the Pacific, and the classic cities of Greece and Rome; along the Bronze-Age trade routes to the Far North, and down again through barbarian Europe to clash with Rome already christianized. Across the ocean, and there, the magnificent palace of Montezuma, the heaven-descended king, glittered with gold and precious gems for more than a thousand years before the Spanish Christian, Cortes, descended upon peaceful people, putting them to rout with fire and sword. South to Cape Horn where the maddest waves bellow, and north to Alaska where the mute snows bind, travelled the magical conception of controlling the gods and demons, of communing with the spirits, of securing good luck upon earth and a continued existence beyond the grave. From the red-skinned hunter with his feathered head-dress and scalping-knife, to the American colonist, and back to 20th-century mechanized Europe, with its precision lathes and aeroplanes—so

the deep, dark tide of the occult ebbs and flows for ever.

J. F.

*Books recommended:*

BREASTED, J. H.:

*Ancient Times: A History of the Early World* (Quinn & Co., Boston, 1916).

*History of Egypt from the Earliest Times* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1906).

KROEBER, A. L.:

*Anthropology* (G. G. Harrap, 1924).

PERRY, Dr. W. J.:

*Children of the Sun* (Methuen, 1923).

*Growth of Civilization* (Methuen, 1926).

SMITH, Sir G. ELLIOT:

*Ancient Egypt and the Origins of Civilizations* (Harper Bros., 1923).

*Diffusion of Culture* (Watts & Co., 1933).

*Evolution of the Dragon* (Longman & Co., 1919).

*Human History* (Jonathan Cape, 1934).

HSI WANG MU. Royal Lady of the West. A legendary being supposed to dwell on the K'un Lun mountain. The peaches in her garden ripen once in 3,000 years, and render the eaters immortal. She is attended by five fairy maidens, and she always rides on a crane's back. Early Jesuit missionaries identified her with the Queen of Sheba, later scholars with the Roman Juno (Hera).

## ILLUSION AND HALLUCINATION

§ 1. According to Esquirol, an illusion is the false interpretation of external objects, while a hallucination is a subjective sensory image arising without external stimulus but, projected outward, assuming apparent objective reality. William James said that to see an object, and to believe that one sees an object, is the same thing except that in the latter case there is no object to see. At first glance, one might suspect the eminent American psychologist of attempting humour; but analysis of the statement reveals that James meant that every psychological function taking the character of a sense-impression *is* a sense-impression; hence a hallucinated person seeing a horse sitting on the bed, or hearing a voice whispering in his ear, is speaking the truth when he informs others of these matters, for to him a hallucination is not merely like, but actually is, a sense-impression.

§ 2. It is not at all times easy to draw a hard and fast line between objective reality and subjective sensation, even when free from pathological conditions that give rise to hallucination. Sense-impressions obtained through the receptor-organs must be interpreted with the aid of experience and memory. It is impossible to see “a white stick, three feet long,” but it is possible to experience a sensation of whiteness, three feet long, in the visual field. On a foggy night a beam of light sloping down from a keyhole, is also “a sensation of whiteness, three feet long, in the visual field.” It may easily be mistaken for a stick and so cause the walker to step carefully over it. One set of receptor-organs alone is insufficient to enable experience to give accurate information concerning

external objects. Visual stimulus plus experience makes of the beam of light a stick. Tactile sensibility could dispel this illusion: the beam of light would not feel like a stick, but on the other hand the sense of touch itself is easily deceived, as anyone knows who has tried the experiment of crossing the first and second finger, and rolling a pellet of bread about in the bifurcation thus formed, thereby receiving an impression of two pellets. Further self-deception may be practised by exerting a lateral pressure on one eyeball and so disturbing the macular focus. In this way two pellets may be actually seen.

§ 3. When “the man in the street” demands indignantly, “Can’t I believe my own eyes?” the correct reply is, “Of course not”; however, it is probable that so strict an adherence to truth would result in the gain of nothing desirable; and in any case, normally and for practical purposes the five senses are sufficiently accurate gauges of objective reality. Nevertheless, a very slight defect in the reaction of the nervous system may bring about startling results, as, for instance, when the drunken man seeing two glasses, knocks over the substance in an endeavour to grasp the shadow; or when very small involuntary muscular movements of the eye, after turning rapidly a few times, are interpreted as a rotating movement of the room.

§ 4. An illusion of animation is produced when sixteen or twenty-four still pictures, each successive one being a slight advance on the last, are projected on to a screen in the time-period of one second: hence the Cinema. Add to this the voice effects of a modern “sound film,” and the uninitiated will find it very difficult to accept the fact that living persons are not actually acting before his eyes.

§ 5. The illusion of a straight rod appearing bent when half its length is immersed in water is so frequently quoted and explained that the laws underlying the phenomenon must be well known to everyone; but the appearance of an oasis to travellers in the desert, and of ships in the sky to mariners at sea, are not so universally understood. These by no means uncommon illusions are due to the same laws of optics as the “straight rod bent” phenomenon, that is, vision through two mediums of differing refractive index. In the case of the rod they are air and water; in that of the mirage, both mediums are air—one layer being of a higher temperature than the other. The great density of water as a refractive medium causes the “bent” appearance in the short focal length of the bucket or pool; but when the lens effect is produced by currents of warm or cold air, the focal length increases to many miles, so that the oasis, or ship far beyond the horizon, becomes visible apparently on, or above it. Ships are even, on some occasions, seen inverted high up in the sky. The Fata Morgana, or Castle of the Fairy Morgana, occasionally visible on the surface of the waters of the Straits of Messina, between the coast of Sicily and Italy, is an illusion due to refraction; and the same startling effects have been observed on the English Channel, when the coast of France has become visible in minute detail, local fishermen in the vicinity of Hastings recognizing on one occasion French fishing-boats at anchor. Of this we have the confirmation of a Fellow of the Royal Society who was resident there at the time.

§ 6. All the foregoing are optical illusions which may be shared by numerous spectators observing the effects from more or less the same locality. On the other hand, a hallucination arising from

within the sensorium is generally a very personal and private affair, though in some cases it may be shared by another person who becomes sympathetically “infected.” In August 1894 the Society for Psychical Research published a census which, along with other statistics, indicated that almost 12 per cent. of persons suffered from waking hallucination, if not as a perpetual mental defect, at least on occasions. The question put was: “Have you ever, when believing yourself completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing or being touched by a living being or inanimate object, or of hearing a voice; which impression, so far as you could discover, was not due to any external physical cause?” Over twenty-seven thousand of these questions were sent out, internationally: over twenty-four thousand persons so addressed replied; hence the figure, 12 per cent., may be taken as fairly representative of the entire population of the civilized world. Many of the instances dealt with in the census are of persons seeing the apparition of a friend, who they subsequently learned had expired at or about the time of the hallucination—a most impressive occurrence that seems to confirm the objective existence of ghosts. It must, however, be clearly understood that events are very easily confused one with another, if either or both are of a sufficiently arresting nature, and that waking-consciousness and dream-states are apt to blend till they become indistinguishable. Illustrative of this latter point, the following is important: On 31 December 1856 Mr. T. Pratt was carrying on business as a tailor in a house on the corner of Warwick Street, Pimlico. At about seven o’clock in the evening a curate from St. Barnabas’s Church, Pimlico, one Mr. Gleddos, called to pay a bill, and also to order a new coat, which he desired to “try on” before

departing on a journey the following day. Mr. Pratt was very busy on another garment needed for urgent delivery, so he decided to sit up late and complete the task. In his own words: "I was accustomed to work all night frequently, and continued working at the coat after my wife and family had retired to bed. I kept on working and thinking about my order, planning it out in my mind, when suddenly Mr. Gleddos appeared at the corner of the board on which I was sitting, and at the same spot as he had stood in the evening, and looking just the same as he did in the evening; the gas-light was between us. At that moment the room door opened and he vanished. The fright was so great, I felt the hair go stiff on my head. I had leaped from the board and looked outside the door, but saw nothing of him." With his knees trembling so that he could hardly climb the stairs. Mr. Pratt went to bed, and next morning felt so very shaken that he was disinclined to recommence work. At about nine o'clock, another curate from St. Barnabas's Church called with the receipted bill, and asked Pratt if he could give any information concerning Gleddos, *who had died suddenly during the night!*, the bill being the only clue to his movements upon the previous evening. Later in the day Mr. Pratt, feeling somewhat recovered from his nocturnal fright, decided to recommence business. Proceeding to his workshop, he picked up the coat on which he had been engaged and prepared to continue. His narrative runs: "As I was about to begin I was surprised at the last part of the back stitching for hem; the stitches were all shapes and not one alike. This convinced me that I had been asleep, although my hand had used the needle at the same time." Mr. Pratt was evidently a very level-headed man: having satisfied himself thus far, he made further search and concluded that the door had

blown open and awakened him from a sleep of about thirty seconds' duration. The evidence of the irregular stitches was sufficiently convincing for Mr. Pratt, who must have been an artist at his work, though many people would have considered the bad technique to be due to the fright they had received, and so the apparition of Mr. Gleddos would have featured among the "best authenticated ghost stories." However, there would still have been, as there so frequently is, a margin for doubt: why should the dead curate have appeared to his tailor instead of, let us say, his mother? Unless it was to intimate that the garment he had so urgently required was now no longer necessary.

§ 7. Mr. Pratt's "nasty shock" was what is known technically as hypnogogic hallucination. Such experiences occur when a person is in a state bordering on the realms of sleep, a form of somnolence which may be either light or deep, according to how near the subject is to complete wakefulness or actual slumber; hence a person apparently awake and actively engaged on even a more strenuous and less monotonous occupation than sewing, may actually be in a hypnogogic condition, when the appearances of dream-life can manifest themselves in waking consciousness. Under these circumstances, the subject is positive that he is fully awake, and at the same time receives a very vivid visual or auditory impression.

§ 8. Persons having experienced a hypnogogic hallucination which they have convinced themselves is a real appearance, are as a rule very subject to suggestion concerning it, and medical men investigating such cases frequently use this susceptibility as a test. For instance, a subject seeing an apparition and reporting it, will, on hearing of the death of, or an accident to, the person whose

shade had appeared, very naturally connect the two events, and claim to have had a prophetic vision, though hours and in some cases even days may elapse before the death or accident follows the “prophecy.” In the course of interrogation, the suggestion, “Did you not observe how very ill he looked when you saw him?” will elicit the reply, “Indeed he did! the appearance of death was upon him!” though in the first report no such observation was made.

§ 9. Those subject to so-called “psychic” experiences are seldom if ever able to judge the exact extent of their wakefulness at the time; it is therefore impossible either to accept the “ghost” as an objective fact, or to declare all apparitions to be hypnogogic hallucinations; but in a great many instances, the circumstances indicate the probability of the appearance having been seen during a dream-state, and facts brought forward in confirmation of the objective reality of a ghost often assist greatly in diagnosing the hypnogogic condition. For example, a mother confirms her child’s vision of his dead grandfather by stating, “. . . he woke me up by calling out and I saw it myself, as plain as anything, and it gradually faded away!” The words “*he woke me up*”<sup>1</sup> are quite sufficient to discredit the objective existence of grandfather’s ghost, even if each hair of the old gentleman’s beard had been distinctly visible.

§ 10. After we gaze fixedly at a red spot, a green one, identical in size and shape, will be visible to us when our eyes are closed. This is an “after-image” involving the retina. It is quite different

---

<sup>1</sup> Appearances of this nature *after* sleep are more properly called “hypnopompic” hallucinations.

from visual hallucination, in which the physical eye takes no part. This was proved in the case of Esquirol's spectre-seeing patient, who subsequently became blind, a defect, however, which did not put an end to the morbid disturbance, the sightless sufferer continuing to project the imagined forms into the now extinct visual field. These impressions were purely subjective and could not have arisen from any secondary entoptic reaction, because the nervous connection between eye and brain was found, on autopsy, to be completely atrophied.

§ 11. Sir David Brewster's recipe for laying a ghost is to exert a lateral pressure on the eyeball. This expedient, as previously explained, throws the orbs out of macular focus, with the result that all visual impressions that have an objective existence will appear doubled, but the ghost, or other apparition, even though it is sufficiently vivid to blot out the objects behind it, will remain single if it is of subjective origin. Persons finding themselves confronted with a phantom are generally much too startled to try any such experiment; but its efficacy was confirmed by Dr. D. Hack Tuke, who had opportunities of testing it on his patients.

J. F.

*Book recommended:*

WOLTERS, A. W. P., *The Evidence of our Senses* (Methuen, 1933).

## INCUBUS AND SUCCUBUS

§ 1. The incubus is a spirit, evil to be sure, which, taking the semblance of a man, has intercourse with mortal women. The succubus is a similar spirit which in the form of a woman behaves in a like manner with mortal men. Holinshed, in his *Chronicles* under the date 1480, gives the harrowing story of a Scottish ship overtaken by a violent storm in midsummer, whereupon a woman passenger burst into lamentation, declaring herself an adulteress with an incubus, and asking to be cast into the sea that the rest of the ship's company might be saved. It so happened that a priest on board exorcised the demon which "issued forth at the pumpe of the ship, a foule and evil-flavoured black cloud, with a mighty terrible noise, flame, smoke, and stinke."

§ 2. The Hebrew Lilith, "Adam's first wife," was regarded as queen of the succubi by the theologians who spent much time investigating such matters. St. Augustine states that "devils do indeed collect human semen, by means of which they are able to produce bodily effects: but this cannot be done without some local movement, therefore demons can transfer the semen which they have collected and inject it into the bodies of others." St. Thomas Aquinas did much to prove that incubi and succubi were demons sent to tamper with frail humanity; but in the 17th century Peter Sinistrari made the unorthodox claim that such visitants were not demons but semi-angels who honoured mankind by contact.

§ 3. Many renowned people, including Cæsar, Alexander the Great, and Plato, have the distinction of descent from such unnatural unions, which is not impossible when one takes into

consideration that Hieronymus relates a story of a young woman who called for help against the attack of an incubus, which, on being pulled from under the bed where it had rushed to hide, proved to be none other than the good Bishop Sylvanus—whose reputation would undoubtedly have suffered had he not, then and there, preached a sermon on the wickedness of the demons, incubus and succubus, who assume the form of living humans to assist them in the execution of their unhallowed tasks.

J. F.

## INDIAN OCCULTISM

§ 1. The beginnings of organized occult thought in India may with safety be placed about 1500 B.C., when the Aryan invaders settled in the Peninsula, and composed the Vedas, that collection of hymns and verses upon which the religious life of India is based, and out of which its mysticism has grown.

§ 2. Between occultism and materialism, as between religion and philosophy, there is no distinction in the Indian mind. The purpose of life is to attain union with the Godhead, either by a willed endeavour or in the natural course of events: and all religions, all occult systems and all philosophies tend ultimately to that end, which is, in effect, self-annihilation. To the Occidental mind, this is the epitome of pessimism; but actually the spirit of the Rig-Vedic songs is essentially optimistic, for the ascetic believes that, when all desires are destroyed, he has become one with the Absolute, while he is still here on earth. The Rig-Veda is the oldest of the Vedic writings, and consists very largely of formulas to be recited while sacrifice of soma juice and melted butter (*ghee*) is being offered up. It also contains a mythological element giving accounts of gods and heroes, their dwellings and deeds, but does not deal with demons and evil spirits. The Sama-Veda is composed of hymns drawn chiefly from the Rig-Veda; and the remaining two books are rather different in character, being more in the nature of magic than religion; of these the Yajur-Veda, written in prose, is the older; and the Atharva-Veda, with its ramifications, the fuller in magical formulas. It is built up, in the main, of spells, and forms the basis of Indian witchcraft. Despite

the separateness of the four books, it is not possible to distinguish between occultism and religion by paying exclusive attention to the matter contained in either section, nor is it possible to make the distinction by concentrating upon either deities or demons, for not infrequently both are represented by the same personage in the Indian pantheon. The Vedic scriptures include the Brahmanas and the Upanishads: the former are a set of theological treatises based on the Rig-Veda, and suggesting the existence of a Father-God; the latter, though an offshoot of the Brahmanas, virtually represents a new train of sublime thought, replacing the Father-God with the idea of a world-soul, of which all living things are partakers, and introducing the conception of reincarnation for individual souls, until perfection is reached.

§ 3. The Vedic creation-myth is vague and confused, primitive and philosophical at the same time. The universe is stated to be built of wood and supported on posts, yet at the same time supposed to be evolved from a giant who was slain by the gods. From his enormous limbs the four castes were created: his head forms the sky, his navel the air, and his feet the earth—a very materialistic conception compared to “the existent sprang from the non-existent,” a point of sublimity which is reached, then abandoned in the Brahmanas, where it is written that the earth was raised from the Primordial Flood by a wild boar that lifted it on its back. The belief that water existed before all things is maintained right through the Indian Scriptures, but the “non-existent” is not intended as a poetical expression for “water.”

§ 4. The origin of man is variously ascribed to Agni, the god of fire, or Manu and Yama, two sons of Vivasvat, the solar deity. The gods are numerous, and vary greatly in power and importance,

descending in grandeur from world-pervading spirit, through a long scale of specialistic divinities, to agricultural implements, certain of which are deified and worshipped. The ability of an Indian deity to be both beneficent and terrible, results in an extremely complicated set of ritualistic exercises; for though the formulas of the Atharva-Veda and Yajur-Veda may be potent against lesser demons, they are powerless, for instance, where such a vast force as Karala is concerned. Although she is a benign goddess, she is named “the horrible one,” and the help of the exclusively benevolent powers must be implored against her demoniac manifestations. The chief gods are stated to be thirty-three in number. They are divided into three groups of eleven, having power over respectively the earth, the air, and the heavens. In the Brahmanas they are styled Vasus, Rudras, and Adityas. The gods of lesser rank—for instance, storm-gods, rain-gods and the like, are not included among these; but even the highest gods are considered to have once been mortals, and to have attained their divine elevation by the practice of austerity.

§ 5. Because of their human origin these deities are regarded as still possessing human shape, but they nevertheless symbolize and partake of the nature of that force or power which they represent; thus the oft-mentioned arms of Vivasvat are the rays of the sun, the tongues of Agni are tongues of flame. Their abode is the third heaven, or the highest step of Visnu (i.e. the zenith), where they live a life of eternal bliss having for their sustenance the milk, butter, grain and meats offered in sacrifice by their worshippers. The deities are always invoked and addressed in pairs, a practice which enables both gods to share the attributes and characteristics properly belonging to one alone; hence

identification becomes confounded with identification until Aditi and Prajapati become the embodiment of all the gods and of all the forces of nature as well, resulting in a form of pantheism.

§ 6. The oldest god, Dyaus (heaven), is, like the Greek Zeus, father of the gods. He is coupled with Pirthivi (earth), the two being regarded as universal parents. Varuna is the chief representative of moral order, and the keeper of the stars' courses in the heavens. Mitra (friend) is a personification of the sun's warmth. Surya (the sun) prolongs life and drives away disease; he is the husband of Usas, the goddess of dawn, who comes into being when the Asvins, twin deities (lords of the steeds), yoke up their chariot. They are considered personifications of the morning and the evening star, and are divine physicians who succour all in distress, more particularly the shipwrecked. Savitar (the stimulator) bestows immortality on gods and longevity on men; he is also the psychopomp conducting the souls of the departed to the abode of the righteous. Pusan (the prosperer) protects cattle, and acts as psychopomp in conveying souls to the abode of the fathers. Visnu assumes great importance on account of his avatars (i.e. descents to earth), each incarnation being solely for the benefit of man. Indra is the mighty warrior-god, and the most popular in Indian thought. It was owing to his might in slaying Vrtra, that the waters were released, and left to flow for the benefit of man. He is the thunder-god *par excellence*. Apam napat is son of the water, but is also in some obscure way connected with lightning and with fire; and Matarisvan is the bringer of fire to earth, though he is also the wind-god. Ruda is the early form of Siva; the origin is obscure, but seems to have some bearing on lightning and fire; however, he is god of destruction bringing disease and death to

men and cattle. His sons are the Maruts (storm-gods), “born from the laughter of the lightning.” They are eternally young, ride in chariots, create havoc with their battle-axes, but assist Indra in his conflicts. Parjanya is a personification of the rain-cloud; he is called the divine father because he brings fertility to the earth. There is also a group of abstract deities, as well as deified human heroes, animals, and inanimate objects, including mountains, rivers, weapons and implements.

§ 7. The demons are of two orders: the Asuras, evil powers in opposition to the gods, Indra’s foe, Vrtra, being one of them; and Raksas, goblin spirits that inhabit the earth and oppose mortals. These earth-goblins take many forms including those of animals and birds. They prowl chiefly at night, and entering the bodies of animals and men produce disease and madness; men become werewolves because of them. The Pisacas are flesh-eating demons of the ghoulish and vampire type.

§ 8. To the Atharva-Veda there are numerous supplements called Parisistas. One of the most interesting of these, from the point of view of occult practice, is the Asuri-Kalpa, a manual of witchcraft outlining rites to be performed in connection with the asuri-plant, which is the native name for black mustard. This pungent vegetable was regarded as a very powerful goddess, because one of her seeds alone could burn the mouth so thoroughly. The mustard in India, when used to magic ends, is treated in the same way as wax or clay in Europe: the seed is ground to meal, then, mixed with melted butter, formed into an image of the person to be destroyed, and with incantations burned in a sacred-fire-pot. According to the laws of Manu, witchcraft of this kind is not reprehensible “With thought one should perform

the [rites] of the Atharva-Veda, without hesitation. The word is the Brahman's weapon. With it the 'twice-born' shall smite his enemies." Repetition of magic formula is the keynote of successful witchcraft in India as elsewhere, and some of the spells have to be reiterated so frequently that it seems the witch might die of exhaustion before the maleficium was complete. For instance: "Om obeisance to Ruda: Om O Pungent one, thou of the pungent leaf, blessed Asuri, reddish one, thou of the reddish garment, O daughter of Atharvan, non-terrific one, non-terrific wonder worker! [Name of enemy] smite, smite, crush, crush, burn, burn, cook, cook: so long smite, so long crush, so long burn, so long cook, . . . until thou hast brought him into my power," is a little prayer which in theory needs to be repeated ninety million times, because Durga (who is also Kali, and Siva, and Ruda, and numerous others) has that number of bodily forms and might be offended if one of them was omitted. However, the mental gymnastics that enable the Indian to confuse gods with demons, also enable him to contract very considerably the number of repetitions, without incurring the wrath of Durga. Different kinds of fuel must be consumed in the sacred-fire-pot, the status of the person to be bewitched determining the selection. For Rajas and women, arka-wood is prescribed; for Brahmans, palasa-wood; for Ksatriyas, khadira-wood; for Vaisyas and Sudras, udumbara-wood; and for foreigners, nimba-wood. All these woods have a sacred symbolism attached to them, and are mentioned in the Laws of Manu, wherein is also laid down the types of wood that may be cut for staffs, by members of each of the four castes. Not only for the destruction of foes, but for the gaining of good looks and wealth, and in fact, for all the numerous ramifications that are found in

European witchcraft, the Asuri-Kalpa has formulas; and were it not accepted that Oriental and Occidental witchcraft both descend from a common ancestor, one might be inclined to think that the leaders of the European witch-cults were in occult communion with the wizards of India.

§ 9. Although destiny and disease are in the hands of the gods, the Indian does not dare expect an incarnation of the mighty Visnu for the sole purpose of curing his sick cow (avatars being for the benefit of humanity at large), nor can he with any show of decency desire the deity, in public, to visit his neighbour's cattle with murrain; hence the witch in India, in spite of British rule, is kept fairly busy. The fact of the Atharva-Veda containing the ritual of witchcraft defeats the theory that all the black art practised in India arises from the contamination of the Dravidian people (i.e. pre-Aryans), though it is true that the Dravidian tribes resort more frequently to witchcraft than the Aryan people, and are more inclined to confuse the witch herself with the discarnate intelligences, by whose aid she is supposed to work. They even consider sorcerers to be immortal so long as the esoteric knowledge is preserved; but as immortality is tolerable only to gods, the witches ultimately choose a successor, impart the secrets of their craft—and die.

§ 10. A particularly dreaded type of sorcerer is the Jigar-Khor, or liver-eater. By repeating incantations she (they are mostly women) can cause a person's liver to leave the body. She keeps the organ for two and a half days, then eats it; but if she can be caught and put under the influence of an exorcist she will be forced to replace the stolen liver by that of an animal. Another witch that lives on human flesh is the Kalaratri, a type of werewolf, but

possessed of enormous occult ability; she can restore the dead to life, set fire to water, render stone soft as wax, and confer the power of shape-shifting on to any person who craves that boon. To accomplish this end, she employs a familiar called a Bir. The animal form assumed by lycanthropists is always that of the most formidable of local carnivora, hence the Kalaratri becomes a tiger; but the Bir is not necessarily one of these troublesome beasts, for the tiger has an aunt that taught him everything except how to climb trees. It follows that the tutor must know more, for good or ill, than the pupil; therefore, although the tiger's aunt is only the cat, Zalim Sinh, the famous Regent of Kota, falling sick and fancying himself bewitched, had every cat expelled from his cantonment.

§ 11. Fear of the evil eye in India pervades all castes and, no matter the financial status or cultural achievement of a family, it is a common practice for children to be called something other than their name. This precaution is supposed to deceive demons. Sometimes children of rich parents are dressed in the poorest and even the dirtiest of clothes so as not to invite envious glances. It is also usual for boys to be dressed as girls during infancy—a practice which spread to Victorian England, either with or without its attendant superstition. To the Indian, all Europeans have the evil eye and are not kindly disposed enough to surround their orbs with a ring of lamp-black as a general warning. When a native witness before a European tribunal keeps his eyes down during examination, it is not because he is committing perjury (or not only for that reason, as the case may be), but to avoid the dangerous stare of the stipendiary. It is also well known in India that the fingernails of Europeans exude a foul poison, and that is

why they eat with a knife and fork instead of with their hands, like decent people.

§ 12. Iron is considered a potent protection against witchcraft and all kinds of demons and evil forces. It is customary to put an unsheathed knife on the couch of a parturient female to keep the demons at bay; and no house is safe to inhabit if it has not been built round an iron pot, and is without an iron ring hanging above the entrance. Copper and brass, gold and silver, coral and shells, precious stones, glass beads, blood, salt and incense, are all considered of great protective efficacy; but as an Indian ghost is easily able to stretch itself to a length of eighty miles, these charms seem pitifully mild.

§ 13. Chief among benign ghosts is the Brahmadaitya, that is, the spirit of a Brahman who has died unmarried. He is very particular about his food, lives in a tree, and is kindly disposed to human beings so long as they do not trespass on his domain. Should they do so, he literally breaks their necks; therefore, if it is absolutely necessary for an Indian to climb a tree, he prays to all the gods beforehand. The Indians have no fairy folk akin to the European variety, unless it is possible to include the two friendly little agricultural sprites called Jak and Jakni, who are the modernized version of the Vedic gods of wealth, Yaksha and Kuvera. The Jak is male and the Jakni female; they live apart, each assuming the responsibility of protecting a village, but the Jak will always steal things from his villagers and make presents of them to his Jakni; that is how things lost here may sometimes be found there! Among friendly ghosts one might include the Bugaboos, in whose objective existence even the Indians do not believe. Mothers use them to quieten naughty children. In the

ranks of these “terrible” creatures are to be found Ghoghar (the hooting owl), Mano (the cat), Dokar Kaswa (the old man with the bag), and last but by no means least—Warren Hastings.

§ 14. The philosophy of the Vedic Scriptures descends by imperceptible stages to the folk-lore of modern India, taking in its long stride Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, together with the mystic systems that have been evolved from these religions. Beneath it all, and erupting through it is the primitive, demon-ridden Dravidian Cult, which comes very near the everyday life of the people, with the result that the highest abstract thought exists side by side with materialistic and superstitious practice. The transcendental mental attitude of the yogi is one with repellent self-mutilation; his all-embracing love enables him not only to tolerate but actually to delight in body lice. The complete yogi who has at last acquired so much body and mind control that he can at will throw himself into a cataleptic trance, in which state he may be buried alive for days only to rise again none the worse for his experience, probably believes that he has conquered death, and is even able to convey that impression to others; nevertheless the fact remains that catalepsy is not death, and even if it were, the holy man is of no practical use in the world and might, so far as that is concerned, just as well stay dead. L. Jacalliot, in *Occult Science in India*, p. 219, says: “From the remotest antiquity the pundits of the pagodas have been in the habit of bursting vessels by the use of compressed steam. They have also observed many electrical phenomena, but that has not led to the construction of railroads or telegraphs.” Such practical tasks have been left to the European, who has received little thanks for his endeavours; and indeed it is a moot point whether it is more important to obliterate

self in a divine endeavour to defeat reincarnation, or get quickly and comfortably from Bombay to Calcutta. The Indian occultist does not consider the affairs of this world of any importance, but strives to detach himself completely, so that his soul may have no desire for reincarnation, and thus enable him to become one with the Absolute. In theory this is a very high ideal; in practice it degenerates into a set of super-conjuring tricks, impressive enough to render the occult-inclined European emulous, and send the materialistically-minded European away in a state of awed, if not respectful silence.

See also *History of Occult Ideas*, §§ 44-50.

J. F.

*Book recommended:*

FARQUHAR, J. N., *A Primer of Hinduism* (Oxford University Press, 1912).

ISLANDS OF THE BLEST. The Fortunate Islands—situated in the Eastern Sea. They are supposed to be inhabited by fairies and the Immortals. In 219 B.C. Hsu Shih, a Taoist mystic, sailed with a company of men and women to these islands, but was unable to land due to adverse weather. Perhaps the story records an attempt to colonize the islands of Japan.

“KEY OF SOLOMON THE KING.” A grimoire (q.v.) supposed to have come from the pen of King Solomon the Wise (of Biblical fame). The book is actually of 14th- to 15th-century origin. The Lesser Key of Solomon the King, or Lemegeton (of 17th-century

origin) is in four “books”: (1) Goetia, consists of formulæ for invoking demons; (2) Theurgia Goetici, consists of treatises on the nature of the spirits of the cardinal points; (3) Pauline Art, deals with the spirits of the hours, and those of the signs of the zodiac (q.v.); and (4) Almadel, deals with miscellaneous spirits. The Lesser Key is claimed to be a book of White Magic (q.v.).

**LAMAISM.** From Tibetan “Lama”—the superior one. Tantric Buddhism as practised in Tibet, Mongolia, and around the Himalayas. See Buddhist Occultism.

**LEMURIA.** A lost continent supposed to have occupied the area now covered by the Pacific Ocean. The claims made concerning it are as baseless as those made for Atlantis (q.v.).

**LING CHIH.** The sacred fungus of immortality. (Probably *Polyporus luscidus*, which grows on the roots of trees.) Specimens of the fungus, also wood-carvings of it, are kept in Chinese temples.

## LITERATURE OF OCCULTISM

§ 1. "The Kabbalah was first taught by God Himself to a select company of angels, who formed a theosophic school in Paradise. After the fall the angels most graciously communicated this heavenly doctrine to the disobedient child of earth, to furnish the protoplasts with the means of returning to their pristine nobility and felicity. From Adam it passed over to Noah, and then to Abraham, the friend of God, who emigrated with it to Egypt, where the patriarch allowed a portion of this mysterious doctrine to ooze out. It was in this way that the Egyptians obtained some knowledge of it, and the other Eastern nations could introduce it into their philosophical systems. Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, was first initiated into it in the land of his birth, but became most proficient in it during his wanderings in the wilderness, when he not only devoted to it the leisure hours of the whole forty years, but received lessons in it from one of the angels. By the aid of this mysterious science the lawgiver was enabled to solve the difficulties which arose during his management of the Israelites, in spite of the pilgrimages, wars and frequent miseries of the nation. He covertly laid down the principles of this secret doctrine in the first four books of the Pentateuch, but withheld them from Deuteronomy. This constitutes the former the man, and the latter the woman. Moses also initiated the seventy elders into the secrets of this doctrine, and they again transmitted them from hand to hand. Of all who formed the unbroken line of tradition, David and Solomon were most initiated into the Kabbalah. No one, however, dared to write it down, till Simon ben

Jochai, who lived at the time of the destruction of the second Temple” (c. AD. 200).

§ 2. The foregoing, according to Dr. C. D. Ginsburg (*The Kabbalah*, pp. 84-5), is the claim made by the Kabbalists, concerning the antiquity of the book. In effect, it existed before Creation, therefore it is eminently suited to head a list of works on occultism, in which some attention is paid to chronological order. It is a collection of theosophical treatises purporting to solve the problems of the nature of God, the evolution of the material universe, the creation of angels and of man, and the ultimate destiny of matter and all life. By no means an unambitious task. It consists of several “books,” the most notable of which is the Zohar, a mystical commentary on the Pentateuch. Apart from its pre-Adamite origin, had proto-historic man devised a set of symbols to stand exclusively for numbers, instead of employing the letters of the alphabet for the dual purpose, the bulk of the Kabbalistic writings would not exist, because the bed-rock of Kabbalism is the simple coincidence of letters and numbers, from which certain vast ramifications of “mysticism” emanate. The modern fortune-telling system called numerology is essentially Kabbalistic.

§ 3. The great Rabbi Moses Maimonides, who declared the essence of Judaism to be reason, not imagination, decried the Kabbalah as a work of which Israel had cause to be ashamed; which judgment is justified inasmuch that the work is fantastic, puerile, and even blasphemous in places; but Kabbalists no doubt write the great Rabbi’s words in Hebrew, read the letters as numbers, perform some arithmetical contortion, and re-reading the numbers as letters, prove that Maimonides meant the opposite. In spite of the claims made by supporters of Simon ben

Jochai, who at most sketched an outline of the ancient oral tradition, the work in its present form was written in Spain in the 13th century, by Rabbi Moses ben Leon. Prior to that period certain of the rabbis, having the oral tradition, preached mysticism; subsequent to that time, Jew and Gentile alike have applied Kabbalistic jugglery to alchemistic activities, astrology, geomancy, fortune-telling, divination and magic of all kinds.

§ 4. Among important Christian students of the Kabbalah, some attracted to it from philosophical rather than thaumaturgic motives, may be mentioned Raymond Lully<sup>1</sup> (1235-1315), the celebrated scholastic metaphysician, who was confused with a later personage of the same name, also an alchemist. The second Lully lived in the 17th century, and the exponents of magic suggest that the first and second are the same person; the unnatural longevity they attribute to the use of an elixir. The former wrote a great number of works on alchemy, including *Alchemia Magic Naturalis*; *De Aquis Super Accurtationes*; *De Secretis Medicina Magna*; and *De Conservatione Vitæ*. Both Raymond Lullys had ambitions to convert Islam to Christianity, and it is said of the first that he transmuted enough base metal into gold to enable Edward the Confessor to mint six million nobles.

§ 5. John Reuchlin (1455-1522), professionally a scholar in Greek and Oriental languages, studied the Kabbalah and wrote in 1517 *De Arte Cabbalistica*; he was an anti-Semite who advocated the confiscation of all Jewish literature as a means of persecution.

§ 6. John Picus de Mirandola (1463-1494), philosopher and

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 29.

classical scholar, studied the Kabbalah to such good end that he was accredited with the possession of a familiar that supplied him with all knowledge. He is also supposed to have lived a previous life on earth, in Babylon, where he made his first studies in Kabbalism. Owing to the stupendous ignorance of his contemporaries, who thought “Kabal” was the name of an anti-Christian writer, and that Kabbalists were his followers, Mirandola wrote *Apologia Pici Mirandola*, and so made the nature of the Kabbalah sufficiently clear for Pope Alexander VI to grant him absolution in 1493, two years prior to which, in his twenty-eighth year, he published *Heptaplus*, a Kabbalistic exposition of Creation. In 1486 he published *Conclusiones Philosophicæ, Cabalisticæ et Theologicæ*, and in 1495 *Disputationes adversus Astrologiam Divinaticam*. A collected edition of his works was brought out at Boulogne in 1496, and another at Venice in 1498. Mirandola used the Kabbalah to prove the wisdom of Christian doctrines: he advanced a thesis based on Kabbalistic conclusions and offered to pay the expenses of any scholar who would travel to Rome and dispute with him. A few of these “conclusions” are:

§ 7. “The great north wind is the fountain of all souls simply, as other days are of some and not all.

§ 8. “Whosoever shall know the quality which is the secret of darkness shall know why the evil demons are more hurtful in the night than in the day.

§ 9. “The letters of the name of the evil demon who is prince of this world are the same as those of the name of God—Tetragrammaton—and he who knows how to effect their transposition can extract one from the other.”

§ 10. This is perfect Kabbalism. His offer to defray the expenses

of disputants was a fairly safe one.

§ 11. Mirandola's death occurred when Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), of Cologne, was but eight years old. Agrippa grew to be a notorious magician and had no philosophical or theological interest in the Kabbalah. To him it was simply a book of magic, and though some writers suggest that he was influenced by Mirandola, this claim is not supported by the evidence of his work, which consists of three books, *De Occulta Philosophia* wherein he sets forth methodically a description of the entire Kabbalistic system, as he understood it. In the three books he gives no incantations, but soon after his death a "fourth book" was added, in which spells and ritual are set forth. Persons who wish to glorify Agrippa's memory declare this addendum a forgery; nevertheless, the style is so close that it may more easily than not be Agrippa's work.

§ 12. Robert Fludd (1574-1637), the English alchemist, born in Kent, wrote a great deal of matter in defence of the Rosy Cross Brotherhood (Rosicrucians), the existence of which is to-day a matter of great doubt; but he was a very proficient Kabbalist. He believed that the book contained secrets the mastery of which would enable one to foretell future events, command Nature, compel angels and demons alike to bend to one's will, and so perform all the miracles recorded in both the Old and the New Testament. He contended that by Kabbalistic learning Moses acquired the ability to perform his signs and wonders; that Joshua, from the same source, learned how to cause the sun to remain stationary; and that Elijah mastered therefrom the secret of bringing fire down from heaven. His chief works are *Summum Bonum, quad est Magicæ, Cabalæ, Alchimicæ, Fratrum Roseæ-Crucis*

*Verorum, et scientia Creatonis explicantur* (in which he showed that Moses was a Rosicrucian), and *Tractatus Apologeticus integritatem Societatis de Rusæ Cruce defendans*, both published in Leyden, 1617; *Veritatis Proscenium*, Frankfort, 1621 *Monochordum Mundi Syhiphoniacum*, Frankfort, 1622; and *Medicina Catholica*, Frankfort, 1629.

§ 13. Henry More (1614-87), the Cambridge Platonist, also made the acquaintance of the Kabbalah, as may be plainly seen in his works, most important among which are: *Opera Theologica*, 1675; *Opera Philosophica*, 1678; and *Divine Dialogues*, 1688.

§ 14. Kabbalistic writings continued through the centuries and are still being perpetrated. In modern times a prodigious amount was produced by Eliphas Levi<sup>1</sup> (1810-75), who was known as “the last of the magi.” The Hebraic pseudonym covered Alphonse Louis Constant, son of a shoemaker and protégé of a parish priest. He became a deacon of the Catholic Church, but was subsequently unfrocked, and came into prominence through receiving a sentence of six months’ imprisonment for publishing seditious literature (*Gospel of Liberty*, 1839). Some years elapsed before he blossomed forth as a Kabbalist, and his later works include *Doctrine of Transcendental Magic*, 1855; *Ritual of Transcendental Magic*, 1856; *History of Magic*, 1860; *Key of the Grand Mysteries*, 1861; and *Fables and Symbols*, 1864. Most of his work has been translated into English by A. E. Waite,<sup>2</sup> a cautious and critical occultist, who has also produced a very good work, *The Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah* (1902), prior to which (in 1901) his

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 19 (twice), 36.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 20, 30, 36, 59.

*Life of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the Unknown Philosopher*, had appeared. Other works of Waite's are: *The Occult Sciences*, 1891; and *The Book of Black Magic and of Pacts*, 1898.

§ 15. The Kabbalah is not the only source from which occultists draw their inspiration. In 1929 Mr. Harry Price, Honorary secretary of the University of London Council for Psychical Investigation, published a *Short-title Catalogue of works on Psychical Research, Spiritualism, Magic, Psychology, Legerdemain and other Methods of Deception, Charlatanism, Witchcraft, and Technical Works for the Scientific Investigation of Alleged Abnormal Phenomena; from circa A.D. 1450 to A.D. 1929*. This list contains in round figures about seven thousand titles, and that is but a drop in the ocean of books written on the subjects enumerated on the title-page.

§ 16. In 1484 Pope Innocent VIII issued his famous Bull against witchcraft; ten years later (1494) there appeared the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a large tome published in Nuremberg and written by two inquisitors, Jacob Sprenger and Henricus Institor. The book deals not only with witchcraft but also with lycanthropy. The authors themselves, so they state, were constantly tormented by demons in animal form, and not infrequently found large pins sticking in their night-caps. They very proudly boast of the huge number of witches they caused to be burnt, and on the whole made so good a job of their volume that no accused person could hope to escape if her judges had read it.

§ 17. Reginald Scott (1538-99), born in Kent, wrote in 1584 *The Discoverie of Witchcraft, wherein the lewde dealings of Witches and Witchmongers is notable detected, in sixteen books . . . whereunto is added a Treatise upon the Nature and Substance of Spirits and*

*Devils*. Scott gave two hundred and thirty-five authorities from whose works he quoted—many in Latin, Greek and Arabic. Notable among his English sources are: Bale, Fox, Sir Thomas More, John Record, Barnabe Googe, Abraham Fleming and William Lambarde. But Scott was not only book-learned; he had met witches at work in the villages of Kent and, further, had attended many trials. With typical English common sense, and pious belief in God, he set out to show that belief in witchcraft and other forms of magic was rejected by reason and religion, and that spirit manifestations were due either to wilful trickery on the part of the mediums, or to illusion in the observer. His object was to stay the murderous hand of the Roman Catholic Church, and to undermine the cruel influence of credulous “authorities” like Jean Bodin (1530-96), author of *Démonomanie des Sorciers* (Paris, 1580), and the joint authors of the above-mentioned *Malleus Maleficarum*. Scott’s work was most extraordinarily humane and enlightened, and for a time had the desired effect on both clergy and magistracy. The witchcraft epidemic, however, was not a little leak in the dyke; the banks of hysteria had burst, and Scott was as powerless as Peterkin would have been in a like circumstance. Numerous pens were raised against him and much ink spilt in defence of credulity and wholesale murder. George Gifford, Minister of Malden, contributed two works, namely, *A Discourse of the Subtill Practices of Devilles by Witches and Sourcers*, published 1587, printed in black letter; and *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcraft. In which is layed open how craftily the Divell deceiveth not onely the Witch but many others*, another black letter, published 1593, reprinted 1603. William Perkins, Fellow of Christ’s College, Cambridge, in 1608 published *A Discourse of the Dammed*

*Art of Witchcraft; so farre forth as it is revealed in the Scriptures and manifest by true experience.* Another formidable opponent was no less a personage than King James VI of Scotland, who, having already shown his colours by writing and publishing his *Dæmonology* in 1597, further displayed his disapproval of Scott by, on his accession to the English Throne, ordering all copies of the *Discoverie . . .* to be burnt. Other important books directed against Scott were: *Censura Librorum Apocryphorum*, 1611, by John Rainolds; *Guide to Grand Jurymen*, 1627, by Richard Bernard; and *Philosophical Considerations touching Witches and Witchcraft*, 1666, by Joseph Glanvill. Those who defended his position were: Thomas Ady in *A Treatise concerning the Nature of Witches and Witchcraft*, 1656; and John Webster, *Practitioner in Physick*, who published in 1677 a folio volume with the illuminating title, *The Displaying of supposed Witchcraft wherein is affirmed that there are many sorts of deceivers and Imposters, and Divers persons under a passive delusion of Melancholy and Fancy. But that there is a Corporeal League made betwixt the Devil and the Witch, Or that he sucks on the Witches body, has Carnal Copulation, or that witches are turned into Cats, Dogs, raise Tempests, or the like, is utterly denied and disproved. Wherein also is handled, the existence of Angels and Spirits, the truth of Apparitions, the Nature of Astral and Sydereal Spirits, the force of Charms, and Philters; with other abstruse matters.*

§ 18. In modern times anthropologists and psychologists have renewed the interest taken in the witch-cult, and Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* (3rd [complete] edn., 12 vols., Macmillan 1907-15; Abridged edn., Macmillan, 1922) covers the ground very thoroughly. Dr. R. F. Fortune in *Sorcerers of Dabu* (Routledge,

1932) gives an intimate study of magic among cannibals; and Professor B. Malinowski in *Baloma: the spirits of the dead in the Trobriand Islands* (Royal Anthropological Institute, 1916), *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Routledge, 1922) and *Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge, 1929) displays a most remarkable insight into the primitive mind and its relation to magic. The works of Montague Summers may be regarded as something like curiosities of modern literature. Aided by enormous scholarship, he has produced *The History of Witchcraft* (1926), *The Geography of Witchcraft* (1927), *The Vampire, His Kith and Kin*, and *The Vampire in Europe* (both 1929), and *The Werewolf* (1932); all published by Messrs. Kegan Paul. In these works he steps back into the Middle Ages and endeavours to convince his readers that the authors of *Malleus Maleficarum* and *Démonomanie des Sorciers* are pillars on which the Church may rest; and, since he is both a vigorous and charming writer, he almost succeeds; in fact, if he could refrain from quoting saints, who may have been logicians, but certainly were not psychologists, to back up his own arguments, he might quite succeed. On the other hand, Dr. Ernest Jones in his book *On Nightmare* (L. & V. Woolf, 1931), equipped with no less erudition, discusses witchcraft, the vampire, the werewolf, the incubus and succubus, from the modern psycho-analytical point of view, and in effect says the last word in the witchcraft controversy.

§ 19. The witches, apart from their general illiteracy, were hardly likely to contribute to the mass of writing on and around their craft: the alchemists, however, though distasteful to the Church, were protected by powerful patrons, hence they were free to employ the pen as often as the alembic. The first English alchemist, Robert of Chester (12th cent.), translated from the

Arabic of Marianus, a work entitled *The Book of the Composition of Alchemie*. In the next century Roger Bacon<sup>1</sup> (1214-94) laid the foundations of real science and published (in 1249) his *De Secretis Artis Naturæ*. In the 15th century George Ripley,<sup>2</sup> Canon of Bridlington, wrote *The Compound of Alchymie conteining Twelve Gates*; this, printed in 1475, was dedicated to King Edward IV. The entire work was composed in doggerel verse. Ripley's pupil, Thomas Norton (fl. 1477), born in Bristol (in a fine old timbered building, still standing and now called St. Peter's Hospital), wrote *Ordinall of Alkimie* in 1477, which is the date of the manuscript in the British Museum. It was published in Latin by Michael Maier,<sup>3</sup> in his *Tripus Aureus*, Frankfort, 1618; and subsequently (in 1652) by Elias Ashmole, in his *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, which also contains Thomas Charnock's (1526-81) *Breviary of Naturall Philosophy*, composed in verse, in 1557. Charnock wrote *Enigma ad Alchimiam* in 1572, and *A Booke of Philosophie* (1566), which he dedicated to Queen Elizabeth. The *Theatrum Chemicum* . . . consists of two hundred and nine treatises, by various authors irrespective of period or nationality. Dr. John Dee<sup>4</sup> is represented there, but by only a minor work, not his famous *Account of the Manner in which a certayn Copper-smith in the Land of Moores, and a certayn Moore Transmuted Copper to Gold*, which was published in 1576.

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 27, 51.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 35.

<sup>3</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 4, 25, 40.

<sup>4</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 37.

§ 20. J. B. Van Helmont<sup>1</sup> (1577-1644), great scientist that he was, also believed in the transmutation of metals, and declares in his treatise, *De Vita Eterna*, that he has “seen and touched the philosophers’ stone more than once,” and claims to have transmuted mercury to gold by its aid. His collected works, entitled *Ortus Medicinæ, vel Opera et Opuscula*, were published in Amsterdam in 1668 by his son, Franz Mercurius (1618-99), whose own literary productions, *Cabbalah Denudata* (1677) and *Opuscula Philosophica* (1690), consist of Kabbalism and theosophy run riot.

§ 21. John Frederick Helvetius,<sup>2</sup> a physician of The Hague, who wrote a treatise against the sympathetic powder of Sir Kenelm Digby, also wrote *Of a Transmutation*, translated into English and published in 1670 and reprinted many times since.

§ 22. The hermetic endeavours of the alchemists resulted in the foundation of modern chemistry, hence it was no longer easy for men with rational minds to delude themselves that they have succeeded in making gold from base metal; but that did not prevent charlatans coming forward frequently with new and simple methods, nor rich fools from parting with their cash to further the great work which, strangely enough, is still going forward. Modern alchemists talk vaguely around the atomic theory, and of radio-activity; their literary efforts do not as a rule exceed the drafting of company prospectuses; but they do certainly make gold. In 1929 Franz Tausend<sup>3</sup> made £75,000, and was sentenced to only three years and eight months—not for his

---

<sup>1</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 42, 49.

<sup>2</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 43, 49.

<sup>3</sup> See also *Alchemy*, § 52.

gold-making abilities which were cleverly planned within the law, but for posing as a country squire and so misrepresenting himself.

§ 23. Astrologers have never been shy of print. To go no further back in history than the 17th century, William Lilly (1602-81) published, besides thirty-six prophetic almanacs (1647-2): *Collections of Prophecies* (1646); *Christian Astrology* and *The World's Catastrophe, or Europe's many Mutations until 1666* (1647); *An Astrological Prediction of the Occurrences in England for the years 1648, 1649, 1650* (1648); *Mr. Lilly's Prognostications . . .* (1667); *The Dangerous Condition of the United Provinces Prognosticated* (1672); *Mr. Lilly's late Prophecy come to pass concerning the present War and the late unseasonableness of the Weather* (1673); *Mr. Lilly's Prophesie of a general Peace* (1674); *Mr. Lilly's Prophecy . . . of a Peace between the French and Dutch . . .* (1675); *Anima Astrologiæ, or a guide for Astrologers . . .*, and *Mr. Lilly's Astrological Predictions for 1677 . . .* (1676). The foregoing are but a few of his major works; he also produced many penny fortune-telling books, the best known among them being *A Groat's Worth of Wit for a Penny*.

§ 24. John Gadbury (1627-1704), Lilly's rival, published in 1651 *Philastrogu's Knavery Epitomized, with a Vindication of Mr. Culpepper, Mr. Lilly, and the rest of the Students in that noble art . . .* in 1654, *Animal Cornutum, or the Horn'd Beast, wherein is contained a brief method of the grounds of Astrology*; and the first of his long series of "Ephemerides" appeared in 1655. The following year he issued his *Emendation of Hartgil's Astronomical Tables*; *Genethialogia, or the Doctrine of Nativities* came out in 1658; and his most important work, *The Nativity of the Late King Charls [sic] Astrologically and Faithfully Performed, with reasons in Art of the*

various success and mis-fortune of his whole life. Being (occasionally) a brief *History of our late unhappy Wars*, was brought out in 1659. He also published in the same year *The King of Sweden's Nativity*; and in 1660, *Nature of Prodigies*, in mockery of Lilly, who had been indicted as a cheat before a Hicks's Hall jury. In 1661 he produced *Britain's Royal Star, or an Astrological Demonstration of England's future Felicity*. He wrote on comets, on eclipses, and in 1667 he published his *Dies Novissimus; or Dooms-Day not so near as dreaded*, which must have been a source of great comfort to its readers.

§ 25. Henry Coley (1633-95), Lilly's adopted son, was not a prolific writer on astrology, but he attracted a great deal of attention in 1669 by publishing his *Clavis Astrologiæ Elimata, or a Key to the whole art of Astrology, new filed and polished*. He inherited Lilly's Almanac and continued it under the new title, *Merlini Anglici Ephemeris or Astrological Judgements for the year, according to the method of Mr. Lilly*.

§ 26. John Booker (1603-67) published in 1650 his quaintly-rhymed *Dutch Fortune-Teller*, and the *Bloody Irish Almanack*, which contains some important facts concerning the Irish Rebellion. *The History of Dreams*, issued under his name soon after his death, is not considered to be from his pen.

§ 27. John Case (1660-1700) came to London at the age of fifteen and soon made himself famous with *The Wards of the Key to Helmont proved unfit for the lock, or the Principles of Mr. Wm. Bacon examined and refuted*, published 1682. His *Compendium Anatomicum nova methodo institutum* appeared in 1695. In this he supports Harvey and De Graaf concerning the generation of animals *ab ovo*; and the work is so superior to the man, and the

rest of his literary productions, that it is very doubtful whether he is the true author. Besides several inferior pseudo-medical works, he wrote *The Angelical Guide, shewing men and women their lott or chance in this elementary life in IV books*. He was a notorious quack doctor, issuing handbills to the effect that “Case, he can do what may be done, by Either Physick or true Astrology.” Another broadsheet stated that he gave “the Poor, Sick, Sore and Lane advice for nothing and doth also, with great certainty and privacy, resolve all manner of Lawful questions according to the Rules of Christian Astrology, and more than fifteen years experience.” Over his door appeared the inscription,

Within this place  
Lives Doctor Case.”

§ 28. Ebenezer Sibley (d. 1800) graduated M.D. at Aberdeen in 1790, and following in the steps of Paracelsus he studied Astrology believing that “without this species of . . . knowledge, the medical art is found in many cases to fail.” He is the author of: *Uranoscopia, or the Pure Language of the Stars*, published prior to 1787; *A New and Complete Illustration of the Celestial Science of Astrology*, 1787, which ran into twelve editions, the twelfth published in 1817; *Key to Physic and the Occult Science of Astrology*; besides several purely medical works.

§ 29. From 1800 to 1900 a great deal was written on Astrology, generally by persons using pseudonyms; and if their prophecies were less imposing than those of their predecessors, they were equally daring. The 19th century ended with a brilliant astrological star at its zenith: this was Mr. Allan Leo, whose

numerous contributions to the literature of the subject were collected and issued in 1903 by L. N. Fowler as *Astrology for All*. This opus runs into seven thick quarto volumes.

§ 30. Religion, medicine, magic and conjuring, are four distinct subjects, yet inseparable, for no hard-and-fast line of demarcation can be drawn between them; hence Mr. Harry Price, quoting from *Nature* for 9 February 1929, says: “The first necessity (for the investigation of alleged abnormal phenomena) is a thorough knowledge of the art of mystification.”

§ 31. One of the outstanding figures on the border-line between medicine and magic is Franz Anton Mesmer (1733-1815), who published his first work, *De Planetarum Influxu*, in 1766. His theory of animal magnetism caused an enormous furore and resulted in a veritable avalanche of literature for and against him. Dr. J. Elliotson’s *Numerous Cases of Surgical Operation without Pain in the Mesmeric Sleep* (1843), and Wm. Gregory’s *Letters to a Candid Enquirer on Animal Magnetism* (1851, 4th edn., 1896), are still regarded as standard works on the subject. A good modern short biography is that by Richard Ince; a larger and more recent book, containing also a valuable bibliography, is *Franz Anton Mesmer: The History of an Idea*, by L. M. Goldsmith (Arthur Barker, 1934).

§ 32. James Braid (1795-1860), a Scottish doctor, interested himself in mesmerism so thoroughly that it came to be known as Braidism. He invented the term “neuro-hypnotism” which, stripped of its prefix, has come into general usage. His most important works are: *Satanic Agency and Mesmerism reviewed, in a letter to the Rev. H. McNeile, A. M., in reply to a Sermon preached by him* (1842); *Neurypnology, or the Rationale of Nervous Sleep*,

considered in relation to *Animal Magnetism* . . . (1843); *The Power of the Mind over the Body: an experimental enquiry into the nature and cause of the phenomena attributed by Baron Reichenbach and others to a New Imponderable* (1846); *Observations on Trance* (1850); *Magic, Witchcraft, Animal Magnetism, Hypnotism, and Electro-Biology* . . . (1852).

§ 33. The famous Dr. R. von Krafft-Ebing, Professor of Psychiatry and Nervous Diseases in the Royal University of Graz, Austria, investigated a case of hysteria and produced *An Experimental Study in the Domain of Hypnotism*, translated into English by Dr. C. G. Chaddock and published by Putnam in 1889.

§ 34. In 1895 Professor (then Dr.) Sigmund Freud, in collaboration with Dr. J. Breuer, produced *Studien uber Hysterie*, and from thence onward developed the psycho-analytical technique, which has a voluminous literature of its own.

§ 35. The modern spiritualist movement began in 1848 with the Rochester (U.S.A.) knockings, which phenomena occurred in the Fox family. This new development rapidly assumed enormous proportions, and many famous people took up investigation. Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer, wrote *The Unknown* (1900); *Mysterious Psychic Force* (1907); and *Haunted Houses* (1924). Sir William Crookes, the English physicist and chemist, experimented with a medium, Florence Cook, and wrote *Researches into the Phenomena of Modern Spiritualism*, first published 1903 and reissued with an appendix by Sir A. Conan Doyle in 1920. Cesare Lombroso, the Italian anthropologist, produced *After Death—What?*, translated by Sir William S. Kennedy and published in 1909; this was followed in 1910 by Mrs. Marson's abridged edition.

§ 36. Since the War there has been an abundance of literature on all branches of occultism, but the bulk of it, of course, on spiritualism. The following are English periodicals dealing with the subject: *Anthroposophy*; *Atlantis Quarterly*, *British Journal of Psychic Research*; *Bulletin of the National Laboratory of Psychic Research*; *Christian Spiritualist*; *God and Humanity*; *Golden Dawn*, *Greater World*; *International Psychic Gazette*; *Light*; *London Forum*; *Moore's Journal*; *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, *Psychic News*; *Service, Two Worlds*.

§ 37. Among modern writers on occultism, other than theosophy and spiritualism, might be mentioned Mr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, and Mr. C. J. S. Thompson. The former produced *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (1911); *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1927), an authoritative account of Tibetan beliefs; and *Mila Raspa, Tibet's Great Yogi* (1928). The latter gives us well-documented historical studies, among them being: *Mysteries and Secrets of Magic* (1927); *The Mystery and Romance of Astrology* (1929); and *The Lure and Romance of Alchemy* (1932).

§ 38. Some books of interest which do not easily classify, in the collection of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, are: Samuel Rid's *The Art of Iugling or Legerdemaine*, black letter, London, 1614; *A Nunne's Propheisie, or, The Fall of Friers. Contayning the downfall of the Pope, by the Unicorn of the West; prophesied 300 years ago, and fulfilled in this present age 1615*, black letter, London, 1615; John Heydon's *A New Method of Rosie Crucian Physick . . . for the cure of all Diseases*, London, 1658; *A Whip for the Devil; or, The Roman Conjuror. Discovering the Intolerable Folly, Profaneness, & Superstition of the Papists, in Endeavouring to Cast the Devil Out of the Bodies of Men and*

*Women* (London, 1683). Dean Swift, under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff, issued *Predictions for the year 1708 by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., Written to Prevent the People of England being Imposed upon by Vulgar Almanac Makers*, as a satire. In it he prophesied the death of a popular quack astrologer, and did it so well that his victim was put to a great deal of trouble to prove himself alive. He succeeded finally, but not without making a further laughing-stock of himself by declaring that he was alive all the time. Swift again in 1722 produced a satire against the astrologers, *The Wonder of all the Wonders that Ever the World Wondered at*. One of the rarest books connected with occultism is Viscount Adare's *Experiences in Spiritualism with Mr. D. D. Home* (London, 1870). This work, of which only fifty copies were printed and issued privately to the Viscount's friends, was subsequently withdrawn; nevertheless the National Laboratory Library includes a copy.

§ 39. Mr. Harry Price is the leading authority on the literature of occultism, therefore the following magazine articles from his pen are of great interest. "Some Magical Rareties, Ancient and Modern (*Magazine of Magic*, London, Nov. 1920); "A Wonderful Book on Playing Cards" (*ibid.*, May 1920); "Mornings amongst the Cobwebs, or Hours in a Magical Library" (*ibid.*, March 1921); "Five Hundred Years of Magic" (*ibid.*, Feb. 1921); "My Library," in the *Magic Wand* for October 1923; "Some Early Works on False Mediumship" (*Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, New York, 1926); "The National Laboratory Library" (*British Journal of Psychical Research*, Nov.-Dec. 1927); "Some Recent Additions to My Library" (*The Sphinx*, April 1931, Kansas City, Mo.); "England's Strangest Library" (*John o' London's*

*Weekly*, 20 June 1931, London, and reprinted in *The Ceylon Observer*, 16 December 1931); “Strange Library. Books on Magic and Fraud” *The Week*, Brisbane, 1932); and “Some Conjuring Books of Yesterday” (*Goldston’s Magical Quarterly*, Dec. 1934-Jan. 1935).

§ 40. In 1934 Mr. Price gave an exhibition of rare books and produced a Catalogue entitled *Exhibition of Rare Works from the Research Library* (University of London Council for Psychical Investigation, Dec. 1934); and this year (1935) he compiled a “Supplement” to the *Short Title Catalogue . . .*, published as *Bulletin I* by the University of London Council.

J. F.

LITTLE WORLD. A sect of Freemasons who, in the 18th century, conspired to re-establish the Stuart dynasty. The Devil (so it is said) was their Grand Master.

MANCY. Greek word-terminal having the meaning “prophecy.” Some “mancy” words in modern usage are of Greek origin in their entirety (chiro-m., necro-m.); others are of modern formation on the Greek plan (crystallo-m.).

MANDRAGORAS. Familiar spirits taking the form of little men. See Mandrake.

## THE MANDRAKE

§ 1. Pedanios Dioscorides, the Greek physician, called “the Father of Pharmacy,” served in Nero’s army, and travelled widely in Europe and in the near East. He investigated the properties of six hundred plants and produced an illustrated manuscript, known as “Anicia Manuscript,” now in the Imperial Library at Vienna. Between 1652 and 1655, John Goodyer translated it, and his English version lies in the library of Magdalen College, Oxford. Dioscorides devoted a goodly space to Mandrake, “since that the root seems to be a maker of love-medicines.” But that was not the only virtue, for “some do seethe the roots in wine to thrids and straining it, set it up. Using a cyathus of it for such as cannot sleep or are grievously pained and upon whom being cut or cauterized they wish to make a not-feeling pain. Ye juice being drank . . . doth expel upward Phlegm and black choler, . . . but being too much drank it drives out ye life. . . . It expels the menstura and ye embryo and being put up ye seat for a suppository it causeth sleep.”

§ 2. The remedial properties of the mandrake are confirmed by modern chemical investigation. The root contains an alkaloid which, belonging to the atropine group, is a narcotic and a local anæsthetic; and the time may come when the plant is cultivated in order to extract the drug for medical use. In the event of this development, it is presumable that the roots will be lifted from the soil as unceremoniously as those of beet, or the potato; but up to the present, mandrakes have not been grown for commercial purposes, and when gipsies and other superstitious folk gather

them, the old ritualistic method is employed.

§ 3. The mandrake, according to legend, was moulded out of the same clay as that from which Adam was created. The Devil, who regards the plant with great favour, is responsible for its human contours, therefore it was associated with underground demons and other supernatural powers; and highly prized as the roots were for their magical properties, their unearthing was considered a very perilous under taking. It necessitated a magical procedure, which was usually enacted at sunset, but occasionally in the dead of night. First, the earth was loosened for mechanical reasons, then, with the point of a two-edged sword that had never drawn blood, three circles were scratched around the plant. The magical significance attending the latter act was to prevent the demons rising with the root. After these preliminaries were accomplished, the most impressive part of the ceremony followed. A dog, generally a black one, was secured to the plant by means of a stout cord, and the mandrake-gatherer, standing at a little distance with trumpet to his lips, threw a piece of meat to the hungry, captive animal. Care was taken in aiming the titbit, so that it landed out of the dog's reach, with the result that the animal's frantic endeavours to seize its prize caused the root to yield. The moment it showed signs of leaving the ground, the man made a loud shrill blast on the trumpet, for the uprooted mandrake emitted a shriek that brought death to all hearers. The blast on the trumpet effectually drowned the cry of the plant, but the dog, poor creature, whether he heard it or not, dropped dead as though felled with an axe, for the underground demons demanded a life for a life, and immediately took that of the mandrake's murderer.

§ 4. The foregoing, a general technique, was altered and added

to throughout the ages. In the 16th century, a further precaution against hearing the dreadful cry of the stricken mandrake was to fill the ears with cotton and seal them with wax. The dog, which had, by this period of history, developed an immunity to mandrake wrath, needed to be slaughtered at dawn on the day following the uprooting, and buried in the place previously occupied by the coveted root. The ceremony of burial was accompanied by incantation and secret rites, which were often blasphemous, the animal being elevated into a type of saviour who had given his life for the community.

§ 5. The aphrodisiac properties of the mandrake are referred to in Genesis when Reuben, finding sweet yellow berries, each about the size of a small plum, took some of them to his mother, Leah. Rachel, Leah's sister, seeing the fruit, said: "Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes." After some bartering, Leah complied with Rachel's request, with the gratifying result that the hitherto barren woman conceived and bore Joseph. Some doubt has been cast upon the identity of the mandrakes mentioned in the Bible story (in the Hebrew text the berries are called *dudaim*, love-apples): first, because mandrakes were common enough and Rachel could have picked up as many as she desired; and secondly, on account of the berries' alleged sweetness, both of taste and smell. The mandrake is of the order *Solanaceæ*, similar to deadly nightshade,—and it is far from sweet. In 1697 Henry Maundrell wrote an essay entitled "A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter," in which he recounts how he inquired from "the high priest of the Samaritans at Naplus" concerning "what sort of a plant or fruit the *dudaim* or (as we translate it) mandrakes were which Leah gave to Rachel," and learned that "they were

plants of a large leaf, bearing a certain sort of fruit . . . of an ill savor, and not wholesome.” The traveller saw many specimens on his journey, and remarks: “One must either conclude these could not be true mandrakes (*dudaim*) or else it would puzzle a good critick to give a reason why Rachel should purchase such vulgar things. . . .” But, as Andrew Lang has pointed out (*Custom and Myth*, pp. 143-4), a potato, only if stolen, has the virtue to keep the bearer immune from rheumatism, so probably a “love-apple,” only if bought, had aphrodisiac virtue; and regarding the sweetness of “such vulgar things”: it is now recognized that the impression of taste depends upon the education of the palate: that which was “sweet” to Leah’s son, might appear sour to a 20th-century youth accustomed to chocolate and other modern delicacies; hence, we may justly conclude that *dudaim* is correctly rendered as mandrake, and that the berries Reuben gathered were indeed of the common variety indigenous to all countries surrounding the Mediterranean.

§ 6. Although the aphrodisiac and the narcotic effects of mandrake were known in Ancient Egypt, the origin of the superstition surrounding the herb belongs to the Early Greeks, to whom the poisonous properties of, for instance, belladonna, hellebore, hemlock and poppy were well known; and the herb-gatherers, considering their occupation extremely risky, took elaborate precautions to guard against the vindictiveness of the disturbed plants. One of the ill-consequences to be reckoned with was prolapsus ani. They deemed that, before drawing even the least potent of the magic roots, it was necessary to anoint the hands and face with oil, and during the process of uprooting to stand carefully to windward; hence, the mandrake, “Aphrodite’s

plant,” demanded the employment of the greatest possible caution, and ultimately developed into the ceremony in which the dog received the inevitable death-blow from the lurking demons.

§ 7. In Homer’s *Odyssey* the hero sets forth to rescue his men, who had been changed into swine by the machinations of Circe; but the god Hermes, aware that even a hero’s sword was powerless to break the spell, gave Odysseus “a charmed herb . . . a herb of grace,” which the poet described as “black at the root, but the flower was like to milk. ‘Moly’ the Gods call it, but it is hard for mortal men to dig.” This reputed difficulty experienced in digging “the moly of Homer” has resulted in its being regarded as mandrake; however, subsequent translators and commentators were sceptical of this because of the mandrake’s having a white and not a black root; and yellow, not white flowers. Theophrastus says<sup>1</sup> that men digging for hellebore needed to protect themselves with garlic, which is accredited with power to preserve the bearer from sorcery, witchcraft, and particularly from the attack of vampires; hence it is not unreasonable to suppose that garlic was employed as an antidote also when mandrakes were to be extracted. The “plant of Aphrodite” was also the “plant of Circe,” and it is contended that this (mandrake) was the drug that the sorceress gave to Odysseus’s men and so brought about the disastrous metamorphosis; therefore, wild garlic, which is called *Allium Moly*, is conceivably “the herb of grace” supplied by Hermes as a counter-charm to the goddess’s enchantment. There is, however, in China a sacred shrub called *Mo Li Hau*, whose roots are prized for their medicinal value; and whose beads, made

---

<sup>1</sup> *Historia Plantarum*, written about 230 B.C.

from the twigs, are considered to be endowed with sufficient magic to keep evil demons at bay. Professor Giles, in his Chinese-English Dictionary, suggests that the word Mo Li Hau (Jasmine) is connected with Homer's moly, hence it seems clear that "the charmed herb," whether jasmine or garlic or some other unidentified plant, was certainly not mandrake—though it was "hard for mortal men to dig."

§ 8. Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes a herb called "baaras" (from the Hebrew *ba'ar*, to burn), which is certainly none other than the mandrake. Josephus is the first to record the practice of employing a dog to assist in the plucking. According to him, the plant has the virtue of attracting demons out of the bodies of persons possessed.

§ 9. Ibn Beithor, the Arab herbalist, refers to mandrake as "The Devil's Candle," a title suggested by the plant's glistening appearance at night. This luminosity is accounted for by the presence of numerous glow-worms at rest on the plant's ample leaves. The Moors, for the same reason, call mandrake "The Lamp of the Elves." According to Ibn Beithor, sometimes styled "the Arab Dioscorides," King Solomon had a portion of mandrake set in his famous signet ring, and by its power he held dominion over jinn; further, the learned Arab tells us that Alexander the Great owed his conquest of the East to the magical power of mandrake, and that it cures numerous maladies, including in its wide range elephantiasis and loss of memory.

§ 10. It seems to have been from Greek sources that Pliny the Elder drew his knowledge of mandrake. In his *Historia Naturalis*, in describing the plant, he states: "There are two varieties (*mandragora vernalis*) which is generally thought to be male . . .

and be the black (*mandragora autumnalis*) which is considered to be female.” This dual classification made a strong appeal to the popular mind, and spreading through the folk-lore of all European peoples, has survived to this day. In England, we have the Spring mandrake and the Autumn womandrake; actually the former is more robust than the latter, but they are essentially identical.

§ 11. The mandrake plant was introduced into Britain about the 11th century A.D., but its fame had gone before it. A certain Apueilus Platonicus, who flourished during the 5th century, composed a botanical treatise, entitled *Herborium*, and devoted the last chapter to a very thorough exposition of the properties, both actual and magical, of the mandrake, which, he declares, - “shineth at night also like a lamp.” He further gives advice to would-be gatherers: “When thou seest its hands and its feet, then tie thou it up. Then take the other end and tie it to a dog’s neck so that the hound be hungry . . .” This manuscript, which unfortunately has been damaged by fire, is now in the British Museum, but the illustration accompanying the description is comparatively clear, and depicts a dog secured by a chain to the plant, which is delineated as a human being with leaves growing in place of hair on the head.

§ 12. Additional superstition applied in Europe to the mandrake was that it grew from moisture that dropped from a felon hanged, and was sometimes to be found beneath the gallows. The fact that it did not always grow after a hanging needed to be accounted for, and this was done by the invention of two sets of special circumstances: one, that the hanged man was innocent but forced to “confession” by torture; the other, that the miscreant was a thief born of a family of thieves, whose mother stole while he was

in her womb. In either case the mandrake was called “Little Gallows Man,” and it had to be uprooted by the conventional means on a Friday evening before sunset. As soon as it was out of the ground it needed to be cut free from the body of the dog, then washed clean in red wine; after which it was wrapped in a garment of either white or red silk, and placed in a casket. Every Friday at the evening hour it had to be rewashed in red wine, and provided with a new garment at each new moon. If these rules were carefully observed, the “Little Gallows Man” would speak when spoken to and answer all questions concerning future events. Its happy possessor would henceforth have no enemies, and never again be poor, because a gold coin laid beside the mandrake overnight was sure to become doubled by the morning; however, it was not wise to repeat this process too often, for possibly the “little gallows man” would suffer fatigue, and might even die. Youngest, and not eldest sons inherited these precious possessions, but it was necessary for a piece of bread and a coin to be put in the dead man’s coffin and buried with him. In default of this last office the mandrake was deprived of its magical virtue.

§ 13. The mandrake is still considered to be a potent charm that can ensure pregnancy, and barren women occasionally purchase the roots from gipsies and pay highly for them. If the desired condition does not ensue, it follows that the gipsy has, by supplying a false or forged mandrake, cheated the customer. In the 16th century, a Tuscan doctor named Andrea Matthioli (whose *New Herbal* was published at Prague in 1563), when practising in Rome cured a vagabond of an illness, and received from him, by way of a fee, the secret of forging mandrakes. The process confided to the doctor was without question known much earlier

in history, and probably it is the method still employed. Roots of bryony are roughly carved into human shape, and seed of barley or millet is attached to both the head and the chin; thus treated, the roots are buried for several weeks, during which the seed sprouts, appearing like hair, and the knife-marks become invisible owing to a new growth of surface tissues; hence the manikin, upon disinterment, gives the impression of being a natural formation. John Parkinson, herbalist to Charles I, in his *Theatrum Botanicum* (London, 1640), says: "Mandrakes and Womandrakes, as they are foolishly so called, which have been exposed to publicke view both in ours and other lands and countries, are utterly deceitful, being the work of cunning Knaves onely to get money by their forgery." In north European countries, where mandrake, not being indigenous, was hard to come upon, the witches also employed bryony as a substitute. The interest of these good ladies was centred not so much in the possession of a manikin as in the use of the plant for its aphrodisiac properties.

§ 14. In Germany false mandrakes are called *alrauns*,<sup>1</sup> and are prized almost as highly as true mandrake. Until quite recent times it was believed that to imprison an *alraun* in a bottle resulted in its changing shape constantly in a wild endeavour to escape. A bottled-imp was considered a valuable chattel because the creature was forced to perform for its owner all sorts of miracles, from gold-divining to maleficium. However, to possess such an imp was to invite great danger, for to die, and have it among one's effects, brought the Devil posthaste to claim the soul. Robert Louis Stevenson's story, "The Bottle-Imp," is based on this theme, but

---

<sup>1</sup> From "*Rune*"—the all-wise one.

whilst in folk-lore the imp may be given away, Stevenson introduced the idea that it must always be sold for a smaller figure than was paid for it. This ensures the Devil's getting his own at last, for there is nothing smaller than the smallest coin in the world, even including the humble cowrie-shell, which is the currency used by some primitive peoples.

§ 15. It is interesting to note that even to-day alrauns are sold as amulets in Germany, and the Berlin business man is as likely as not to have one in his waistcoat pocket. This state of affairs, together with the Hitlerite endeavour to repaganize the fatherland, makes it obvious that superstition, no matter how far divorced from reason, will never die a natural death, but may possibly be exterminated (with the race) by aerial and chemical warfare.

Book recommended:

FRAZER, SIR JAMES G., "Jacob and the Mandrakes" (*Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. VIII, Oxford University Press, 1917).

MANJUSRI. An Indian Bodhisatva worshipped in China as the god of wisdom.

MARTIAN LANGUAGE. A gibberish (based on French) spoken during trance by Hélène Smith (fl. 1896) and claimed by her to be the language spoken on Mars. See Psycho-therapy and Psychic Phenomena.

MA TSU PO. Taoist Queen of Heaven, the patron goddess of sailors, to whom they pray for fine weather. Her attendants are “Fair Wind Ears” and “Thousand Mile Eyes.”

MERLIN. A soothsayer in Arthurian legend. Also used in the titles of almanacks, as, e.g., Lilly’s Propheticall Merline.

## MOSLEM OCCULTISM

§ 1. The Mohammedan believes in three kinds of supernatural beings: angels, demons, and jinn; but he is by no means sure where to draw the line between them, for both jinn and lesser angels can, and often do assume human shape and move among men. The better-class angels, concerning whose pedigree there is no doubt, spend their whole time praising Allah. Their food consists of the repetition of the words "Glory to Allah!"; their drink of "Allah is holy!" According to the Prophet, "The heavens crack and cannot but crack, for there is not a hand's-breadth of space to be found in them without an angel bending or prostrating himself before Allah." The four throne-bearers are in the form of man, the bull, the eagle, and the lion. The first is humanity's intercessor before the Lord; the second supplicates on behalf of domestic animals; the third for birds, and the fourth for wild beasts.

§ 2. There are four archangels: Jabril (Gabriel), Mika'il (Michael), Azra'il and 'Israfil. These four will be the last to die at the end of the world. Jabril is the messenger of revelation, and his special function is to appear to the prophets with messages from Allah; however, he always appears in a disguised form because he is so awe-inspiring that mortals confronted by him would be unable to concentrate on his words. Mohammed once entreated him to reveal himself as he really was. This Jabril consented to do, but when the Prophet saw his immense wings covering the whole of heaven, he simply fainted away. Asked to make known all his power, he informed the Prophet, "On my two wings I bore the

country of the people of Loth, and carried it up into the air so high that its inhabitants could no longer hear their cocks crow; then I turned it upside down.” This mighty messenger of Allah is described as having sixteen hundred wings, and saffron-coloured hair all over his immense form. A sun shines from between his eyes, a moon and star peeps out from between every two hairs. He plunges into the Sea of Light three hundred and sixty times every day, and upon his emergence, shakes from his wings a million drops which become spiritual messengers, bearing peace and perfumes.

§ 2. Mika'il is almost as impressive; his function is to provide food for the body, and knowledge for the mind; also, to preside over all forces of nature. He sheds daily a thousand tears from each eye. These precious drops become *karubiyun* (cherubim) they take charge of “every plant and every tree and every drop of water.”

§ 3. Azra'il is the angel of death. Allah created him and kept him hidden for some time, but at last he showed his handiwork to the other angels and they all fell into a faint that lasted a thousand years. He is so immense that he is everywhere at once, but fortunately Allah is so mighty, that this slayer is in his hand, and cannot execute the decrees inscribed upon the “Well Guarded Tablet of Destiny” without permission from Allah, who does not grant this until a leaf with the person's name on it falls from the tree by his throne. Azra'il has four faces but only one head, consequently the remaining three are placed severally on his chest, back, and feet. The first is reserved for the regard of angels and (of course) prophets; the second for believers; the third for unbelievers, and the fourth for jinn. He has seventy thousand feet,

four thousand wings, and an eye for each person that ever has or ever will be born into the world. When a man dies the angel of death closes an eye, but even at the end of the world he will not be blind, for there will be the four archangels and the four throne-bearers, so, he will still have eight eyes. Believers are gathered in a silk cloth perfumed with musk and transported in that manner to the heights of heaven, and unbelievers are swathed about in tarred rag and cast into the depths of hell.

§ 5. 'Israfil stands with trumpet to his lips and never removes his gaze from Allah's face. He is waiting to sound the trump of doom. The moment Allah gives him the nod of assent the first blast, "the blast of terror" (*nafhat al-faz*), will kill everything on earth and in heaven except the four archangels and the throne-bearers. The archangels will die one at a time, in their appointed order: Jabril first, Azra'il last; and after forty years the angel of death will rise and blow a second blast. Out of the bell of his trumpet, numerous as the grains of sand that fly before the windstorms of the desert through thousands of years, the souls of all that have lived and died will fly to their bodies. This is the blast of resurrection.

§ 6. After Azra'il has done his work and a man's body lies lonely in the tomb, listening mournfully to the retreating footsteps of his friends, two rather unpleasant angels, Munkar and Nokir, come and sit by his side. Suddenly they break the awful silence by asking, "What say you of Mohammed?" in a very casual and confidence-creating manner. A dead man, left alone and cold in the dark sepulchre, is glad of a little friendly chat, and answers truthfully. Either he says: "I bear witness that he is the Prophet of Allah and His servant," in which case he is a true believer; or he

says: "I do not know—I simply repeated concerning him what I heard from the others," thus proving himself a false believer. The former reply results in the dead man being allowed to have a peep at the place reserved for him in paradise, and after that, is given a glimpse of the seat in hell he has been spared, so he may rest awhile without anxiety. The false believer, however, is treated to no peeps and glimpses; instead, he is beaten with iron rods till he utters a cry that can be heard by both men and jinn, then left to think the matter over. Strange to say, those who die on Friday are spared this post-mortem "third degree."

§ 7. During life, each true believer and false believer alike is guarded night and day by four inferior angels called *hafaza*; two by day, and two by night. They change guard at sunrise and sunset, those who have been on duty returning to headquarters before the relief sets out, so man is left alone in the semi-light when jinn are a-prowl. The true believer makes haste to commence the morning or evening prayer, first, because the performance of the ceremony keeps him safe from jinn, and secondly, in order that the retiring guard may inform Allah that their charge has started his pious exercises. The false believer is in very grave danger during these hours, for 'Iblis (the Devil) and his son are always on the look-out.

§ 8. In Islam it is not quite safe to refuse alms to any beggars, for there is an immense throng of lesser angels, having human form, who, assuming the disguise of wandering mendicants, go about the world calling upon people. Such angels are in effect Allah's spies, for they ascend to heaven with a report of the kind of treatment they have received at the hands of each person they have visited. It is firmly believed that these angels cannot enter a

house where there is either an image or a dog, and alas, it is sinful to keep either.

§ 9. In spite of this proclivity of Allah's agents to go about sneaking and prying, the Mohammedan still takes risks, and one of them is in practising black magic and sorcery. He accounts for the origin of the black art by referring back to antediluvian days. In Genesis it says quite plainly, ". . . God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth . . ."; and it certainly must have been flagrant, for two angels, Harut and Marut, observing it, were surprised at Allah's gentle tolerance, and said as much to Him. "Be more charitable—if you were exposed to the passions that agitate men you would soon commit all their crimes," was the benign reply. Harut and Marut regarded that as a challenge, which they accepted, and descended to earth. All went well until a saucy jade named Zarah in Arabic, Baiduht in Aramaic, Anahid in Persian, and Venus in Greek, called upon them. Being a regular Delilah, before she had terminated her visit she extracted the secret password that enabled them to re-enter heaven, and making full use of it she shines there to this day. But the two unfortunate angels were enchained in the Well of Babel in Chaldea, and there they eternally abide ready and willing to instruct men in the practice of magic.

§ 10. Sufism is the Mohammedan system of mysticism. The sufis' mode of existence, common enough in the East, is that of the mendicant friar, and their doctrine is largely based on Buddhism, with some Christian trends. They maintain that the Prophet himself was a sufi. They attach great importance to their dress, and more especially to their head-gear, by which it is possible to judge the number of worldly desires they have abandoned. It is

usual for them to carry a large stone in their belt as a symbol of hunger. Sufism, like other forms of Oriental transcendentalism, in practice is represented by the dancing dervishes, who, by intoning "La ilaha illa 'llahu" a vast number of times, with closed eyes while they rotate in a circle, induce a rapt hysterical state in which they perform "Miracles." Their theory is that the greatest miracle is to replace in themselves a worldly desire by an ascetic desire: in practice they walk on live coals, and run through the whole gamut of an Oriental conjurer's tricks; but even so their accomplishment is inferior to that of the Indian yogi, who will put up a much more impressive performance for an even smaller fee. It has been said of the Sufi Order that it is a secret organization entertaining hopes of conquering the world for Islam; and again, that its aim is simply to increase the faith of true believers; but the fact remains that today, miracle-working impresses the few, not the many, and the dervishes cannot spread Islam over Christianity by the foolish practice of "charming" snakes that have already had the venom sacs removed. Such well-known tricks, too, in all probability fail to increase the devoutness of the true believer; but to him the dervish is a merchant who deals in talismans, and who assists one in the working of maleficium against one's enemies.

§ 11. The Mohammedans' belief in talismans is drawn chiefly from Hebrew sources and tintured with a few invocations taken from the Koran. Not only Harut and Marut instruct men in evil practices of this kind, but Adam's daughter, Anak, is much to blame. This lady, so it is said, was the first "to reduce the demons to serve her by means of charms." Allah had given Adam a sprinkling of magic words, just to enable him to control a few spirits, and these words he communicated to Eve. She preserved

them quite faithfully until Anak extracted them from her while she slept. It is not stated how this robbery was effected; perhaps the words were impressed in cuneiform characters on clay tablets; however, once Anak was in possession, she “conjured evil spirits, practised the magical art, pronounced oracles, and gave herself up openly to impiety.” King Solomon is respected for his magical powers, and a story in the Koran represents him reviewing an army composed of men, jinn and freak birds. We also learn that he discussed certain matters of State organization with the ant, and sent an ifrit (i.e. species of jinn) to bring to him the Queen of Sheba complete on her throne.

§ 12. The Arabic scholar Maslama al-Majriti (fl. 1007), a native of Madrid, travelled in the East, studied magic and wrote a book on the construction of talismans. This is something of a classic and is beyond the understanding of the talisman-vending dervish, whose authority is Al-Buni, the author of works dealing with heavenly names and magic letters, lucky numbers and propitious days. The repetition of magic words is always essential to successful sorcery, and the Arabic forms based on names of angels and demons are generally spoken in doublets—for instance, Harut and Marut, Gog and Magog, Kaitor and Maitor. The dervish memorizes an interminable list of these names, together with the attributes of each. To construct a talisman he selects the particular pair of angels or demons that seems most suited to the case in hand, repeats the name and fame many times in the form of an incantation, then, writing his words on parchment or silk, sprinkles the script with perfume, and hands it over to the applicant. It is then enclosed in a leather case and carried on the person as a protection against the evil eye or any other of life’s

innumerable ills.

§ 13. Another type of charm supplied by the dervishes is the magic square, a device in which purely spurious nonsense is blended with arithmetical science. By drawing parallel lines vertically and horizontally, the major square is subdivided into a series of small squares in each of which is written a certain number, so that addition of any column in any direction results in the same sum. Letters are occasionally used in the columns so as to form anagrams of magic words, hence evil demons are kept guessing and their unpleasant attention is distracted from the bearer.

§ 14. The human hand is often drawn on talismans because the five fingers represent the most sacred persons in the Mohammedan system. They are the Prophet himself; Fatima, his daughter; Ali, her husband, and Hasan and Husain, their two sons. Generally speaking, the portrayal of the human figure is forbidden in Islam; a rule observed in Arabia, but almost totally ignored in Persia, where there was a highly developed art before the new religion came to them.

§ 15. It is also contrary to strict Mohammedan usage for verses of the Koran to be used in Magic, nevertheless passages that contain the word *hifz* (guard) are called *ayai al-hifz*, literally "preservative verses," and are used in the preparation of amulets. The paragraph "I seek refuge in the Lord of the Day-break, from the hurt of what He has created; and from the hurt of the night when it cometh on; and from the hurt of the witches who blow (or spit) upon knots; and from the hurt of the envious when he envies," is supposed to be particularly potent in guarding the wearer from bodily harms; and the paragraph "I seek refuge in the

Lord of men, the King of men, the God of men, from the hurt of the whisperer, who slinks off, who whispers evil into the heart of men, from jinn and from men," protects the wearer from damage to his soul. In cases of sickness, appropriate quotations from the Koran are written on paper (or parchment), which is soaked in water long enough for the magical properties of the words to pass their potency into the liquid, which is then given to the patient to drink. European physicians in Mohammedan countries find it very difficult to persuade their patients to take prescriptions to the druggist and swallow the medicine which they receive in exchange, for the sick Islamite regards this as a piece of infidel addition to decent magic.

§ 16. Talismans are carried by almost all Mohammedans, but the method of wearing them varies with the nation. Turks affix them to their arms, or wind them in their turbans; Bedouin wear them on a cord about their necks and over their outermost garment. A wealthy man has his amulet made from gold and hangs it on a chain of the same precious metal; sometimes many are carried making a rich necklace of several rows of medallions. The *hurz* is a miniature book of quotations from the Koran: this, encased in gold, is generally worn by girls. Every child when it is forty days old is given an amulet which may be anything between a simple shell and a very rich gem. It is always fixed beneath the child's left arm.

§ 17. The Prophet utterly condemned sorcery: "O true believers, verily, wine, and games of chance, and the worship of statues, and divining by arrows are only an abomination of Satan's work; avoid them then that haply ye may prosper," is, as far as the letter is concerned, directed against divination by arrows, a very

common Arab practice; but in the spirit it is meant to cover the entire field. Notwithstanding this, the working of maleficium is very prevalent. The favourite method is by use of a scorpion: the creature is imprisoned in a glass vessel and the following incantation repeated over it seven times. "Aryush, Sharhush; He is a God so great that there is none beside Him. Bartima, Maltima, Azrian. Understand and hearken to what I say, O scorpion born of a scorpion; otherwise will I give the fire power over thee. . . By the glory of God and the light of His countenance, go to [name of enemy] and sting him in the [specified selected portion of enemy's anatomy]." After the seventh repetition the scorpion is released and it goes at once and does what is requested of it.

§ 18. The shadow of a man can be created a jinn and compelled to do its owner's bidding. The ceremony must be performed on either a Sunday or a Wednesday night. When it has grown dark and all is still the sorcerer lights a candle and stands facing the east with the illuminant behind him; the result is that his shadow is thrown large and menacing upon the wall before him. Then, in the loneliness and silence, perhaps with a gentle draught making the magnified shadow dance and dip, elongate and grow grotesque, he addresses to it a lengthy invocation, conjuring it to depart to the home of So-and-so, and smite him in such-and-such a manner. This cantrip is repeated again and again as the candle burns away. The wax spreads, the flame gutters, the shadow darts from side to side, grows denser, denser—taller; then—out goes the light and off flies the shadow!

§ 19. Another method is to draw the figure of one's enemy on a leaf, pin it head downward on the wall, chant an incantation to it and stab it with a red-hot needle. As the point penetrates the leaf

and burns into the wall behind, the sorcerer says: “Take the sleep from his eyes. Enter his body at this place, and as this needle enters this image!” This ensures the victim’s falling sick and remaining so, until the needle is removed from the wall.

§ 20. The jinn are a race of spirits considered to be the offspring of fire. They have a king called Sulayman, who built the Pyramids! Jinn may be either good or evil. They are commonly imprisoned in brass vessels, vases, lamps, or finger-rings, and may be called forth to do their owner’s bidding. In “The Thousand and One Nights,” a poor fisherman draws up in his net a copper vase with a lead seal. As soon as it was opened, up rose an immensely powerful jinn that had been thus imprisoned by King Solomon. The magical power of the prophet-king’s seal prevented the spirit from escaping; but the fisherman evidently found no difficulty in breaking it. Solomon’s seal is the hexagonal star composed of two interlacing equilateral triangles enclosing the ineffable Name of God— the tetragram YHWH (or JHVH. The Hebrew sounds are Jud Hey Vuv Hey, hence Jehovah). This talisman represents supreme power and mystery to Mohammedan and Hebrew alike, the latter not daring to pronounce the Name, but, when confronted by it in the Torah (the Law), substituting Adonai—“The Lord.” So enormous is the magical power of the tetragram that even Adonai is not uttered by children when practising the prayers and learning the Law, Adoshem being spoken in its place.

J. F.

Book recommended:

BROWN, J. P., *The Darvishes* (Oxford University Press, 1927).

## OCCULTISM IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

J. H. Mozley

§ 1. In default of anything more definite, Occultism in the world of ancient Greece and Rome must be taken to cover a whole range of beliefs and practices, from the primitive cults of Italy and Greece through oracles, divination and mystery religions down to the imported Astrology and Magic of the Roman Empire. Only a few points can be touched on here: primitive religion with its innumerable cults and ceremonies provided a sort of science of the occult, directed to securing the favour and averting the ill-will of powers vaguely comprehended but believed to control the processes necessary to human existence and well-being. The cults existed for the community concerned and were under its control: the Roman State religion is only an example of centralization on a large scale, with bodies of experts, pontiffs, augurs and the like, dealing with different departments of the system. Oracles usually stood outside the civic religion, being located at particular spots to which nature had given unusual impressiveness, and there were other isolated shrines, sacred springs, entrances to the underworld, and so on; there was traditional lore concerning omens, lucky or unlucky days, social and religious taboos such as we read of in Hesiod's *Works and Days*: "Pray before crossing a stream," "Don't cut your nails at a festival," "Don't put the ladle on a bowl at a party." Divination to discover the future was an important activity of this primitive religion; this was carried on in a host of ways by specially trained experts; the strangest of these ways, to

us at least, was the examination of the entrails of slaughtered animals, known to us technically as extispication, but to our ancestors as “bowel-prying,” in origin Babylonian, we are told, but adopted most successfully by the Etruscans. Among other methods, which I can here do no more than mention, were divination by the flight or the cries of birds, by fire and smoke, by omens or abnormal occurrences, by sleeping visions at sacred springs or shrines, by bowls of water, by the casting of lots and by the consultation of the dead. “It does not appear,” writes Dr. Halliday, “that divination by the dead played an important or prominent part in Greek superstition,” certainly in no way comparable, we may add, to that which it plays in our own. There are a few examples in literature, the summoning up of the spirits of the dead heroes by Odysseus in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, the appearance of the ghost of Darius in the *Persæ* of Æschylus, while there is a kind of skit on the whole business in the dialogue of Lucian called “Menippus, or Necromancy.”

§ 2. If Divination is the art of foretelling the future, Magic is the art of modifying and controlling it. The two things, while logically distinct, are in practice confused, for, to quote Dr. Halliday again, “the inquirer desires to know what the future has in store, in order that he may turn it to account, make sure of the good things, or in case of necessity cheat the Devil.” Magic falls within the scope of this essay so far as its effect is due to a mysterious or non-natural power thought to be inherent either in individuals or things. This is the case with all the magic of the primitive cults; in Methana, for a instance, they used this device for averting the storm-winds that spoil their vines: two men ran round the vines in different directions, starting from the same point and each carrying half of a

white cock that had been cut in two; when they met again at the starting-point they buried the cock. Here the magic potency resides in the white colour of the bird, which is supposed to absorb the blackness of the storm and through burial to take away its harmfulness. Again, at the Thesmophoria at Athens pigs were let down into clefts or chasms, where they were left to rot, and after a year's interval brought up again and placed on altars, where the flesh was mixed with seed to be used as a fertility charm. In many cases deities such as Hecate or Pluto are invoked at the performance of rites, but this does not appear to be essential to magic; there must, however, be belief in some power, either inherent or external.

§ 3. While magicians, strictly speaking, are not necessary for the performance of magic, the necessary thing being the use of the proper means, either the saying or the doing of certain things, or both, it is easy to understand that such practices would fall into the hands of experts. Hence the presence in Greek myth of the great enchantresses, Circe and Medea, who, it may be pertinent to notice, belonged to the same family, Medea being Circe's niece; all are familiar with Medea's spells and herbs, and with Circe's wand. To come to historical times, the girl Simætha in Theocritus' second *Idyll* uses incantations, the burning of bay-leaves, the whirling of rhomb and the melting of a wax image to bring her lover back to her: "as this puppet melts for me before Hecate, so may Delphis as speedily melt with love, and as this brazen rhomb turns by grace of Aphrodite, so may Delphis turn again before my threshold." Or still later, in Apuleius' tale the witch Pamphile uses certain ointments to turn herself into an owl, and of course all who have read it will remember how Fotis, the pretty serving-

maid of Pamphile, gave her lover Lucius the wrong ointment and he became an ass—a lesson to those who would meddle with the occult. Apuleius himself was suspected of magic practices and actually put on trial; we still have the speech he made in his defence, and it is amusing to note that the accuser viewed with grave suspicion a box of ointment Apuleius had sent him, though the defendant says it contained nothing more harmful than a dentifrice.

The case of Simætha shows that private persons could practise magic, and as early as the 4th century B.C. Plato in the *Laws* (XI 933) urges that the State should make enactments against any man who tries to slay or injure by magic; he is not quite certain whether there is anything in witchcraft or not, but he is clear that such practices should be stamped out if possible; accordingly, anyone who injures either by magical bindings or inductions or incantations is to die.

§ 4. To the Greeks Colchis and Thessaly were the great homes of witchcraft, and Latin poetry takes over the convention, though we sometimes hear of Marsian spells and of witches haunting the hills of central Italy. In Horace we have real witches with streaming, snake-bound hair using various ingredients to make a love-philtre: Canidia, Sagana, Veia and Folia make a hole in the ground in which to bury a boy up to the neck; when he has perished of slow starvation his marrow and liver are to be removed to add to the grisly mixture, leaves of the cypress and the fig, eggs and feathers of an owl smeared with toad's blood, Thessalian and Iberian, that is Colchian, herbs, and bones snatched from a ravaging bitch. In Lucan, too, there is a long description of necromantic rites conducted by a Thessalian

enchantress, Erichtho. Under the Empire, indeed, magic had a tremendous vogue, particularly in the North African provinces, where the influence of Egypt was most felt. Egypt is perhaps the greatest ancient centre of witchcraft, though it is not until Roman times that we find it exercising its influence on the Græco-Roman world. Many magic formulas have been preserved, full of strange names and weird jargon of languages, Greek, Hebrew and Egyptian apparently, but often a meaningless jumble of syllables. They are fitted for use on particular occasions, with insertion of names as required, for purposes amatory, medicinal, harmful or the reverse, and frequently written on leaden tablets, which were pierced with a nail to symbolize certainty or else “posted” to the powers below by being dropped into some convenient sepulchre. One or two examples may be given:

(i) From the amphitheatre at Carthage (c. 200 A.D.), written over the picture of Typhon-Seth, the evil demon of magic, holding a spear and a thunderbolt: “Slay, exterminate, wound Gallicus son of Prima in this hour in the ring of the amphitheatre . . . bind his feet, his limbs, his senses, his inward parts. Bind Gallicus son of Prima that he slay nor bear nor bull with one stroke, nor slay with two strokes, nor slay bear or bull with three strokes. In the name of the living omnipotent God perform this. Now! Now! Quickly! Quickly! Let the bear crush and wound him!”

(ii) From Cyprus: a tablet that is full of what Lucian calls “barbaric, senseless, many-syllabled names” (Menippus, 9): “Deities that are beneath the earth . . . take away from Krateros the fierceness that he hath against me Kallias and the wrath, and rob him of his power and might and make him weak and voiceless and breathless . . . I conjure you by the great gods

Masomasimablaboio Eumazo . . . take Krateros and deliver him to the doorkeeper of Hades Mathyruphramenon . . . I conjure the gods from Kronos onward Ablanathanalba Sisopetron take Krateros the adversary of me Kallias” (much abbreviated).

§ 5. While this kind of magic came from Egypt, astrology was an importation from Babylonia. Many attempts, all of them vain, were made to suppress it; Juvenal ridicules the hold it had over the women of Rome, who keep their well-thumbed manuals by them; both Tiberius and Otho among the Emperors listened to the predictions of astrologers.

§ 6. I propose finally to speak of the Greek Mysteries, for these undoubtedly originated in rites of primitive magic, and in the course of time acquired, perhaps possessed from the beginning, an element of secrecy which gave them their particular name of “mysteries,” things that may not be spoken of. Of the various rites so called the Eleusinian were celebrated at the beginning of October, and originally consisted of ceremonies that try to influence the fertility of the fields by imitative magic; as the Greek mind became purified of its primitive superstition and capable of deeper reflection on the mysteries of life and death, the rites came to symbolize the passage from this life to that of the world to come. The votaries first received instruction from a *mystagogos*, then on the 15th of the month Boedromion the festival began with the words “Mystæ, to the sea!” uttered by the King Archon from the steps of the Stoa Poikile at Athens. The votaries bathed in the sea with a pig, which was subsequently offered to Demeter, and two days later a procession started from Athens to Eleusis, arriving in the evening by torchlight. The rites lasted from sunset to sunset of the 22nd and 23rd; first came a dramatic representation of the

legend of Demeter and Kore, then the partaking of the Kukeon, a mixture of mint and barleymead, the touching of sacred objects and repeating a sacred formula "I have fasted, I have tasted and taken from the box"; finally came the climax of the festival: a ritual marriage between the Hierophant and the chief priestess of Demeter, accompanied by more formulas, "I have eaten from the timbrel, I have drunk from the cymbal, I have carried the fan, I have entered the bridal-chamber," and the announcement of the birth of a sacred child. At some moment in the ceremonies the scene was plunged in darkness, which was followed by a brilliant light in which was revealed the blessed state of the initiated in the world to come.

§ 7. The Orphic Mysteries are contrasted with the Eleusinian in various ways: the Eleusinian could only be performed at Eleusis, but the Orphic wherever there was an Orphic community; the Orphic mysteries are the result of a conscious reforming movement within the religion of Dionysus, due to a possibly historical Orpheus; there was definite teaching, moral, cosmological and eschatological associated with them, and they stood outside the ordinary State religion. We must imagine an originally wild and orgiastic cult, whose votaries in an ecstasy of intoxication tore animals to pieces and drank their blood, reformed and tranquilized by Orphic influence; the uncontrolled emotionalism of Thrace and Phrygia sobered by Greek moderation into a regular process of initiation, instruction in the divine origin of the worshipper, and finally communion; in this latter rite raw flesh was eaten, representing the old myth of Zagreus, who was torn to pieces by the Titans and reborn as Dionysus, and symbolizing the rebirth of the human soul after its

temporary death in the tomb of the body; when the worshipper came to die, his body was provided with small plates of gold inscribed with formulas and directions for use in the next world. Some of the formulas of ritual and burial are extremely beautiful, for instance: "I have passed beneath the bosom," signifying adoption by the family of gods; "I have flown out of the sorrowful wheel," referring to the Orphic belief in a wheel or cycle of becoming; "I have passed with swift feet to the crown desired," and this quaint one, "A kid I have fallen into milk," which possibly refers to the boiling in milk of Zagreus, who was perhaps slain as a kid, the phrase thus signifying rebirth; but this is very uncertain, as also is the question whether there was any ritual corresponding to these formulas.

§ 8. The mysteries of Isis and Osiris were originally the rites of a spring festival: Osiris, like Adonis, is the personification of the vegetation spirit that dies, is buried and is born again. There are also features that recall the Orphic rites: a dramatic representation of the scattering of the fragments of Osiris, when he has been torn in pieces by Typhon, of their collection by Isis and his rebirth as Apis, the sacred bull. Isis, wrongly identified by the Greeks with Io, is rather to be compared with Demeter, the Earth mother, but in Apuleius she appears as uniting in herself almost all the aspects of female divinity that we know. "Behold me," she says when she appears to Lucius, "who am Nature, the parent of all things, the mistress of all the elements, the primordial offspring of time, the supreme among divinities, the queen of departed spirits; who govern by my nod the luminous heights of heaven, the salubrious breezes of the ocean and the anguished silent realms of the shades below; whose one sole divinity the whole earth

venerates under manifold form, with different rites and under a variety of appellations; hence the Phrygians, that primeval race, call me Pessinuntica, the Mother of the gods; the aborigines of Attica, Cecropian Minerva; the Cyprians in their sea-girt isle, Paphian Venus; the arrow-bearing Cretans, Diana Dictynna; the three-tongued Sicilians, Stygian Proserpine; and the Eleusinians, the ancient goddess Ceres. Some call me Juno, others Bellona, others Hecate and others Rhamnusia. But those who are illuminated by the earliest rays of that divinity the Sun when he rises, the Æthiopians, the Arii and the Egyptians, so skilled in ancient learning, call me by my true name, Queen Isis.” When Lucius has been restored to human form, he is initiated into the mysteries of Isis; after ceremonial washing and abstaining from flesh and wine and luxurious food for ten days “the priest,” he tells us, “taking me by the hand brought me into the inner recesses of the sanctuary, clothed in a new linen garment. . . . I approached the confines of death, and having trod on the threshold of Proserpine I returned therefrom, being borne through all the elements. At midnight I saw the sun shining with its brilliant light, and I approached the presence of the gods beneath and the gods of heaven and stood near and worshipped them.” It is clear, indeed Lucius says as much, that these words are only for the profane; of the reality he is forbidden to speak. The next morning he undergoes a sort of public manifestation or epiphany: he ascended a wooden pulpit, wearing a linen garment elegantly coloured and a robe embroidered with a variety of animals, Indian serpents and Hyperborean griffins and carrying a torch in his right hand; “a graceful chaplet encircled my head, the shining leaves of the palm-tree projecting from it like rays of light. Thus

arrayed like the sun and placed so as to resemble a statue, on a sudden, the curtains being drawn aside, I was exposed to the gaze of the multitude.”

§ 9. The idea which lies at the heart of all the Mysteries is that of regeneration, of being born anew; its great symbol at Eleusis is the change from darkness into light. In Orphism the idea is connected with purification; and thus it inspires the Platonic conception of the mystic progress of the soul, throwing off the entangling associations of the body till it can contemplate the things that be eternal, the Essential Forms. The cult of Isis attracted no minds as mighty as those of Æschylus and Plato, but it drew thousands of votaries and must have answered to some need of their souls. Here we may perhaps find the secret in the figure of Isis herself, for she is the bringer of consolation and hope, the universal: Mother in whom the soul is reborn, the powerful and all-glorious Goddess of the world below. “Behold then, commiserating your calamities I am come to aid you, favouring and propitious am I come. Away, then, with tears; leave your lamentations, cast off all sorrow. Soon through my providence shall the day of deliverance shine upon you . . . Under my protection you will live happy, you will live glorious: and when having passed through the allotted period of your life you shall descend to the realms beneath, there also dwelling in the Elysian fields you shall frequently adore me and shall see me shining amid the darkness of Acheron and reigning in the Stygian realms.”

J. H. MOZLEY.

Books recommended:

HALLIDAY, W. R., *Greek Divination* (Macmillan, 1913).

GLOVER, T. R., *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire* (Methuen 1923).

Lowe, J. E., *Magic in Greek and Latin Literature* (Blackwell, 1929.)

OLIPHANT, LAURENCE (1829-88). His tendency to eccentricity was sharpened by association with that “backwoods Messiah” of America, Thomas Lake Harris, who “did” him shamefully. Occultism notably informs *Sympneumata*, 1885, and that remarkable novel, *Altiora Peto*, 1883. See especially Mr. Michael Sadleir’s edition of his satirical novel, *Piccadilly*.

PAGODA. Of Indian origin, a “Relic Preserver.” Used in China in the art of geomancy (see Chinese Occultism). They are circular or octagonal, and either seven or nine stories high. Seven for the seven Buddhas: nine for the “ninth incarnation of Visnu,” i.e., The Buddha. The porcelain tower of Nankin was built by Yung Lo (1403-25); it cost £200,000 and was destroyed by rebels in 1856.

P’AN Ku. The Great Architect of the universe. Represented in Chinese art as a powerfully-built man busied with hammer and chisel on great blocks of stone. He is also the Chinese Adam.

PLANCHETTE. Named from its inventor (1853). A small board on wheels, carrying a pencil and used by mediums (and others in lighter vein) for “spirit” writing.

PLANET OF DEATH. A supposed sphere where departed souls, too bad for further reincarnation, are destroyed.

PRICE, HARRY. Honorary Secretary of the University of London Council for Psychical Research. Inventor of numerous devices for detecting fraud on the part of spirit mediums: collector of books on occultism, magic, conjuring, etc. Author of many works on these and their subject matter. See also *Literature of Occultism*, § 15, 39, 40; and *Spiritualism*, Part II.

PSYCHOMETRY. A form of clairvoyance enabling people to give an object's history, simply by holding it in their hands.

## PSYCHO-THERAPY AND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

§ 1. The unconscious mind is a receptacle beneath the surface of all that we think and know and feel. It is the psychic boiler which generates the life force. The energy it contains is dangerous and destructive, but, bound and controlled in the machinery of the normal conscious mind, it becomes held in check and turned to good account. Leibnitz, writing in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, had his conception of an unconscious background out of which mental activities grow. To Schopenhauer the world was Will. Brain to him meant just the will to think and know; his Will may be equated to the unconscious mind. Eduard von Hartmann's *magnum opus* is entitled *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. In it he suggested that the selection of a thought-sequence has already taken place before its emergence into consciousness. Freud is thus in direct descent from the philosophers; he has not "invented" the unconscious, he has simply elevated it to the status of an "organ" that can be subjected to treatment in many cases of mental disease.

§ 2. The latest developments in scientific psycho-therapeutics are the outcome of a long series of experimental studies in hypnotism. During hypnosis, the subject is put in a state of somnambulism by the operator; consciousness is suspended, and suggestion made meanwhile will be accepted and acted upon. A touch on the bare flesh with the finger, together with the remark, "This is hot iron. You are burnt," will result in a blister developing at the place, and, which is even more surprising, a scar will be left.

Thus it is possible to brand a person with a cold instrument; and herein is to be found the key to stigmata miracles. More startling still is the phenomenon of “post-hypnotic obedience.” A subject put into hypnotic rapport will receive a suggestion to perform some feat the following day, and no matter how ridiculous the instruction, it will be carried out to the letter. For instance, the injunction, “You will enter this room at three o’clock to-morrow afternoon, raise your umbrella, and walk round three times,” will result in the performance of this stupid exercise, in spite of difficulties being put in the way; and, upon interrogation, the subject will give a rational explanation of his conduct, and remain absolutely ignorant of the fact that his willpower has been temporarily suspended. Auto-hypnosis differs in no essential from hetero-hypnosis. The subject, from one cause or another,—such as performing a monotonous manual exercise,<sup>1</sup> listening to a clock ticking, or gazing fixedly at any shining object, a brass door-knob, or glass or crystal ball,—enters a dream-state in which he projects part of the content of his unconscious mind into his sensori-motor field, with the result that he may experience vivid hallucinations, or become motorially inco-ordinate. Hypnosis is artificial hysteria. Persons suffering from real hysteria are perpetually in a dissociated state, and are prone to periodic violent attacks. It is a form of dramatized expression rising from the unconscious, and “shouting down” the calm, sane exterior. Some hysterical attacks are almost indistinguishable from epileptic fits, and very often paralysis, contractures, anæsthesias, blindness, deafness, speechlessness, and involuntary twitching of the face and limbs,

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Illusion and Hallucination*.

are not due to damaged nerve-tissues, but are the somatic expression of psychic disturbances. The general term employed to describe these pathological states is “conversion hysteria,” and, which is important from the point of view of an inquiry into occultism, all phases of conversion hysteria may be affected by either auto- or hetero-suggestion. With this medical fact kept in view, an investigation of some ancient and modern miracle cures will prove instructive.

§ 3. As such cures are frequently achieved by saintly persons, it might be well, first of all, to examine a saint; and the most useful for our purpose is St. Simeon Stylites. Hearing, at about the age of thirteen, the words “Blessed are those who weep” pronounced in church, he betook himself to the desert where he remained seven days without food or drink, weeping and praying the whole time. His next saintly penitential exploit was to tie a rope of palm fibre round his body and draw the knots so tight that the girdle cut into his flesh and a putrefying wound formed, the fetid odour of which horrified all who came near him. Finally the rope was cut from him, the merciful release causing him intense agony. After three years in a monastery he retired to a cave where his fasting brought him to the point of death. One Easter Day a priest visiting him found him in a state of collapse, but upon receiving the sacrament he made a “miraculous” recovery. The sacrament in those days was, of course, not a wafer but a hunk of bread. Whether the saint objected to being saved, the records do not tell; however, soon after this experience he retired farther from the haunts of men to a mountain where he built a stone wall around himself and attached a chain to his foot. This bold bid for isolation failed miserably, for crowds (motivated no doubt by the same urge that sent sightseers

into the lunatic asylums in our own country not very long ago) flocked to see the holy man. To escape from them he built a column four feet high, on top of which he lived, engaged in prayer, for four years. The populace still refused to leave him alone, so he raised his column to the height of eighteen feet, and at last, in desperation, no doubt, he elevated himself sixty feet, an eminence at which he was at least safe from the inquisitive gaze of the throng. The top of this latest column was four feet in diameter, and was surrounded by a low wall; residing within this space he could never lie down, and there he remained till his death at the age of sixty-nine. During his last years he punished himself further by standing always with one foot raised, and so developed a varicose ulcer, on which he carefully replaced all the maggots that fell from it to the ground, saying "Go—feed upon that which God hath given thee."

§ 4. There were many sceptics who regarded him as an impostor motivated by vanity and pride, an opinion which caused the Church authorities to inquire into his state. They decided that if his was a religious vocation, he would descend at the bidding of a church dignitary, but if his mode of existence was a demonstration of pride, he would refuse; in which case, he would have to be brought down by force, and his column destroyed. Upon receiving the command St. Simeon Stylites gave every sign of being about to descend, so he was allowed to remain exalted.

§ 5. No doubt St. Simeon was a virtuous man, but to-day virtue expressed so enthusiastically would invite the attention of an alienist, whose diagnosis would no doubt reveal that he was catatonic, with exaggerated self-esteem, aversion to food, and a tendency to auto-mutilation. There might even be added

coprophilia, that is, love of dirt. His pious obedience when commanded to descend from the column adds weight to the diagnosis, for catatonic subjects are very suggestible, just as hypnotized patients are; therefore his mechanical submissiveness, accepted at the time as proof of his saintliness, would be recognized to-day as confirmation of his insanity. In fact, the Church authorities themselves would find it difficult to defend the conduct of a modern St. Simeon in the face of public opinion, especially if he chose for his residence the Monument or Nelson's Column.

§ 6. There are other saints, less repellent and more socially useful than St. Simeon Stylites, who nevertheless have been hysterics; yet they have succeeded in healing the sick by the laying-on of hands. It has been said that anything having the reputation of possessing healing-power, heals: for this reason sufferers visit sacred groves, grottos, wells, fountains, rivers, shrines, and even qualified physicians. Hippocrates is regarded as the father of modern medicine, because he wrought the cleavage between medicine and religion; but in the earlier days, at the Temple of Æsculapius (god of healing), many miracle cures were effected, and in spite of Hippocrates, the miraculous cures have continued.

§ 7. Queen Anne was the last English monarch to extend the royal touch, which was considered a cure for scrofula, a disease known on that account as king's evil. Dr. Johnson was touched by her. Needless to say, the royal touch did not cure scrofula, for it is a form of tuberculosis, and miracle workers (albeit of highest rank) are not germicidal; their influence can only affect cases of conversion hysteria. However, the miracle healer, in his blissful

ignorance, has but to lay his hands on one blind beggar who recovers, for a stampede of the sick, from street-sweepers to millionaires, to queue before his door.

§ 8. "The Divine Count Cagliostro," as he was called, flourished in the latter half of the 18th century. He was one of the world's greatest medical charlatans. Expelled from Russia by Catherine the Great, on account of his inability to produce hair on the scalp of a bald man, he arrived in Strasbourg in fine style, attended by servants. With the greatest show of pomp imaginable he settles into the best hotel, and before long the city is ablaze with the news that a renowned magician has arrived. It is given out subtly by his servants that the count has the secret of changing lead into gold, and has in his possession the elixir of life. Soon he is besieged by the distressed, supplicating medical aid. The rich he rejects; the poor he succours! By making the sign of the serpent with his finger upon the patient's brow, and putting one drop of elixir on the lips, his miracle cures are accomplished at the rate of hundreds a day. The cripple throws away his crutch; the blind man sees again; and so vast a reputation did he beget himself that at last Cardinal de Rohan called begging aid for a sick relation. Within a few days of Cagliostro's visit the invalid recovered, and so impressed was the cardinal that he conveyed the magician to Paris. It was just as well, for the healed cripples of Strasbourg were already picking up their discarded crutches; those with sight restored, again groping in the dark. In Paris Cagliostro's practice was confined to rich patients only. He sold, for fabulous figures, chairs that cured those who sat upon them; powders to change ugly old hags into young and beautiful girls; elixirs to restore vigour to senile profligates. Great artists of the day painted his

portrait, he was “immortalized” in song,—and then his patron, Cardinal de Rohan, dragged him down in the scandalous business of Marie Antoinette’s diamond necklace. He scraped out of the affair, but Paris became too hot to hold him. He went to Rome where, instead of gaining fresh distinction and fortune, he was arrested and imprisoned for life. The trial revealed his origin. Born at Palermo of humble stock, he compensated for his lowly estate by robbing a local jeweller during a spirit séance. This feat resulted in his flying from the town. Then, although scarcely out of his teens, he set up as the worst kind of blackmailer with the aid of a female accomplice, and so obtained sufficient capital to start business as a magician.

§ 9. Cagliostro is the classical example of the medical charlatan, but he is not without his contemporaries and his successors. James Graham of London opened, in 1779, a “Temple of Health.” It contained a magic bed which played organ music for an hour after the patient was “tucked up”; but that was not all—sleeping upon it cured barrenness or sterility; music indeed hath charms! In the 19th century, the United States of America seemed to breed miracle workers as Australia bred rabbits. All American faith-healing was of a religious character. Andrew Jackson Davis, a cobbler by trade, in about 1840 began to preach a philosophy involving the concept of disease as punishment for sin, and soon he published a book on the subject; it became a best seller. His miracle cures won him an enormous following, and the senate seriously considered making his system the official religious faith of the States. However, the Civil War gave them other matters to discuss. Soon after this, George O. Barnes, the “Mountain Evangelist,” secured a large following. He declared that the Devil

caused disease, and he effected cures by rebuking the Evil One. Joseph Smith, the Mormon, did miracles of a medical kind—until Asiatic cholera rather ruined his reputation. One of his followers advertised that he could “set bones through faith in Christ . . . commanding the bones they come together, making a noise like the crushing of an old basket.” Francis Schlatter set out bare-headed, bare-footed and with empty pockets, walking from Denver, Colorado, over mountain and plain, in 1893, to New Mexico. Divine inspiration (he said) led him there and back. On his return he set up as a faith-healer, and “touched” as many as five thousand patients in a day. These queues were swelled by persons from all over the States; but when he began a mail-order business, selling “blessed” handkerchiefs to those too sick or too poor to visit him, the government refused, on the grounds of fraud, to carry the postal matter. John Alexander Dowie took up the cloak, established the “Christian Catholic Church,” and preached that disease was the work of the Devil. Phineas Quimby taught that illness was the outcome of evil thought, and that the replacement of the blots upon the brain by “healthymindedness” resulted in physical cure. Mary Baker Eddy’s mental robustness may have been gained in her search for bodily fitness, because she had been a patient of Quimby’s. Strangely enough, she never cared to admit this—perhaps the reason was that her organizing ability was innate, and vastly superior to his. Mortality among Christian Scientists is in the same proportion as among the rest of the population, nevertheless the very large number of enthusiastic followers testifies to the attractiveness of the New Thought.

§ 10. The title “Christian Science” implies that the practitioners do not regard their method of healing as miracle working; but the

recoveries made at Lourdes are regarded as miracles. About a million people make the pilgrimage every year; a small percentage of them are sightseers and religious enthusiasts, the vast bulk being sufferers from every kind of sickness. A few, very few are cured. In 1922 the number was seventeen; in 1923, eighteen; but hundreds of the invalids die of fatigue on the journey. On one occasion a man expired from shock on being immersed in the fountain. At the grotto is a large collection of crutches, leg-irons and other orthopædic instruments; spinal-appliances and the like, but no glass eyes or artificial limbs, a notable deficiency which hard-headed doctors have not failed to point out. In defence of this piece of scepticism, it has been said that the growth of an eye or a limb would not constitute a miracle, as crabs, and other creatures low in the scale of life, have the power to replace damaged or lost organs. This, of course, is perfectly true.

§ 11. Franz Anton Mesmer (b. 1733) practised mental-healing without resorting to divine aid or finding it necessary to establish a religious sect. Though a qualified physician, he believed in astrology. He considered the stellar influence on man to be a form of energy akin to electricity or magnetism acting on the nervous system. His method was to stroke, with a magnet, the part affected by the disease. Later he abandoned the theory of terrestrial magnetism, and concluded that the force was a psychic power which he called “animal magnetism.” He exercised his therapeutical influence over his patients by making elaborate passes with his hands before their faces; he also employed the “magnetic chain”—persons sitting in a ring and holding hands in a darkened room. These séances resulted in his expulsion from Vienna; but migrating to Paris, he became very popular. At last

the representatives of “Science” undertook to investigate his claims, and finding nothing that could be expressed in terms of mathematics, they declared him an impostor. However, Mesmer was no charlatan, but a psycho-therapist of the modern type, with insufficient data to establish a theory.

§ 12. Hypnotism differs nowise from Mesmerism, except that to-day no extravagant passes are made about the patient’s head, this having been found quite unnecessary to induce the rapport. It was the practice of hypnotism that led Freud to elaborate the psycho-analytical technique, by means of which so much knowledge has been gained concerning the content of the unconscious mind, and its supreme influence over our daily existence. *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious* and *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* are works in which Freud has demonstrated how each waking moment is under the influence of unconscious mental forces. *The Interpretation of Dreams* made it clear that these, too, arise from those hidden depths. Our dignified Victorian doctors, declaring nightmare to be solely the result of indigestion, discarded the wisdom of the ancients who believed that dreams were fraught with meaning.

The Freudians both accept and reject the two extreme points of view. To them, dreams are not uninfluenced by visceral discomforts, but are nevertheless most certainly not cryptic whispers from the gods. To-day we are told that dreams—even bad dreams—are the disguised fulfilment of an unconscious wish. The unconscious is a primitive layer of mentality conditioned by our pre-human phylogeny. It cannot think—it can only wish, and without compunction it wishes for the death of one’s dearest relations. Unpleasant experiences are repressed into the

unconscious, so it is full of inadmissible wishes and rejected memories. No wonder some dreams are bad! Sense impressions gathered and not consciously registered find their way into the unconscious mind, as do forgotten incidents. A child having some terrifying experience, especially if before the age of three years, may grow up an hysteric. The outward symptoms will not give an inkling of the inner cause, for the psyche is ever on the alert to alter and symbolize the expression, so that the conscious shall be able to tolerate the unconscious. Hypnotism effects cures by suggestion without removing the cause of the hysteria. Psycho-analysis, by allowing the conscious mind to walk backward, as it were, by easy stages, reveals causes and so allows the sufferer to readjust himself to life. Hypnotic cures are generally temporary; psycho-analytical cures, often permanent. Freud has tapped the fountain-head of both genius and insanity; his followers have laid a pipe-line, and if we apply Freud's doctrine it is now possible to read aright the cryptic meanings of many mystics and mediums.

§ 13. Psychic revelation has bestowed upon man only confirmation of his material limitation. Every valuable word given out has at some time or other been taken in. Emanuel Swedenborg "numbered the stars"; but the fact that others have been discovered subsequent to his inspired enumeration, does not speak well for the omniscience of the "spirits." It occasionally happens that a person suddenly launches forth in a foreign tongue, a feat which is regarded as miraculous. Actually it is a form of mental illness called Glossolalia. The words have been stored up, perhaps since very early infancy, and are now brought forth from their long-forgotten hiding-place in the unconscious; it is not that the person has become the mouthpiece of the gods. An

observation made concerning these languages that seem so mysteriously acquired is, that there are always notable errors in pronunciation.

§ 14. Dr. C. G. Jung, before he broke away from Freud and propounded advanced theories of his own, did some very valuable work in the psycho-analysis of occult phenomena by investigating the manifestations of a spirit-medium. His subject was a certain Miss S. W., fifteen-and-a-half years of age, the grand-daughter of a clergyman. Her education was faulty, though she was by no means unintelligent. Hearing about table-turning she commenced the practice “for fun,” and her family soon discovered that she was a medium, the messages received from the table being supposed to proceed from the dead grandfather. After about a month she “developed her powers” by going into a cataleptic state and delivering the messages in a tone of voice that gave a very vivid impression of the deceased grandfather—“it was him speaking.” She also could impersonate dead relations of whose peculiarities she had only heard. “She took up postures of prayer and rapture with staring eyes and spoke with impassioned and glowing rhetoric [using] exclusively literary German which she spoke with ease and assurance quite contrary to her usual uncertain and embarrassed manner in the waking state” (*Psychology of Occult Phenomena*, p. 18). S. W. went into ecstasies, and once developed hysterical blindness which persisted for over half an hour. Sometimes in the night the room became magically illuminated and the medium saw figures “concealed in white veil-like robes.” Dr. Jung attempted to supply her with a rationalistic explanation of her case, but she always rejected this. She once said, “I do not know if what the spirits say and teach me is true, neither do I

know if they are those by whose names they call themselves, but that my spirits exist there is no question. I see them before me, I can touch them. I speak to them about everything I wish as loudly and naturally as I am now talking. They must be real” (*op. cit.*, p. 22).

§ 15. Soon the “spirits” began to take Miss S. W. away with them on long journeys, and leave in charge of her mortal frame a spirit guard, named Ulrich, “an entertaining chatterer [speaking] very fluently in high German with a North-German accent.” Ulrich, on one occasion after much questioning, explained that S. W. had gone to Japan to appear to a distant relation and dissuade him from making an ill-advised marriage. Then suddenly he announced her return: he saw her coming from afar off like a star in the north. Asked why the north and not the east if she was coming from Japan, he declared that the spirits travel “the direct way over the North Pole.” Soon S. W. awoke from her trance, said she saw Ulrich standing by her body and expressed a hope that he had not been talking nonsense; then she complained of a headache.

§ 16. Ulrich came into evidence more and more. The serious, religious grandfather was slowly but surely pushed from the scene, and the witty, chattering idler assumed the forefront. This gentleman, when asked earnest questions always replied, “Ask Ivenes,” or “Ivenes knows,” *Ivenes* being S. W.’s name for her somnambulistic self. After these trances she could remember all the twaddle, because it was much nearer her conscious mind than was the weighty discourse of the grandfather, for which she was totally amnesic. Like all mystics, Ivenes held in her palm the secrets of the universe. During her long journeys with the spirits

she visited “that space between the stars which people think is empty; but in which there are really very many spirit-worlds.” She described the appearance of “Star-dwellers” as “hairless, eyebrowless, sharply cut.” She revealed that the inhabitants of Mars have no souls, no science and no philosophy, but excel in mechanical arts; their aeroplanes were perfected long ages ago. Napoleon was a Martian sent on earth. She gave the geography of Mars, at the same time explaining that the canals were not difficult to cut as the Martian soil was so much lighter than our own. In her semi-somnambulistic state she pronounced herself to be the reincarnation of the Prophetess of Prevorst, whose exploits she had become aware of through a then recently published book. She (Ivenes), together with Swedenborg and Miss Florence Cook (Sir William Crookes’s medium), were able to reincarnate themselves every two hundred years. Ivenes gave a long list of historic personages whom she had been; but she was unaware that these characters had not always followed each other in history at intervals of two hundred years. Her “mystic science” began to manifest itself after a conversation concerning Kant’s *Natural History of the Heavens* occurred in her presence, during her normal period. She then, in her trance state, declared that “On one side was the light, on the other the power of attraction”; that “the natural forces are arranged in seven circles. Outside these circles are three more, in which unknown forces intermediate between energy and matter are found. . . .” She revealed the existence of two Powers, “Magnesor” and “Connesor,” between which were numerous other Powers such as Cafor, Hefa, Persus, Hypnos, Smar, Kara, Pusa, etc. These might be equated to life-force, warmth, light, electricity and the like.

§ 17. After this the spirits apparently deserted Miss S. W., or she began to make recovery from her illness. Ulrich's nonsense became more and more the natural conversation of a girl of now a little over sixteen years of age; and at last, during a séance held in the dark, she was caught throwing "apports" about. These were discovered to have been concealed in her clothing.

§ 18. Dr. Jung, in reviewing the case, makes it quite clear that all these manifestations were part of the content of S.W.'s unconscious mind. She was a sensitive girl, under-educated and neglected. The dead grandfather who took so much interest in her during her cataleptic state, represented a wish-fulfilment. She deeply desired to be loved, cared for and instructed. Her description of the inhabitants of the stars expressed her antipathy to unsympathetic people. Her reincarnation claims might be regarded as superiority wishes, in opposition to inferiority feelings; and her "mystic-science" was no better and no worse than the systems so elaborately devised by famous "mystics"; in fact, for a girl of such meagre learning, it was a surprising feat. Dr. Jung discovered its basis in the back of Miss S. W.'s school-atlas, in the diagrams of botanical schemes, and the astronomical charts. Her words, Persus, Fenus, Nenus, Sirum, Surus, Fixus and Pix, are childish distortions of Perseus, Venus, Sirius, and fixed stars. The girl had read without understanding, repressed the irksome knowledge, distorted it, and reproduced it through hysteria. Ulrich's good German accent was that of a friend of the family. "Magnesor and Connesor" were derived from magnetism and what she imagined must be its contrary. When the spirits finally left her alone, that is when she passed right through from somnambulism via conscious fraud to good mental health, her

character was found to be improved; she had become a sadder and wiser young woman, able to earn a good living and assume business responsibility. Not all “mediums,” however, are so fortunate as Miss S. W. They either remain cataleptic, in which distressing state of disease they derive a good income from their enthusiastic followers, or they recover to the conscious-fraud level and continue to cheat for their subsistence until exposure brings them into disgrace.

§ 19. A person does not need to be in a psychopathological condition, or even in a dream-state, for the unconscious mind to erupt part of its contents into consciousness, so that forgotten matter appears as original matter. This is called cryptomnesia, and such utterances and writings are by no means uncommon. Nietzsche in *Zarathustra* committed unconscious plagiarism from a book by Kerner, *The Log of the Ship “Sphinx,”* which he had read in his boyhood. Cryptomnesia, too, can explain the phenomenon displayed by mediums when, in a trance-state, they write books which they believe to be dictated to them by the spirit of a dead author. The same process is at work when a person discovers a lost article of value through “supernatural” revelation, either in a dream or thanks to the timely appearance of a kindly, all-seeing, informative ghost; in other words, during a somnambulistic state. The knowledge of the whereabouts of the missing article is all the time in the unconscious: the hypnoidal condition allows it to well up into consciousness.

§ 20. Such unconscious cerebration as merges into occultism includes the process known as paramnesia. Not infrequently persons visiting a strange place feel that they are familiar with every detail of the landscape. It appears to them that they know

exactly where to look for each hill-top; that every landmark is an old friend. The impression can be so vivid that the recipients have been known to conclude that this is their second time on earth. Reincarnation then becomes a subject of overwhelming interest; books on the subject are borrowed and even bought, and perhaps the Theosophical Society gets a recruit. The delusion is the result of the combined effects of excitement and fatigue, the latter being on the occasion inhibited by the former; nevertheless the tired psychic mechanisms attempt to short-circuit their task, hence the landscape is immediately repressed to the memory sphere so that the hill-top now seen for the first time is simultaneously” remembered.” A person thus convinced of the reality of reincarnation is not only unwilling, but unable to accept the prosaic, physical fact concerning the function of exhausted nerve-tracks, any more than Miss S. W. was able to relinquish her spirits. She saw, touched and talked with them, therefore their (to her) objective existence was established.

§ 21. Hysteria is a psychically infectious disease, and has, in various forms, been known to attack entire communities. When crusading was popular, a mad shepherd lad (Stephen of Cloyes, 1212) received “divine” injunction to lead the children, who were young and innocent, to the Holy Land for the purpose of driving out the Saracen. He marched through France, and despite all the endeavours of parents, children from every town and village *en route* joined his ranks. An “inspired” person may thus become a very dangerous person, for suggestibility and affectibility are factors in everyone’s make-up. An excited mob acts in unison, just as a pack of wolves does, the group becoming emotionally one unit; hence nations plunge wildly into war, their vast, blood-

lusting armies being composed of peace-loving, gentle citizens. The same forces are at work when, in the United States of America, some innocent negro is lynched on less than suspicion; and even when there is no cause for passionate excitement, expectancy may bring about similar mass-delusion.

§ 22. In the Indian rope-trick the operator causes a group of people to witness a rope rise out of a coil and stand on end like a rod. Up this vertical rope a boy climbs, then a fire is set to the bottom of the cord, and all is consumed, the twist of the rope ravelling out as the flame ascends, the ash falling in flakes. After this the operator claps his hands and all is as before—the rope coiled on the ground, the boy standing beside it, and, needless to add, the operator going round with the equivalent of “the hat.” What has actually taken place is that the Indian has put the entire expectant group in hypnotic rapport, and they have seen an act suggested, but not objectively performed. The clap of the hands rouses the audience from the somnambulistic state and they go their way wondering.

§ 23. When a medium gives to an absolute stranger a message purporting to emanate from a dead relation,—and when that message “comes through” tintured with the stranger’s home-county dialect, and studded with intimate nicknames and family “pet” names, it is very impressive; and if there is no question of deliberate fraud through connivance with a third party, it is to the occultist convincing of the medium’s genuine communion with “spirits.” The rationalist, however, can find a more mundane explanation: the client, filled with expectancy, has easily become *en rapport* with the medium, who acts as a psychic mirror to his own mind, from whence the advice and warnings arise, no less

than the dialect and nicknames.

§ 24. From Mesmer to Freud and his followers, much valuable knowledge of human mental processes has been obtained in the practice of medical science. The application of this knowledge to the realms of occultism suggests that the medium, if genuine, is a hysteric capable of affecting the audience; and if an impostor, then a hypnotist of no less capability. But as hypnosis is artificial hysteria, and as Dr. Erskine found that one of his patients, a professional medium, went into the mediumistic state when subjected to hypnosis, there does not seem to be very much room left for the objective existence of ghosts, albeit the ectoplasmic materializations can sometimes be photographed—under conditions imposed by the medium.

J. F.

*Book recommended:*

HITSCHMANN, DR. E., *Freud's Theories of the Neuroses* (Kegan Paul, 1921).

REDGROVE, H. S. Author of: *Alchemy; Ancient and Modern* (Rider, 1911); *Bygone Beliefs . . . Excursions in the Byways of Thought* (Rider, 1920) *A Mathematical Theory of Spirit* (Rider, 1912); *Matter, Spirit, and the Cosmos* (Rider, 1910); *Purpose and Transcendentalism* (Kegan Paul, 1921); *Roger Bacon . . .* (Rider, 1920), and, in association with "L. M. L.," *Joseph Glanvill and Psychical Research in the 17th Century* (Rider, 1921).

RING-PASS-NOT. The mental and spiritual barrier of all who are so foolish (or wicked) as to believe they are separate beings.

ROSARIES (Buddhist) consist of 108 beads of uniform size. This number ensures the repetition of the name of Buddha at least 100 times. The extra 8 allow for breakage, loss, and absentmindedness. The two ends of the string are joined through three extra beads representing Buddha, The Word, and the Priesthood—The Three Holy Ones. These beads are larger than the others to indicate to the teller the completion of a cycle. The string represents the penetrating power of the Buddhas, and is sometimes woven from human hair.

ROSICRUCIANS: or, BROTHERHOOD OF THE ROSY CROSS. A secret society which in origin was apparently nothing more than a practical joke. In 1614 an anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Fama of the Fraternity . . .* appeared, much to the surprise of all the “philosophers” and alchemists of the period, who each felt eminently suited to become a member of an esoteric brotherhood which announced with candour such vast occult achievement. Consequently, frantic “letters of application” were dispatched to the address given on the pamphlet—with an utterly blank result, for not one of the impatient senders received a reply. The mysterious paper, which had behaved like a jack-o’-lantern to these good men searching for the road to All Knowledge, claimed that the Order was founded by one “C. R. C.” who had travelled in the Orient and while there he was initiated into all the mysteries of magic. In 1610 another paper entitled *The Chymical Nuptials of Christian Rosencreutz* appeared and caused a further furore in occultistic circles. For the following four years “philosophers” and alchemists wrote books and pamphlets in defence of the

Rosicrucians, each writer hoping to convey the impression that he was himself a member of the mystical brotherhood and thereby increase the respect of his compeers. Eventually, by 1620, the “quill war” came to an end, but not the vibration set in motion by the anonymous jester who created “C. R. C.” and his exploits; for in modern times numerous groups of people, from freemasons to theosophists, have called themselves “Rosicrucians,” and it is even said that the one and only “C. R. C.,” having in his possession the secret of the elixir of life, is still living—as a Lama, in Tibet.

SA OF LIFE. A mystic fluid believed by the ancient Egyptians to flow through the body, thereby producing health and vigour.

SCAPULOMANCY. Divination by means of animals’ shoulder-blades.

SCOTT, CYRIL. Musical composer. Under the pseudonym of “His Pupil” and also of “Charles Broadbent,” he has produced several literary works (including novels) dealing with occultism. The Initiate (1920); The Adept of Galilee (1920); The Initiate in the New World (1927); The Initiate in the Dark Cycle (1932); The Vision of the Nazarene (1933); An Outline of Modern Occultism (1935), all published by Routledge. Also Music, its Secret Influence (Rider, 1933); and the introduction (at least) to a work as foolish as it is impious, purporting to be by one “David Anrias.” It is entitled Through the Eyes of the Masters and consists of several reproduced pencil sketches, each accompanied by an essay. The portraits are :—

1. St. Paul. Master Hilarion in a previous incarnation.
2. Master

Morya, a Rajput prince. Occupied Akbar's body in a previous incarnation. Resides at Shigatse. 3. Master Koot Hoomi Lal Singh, of Kashmiri origin. Studied at Oxford in 1850. Pythagoras is one of his previous incarnations. Resides at Shigatse. 4. Master Jesus. Previous incarnation Joshua, son of Nun; also Jesus of Nazareth who was overshadowed by the Christ. Now in a Syrian body. Lives in the Holy Land. 5. Master Hilarion. In a previous incarnation St. Paul. Now in a Cretan body. Spends much time in Egypt. 6. The Venetian Master. The Painter Paul Veronese in one of his previous incarnations. 7. Master Serapis. Greek by birth. Works with the Deva Evolution. Dwelling-place may not be revealed. 8. The Mahachohan. Known as the Lord of Civilization. Chief of the Masters. Resides in the Himalayas. 9. The Lord Maitreya. Known to Christians as the Christ, to the Orient as the Bodhi-Sattva, to Mohammedans as the Iman Madhi. Appeared in India as Shri Krishna, in Palestine as Christ, in Great Britain as St. Patrick, whose etheric body he now holds. Resides in the Himalayas. His office is that of World Teacher. He presides over the destiny of great religions. This book, published in 1932 by Routledge, is a jumble of astrology and theosophy, and surely cannot be intended to be taken seriously?

Among Scott's orchestral works is an opera, "The Alchemist."

SHARP, WILLIAM (pseudonym: FIONA MACLEOD), 1855-1905. Literature of Occultism, § 15. Wrote much prose and verse of a mystical character, supposed to have been produced while in a trance state. His chief work, *The Immortal Hour*, is a poetic drama in which Eochaid, King of all Ireland, marries a fairy maid, Etain. This union is attended by the usual tragic results of such

arrangements. The play was set to music by Rutland Boughton, and produced at the Regent Theatre, King's Cross, London.

**SHIP O' THE DEAD.** When old sailors (more particularly pirates) die ashore, a phantom ship comes sailing through the air to fetch them. In Borneo it is in the shape of a bird and takes all men's souls.

**SIBYL.** One of those women of the classic period who were reputed to possess powers of prophecy. (Cf. Occultism in Ancient Greece and Rome.) Hence, a fortune-teller; a witch.

**SIDEROMANCY.** Divination by red-hot iron.

**SKELETON STAFF.** A staff of wood or bone, carved to represent a human skeleton, used by the Lamas in Devil-worship.

**SOCIETIES (BRITISH) FOR THE STUDY OF PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA.** 1. The University of London Council for Psychical investigation Executive, Prof. Aveling, Prof. Cyril Burt, Prof. J. C. Flugel, Mr. Harry Price, Dr. Guy Brown, S. G. Soal, B.Sc., C. E. M. Joad, Dr. Mace. 2. The Society for Psychical Research: President, Prof. C. D. Broad; Hon. Sec., W. H. Salter. 3. The British College of Psychic Science. (This, unlike Nos. 1 and 2, is not a society established for the unbiased investigation of Psychic Phenomena, but seems to be concerned largely with the advancement of the spiritualistic creed.)

There are also societies at Reading, Ipswich, Sheffield, Edinburgh, North-West Durham, and Dublin, all of which are

affiliated to No. 3.

SPENCE, LEWIS. Author of *Atlantis in America* (Benn, 1925); *Cornelius Agrippa, Occult Philosopher* (Rider, 1921); *The History of Atlantis* (Rider, 1926); *The Magic and Mysteries of Mexico* (Rider, 1930); *The Mysteries of Britain* (Rider, 1928); *The Mysteries of Egypt* (Rider, 1929); *Myths and Legends of Babylon and Assyria* (Harrap, 1916); *Myths and Legends of Ancient Egypt* (Harrap, 1915); *The Problem of Lemuria, the Unknown Continent of the Pacific* (Rider, 1932); *The Problem of Atlantis* (Rider, 1924); *Weirds and Vanities* (Porpoise Press Broadsheet, 1927); *Songs, Satanic and Celestial* (Elkin Matthews, 1913). He is also editor of *An Encyclopczdia of Occultism* (Routledge, 1930).

# **SPIRITUALISM**

**S. G. Boal**

## **Introduction**

§ 1. The literature of modern spiritualism is vast and its ramifications almost endless. In Part I of this article I give a very brief résumé of some of the principal phases of early spiritualism between the years 1848 and 1875. I make no attempt to be exhaustive as regards either the alleged phenomena or the mediums concerned. I am of course indebted largely to the incomparable Podmore for this section, and if my judgments agree largely with his it is because after having read a great deal of the original literature I think that Podmore's views are fundamentally sound.

§ 2. In Part II I give some brief description of telekinetic phenomena for which the evidence is stronger than for any other class of physical phenomena. Here again no attempt whatever is made even to exhaust the list of mediums who are considered important by psychical researches. I do not even discuss the phenomena of Eusapia Palladino, though in her case the evidence for telekinesis is exceptionally strong. Brief notes follow on other alleged physical phenomena for which the evidence is very feeble or entirely negative.

§ 3. I am indebted to Mr. Fred Barlow, Major Rampling Rose and Mr. Harry Price for my estimate of the status of Spirit Photography. Their work in unmasking the machinations of William Hope is of paramount importance.

§ 4. Part III I regard as the main *raison d'être* of the present article. For not only is the evidence for telepathic phenomena immeasurably superior to that for any alleged supernormal physical phenomenon whatsoever, but the interest of the general reader in psychical research centres chiefly around the great question of human survival after bodily death. In this article will be found what the writer hopes is a fairly cogent analysis of so-called spirit communications, illustrated partly from his own first-hand experience and partly from the work of other investigators. If the reader feels disappointed in the writer's inability to endorse the spiritualistic interpretation of these obscure mental phenomena he may be reminded that though communication with the spirits of the dead is discredited in favour of the hypothesis of an extended form of telepathy from living minds, yet the very demonstration that there are regions of the human mind which are free from the fetters of space and time, brings us appreciably nearer to the long-hoped-for proof of the soul's survival.

§ 5. In an article necessarily restricted as to space, I felt it would be impracticable to give any account of the numerous investigations, statistical and otherwise, that have been carried out since 1882 in attempts to demonstrate telepathy and clairvoyance by experimental means. Most of my own work during the past nine years has been directed towards this end, but the results have been entirely negative. The recent experiments of Dr. J. B. Rhine which have received so much newspaper publicity should be accepted only with the greatest caution. At present the University of London Council for Psychical Investigation is engaged in a prolonged repetition of Dr. Rhine's work and until the results are available, judgment should be held in suspense.

## **Part I:**

### **Early Spiritualism in the United States**

§ 1. Although “spirit” rappings had been reported at Glenn’s Falls several years previous to those of Hydesville, yet it may be fairly claimed that the year 1848 saw the beginning of the great wave of modern spiritualism which was destined to flood the North American continent and to break five years later on our English shores.

§ 2. The times were fully ripe for the founding of a new religion which should have facts for its basis instead of faith. Already itinerant hypnotists had made large sections of the American public familiar with the marvels of the mesmeric trance. Ignorant people under the mesmeric influence seemed to become endowed with a knowledge and an intelligence that were not their own. They delivered learned discourses and they even diagnosed diseases.

§ 3. In the summer of 1847 Andrew Jackson Davis published his bulky work *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations and A Voice to Mankind*.

Davis, an imperfectly educated though not illiterate shoemaker of New York State, had been hypnotized almost daily by a Dr. Lyon, and while in the hypnotic trance had dictated the above book piecemeal over a period of fifteen months. At the time of its completion Davis was only 21 years of age. In this work he attempted to trace the main outlines of cosmic evolution starting with the genesis of the solar system and proceeding to describe the growth of plant and animal life through the geological epochs

culminating with the history of the human race and its projected future. As a contribution to the scientific knowledge of his day, Davis's work was of negligible value and is indeed full of absurdities. Yet it possessed a sort of crude imaginative power which caused it to become an instant "best seller" and its author to be proclaimed the herald of a new religious era.

§ 4. Davis had probably read much more widely than was credited him by his disciples and he possessed a memory that was "marble to retain." The sources of the remarkable work produced by Davis were probably such books as *The Vestiges of Creation* and certain English textbooks of geology. According to Podmore the *Voice to Mankind* was possibly founded on Brisbane's *Social Destiny of Man*, a book which was popular at that time in the Eastern States.

In the earlier part of his career Davis does not appear to have claimed that his works were dictated by discarnate spirits; he seems to have regarded them as the products of his own lucidity in the hypnotic state. Later on he became associated with the new Spiritualist Movement.

§ 5. In the same year, 1847, which saw the publication of *The Principles of Nature*, mysterious rappings broke out at a house in the little village of Hydesville, situated in the township of Arcadia, New York State. Into this house, which was of wood and furnished with a cellar, a family of small farmers of the name of Fox had moved in December 1847. The family consisted of the father and mother and two young daughters, Margaretta and Katie, the latter being aged 15 and 12 years respectively. According to the testimony of the Fox family, the four tenants of the house had passed many disturbed nights on account of mysterious rappings

which broke out on the walls, floor and furniture of the bedroom in which the whole family slept. On the memorable evening of 31 March 1848 it is said that the younger sister Katie was lying in bed while the raps were occurring. Katie called out, "Here, Mr. Splitfoot, do as I do," at the same time snapping her fingers several times. The raps responded with an imitative fusillade.

§ 6. Thereupon the family entered into communication with the rapping intelligence. Neighbours were called in who witnessed the rapping and plied it with questions. These questions seem all to have been of the leading type. If the answer was "Yes" the listeners heard a series of raps; if "No" the "spirits" remained silent.

§ 7. Now it was recalled by the neighbours that in a certain year previous to the tenancy of the Fox family, a pedlar of the name of Charles B. Rosna had called at the house one day and had never been seen again in the district. Bit by bit by means of leading questions it was extracted from the rapping entity that he was indeed the spirit of this pedlar who had been murdered by the former occupant of the house. He stated further that his body was buried in the cellar. In July 1848 the Fox family claimed to have dug in the cellar and unearthed human bones, hair, charcoal and a wooden board which covered a hollow space. Now there is not the slightest corroborative evidence of this sensational discovery. For all we know, the Foxes may have procured a few bones from elsewhere and buried them in the cellar. It is certain that they had commenced digging operations three months earlier, i.e., in April 1848, but had given up on reaching water. Nor is there any proof that the pedlar was even dead; he may merely have migrated to another neighbourhood. There is only the vaguest rumour that he

ever existed. And even if bones were found in the cellar there is no evidence worth a farthing candle that they were the remains of a human being.

§ 8. Shortly afterwards, Margaretta Fox left Hydesville to stay at Rochester with a married sister, while Katie went to Auburn. The mysterious raps followed the two sisters, and it was soon discovered that messages could be obtained through them purporting to come from various deceased persons. Katie and Margaretta found themselves to be persons of importance and soon set up as rapping mediums. Committees of medical men were appointed to investigate the cause of the alleged raps, and some of these committees appear to have been incompetent. In 1850 the sisters, now famous, visited Buffalo and were examined by three professors of the University. These gentlemen satisfied themselves that the raps were produced by a cracking or slight dislocation of the knee-joints. They found that when the legs were placed in such a position that the girls were unable to obtain leverage by pressing their feet on the floor the raps could not be produced.

§ 9. As a matter of fact, this partial “exposure” did the Fox sisters little or no injury. For the Buffalo committee did not push its investigations so far as to secure positive proof that the actual origin of the sounds was the knee-joint. This was merely an indirect inference, and in the eyes of the general public it could not produce the conviction of a direct demonstration of fraud. In fact, such sounds as we are dealing with are extremely difficult to locate without the aid of elaborate microphone apparatus, which of course the investigators did not possess.

§ 10. In 1851 a Mrs. Culver, a relation by marriage of the Fox sisters, produced a statement in the presence of witnesses to the

effect that Katie had confessed to her that her raps were fraudulently produced by cracking either the knees or the big toe. According to Mrs. Culver, Katie had also explained that if she desired to create the illusion that the raps were coming from a particular piece of furniture she would look earnestly in that direction. The explanation is, of course, in agreement with the basic principles of ventriloquism.

§ 11. In the meantime, “rapping” mediums were being discovered in all parts of the Eastern States. Modern Spiritualism was fairly launched. The phenomena grew in number and variety. It was found that when three or four persons rested their hands on a small table the table would sometimes behave as though it possessed intelligence; it tilted backwards and forwards. If one called over the alphabet, intelligent communications were obtained: these purported to come from discarnate spirits. For the clumsy table a small board on wheels and provided with a pencil was in course of time conveniently substituted and messages were written on a sheet of paper. Other mediums simply let a pencil rest in their fingers and the pencil wrote long communications which the medium claimed were produced by an intelligence other than his own.

§ 12. In this way communications were received from such exalted spirits as Jeanne D’Arc and from scientific worthies like Benjamin Franklin. Still other mediums like T. L. Harris<sup>1</sup> dictated whole epic poems and lyrics while in the trance state. These poems of Harris were by no means lacking in literary merit,

---

<sup>1</sup> That plausible rogue who so despicably befooled Laurence Oliphant (q.v.).

although echoes of Shelley were frequent.

§ 13. Other trance speakers like Mrs. Cora Tappan regaled their audiences with fluent discourses on spiritualism and the progress of the soul in the spirit spheres. Mrs. Tappan appears to have been the American prototype of the Mrs. Meurig Morris of our own day. Like Mrs. Morris, she could preach from almost any text *extempore*, and like her she seldom descended to such vulgar detail as to discuss whether spirits eat and drink, whether they live in houses or what clothes they wear. Mrs. Tappan's effusions are full of a windy eloquence and remind one of the attempts of a clever but inexperienced schoolgirl who desires to write "something fine" but who has really nothing much to say.

§ 14. In general, it must be confessed that in the seventies the spirits seem to have been very reticent concerning the topography and domestic detail of the world beyond the grave. But the main outlines of their dogma may be briefly explained. A man is supposed to possess as well as his body of flesh and bone an "astral" or "fluid" body composed of a finer and more subtle kind of matter. At the death of the physical body the soul is supposed to exercise its functions through the vehicle of this "astral" body. The astral bodies of those who have led gross lives are said to consist of a grade of matter that is less refined than that which constitutes the fluid bodies of more spiritual souls. As the soul progresses towards moral perfection its "astral" body grows less dense and rises by some law of moral gravity to the higher spiritual spheres. This conception of the "astral" body was, of course, borrowed by Spiritualism from ancient Hindu philosophy.

§ 15. In the séance room—granting a sufficient absence of light—the spirits can clothe their "etheric" members with denser

matter drawn from the body of the medium and so render them visible or tangible, a process known as *materialization*. These materialized spirit hands were able to move objects in the darkness, to play musical instruments and to caress the sitters. In the early days of American spiritualism “physical” mediums gave their demonstrations frequently before large audiences in darkened halls. The “spirits” played guitars, violins and even pianos in the darkness: the mediums being absolutely free from all control. Not infrequently some hostile sceptic would flash a dark lantern upon the stage and the mediums would be revealed with the guitars and accordions in their hands or in the very act of playing the piano. Then pandemonium would break loose and the mediums would be lucky to escape with their skins unbroken.

§ 16. But there were also many private circles for physical phenomena at which only believers were welcomed. The most famous of these was held in the “spirit rooms” of Jonathan Koons away in the hills of Ohio. The mediums were Koons and his son Nahum, and the séance room was a log building. The mediums sat at a small table entirely uncontrolled, while the sitters to the number of twenty occupied benches facing the mediums. A dish containing wet phosphorus was provided; into this the “spirits” were alleged to dip their materialized hands which were then visible to the audience in the darkened room. Various musical instruments placed ready for the purpose were played by the spirits to such effect that the discordant din could be heard a mile away.

§ 17. There is hardly a phenomenon that has been reported in the last forty years—with the possible exception of the impression of spirit thumbs in wax and fully materialized human figures—but

has its prototype in those early days. In the case of the Koons manifestations, the controlling spirits claimed to be a race of pre-Adamite men one hundred and sixty-five in number.

§ 18. In the year 1853 Robert Hare, a professor of chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania, became interested in the alleged physical phenomena of spiritualism and actually devised some simple apparatus for demonstrating the action of supernormal force at a distance from the medium's body. Hare was thus the precursor of Crookes and Crawford and like them he seems to have paid little attention to the possibility of the medium's tampering with the apparatus by the normal use of his hands or feet. In all these early experiments the honesty of the medium was tacitly assumed.

§ 19. Another famous public man who about this time became interested in the new cult was Judge Edmonds, a lawyer of the Supreme Court in New York State. Edmonds, who appears to have suffered a good deal of persecution on account of his belief in spiritualism, possessed a daughter Laura, of whom it is alleged that she spoke words and sentences of foreign languages of which she was normally ignorant. Thus it is said that she spoke Polish in the presence of a Pole and Greek when a Greek gentleman was present. But no examples are recorded, and there is no proof that the lady did not know something of the languages in question. In fact, the evidence for what Professor Richet calls *Xenoglossie*, or the speaking in unknown tongues, is even more shadowy in the case of Laura Edmonds than it is in the case of the modern medium George Valiantine.

§ 20. Another almost incredible phenomenon was reported of the medium Henry Gordon. Dr. Halloch, at a meeting of the New

York conference, stated that on the previous Sunday afternoon, while he was giving a lecture, the medium Henry Gordon, who was seated at some distance in front of the lecturer in a well-lighted room, suddenly “rose in the air without any human aid, till the speaker beheld him floating so high that his feet just grazed the top of the seat, above which he hung in the air, where he swayed about from side to side, and turned partly around. By this time the attention of the entire congregation was riveted on him when he sank to the ground.” With regard to this incident, Podmore remarks that he was unable to find corroborative evidence by any other member of the audience, and further that there is no other reference to it in the literature of spiritualism.

§ 21. Another incident alleged to have occurred in a good light in the presence of several witnesses is the movement of a metal ring. It is said that the medium held her hand several inches above the ring, which was resting on the piano-lid. The ring rose in the air, followed the medium’s hand, and remained an instant motionless without visible support. It does not, however, seem to have occurred to any of the observers to discover whether there was a fine human hair attached to the ring! Such a hair would escape detection if the background of the experiment was properly chosen.

§ 22. The new movement, of course, possessed its fanatics who claimed knowledge both exclusive and superior to that held by the rank and file. There was, for example, in the town of Auburn a spiritualistic sect who obtained, by means of raps, messages purporting to come from St. Paul, the twelve Apostles and the prophet Daniel. This community afterwards settled in 1851 at Mountain Cove in Virginia.

§ 23. Again, there was the ludicrous case of the medium John M. Spear, who announced in 1854 that the “spirits” had formed a society of “Electrizers.” The “Electrizers” intended to communicate the principle of life to a machine made of copper and zinc which was to be worked by spiritual energy and which was to revolutionize human life on our planet. In order to effect this desirable consummation, the friends of the medium constructed some kind of mechanical device out of copper and zinc. A woman was found and she experienced imaginary pangs of child-labour, but the machine refused to come to life. In spite of all efforts it refused to budge, and was ultimately wrecked by an angry mob which broke into the building in which it was housed.

### **Early Spiritualism in England**

§ 24. In 1852 Mrs. Hayden, the first “rapping” medium, landed in England and gave sittings at half-a-guinea a head. In the same year a craze for table-turning started in France, and in the following year it spread to England. It was found that when four or five persons stood round a light circular table with their hands resting upon it, the table would tilt and sometimes rotate. The sense of the rotation conformed to the general expectation of the people standing around. If one half of the sitters expected it to rotate in a clockwise sense and the other half counterclockwise, the table would remain at rest. The great physicist Faraday showed by means of ingenious experiments that the movement of the table was caused by the unconscious muscular pressure of the hands resting on it.

§ 25. What Faraday did not explain, however, was why the table should tilt out (by the use of the alphabet) messages which were often quite unexpected by any of the people present. The name of a deceased person would be spelt out by the tilts when perhaps no one was thinking of this name. In denouncing the activities of the table-turners as puerile, Faraday and others did not realize that an epoch-making advance in human psychology was being inaugurated. Here were the first experimental proofs of the existence of a stream of mental activity flowing underneath the normal consciousness of waking life. To-day the existence of a “subconscious” mental activity has become such a commonplace idea that we forget how much psychology owes to the humble table-turners and automatic writers.

§ 26. In 1853 a French Committee presided over by Chevreul, a famous chemist, investigated the phenomena of table-turning and came to the conclusion that the movements of the divining-rod, of the *pendule explorateur* and of the tables were to be attributed to a single cause—namely, the effect of small unconscious muscular pressures. But here again Chevreul refused to admit that the messages ever showed any knowledge that was not in the conscious minds of the automatists themselves.

§ 27. The year 1855 was a landmark in the history of English spiritualism, for in that year Daniel Dunglas Hume (or Home), one of the most mysterious men of all time, visited England. Home, who was born in Scotland, had passed most of his life in America, and when he arrived in England was in his twenty-third year. In America, Home had developed as a physical medium and had produced the same sort of phenomena as we have described in our account of Koons’s spirit rooms. The playing of concertinas,

guitars, and the ringing of handbells, touches of “spirit” hands, the apparent levitation of tables, currents of cold air passing over the hands and faces of the sitters were among the phenomena he produced in a dim light or a darkened room.

§ 28. During his stay in England, Home, who was a man of great personal charm, moved in some of the best circles of society. He habitually interrupted his physical séances to deliver lofty moral discourses which appear to have profoundly affected his hearers. In his bearing Home affected the cultured man of the world; there was little about him that might suggest the common charlatan or vulgar paid medium. Nevertheless, Home managed to feather his nest by getting “adopted” by a wealthy widow who presented him with a sum of £24,000. This widow afterwards repented of her generosity, and in 1868 brought an action against her protégé alleging undue influence on Home’s part. This action she won, although Home was acquitted of any definite intention to defraud.

§ 29. Home’s outstanding reputation does not depend so much on the things that were alleged to occur in the darkened séance room as on the numerous inexplicable happenings which were witnessed in his presence in fairly good light.

§ 30. Thus Sir William Crookes records that on 30 July 1871, by the light of methylated-spirit lamps, Home was seen to rise in the air to the height of about 6 inches, remain there for about 10 seconds, and then slowly descend. Sir William himself did not see the medium’s feet while they were in the air, but reported that Mr. Walter Crookes actually saw his feet in the air. The movement, says Sir William, was a continuous glide upwards.

§ 31. The famous case of alleged levitation in which three witnesses of high social standing were convinced that Home was

carried through the air from the window of one upstairs room to reappear through the window of the adjoining room is so well known that I shall not attempt to describe it here.

§ 32. We shall probably never know the truth about this remarkable incident any more than we shall know the truth about Home's other phenomena. Probably Podmore's theory that Home habitually chose for his sitters individuals who were highly suggestible and on whose minds he could produce psychological illusions amounting almost to visual hallucination lies nearer the truth than any that has yet been put forward. It may perhaps be objected that Crookes, the eminent chemist, the discoverer of thallium and of the cathode rays, could not have been of this type. When Crookes saw Home take out of the fire a large piece of cinder and place the red-hot part on a handkerchief allowing it to rest there for half a minute without setting the handkerchief ablaze—it will be said that surely this was not an illusion. The answer is that conjurers who are experts in the art of misdirection and psychological deception have produced illusions quite as convincing as this one. It does not follow that because Crookes was an eminent chemist familiar with the properties of temperature and flame, he was equally versed in the arts of visual deception. He may have seen just what Home wanted him to see and no more. Moreover, it is now generally admitted by psychical researchers of any standing that Crookes was deceived in believing that Katie King was a spirit form distinct from Miss Florence Cook the medium. Personally, I think that Crookes may well have been in many directions a highly suggestible person.

§ 33. The handling of hot coals as practised by Home is perhaps not so remarkable a feat as at first sight appears. There is often on

the hot cinder a protective layer of non-conducting ash, and if the coal is expertly handled the red-hot part may never come into contact with the skin. At one sitting the Earl of Dunraven reports that kneeling down before the fire Home” placed his face right among the burning coals, moving it about as though bathing it in water.” But here again we do not know precisely the sort of fire into which Home so boldly placed his head. We are told that he had first “stirred the embers into a flame,” but we are not told what sort of a flame.

§ 34. Nevertheless, when all is said, it is difficult to apply Podmore’s conjecture to all the mysterious occurrences that were alleged to happen in the presence of Home. For example, Dr. Thomas Hawksley reports that he visited Home one day in the company of a friend. In broad daylight this friend stood on a heavy centre-claw table and the table was lifted 8 inches into the air. Dr. Hawksley put his hand under the castors and verified that the legs were really off the ground. I cannot with Podmore suppose that Dr. Hawksley here suffered from an illusion of *memory* merely because he reported the event years after it actually occurred. Normal individuals of scientific training are not as a rule deceived by their memories to this extent. Cases of this kind, moreover, are not rare in the extensive literature of Home’s mediumship. The case of Home remains and seems destined to remain one of the unsolved riddles of psychical research.

### Early Materialization Phenomena

§ 35. The alleged appearance of a full-fledged solid and tangible spirit form wearing clothes was first noted in America at a séance in which one of the Fox sisters was the medium. At this séance, held in 1860, a “veiled and luminous female figure” was seen to walk round the room. In the six years that followed, Kate Fox produced hundreds of materializations purporting to be the spirit of the deceased wife of Mr. Livermore, a New York banker. At these séances, which were held in total darkness and generally in the sole presence of Mr. Livermore and the medium, a luminous figure would appear: this the banker professed to recognize as his deceased wife.

§ 36. In 1872 the notorious Mrs. Guppy started the ball rolling in England by sitting inside a cupboard and causing to appear and disappear at an aperture a small white head. As Podmore aptly remarks, the performance seems to have been of the nature of a Punch and Judy show and was not particularly convincing. But the next eight years saw a veritable epidemic of full-form “materializations “ produced in fairly good light. Farcical as these performances were, some brief description of them must be given. In one corner of the room would be placed a cabinet or upright wooden box, supplied sometimes with folding doors; on other occasions, a curtain would be hung across a corner of the room. The medium would retire inside the cabinet or behind the curtain. The sitters, who were nearly always convinced believers, would sit in a circle at some distance from the curtain. The medium would be fully dressed and tied to her chair by one of the sitters. The lights would be turned low. Presently some white drapery would

make its appearance in the aperture of the curtains or folding doors. This would disappear and reappear. In the event of no sceptics being present a form dressed in white drapery and with swathed head would emerge and slowly promenade the room, sometimes caressing a sitter. It would then disappear into the cabinet. After a short interval the sitters would examine the cabinet and find the medium apparently asleep dressed as at the beginning and still tied to her chair.

§ 37. Very occasionally a sceptic would gain admission to these sittings and seize the supposed spirit. Whereupon the white drapery would fall to the floor and the sceptic would find himself embracing the medium. All sorts of absurd hypotheses were invented by the spiritualists in order to show that the exposure was not an exposure. They even went so far as to suggest that the spirit form and the medium were connected by a kind of elastic band. When the spirit form was seized this band immediately contracted and the spirit form instantly coalesced with the body of the medium! In other words, the medium's body flew to join that of the spirit and merge with it. To explain away the existence of the white drapery it was suggested that this, unlike the spirit body itself, was not "materialized" but introduced by the spirits by supernatural means from, say, some draper's shop.

§ 38. Now it must be emphasized that the famous case of Florence Cook, the materializing medium examined by Sir William Crookes, does not differ fundamentally from that of half a dozen other mediums whose puerile performances I have summed up in the last paragraph. There was the same lack of control of the medium in the cabinet; there was the same absence of any attempt to search the medium before the séance for hidden drapery; there

was the same close resemblance between the faces of the medium and of the spirit form. All that Crookes had to rely on are certain séances in which he claimed to see the figure of the spirit Katie King standing beside the huddled form of Miss Cook lying on the floor. [I am speaking here of the séances held in Crookes's own house.] Now Crookes admitted that on these occasions he and the other observers never saw the *face* of Miss Cook. Apparently all they saw was a heap of clothes and a pair of boots. As regards the boots it must be remembered that Katie the spirit always appeared barefoot.

§ 39. The two séances on 29 March 1874 and 21 May of the same year at which Crookes obtained indisputable evidence that the figure on the floor and Katie were distinct human beings were unfortunately both held at Miss Cook's own house, and seem to have been deliberately staged by the medium herself in order to produce final conviction in Crookes's mind. Under the circumstances it would be probably easy for Miss Cook to arrange for a confederate to be introduced—a young girl resembling herself—to personate the entranced Miss Cook. The final disappearance of the spirit on 21 May strongly suggests that things were getting too hot for the medium and that she could not hope to deceive Crookes much longer. Six years later Miss Cook, then Mrs. Corner, was seized while impersonating a spirit.

§ 40. In April, 1934, four photographs of the "spirit" Katie King taken by Crookes himself were published for the first time. They reveal a very modern-looking young woman wearing a white dress and a head-covering of the same material. It is indeed difficult to believe that any person could be deceived by so obvious an imposture as is presented to us by these photographs.

§ 41. The case of Crookes is doubtless one for the psychoanalyst. The only solution I can suggest is a sexual one. Did the imagination of the great chemist succeed in transforming the face of this very ordinary-looking young woman into that of an angelic being who inspired love and reverence? Was Crookes in love with “Katie King” and did his love blind him to the grossest forms of imposture and cause him to overlook the most elementary precaution? It would almost seem so.

**Part II:**  
**The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism**

***Telekinetic Phenomena***

§ 1. By *Telekinesis* is understood the movement of objects placed at a distance from the medium's body by the action of forces at present unknown to science. Thus, if a medium is able to cause a curtain to sway by what appears to be a jet of air impinging upon it we could consider this to be a genuine case of telekinesis only if we were able to exclude every known means by which such a current of air could be generated. The main difficulty experienced by competent observers in testing the reality of such phenomena arises out of the fact that they almost always occur in a feeble light or in absolute darkness.

§ 2. It is true that there are isolated cases which have been reported to occur in broad daylight. We have mentioned one such alleged case with the medium D. D. Home. A similar case was reported with the medium Eusapia Palladino. Professor Charles Richet and F. Brodie Lodge, a son of Sir Oliver Lodge, declare that in the year 1899 they saw in front of the Château de Carquéiranne a table weighing 48 lb. rise 2 feet into the air in broad daylight. The medium Eusapia was seated in front of the table with both hands held, and when it was well up in the air all the people present, including the medium, stood back from it. Professor Richet passed his hands under and all round the table and satisfied himself that nothing visible was holding it up. Lodge's account is written from memory, but it is hard to believe that the observers should have been deceived in such an affair in

broad daylight, unless we assume that Eusapia was able to hallucinate them all at the same time—a supposition which to me seems even more improbable than the alleged levitation itself.

§ 3. Nevertheless, such isolated cases produce but small conviction in the minds of scientific men with regard to the general question of the existence of telekinesis. They demand that examples shall be produced in a séance-room fitted up with the most up-to-date recording apparatus and under conditions of unexceptionable control of both medium and sitters. The nature of this control varies with the type of the phenomena which are being examined. Thus with a medium like Willi Schneider, whose chief phenomena consisted in the alleged supernormal movements of objects placed inside a gauze cage, it was not considered necessary by Baron Schrenck-Notzing or E. J. Dingwall to institute a minute preliminary search of the medium's rectum, stomach, nasal cavities, etc., since obviously small objects secreted in such places would have been of no use to him in the séance-room where he was unable to free his hands or feet. But if the medium had, like Eva Carrière, claimed to extrude teleplasm from his body, such a minute search by a competent medical man would have been imperative. Hence, in testing Willi Schneider for telekinesis, a less vigorous search was made, after which he was told to undress and put on black tights, slippers and a dressing-gown, all of which had been subjected to careful inspection by the observers—in this case Baron Schrenck-Notzing, E. J. Dingwall and Harry Price.

§ 4. While the medium is in the séance-room the continuous control of his hands and legs is vital. In a modern séance two persons are usually employed to effect this control. One person

sits directly opposite the medium and holds both his hands, at the same time resting a stockinged foot on each of the medium's feet. A second person sits by the side of the medium facing the horseshoe formation of sitters and holds the medium's forearms over which luminous bracelets have been passed just above the wrists. The sitters in the horseshoe formation usually join hands so that the only person with a free hand is the person at the extreme end of the circle farthest from the medium. This person usually controls the red light which by means of a rheostat can be varied in intensity. The objects to be moved are often placed on a table surrounded by a cage of fine gauze stretched on a wooden framework, the objects such as handbells, etc., being provided with luminous bands.

§ 5. The conditions described above are very roughly those which prevailed in 1922 in Baron Schrenck-Notzing's laboratory at Munich where the medium Willi Schneider was tested for telekinesis. At some séances witnessed by E. J. Dingwall and Harry Price in May 1922, a table weighing about 33 lb. was observed to rock violently inside the gauze case at a distance of about 3 feet from the controlled medium. A handbell outside the cage and at a distance of 2 feet from the medium was observed to rise in the air to the height of about 3 1/2 feet. The bell hung in the air for some seconds and then commenced ringing loudly. At times the luminous band on the bell was partly hidden as though some hand were holding it. A small wicker table at least 4 feet away from the medium was completely lifted from the floor to the height of a foot. It was again noticed that a luminous bracelet on this table was sometimes obscured as though something opaque was lifting the table. A musical box, previously examined by Dingwall

and Price, was wound up by Baron Schrenck-Notzing and placed on the table in the gauze cage. The music could be stopped by a lever. When Dingwall told the music to stop it stopped; it obeyed the voice of Price also. Thus it appeared that the lever was operated by some telekinetic force inside the cage. In one séance of this series, a white handkerchief placed on the floor near some black curtains was, by the light of a red lamp, seen to rise up and to remain suspended in the air, "as if supported by two fingers." On one occasion violent thumps were produced on one side of a board held about 4 feet from the ground by two of the experimenters, the side of the board away from the medium being luminous.

§ 6. Such were a few of the remarkable phenomena observed by Messrs. Dingwall and Price, two of the greatest authorities in the world in this department of psychical research. They were unanimous in the conclusion that the medium himself could not have normally produced these movements and levitations at the distances described. The only loophole left for sceptics was to assume that a confederate was able to gain access to the room by means of secret trap-doors, etc. But no such trap-doors could be discovered by a careful search of the premises. Later on Willi Schneider was tested in the séance-room of the Society for Psychical Research under even more rigorous conditions. Similar phenomena were observed by Messrs. Dingwall and Woolley, although these were less pronounced in intensity. In this case the possibility of a confederate entering the séance-room was absolutely ruled out since the room has no window and only one door (which, moreover, was sealed). The only resource left for Dingwall was to assume that one of his fellow investigators, say

Mr. W. H. Salter, was producing the movements of objects—a suggestion so ridiculous that it cannot be seriously entertained. Subsequently Dingwall had Willi Schneider as an inmate of his house for several weeks and found apparently that when the control was tightened up no phenomena occurred. He seems also to have noted one or two suspicious happenings which led him to modify his former belief in the genuine nature of Willi's phenomena. But it may well be that Willi's powers were declining at this period, and that rather than disappoint Dingwall with negative séances he may have resorted to trickery. His powers now appear to have disappeared completely. A similar decline seems to have set in with Willi's brother Rudi, another famous telekinetic medium. Indeed, it seems exceedingly difficult to doubt the genuineness of Willi's earlier phenomena in view of the exact description of the conditions of the séances attended by Dingwall.

§ 7. A man named Kraus deceived Baron Schrenck-Notzing by fraudulently producing phenomena which he claimed to be somewhat similar to those produced by Willi Schneider. The writer saw a demonstration given by Kraus at the S.P.R. rooms. Kraus, whose hands and feet were controlled after a fashion, managed to insert his head into the aperture of a cage and so knock over certain objects inside the cage. But it would be absurd to compare this crude performance with such phenomena as were observed by Dingwall and Price at Munich. It was very unfortunate that Baron Schrenck-Notzing should have been deceived by such common tricksters as Kraus and Schlag; the man in the street who is totally ignorant of the technique of the telekinetic séance and unable to appreciate the difference between two such totally different performances as those of Kraus and Willi

Schneider argues illogically that, since Baron Schrenck-Notzing was deceived by Kraus, therefore Schneider's phenomena were also fraudulent.

§ 8. Even more elaborate were the precautions taken by Mr. Harry Price in his investigation of Rudi Schneider. Mr. Price, the founder of the National Laboratory for Psychical Research and now the Honorary Secretary of the University of London Council for Psychical Investigation, began his career in the study of physical mediumship with the advantage of a lifelong study of the arts of illusion. He was at one time Chairman of the Magic Circle.

§ 9. Mr. Price first became convinced of the reality of telekinesis by his investigation of a private medium, a young girl of good education known as Miss Stella C., with whom experiments were conducted partly in good red light and partly in darkness. Price constructed many ingenious instrumental devices for testing the reality of telekinesis. One of these he called the "telekinetoscope." This consisted of a brass cup, inside of which was a small contact flap which was connected by insulated leads to a small red electric lamp, a battery being included in the circuit. The lamp could be lighted only when pressure was exerted on the contact flap inside the cup. The top of the cup was covered by a strong soap-film so that the contact flap was protected from any fraudulent interference from without. Nevertheless, under these conditions the lamp was seen to light several times during the séance, the soap-film being found intact. Whether the telekinetic force passed through the soap-film or the metal cup is not clear. The only way in which I can imagine this control to be evaded is by some sitter short-circuiting the apparatus by means of pins stuck into the heavily insulated leads.

§ 10. Another ingenious device used by Price was a pair of tables, one of which fitted inside the other, the outer table being enclosed by trellis work and the inner table being provided by a shelf on which small objects could be placed. The tops of the tables were concentric squares in the same horizontal plane, and a circular trap-door was constructed in the top of the inner table. This trapdoor could be opened upwards only by a force exerted from within. It was therefore impossible for the sitters resting their hands on the outer table to tamper with any of the small objects enclosed within the trellis or to raise the trap-door. Yet under these circumstances chords were blown upon a mouth-organ placed inside the trellis, a trumpet inside the trellis was blown; the hinged flap in the table top was opened and closed several times and a rubber dog handed out through the trap-door.

§ 11. Other phenomena observed with Stella C. were blue flashes of light sometimes accompanied by a crackling sound above the head of the medium or even inside the trellis. By means of a recording thermometer Price showed that during the sitting there was a fall in temperature of several degrees. It is, however, possible that the telekinetic forces may themselves have tampered with the pin of the thermometer. Raps were heard on the table and apparently on more distant objects. By calling over the alphabet Price showed that the telekinetic forces were accompanied with intelligence since appropriate messages were spelled out by the raps. Unfortunately after her marriage Miss Stella C. could not be prevailed upon to continue these interesting experiments.

§ 12. Rudi Schneider, the brother of the famous Willi Schneider, is said to have produced telekinetic phenomena at 11

years of age in the year 1919. The two brothers hail from Braunau, a little Austrian town about 70 miles from Munich. Since the year 1921 Rudi appears to have given a large number of sittings to various investigators, producing phenomena similar in nature to those of his brother. Professors Karl Prozibram and Stefan Meyer, after witnessing Rudi's manifestations in 1924, claimed to have themselves arranged mock séances at which the same phenomena were imitated fraudulently. But since they gave no detailed account of the conditions prevailing at these mock séances, not much weight could be attached to the exposure. Dr. Prince, the well-known American researcher, had ten sittings in 1927 at Stuttgart and came away unconvinced. In 1926 Mr. W. J. Vinton sat several times with Rudi at the latter's home in Braunau and came to the conclusion that the movements of objects were fraudulently produced by other members of the Schneider family concealed in the room. In 1927 Mr. Malcolm Bird, the editor of *The Scientific American*, also had a sitting at Braunau and came to the same conclusion of a conspiracy of fraud.

§ 13. In 1929 Mr. Harry Price had a number of sittings with Rudi at the National Laboratory of Psychical Research in which not only the medium but all the sitters were controlled by an electrical device that had been first used by Baron Schrenck-Notzing. All the sitters had their hands fixed inside metal gloves and their feet resting on metal plates. An electrical circuit was thus formed in such a way that if a sitter let go his neighbours' glove or raised his foot from a plate, a tell-tale lamp would at once begin to glow. As the principal charge directed against Rudi's mediumship was the suggestion that he was assisted by other persons, this new method which Price substituted for the old

method of holding hands was designed as a check on the sitters themselves. (The writer did not see this apparatus, which, though it possibly had defects, was certainly a step in the right direction.) Remarkable telekinetic phenomena were photographed by flashlight. Objects such as baskets were levitated and knots tied in a handkerchief.

§ 14. At a further series of sittings at the National Laboratory, Mr. Price abandoned this system of electrical control and reverted to the older method of linked hands. At these sittings, minute by minute records were dictated to a stenographer who was enclosed in a gauze cage. Levitations of the handkerchief and movements of a basket were again observed. One of the photographs taken unfortunately revealed the medium with a hand free from control and behind him.

§ 15. Between 10 October and 14 November 1930 Rudi gave a series of sittings at the Institut Metapsychique, Paris, during the course of which the director, Dr. E. Osty, claimed to have made some revolutionary discoveries. Over the handkerchief to be levitated on the séance table was directed a beam of infra-red light which fell upon a photo-electric cell. This cell was connected in an electric circuit with an electric bell. If a person placed his hand in this beam of light so as to obstruct it the resistance of the cell would be lowered and the bell begin to ring. The object of this device was to prevent Rudi or any person from fraudulently lifting the handkerchief. Osty, of course, assumed that probably the invisible telekinetic force would not obstruct the beam, whereas a solid object interposed would be immediately detected. Instead of a bell a flash-light apparatus and cameras could be introduced into the circuit so that when the infra-red beam was interrupted to

such an extent that at least 30 per cent. was absorbed or refracted, the flash would be ignited and photographs taken of the space surrounding the handkerchief. For many sittings nothing happened, but during the fourteenth sitting the beam of infra-red was on two occasions obstructed and the flashlight automatically operated. When Osty examined the photographs he found to his amazement that no solid object such as a hand was seen to be obstructing the beam. He thus came to the conclusion that some substance invisible to the eye of the camera had forced its way into the beam and that this substance was able to absorb or refract at least 30 per cent, of the rays. During the next sitting, Osty replaced the flashlight apparatus by an electric bell in the infra-red circuit and this bell was heard to ring several times for as long as a minute and a half. When the bell rang Osty took flashlight photographs, but again no solid substance revealed itself as obstructing the beam. It was next found that the medium Rudi was able to prophesy when the invisible substance was about to enter the beam. By means of a very sensitive galvanometer registering small changes in the resistance of the photo-electric cell, Osty found that the invisible substance oscillated in and out of the beam at a rate varying from 120 to 420 pulsations per minute.

§ 16. One remarkable feature of Rudi's mediumship is the abnormally rapid rate of his respiration while in the alleged trance. His normal rate of breathing is about 12 to 14 per minute, but in the trance it varied from 120 to 300 per minute and was of a peculiarly noisy nature. Osty, by means of a pneumograph, was able to show that the rate of pulsation of the invisible substance was exactly double Rudi's rate of respiration. Osty's publication of these researches naturally created a lively interest in scientific

circles. Criticism was directed towards the unconvincing manner in which Dr. Osty had presented his report. Names of sitters were not given nor their positions in the séance-room, etc., and a suspected person appears to have been allowed to enter certain of the séances.

§ 17. Mr. Harry Price in 1932 obtained what he at first thought to be confirmation of Osty's theories of the obstruction of the beam by an invisible substance, but when he installed more sensitive apparatus the result were entirely negative. Lord Charles Hope, working in conjunction with Mr. C. V. C. Herbert and other scientists, obtained results which they considered favourable to Osty's claims. The laboratory in which they worked with Ruth was unfortunately situated close to heavy traffic and subject to strong vibrations which may have affected the sensitive galvanometers employed.

§ 18. Between October 1933 and March 1934 Ruth gave a series of fifty sittings in the séance room of the Society for Psychical Research. Very elaborate infra-red ray apparatus was installed by Mr. Oliver Gatty working with the assistance of Mr. Theodore Besterman. In their report the conditions obtaining at the experiments are most carefully described. No telekinetic phenomena of any kind were observed nor any absorption of the infra-red rays. Every chance seems to have been given Rudi to produce his phenomena under rigid but sympathetic conditions. It was found, by a chemical analysis of the expired air, that Rudi's rapid but shallow breathing involves no more exertion than a normal man undergoes while walking at 4 miles per hour. Mr. Gatty successfully imitated the breathing and showed that it is more spectacular than abnormal. It was further shown by Mr. Whately

Carington, using the psycho-galvanic-reflex, that the medium's spirit control "Olga," who claims to be the ghost of a Spanish dancing-girl, Lola Montez, is in reality indistinguishable in psychological make-up from Rudi himself. Thus the phenomena attributed to Ruth Schneider still await confirmation.

It should be added that the violent spasms and contortions of the medium during the alleged trance, the forced gaiety of the sitters, the loud singing demanded by "Olga," the control, and the noisy breathing all combine to produce an atmosphere that must be very unfavourable to exact scientific observation.

### ***Teleplasm and Telekinetic Structures***

§ 19. *Teleplasm* or *Ectoplasm* is a baffling substance which is said to be extruded from the mouth, ears, nostrils, or genitals of certain mediums. In the descriptions given by different observers of the appearance of this substance there is no uniformity whatever. The alleged teleplasm photographed by the late Dr. Crawford looked like white chiffon and was said to exude from the genitals of the medium, Miss Kathleen Goligher. That produced by the medium Eva Carrière resembled flat sheets of paper in which folds and cracks could often be distinguished. The teleplasm of the American medium "Margery" had the appearance of animal lung-tissue and was declared to be such by Harvard experts. The teleplasm which exuded from the mouth of the fraudulent Mrs. Duncan had the appearance of cheese-cloth soaked in fat and undoubtedly was cheese-cloth.

§ 20. Some observers describe the substance as being inert while others declare that it squirms and wriggles. It is said to be plastic, to mould itself into hands and heads and even into the

complete forms of animals and human beings. It can also organize itself into rigid rods which are used to produce loud raps and into cantilevers which support heavy tables in the air. In fact, the variety of its functions is as amazing as the alterations in its appearance. It is a most chameleon-like form of matter. And, strange to say, all mediums who produce it are sooner or later accused of fraud. One of the teleplasms produced by Eva Carrière appeared to be a sheet of paper which bore the printed characters LE MIRO, the rest of the word MIROIR being hidden by the medium's head. Other photographed examples appeared to contain portraits of Poincaré, President Wilson, the King of Bulgaria, and others, all apparently cut out of the same French newspaper *Le Miroir*. Baron Schrenck-Notzing tried to show that the search and medical examination of Eva was so rigid that these apparent newspaper cuttings *must* have been genuine teleplasms. He also maintained that they were different in appearance from real newspaper cuttings surrounded by muslin. It cannot be said, however, that his arguments produced much conviction. The late Dr. Geley also experimented with Eva C., and though he assured us that the medium's hands were always held and in sight during the production of the teleplasm, yet in the only four published photographs which show *both* hands, no less than three of these show Eva with both hands free! Such facts as these indicate just how much value is to be attached to the assertions of experimenters that a medium is rigorously controlled.

§ 21. Under the name of Marthe Béraud, Eva C. had materialized for Professor Richet at Algiers a complete Egyptian princess, who allowed Richet to cut a piece from her hair! But during his investigation of Eva C., Baron Schrenck-Notzing

refrained from informing the world that his medium was none other than the notorious Marthe Béraud of shady reputation.

§ 22. It is said that the Polish medium Kluski materialized not only solid, speaking human beings, but also birds and a hairy beast christened *Pithecanthropus*, who used to lick the sitters' faces in the darkness. Kluski's human forms were also able to dip their hands in melted wax and withdraw them, leaving behind wax gloves. In recent years it has been fully demonstrated that such gloves can be imitated by normal means. If we compare these full-blooded solid forms attributed to Kluski with the two-dimensional figures and immobile parchment-like faces produced by Eva C., we must either give up all hope of ever understanding such irreconcilable protean phenomena or arrive at the more rational conclusion that both Kluski and Eva Carrière have, despite all alleged precautions taken, succeeded in introducing material into the séance room by fraud.

### ***Telekinetic Structures***

§ 23. The late Dr. W. J. Crawford, a lecturer in Mechanical Engineering at Belfast, spent six years (1914-20) in attempting to elucidate the mechanics of table levitation. The medium was Miss Kathleen Goligher and the circle of sitters consisted of the medium's three sisters, brother, father and brother-in-law. This circle sat holding hands in chain order in a dim red light, forming a ring of about 5 feet in diameter, the table which weighed about 8 lb. being placed in the centre of the ring. Thus, with seven possible mediums to control (i.e. 14 legs) and his apparatus to look after, did Crawford single-handed commence his hopeless task. By placing the medium's chair on a weighing machine he observed

that when the table was levitated, the weight recorded was increased by the weight of the table, thus showing that the table was supported by some structure rigidly attached to the medium's body. This structure, Crawford maintained, was a psychic cantilever emanating from the lower part of the medium's body and packed with matter drawn from the medium in a form unknown to science. The same increase in weight would of course have been recorded if the medium were supporting the table with her foot. According to the replies of the invisible operators who answered Crawford's questions by means of raps, this cantilever had a diameter of about 4 inches and proceeded almost horizontally from the medium's body until it was under the table, at which point it formed a right-angled bend upwards and expanded into a mushroom-shaped head covering almost the entire undersurface of the table. At the point where the column of the cantilever left the medium's body its diameter was increased to about 7 inches.

§ 24. This simple type of cantilever was (according to the "spirits") used only for raising comparatively light bodies like the 8-lb. table. When a heavier table was to be raised the invisible "operators" claimed that they first threw out from the medium's body a downward strut whose end rested on the floor; from this point on the floor the "spirits" built up another upward sloping column whose end supported the table. Thus the weight of the table was in this case taken by the floor and the medium and her chair on the weighing machine would show a *decrease* in weight owing to the upward reaction on her body of the vertical component of thrust from the psychic strut. The horizontal component of this same reaction would tend to push her chair

backwards along the floor. By mounting the medium's seat on a pair of bicycle wheels, Crawford claimed to have verified the last effect. He claimed also to be able to locate the point at which the invisible strut rested on the floor by using a spring-pressure contact inserted in an electric circuit with an electric bell which was heard to ring continuously when the correct point on the floor was located.

§ 25. On one occasion Crawford asked the operators to take out of the medium's body as much "psychic matter" as they were able and to lay it on the floor without building up any cantilever. The "spirits" gave three raps when this was supposed to be done, and it was found that the weight of the medium whose chair was on the weighing machine, had decreased by about 54 lb.

§ 26. Although these rods and cantilevers packed with matter were generally invisible in the dim red light, yet on occasions they could be photographed by flashlight. These photographs, published after Crawford's untimely death in the summer of 1920, reveal loops and bands of a soft white muslin-like substance which unfortunately are not consistent with Crawford's previous descriptions of the struts, cantilevers, etc. Moreover, none of the photographs show the table with its four legs completely off the floor.

§ 27. After Dr. Crawford's suicide in 1920, the investigation of Kathleen Goligher was continued by Dr. Fournier D'Albe for about 4 months. This investigator appears to have made up his mind that he was being tricked by the various members of the Goligher family. Beyond noting one or two suspicious incidents, Fournier D'Albe obtained results that were almost entirely negative. This is very unfortunate. If I had had charge of the

Goligher investigation I should first have gained the confidence of the family and then have proceeded *to repeat all Crawford's results under his own lax conditions*. I should then have gradually modified those conditions by introducing new apparatus in such a way as not to arouse the suspicions of the medium and her relatives. By this means I should have discovered *why* Crawford obtained the results he did. It is far from certain that all Crawford's results were due to fraud on the part of Miss Goligher and her family. All we can truly say is that Crawford's results were obtained under hopeless conditions. No one can say what the people seated round that table were doing with their legs and hands. If the table-levitations were fraudulent, then almost certainly the raps were fraudulent and the theories of the psychic cantilever must be ascribed to the more intelligent members of the family. These members would therefore know the various reactions that ought to be observed when the medium was seated on the bicycle wheels and weighing-machine, and, being uncontrolled, they could assist in the fraudulent production of such expected reactions.

### ***Spirit Lights***

§ 28. Numerous mediums have produced luminous phenomena either by fraud or by supernormal means. Dr. Speer reports that at the séances of Stainton Moses, he saw between thirty and forty luminous balls about as big as apples rise from the floor. Podmore believed these to be glass globes filled with phosphorous oil. It appears that one day there was an accident, for Stainton Moses himself describes how he suddenly found himself enveloped in clouds of smoke and rushed out of the room in a panic. He noticed

a strong smell of phosphorus. This incident appears to be the basis of Podmore's conjecture. Similar globes of light were seen by Lord Adare with the medium Home. Eusapia Palladino produced various kinds of lights, some of which resembled the sparks from an electric machine.

§ 29. Phosphorescent lights were seen by the writer at the séances of the American medium, Amy Burton, who visited this country under the pseudonym Ada Bessinet in 1921. These lights appeared suddenly in the darkness in quick succession, rising and disappearing. They were clearly reflected in the polished surface of the table around which we were sitting. Dr. Hyslop confessed that he was totally unable to imitate these lights by any means known to him and, in fact, they were the only phenomena observed with this medium that appeared to be genuine. She was, in fact, an hysterical subject who, uncontrolled in any way, used to go into a state of self-hypnosis and to move tambourines and other objects in the dark. It is doubtful if she was consciously fraudulent.

§ 30. Bluish flashes of light were often observed in the vicinity of the medium Frau Silbert, who sat in a good red light. These flashes were probably fraudulent, for they could be imitated by rubbing ferro-cerium on the fingers. The other phenomena produced by this medium, who was totally uncontrolled, consisted in the scratching of the name of the medium's control, "Nell," on cigarette-cases, etc., placed under the table by the sitters at the beginning of the séance. These objects were then thrown up into the medium's lap. As it was impossible to see what was going on in the darkness beneath the table, there is every reason to believe that the medium freed a foot from one of her shoes and manipulated the engraving tool with her toes, afterwards jerking

the object into her lap. "Spirit hands" would often seize the skirts of the ladies from underneath the table, but if one ventured to look downwards the tugs at the skirts would cease. Such is the devastating effect of human eyesight!

§ 31. The writer also observed lights at the séances of Mrs. Blanche Cooper. These would vary in appearance from vague amorphous patches to bright bluish disks about the size of a half-crown. They never remained stationary. I am fairly certain that this luminosity was on the finger-tips of the medium's right hand, which was free, for the dark outlines of three or four fingers appeared sometimes against the light. It could probably have been fraudulently produced by rubbing phosphorus on the fingers. As the mental phenomena exhibited by this medium were undoubtedly genuine it is just possible that the luminosity was also supernormally produced. It has proved impossible to examine "spirit" lights by means of the spectroscope as they do not remain still enough for observation.

§ 32. In the case of certain mediums, the lights have been definitely proved to be fraudulent. Thus Mr. Price found that the medium P. Erto produced lights by rubbing ferro-cerium on his fingers. When his hands were fastened inside wooden boxes no lights appeared. Moreover, ferro-cerium was found on the floor next morning: but the bluish flashes produced in the vicinity of Stella C. are worth recording as possibly genuine luminous phenomena of a supernormal nature.

### ***Spirit-Photography***

§ 33. There is perhaps no phase of mediumship to which spiritualists cling more tenaciously than the alleged appearance,

on photographic plates, of the faces of deceased persons, and we may add that for no class of phenomena is the evidence more contemptible. A person visits one of these photographic mediums taking with him an unopened packet of plates which he himself has purchased. He may even sign his name on the plate before it is put into the slide so as to be able to recognize it as the same plate after the process of developing. The camera having been loaded, the sitter poses for his photograph. The medium will even allow him to develop the plate in the dark room. After development there will usually be seen on the plate what is known as an "extra." By this is meant that by the side of the sitter's head will be seen another human face with perhaps rather blurred features. This face may or may not be surrounded by what appears to be a mass of cotton wool. The sitter is perhaps mourning the loss of a wife or a brother. Into the vague features of the spirit "extra" his imagination will read a likeness to the lineaments of the dear departed one. After a time his memory of the deceased relative will grow more and more distorted until he identifies it with the face on the photograph. A disinterested person, on being shown the psychic "extra" and an actual photo of the deceased, will perhaps notice very little real resemblance, but the sitter sees what he desires to see. But if the sitter is an acute and experienced observer he will have noticed that at some stage in the production of the photograph the medium will have handled the plate or the loaded slide even though it may be but for a few seconds. It is during those few seconds that the psychic "extra" is fraudulently produced.

§ 34. Like most other spiritualistic phenomena, spirit-photography hails from America. The first photographic medium

of whom I can find any account is a man named Mumler of Boston, U.S.A., to whose rooms spiritualists came in the year 1862 in order to obtain spirit photographs of their deceased relatives. It was found, however, that certain of the “extras” which had done duty for various deceased persons were in reality the likeness of a living person whom Mumler had apparently “ posed” for the spirit.

§ 35. In 1872 there appeared in England a spirit photographer named Hudson who worked apparently in conjunction with the medium Mrs. Guppy of “translation” fame. Hudson, it would seem, used the method of “double-exposure” to produce his extras, since in some photos the patterns of a carpet showed through the body of the sitter. In other extras the medium himself had posed for the spirit.

§ 36. Far more important, however, was the case of the French photographer Buguet who came to London in 1874. Buguet obtained spirit extras of a large number of well-known spiritualists such as the deceased Alan Kardec. He also claimed to have obtained on a plate a photo of the spiritualist Stainton Moses while the latter was still alive but said to be in a trance. But Buguet’s fame rested chiefly on the large number of recognitions of his spirit extras claimed by living relatives of the deceased. In June 1875 Buguet was arrested in France for fraudulent practices, and the police discovered in his studio a large stock of heads used for the production of spirit extras. At the trial Buguet made a full confession of his frauds. In spite of this confession, numerous individuals who were called as witnesses protested vehemently that the photos Buguet had produced were genuine likenesses of their deceased friends. Even when Buguet himself stated

emphatically that a certain likeness, which a sitter claimed as genuine, was due to pure chance, the sitter refused to believe that this was so. As in the case of every spirit photographer of which we have record, the spiritualists refused to believe that Buguet was not a genuine medium and even suggested that he had been bribed by the Jesuits to make a bogus confession. So hard does spirit photography die!

§ 37. Passing over such mediums as Bournnell, whose work showed definite signs of the use of double-exposure, we come to the most important spirit-photographer who has practised after the great European War—William Hope of Crewe. Hope, an extremely uneducated man, a carpenter by trade, was assisted by a working woman, Mrs. Buxton, the pair constituting what was known as the “Crewe Circle.” There is little reason to believe that Mrs. Buxton took any part in the fraudulent manipulations attributed to Hope. She was merely present at the sittings to provide the “psychic power” said to be necessary for the production of the spirit extras, and she may even have sincerely believed that Hope was genuine. Hope began his career, apparently, by using the method of double exposure. Until the year 1922 all the extras appear as heads swathed in large masses of cotton wool. Many of these extras were identified as copies of photos published in newspapers and magazines, and while the cotton-wool effect was claimed to represent “ectoplasm” its real use seems to have been to disguise the edges of the cutting. In the opinion of Mr. Fred Barlow, who had many hundreds of sittings with Hope, the medium first cut out the photo from the newspaper, surrounded the cutting with a halo of cotton wool, and then photographed the ensemble against a carefully prepared

background. While the sitters' attention was momentarily distracted in the dark room, Hope would substitute this prepared plate for the one chosen by the sitter from his own packet. In some cases the sitter may even have signed the prepared plate under the impression that he was signing the plate he had brought. The photos taken from the newspapers would generally be those of notable spiritualists or other well-known people. Hope no doubt applied the same method to actual photos of deceased persons when he was able to obtain them. The prepared plate, after substitution, was of course placed in the camera and used to take a photo of the sitter.

§ 38. Mr. Barlow and Major Rampling Rose obtained very clear evidence that this method was actually used by Hope prior to 1922. When a photographic plate is put into a dark slide it does not fit exactly, i.e. there is some play for movement. Consequently, as the plate is protected at the edges from the action of light by the rebates of the slide, the unexposed edges are marked by fairly definite lines. Hence, owing to this play of movement, it is extremely difficult to put the same plate a second time into the same slide so that it will occupy exactly the same position as on the first occasion. Hence, when the plate is exposed a second time, there will be a double exposure line. In this way an expert photographer like Mr. Barlow or Major Rampling Rose can often say that a given plate has been subjected to two exposures. Many of Hope's negatives showed such marks. Moreover, it was shown that, on certain occasions, *different* cuttings or photographs had been posed by Hope in the *same* halo of cotton wool.

§ 39. In 1922 Mr. Harry Price obtained direct proof that Hope used the method of substitution of plates. He arranged with a well-

known firm of manufacturers of photographic plates that they should prepare for him a packet of plates each of which had been marked by X-rays with a secret design. This design would remain invisible until the plates were developed. Mr. Price had a sitting with Hope and took with him the new unopened packet of secretly marked plates. Hope, seeing that the packet produced by Price had never been opened, had no suspicions of a trap. The sitting duly proceeded according to the usual rites, and on one of the developed plates there appeared an "extra" which Mr. Price pretended to recognize as the likeness of a deceased relative. Mr. Price retrieved his negatives and proceeded to a photographer's studio where, in the presence of a witness, he developed the remainder of his plates. The secret mark appeared on all the plates bar the one which contained the psychic "extra": showing conclusively that Hope had substituted a prepared plate for one of those brought by Mr. Price. Thus does science outwit the fraudulent medium.

§ 40. After this exposure, sitters appear to have insisted on signing their names on the plates to safeguard themselves against substitution. In the new extras produced by Hope the spirit heads were no longer swathed in "ectoplasm" or cotton wool. The double exposure lines no longer appeared on the edges of the plates. It appeared that Hope was using a new method. It was shown by Mr. Barlow and Major Rampling Rose that the new spirit photographs could all be produced by the use of a pocket flash-light apparatus so minute that it could be concealed in the palm of the hand. A small "positive" face was placed in front of the flash-light bulb, and, if one switched on the light at a propitious moment for a second or two, the image would be imprinted on the plate. The

wires attaching the bulb to the battery could easily be made to pass up the sleeve of the operator. Hope was never detected using this apparatus, but there was one suspicious occasion when a bulge was noted in one of his pockets and the sitter, Mr. Mosely, suspecting concealed apparatus, asked Hope to allow himself to be searched. Hope refused, leaving the room. On his return he expressed willingness to be searched, but, of course, he had during his absence ample opportunity of disposing of any incriminating properties.

§ 41. Sometimes, though more rarely, the “extra” which appeared on the plate was not a spirit face but a short message in the handwriting of some prominent deceased spiritualist. Such photographic extras have been called “*scotographs*” or “*psychographs*.” Thus Hope obtained messages purporting to come from Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Archdeacon Colley, Dr. Crawford, and many others. In each case the handwriting was undoubtedly that of the deceased person, but Hope had received letters at some time or other from each of these various personalities who were all prominent in the spiritualist world. Mr. Barlow has demonstrated very clearly how Hope produced these psychographs. There is no doubt that, having numerous letters in his possession from (say) the late Dr. Crawford, Hope cut out a word here and a word there until an intelligible sentence was obtained. The separate bits of paper bearing the words were then carefully pasted together and the whole was photographed. Sometimes the scissor marks appear in the photograph; sometimes they are concealed by means of cotton wool or some such material. In other “*scotographs*” which appear to be in Hope’s own handwriting disguised as copperplate, the scissor

marks are absent: but there are words misspelled in exactly the same way as Hope habitually misspelled them in his private letters. Hope died a few years ago. Nevertheless, his psychic “extra” has already appeared on the photographic plates of the new mediums who are practising to-day and using the same methods. Thus the ghost of a fraud becomes after his death a fraudulent ghost.

### ***Direct Voice***

§ 42. It has been alleged that, at certain séances, voices are heard to speak which do not issue from any human larynx or from any mechanical instruments of reproduction. Such voices, it is further alleged, are produced by the spirits of deceased persons who “materialize” a larynx out of teleplasm extracted from the medium’s body. In order, it is said, to render more audible these faint “spirit” voices, a cardboard or aluminium trumpet is provided. This hollow cone or trumpet into which the spirits speak is levitated by them and sometimes carried round the room. Séances for the “direct voice” are almost invariably held in darkness, and generally the medium has his hands free and so is able to manipulate the trumpet. If the medium points the trumpet to the ceiling and speaks into the narrow end the “spirit” voice appears to issue from a region high above the sitters’ heads; if he directs the trumpet towards the floor the voice seems to come out of the ground. Thus the inexperienced sitters are deceived as to the true origin of the voices.

§ 43. Recently, a young man wishing to escape from his occupation in a barber’s shop, told me that he had decided to “develop” as a spirit medium and asked me to advise him as to

what branch of mediumship he should cultivate. As the young fellow was an excellent mimic I unhesitatingly recommended the “direct voice” as being far more impressive than ordinary trance-speaking. I warned him, however, to be on the look-out for secret installations of infra-red rays and also to avoid such a disastrous *contretemps* as happened to Frederick Tansley Munnings.

§ 44. It appears that Munnings was one day consoling his audience with the alleged voices of their spirit friends when, by an unfortunate accident, the electric light was switched on, revealing Munnings holding the trumpet by means of a telescopic extension piece and an angle piece which he was using in a laudable attempt to increase the effect of his auditory illusions. This same Munnings was also an adept at reproducing the barkings of our canine spirit friends. At a séance at which I was present a very passable imitation of a barking dog was produced and a lady present exclaimed, “It’s darling Fido; I’d know his bark anywhere!” Munnings was most painstaking. When he received a letter headed with the address of some person who wished to be admitted to his séances, he would even go to the length of visiting the locality in which the prospective sitter lived and having primed himself with a few choice bits of information would afterwards retail these through the trumpet as a spirit communication from the sitter’s deceased relatives.

§ 45. Another notorious fraud was the American direct-voice medium George Valiantine, who came to England in 1924 and gave sittings to the late Mr. H. Dennis Bradley. Valiantine had been previously exposed by a committee appointed by the *Scientific American*, who attached an electrical contrivance to his chair so that, if he vacated it during the séance, a light would be

extinguished in the adjoining room. It was found that while persons were receiving “spirit” touches in a distant part of the séance room Valiantine had left his chair on fifteen occasions, some being for periods of eighteen seconds at a time. Later on in 1931 Valiantine was again exposed by Mr. Bradley himself: Valiantine was attempting to produce fraudulent “spirit” fingerprints in wax. Mr. Bradley, however, maintained in his books *Towards the Stars* and *The Wisdom of the Gods* that Valiantine produced mental phenomena of a supernormal character. There is, I submit, small reason to agree with Mr. Bradley in this. Bradley, though a writer of some verve and imagination, possessed neither the training nor the temperament of a psychical researcher. His records of cases in which “spirits” are said to have proved their identity are so lacking in detail as to be almost worthless. And, apart from the totally inadequate analysis and recording, Bradley’s sittings with Valiantine are full of suspicious incidents. Thus a spirit addressing Miss Rebecca West, the authoress, gives his name as “Grandfather West,” whereas “West” was only a pen-name assumed by the essayist. Lady Troubridge and Mr. Harry Price have put on record other incidents which tend to reflect on Valiantine’s probity. But for a thorough exposition of the dubious quality of his alleged spirit communications, the reader cannot do better than consult Mrs. W. H. Salter’s admirable paper entitled “The History of George Valiantine” in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, Part 125, Vol. XL.

§ 46. The “direct voice” is said to have been heard occasionally at the trance sittings of Mrs. Osborne Leonard. In 1933 the writer, in conjunction with Dr. Irons, devised a method for locating the

amount of displacement of this voice from the medium's mouth by using two microphones. The experiment was duly carried out by Mr. Theodore Besterman and Mr. Gerald Heard, but although the alleged voice was heard on three or four occasions during the séance no displacement could be detected. It seems probable that the effect was merely a ventriloquial illusion.

§ 47. To sum up.—There is very little evidence that the so-called “direct voice” has any existence as a supernormal phenomenon. It seems probable that in almost all cases the medium's own larynx is the source of the alleged voice; possibly, in certain dark séances, unscrupulous sitters may also assist in producing the illusion of two voices speaking at the same time. It is, however, possible that certain mediums like Mrs. Blanche Cooper may use their vocal organs in an automatic manner—i.e., without being fully conscious of the movements of the larynx, tongue, etc. Such mediums  *speak*  automatically in much the same way as certain others  *write*  automatically. In either event, there is in operation a stream of consciousness that is dissociated from the normal consciousness of the subject, as well as a distraction of attention from the movements of the hand or vocal organs.

### ***Poltergeist Phenomena***

§ 48. The name “*Poltergeist*” [= Noisy Ghost] is applied to a class of mysterious disturbances which have been reported in all parts of Europe during the last three hundred years. These phenomena, which are apparently purposeless in character, include inexplicable noises and rappings, the throwing of stones and smashing of crockery by unseen agencies, the upsetting of furniture, etc. One prevailing characteristic of these outbreaks is

the progressive mildness in the reported phenomena as one passes from accounts retailed at second or third hand to first-hand narratives. Thus when Joseph Glanvill, in *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1689), recounts the hearsay happenings in Mr. Mompesson's house, he mentioned such marvels as "a gentleman who found all his money turned black in his pockets," "a vision of a Great Body with two red and glaring Eyes," and "a horse found one morning with a hind leg fixed so firmly in its mouth that it was difficult for several men to get it out with a lever." But when Glanvill himself visited the house all he saw and heard was "two little modest Girls in a Bed between seven and eleven years old" and "a scratching in the bed as loud as one with long Nails could make upon a Bolster" followed by a "panting like a dog" and the shaking of the windows.

§ 49. In nearly all manifestations of poltergeist, the disturbance seems to centre round the person of some young boy or girl in the household. Thus in the accounts of the haunted parsonage at Epworth where John Wesley was born, the noises seemed to follow young Hetty Wesley about the house with marked attention, and she was observed to tremble in her sleep when "Old Jeffery" the poltergeist was at work.

§ 50. A considerable number of cases of poltergeist have been investigated by the Society for Psychical Research during recent years. In a majority of these cases it was shown that the probable culprit responsible for the mischievous pranks was an adolescent of neurotic temperament. These young people were subject to nervous tics, spasmodic twitchings, and so forth, and often repressed by their parents. To attract the attention of the newspapers and the neighbours, to outwit everyone by throwing

about pieces of coal and potatoes without ever being seen in the act, no doubt gave these young neurotics a compensatory feeling of self-importance and a means of escape from their inferiority complexes. It is however probable that in some cases the culprit is a genuine hysterical subject who plays the poltergeist without being aware of it afterwards. The almost superhuman cleverness with which certain of these young people escape the vigilance of the observers suggests that their senses of hearing and of sight are in a state of hyperacuity.

§ 51. The late Mr. Hewart McKenzie relates the case of a mill-girl of whom it was reported that threads on the looms were apt to snap when she went near them. Mr. McKenzie brought the girl to London to be an inmate of his house where she was employed in the kitchen. Pans were thrown from the shelves and much crockery and furniture smashed, but no one ever caught the young woman in the act of throwing an object. Although Mr. McKenzie applied his eye diligently to the keyhole of the kitchen door nothing ever happened while he was watching.

§ 52. It is, of course, possible that some poltergeist phenomena may be spontaneous cases of genuine telekinesis. This may have been so with that Roumanian girl, Eleonore Zügun, who was kept under observation for some weeks at the National Laboratory of Psychical Research in October 1926. Coins placed in marked positions were observed to fall to the floor in distant parts of the room under circumstances that rendered any normal explanation extremely improbable.

**Part III:**  
**The Mental Phenomena of Spiritualism**

***The Mediumistic Trance***

§ 1. It is well known that while we are asleep some part of our mind often remains awake and alive to external impressions. Thus a mother who would sleep soundly through a storm yet awakes at the slightest murmur from her sick child. Again, we can often determine to rise at an unaccustomed early hour and succeed in doing so. Some portion of our mind, therefore, must be conscious of the passing of time.

§ 2. When a person is hypnotized, only a part of his mind is asleep. The other portion remains awake to the suggestions of the hypnotist; these suggestions it accepts blindly because the reasoning powers are asleep just as they are when a dreamer accepts the absurd situations that arise in his dreams. The mediumistic trance would appear to be a state of self-induced hypnosis during which the medium's mind is awake not only to its own dream fantasies but also to the conversation of the persons present at the sitting. Like the ordinary hypnotic subject, the medium remembers little or nothing of what has occurred during her trance. Mrs. Leonard, the well-known English trance-medium, told me that she was sometimes disturbed at night by fragments of trance conversations invading her mind. When a medium has once acquired the habit of self-hypnosis she goes to sleep very quickly when left to herself, but often resists the attempts of another person to hypnotize her. Thus Professor James did not succeed in hypnotizing Mrs. Piper, the famous Boston medium. When,

however, she had put herself to sleep he was able by suggestion to create a fresh hypnotic condition that was characterized by nervous excitement and muscular twitchings.

§ 3. It is well known that the hypnotist can by suggestion cause his subject to imagine that he is Napoleon or some other exalted character. The subject, who is asleep to the realities of his normal existence, will play the part assigned to him with all the knowledge and histrionic power at his disposal. In fact, the more he knows about Napoleon the better the impersonation will be. In the same way the medium who practises self-hypnosis soon learns to play an imaginary role in her sleep. She speaks in the character of some personage that is congenial to her, and by constant practice the pose becomes almost second nature. Imaginative children do the same sort of thing in their day-dreams, posing to themselves and to their comrades as the hero in some interminable saga.

§ 4. Such an imaginary character appearing in a medium's trance is known as a "control." The origin of the "control" may be some stray suggestion that has been repressed into the medium's subconscious mind. For instance, Mrs. Piper had once been acquainted with a blind medium of the name of Cocke who himself possessed a "control" claiming to be Albert G. Finnett, a French medical man of the barber-surgeon school. Now, when Mrs. Piper herself became a medium a "control" soon appeared who called himself *Phinuit*, and like Cocke's *Finnett* also claimed to be an old French doctor. This *Phinuit* gave his complete name as *Jean Phinuit Schlevelle* and stated that he was born at Marseilles somewhere about the year 1790, that he had studied medicine at Metz and died at 70 years of age from the leprosy. The

resemblance between *Finnett* and *Phinuit*, who both claimed to be French doctors, is sufficiently strong to reveal the probable origin of Mrs. Piper's *Phinuit* who controlled her trances for a good many years. Though claiming to be a Frenchman *Phinuit* was totally unable to converse in French, and when asked for an explanation of this extraordinary deficiency accounted for it by saying that he had lived so long among English people at Metz that he had forgotten his native language! It is doubtful if *Phinuit* even understood French when he heard it; it is certain that he failed to recognize the French names of remedies that would have been well known to a medical man of his own day. Yet, though he knew little of medicine, it is said that he was sometimes able to diagnose the pains and aches of people who visited Mrs. Piper and even to prescribe simple remedies.

§ 5. The ostensible function of the "control" is to guard the medium's organism during the trance and also to fetch from the spirit world the spirits of the deceased relatives with whom the sitter wishes to communicate. Usually the "control" claims to be able to "see" these deceased friends of the sitter and begins to describe their personal appearance *as it was during life*, even to the details of the clothes they used to wear. Now this is in itself very remarkable. The "control" claims to derive these sartorial details from the "spirit" himself, who, to the "control," shows pictures of his earthly appearance. But if a person on earth were trying to establish his identity over the telephone, surely the last thing he would dream of describing would be the cut of his suit or the type of his hat or the shape of his nose! How many people could give any accurate description of their own features? Yet these are the details that are always first volunteered as proofs of

identity. Does it not suggest irresistibly that the medium is describing the deceased person *not* as he appeared to himself *but as the sitter remembered him in life*? These descriptions are often fairly accurate and go far beyond what could be arrived at by mere guesswork. They strongly suggest that what the medium sees is a picture of the deceased derived telepathically from the sitter's memory.

§ 6. According to Jung, while our friends are alive we direct towards them a certain amount of psychical energy in thinking of their careers and the relation of their lives to our own. But when the friend dies this stream of mental energy recoils upon itself and becomes concentrated not upon the man himself but upon his image which we retain in our memories. We may thus suppose that this image becomes endowed with so much psychical energy that it can be discerned by the entranced medium through his telepathic faculty. We have seen that *Phinuit* failed to establish his claims to identity. Nor do the spirit "controls" of other mediums fare any better when we examine their claims. The spirit control "Uvani" of Mrs. Eileen Garrett claimed to be an Arabian, but when the writer took an authority on Oriental languages to hear "Uvani" this authority declared emphatically that the English spoken by "Uvani" bore no resemblance to that which an Arabian would use if he had learnt our language. The majority of these controls claim to be young girls or children who affect a sort of broken English which is sometimes engaging and sometimes exasperating to the listener. Many of them profess to be Indian girls, but the kind of pidgin-English they speak is not in the least convincing. The emergence of the child-control is no doubt a phenomenon of infantile regression.

§ 7. Interesting work is being done at present on the nature of these controls by Mr. Whately Carington, who makes use of word reaction times and of the psycho-galvanic reflex. Very briefly indeed, Mr. Carington's method may be outlined as follows. Let us suppose that a list of, say, 100 carefully chosen test words is called out one by one to a person, A, who is asked to reply to each word as quickly as possible with the first word that comes into his head. Each reply is noted and the times taken recorded in fractions of a second by means of a stop-watch. Now imagine that A has, like George Borrow, a fanatical hatred of the Roman Catholic religion, and suppose that the list of words contains a word such as *Jesuit*. When this word is fired unexpectedly at A a considerable commotion will be caused in his subconscious mind and this mental disturbance may tend to make him hesitate in his reply and so prolong his reaction time beyond the normal. Another effect of this sudden probing of A's subconscious mind will be physiological and will manifest itself by a sudden decrease in the electrical resistance of the subject's skin. If the subject sits with his feet in baths containing salt solution into which electrodes are dipped it will be possible to measure this change in resistance by means of a sensitive galvanometer. The magnitude of the deflection of the galvanometer will constitute in fact a sort of measure of the degree of the disturbance produced by the test word. Now if we read out the same list to A on five different occasions, noting the reaction times or galvanometer deflections as the case may be, these five samples supply us with a sort of numerical picture of A's subconscious reactions to the given list of words. Using the same list, we may then fire it off at another person, B, on five different occasions, noting again the deflections

or reaction times. After the readings have been corrected for sensitivity, etc., Mr. Carington will apply an elaborate statistical method (called the Analysis of Variance) which will enable him to say what significant degrees of difference and of similarity there are between the subconscious reactions of the two personalities A and B. In practice the method of reaction times proved more reliable than the use of the psycho-galvanic reflex.

§ 8. It was at first hoped that the method might enable us to identify definitely an individual mind by its mental measurements, just as the finger-print system enables us to identify individual bodies. Had this been possible, we should have been provided with a marvellous instrument for testing the identity of those personalities which, manifesting through mediums, claim to be the spirits of our deceased friends. It would only be necessary to record a man's reactions to a suitably chosen list of words shortly before his death and compare them with the corresponding reactions of the communicating spirit while in temporary control of the medium. Statistics would do the rest. Unfortunately Mr. Carington has now succeeded in showing that one and the same living person can, by adopting two different mental poses or conscious mental attitudes, produce significantly different series of subconscious reactions to the same set of words. By thinking of himself first as a scientific recluse during one test, and in another as a country gentleman of leisure and means—corresponding to two real aspects of his life—Mr. Oliver Gatty produced two widely different sets of reaction times and deflections. It seems, therefore, that a great deal of further research will be necessary before Mr. Carington's method can be usefully applied to the problem of human survival. One of Mr. Carington's tentative conclusions,

however, is of considerable interest. He claims to have demonstrated by his method that Mrs. Leonard's control "Feda," who maintains that she is the spirit of an Indian girl, is in reality merely a secondary personality of the medium formed around a nucleus of repressed mental material. This, however, only confirms what we should have anticipated on general grounds as the result of various observations recorded from time to time on Mrs. Leonard's trance.

§ 9. It is not always the case that a single "control" remains associated with a medium throughout his or her career. Mrs. Piper, for instance, had possessed several controls before Phinuit came on the scene. These earlier controls claimed to be John Sebastian Bach, the poet Longfellow, Mrs. Siddons the actress, and other notabilities. In the year 1897 the bluff, good-natured, lying Phinuit himself disappeared and his place as master of ceremonies was usurped by a fresh band of controls who called themselves Emperor, Rector, Doctor and Prudens. The genesis of Emperor and his band is of great psychological interest.

§ 10. In 1892 had died a prominent English spiritualist and medium named William Stainton Moses. This Moses was a Church of England curate who for reasons of health gave up his curacy and was appointed English master at University College School in or about the year 1871. Just before this period Moses had made friends with a Dr. and Mrs. Speer, of whose house he became an inmate. Moses soon developed as a medium and gave séances to the Speer family in their house. At these sittings, held in total darkness, remarkable physical phenomena were said to occur, including spirit lights, touches of spirit hands, etc. The medium, in whom the Speers had implicit trust, was totally uncontrolled.

Stainton Moses also produced automatic writing which purported to emanate from a band of high spirits who adopted the pseudonyms Emperor, Rector, Doctor and Prudens. These lofty beings claimed to have, at one time, been mortal men and they revealed to Stainton Moses the names by which they were known on earth. Stainton Moses wrote these true names in his note-book but published only the pseudonyms in his book called *Spirit Teachings*. These “Spirit Teachings” consist largely of theological arguments between Stainton Moses the English clergyman and the Emperor group of spirits who gradually succeed in convincing the curate that the narrow dogmas of his orthodox faith are erroneous. Stainton Moses accepted the new creed taught by the spirits—a sort of Unitarianism—and became an ardent apostle of Spiritualism and the founder of the London Spiritualist Alliance.

§ 11. Now one day in 1895 Professor Newbold was having a sitting with Mrs. Piper at which an acquaintance of his, George Pelham (pseudonym), purported to speak. The conversation turning on the “Spirit Teachings” of Stainton Moses, Professor Newbold asked the spirit of Pelham if he could fetch the spirit of Stainton Moses. After some delay a *soi-disant* Stainton Moses manifested through the automatic writing of Mrs. Piper. On being interrogated, Stainton Moses made many bad “bloomers.” For instance, he said, “When you see my friend Sidgwick kindly ask him if he remembers the evening we spent together at his own house.” But the real Stainton Moses had never in his life visited Professor Sidgwick’s house. This spirit also sent his love to an English spiritualist called Wedgworth, whereas Wedgworth was then already dead. As the real names of the Emperor band who

had been the controls of the living Stainton Moses were contained in a note-book which was at the time in the possession of Frederick Myers in England, here was an excellent opportunity to test this spirit who claimed to be Stainton Moses. No one in America knew these names and only one man in England. The spirit was therefore asked to give the true names of his old controls. He volunteered certain names, but not one of them bore any resemblance to the real names contained in the note-book.

§ 12. Let us try to grasp the real importance of this failure of the “spirit” Moses to prove his identity. The spirit “George Pelham” who had been sent by Professor Newbold to find Stainton Moses was one of the most remarkable that have ever manifested through any medium. The real George Pelham was a young journalist who had been killed in an accident. Shortly after his death he claimed to communicate through Mrs. Piper. Now, this spirit which purported to be Pelham recognized no less than thirty of his friends, calling them by name, although excessive precautions had been taken by Dr. Hodgson to preserve their anonymity when they visited Mrs. Piper. Pelham not only recognized his friends, but he knew their occupations and recalled conversations which he had held with them in his lifetime. Moreover, he adopted towards each friend the characteristic attitude and degree of familiarity that he had shown during his lifetime. To take only one example, Pelham had been very intimate with a family named Howard. After his death Mrs. Howard and her daughter Catherine visited Mrs. Piper. (It should be mentioned that when Dr. Hodgson introduced sitters to Mrs. Piper she was already in the trance.) On this occasion the “spirit” of George Pelham wrote: “Catherine, how are you getting on with

the violin? It's horrible to hear you play!" Mrs. Howard, on reading these sentences, replied, "Yes, George, but don't you see that she loves her music because she has no other?" "No doubt," answered Pelham, "but that is what I always used to tell her." The real George Pelham had been very irritated by Catherine's playing. If any spirit ever succeeded in establishing his identity we must agree that George Pelham did. Yet this same George Pelham accepts and vouches for the authenticity of an entirely fictitious Stainton Moses! If these spirits of Mrs. Piper are real disembodied personalities living in a real world it is difficult to understand how such gross errors as these arise. We in this world do not mistake our own species for sheep or cows.

§ 13. Similar cases have occurred in the writer's own experience. At one of my sittings with the medium Mrs. Blanche Cooper, the spirit of a small boy purported to communicate; he gave his name as James Miles and his age as 13 years. He said that he had recently been drowned in the River Avon near Bath in trying to rescue a toy balloon which had fallen into the water. He also said that his home was at Clarence Place, Locksbrook Road, Weston, near Bath. There were lots of brothers and sisters and his father, with whom he wished to communicate, was a painter. All these details were given with much dramatic effect. On making enquiries it turned out that the source of this spirit communication was a short paragraph which had appeared in the *Daily Express* of 30 December 1921—just ten days before the séance. All the details given by the "spirit" of James Miles were contained in this newspaper paragraph and they did not go beyond it. At subsequent sittings I asked the "spirit" of the dead lad to tell me the names of his brothers and sisters and to

volunteer details of his home circumstances, all of which were unknown to me and not contained in any newspaper report. James Miles utterly failed to give a single name or fact that proved to be correct. Yet a few days before this same “spirit” had been able to communicate such complicated names as Locksbrook Road. Though he spoke in the first person he clearly was not the spirit of the dead boy.

§ 14. But here is the disconcerting aspect of the case. A communicator had previously appeared for many weeks purporting to be my brother Frank, who had been killed in France. This communicator had volunteered excellent proofs of his identity. He had correctly described numerous incidents in connection with our boyhood spent on an Essex farm. By no amount of detective work could the medium have unearthed these obscure but vivid episodes. Yet the “spirit” which claimed to be my brother Frank showed himself to be perfectly aware of the presence of “James Miles” and to accept him as a real spirit. Thus on one occasion Frank said, “I am looking after the poor little fellow.” Does it not seem from this and similar cases that the spirits who volunteer fairly satisfactory proofs of identity are no more truly the persons they claim to be than those spirits that are obviously fictitious? Thus “George Pelham” appeared to think that the fictitious control “Phinuit” was a real spirit. By an elaborate psychological study of the utterances of the various Piper controls and communicators, Mrs. Sidgwick came to the conclusion that both the spirit controls and the ordinary communicators who gave proofs of identity possess a common background of mental associations and characteristics. They do not correspond to real fissures of the medium’s subconscious mind

but only to poses assumed by it. In fact, the tendency to *impersonate* is the chief characteristic of the mediumistic trance. By the mere accident of Professor Newbold asking for the spirit of Stainton Moses the control Phinuit, who had been associated with Mrs. Piper's trance for years, abdicated and gave place to a new set of controls claiming to be the Emperor, Doctor, Prudens, etc., of Stainton Moses.

§ 15. It has long been known that new "spirit" personalities can be made to appear in the medium's trance by mere verbal suggestion. Thus at a physical séance, the investigator Ochorowitz suggested to the child-control Stasia that a powerful male spirit was required to assist her to move a certain heavy table. Ochorowitz mentioned the name WOYTEC, this being a common name among Polish peasants. Immediately the table spelt out "WOYTEC is here" and WOYTEC appeared at all subsequent séances.

§ 16. Nothing, in fact, is more easy than for the experimenter to create for himself cases that are similar to the well-known case of "Bessie Beals." After death, Dr. Hodgson manifested as a spirit control of Mrs. Piper. The impersonation of Hodgson was not at all striking when we take into account his long years of association with the medium. However, one day Dr. Stanley Hall (the famous American psychologist) had a sitting with Mrs. Piper and asked for the spirit of a niece called Bessie Beals, a character which he had invented on the spur of the moment. "Bessie" duly appeared and accepted Dr. Hall as her uncle, giving more or less appropriate answers to Dr. Hall's questions and imaginary reminiscences. Dr. Hall then told the control "Hodgson" that he had never possessed such a niece. Now "Hodgson," who claimed to have fetched this

niece from the spirit world to talk to her uncle, had taken “Bessie Beals” quite seriously. He tried to wriggle out by saying that he himself had known a real Bessie Beals in his lifetime and that this was the spirit he had brought to Stanley Hall by mistake. The excuse is not plausible. If the spirit was the Bessie Beals Hodgson had known, why should she claim Stanley Hall as her uncle and assent to his imaginary reminiscences?

§ 17. In 1921 the writer found that such a fictitious personality could be created by silent or unspoken suggestion; that is to say, it could be telepathically induced. It must be noted that a rudimentary case of this kind is reported of Mrs. Piper’s mediumship. One day Dr. Hodgson, when in charge of the investigation of Mrs. Piper, had been reading *Scott’s Life and Letters*. The next day a Sir Walter Scott communicated through Mrs. Piper and took his listeners for imaginary voyages among the planets. Sir Walter Scott probably knew little about astronomy while he was alive, but it is certain that he knew even less dead. The “Scott” who appeared through Mrs. Piper was a rank impostor and yet on one occasion he was apparently aware that Newbold and Hodgson had been laughing loudly together in private over his astronomical absurdities, for he remarked to Hodgson, “Who was the gentleman with whom I saw you seemingly laughing over my journey with you?”

§ 18. My own case of “John Ferguson” illustrates clearly how a fictitious personality can develop as a result of unconscious suggestions which have never been verbally voiced by the sitter. At a sitting with the automatic-speaking medium, Mrs. Blanche Cooper on 3 November 1921, the “spirit” control “Nada” whispered the name of a street, “Westgate Road” in the town of

Brentwood, saying that a man and his daughter from this town wished to communicate. I had never visited Brentwood, though I had passed through its railway station for years on my way to town. The name Brentwood was therefore familiar, but not the street. At the next séance the man purported to speak in the first person and gave his name as John Ferguson and his age at death as 33 years. He mentioned a brother Jim, said to be still alive, and proceeded to describe a house in the town of Brentwood. This house was situated in a tree-lined avenue whose name began with H. It was a large house with the gates painted dark red and standing in its own grounds. The family residing in it were musical and they kept fowls. I was to inquire there for his brother Jim. At the third séance Ferguson stated that he had been drowned in a boating accident on 3 March 1912. His occupation was that of a motor engineer and his brother Jim was ten years younger than himself.

He was unable to give the place of his death or burial, but mentioned that his daughter Amy, aged 4 years, had been interred in the same grave. A few days after this sitting I suddenly remembered that as a boy at school in Southend I had known a Jimmy Ferguson and chummed with him a bit, although I never met any of his family. I knew, however, that his father was an army instructor in the School of Gunnery at Shoeburyness. In the year 1902 both Jimmy Ferguson and I were about 13 years old. At the end of the same year he left the school and I never heard what became of him. I began to wonder if the John Ferguson of the séance was the brother of the boy I had known. It will be seen that the ages and dates tallied fairly well. At the next sitting my conjectures were confirmed in a startling way. "J. F." spoke,

saying: “My father—my father had to do with the army.” I asked, “Was he a soldier?” “J. F.” answered, in effect, “No! but he used to help soldiers with maps and compass!” The spirit control “Nada” then went on to mention “Boom—Boom—he makes a noise like big guns—the noise would break all the windows—” Having served in the Siege Artillery during the war, I knew that the work of an R.G.A. schoolmaster would be teaching the use of the prismatic compass and map-reading. The description of the noise of the guns clearly applied to Shoeburyness, where windows used to be broken while firing practice was in progress.

§ 19. After this séance I visited Brentwood for the first time in my life and found that not only was there a street called Warecott Road, but near it an avenue lined with young trees called Highland Avenue. I did not, however, inquire whether there was anyone living in Brentwood of the name of Ferguson as I was afraid of bringing the case to a premature end. At the next sitting both Mr. Gregson and I heard the name “Highlands” given as the name of the avenue in Brentwood. In the subsequent sittings other details were given which seemed to be derived from my own mind. Growing tired of the case, which did not seem to progress, I visited Brentwood again on 12 December 1921 and inquired at the post office if anyone of the name of Ferguson lived in Highland Avenue or elsewhere in the town. I soon convinced myself that no one of the name of Ferguson had lived in Brentwood for many years before 1912. I noted, however, that there was in Highland Avenue a house which had been recently occupied by a certain Captain Shoemith (pseudonym) of the Royal Naval Reserve. Now in my mind I naturally associated the Navy with the Coast Defence and I conjectured that this Shoemith might have been a friend of

Ferguson. The name of the house was “Paglesham,” which is also the name of a little fishing village in Essex near Southend, well known to my brother Frank and myself. At the next sitting I spoke severely to “John Ferguson,” charging him with telling untruths. He then admitted that he and his brother had never lived at Brentwood but had visited friends there in Highland Avenue. At the following sitting J. F. volunteered a curious approximation to the name “Shoesmith” and said that his friend at Brentwood was a naval man. The “spirit” of my brother Frank also clearly indicated the name Paglesham [in Anglo-Saxon it = Cowslip Mead] by the phrase “*where cowslips grow in cocklebeds*”; Paglesham is a fishing village devoted to the cockle and oyster industries.

§ 20. I wrote to this Captain Shoesmith giving him all the details of the case, but he replied that he had never known a John Ferguson and that my information meant nothing to him. J. F. ultimately admitted that he was a Scotchman and that he was buried in a Glasgow cemetery, having lived for several years in the district of Pollockshields. On the eve of the next sitting I bought a map of Glasgow and pored over it for a couple of hours. I noted that near the Pollockshields district were two large cemeteries, one called South Necropolis and the other Janefield Street. At the sitting held next day, after the lights had been turned out, I spread this map on the floor in the dark and asked J. F. to try to remember the name of the cemetery in which he was buried. J. F. volunteered first the names of several streets which I afterwards verified were on the map and towards the end of the séance at a moment when I was not thinking of the cemeteries he suddenly said “South Necrop—”. I wrote to the keeper of this cemetery,

asking him to make me out a list of all the John Fergusons who had been buried there since the year 1901 with the dates of death, and to note especially any John and Amy Ferguson interred in the same grave. From the list I received, it appeared that though John Fergusons were as plentiful as blackberries in autumn, there was no John Ferguson who had died on or about 3 March 1912, and no Amy Ferguson on the list, or any name resembling Amy.

§ 21. A study of this case shows clearly that a purely fictitious personality may be built up bit by bit out of fragmentary suggestions woven by the mind of the experimenter: but similar experiments on the same lines are much to be desired. It should be added that it is very difficult to account normally for this case by the theory of unconscious whispering on my part. It might, for instance, be assumed that, as I was expecting the name "Highlands," the medium caught a nasal whisper which gave her the clue, but it is not easy to believe that when I was expecting "Paglesham," she heard me whisper "Cowslips that grow in cocklebeds."

### **Attempts to Prove Survival**

§ 22. There are still psychic researchers, although they are in a dwindling minority, who deny that mediums like Mrs. Piper or Mrs. Osborne Leonard have ever shown supernormal knowledge during their trances. It is, of course, easy to collect a number of weak examples from the sittings of these two great mediums and to show that the facts could be accounted for by chance coincidence, astute deductions by the medium from remarks made by the sitter, and so on. By ignoring all the strong cases, it would

be fairly easy to argue that these weaker cases do not demand any supernormal explanation. Dr. Stanley Hall and Dr. Amy Tanner in their *Studies in Spiritism* adopted this disgraceful attitude towards the work of Mrs. Piper. But such methods are as unfair as they are unscientific. Again, if one takes an individual case, it is possible to suggest that though a sitter has been introduced anonymously to Mrs. Leonard it is extremely difficult to prove that the sitter is really unknown to her. She may, for all we know, have taken tea with one of his acquaintances on the previous Sunday and obtained foreknowledge of his projected visit. But this explanation or any similar one becomes increasingly improbable when we recall that hundreds of people have been introduced anonymously to Mrs. Leonard and have obtained successful results over a period of twenty years. Moreover, many of these people have been persons of critical and well-balanced mentality. Professor C. D. Broad—to take only one example—has sat with Mrs. Leonard and expressed his conviction that the medium has shown at least the power of reading his mind in a remarkable way. In the case of Mrs. Piper, Professor William James came to the conclusion that in her trance she knew things that she could not have found out in any normal way. The writer had only a few sittings with Mrs. Leonard, but he saw enough to convince him that this medium possesses powers at least telepathic, i.e., a faculty for digging up names and incidents from the sitter's memory in some supernormal way. Moreover, with Mrs. Leonard, as with Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Blanche Cooper, the knowledge shown in the trance nearly always referred to incidents that, from their private nature, it seemed wildly improbable that she should have gleaned in any casual conversations with acquaintances or from directories or by

employing a detective to make inquiries.

§ 23. Lady Troubridge and Miss Radclyffe-Hall were exceptionally careful and painstaking observers who had an extended series of sittings with Mrs. Leonard in which they attempted to get messages from “A.V.B.,” a deceased lady who had been a friend of both the sitters. Dr. Mitchell, the editor of the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, was particularly impressed by the accuracy with which Lady Troubridge noted almost every word that was spoken by “Feda,” Mrs. Leonard’s control. When the deceased “A.V.B.” described accurately a country house familiar to the two sitters, they were so sceptical that they employed private detectives in an attempt to discover whether any person had been instituting secret inquiries in the district. The detectives were satisfied that no such inquiries had been made. I do not think that any unprejudiced person who studies the long series of reports of Lady Troubridge and Miss Radclyffe-Hall can reasonably doubt that “A.V.B.” did succeed in describing a large number of incidents in which she had taken part during her lifetime. Many names also were given correctly, including the pet name “Ladye” by which “A.V.B.” was known to the sitters.

§ 24. A study of the “A.V.B.” series of communications and of similar series reveals one remarkable fact. The “spirit” recalls most easily names and incidents which are in the memories of the persons present at the sitting, although these sitters may not be thinking of the name or incident at the moment when it is given. When, however, the “spirit” is asked to detail incidents in his life which are unknown to the persons present he either fails entirely or volunteers descriptions which prove to be very vague and uncertain. Thus “A.V.B.” had no difficulty in giving fairly accurate

attempts at names and incidents which were known to Lady Troubridge and Miss Radclyffe-Hall, but when she was asked to describe a house at Burnham Beeches where she had stayed as a little girl and about which the two sitters knew nothing, she volunteered an extremely vague and shadowy description. Certain of the items were appropriate in a vague way, but little that was definite was found to be true when inquiries were made.

§ 25. In my study of Mrs. Cooper I found that, when a name was known to me, I could never get it at the moment when it was in my conscious mind, but later on when I was thinking of something else the “spirit” would volunteer it correctly. This, of course, strongly suggests that when an idea is in consciousness it is inaccessible to the medium. That is to say, that what we call telepathy is a communication not between two conscious minds but between the subconscious regions of those minds. It may even be, as Mr. Whately Carington suggests, that we all share a common subconscious mind and that to imagine that ideas are transferred from one mind to another like eggs from one basket to another is to form a totally false conception of the telepathic process. Our bodies occupy space, but there is no reason to suppose that our minds are spatial entities in any sense: spatial analogies may not hold when we deal with thought-transference.

§ 26. Although it would be probably true to say that 90 per cent. of the incidents correctly related by “spirits” in proof of their identity are matters known to the persons present, there is still a residuum that is not easily accounted for by the theory of simple thought-transference from the sitter. Such cases are best illustrated by the “proxy” sittings of the Rev. Drayton Thomas with the medium Mrs. Leonard. Mr. Thomas, although a

convinced spiritualist, is known to be a very accurate and conscientious recorder; in recognition of his long and painstaking study of Mrs. Leonard, he was elected to the Council of the S.P.R. What happens at these “proxy” sittings I shall attempt briefly to describe. A lady whom Mr. Thomas has never met writes to him saying that she has lost her son and begs him to get into touch with the spirit of the deceased lad through Mrs. Leonard. Mr. Thomas, who has a sitting with Mrs. Leonard about once a fortnight, takes the letter with him to one of these sittings. The letter is not shown to Mrs. Leonard. It might well be supposed that the chances of success in such an enterprise are so small as to render it hopeless. Mr. Thomas knows nothing of the lad or his family; there is no link whatever except the letter in his pocket. Yet, strange to say, the spirit control “Feda” will proceed to describe the deceased boy and mention little incidents which on inquiry turn out to be correct. It is true that in many cases the evidence for identity is feeble and that chance coincidence might be invoked to account for much of it. Nevertheless, there are sometimes approximations to names and descriptions of incidents that it would be very unreasonable to ascribe to chance. If we wish to evade the spirit hypothesis, it is necessary for us to suppose that in some mysterious way the possession of a letter from the relatives of the deceased enables the subconscious mind of Mrs. Leonard to link up with the memory of one of these relatives. Possibly the mind of Mr. Thomas might serve as an intermediary. No one can doubt that the “will-to-believe” as well as chance coincidence plays a considerable part in the interpretation of the records obtained at the sittings. Spiritualists often display extraordinary ingenuity in producing incidents and reminiscences

to tally with the somewhat vague statements made by “Fedra.” It might be possible, however, to devise a control of Mr. Thomas’s “proxy” sittings as follows. Let us suppose that a communication is received by “proxy” purporting to come from the deceased son of Mrs. A. The record of the sitting should be posted to another lady, Mrs. B, who has also recently lost a son. If Mrs. A is a spiritualist, care should be taken that Mrs. B is also a spiritualist. Mrs. B should be induced to believe that there is reason to suppose that the communication is from her son and should be asked to annotate the record. A copy of the same record could be sent to other spiritualists who have lost sons—Mrs. C, D, E, etc. By means of a scoring system we could discover whether the information can be made to fit the circumstances of Mrs. B, C, D, etc., as readily as it applies to the case of Mrs. A. Even if Mr. Thomas’s “proxy” sittings had to be discarded after such a test as the above, there still remains the long series of “proxy” sittings taken by Miss Nea Walker on behalf of a Mrs. White who had lost her young husband. In this series considerable precautions were taken by Miss Walker both in reporting and in the prevention of leakage. I must say that a careful and unprejudiced study of this case recorded in *The Bridge* has convinced me that supernormal knowledge (possibly obtained by telepathy from Mrs. White) was really shown at these “proxy” sittings.

§ 27. It will be asked: Why should we prefer to assume that Mrs. Leonard the medium was able to make contact with the subconscious mind of the distant Mrs. White rather than to suppose that the spirit of Mr. White himself communicated the information to Mrs. Leonard? In order to answer this question we must briefly review some work which has been done in France and England

during the past twelve years. We must first bear in mind that in England and America the spiritualist tradition is far stronger than it is in the Latin countries such as France. In England, so soon as a young person contracts the habit of falling into trances, he or she is at once drawn into the spiritualist community and trained or “developed” in an atmosphere of spiritistic culture. After a very short time, the young recruit will have all his energies directed towards getting messages from the dead. He will, in his trances, soon learn to speak of “the spirit spheres,” “the Summerland,” “spirit guides” and “controls.” If any bit of information is given which appears to involve a supernormal explanation it will purport to come from the spirit of a dead person. In France there are psychic sensitives who have escaped this training in the spiritualist tradition. Some of these, such as Mlle Laplace, Mme Morel, Mlle de Berly and M. Pascal Forthuny, have almost as great a reputation in their own country as our English Mrs. Leonard. Now, a sensitive such as Mme Morel goes into the hypnotic trance just as Mrs. Leonard does, but—in contradistinction to what happens in Mrs. Leonard’s trances—no “control” appears. Nor does Mme Morel claim to get into touch with spirits of the dead. If a handkerchief belonging to a distant *living* person is put into her hands she will often be able to describe correctly incidents that have happened in the life of this person, his or her personal characteristics, and even the names of his or her relatives. And the details given will often prove to be true even when they are unknown to the persons present at the sitting. It will immediately be asked “What is the role played by the handkerchief?” This is one of the most baffling problems of psychical research. In some mysterious way it serves to link up the mind of the sensitive with

that of the distant owner of the object, but by what mechanisms we have no clear conception. The point I wish to emphasize is that psychics like Mme Morel and M. Pascal Forthuny will describe a distant *living* person in much the same way as Mrs. Leonard describes a *dead* person when Mr. Thomas takes a “proxy” sitting. Further, if some small relic or other object is put into the hands of Mme Morel, she will usually be able to state correctly whether the owner is living or dead. In *either* case she will describe him and trace events in his life more or less accurately. But if the owner is dead, Mme Morel will not claim to get into touch with his spirit; she will have nothing to say about his life and employments in the spirit world. In giving her narrative of the dead person’s life she will simply feel that the thread is broken at a certain point, and that the rest is blank. After many years of study of psychic sensitives like Mme Morel, Dr. Osty has come to the conclusion that in all cases the *source* of the sensitive’s information is the mind of a living person.

§ 28. There is, for instance, a Polish engineer named Stefan Ossowiecki who apparently possesses a remarkable faculty for reproducing sketches and words which have been enclosed in several light-proof envelopes. Dr. E. J. Dingwall, who is perhaps the world’s greatest sceptic of the supernormal, made in 1923 a remarkable experiment with Ossowiecki. Before leaving England for the Varsovie conference, Dingwall drew on a sheet of paper a small bottle surrounded by a line. On the same side of the paper he wrote the date, Aug. 22, 1923. On the other side he wrote a short sentence in French extolling the wines of the Meuse. The folded paper was enclosed in an envelope which was again enclosed in a second light-proof envelope which in turn was put

into an outer envelope which was sealed. By means of secret pin-holes in alignment, Dingwall ensured that any tampering with the envelopes would be immediately detected when he opened them. The envelope was locked inside Dingwall's suitcase and on his arrival at Varsovie handed to Baron Schrenck, who kept it in safe custody. Ossowiecki guessed at the contents of the envelope in the presence of six distinguished experimenters; Dingwall remained absent so as not to influence the result by direct thought-transference. Ossowiecki made a very accurate reproduction of the bottle and read the date partially. He also said there was some writing on the back which, being tired, he was unable to read. The envelope was afterwards opened by Dingwall at a meeting of the Congress and found to be absolutely intact.

§ 29. Other investigators such as Richet, Geley and Besterman have carried out similar carefully planned experiments with brilliant success. The possibility of deciphering the message by X-rays has, however, not been investigated. In Dingwall's experiment this would obviously involve the complicity of Baron Schrenck, whose honesty has never been called in question. It has, however, been observed that Ossowiecki in many cases not only describes accurately the contents of the envelope but often describes correctly the personal appearance, etc., of the absent person who has prepared it. He often gives a fairly accurate description of the room in which the envelope was prepared and sometimes notes correctly that the experimenter had first drawn another sketch and then discarded it. These observations suggest to Osty that the envelope merely serves as a link to put Ossowiecki into subconscious communication with the distant investigator. That is to say, the sensitive does not really "see" through the light-

proof envelope; he only reads the memory of the person who invented the test. Knowledge shown by a medium which is not acquired through the normal channels of sense and which is not contained in the memory of any living person is called *Clairvoyant* knowledge.

§ 30. If we understand Osty aright, he denies that mediums possess any *direct* supernormal knowledge of events; they only have knowledge of *mental reconstructions* of these events. But since Osty admits that this mental reconstruction may exist in *future* time as well as in past or present time, his conception of telepathy from living minds is a vastly extended conception. To illustrate this extended conception of telepathy, I shall very briefly describe a remarkable experiment carried out by Osty at Paris with the psychic Pascal Forthuny. I should first mention that Pascal Forthuny gives demonstrations of his alleged supernormal powers before large audiences after much the same fashion as the English platform clairvoyantes. Unlike the latter, however, he does not invoke the spirits of the dead, but often gives descriptions of the living relatives and friends of the people in the audience. It is, of course, extremely difficult to assess the real value of such performances as these. The clairvoyant, for example, may recognize in the gathering certain persons about whom he may know a good deal more than the rest of the audience suspect. Unfortunately, the work of P. Forthuny is not always above suspicion. In 1929 he gave me a private sitting at which he pretended to get the name SOAR by automatic writing. I learned later that just before the séance he had lunched with Mrs. Sidgwick and Dr. Woolley. By an oversight they had told him that the sitter for the afternoon was to be Mr. SOAL. There were other

suspicious incidents in this sitting. It is certain that Forthuny uses his wits, but nevertheless it is highly probable that he does possess certain supernormal powers. The experiment which I shall describe, however, is of such a unique nature that—*granting Mme (M—) has told the truth—it* is difficult to suspect Forthuny of having cheated. At 2.30 p.m. on 21 April 1926, Dr. Osty conducted M. Humblot (a senator) and Mme Camille Flammarion to the séance room of the Institut Métapsychique. The room contained 150 seats which were empty. Osty asked Humblot to choose a seat at random, and a small piece of paper was gummed on the underside of the seat of the selected chair in order to identify it. Pascal Forthuny was then brought into the room and shown the chair, in which he then seated himself. He forthwith dictated rapidly a long description of the unknown person who was destined to occupy that chair at the public meeting which was to be held later in the afternoon. This description was taken down in shorthand by a stenographer and typed in duplicate immediately afterwards. Dr. Osty and P. Forthuny left the empty séance room at 3.30 p.m. and remained in Osty's drawing-room with Mme Flammarion till four o'clock, Humblot having left the house. At 3.30 about a hundred persons were waiting to be admitted and surged into the room as soon as the doors were opened. At four o'clock Osty and P. Forthuny entered the séance room in which a large audience had taken their seats. Osty explained the nature of the experiment to the assembly and Forthuny then read aloud from one of the typed copies his descriptions of the occupant of the chair, Osty following his words from the other copy. The occupant of the chair, a certain Mme M—, whose identity is not disclosed, afterwards annotated Forthuny's description point by

point. I will cite a few of the most striking details that proved to be correct. Forthuney's statement is given in italics, the corresponding annotation of Mme M— in ordinary type in brackets.

*Across the sea, far out on the sea, beyond the seas, an odour of Vanilla. Very surprised to see some one return from Brazil or the Argentine or from South America in any case. You are connected with this person.*

[Eight days before the séance Mme M— had received an unexpected visit from a good friend of the family who arrived from Brazil and whom she had not seen for four years.]

*Do not wear that belt; it has already wounded you.*

[Mme M— was wearing at the séance and had worn for some time an elastic belt which had abraded the skin.]

*Look after your liver.*

[Mme M— was being treated for liver trouble.]

*Pay attention to the return of the ear, nose and throat trouble. It is the sole source of your neuralgia.*

[Some days before the sitting Mme M— had visited a throat, nose and ear specialist who had found a deviation in the nose partition and other throat trouble and told her that when this was remedied the neuralgia would disappear.]

*Your plans for a distant journey in the summer are already upset and will be still more so. Do not think any more of the East; for the time being that idea is finished.*

[Mme M— had recently made plans for a fortnight's motor tour in the approaching summer holidays, but this was already abandoned. Another tour (in the Vosges) had been also abandoned.] The real weakness of this case is that we have to rely entirely on the good faith of Mme M—, a person of whom we know

very little. Osty, so far as I can ascertain, does not present us with much corroborative evidence in support of her statements. But if we accept the good faith of the lady, the case contains an element of prevision which is astounding. On being interrogated, Mme M—told Osty that at the exact time when Forthuny was dictating his impressions in the empty room she felt unaccountably ill and was undecided whether or not to attend the meeting. She said also that she was jostled in the rush to gain seats and sat down on that particular chair by the merest accident.

§ 31. It has been shown by psychologists that what we call the present moment is not a mere line dividing the past from the future, but that it extends over a definite small duration which overlaps both the past and the future. We might suppose with Mr. Saltmarsh and others that there are states of human consciousness in which this small overlap is magnified so that it covers a considerable interval of future time. Thus the empty chair might serve as a “rapport” object enabling M. Forthuny to grasp a sufficient portion of the future to reach the instant when the chair was occupied by the lady. He would thus make contact with the lady’s subconscious mind at the instant when she sat in the chair and so enter into telepathic communication with her. The feeling of illness experienced might arise from the subconscious disturbance produced by the rapport. We are, of course, assuming that the case was genuine. In cases such as this where spirit intervention is not in question, the supernormal knowledge shown is quite as remarkable as that obtained at any “proxy” sitting with Mrs. Leonard or Mrs. Piper. In fact, the work of these French sensitives renders it probable that in the “proxy” sittings the medium does get her information from the minds of the distant

surviving relatives. The spirit hypothesis becomes unnecessary and the principle of economy dictates that we should avoid redundant hypotheses.

§ 32. In the year 1925 the writer published a case that is peculiarly fatal to the spirit hypothesis. Lack of space compels me to be very brief, but the reader can look up the case of *Gordon Davis* in *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* (Vol. 35, December 1925). I must explain first that Mrs. Blanche Cooper was an “automatic voice” medium. Just as certain persons can write, e.g., long poems and remain only vaguely aware of the movements of their hand, so there are people who can speak without having much consciousness of the vibrations of the larynx, movements of the tongue, etc. Such mediums usually sit in darkness and claim to be “direct voice” mediums. Moreover, their voices vary in pitch according to the deceased characters which they are impersonating. Thus the voice of James Miles was a boyish treble while that of Ferguson was of a more manly character. But all the voices bore a fundamental resemblance to Mrs. Cooper’s normal voice; they were, in fact, her normal voice disguised.

§ 33. At school I had known slightly a boy called Gordon Davis who was particularly interested in Geography and who made a hobby of collecting savage weapons. After our schooldays were finished I saw nothing of Davis until the year 1916, when I met him unexpectedly on the train. He and I were then both cadets and our conversation turned on the ceremony of mounting guard. We parted and I heard nothing more of him till after the War, when one day in 1920 I heard a rumour that he had been killed. This rumour I afterwards verified was widespread. At a sitting with

Mrs. Cooper on 4 January 1922 a voice spoke giving the name of Gordon Davis. I thought I could identify this voice; at any rate, it seemed to resemble in accent the voice of Davis as he had spoken in the train. The accent, in fact, was rather affected. Davis said he had been killed and wished to give a message to his wife and child. He mentioned “harpoons” (an allusion to his savage weapons), referred to his interest in Geography, and gave the name of the house in which he had lived as a boy at Rochford. There were also good approximations to the name Rochford itself and to the names of two schoolfellows, Over (for Overall) and Playle. Most of these facts were, however, well known to me. He also stated correctly that our last meeting had been on the train and that the subject of our conversation had been “guards” [*not* railway guards” he emphasized].

§ 34. At the next sitting on 9 January 1922 there was given through the “spirit” control Nada a detailed description of the exterior environment and interior furnishings of a house in which the widow and her child were said to be living. The house was said to be situated in a street whose name contained two “L’s.” All these details concerning the house were unknown to me at the time and I did not even know whether Davis was married. I thought that the description was merely the idle invention of the medium. In April 1925 I made the dramatic discovery that Gordon Davis was still alive and living with his family at a house in Southend situated in a street called the “Eastern Esplanade.” Every single detail in the description of the house proved to be correct. I estimated that the chance of all the details applying to any other house chosen in England at random was one in many tens of millions. A still more startling shock was awaiting me. It

turned out that in January 1922 Davis and his family were not yet living in this house but occupied a London flat. In fact, it transpired from a diary kept by Davis that between the dates of the two sittings (4 January and 9 January) he had paid his first visit to the house with a view to renting it. At that time he had not even thought about the probable disposition of his pictures, brass candlesticks, vases, mirrors, etc., whose positions had been so carefully described by the control Nada. In particular, Nada had mentioned “a bird standing on the piano.” There was such a bird on the piano at the house in Eastern Esplanade, but at the time of the séance this bird was packed away in a box in the London flat. Davis did not move into the house until 13 December 1922—about a year after the sittings. Fortunately, I was able to discover exactly what the real Gordon Davis was doing at the hour when his “spirit” was speaking in the first person through Mrs. Cooper. From the diary it appears that Davis, who is an estate agent, was busy interviewing a client, Mrs. Short, in a street which is an extension of the Eastern Esplanade. Davis, on reading the words his spirit was supposed to have spoken, laughed heartily as he recognized *his own mannerisms and turns of phrase*.

§ 35. In this remarkable case it would seem that the subconscious mind of Mrs. Cooper contacted that of Davis not in the present but in the future. Probably my own belief that Davis was dead supplied Mrs. Cooper with the suggestion that he should be dramatized as a deceased person wishing to send a message to his wife and child. The episode throws a vivid light upon the genesis of spirit communications. It shows further that even the reproduction by the medium of little characteristic mannerisms of speech is no guarantee that we have to deal with a discarnate

spirit. Osty has come to a similar conclusion on this point from his studies of the French sensitives.

### **Other Attempts to Prove Survival**

#### ***By Sealed Envelopes***

§ 36. Before his death the famous spiritualist Frederick Myers, one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research, prepared a sealed envelope in which he had enclosed some lines of writing unknown to anyone but himself. This envelope was kept in safe custody until after Myers's death. Myers, before he died, promised that if it were possible he would reveal the contents of the envelope through different mediums. After his death the experiment was tried, and when there appeared to be a certain concordance among the various messages received the envelope was opened at a meeting of the Society for Psychical Research. The contents were found to be quite different from the messages received from the alleged spirit of Myers.

§ 37. An even more interesting case is that of Hannah Wilde. Miss Hannah Wilde died in 1886. About a year before her death, on the advice of a married sister Mrs. Bessie Blodgett, she wrote a letter and sealed it in an envelope, the contents being known only to Miss Wilde herself. The envelope was kept in a tin box to which no one had access except Mrs. Blodgett. Miss Wilde, who was a spiritualist, promised to make a post-mortem revelation of the contents of the envelope if some suitable medium could be found. After her sister's death Mrs. Blodgett retrieved the envelope from the box with a pair of scissors so as not to impregnate it with "her

own magnetism” and posted it to Professor William James, asking him to try to obtain a message through Mrs. Piper. Professor James retained the envelope but sent to Mrs. Piper a glove and hat-band that had formerly been worn by Miss Wilde, giving injunctions that the medium was to try to obtain the contents of the sealed envelope. Several séances were devoted to the attempt but all that was obtained of any interest was the name “Hannah Wilde,” which was (presumably) unknown to Mrs. Piper. In May 1888 Mrs. Blodgett paid a personal visit to Mrs. Piper, her anonymity being strictly preserved by Dr. Hodgson, then in charge of the Piper investigation. It was an extraordinary séance. The *soi-disant* Hannah Wilde, speaking through the intermediary of old “Phinuit,” the French doctor whose acquaintance we have already made, began as follows: “Bessie, Bessie Blodgett, my sister, how happy I am to see you!” Mrs. Blodgett handed the medium a gold chain wrapped in silk, asking the “spirit” of Hannah to indicate to whom it belonged. She replied: “It is our mother’s chain—Alice Wilde, our mother.” This was correct. The “spirit” of Hannah also asked after a friend, Sarah Hodgson, giving the full name. [This Hodgson was no connection of Dr. Hodgson the investigator.] Mrs. Blodgett said she had been thinking of this lady only the day before. Presently Mrs. Blodgett asked her sister to say something about the letter and she made a very extraordinary reply. Hannah Wilde answered, “I said if I come back it will be as if the church bells were rung.” According to Mrs. Blodgett Hannah had used almost this identical phrase as she was putting the sealed letter into the tin box. *Nevertheless, the “spirit” was totally unable to reveal the contents of the envelope.* The general impression left on Mrs. Blodgett’s mind was that the “spirit” could answer questions

readily enough if she, Mrs. Blodgett, knew the answer to them, but that it hesitated and became vague when questioned on matters unknown to the sitter. This judicious observation is in entire accord with the telepathic theory which I have been trying to expound in the present thesis.

§ 38. This case rests entirely on the good faith of Mrs. Blodgett; but Mr. Dingwall, who is the leader of a school of psychic research that challenges the accuracy of every record published, would probably express grave doubts about the trustworthiness of the lady's reminiscences. Nevertheless, while admitting the entire propriety of Dingwall's attitude which has been abundantly justified, I may reasonably doubt whether it is seriously possible to maintain that all the friends of George Pelham as well as Mrs. Blodgett, Professor James, Professor Newbold, Dr. Hodgson and a score of other intelligent people were either deliberate liars or the victims of paranoia, or inexcusably careless or grossly imposed upon by the medium. The strength of the Piper case rests not upon any single individual report but upon a large number of favourable reports presented by persons of intelligence and probity. Upon Mrs. Leonard and Mrs. Piper it is my considered opinion that the waves of adverse criticism break in vain. It is of course desirable that other distinguished men should leave behind them sealed envelopes; I understand that Sir Oliver Lodge has already deposited such an envelope with the Society for Psychical Research. It will be interesting to see whether he fares any better than did Frederick Myers and Hannah Wilde.

### ***The Method of Cross-Correspondences***

§ 39. It would be quite impossible for me even to attempt to

discuss the vast literature which the Society for Psychical Research has accumulated on the subject of Cross-Correspondences. The underlying conception of the method may, however, be briefly indicated. Let us suppose that during his lifetime a mathematician has devoted much time to the calculation of some very abstruse mathematical constant. To take a purely imaginary instance, let us suppose that the value of the constant to ten significant figures is 2861735864 and that the name of the mathematician is Melville-Jones. Now, suppose that after Melville-Jones is dead, two mediums, X and Y, both entirely ignorant of mathematics, the first living in Boston, U.S.A., and the second in Kent, England, receive on the same day the following messages: X—28617 Melville compare Y Kent. Y—Jones 35864 compare X Boston. Taken separately, these messages are quite unintelligible, but when submitted to a mathematician he notes immediately that they combine to form the name of the famous mathematician Melville-Jones who died only a few weeks ago. He submits the two messages to another mathematician who is more familiar with the published work of Melville-Jones, and it is discovered that the two sets of figures form the first ten significant figures of the famous constant to whose calculation Melville-Jones devoted five years of his life. What are we to conclude other than that the two fragments are the work of one and the same mind? But it by no means follows that this mind is the surviving mind of Melville-Jones. Certainly the message is characteristic of Melville-Jones, but it might be the work of some living mind who was familiar with the dead mathematician and his work. This living mind, interested perhaps in psychical research, may all unconsciously have made telepathic contact with the minds of the two mediums and

communicated a fragment of the message to each. The whole affair might even be a hoax by a friend of Melville-Jones.

§ 40. It must not be supposed, however, that the cross-correspondences studied by a certain section of the S.P.R. bear any close resemblance to the imaginary clear-cut case which I have described above. They consist instead of obscure literary jig-saw puzzles of such a vague character that we may well be excused for expressing our opinion that the time spent on them has been wasted. The fragments of verse which are pieced together from the automatic scribblings of these S.P.R. automatists are not even written on the same day: the complementary fragments are often produced at intervals of months apart. Moreover, no really serious attempt has been made to estimate the parts played by coincidence and by common tastes in reading among the automatists. Given a sufficiently large amount of material written by two or three people whose main literary interests centre around Ruskin and the major Victorian poets, I maintain that it does not require very great ingenuity to manufacture the kind of cross-correspondence described by Mr. Piddington in his too voluminous papers. In fact, the mentality which searches for these vague correspondences is similar to the mentality which seeks to trace the course of modern European politics in Biblical prophecies. But as we have seen, even if the correspondences were genuine and not merely spurious examples, they could not prove that the mind responsible for piecing them together was not the mind of a living person.

### ***Spirit-Identification by means of Thumb-prints***

§ 41. About the year 1923 Mrs. Crandon (“Margery”), the wife of

a Boston (U.S.A.) surgeon of some standing and social position, developed numerous phases of physical mediumship which, if genuine, would class her as the world's greatest physical medium. The phenomena attributed to "Margery" include the production of masses of "teleplasm" which can be photographed by flashlight and also observed visually in red light for a few seconds at a time, the generation of an "independent" voice said to be that of Walter Stinson (Margery's deceased brother), the levitation of objects placed in a basket on a small table, and the production of the prints in dental wax of Walter's thumbs. Around this alleged mediumship twelve years of controversy has raged with bitter recriminations on the sides of both the critics and the supporters of "Margery's" claims. However, bit by bit, the mediumship has been discredited. Dr. McDougall and other experts demonstrated from the photographs that the alleged "teleplasm" bore a very suspicious resemblance to animal lung tissue. In order to prove that the voice which whistled and sang and joked was produced independently of the larynx of the medium, Dr. Richardson (one of her supporters) devised a U-tube arrangement with luminous floats and provided with a mouthpiece which the medium had to hold in her mouth in order to maintain the liquid at a certain level. It was shown, however, by the late Dr. Prince and others that by various tricks involving the use of chewing-gum, etc., it was quite possible for a person to maintain the requisite air-pressure and speak and whistle at the same time. Practice was required, but the medium had plenty of time for it. In the year 1929 "Margery" came to London and gave, in the S.P.R. séance room, a few sittings at which Dr. V. J. Woolley, the research officer, was present. The medium was controlled by the method used in the Boston sittings.

Her wrists were fastened to the arms of her chair by adhesive tape and her ankles to the front legs of the chair. There was also a cord passing under her arms and fastened to the back of the chair. Under these conditions objects were lifted from a basket on a small table placed in front of the medium. Dr. Woolley demonstrated, with the help of Mrs. Brackenbury, who played the role of “Margery,” that the control was quite ineffective. By lifting her knees the medium could easily tilt the table towards her and since her *hands* were free—the *wrists* only being tied to the arms of the chair—she was able to reach and handle objects placed in the basket. Incredible as it may seem, the Margery supporters (including her husband) claimed that a thumb-print said to be produced by the ghost of Walter Stinson in soft dental wax was identical with a thumb-print found on an old razor which had belonged to Walter Stinson when he was alive. In order to produce these thumb-prints two dishes are placed on the small table, the one containing very hot water and the other cold water. The medium is secured to her chair as described above. In the hot water is a cloth with its ends hanging over the sides of the dish. The lights are extinguished and, at a signal from the control “Walter,” a sitter places in the hot water a small cake of dental wax which he has previously marked for purposes of identification. When the wax has softened, the ghost of Walter lifts the wax out by means of the cloth, presses his ghostly thumb on the wax, and drops the cake into the dish of cold water. When it has hardened, the lights are turned up and the sitter finds on his marked piece of wax a human thumb-print. Obviously such prints could have been produced normally by means of a die concealed in “Margery’s” body. In the London sittings “Margery” submitted

to a *rigorous* medical examination *after* the séance but not before. Possibly she could succeed in passing the die to her husband after it had served its purpose.

§ 42. In 1932 came the dramatic collapse of the “Margery” mediumship. It was shown beyond reasonable doubt by Mrs. E. E. Dudley that the thumb-prints claimed to be the left and right thumb-prints of Walter’s ghost were actually the thumb-prints of a *living* man (a Mr. X) who had attended some of the earlier séances and who, moreover, had first showed “Margery” how to make thumb-prints in wax. Finger-print experts demonstrated beyond all doubt that Walter’s thumb-prints were those of the living Mr. X. Much ink has been spilt by the “Margery” faction in trying to explain away this damning evidence, but without success. A mortal blow has been dealt to the Margery mediumship.

§ 43. In 1931 George Valiantine, the “direct voice” medium of shady reputation, began to imitate “Margery” by producing finger-prints in wax and on smoked paper purporting to be those of the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Lord Dewar, the late Sir Henry Seagrave, and others. With the aid of Mr. Jacquin, a finger-print expert, the late Mr. H. Dennis Bradley showed that these prints were fraudulently produced by Valiantine’s own fingers and in some cases by his big toe or elbow-joint. At one sitting the wax was stained with methylene green unknown to the medium, and after the sitting stains were found on his elbow. Needless to say, those “voices” of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Lord Dewar, and Valiantine’s spirit controls, “Dr. Barnett “ and “Bert Everett,” which all vouched for these fraudulent finger-prints must be considered to be themselves equally fraudulent. Thus the mediumship of George Valiantine, defended by the late Mr. H.

Dennis Bradley with more valour than discretion or judgment, was finally stripped of its meretricious glamour, and relegated to the same category as that of Munnings and other fraudulent producers of the “direct voice.”

### **The Spirit Hypothesis versus Alternative Theories**

§ 44. In the preceding sections I have endeavoured to show that Osty’s extended conception of telepathy from the living provides a more consistent interpretation of the mental phenomena of medium-ship than the spirit theory, or at any rate the cruder forms of this theory. We have seen how fictitious personalities can be created by direct or indirect suggestion, and we have noted how such obviously fictitious communicators succeed in reading the minds of the sitters as readily as do the other communicators who have volunteered far better evidence of identity. We have observed how the French sensitives read the minds of the sitters and even those of distant persons without invoking assistance from the spirits of the dead. We have noted that the “spirits” can recall trivial incidents, but when questioned fail to remember the really important events of their lives. Another objection which we may raise centres on the inability of the Spirits to give any credible account of their life beyond the grave. The tales told by these *revenants* remind one of nothing so much as the stories told by incompetent story-tellers who lack the imagination necessary to invest their creations with the stamp of reality. The poverty of imagination revealed by these descriptions of the spirit spheres is amazing. One cannot help thinking how much better Mr. H. G.

Wells would do the job if he elected to become a medium.

§ 45. Until “Raymond,” the son of Sir Oliver Lodge, purported to communicate through Mrs. Leonard, the spirits seldom condescended to give detailed accounts of their domestic life in the other world, but contented themselves with vague references to “spiritual progress” and “moral advancement.” But the ghost of Raymond Lodge told how the spirits live in houses made of bricks and surrounded by trees and flowers. They have bodies which appear to them as substantial as ours do to us. They see the sun as we do, and the earth on which they live is so real that when Raymond kneels down his clothes are muddied. Newcomers still unpurged of their gross desires demand “whiskies” and cigars which are provided by the considerate chemists of the spirit world. Somehow these cigars are not very satisfying and there is no great demand for them. The clothes of the spirits are made apparently out of the “smells” and emanations which arise from the terrestrial wardrobes. *Raymond* published, scores of mediums and automatic writers set out to go one better. The other world was envisaged as a kind of heavenly Highgate or spook Surbiton in which upper-middle class spirits assembled for afternoon tea and uplifting conversation. Raymond Lodge was sure to be present at these gatherings. But there was a darker side to the picture. Far below this celestial suburbia of the intelligentsia were the grey spheres in which the grosser spirits groped in darkness. Those inhabiting the pleasant haunts above sometimes plunged into these hells to rescue some repentant soul and lead it up to the light. Yet there have been learned exponents of Spiritualism like the late Professor Hyslop who actually accepted these descriptions of a mundane after life. According to Hyslop’s theory, the soul

after death retains its power of creating mental images and these images will be based upon the memories of objects that it has known on earth. Divorced from the life of the senses, the after-death existence will partake of the nature of a vivid dream in which the dreamer will mentally reconstruct images of the terrestrial surroundings of his former body and of the bodies of his friends. He will find himself the inhabitant of a fantastic mental world irrational and full of bizarre illusions. It would, however, appear to be even more probable that the after-death descriptions emanate not from any surviving mind but from the imagination of the medium.

§ 46. There are other very serious criticisms to be made of the spirit hypothesis. Mediumistic phenomena have throughout history reflected the culture of the age in which they were produced. In Ancient Greece we have seen how only the gods and the souls of great heroes spoke through the oracles. In the Middle Ages it was the saints from heaven or the devils from the pit who manifested through the foaming mouths of the hysterics. Except for few cases recorded in the annals of the early French “magnetizers” (or mesmerists), it was not until 1848 that the spirits of common men were permitted to speak. Why were the Uncle Dicks of Bermondsey and the plain Tom Joneses of the world silent through such long ages? Certainly not for lack of mediums. These communications are influenced by the general religious beliefs of the age; they vary also with those of the social groups in which they occur. Thus in the table-turning séances of Jersey in which Victor Hugo took part, not only did the spirit of Molière expound his views in sonorous Hugoesque verse, but such legendary characters as the Lion of Androcles and even the

abstract Virtues also wrote poems reminiscent of Victor Hugo. Again we may ask why the great scientists and authors appear to lose their intelligence and talk pretentious nonsense when their spirits return through the mediums? If their souls survive it would seem that their brains certainly do not.

§ 47. Professor Broad a few years ago put forward the theory that a human mind is produced by the combination of a bodily organism and a psychic or mental factor. This psychic factor is not a mind in itself but only becomes a true mind when it reacts with a living organism. Thus when Tom Jones dies, all that remains of his mind is the psychic factor. When this psychic factor comes into contact with the organism of an entranced medium it combines with this organism to form a temporary mind which has some of the characteristics of the mind of Tom Jones and some of the characteristics of the medium's mind. The communicator can reveal nothing that is credible about his life in the other world for the simple reason that he does not exist as a true mind in any such world. But he still retains memories from the life of Tom Jones, and of these the temporary mind can speak. A similar theory was put forward by M. René Sudre in 1925; he identifies Broad's psychic factor with the Bergsonian Pure Memory. These modern theories are reminiscent of the Homeric conception of the souls in Hades. When Odysseus wishes to communicate with the spirits of the heroes he digs a trench and spills in it the blood of goats. The poor pale phantoms of Hades flock to the trench that they may drink of the blood and so gain a little strength to enable them to speak. Substitute "psychic factors" for "pale phantoms" and the body of the medium for the "blood of goats" and the old legend becomes the modern theory. As a matter of fact, however, the

mediumistic phenomena themselves hardly support Broad's theory. One of the commonest experiences noted by those who experiment much with spirit mediums is the observation that the "spirits" of one's deceased relatives seem to be aware of domestic changes that have occurred after their death. Thus the "spirit" will note that a new wing has been added to the house or that a piece of furniture has been moved. At a sitting of my own with Mrs. Blanche Cooper, the *soi-disant* spirit of my brother greeted me with the words: "Sam, I was with you yesterday." Asked where I had been, he gave correctly, or almost correctly, the name ("Doggetts") of the farm which I had visited. On Broad's theory, if the psychic factor is not a true mind and the temporary "mind-kin" exists only while the séance is in progress, it is difficult to see how it can be aware of events that happen outside the séance-room. On the other hand, the *telepathic* theory furnishes us with a quite satisfactory explanation. Of the nature of the psychic factor in its free state, Broad gives us no inkling. But M. René Sudre holds with Bergson that a man's memories are not stored up in the cells of his brain but exist in a world of unconscious mental states. The brain is merely an instrument of action which translates an unconscious mental state into the sphere of conscious life. Like a lens, the brain gathers up the rays of our unconscious past and focuses them into a moment of conscious life. Thus when a man's brain is destroyed, his unconscious past experience still survives and can be temporarily resuscitated to conscious life by the brain of a medium. It would, however, be necessary to apply such a theory as this only in those very rare and doubtful cases in which the "spirit" reveals some piece of information known to himself during life but not now in the memory of any living person. But

even in such cases the ordinary telepathic explanation is not ruled out, for the contents of the sealed envelope or notebook known apparently only to the dead man may, during his lifetime, have been telepathically transferred to the mind of some living person who survives him and so may be accessible to the mind of the medium.

§ 48. Another serious objection to the spirit hypothesis arises out of the observation that there are certain people who, though plentifully supplied with deceased relatives and friends, never succeed in getting any evidence of their survival through any medium they care to visit. On the “spirit” hypothesis this is almost inexplicable, but on the telepathic hypothesis we must assume that such persons are bad “agents.” That is to say, their subconscious minds are not easily penetrated by the medium. This interpretation is supported by the fact that non-spiritistic sensitives like Mme Morel experience exactly the same difficulty when they attempt to delineate the lives and connections of certain individuals. The sensitive finds herself unable to penetrate the mental atmosphere of the person who has come to see her; she is able to tell him nothing of any interest, while with other people she is successful at once. It seems therefore reasonable to attribute the failure of the spirit medium and the non-spiritualist sensitive to the same cause—namely, an inability to penetrate a certain type of subconscious mind. Certain spiritualists like Mr. J. Arthur Hill have argued that, on the telepathic theory, it is difficult to understand how the medium is able, out of the myriads of names and incidents contained in the sitter’s memory, to choose correctly just those which are appropriate to a particular deceased person. The difficulty disappears if we envisage the process of telepathic

communication as a sort of *conversation* between the subconscious minds of the medium and sitter. It is, however, more important to observe that the same *selective* power is shown in choosing appropriate material in those cases where there is no question of the intervention of the spirits of the dead. Thus in the case of “John Ferguson” we might ask why was the medium able, out of the myriads of names in my mind, to select the names “Highland Avenue,” “Onget Road,” etc., which were appropriate to the case under consideration? The same power of appropriate selection is shown over and over again in the cases studied by Dr. Osty in which “spirits” were not in question. In fact, the difficulty is just as great in the non-spiritistic cases as in the spiritistic ones.

§ 49. We need not linger over those alleged communications from dead authors which claim to reproduce their peculiar literary styles and habits of thought. Such were the spirit “messages” which purported to come from Oscar Wilde in 1923. In the first place it is extremely difficult to prove that such automatic writings are genuine and not essays deliberately composed and memorized, then afterwards reproduced in the séance-room. It would be fairly easy for any competent writer to produce a few pages of dialogue in the epigrammatic, antithetical style of Oscar Wilde and also to write a few short impressionistic essays in Wilde’s decorative manner. This is especially true of an author like Oscar Wilde whose frothy thought conceals no very profound depths. And even if these messages are genuine automatic scripts the imitation of the style and handwriting of the dead author proves very little. It is certain that the automatist “Mr. V.” had read several of Wilde’s books in 1914 and he may have seen a specimen of the handwriting of the dead author in a facsimile of a

Wilde letter which was reproduced in the Comtesse de Brémont's *Oscar Wilde*—a book prominently displayed in the bookstalls about the year 1915. Moreover, while the style is a tolerable imitation, there are certain astronomical and botanical allusions in the script which are not altogether characteristic of the living Wilde. The Oscar Wilde case, in fact, is of far inferior importance as evidence for human survival than, say, the case of George Pelham obtained through Mrs. Piper.

S. G. SOAL.

SPUNKIE. A Scottish goblin that appears like a light to lure travellers from the path.

STARR, MEREDITH. A noted authority on Oriental occultism. For his more important *Constructive Psychology*, see Richard Ince, *A Dictionary of Religion and Religions*.

STICHOMANCY. Divination by random passages found in books.

SUNAMITISM. Magical rejuvenation by sleeping with the young.

SWASTIKA. (From Sanscrit *su*, "well"; *as*, "to be;" meaning "so be it"; equivalent to "amen.") Also called *fylfot*. It is a sun or/and fire symbol, and may be compared to St. Andrew's Cross. It was used as the monogram of Siva (q.v.) and Visnu (q.v.) in India, was carried into China with Buddhism, and used also to symbolize sun- and fire-gods in other parts of the world. Earliest European use—the badge of Thor (Norse). The true Swastika's crampoms are directed towards the right. When reversed, it is termed a

Sauvastika.

T'AI CHI. The origin of all created things. It is expressed by a circle, having two semi-circles facing in opposite directions, side by side on the original diameter. It typifies Yin and Yang, and surrounded by an octagon composed of the eight diagrams, is considered a powerful charm against evil. (See Chinese Occultism.)

TEPHRAMANCY. Divination by writing in ashes.

THEOMANCY. Divination by oracles.

THIGH-BONE TRUMPET. A trumpet made from an executed criminal's thigh-bone, used by the Lamas to summon the demons and other spirits.

TIEN MU. Goddess of Lightning (China).

TI-TSANG WANG. Ruler of the Chinese Buddhist under-world and also the protector of little children.

ULK. Old German form of Elf.

UNDINE. A female water-sprite. Also, Ondine.

URIM and THUMMIM. An ancient method of Hebrew divination by casting lots, and asking categorical questions to which only "Yes" or "No" might be answered.

## THE VAMPIRE

§ 1. “The solemn tones of the old cathedral clock have announced midnight—the air is thick and heavy—a strange, death-like stillness pervades all nature. . . . A faint peal of thunder now comes from afar off. Like a signal gun for the battle of the winds to begin, it appeared to awaken them from their lethargy, and one awful, warring hurricane swept over a whole city. . . . It was as if some giant had blown upon some toy town . . . for as suddenly as that blast of wind had come did it cease. . . . What is that—a strange pattering noise as of a million fairy feet? . . . a hail-storm has burst over the city. . . . There is an antique chamber in an ancient house. Curious and quaint carvings adorn the walls, and the large chimney-piece is a curiosity itself. . . . A large bay window, from roof to floor, looks to the west. The window is latticed. . . . There is but one portrait in that room . . . that of a young man, with a pale face, a stately brow, and a strange expression about the eyes, which no one cared to look on twice. There is a stately bed in that chamber, of carved walnut-wood is it made. . . . The bed . . . is occupied. A creature formed in all fashions of loveliness lies in a half-sleep upon that ancient couch—a girl young and beautiful as a spring morning. . . . A neck and bosom that would have formed a study for the rarest sculptor that ever Providence gave genius to, were half disclosed. . . . Now she moves, and one shoulder is entirely visible—whiter, fairer than the spotless clothing of the bed on which she lies, is the smooth skin of that fair creature. . . . Was that lightning? Yes—an awful vivid, terrifying flash—then a roaring peal of thunder, as if a thousand

mountains were rolling one over the other in the blue vault of Heaven! . . . Now she awakens. . . . Another flash . . . of lightning streams across that bay window. . . . A shriek bursts from the lips of the young girl, and then, with eyes fixed upon that window, which, in another moment is all darkness, and with such an expression of terror on her face as it had never before known, she trembled, and the perspiration of intense fear stood upon her brow. ‘What—what was it?’ she gasped; ‘real, or a delusion? . . . A figure tall and gaunt, endeavouring from the outside to unclasp the window. I saw it. That flash of lightning revealed it to me. . . .’ . . . A strange clattering sound came upon the glass. . . . It could not be a delusion—she is awake, and she hears it. What can produce it? Another flash of lightning—another shriek—there can be now no delusion.

§ 2. “A tall figure is standing on the ledge. . . . It is its fingernails on the glass that produce the sound. . . . Intense fear paralysed the limbs of that beautiful girl. That one shriek is all she can utter—with hands clasped, a face of marble, a heart beating so wildly in her bosom, that each moment it seems as if it would break its confines, eyes distended and fixed . . . she waits, frozen with horror. . . . What strange light is that which now gradually creeps up into the air? red and terrible—brighter and brighter it grows. The lightning has set fire to a mill, and the reflection of the rapidly consuming building falls upon that long window. There can be no mistake. The figure is there, still feeling for an entrance, and clattering against the glass with its long nails, that appear as if the growth of many years had been untouched. She tries to scream again, but a choking sensation comes over her, and she cannot. . . . She tries to move—each limb seems wedged down by tons of lead.

A small pane of glass is broken, and the form from without introduces a long gaunt hand, which seems utterly destitute of flesh. The fastening is removed, and one half of the window . . . is swung wide open upon its hinges. . . . She could not scream—she could not move. . . . The figure turns half round, and the light falls upon the face. It is perfectly white—perfectly bloodless. The eyes look like polished tin; the lips are drawn back, and the principal feature next to those dreadful eyes is the teeth . . . projecting like those of some wild animal, hideously, glaringly white, and fang-like. It approaches the bed with a strange, gliding movement. It clashes together the long nails that literally appear to hang from the finger ends. No sound comes from its lips. Is she going mad? . . . The power of movement has returned to her; she can draw herself slowly to the other side of the bed from that towards which the hideous appearance is coming. But her eyes are fascinated. The glance of a serpent could not have produced a greater effect upon her. . . . Crouching down so that the gigantic height was lost, and the horrible, protruding, white face was the most prominent object, came on the figure. What was it?—what did it want there?—what made it look so hideous—so unlike an inhabitant of the earth, and yet to be on it? Now she has got to the verge of the bed, and the figure pauses. . . . The clothing of the bed was now clutched in her hands with unconscious power. She drew her breath short and thick. Her bosom heaves, and her limbs tremble. . . . The storm has ceased—all is still. . . . The church clock proclaims the hour of one: a hissing sound comes from the throat of the hideous being, and he raises his long, gaunt arms—the lips move. He advances. The girl places one small foot from the bed on to the floor. . . . Has she power to walk? . . . Half on the bed and

half out of it that young girl lies trembling. Her long hair streams across the entire width of the bed. . . . With a sudden rush that could not be foreseen—with a strange howling cry that was enough to awaken terror in every breast, the figure seized the long tresses and twining them round his bony hands he held her to the bed. She was dragged by her long silken hair completely on to it again. . . . He drags her head to the bed's edge. . . . With a plunge he seizes her neck in his fang-like teeth—a gush of blood, and a . . . sucking noise follows . . . *the vampyre is at his hideous repast!*”

§ 3. The foregoing somewhat lengthy quotation is from the first chapter of *Varney the Vampire; or the Feast of Blood*, by Thomas Preskett Prest. It was first published in 1847, and is now considered among the rare books of the period. Its florid style would doubtless exclude it from a modern list of “best sellers”; nevertheless, for lurid description and accurate details concerning a visit from a vampire, there is little in literature to excel it.

§ 4. A vampire is in the category of demons, fiends, night-howling horrors, and visitants from beyond the grave, but it is not a ghost. It is an animated corpse, that periodically rises from the tomb to suck the blood of living persons: fortified by this sustenance: it remains quick, and upon exhumation proves to have colour in the cheeks, red lips, supple flesh and flexible joints. The method of disposing of a vampire is to cut off the head with a sexton's spade, and drive a stake through the heart—which results in the cadaver bleeding profusely, just as a living person would if treated in such a manner. After this the remains are burnt, and so the pest is dispatched for ever. Persons who have been attacked by this unsavoury monster, sad to say, are themselves doomed to become vampires after death.

§ 5. Belief in the existence of the vampire was current in Greece and Rome. In the former place they were termed Empusa, and the best narrative concerning such a being occurs in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, by Philostratus. One of this great philosopher's pupils, Menippus, a comely youth of five-and-twenty, found himself pursued by a foreign woman, who was both beautiful and very rich. Being a budding philosopher did not prevent Menippus being also a devotee of Aphrodite; hence, after visiting the lady at her superb villa in a suburb of Corinth, the wedding was arranged. The wise Apollonius hearing of this, warned his pupil that he was cherishing and being cherished by a serpent, and prognosticated that the nuptials would never be celebrated. It seemed the philosopher was wrong, for the wedding-breakfast was at last set and the guests present; but at this happy gathering he appeared, an unbidden guest, and declared all the appurtenances of the feast to be only a semblance of reality, whereupon the precious goblets, the cooks, and wine-bearers disappeared, leaving the astonished Menippus to hear from the lips of the lady that she was indeed a vampire, fattening him for her own unnatural repast.

§ 6. Walter Map, writing about 1195, gives many stories of similar curious incidents occurring in England. Perhaps the most noteworthy among them is the following: A certain knight married a lady of unsullied reputation with whom he lived happily. The morning after his first child was born, it was found in its crib with its throat cut from ear to ear. The same ill fate befell his second and his third child, despite every precaution. At the birth of the fourth child the whole house was illuminated with torches and a close watch kept. During the evening a venerable stranger

knocked and begged shelter in God's name. This being granted, and the cause of the excitement in the house explained, he, too, offered to watch. At midnight, all save the stranger fell asleep, and soon a woman entered, but, on the point of murdering the newly-born child, she was seized and held by the vigilant watcher. The ensuing uproar awoke the bewitched company who, one and all, recognized the evil intruder—but they could not believe their eyes, for the lady was one of the most respected and pious persons in the district. Declaring it must be a mistake, they advised the stranger to let her go, but this he refused to do. Instead, a messenger was dispatched to the captive's house where, curiously enough, she was found at home! Filled with horror at the incredible story, and returning post-haste with the messenger she saw the vampire demon, her double, howl in terror and disappear in a flash of flame and a cloud of stinking, sulphurous smoke. This, of course, is not a true vampire, but a demon possessed of vampiristic appetites, which to satisfy, it assumes disguises that will afford it the best advantage.

§ 7. T. P. Prest's *Varney the Vampire*, already quoted, is typical of the conventional blood-sucking night visitant. Prest declares that his narrative is founded on facts occurring in England in the reign of Queen Anne, which declaration, however, proves but novelistic hyperbole, for no amount of patient research reveals his sources. The belief in vampirism seems to have been quite extinct in England at that period, though it is possible that the superstition surrounding death due to pulmonary consumption was very prevalent; indeed, it still lingers: persons dying of the disease are supposed, if they are not cremated, to return from the grave and feed upon the vital forces of their relations. No doubt,

the repeated example of members of a consumptive family succumbing, one after another, on reaching maturity, preserves the ghoulish superstition. The vampire belief is also kept alive by the existence of the “psychic sponge”—the intensely excited person who, at a social gathering, seems to grow brighter and gayer as the rest of the company becomes tired out, rendered flaccid by such inordinate brilliance. Further, the term is applied to a boring person having a like depressing effect, and to any rapacious or heartless person. There are also two species of blood-sucking vampire bats: the larger, about 3 inches in length, is found in Central America and south to Brazil and Chile; the smaller, rather a rare specimen, is confined to Brazil. Both species live in caves or hollow trees, and fly abroad at night. They settle on cattle, and, after making a slicing wound with chisel-shaped teeth, suck blood from the exposed capillaries. There was much doubt cast upon their existence till Darwin had the good fortune to “catch one in the act” on one of the camp horses.

§ 8. Necrophilia, i.e., sexual interest in corpses, is also sometimes termed vampirism. This type of dementia is more common than is generally supposed, and even if such blatant cases of disinterment and violation, as that of the notorious French Sergeant Bertrand<sup>1</sup> (1849) are rare, murder is sometimes committed with no other motive.

§ 9. To the Czech and Slav peoples the vampire is, and apparently always has been, a very prevalent terror. There is extant a document signed by three army surgeons, a lieutenant-colonel and a sub-lieutenant, dated January 1732, giving full

---

<sup>1</sup> See *The Werewolf*.

details of a case of vampirism occurring near Belgrade. A young man, named Arnold Paole, returned from active military service and settled down in his native village. He married, and, the story has it, confessed to his wife that whilst in foreign parts he had been bitten by a vampire. He met with an early accidental death and was decently buried, but about a month after, his shade was seen haunting the village. Panic ensued when those who had beheld the apparition began to decline into a state of anæmia; and when they all died of their weakness no one dared to go out of doors. The military authorities undertook to investigate the matter, and decided to exhume the body of Paole. When the coffin was at last brought to the surface and opened, the corpse was found to have “moved to one side, the jaws gaped wide open and blub lips were moist with new blood which had trickled in a thin stream from the corner of the mouth” (Montague Summers, *The Vampire in Europe*, p. 153). The usual precaution, that of driving a stake through the heart, was taken and the body burned, together with the disinterred remains of his victims; but alas, some years later deaths due to anæmia recommenced. Again the military authorities intervened, exhumed the bodies, all of which were found in the vampire condition, and destroyed them. According to Montague Summers, the vampire that had in the first place bitten Paole, was possessed of a more than usually venomous demon able to survive in a discarnate state.

§ 10. It does not, in any of the foregoing cases, appear why the stricken villagers did not take the precaution of protecting themselves with garlic, for it is well known that this root proves an impassable barrier to even the most famished vampire. All over Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, and much of Russia, an epidemic

disease among cattle is considered due to the attack of vampires. Even as late as 1923, and in so metropolitan a place as Belgrade itself, a case of haunting of the poltergeist type was described in the press as the visit of a vampire.

§ 11. In Russia, Roumania, Bulgaria, Dalmatia, Albania—in short, all East European countries—people believe in the vampire, and believe also in garlic as a sovereign remedy against its attacks.

§ 12. In Asia, too, vampires are a source of terror to the populace. A Chinese story which is referred to the 18th century, centres round a wedding taking place at Peking. As the bride's sedan-chair passes an old tomb, a cloud of thick dust is blown over it. When the vehicle arrives at the house, two brides, exactly identical with each other, alight. Nothing can be done, the ceremony cannot be interrupted. Later, piercing screams bring the guests running to the chamber door, which on being broken open reveals the husband in a trance, motionless on the floor, the bride on the bed with the flesh ripped from her face and her eyes torn out. Overhead, in the rafters, was perched an enormous black bird of hideous appearance, which escaped with a great flapping of wings as soon as the door was forced. When the husband regained consciousness, he related how one of the duplicate brides had struck him in the face, then changed into a bird, and pecked out his eyes—for he, too, was blind. This vampire is somewhat different from the European conception, though it possesses more vampire characteristics than appear on the surface, for the draining of the bride's blood is implied.

§ 13. In the Malay Peninsula, vampires consist of a human head, with the entrails hanging forth from the severed neck in a long streaming appendage. These horrors fly through the air, sucking

blood wheresoever they may come upon an unprotected sleeper, their favourite victims being children. Young persons are also liable to attack by the blood-lusty demon called the Bajang, which assumes the form of a polecat. In England it is believed that the ordinary domestic cat may “suck a baby’s breath,” a superstition possibly having its roots in the demonological fears which linger beneath the surface of civilization. However, it might also be due to the fact of cats having been known to smother very young children by sleeping on them.

§ 14. It is equally difficult either uncritically to accept vampires or indiscriminately to refute all the evidence, much of which, as in the case of Paole, is of a reliable nature. Cases of delayed decomposition are far from unknown to medical jurisprudence. This phenomenon is quite common if the deceased has been an arsenic-eater, and it may also be the result of natural mummification taking place. In any case, decent burial and normal decomposition are considered desirable, and the sinner is warned that he will find no rest in the grave. Somewhat contrarily, saints also are reputed to resist the process of decay.

§ 15. Dr. Ernest Jones in his book, *On Nightmare*, has devoted a whole chapter to the psycho-analytical aspects of vampirism, whilst Montague Summers in two admirable works, *The Vampire in Europe* and *The Vampire, His Kith and Kin*, has treated the subject exhaustively from the occultistic point of view. In fiction, the vampire has never failed to draw a large public, and among the noteworthy pieces, other than T. Preskett Prest’s, we have *The Vampyre: a Tale by Lord Byron* (but said to have actually been written by the poet’s companion-physician, Dr. William Polidori). The story tells of Lord Ruthven—a nobleman of strange, sombre

mien, who appears at the height of the London season. He meets a brother and sister, orphans, of great wealth, and sets out with the youth on Continental travels. Ruthven proves of a criminal turn of mind, and at last is shot and killed in the interior of Greece; but instead of being buried, in fulfilment of a promise extracted before death, the body is laid on the highest pinnacle of a mountain where the “first cold ray of the moon” might fall upon it. Arriving back in London, the youth finds his sister about to be married to a certain Earl of Marsden, who proves none other than Lord Ruthven—a monster that, dead, still lives! The brother, bound by oath, cannot prevent the wedding; and when at last he is freed from the bond of his word, it is too late— his sister has already “glutted the thirst of a vampire.” The story met with so popular a success that “ a Lord Ruthven” came to mean a vampire.

§ 16. In more modern times we have Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, first published in 1897, and dramatized by Hamilton Deane in 1925. It is not a good book, but it ran through numerous editions. It made an even worse play, although it attracted vast audiences. Such is the fascination surrounding that worst of all occult horrors—not even a “decent ghost” but a filthy, revolting, resuscitated corpse, prolonging its unnatural existence by sucking, from the unprotected throat of the living, its sustenance in the form of their life-blood.

J. F.

*Book recommended:*

GIVREY, GRILLOT DE, *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, translated by J. Courtenay Locke (Harrap, 1931).

**VRIL.** A mysterious psychic force that is, for once, admitted purely fictitious by all parties. The invention of Lord Lytton, it appears in his *Coming Race*.

**WARLOCK.** The Devil; a monstrous creature; one in league with the Devil; a sorcerer; a warrior magically immune from wounds.

## THE WEREWOLF

§ 1. Although the objective existence of the werewolf is a matter on which both the rationalist and the occultist agree, the former attributes it to abnormal psychology, and the latter to the agency of demoniac forces. Rationalism is supported by the fact that lycanthropy is practised among savage peoples, and their observed methods differ in no essential point from the cases of werewolfism reported in Europe at former times.<sup>1</sup> In other parts of the world the metamorphosed human being takes the form of local wild carnivora: the tiger, the leopard, and even the crocodile.

§ 2. The lycanthropist, clad in the skin or part of the skin of the beast he imagines himself to be, prowls abroad at night behaving as a wild animal, killing and devouring sheep and goats, and also human beings. The hysterical condition may be induced voluntarily by incantation, drugs, the use of ointments, and the donning of the pelt; or lycanthropic activities may be the outcome of a maniacal seizure, as when, for instance, a pregnant woman manifests (as is not uncommon) an inordinate desire to consume raw flesh, the appetite sometimes being accompanied by the expectant mother's conviction that she is possessed by an animal spirit.

§ 3. As recently as 1919, at Bhagalpur in India, a shopkeeper named Rupa Sao attacked and killed a little girl, under circumstances that pointed to a lycanthropic motive. He was

---

<sup>1</sup> The word werewolf is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *werwulf*: *wer* meaning man, and *wulf*, wolf.

found guilty of murder, but recommended to mercy and confined in an asylum. In the interior of the country, in the event of a man being killed by a tiger, it is customary to mark the corpse in some manner that will render recognition easy should the ghost, in tiger shape, return to attack the villagers.

§ 4. Totemism, a type of savage social organization under which the people consider themselves descended from, and therefore related to, an animal, is not a species of werewolfism; but since such folk believe in metempsychosis, occultists not infrequently regard totemism as a mild, one might almost say chronic form of lycanthropy. The Kands of Orissa, though not strictly a totemic people, believe that the tiger has their welfare at heart and therefore they pay it an especial respect. In the event of a Kand receiving offence from a neighbour, in a revengeful frenzy he addresses supplications to the tiger so that this formidable beast will grant him the power to change into his shape. An account of very doubtful authenticity is given by Mr. Elliott O'Donnell in his book, *Werewolves*. According to this narration, "a Mr. K—, whose name I see in the list of passengers reported 'missing' in the deplorable disaster to the *Titanic*," went into the "haunted" part of the jungle to witness a metamorphosis. Well hidden, Mr. K— observed a young native making incantations, with the result that "a vertical column of crimson light of perhaps seven feet in height and one or so in width" appeared before him. "A column—only a column, though the suggestion conveyed to me by the column was nasty—nasty with a nastiness that baffles description." The native, who had placed a row of beads on the ground before him, made some cryptic sign with his fingers, whereupon "I then saw a stream of red light steal from the base of the column and dart like

forked lightning to the beads, which instantly shone a luminous red. The native now picked them up, and putting them round his neck . . . [uttered] a roar that converted every particle of blood in my veins to ice. The crimson colour now abruptly vanished, [and] I saw, peeping up at me from the spot where the native had lain, the yellow, glittering, malevolent eyes, not of a man, but a tiger—a tiger thirsting for human blood.” Mr. K— was miraculously saved from death on this thrilling occasion by climbing the magic Kulpa Briska tree, and one cannot credit that he was lost on the *Titanic*; no doubt he was saved by the combined efforts of a dolphin and a mermaid, and will come again among us with more authentic tales to tell.

§ 5. In comparison with the foregoing, the shape-shifting exploits of the European witches sink into insignificance. These hags only changed into purring, domestic pussies, or else into fleeting, timid hares; but even such small animals, when created by the Devil, may prove terrifying enough beasts to encounter. St. Albert the Great, in his book *On Animals*, says that devils “can, with God’s permission, make imperfect animals”; upon which Montague Summers “would remark that many—but not all—authorities hold that the werewolf has no tail. Whence, if such be the case, it is clear that the Devil can make a werewolf.” However, the Freudian psychologists hold a different point of view. According to them the werewolf, the vampire, the Devil himself and all his agents—an extremely numerous band—are but phantoms rising from the unconscious mind; hence—as one fiction cannot create another—the werewolf, with or without a tail, can only be a hysteric disguised, and not a human being miraculously changed in shape. Rationalistic analysis of the superstition itself

supports the Freudians, for it is believed that a wound inflicted on the beast will show also on the man, which, if werewolves are but maniacs disguised in a wolf's skin, is very reasonable indeed. Demonstrative of this is the story from 16th-century France, of a gentleman who asked a huntsman to bring him some of his bag, which the huntsman agreed to do. However, before long he was attacked by a very fierce wolf and barely escaped with his life. During the encounter he cut off one of the animal's forepaws, and this he put in his bag to convince the gentleman of his ill-fortune, and prove that he was not retaining game. Meeting the gentleman at the village inn and recounting the tale, he opened the bag and drew forth—not a wolf's forepaw but a woman's hand. Recognizing a finger-ring, the gentleman hurried home where he found his wife nursing a bandaged arm, which he forced her to unwrap and discovered that the hand was missing. The lady was thereupon hastened to the flames.

§ 6. Henri Boguet of St. Claude, who presided at many witch and werewolf trials, in his *Discours des Sorciers*, devotes a whole chapter to "The Metamorphosis of Men into Beasts . . ." and gives full details of many interesting if ugly cases. In 1584 a lad picking fruit was attacked by a wolf, which was driven off and killed by the neighbours. In its last throes the creature crept beneath the bushes, and upon being dragged out, the body proved not that of a wolf, but of a woman, Perrenette Gandillion. Her brother and his son, on the strength of this discovery, were both charged, and confessed to being werewolves, in which shape they had killed and consumed many children.

§ 7. In December 1598 a tailor of Paris was charged with werewolfism on the evidence of barrels of bleached human bones

having been discovered in his cellar. Although he confessed to being a werewolf, and to prowling the woods at night, he was condemned and burned more on the concrete evidence of luring children into his shop, where the murders took place, than on the more romantic claims of his confession. In the same year, at Angers, a company of people came upon the half-consumed body of a youth, still warm and bleeding. It seemed that a wolf had just dashed into the undergrowth, a spectacle which set the party searching hither and thither till they found—not the animal, but a man named Jaques Rollet, his hair and beard soaked in blood, pieces of flesh still adhering to his talon-like finger-nails. He, his brother Jean and his cousin Julien, a homeless trio of tramps, were all apprehended and tried at the same time. Jacques was found guilty and condemned to death, recommended to mercy (which is a remarkably enlightened act for that period), and confined in an asylum. It is not clear what became of the other two.

§ 8. As late as 1849, in Paris, occurred the notorious case of Sergeant Bertrand. Since it is so recent, there are no serious doubts of the evidence, and although no charge of animal metamorphosis, or metempsychosis, was brought, it is reasonable to suppose that a few hundred years earlier the terrified populace would have beheld a wolf in the desecrated cemetery. Many corpses had been mysteriously exhumed and partially eaten before marks suggestive of climbing were found on one part of the wall. A trap containing explosives was set, and upon the charge being fired watchers hurried to the spot, only to see a tall, gaunt figure give an inhuman leap and disappear. Traces of military uniform were found adhering to the wires of the trap, but the

affair might have remained a mystery had not someone overheard a common soldier relating how one of his sergeants had been attacked in the town and severely wounded. The story was passed on to some shrewd person who was instrumental in instituting inquiries which resulted in Sergeant Bertrand's confession. This is a case of necrosadism, and no magical import is set upon it, even by the occultists, but it is important in so far as it confirms the evidence of werewolfism attached to the earlier cases. It is now rare to encounter wolves in a wild state in the more civilized parts of Europe. A few hundred years ago they were a source of constant terror to the people, hence the spectacle of a man in a wolf's, or even a sheep's skin, could not fail to rid the observer of his critical faculty, and send him helter-skelter to report the presence of a wolf.

§ 9. The werewolf, according to the superstition, is doomed after death to become a vampire, therefore the bodies of condemned persons, even though they may have been executed by strangulation at the stake, were always burned. In parts of Greece the peasants will not eat the flesh of a sheep that has been killed by a wolf, for fear of becoming vampires.

§ 10. Enchanted waters and enchanted flowers are, in many parts of the world, believed to confer the power of shape-shifting on the drinker or the wearer, which simple act in itself is generally considered sufficient, though sometimes a magical cantrip needs to be repeated. The spell is always entered into at sunset, and human form is regained at sunrise. The folk-lore of all people abounds in stories of shape-shifting, and also in legends of strange, solitary souls who dwell alone in the depths of the forest and, without changing their form, act as king of the wolves, leading

them in the chase, fondling them, and knowing the whole pack, each by name, as if they were so many pet dogs. And in the more cultured literature all over the world, werewolf stories are to be found. Ibsen makes the young Peer Gynt at his first meeting with Solveig, declare:

I'm a werewolf at night, and I'll bite you  
All over the thighs and the back.

In story, the werewolf is a man or woman transformed by magic into a wolf. In actual fact, it is a psychopathic person who, in the throes of mania, affects the disguise and assumes the characteristics of a wolf, or other carnivorous beast.

J. F.

*Book recommended:*

BLACKWOOD, A., *Ancient Sorcerers* (Collins, 1927).

WEYER, DR. JOHN. (c. 1516-1588.) A Dutch doctor of medicine who opposed witch-trials. He believed in sorcery, but contended that all the witchcraft was the Devil's trick to make perjurers and murderers of pious priests. James I (q.v.) wrote his *Dæmonology* to oppose "one called Scot, an Englishman" and "Wierus, a German physician." Weyer was physician to Duke William of Cleves, who protected him from the Inquisition, and after the duke's death Countess Anna of Tecklenburg offered him hospitality. His literary works were banned by the Church and publicly burned by the University of Marburg. It is the habit of German writers to claim him as their countryman.

## WHITE MAGIC

§ 1. Persons wishing to consort with either good or evil spirits for a beneficent or innocent purpose, invoke them by ceremonial, or white magic; but as consorting with demons is not by any means healthy for the soul, ceremonial magic might be stigmatized as “black as a tar-barrel.” However, as a contrast, the simple “palming” of a coin is also, to the child who gurgles with delight, a feat of magic; and between the two is much fortune-telling, folk-medicine, crystal-gazing, and other items of magically harmless amusement.

§ 2. Persons engaged in Psychical Research are continually discovering new, or at least, modern developments of old conjuring tricks, and Mr. Maskelyne is no less a magician than many who in days gone by suffered death at the stake in punishment for their wickedness. Legerdemain on the part of the operator figures as large as lack of critical ability in the observer; and when mechanical apparatus, such as distorting-mirrors, magnets, speaking-trumpets coupled with ventriloquism, and divers other instruments are used to induce optical and auditory illusion, the most penetrating powers of criticism are subject to deception. When messages are read from a paper placed inside a metal box, and the time accurately told from a closed hunter watch, it seems that superhuman and truly magical abilities are at work; nevertheless, the faculty to perform both of these miracles is admittedly a “trick” and nothing more on the assurance of those (or at least the more honest or intelligent of those) who earn a living by performing them. It is common knowledge that volumes

of ectoplasm have materialized into yards of butter-muslin. This, however, does not prove that all ectoplasm is butter-muslin, nor that many persons practising as fortune-tellers and the like do not honestly believe themselves in possession of the psychic powers they lay claim to, neither does it conclusively disprove the existence of such superhuman abilities,

§ 3. Apart from the activities of the modern spiritualists, the most common form of white magic practised to-day is fortune-telling. This covers all the ground between the social event in which the dregs left at the bottom of a tea-cup are “read,” to actual clairvoyance. Crystal-gazing, or crystallomancy, is still practised; but whereas in ancient times the seer worked according to the rules of astrology—picking the hour of operation by consulting the stars, inscribing zodiacal signs on the floor and walls of the room and burning incense—nowadays no such elaborate precautions are taken. Rock-crystal, turned and polished into a sphere about 4 inches in diameter, is the ideal material for use; failing this, a glass ball will answer. Liquid surfaces may also be used, water, ink, and even treacle being among the seer’s implements, but such practice is more properly called hydromancy. The crystal-gazer usually works in a subdued light, sitting and concentrating on the shining sphere until a state of auto-hypnosis is induced with its attendant visual hallucination. Thus far modern science can keep pace with magic; it is when the visionary sees in the glass an event taking place at the same moment in a distant part of the world, or, as so frequently happens, accurately describes an incident which has not yet occurred, that the magician leaps far ahead of the doctor. Louis Berman, in *Food and Character*, has coined an expression “bodymind,” and though it does not adorn the language, it does

very aptly express the fact that the mind and body are not separate and distinct entities (the former being carried or contained in the latter), but that the two in existence and function are one, hence every physical movement, no matter how small, affects the mind, and vice versa. The blinking of an eyelid has its corresponding mental equivalent, and to “think of a number” results in the body reproducing the thought in miniature. These minute physical movements might be discernible unconsciously by an extremely sensitive (i.e., clairvoyant) person, in which case, much crystallomancy and telepathy is explicable; but these facts, indisputable though they be, still do not go all the way, and an insoluble residue of magic remains.

§ 4. Cartomancy, or card-reading, is another surviving form of fortune-telling, for which purpose the more exclusive practitioners make use of the tarot pack. There is a stack of literature on the subject of the tarot cards—most of it very unreliable and misleading. Mystics, seers and magicians, more particularly the French members of the brotherhood, have vied with each other in establishing the antiquity of the cards, and their arguments, reduced to a logical absurdity, result in the conclusion that “in the beginning were the tarots” and Creation came next, just to render them useful. It seems fairly well established, however, that the cards were brought into Europe by the gipsies, and as the origin of these people remains unknown, so does the derivation of their cards. The pack consists of seventy-eight pictorial cards, twenty-two of which are called the “major arcana or trumps major,” and fifty-six (four suits of fourteen cards) the “minor arcana or trumps minor.” The major arcana consists of the magician, the high priestess, the empress, the emperor, the hierophant, the lovers,

the chariot, strength, the hermit, the wheel of fortune, justice, the hanged man, death, temperance, the devil, the tower, the star, the moon, the sun, the last judgment, the fool, the world—all represented in a suitably symbolic manner. The lesser arcana consists of four suits as follows: wands or staves, cups, swords, and pentacles, each having four court cards, king, queen, knight and page. These suits are reputed to have given rise to the normal playing-card suits by wands becoming clubs; cups, hearts; swords, spades; and pentacles, diamonds. Hebrew letters, signs of the zodiac, and every possible kind of symbolism is attached to these devices, hence not only are they eminently suitable to fortune-telling, but the dealers in transcendental magic can read therein the solution of the world's mysteries. It has been claimed for the tarot cards that they constitute the key to the esoteric knowledge of the Bible, the Kabbalah, the Talmud, the Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian books, and that the only reason for the preservation of the gipsies is their understanding of these potent pictures. There may be some practical truth in this, as fortune-telling is notoriously a common means of livelihood with the Romanies. According to Sir James Murray (*O.E.D.*), the word tarot is derived from the 16th-century French *tarault*, or *tarau*. The early Italian *tarocchi* is, in the opinion of Eric Partridge, misleading: as he points out, Sir E. A. Wallis Budge in his Egyptian Dictionary gives *taru*, meaning "demons, devils, enemies." This may have no bearing on the cards, but it helps to keep controversy alive. Florio's definition is: "Tarocchi, a kind of playing cards called Tarocks or Terestriall triumphs."

§ 5. The gipsies excel also in the practice of chiromancy, or palmistry. By this method, character, fortune, and future events

are read in the flexion folds of the hand, commencing at the line across the wrist. It would be no exaggeration to state that everybody knows the “line of life,” and almost as many can distinguish the “head line” and the “heart line,” but by the professional, the most minute lines are taken into consideration together with contours, shape, and moisture of the skin. Results are frequently startling, and so far as reading of character is concerned, the method may well be reliable, but “fortune” and “the future” are outside the rules of reason, and in cases where “accurate” prognostications are made by palmists the process of deduction is most probably clairvoyance.

§ 6. Dowsing- or divining-rods, though perfectly practical in application, may quite correctly be regarded as “magical” appliances in so far as science cannot adequately explain the process underlying their use. The diviner, holding a Y-shaped twig of hazel or other nut-tree by the horns, walks slowly over the land until he comes to either an underground stream of water, or a deposit of minerals—when the rod makes a definite movement, as though endowed with a volition of its own. In “the good old days,” diviners were tried on a charge of witchcraft, and generally found guilty; to-day they are employed, often at a handsome rate of remuneration, by land and mine owners, a really good diviner knowing by these magical means how much water or mineral is present and at what depth it exists beneath the surface. This remarkable power may be a form of clairvoyance, but whatever type of magic it is, the fact remains that very efficient materialists have failed in their endeavours to produce a mechanical diviner.

§ 7. The magnificent breakers of the ocean of Science are for ever booming along, undermining and encroaching upon the

shores of the secret land of the Occult. That which was a dark continent has now been reduced to an island, but it is necessary to the safety of civilization and the sanity of mankind that those relentless waters rush on till the last wrecking rock of superstition disappears beneath many a goodly fathom. If there is a world of spirits, of discarnate intelligences good or evil, speaking to us through the mumbling lips of an emotionally unsound medium, it were well for us to know about them; if certain sensitive persons can delve into a fourth-dimensional intelligence, and so see and hear with superhuman eyes and ears, it were well for us to employ those mortals to a utilitarian end; but all their claims must bow to the sublime impeccability of the Socratic method. This, the test of applied fact as it might be called, has resulted in the magnificent achievements of modern science, and if its application to the realms of magic can reduce the medium's heaven-sent message to the symbolic expression of undischarged libido, then the doctor and not the theologian must steer the craft of our emotional life. On the other hand, the spirit-world, if it exists, may be thrown open and flooded with the light of reason by the same method.

§ 8. The mountains of magic are not yet scaled, but the plains are thoroughly explored. Homœopathic and contagious magic are employed all over the world in folk-medicine, in rain-making, and in the social life of primitive peoples. In the days before Louis Pasteur's work, "a hair of the dog that bit you" was considered a cure for rabies. The hair, which needed to be consumed by the patient, was taken from the animal's tail, and as it was never certain that the "mad" dog was rabid, the remedy was considered a cure because those unfortunates bitten by a healthy beast, and so treated, naturally enough never contracted the disease! Such

magical remedies are still in use. We need go no further than Ireland where, according to E. Æ. Somerville and Martin Ross in *The Smile and the Tear* (p. 52), “The mother of a family of young children who were . . . afflicted [with whooping-cough] was accused of neglecting them. She replied that she had done all that was possible, and it was no easy job at all. ‘Sure I walked six miles to the town,’ she said indignantly, ‘to try could I get the loan of a pair o’ ferrets. I had the town walked before I could meet the lad that had them. I brought them hither then, and I got a bowleen o’ milk, and I put their noses down in the way they should drink it. What they left afther them I took it and I give it to the children to drink. It was a wise woman back in the mountains that said I should do that. But,’ she admitted, ‘they hardly got much good out of it yet—’ A triumphant whoop from one of the sufferers came, as, no doubt, a hint from the demon in possession, that it had been neither scared nor disgusted—which seems odd.” The idea of possession by demons as a cause of illness lingered very long in Europe and was applied particularly to the insane. If the demon could not be “cast out” by a practised exorcist (which, for reasons now known to the psychotherapist, could sometimes be accomplished), then the only possible method was to torture the fiend out of its host, hence lunatics were burned on the soles of the feet, beaten, starved, and subjected to the most horrifying cruelty. Torture was abandoned, but patients continued to be treated like criminals till in 1794 the Quaker doctor, William Tuke, brought in Lunacy Reform and founded his ideal asylum, “The Retreat,” in Yorkshire.

§ 9. Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, a monumental work dealing with world-wide folk-lore, magic and religion, gives a

prodigious amount of detail concerning the working of magic among all peoples. “In Russia . . . three men used to climb up the fir-trees in an old sacred grove. One of them drummed with a hammer on a kettle or small cask to imitate thunder; the second knocked two fire-brands together and made the sparks fly, to imitate lightning; while the third, who was called ‘the rain-maker,’ had a bunch of twigs with which he sprinkled water on all sides. To put an end to drought and bring down rain, women and girls of the village of Ploska are wont to go naked by night to the boundaries of the village, and there pour water on the ground” (p. 63, abridged edition).

§ 10. In the foregoing examples, magic to induce rain is performed by the ordinary inhabitants of the villages, but many primitive peoples have in their midst a special rain-maker who is held actually responsible for the annual rainfall. These practitioners, generally very shrewd men, are “weather-wise” in the ordinary sense, and perform their magical ceremonies just before the rain is about to descend. This does not constitute deliberate cheating: the rain-makers believe that without their ceremony the rain will not fall. In the event of very prolonged drought, they conclude that the people have offended the gods, hence the whole community is drawn into the ceremonial, loud and frenzied incantations rising for days on end. Under these circumstances primitive religion is brought to the aid of homœopathic magic, for between incantation and prayer there is essentially no difference.

§ 11. In Northern Australia the magician goes secretly to a pool and sings over it a plaintive magic song. After this he solemnly raises some of the water in his hands and tosses it about in all

directions, then runs back to camp expecting the rain to give chase.

§ 12. In Central Australia during a drought the people wail loudly to the Mura-Muras, that is, ancestral spirits, complaining of the parched state of the land and their own impoverished condition, after which the rain-making ceremony is performed. "A hole is dug about twelve feet long and eight or ten broad, and over this hole a conical hut of logs and branches is made. Two wizards supposed to have received a special inspiration from the Mura-Muras, are bled by an old and influential man with a sharp flint; and the blood, drawn from their arms below the elbow, is made to flow on the other men of the tribe, who sit huddled together in the hut. At the same time the two bleeding men throw handfuls of down about, some of which adheres to the blood-stained bodies of their comrades, whilst the rest floats in the air. The blood is thought to represent the rain, and the down, the clouds. During the ceremony two large stones are placed in the middle of the hut; they stand for gathering clouds and presage rain. Then the wizards who were bled carry away the stones for about ten or fifteen miles, and place them as high as they can in the tallest tree. Meanwhile the other men gather gypsum, pound it fine, and throw it into a water-hole. This the Mura-Muras see, and at once cause clouds to appear in the sky. Lastly, the men, young and old, surround the hut, and, stooping down, butt at it with their heads, like so many rams. Thus they force their way through it and reappear on the other side, repeating the process till the hut is wrecked. In doing this they are forbidden to use their hands or arms; but when the heavy logs alone remain they are allowed to pull them out with their hands. The piercing of the hut with the

heads symbolizes the piercing of the clouds; the fall of the hut, the fall of the rain. Obviously, too, the act of placing high up in trees the two stones which stand for clouds, is a way of making the real clouds to mount up in the sky" (Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 85). After such strenuous and sanguinary, not to say painful endeavour, it is to be hoped that the Mura-Muras are merciful, sending the desired downpour.

§ 13. Even in the less superstitious communities, pregnancy is regarded as a period when magic must be resorted to. Women in this condition are warned never to tie knots in their clothing lest it provoke a difficult labour, while the expedient of squeezing through narrow openings, climbing through hoops and the like is considered invaluable to ensure easy parturition. The Basque people of the Pyrenees still perform the *Couvade*. The mother rises from her bed and busies herself with normal household duties, whilst the father of the new-born child takes to his bed, pretends to be very poorly and receives visits from neighbours. This plan deceives the malignant demons who always hover in the air on such occasions, intent on working harm to the exhausted woman, and the delicate new life. Under *couvade* conditions, these spirits would find themselves confronted by a vigorous healthy man who would certainly make very short work of them. Professor B. Malinowski, in his work on the Trobriand Islanders, gives magical formulas for charming the special dress worn by the women during pregnancy. The islanders spread a mat upon the ground, place a garment upon it, then strew with pieces of white leaves. After this, those present who know the magic kneel round and, pressing their faces close into the robe, repeat the words that call upon a certain white bird to alight on the village water-hole.

They then declare that this bird is making beautiful every portion of the robe, and, having named each part in meticulous detail, they proceed to a similar enumeration of the parts of the wearer's body, finishing the spell with the words, "No more is it her head, her head is like the pallor before dawn; no more is it her face, her face is like the white sprout of a young leaf of the areca plant. . . ." The purpose of the spell is to bring great physical beauty to the expectant mother; the bird invoked is of most exquisite form and dazzling white plumage. Its association with the water-hole at which the woman bathes is for the purpose of whitening her skin. Magic among primitives is no plaything, and Trobriand women when enceinte actually do "grow pallid like the white sky before dawn, and like the young sprouts of areca."

§ 14. Magic lies closer to the soul of the savage than does objective reality. The Trobrianders make long ceremonial voyages annually in canoes that are actually unstable and unseaworthy inasmuch that they cannot sail close to the wind, and this defect in seas studded with coral-reefs and sand-banks makes for very real dangers. The natives, however, although fully aware of this, express much more terror of flying-witches, who attack the little vessels when far out at sea. The presence of these malignant beings may always be seen by the sparks which they strike on the masthead. Europeans may term such lights St. Elmo's fire, declare it harmless, and ignore it, but the Trobriand sailor knows better, and as soon as it appears he sets to work with his counter-magic at which he labours to save his life.

§ 15. The practice of magic is the essence of occultism, for by it, man takes, or attempts to take control of natural phenomena, and so shape his destiny. According to Sir James Frazer, magic is the

high road that leads to religion; nevertheless, magic is practised almost as much in Christian countries as in savage society, though in the former it is, of course, not officially recognized by either Church or State. However, “threatening the God” in times of personal trouble, and so attempting to bully Him into granting surcease, is quite common in Italy, and it is not unknown for village communities to “punish the saints” in times of drought by covering with sackcloth the effiges in the churches. Then and now, there and here, space and time contract to a pin-point, and all the world is one beneath the potent spells of magic.

J. F

*Book recommended:*

THORNDIKE, L., *History of Magic* (New York, 1929).

[An arresting novel dealing with the Tarots is: *The Greater Trumps*, by C. W. S. Williams (*Gollancz*, 1932).]

## WITCHCRAFT

§ 1. "If she chanced to stumble [the villagers] always found sticks or straws that lay in the figure of a cross before her. If she made any mistake at church, and cried amen in a wrong place, they never failed to conclude that she was saying her prayers backwards. There was not a maid in the parish that would take a pin of her, though she should offer a bag of money with it. She goes by the name of Moll White, and has made the country ring with several imaginary exploits which are palmed upon her. If the dairymaid does not make her butter to come so soon as she would have it, Moll White is at the bottom of the churn. If a horse sweats in the stable, Moll White has been upon his back. If a hare makes an unexpected escape from the hounds, the huntsman curses Moll White. 'Nay,' says Sir Roger, 'I have known the master of the pack, upon such an occasion, send one of his servants to see if Moll White had been out that morning'" (Addison's Essays). This is the typical witch of later literature—simply a harmless old crone loved by none save her favourite cat; a burden on the parish, and a source of annoyance to her neighbours. It was from about 1450 till about 1750 that the witch cult was a real menace to civilization. Holland was, in 1610, the first country to abolish legal witch-persecutions; in 1632 Geneva followed suit; in 1649 Sweden took their good example. It was not until 1682 that England showed mercy; Scotland in 1697; France 1726. Germany, more brutal even than France, continued the practice twenty-three years longer. Spain always excelled in barbarous cruelty and persecuted witches till 1781. Fear of the witch persists, however, in all

countries, and as late as 1926, at Tipton in Staffordshire, two men were summoned for threatening an alleged witch, and several neighbours gave evidence against her! In the same year in France, Abbé Desnoyers was accused of being an incarnation of Satan, and flogged for bewitching Madame Mesmin and others.

§ 2. Witches actually functioned long before 1450 (the Witch of Endor will suffice as evidence of this); but prior to this date the Church denied the existence of witches, and punished all who believed in, and consulted them for good or ill. Later, in the battle against heretics, who naturally enough held their meetings in secret, the Church also attacked the Witches' Sabbat, and so induced that epidemic of superstitious terror, as a result of which it is estimated that the population of Spain was reduced from 20 millions to 6 millions. Torquemada is said to have burned 10,220, and sent 97,371 persons to the galleys in the course of eighteen years.

§ 3. Before the epidemic, female dabblers in the black art were known as prophetesses, seers or sibyls; their existence was not considered inimical to Church or State, and they were left in peace. The Witch of Endor herself does not seem to have been greatly troubled by the Law; and though her practice was illegal, she must have been pretty generally winked at, seeing that Saul visited her: just as to-day, though fortune-telling is considered an offence, the professional practitioners, by the simple expedient of terming themselves character-readers, remain within the law. The Witch of Endor, however, is really miscalled. She was more of a necromancer, or spirit-medium, than a witch in the medieval sense. As the frontispiece to *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, published in 1681, W. Faithorne has engraved the scene of Samuel appearing

to Saul and depicted the witch's apartment as apparently built and furnished in late 17th-century Europe.

§ 4. Miss M. A. Murray in two works, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* and *The God of the Witches*, ingeniously maintains the thesis that witchcraft was the survival of the Dianic cult which had been the pre-Christian religion of the area. She has gathered much data, and many facts are in her favour, but the theory becomes extravagant and insupportable when she attempts to align the execution of the witches with the sacrifice of the god in early fecundity cults. Agreeing that "Frazer has pointed out that the human victim whether the god himself or his human substitute did not content himself by merely not attempting to escape his destiny, but in many cases actually rushed on his fate, and died by his own hand or by voluntary submission to the sacrificer" (*Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, p. 160), we still cannot admit that Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais made voluntary sacrifices of themselves in accordance with the long-forgotten rites of a proto-historic religious cult; or, despite the fact that "two centuries later Major Weir offered himself up, and was executed as a witch at Edinburgh, refusing to the end all attempts to convert him to the Christian point of view" (*op. cit.*, p. 161), perceive that it proves anything other than the mental derangement of the protagonist. That there is a great deal of the ritual of pre-Christian religious cults contained in the practice of witchcraft is undeniable; yet it seems more reasonable to suppose that the witches themselves were not cognizant of this, but were, through hysteria, expressing the inversion of Christianity. Mr. Montague Summers is much nearer the mark when he declares witchcraft to be a form of Devil-worship. The conversion of Europe to

Christianity had not been a simple matter of switching over, with all the inhabitants experiencing simultaneously a change of thought. First the petty kings had been won to the new doctrine: their peers may have followed suit, but the people were at first quite unconcerned. However, as the gospel penetrated the population, the priests declared the old gods to be part of the Principle of Evil, hence they were equated to the Christian Principle of Evil—Satan. As a result of this, we find that the Devil is represented in many forms, and Diana is no doubt among them. The austere nature of the new faith endeared it more to those ascetically inclined than to the peasant converts. Too many acts that had hitherto seemed natural and harmless were now pronounced to be sinful; and such sinful acts, repressed, were dramatized in hysteria. Emotionally unstable members of the community found in Satan an indulgent deity. The witches were mental invalids, expressing pubertal and climacteric stresses in the superstitious idiom of the time; not folk-lorists, nor antiquarians, attempting to keep the old cults alive for the information of posterity.

§ 5. Hysterics are often unable to distinguish clearly between the subjective experience of dream-life and the objective experience of waking-life; and as the dream of flying, or gliding in long leaps over the ground is by no means uncommon, it is not difficult to perceive the origin of the witches' claims to be able to fly through the air on a broomstick. They induced the somnambulistic state by rubbing the body all over with an intoxicating ointment, and by chanting incantations. In the same way the modern witch-doctors among primitive people work themselves up into the frenzies necessary to the performance of

their miracles.

§ 6. In 1484 the famous Bull of Innocent VIII was issued. This document, stigmatized as “the product of hell,” legalized the anti-witch inquisition, and led to the slaughter of (it is estimated) 9 1/2 million people, for the most part old women and young girls. This means, if Torquemada’s record is taken as an average for the whole of the area, and the whole of the time period covered by the Bull, that a further 80 million, which is a conservative estimate, suffered deportation. The fecundity bee buzzing in Miss Murray’s bonnet deafens her to the loud shouting fact of the Bull’s purpose, and leads her to defend the document as “one of many ordinances against the practice of an earlier cult. . . . It is exactly the pronouncement which one would expect from a Christian against a heathen form of religion in which the worship of a god of fertility was the central idea” (*op. cit.*, p. 24). Actually one would not expect the issue of such a document from a *Christian* against anything; and a few years later, the publication of Sprenger’s *Malleus Maleficarum*, in which inquisitional rules were laid down, making it quite impossible for any accused person to escape slaughter, seems to confirm the hellish origin of Pope Innocent’s Bull.

§ 7. The charge brought against the unfortunate witch was on three heads, involving her relationship to the public, to the Devil, and to God. The second and third points, namely, pact with the Devil and heresy, were the Church’s main interests in the witch trials. To stir the public and gain its support, they stressed the first point, maleficium, that is, harmful magic directed against man’s person and property. The maleficium most greatly feared was the casting of a spell that would result in impotence or sterility; and this dread the Church was not slow to seize upon. “In the

celebrated Bull on Witchcraft the subject of Maleficium is treated under seven headings, of which six are concerned directly with the sexual functions and one with the transformation into animals. The well-known *Malleus Maleficarum* devotes four chapters to a detailed consideration of the question of the means whereby this impotence is brought about. . . . Through it the love between a given man and woman could be annihilated, barrenness of women and sterility of men induced, the intra-uterine embryo destroyed and miscarriages effected” (Dr. Ernest Jones, *On Nightmare*, p. 193).

§ 8. The accusation having been made by a malicious or timid neighbour, and the suspect apprehended, steps were then taken to prove the witch’s guilt. First among incriminating signs was the Devil’s mark. It was considered that when the miscreant entered into her pact with the Evil One, he branded her in some way, often by a miniature replica of his hoof; and that this macala would be devoid of natural sensitiveness, and no blood would flow if a pointed instrument was inserted into it. The inquisitors made most diligent search and seldom failed to find what they sought, usually in a most intimate portion of the anatomy. The mark found, the pricking process was carried out. A document of French origin, dated 10 March 1611, is signed by two surgeons and two physicians. It runs: “We, the undersigned doctors and surgeons, in obedience to the directions given . . . have visited [the accused] upon whose body we observed three little marks, not very different in colour from the natural skin. The first . . . we pierced . . . with a needle to the depth of two fingers’ breadth—[the accused] felt no pain, nor did any blood or other humour exude from the incision. [Into] the second . . . we drove the needle for

three fingers' breadth, leaving it fixed in this spot for some time . . . and yet all the while the [accused] felt no pain, nor was there any effluxion of blood or other humour of any kind. . . . In our judgment such callous marks cannot be due to any ancient affection of the skin. . . ." The opinion of these four learned medical men holds good to-day. This type of anæsthesia is not due to "ancient affections of the skin" but to hysteria. In major cases, such anæsthesia and apparent bloodlessness extends over large areas, and has even been known to involve one-half of the entire body.<sup>1</sup>

§ 9. Other than the Devil's mark was the damning "little Teat or Pap" wherefrom the witch gave suck, and so nourished her familiar. Many records state that the accused possessed these. Elizabeth Wright from a village near Burton-on-Trent, tried in 1597, was subjected to the search. "The old woman they stript, and found behind her right sholder a thing much like the vdder of an ewe that giueth sucke with two teates. . . ." Elizabeth Sawyer, the witch of Edmonton, was found to possess "a thing like a Teate the bignesse of the little finger . . . and seemed as though one had suckt it." Mary Read, the witch of Kent, had a "visible Teat under her Tongue and did shew it to many." Polymastia (i.e., the presence of more than two breasts) and polythelia (i.e., supernumerary nipples) are far from uncommon deformities, but no doubt the majority of the incriminating tumours revealed in the witch trials may be referred to pathological histology.

§ 10. Witches, when taken, often voluntarily confessed guilt on every count. They admitted their responsibility for the death of

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Psycho-Therapy and Psychic Phenomena*.

neighbours by casting spells; of having carnal relations with the Devil; and of denying Christ, spitting upon the cross, flying through the air, and changing into animal shape. This means that, like all hysterics, they were megalomaniacal, and subject to delusions. When the accused refused to confess, she was tortured, and this had the desired effect because death was preferable. The witch was customarily strangled at the stake and the corpse burned, though there are a few records of the judge having pronounced, "to be burned quick." According to Miss Murray the cremation was insisted upon to provide sacred ash for the devotees of Diana to sprinkle over their fields in the ritual of the fecundity-cult. This is mere extravaganza, as the authoress, an anthropologist, must know that part of the witch's crimes was the ability to metamorphose into an animal shape, i.e., lycanthropy or werewolfism; and she must also know that the bodies of reputed werewolves were burned to prevent their rising as vampires, which, according to the ignorant, they invariably did, if buried in either consecrated or unconsecrated ground.

§ 11. "Swimming a witch" was considered a good rough-and-ready method of testing an accused person. The prisoner was stripped naked, and her left thumb tied to her right big toe; the right thumb was then similarly fastened to her left big toe, so that her arms and legs made the sign of the cross before her. She was then taken and carefully lowered on to the surface of a pond or stream. If she floated on her back safely to dry land, the Devil supported her in the water and her pact was indicated; if she sank, then the inquisitors made an attempt to haul her out before she was drowned. Sometimes these Christian endeavours at rescue were unsuccessful; often, though saved from the water, the

exonerated woman died in consequence of shock and exposure.

§ 12. If the Roman Catholic Church created the witchcraft epidemic, the Nonconformists (with notable exceptions) certainly carried it on in a manner not unworthy of practised inquisitors. To deal with the exception first: in Pennsylvania, in 1684, an old hag pleaded guilty before William Penn, the Quaker founder of the colony, who remarked that he saw no reason why anyone feeling so disposed should not fly through the air on a broomstick, and dismissed the case. In Puritan England affairs were very different. The rebel government appointed a “witch-finder general,” one Matthew Hopkins, who qualified for the office by bringing to book a whole coven of witches that met near his house in Manningtree, Essex, every sixth Friday night. His methods were as cruel as any that had been practised previously: he bound his victims cross-legged upon a stool, prevented them from sleeping and had them watched continuously. If that treatment did not wring a confession of guilt from them, he had them walked up and down, up and down, barefoot, on ground sharp with flints, till the flesh fell from their feet—and the confession from their lips. He kept the executioners busy, filled the jails all over East Anglia, and netted a very nice fortune in fees from local authorities. Among his victims was John Lawes, Vicar of Brandeston, who had occupied the living for almost half a century. Hopkins “smelt out” so many witches that folk began to ask if he were not himself in league with the Devil, getting his information direct from the Evil One’s register. To this he replied in a pamphlet, *The Discovery of Witches*, consisting of a series of questions and answers, of which “Querie 1. That he must needs be the greatest Witch, Sorcerer, and Wizzard himselfe, else hee could not doe it” receives the

“Answer. If Satans Kingdome be divided against itselfe, how shall it stand?” Legend has it that Master Matthew Hopkins was at last himself put to the water ordeal and drowned; but the fact is that he retired when he saw his popularity on the wane, and died in his bed at Manningtree.

§ 13. Upon her initiation, the witch received from the Devil, besides his mark and the “little Teat or Pap,” a “familiar” or “imp,” which she was expected to care for and nourish. These familiars often took the shape of cats or hares (both referred to under the general term “puss”), but sometimes, apparently, they were specially created, their description being that of a beast of mixed dog, rat and reptile phylogeny. (Such creatures are common enough to-day, and may often be seen carried by ladies in Kensington.) The familiar served the witch in various capacities, and also changed shape with her. Witches thus metamorphosed were accused of entering the shed and sucking milk from the cow’s udders. After the familiar had rendered a service to its mistress it was customarily allowed a little blood, the witch cutting herself and permitting the imp to suck the wound—a practice reminding one so forcibly of vampirism, which is itself not far removed from the alp superstition (the alp being a milk-sucking night fiend, allied to incubus and succubus), that hysterical phantasy is not difficult to detect. The familiars were generally given rather charming names, such as Grimalkin, Vinegar Tom, and Greedigut.

§ 14. The witches’ meetings were called Sabbats or Sabbaths. Some authorities maintain that the word is not in any way connected with the seventh day or the number seven, but is derived from the Old French *s’esbattre* (to frolic). These meetings

were most certainly jolly affairs, seeming to consist mostly of revels, eating and drinking, dancing, and licentiousness. Bacchus and Priapus were no doubt friends of Diana. There is much controversy concerning the means of locomotion employed by the witches in journeying to the Sabbat, which was obviously held at a distance from the village; and equally obviously those present did not ride through the air on a broomstick. Such flights were of the fancy only; nevertheless, witches generally claimed to have used that esoteric means of transport when attending their functions. Modern analysis of statements made during the trials reveals that many went on foot, but were at the time in a state of nervous stress bordering on somnambulism, hence the delusion of flying. Others were “given a lift” in the conveyance used by the more opulent and influential members of the coven. Such words as “the Devil took me up and conveyed me thither in his carriage,” mean nothing more, for the “Devil” was the title bestowed upon the chief officer of the district.<sup>1</sup> Besides eating and drinking and revelling, the Black Mass was often celebrated at the witches’ gatherings, and that fact alone rather defeats Miss Murray’s thesis, so she leaps to the conclusion that the general rules for performing mass existed long previous to Christianity. That indeed is going too far, and Montague Summers rightly becomes enraged.

§ 15. One of the most striking witch-trials that took place in England was that held, in the year 1612, at Pendle in Lancashire. A crone called Elizabeth Southernnes or Demdike, blind, 80 years of age, mother and grandmother of many witches, was at bitter

---

<sup>1</sup> See *Devil-worship*, § 5.

enmity with Anne Whittle or Chattox, “a very old, withered, spent, and decrepit creature, her sight almost gone; a dangerous witch of very long continuance; always opposite to old Demdike; for whom the one favoured the other hated deadly; and how they curse and accuse one another in their examinations may appear. . . . Her lips ever chattering and walking; but no man knew what. She lived in the forest of Pendle amongst the wicked company of dangerous witches.” It seems these two families struggled for supremacy, and spared each other not a jot. Dame Demdike’s daughter lost her “coif and band”—Dame Chattox’s daughter found it; then followed accusations of theft and not a little fighting, obviously witch versus witch, finding more satisfaction in fisticuffs than sorcery. Rob Nutter, the son of the lord of the manor, attempted to intervene, threatened to evict old Dame Chattox, and so earned her displeasure. He was dead within three months—the victim of her maleficium. Dame Chattox was quite an adept at causing folk to “pine and dwindle” by sticking rusty pins into clay images of them, and Dame Demdike was no less skilful. At last, “Master Roger Nowell, an active and austere magistrate,” raided Pendle Forest and put Demdike and three others in Lancaster Castle.

§ 16. A general meeting of witches was convened by Demdike’s daughter, and they ardently discussed the release of the old lady, the murder of the governor, and the blowing up of the castle. Grief did not inhibit their appetite, for “The persons aforesaid had to their dinner Beefe, Bacon, and roasted Mutton: which Mutton (as this Examinee’s said brother said) was of a Wether of Christopher Swyers of Barley: which Wether . . . [was] in this Examinee’s sight killed and eaten.” In passing, it is important to note that bulimia (i.e., excessive appetite) is a symptom of hysteria. Whatever plans

were made at this meeting were never put into execution, for the whole coven was arrested and lodged with Dame Demdike in the castle they had lusted to destroy. The old dame died in prison before her trial, but not before she had confessed to being a witch and having a familiar “which appeared unto her in the likeness of a brown dog, forcing himself to her knee, to get blood under her left ann.” Chattox, though a trifle superior in years to Demdike, survived the prison existence and “confessed”; five other persons, including a little girl of nine (who gave evidence against her own own mother), did likewise. But, with or without confession, or even protesting their innocence, the rival factions of the Pendle coven were found guilty and condemned. Ten went to the gallows, among the number a lady of good estate, and two children. This occurred during the reign of “the British Solomon”—James I, who did much to popularize the sport of witch-baiting in this country; nevertheless, the fall of the Stuart Dynasty brought no reforms in this direction, and inquisitorial persecutions further befouled the ugly passage of the Puritan rebels.

§ 17. Oliver Cromwell, not many years later, was himself supposed to have entered into league with the Devil, the contract standing good for seven years. The fact that a heavy storm raged on 3 September 1658, when Cromwell lay dying, adds weight to the legend that Satan had come to carry off his own.

§ 18. The most famous witchcraft trial to be found in Scottish annals is that of Thomas Weir and his sister. Weir was created Major of the “Guards of the City of Edinborough” in the year 1650, and as Major Weir he is best known. He was a lay preacher of extraordinary powers, and as it was understood that he prayed only in the houses of “saints,” very many folk tried to secure his

attendance at their house-conventicles. "He had indeed a wonderful fluency in extemporary prayer, and what through Enthusiastical phrases, and what through Extasies, and raptures, into which he would appear transported, he made the amazed people presume he was acted by the Spirit of God." He is said to have always dressed in a long dark cloak and to have carried a staff of curiously carven form. "He was a tall . . . man, and ordinarily looked down to the ground; a grim countenance, and a big nose." He never married, but resided with his sister, Jean Weir, in a high house with quaint projecting angles, on Bow-head, Edinburgh, in which city he was perhaps the most respected inhabitant for many years. At the age of 70, without any evident signs of mental degeneration, he suddenly began to accuse himself of many crimes, the very mention of which was horrifying to the pious people among whom he lived. News of his condition was carried to Sir Andrew Ramsay, Lord Abbotshall, then Provost of Edinburgh, who very wisely concluded that Major Weir was out of his mind, and so sent doctors to visit him; but they returned with the report that the Major was in perfect health, and his torment due to nothing but awakened conscience. Something had to be done, and if medical men were not discreet enough to enable the Provost to avoid scandal, then there was nothing for it but to place the Major and his sister under arrest. "When they were seized, she desired the guards to keep him from laying hold on a certain staff, which she said, if he chanced to get it into his hands he would certainly drive them all out of doors, notwithstanding all the resistance they could make." This poor insane creature, Jean Weir, was evidently in mortal terror of her brother's staff of blackthorn, for she declared it to have magical properties, and to

be particularly necessary to him when he prayed so fervently. She persistently cried that if Major Weir once handled the staff, all his demoniac powers would return to him. In prison she confessed that she and he had entered into a pact with the Devil; that her brother received the gift of prayer and of prophecy “and made [the people] believe that, like Moses, he had been with God in the Mount.” But as for herself—the only benefit she had from the contract was a constant supply of yarn which was always ready upon her spindle. The Major resolutely refused either to pray or to be prayed over while he lay in prison, and at his trial, pleaded guilty when charged, on the sole evidence of his own confession, with witchcraft, incest, and numerous other “deadly sins.” Witnesses could say little more against him than that he was never observed to kneel at prayer, and that he was always accompanied in this exercise by his staff. He and this magical wand were burned together. “Whatever incantation was in [the staff] the persons present own that it gave rare turnings, and was long a-burning, as also himself.” Jean Weir was charged with witchcraft and incest, found guilty on her own confession and hanged in the grassmarket of Edinburgh. It is said that she addressed the populace thus: “I see a great crowd of People come hither to-day to behold a poor old miserable creature’s death, but I trow there be few among you who are weeping and mourning for the broken Covenant.” After which, without fear or reluctance, she threw herself from the ladder. For over a hundred years Major Weir’s house remained uninhabited and was one of the sights of Edinburgh. People declared that at night sounds of dancing and devilish mirth, mixed with the whirr of a spinning-wheel, issued from the building, and Thomas and Jean Weir were, on more than

one occasion, seen riding in a coach and six with the Devil on the box.

§ 19. These British witch-trials are typical of what was taking place all over Christendom. Ignorance and superstition existed in the same measure at home as abroad, but in the exercise of cruelty Britain was less guilty in so far as the Law forbade the use of instruments of torture such as the rack, the thumb-screw and the Spanish-boots; also, there were perhaps fewer trials and a bigger percentage of acquittals. Even during the Lancashire witch-trial (Demdike and Chattox), another case was brought up and dismissed, because the evidence of the accuser, Grace Sowerbutts, savoured too strongly of malice. This is instructive, for it indicates an attempt at calm judgment and unprejudiced justice. The English courts did not condemn as a result of blind panic.

§ 20. On the American Continent the benign Quaker government was confined to Pennsylvania, and beyond the boundaries of this area witch-persecutions flourished. Those eminent Puritan divines, Increase Mather and Cotton Mather, father and son, fanned the flames in New England, and displayed no less subtlety than the inquisitors, and even more hypocritical righteousness than Master Matthew Hopkins.

§ 21. The panic at Salem commenced in the household of the Rev. Samuel Parris. There was a family of girls ranging in age from 9 to 18 years, and during the long winter evenings they whiled away the time listening to no doubt very creepy stories told to them by a West Indian slave-woman named Tituba. Before long an attack of hysteria, with its typical symptoms was induced in three of the younger children: "They would put themselves in odd postures, and utter loud outcries and ridiculous, incoherent and

unintelligible expressions.” Dr. Griggs gravely shook his head over them. Realizing his impotence in the case, he declared that their condition was due to bewitchment. The dread word spoken, and the epidemic raged like a holocaust. Accusations like acrid smoke blackened the outlook and blinded all. Needless to say, the affronted father, Samuel Parris, saw witches at every street corner, and not a clergyman in the whole of New England but made a veritable Matthew Hopkins of himself. Cotton Mather must have required all the geese in the colony to supply quills for his pens used in making long and detailed reports of each case; in fact, he wrote a whole book on the subject entitled *The Wonders of the Invisible World*. The Parris children, providentially saved from death by maleficium of Tituba (who, being shrewder than her judges, escaped the gallows) and others (who did not), became mediumistic, and were used as psychic mariners’ compasses as it were. Brought into the presence of a hitherto unsuspected and respectable person, they “cried out” if he or she were in reality a witch. Thus the very excellent divines continued their work in the name of God till the prisons were overcrowded, and special courts of Oyer and Terminer were held throughout New England. At last the children “cried out” in the presence of Mrs. Hale, wife of the Rev. John Hale, Minister of Beverly, and so overstepped the mark. Mrs. Hale was too universally loved and respected for public opinion to tolerate such an accusation being brought against her. The entire community experienced a *votie face* and in defence of Mrs. Hale declared the children perjurers and liars. At this juncture Sir William Phips, Governor of the colony, took action. He dissolved the special courts, forbade witch-trials and released the prisoners, much to the horror of Cotton Mather and Co.

§ 22. As already stated, prior to the universal legalization of witch persecutions, the beldams had been regarded more as friends than foes of the populace. After the recession of the epidemic they were again elevated—or reduced—to that status, and there are to be found even to-day in the villages, wise old women who eke out a meagre existence with simples and recipes, which they supply for a few coppers, together with sage advice, to all who seek.

§ 23. Among primitive peoples, witchcraft is rife and the witch-doctor is the most important member of the community. In Melanesia, if a man falls from a tree the mishap is ascribed not to a broken branch, or an ill-judged movement, but to the malign magic of some evilly disposed neighbour. All sickness is the result of spells. The witch-doctor works himself up into a frenzy, thoroughly pummels the sufferer, chases the “disease” into a convenient spot on the body and gives the place a good hard bite. He then spits the blood out and searches among it for a little splinter of bone, which is sure to be there for he has previously secreted it in his mouth. This he holds up in triumph—he has conquered the disease; so the patient, satisfied, soon gets well. A cure is all that anyone, in any community, asks from a doctor. Europeans are not always so fortunate as savages in this respect. The witch-doctor system may be subject to many abuses, but on the whole the practitioners are honest men, who genuinely believe in their own occult powers, and the Christian missionaries should be among the last rather than the first to condemn them as frauds and charlatans, considering that Cotton Mather, the Christian minister, died as recently as 1728.

§ 24. Montague Summers sketches the European witch as “an

evil liver; a social pest and parasite; the devotee of a loathly and obscene creed; an adept at poisoning, blackmail, and other creeping crimes; a member of a powerful secret organization inimical to Church and State; a blasphemer in word and deed; swaying the villagers by terror and superstition; a charlatan and a quack sometimes; a bawd; an abortionist; the dark counsellor of lewd court ladies and adulterous gallants; a minister to vice and inconceivable corruption; battenning upon the filth and foulest passions of the age." If he added to this, "because she was driven into a state of catatonic dementia by fanatical, envenomed clergy, who were themselves tottering hysterically under the religious discipline prevailing at the time," he would have given a very complete and praiseworthy description.

J. F.

*Books recommended:*

EWEN, C. H. L'E., *Witch Hunting, and Witch Trials* (Kegan Paul, 1929).

GIVREY, GRILLOT DE, *Witchcraft, Magic and Alchemy*, translated by J. Courtenay Locke (Harrap, 1931).

WITCHES' CODEX, The. This is the *Malleus Maleficarum* (q. v.)

WORK THE TWIG. To use divining-rods. [Cf. the slang expression, "I've twigged it": suddenly become aware.]

WU T'AI SHAN. Buddhist sacred mountain. Headquarters of Mongol Lamaism (q.v.).

XYLOMANCY. Divination by means of dry sticks.