THE STAR IN THE WEST

CAPTAIN FULLER

Star in the West

A Critical Essay Upon the Works of Aleister Crowley

By J.F.C. Fuller

This eBook was prepared by

HKA

March/April, 2004 (Updated June, 2004)

Art provided by
Frater T.S./Celephaïs Press
Cover art was reconstructed
from the original edition.

This eBook was created from the
Health Research edition published in 1969.

Star in the West was originally published
by The Walter Scott Publishing Company
of New York in 1907.

“Evoe! Evoe Ho! Iacche! Iacche!”

"If you hold by anything in the world more than by reason, truth, and justice; if your will be uncertain and vacillating, either in good or evil; if logic alarm you, or the naked truth make you blush; if you are hurt when accepted errors are assailed; condemn this work straight away; do not read it; let it cease to exist for you; but at the same time do not cry it down as dangerous."

ELIPHAS LÉVI.

PREFACE

Non mihi subtilem calamum si cedat Apelles
Quae tibi sunt dotes, posse notare putem.

I.N.R.I.

AT first sight it may appear to the casual reader of this essay, that the superscription on its cover is both froward and perverse, and contrary to the sum of human experience. This however I trust he will find is not the case, and, as Ianthe, will discover that after the mystic union has been consummated, the beautiful daughter of Ligdus and Telethusa was as acceptable a young husband as ever wooed nymph on the shaded slopes of Ida.

Much has been written concerning stars, both terrestrial and celestial, and not a little regarding that capricious star which gleamed over the humble manger-bed of the Son of Man.

Dark seas of blood have long since lapped that star of the morning into the crimson oblivion of day, whose empurpled strife has also rumbled into the distance as the droning of some drowsy fire-finger on the sleeping parchment of life, murmuring and moaning as the wind-kissed mouth of a dreamy drum. Yet why should we still listen for those subtle sounds which have wearily danced out their slow saraband of sorrow. Once Orphic they arose emparadising the cavernous depths of Hell, to sink into a dirge-like Niobe death-

chaunt, bewailing the thirteen children of their begetting, rising once more in the song of Ligeia, enticing men to her mire, and at length to die still-voiced as the daughter of Dis, whose ghostly fingers sinking clutch the frozen reeds of that slough in which she had so long wallowed.

Long have we peered, crouching on the watch-tower of our minds, through the darkness of ignorance lit alone by the northern lights of folly, till our scorched eyes falling as slags upon our hearts, a light celestial hath arisen from out the eyeless sockets of Eternity. A day-star, to flash forth into the west, winged and wonderful. A Pharos of gleaming hope lighting our way across the boisterous ocean of life to our haven of eternal rest.

The fools and the faulty, the wise and the wizened read and tremble before the might of its majesty, for into its flaming horrent hath it woven and braided the ashen locks of wisdom, the dyed curls of folly, and all the glittering circlets of golden youth. All is transcended, all is unified and transcendental; neither is there joy nor laughter, sorrow nor weeping, for all is as a divine mastery of Truth and Knowledge to those who worship the new-born God, like the Magi of the East, with gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Above whose heptagonal cradle flashes the magic star Lusanaher, that great star Cor Leonis, which heralds and directs our reverent pilgrimage.

The Star has arisen; let us like men drop the silly pretence of an ostrich-like self-delusion that the cindery asteroid still lights our way; let us rather apply our mental spectroscope to the analysis of its rays. There shall we perchance discover the blending of all opposites in one harmonious light; thence shall we travel to the holy and humble house of the heart, wherein our God is born, whose name is ineffable, a Crown of Glory, exalted forever above the Balance of Righteousness and Truth.

T.A.R.O.

As author of the following essay to you my readers, I can but say with the four beasts of the Apocalypse: "Come and See."

"Behold the Lion… hath prevailed to open the Book and to loose the seven seals thereof." For until now "No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the Book, neither to look thereon." Yet through the astrolabe of his mind and in the alembic of his heart Aleister Crowley has opened the book, breaking not only the first six seals, but the seventh also. For those who read and understand, the heavens shall depart as a scroll, and the stars shall fall, and the mountains be moved out of their places; and they shall become as kings in a new kingdom, and be crowned with that Crown which passes Understanding.

I have attempted in the following seven chapters to interpret the Book of the Seven Seals, and to paint its splendour, as an artist would incarnadine his canvas with the red blood of his mistress, love-kissed from the bloom of her crimson lips. I have not, as Samuel, hacked and hewn Agag into pieces before the Lord in Gilgal; but rather Elijah-like have called upon Wisdom and Understanding so that my sacrifice, and even the wood and stone of the altar, and the water which floweth about it, may be licked up by the fire of the great Coronation.

As another Ariadne I here offer this work to my readers as a twisted clue of silk and hemp to guide them safely through the labyrinthine mysteries of poetry and magic, whose taurine crags hug the blue sky, amorous as the kisses of Pasiphae; across the Elysian fields of myrtle and asphodel, up the eagle-crested slopes of Olympus, and over the shining sun-scorched sands of Ammon, tawny and silken as the crouching form of some colossal lion, to the cool groves of Eleusis

child-like dreaming in the bosom of silvery Attica by the blue Ægean sea.

Yet those who would drink deeper of the wine of this magical Eucharist, spilt with due reverence on the pages of this volume, they must seek it in the Sibylline verses of those books from which this one has drawn its life-blood. And they are:

Aceldama.
The Tale of Archais.
Songs of the Spirit.
Jezebel.
An Appeal to the American People.
Jephthah.
The Mother's Tragedy.
The Soul of Osiris.
Carmen Saeculare.
Tannhäuser.
Berashith.
Ahab.
The God-Eater.
Alice.
The Sword of Song.
The Star and the Garter.
The Argonauts.
Goetia.
Why Jesus Wept.
Oracles.
Orpheus.
Rosa Mundi.
Gargoyles.
Collected Works, vols. i, ii, and iii.

By which, if they have eyes to perceive, they will become sacramental and holy, through the fire-baptism of a new birth, and will hold the key of all mysteries locked in the esoteric sign of the Sabbatic Goat, the Baphomet of Mendes, the signatures of Solve and Coagula — "The Everlasting Yea and Nay."

A.M.E.N.

My faults are more numerous than I care to think of; yet it is without fear or trepidation that I offer this essay to the public. It has been a difficult task. In simple words and complex symbols Crowley has written with St. Leo— "Know, O man, thy dignity;" and this I have in this essay attempted to explain, though many I am afraid will misunderstand me, and more still misinterpret my modest efforts. For these latter ones I can but exclaim:

"Caeterum scis quid ego cogitem, scortum scorteum; Di tibi dent, nudosque lares inopemque senectam et longas hyemes perpetuam que sitim."

And for those former, bid them contemplate well the words of St. Augustine:

"Such as the love of man is, such is he himself. Dost thou love the earth? Thou art earth. Dost thou love God? What shall I say? Thou art God."

J.F.C.F.

FOREWORD

IN "Frazer's Magazine" of November, 1866, may be found the following:

"Wherever there is any kind of true genius, we have no right to drive it mad by ridicule or invective; we must deal with it wisely, justly, fairly. Some of these passages which have been selected as evidence of (the poet's) plain speaking, have been wantonly misunderstood. The volume, as a whole, is neither profane nor indecent. A little more clothing in our uncertain climate might perhaps have been attended with advantage… To us this volume, for the first time, conclusively settles that Mr.— is not a mere brilliant rhetorician or melodious twanger of another man's lyre, but authentically a poet."

So writes the critic. The name I have omitted is that of the last of the great Victorian poets, Algernon Charles Swinburne. In the dying glory of this last great singer of the nineteenth century, the deepening twilight shows but few rising stars; alone perhaps amid the younger generation of poets – alas, how many and yet how few – Aleister Crowley stands forth with no little of the glory of the great Victorian cast o'er him; enhancing our pleasures, and enchanting our senses. The Sun kisses the Moon, and through the diaphanous veil of the vestal is seen the subtle contour of her form. But no vestal is Crowley, no mere milk-and-bun-walk, where we may rest and take our fill; for he has unstrung the mystic lyre of life from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil, singing old songs and new, flinging shrill notes of satire to this tumultuous world, as some stormy petrel shrilly crying to the storm; or sweet notes of love, soft as the whispering wings of a butterfly.

Here are the jewels of Heaven, of Havilah, and of Eden, with not a little of the fire of Hell, the flames of Gehenna, and the darkness of Dûat. If we look for pyramids and colossi disappointment will be our lot; we cannot hold, as Hanuman of Ind, a mountain in one hand and a forest in the other, neither can we gaze on a celestial Meru or Olympus; but as we look, and here it is only the searcher who is rewarded, we find a little jewel, then another, and still another, till, as we grasp them, their very light is caught by their unfound fellows, and our path is lit as a fairy dell by a thousand wonders of light and of beauty.

"A little more clothing," the critic writes, as he perused the "Poems and Ballads," perhaps, yet we do not feel its need in the glowing works before us. Forty long years have passed, and the world moves. Crowley fairly puts his characters to bed, tucks them up, and does not blow the candle out with cryptic Morse-like dot and dash, leaving the imagination to wallow in the dark, intelligible to the baby-mind of sucklings, and we admire him all the more for not doing so; his undraped virginity is delightful, and if his maidens lack vestments and his matrons mantles, it is a hearty sight, a robust sight, it flushes the drains of our mind, and discloses a heart lying beneath all the conventional tweeds and silks of our sleek respectability. The stale odour of Mrs. Grundy's petticoats vanishes, neither is it replaced by the patchouli of Thais, nor the musk of Aspasia; and if the aroma of a little human sweat does salute our nostrils, it is at least a healthy human smell – an odour of sanctity – infinitely preferable to all the ancient pot-pourri of Philistia, that young and old ladies are alike so fond of distributing among their pretty speeches, as well as their pretty garments.

"Is life, then, to resolve itself for us into a chain of exhilarating pangs?" asked Pallas, in Mr. Gosse's "Hypolympia," in answer to the query of Æsculapius, "What is pleasure?" We see the mortal form of

the immortal healer climbing along the jutting cornice of some cliff, in search for the simples of life; and as the zephyrs waft his long ashen locks around his furrowed brow, his trembling hand clutches some rugged crag, more perhaps from joy than fear. And so, as we now open the works of Aleister Crowley, we are filled with an exhilarating chain of pangs; mortal-like we are never sated, and as our lips taste the nectar of true poetry we tremblingly clutch the crags of Parnassus in search for the Asphodel of Love, Wisdom, and Beauty. Here, as we turn some beetling height, the dying rays of the Swinburnian sun sink, those rays that ruffled the vestal purity of the clouds to the rosy blush of a lover's kiss, and in the departing light we again find the mystic Trinity midst the hellebore and thistles of existence, enthroned, eternal. The sun sinks, and the last notes of the nightingale die into the stillness of falling night. The emerald sky like the robe of some car-borne Astarté, slashed with an infinite orange and red, fades into the sombre garment of night; and above silently breaks a primal sea gemmed with all the colours of the opal, deepening into a limitless amethyst, darkens, and the sun goes out. The spangled pall of Night is drawn, and the lull of death is o'er us; but no, hark! the distant boom of a beetle is carried across the still glowing welkin, it is the signal drum announcing the marriage of Night and Day. The crescent moon rises, diaphanous and fair, and the world wakes to a chant:

DIONYSUS

I bring ye wine from above,
From the vats of the storied sun;
For every one of ye love,
And life for every one.
Ye shall dance on hill and level;
Ye shall sing in hollows and height
In the festal mystical revel,
The rapturous Bacchanal rite!

The rocks and trees are yours,
And the waters under the hill,
By the might of that which endures,
The holy heaven of will!
I kindle a flame like a torrent
To rush from star to star;
Your hair as a comet's horrent,
Ye shall see things as they are!
I lift the mask of matter;
I open the heart of man;
For I am of force to shatter
The cast that hideth – Pan!
Your loves shall lap up slaughter,
And dabbled with roses of blood
Each desperate darling daughter
Shall swim in the fervid flood.
I bring ye laughter and tears,
The kisses that foam and bleed,
The joys of a million years,
The flowers that bear no seed.
My life is bitter and sterile,
Its flame is a wandering star.
Ye shall pass in pleasure and peril
Across the mystical bar
That is set for wrath and weeping
Against the children of earth;
But ye in singing and sleeping
Shall pass in measure and mirth!
I lift my wand and wave you
Through hill to hill of delight;
My rosy rivers lave you
In innermost lustral light.
I lead you, lord of the maze,
In the darkness free of the sun;

In spite of the spite that is day's,
We are wed, we are wild, we are one!*

*"Orpheus," vol. iii, p. 207.

I

The Chapter known as

The Looking-Glass

In which chapter it is related how it surpasseth in brilliance all other glasses in which we see darkly, and how by it we see face to face; and of its divers reflections, and of the brightness and perfection of its surface, and the whiteness of the silver of which it is moulded; for it was cast from the crucible of many mysteries, and fashioned by the cunning hand of a master who will endure *to the end*.

The Looking-Glass

ON surveying the works of Aleister Crowley the two essential facts that grip our understanding are: firstly, the superabundance of his genius; and secondly, the diversity of his form. "My womb is pregnant with mad moons and suns,"* he writes, and though we could hardly agree to endow so virile a master with so feminine an organ, yet we can attribute something very like it to his brain. Pregnant it certainly is, and more, being already the mother of a large family, a family as diverse as the offspring of Uranus, father of the Gods, born to him by Earth, earthy and celestial. Sweet lyrics are crushed cheek by jowl with the most corrosive satire, sonorous heroics and blank verse at times merge into the most raucous of Hudibrasian doggerel, rimes of the sweetest and the most perverse character ring in our astonished ear, tragedy and farce, ever extremes: Paul and Virginie sitting on the knees of Pantagruel, blowing kisses through the Sephirotic circle of eternity. At times we listen to the yearning hopes of a Paracelsus, or the noble words of a Tannhäuser; at times warm arms are flung around us, and the hot kisses of some Messaline suffocate our very breath, leading us into the mansions of a de Sade and through the gardens of an Aretino, horrid with the frenzy of Eros. Or, again, we are treading with the sages of philosophy, or 'midst the stars in search of the Psyche of events; dreams almost monstrous in their intensity seize our troubled brain, deep problems of psychology, of sex, of the carnal, of the pathic, and of evil, all inter-webbed and woven with the eternal filament of good. And so if we read this strange poet aright, we shall see as we progress onwards, that he has struck a sonorous note from the rim of Time, fulfilled of the knowledge of good and evil, sweet to the ears of those who are born children by the daughters of men to

the sons of God, sweet as that mystic fruit was to the lips of Eve, daughter of God, child of the mystic Man. But we must speed on, taking in this chapter swift glances at the magnificent scenery that these volumes offer up to us, plucking the lilies of spring and the roses of summer, and weave them into a laureate wreath with the fiery leaves of the dying year.

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 166.

Poe, in that little masterpiece of his, "The Poetic Principle," lays down that the value of a poem lies in the ratio of its elevating excitement, the excitement being the power it has in elevating the soul. And here we think, were Poe still living, he would have found no small part of his ideal realized. By soul we naturally do not mean a haloed fowl strumming dithyrambs on a harp, or the mere *döppelganger* of the living; but that inner power of good and evil which lies latent in self, controlled by that intuitive consciousness within us, and manifested in our appetites and desires; this intangible soul aspiring upwards is called Virtue, sinking downwards Vice; finding infinity in the conceptions of nether and upper, heaven and hell, paradise and gehenna; and finality on earth – its sporting ground. Further Poe states: that an epic was of itself a nullity, and that a poem of great length, commencing as it might in exaltation, ended in nine cases out of ten in somnolence. Poetry must stimulate, it must irritate the soul in some definite manner, or else it ceases to be poetry. For when once poetry exerts a soporific power its whole object is lost, and, as a flash of lightning, it must he vivid, bright, flaming for a moment, awful, eloquent, rushing from the darkness of night through the flashing elements of day into the silence of eternity.

And this is exactly the poetry we here find. No poems are of any great length, no poems here contain a labour on the part of the reader to attain the end,* though in some places the labours of Hercules seem insignificant compared with the labours of mental unknotting,

but even in such places (where the sense becomes tangled in the reader's mind)' he loses none of the beauty of rime and rhythm, he never becomes bored, never weary. Set in the pure gold of verse and line, lie lyrics of surpassing beauty: Tannhäuser (the longest of the poems) would be a magnificent contemplation even if we cut from it its sparkling songs, but with them it becomes superb, neither are there too many; the queen of our poet's ideals is no gilded prostitute, no Theodora hung with a myriad flashing jewels, but rather some chaste priestess carrying on her breast the mystic symbol of Isis, whose belt is a jewelled Zodiac, and in whose hand is the eternal Ankh.

*Except perhaps in Orpheus.

This interspersing of lyrics has been carried to a charming intensity of expression and their effect on the mind is one full of joy, no cloying, no surfeit, no repletion; the variety of the dishes is extraordinary in delicacy and piquancy as well as in number.

The morals of a nation can with fair accuracy be gauged from the condition of its arts and literature, and in what a state are ours? Our music the jangling ditties of the streets, our paintings, posters and bedizened Jewesses; and our literature, heroically vulgar, vulgarly obscene, and obscenely insipid.

Morals, the nation has none, merely a better art in disguising than in former times, that is all. We no longer can produce a Swift, a Congreve, or a Dryden, a Smollett, a Lever, or a Sterne, and yet our writers are legion – and as feculent as the flabby prostitutes of the street. The facetiae of the fifteenth century, "Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," "The Decameron," "The Heptameron," "The Nights of Straparola," "Brantôme," etc., etc., are not only masterpieces for all time, but are pure, even chaste, compared with the virginal lusts that are becoming so fashionable in our modern literature, whose

maidens are Lesbians, and whose heroes are satyrs. Europa is no longer satisfied with her bull, but seeks an ichor-maddened elephant; Leda disdains her swan, and burns for a straddling ostrich; the goat of lechery sits enthroned o'er us, and is fast coupling with the mind of the nation, and spawning offspring effeminate, lustful, and degenerate. Tribades with their evil-smelling kisses swarm over our pages, heroines are no longer satisfied with mere men, but must strain to their breasts legless monsters; whilst a hero will listen to his loved one snorting in the arms of some lusty Păthān. Such literature is revolting, not in its mere descriptions, for these are nothing to the student, being generally but poorly described realities, but they are horrible when strewn broadcast among the children of the nation. We still have our Bible and need no more erotica. Filth has been defined as matter out of place, and so is this pathic literature, relegated to the realms of sexual psychology in the works of an Ellis or an Ebing is one thing, yet the government of this nation cannot stomach them thus, and seizes, expels, and burns; but if these horrid sores of the human soul are cut out and plastered on the pages of the fickle fiction of the day, then are they passed in seductive covers as proper nourishment for the nation; and devoured with relish and avidity. One minute, impatient reader, for I hear you mutter: "Are not these very aberrations set forth with no mean lustre on the pages of the works of Aleister Crowley?" Listen. Have any of Crowley's works been printed *pueris virginibusque*? Are they intended for the gaping public? Are they devoured by mental babes and sucklings, or worse, forcibly crammed down their throats in *simple* or other forms? I think not. To some it may seem curious that these poems are published by a society called "The Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth." By whom is the Bible published? Is it not also a religious society, and is the Bible immaculate? Was it not Sir Richard Burton, the greatest of Orientalists, who resolved in case the rabid pornophobic suggestions of certain ornaments of the home press were acted upon, to appear in court with the Bible and Shakespeare under one arm, and Petronius Arbiter and Rabelais under the other? And I remember a certain

sentence – characteristic of the man – he was describing those people who are unable to read crude texts, arid needs must have them bowdlerized and expurgated, lest they fall into a priapic frenzy: "The man must be prurient and lecherous as a dog-faced baboon in rut to have aught of passion excited by either."

This is all true enough; but I must call a halt. I had not intended here to write a series of apologetics, for I leave that to the poet and his pen, who can well look after themselves; but what I wished to point out was the deplorable state into which our literature has fallen. Its ever increasing demand for sensation has been its destruction; everyone now is a mental Trimalchio whose appetite has to be awakened by the most piquant and fantastic of dishes. Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray are still (I believe) read by an ever decreasing number of school-girls; Flaubert, Gautier and Balzac – who would have shocked the youthful years of our parents – have become dull and tedious; a few cranks praise Tourgenief, Tolstoi and Gorky, whilst one out of every hundred thousand may know that there was such a man as Dostoieffsky. And poetry, O greatest of the Muses, thy fate is truly a sad one! Much verse is produced which might be placed with last year's store lists – you know where; some is distinctly good, but it is soon lost in the raging sea of poetic dialect, and hackneyed *naïveté*. Here and there we come across a charming lyric, which the carping whisky-and-water critic will at once demolish as weak, troubled, vague, etc., etc. Not long ago my eyes lit on the following which I considered a charming verse from a poetic point of view, if not from that of a morbid anatomist:

Look down into the river. Can you see
The mingled images the water shows?
So lies my soul in yours. As close as lie
The folded petals in an unblown rose.

Yet the little thing who "stinks and stings" was not satisfied, the second metaphor actually weakened the effect of the first, etc., etc. With such have poets to contend, but I do not think such homunculi worry Aleister Crowley much. His poetry is his own, and he gives it us as it is written without respect of persons or opinions, for his masters have been the greatest of our race.

In these poems we find a certain preponderance of Swinburne, Blake, Browning, Keats, Shelley, and Rossetti. In the dedication to "Jephthah," which is addressed to Algernon Charles Swinburne, we read the following:

> As streams get water of the sun-smit sea,
> Seeking my ocean and my sun in thee.*

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 66.

And this discipleship to the greatest and last of the Victorian poets has given us many a subtle and enthralling line. The scene when Charicles wakes and catches Archais to his breast is worthy of the bard who sang of "Tristram and Iseult." It is as follows:

> He sprang, he caught her to his breast; the maid
> Smiled and lay back to look at him. He laid
> Her tender body on the sloping field,
> And felt her sighs in his embraces yield
> A sweeter music than all birds. But she,
> Lost in the love she might not know, may see
> No further than his face, and yet, aware
> Of her own fate, resisted like a snare.
> Her own soft wishes. As she looked and saw
> His eager face, the iron rod of law
> Grew like a misty pillar in the sky.
> In all her veins the blood's desires die,

And then – O sudden ardour! – all her mind
And memory faded, and looked outward, blind,
Beyond their bitterness. Her arms she flung
Around him, and with amorous lips and tongue
Tortured his palate with extreme desire,
And like a Mænad maddened; equal fire
Leapt in his veins; locked close for love they lie,
The heart's dumb word exprest without a sigh
In the strong magic of a lover's kiss.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 11.

These superb lines, like those of Swinburne, are in reality a series of brilliant lyrical illustrations depicting the story in measures of divine song. More we find in this same poem, and in others also; the following fine sonnet entitled "The Summit of the Amorous Mountain," is distinctly Swinburnian; I give it in its entirety:

To love you, Love, is all my happiness;
To kill you with my kisses; to devour
Your whole ripe beauty in the perfect hour
That mingles us in one supreme caress;
To drink the purple of your thighs; to press
Your beating bosom like a living flower;
To die in your embraces, in the shower
That dews like death your swooning loveliness.

To know you love me; that your body leaps
With the quick passion of your soul; to know
Your fragrant kisses sting my spirit so;
To be one soul where Satan smiles and sleeps—
Ah! in the very triumph-hour of Hell
Satan himself remembers whence he fell!*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 181.

Again, such lines as these from the "Triumph of Man":

> And all the earth is blasted; the green sward
> Burns where it touches, and the barren sod
> Rejects the poison of the blood of God.
> . . . . . .
> To tread base thoughts as our high thoughts have trod,
> Deep in the dust, the carrion that was God;*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, pp. 106, 107.

remind us strongly of such pieces as "Before a Crucifix," whilst others take us into the mystic and simple land of Blake, such as the duet of Charicles and Archais:

> Hush! the music swells apace,
> Rolls its silver billows up
> Through the void demesne of space
> To the heavens' azure cup!
> Hush, my love, and sleep shall sigh
> This is immortality!*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 27.

Other lines again hold us enthralled with the extraordinary power they contain, expressed in a single word. Thus in the poem "The Lesbian Hell," we find ourselves in the unutterable void of Orcus, where kisses are flung in vain, and where around us pale women fleet:

> Whose empty fruitlessness assails the night
> With hollow repercussion, like dim tombs

Wherein some vampire glooms.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 185.

This last line is one of the most expressive ever written by Crowley, and in the last word "glooms" is concentrated more than terror or fear, a brooding unnameable horror, comparable to the word "crowd" that Blake makes use of in his "Mad Song":

Like a fiend in a cloud.
With howling woe
After night I do crowd
And with night will go.

Both poets have chosen here not the only word that could be chosen, but the only word that would in the above poems express the maximum amount, of horror in the one case; and of desire in the other.

Very different from Blake do we find such a poem as "Vespers," which, though differing in rime, in cadence and spirit; is reminiscent of Rossetti's "Blessed Damozel":

Still in those avenues of light,
No maid, with golden zone,
And lily garment that from sight
Half hides the ivory throne,
Lay in my arms the livelong night
To call my soul her own.*

* Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 53.

Whilst parts of the poem "Messaline" with which "Alice" opens remind us of poor "Jenny."

Tennyson, if we are to judge from the introduction to "Alice," does not seem to hold a very high position in the opinion of Aleister Crowley. "He is a neurasthenic counter-jumper" certainly would not have pleased Poe, who regarded him as the noblest poet that ever lived. Nevertheless we find traces of the great laureate's work in these poems, such as the idea contained in the following verse of "De Profundis":

> I have dreamed life a circle or a line,
> Called God, and Fate, and Chance, and Man, divine.
> I know not all I say, but through it all
> Mark the dim hint of ultimate sunshine!*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 113.

which is almost identical with that in Canto LIV of "In Memoriam." A poem written in the metre of Tennyson's most famous work, yet differing in cadence, is "The Blood Lotus."

> Quaint carven vampire bats, unseen in curious hollows of the trees,
> Or deadlier serpents coiled at ease round carcases of birds unclean;
>
> All wandering changeful spectre shapes that dance in slow sweet measure round
> And merge themselves in the profound, nude women and distorted apes
>
> Grotesque and hairy, in their rage more rampant than the stallion steed;
> There is no help: their horrid need on these pale women they assuage.*

*Oracles, vol. ii, p. 13.

Another poem that in parts reminds us of the "In Memoriam" is "The Nameless Quest," such lines as:

> I was wed
> Unto the part, and could not grasp the whole.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 191.

breathe a great and similar doubt. As in many respects the agnosticism of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" resembles the atheistic free thought of FitzGerald's "Omar Khayyám," so do both the above-mentioned poems, and the first is of similar metre, its quatrains containing, as those of the poet of Khorassán, flights of great power of thought; the following five quatrains are well worth quoting:

> We weep them as they slip away; we gaze
> Back on the likeness of the former days—
> The hair we fondle and the lips we kiss—
> Roses grow yellow and no purple stays.
> . . . . . .
> Why not with time? To-morrow we may see
> The circle ended – if to-morrow be—
> And gaze on chaos, and a week bring back
> Adam and Eve beneath the apple tree.
> . . . . . .
> Join'st thou thy feeble hands in foolish prayer
> To him thy brain hath moulded and set there
> In thy brain's heaven? Such a god replies
> As thy fears move, So men pray everywhere.
> . . . . . .
> God did first work in earth when womankind

He chipped from Adam's rib – a thankless task
I wot His wisdom has long since repined.
. . . . . .
When I am dead remember me for this
That I bade workers work, and lovers kiss;
Laughed with the Stoic at the dream of pain,
And preached with Jesus the evangel–bliss.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, pp. 109-112. (The metre though not the cadence is that of "Laus Veneris.")

Whilst such lines as the following in the second poem also remind us of the astronomer poet:

O thou, zelator of this Paradise,
Tell thou the secret of' the pillar! None
Can hear thee, of the souls beneath the sun.
Speak! or the very Godhead in thee dies.
For we are many, and thy name is One.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 191.

Before we leave the glowing east, one more curious similarity still strikes us, it is that though in so many ways the ideas of Aleister Crowley are akin to those of Omar Khayyám, yet his fertile imagination also engenders flights as spiritual as those contained in the melodious ghazals of Jeláladdín. In more than one place we come across lines similar to these in Tannhäuser:

I say, then, "I;" and yet it is not "I"
Distinct, but "I" incorporate in All.
I am the Resurrection and the Life!
The work is finished, and the Night rolled back!
I am the rising Sun of Life and Light,

The Glory of the Shining of the Dawn!
I am Osiris! I the Lord of Life
Triumphant over death—
O Sorrow, Sorrow, Sorrow of the World!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 261.

That such similarities as we have pointed out above show Aleister Crowley to be a copyist, must be far from the minds of all his readers. Youth most certainly tends towards certain ideals, and frequently results in a definite hero-worship; but genius cannot be bound for long; it will eventually find its own level. The mere fact that certain forms of thought and modes of expression occur here as they have occurred elsewhere, should he as a literary barometer, enabling us to judge the mental standard of the writer. All great writers will have many points in common. It is more than probable that Aleister Crowley had already read most of Shakespeare before he wrote "The Mother's Tragedy," and yet, because of this we should not necessarily say that the following magnificent lines were due to the influence of the great master, notwithstanding the fact that they are in many respects equal to much of his best:

Your breath, that burns upon me, wraps me round
With whirling passion, pierces through my veins
With its unhallowed fire, constrains, compels,
Drags out the corpse of twenty years ago
From the untrusty coffin of my mind,
To poison, to corrupt, to strike you there
Blind with its horror.*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 160.

Many other pieces are almost equally grand, the last speech of Tannhäuser to Heinrich is truly magnificent:

And verily
My life was borne on the dark stream of death
Down whirling aeons, linked abysses, columns
Built of essential time…*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 261.

In "The Violet's Love Story,"*1. or in "Dora,"*2. we have as simple a poem as could be written, and in one of the verses of a chorus in "Jephthah," beginning "There flashes the heart of a rose,"*3. one of the most mystical. Here is a furious inspiration in blank verse (the prophet in "Jephthah" speaks):

*1. Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 38.
*2. Rosa Mundi and other Love Songs, vol. iii, p. 59.
*3. Jephthah, vol. i, p. 77.

Ha!
The rose has washed its petals, and the blood
Pours through its burning centre from my heart.
The fire consumes the light; the rosy flame
Leaps through the veins of blue, and tinges them
With such a purple as incarnadines
The western sky when storms are amorous
And lie upon the breast of toiling ocean,
Such billows to beget as earth devours
in ravening whirlpool gulphs. My veins are full,
Throbbing with fire more potent than all wine,
All sting of fleshly pangs and pleasures. Oh!
The god is fast upon my back; he rides
My spirit like a stallion; for I hate
The awful thong his hand is heavy with.*

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 67.

Again, in "The Nameless Quest":

> Then surged the maddening tide
> Of my intention. Onward! Let me run!
> Thy steed, O Moon! Thy chariot, O Sun!
> Lend me fierce feet, winged sandals, wings as wide
> As thine, O East wind! And the goal is won!*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 191.

Little, if any, poetry of a truly epic nature can we find; the nearest is the song of Tannhäuser, somewhat of a prophecy, somewhat of an anthem:

> I rose within the elemental ball,
> And lo! the Ancient One of Days did sit!
> His head and hair were white as wool. His eyes
> A flaming fire: and from the splendid mouth
> Flashed the Eternal Sword!
> Lo! Lying at his feet as dead, I saw
> The leaping-forth of Law:
> Division of the North wind and the South,
> The lightning of the armies of the Lord;
> East rolled asunder from the rended West;
> Height clove the depth; the Voice begotten said:
> "Divided be thy ways and limited!"
> Answered the reflux and the indrawn breath:
> "Let there be Life, and Death!"*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 252.

Worthy of the author of "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell!"

"Let there be Life and Death," and the link between these two is Love. Here we will give but one or two curious examples, dealing with the great songs of love in the next chapter. As a singer of love-songs Aleister Crowley excels. The following is from "The Star and the Garter":

> Your lips are gathered up to mine;
> Your bosom heaves with fearful breath;
> Your scent is keen as floral wine,
> Inviting me, and love, to death.*

*The Star and the Garter, vol. iii, p. 11.

Also the following is charming in its simplicity:

> She has a lithe white body, slim
> And limber, fairy-like, a snake
> Hissing some Babylonian hymn
> Tangled in the Assyrian brake.*

*The Star and the Garter, vol. iii, p. 10.

A curious Swinburnian strain of passion is found wedged in the satiric lines of "Why Jesus Wept." Percy, the youth flatulent with love, chants to his Angela – society – thus:

> To me she is
> The rosy incarnation of a kiss,
> The royal rapture of a young delight,
> The mazy music of virginity,
> Sun of the day, moon of the night,
> All, all to me!*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 39.

And again:

> Love, love, these raptures are like springtide rain
> Nestling among green leaves.*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 40.

One more example of the diversity of Crowley's pen, before we deal with his place in the history of poetry. In the "God-Eater" we come across a most weird form of poetic imagination in the chants of Rupha – the hag of Eternity:

> Crafty! Crafty!
> That is the omen.
> Fear not the foemen! *[She rises up.*
> Mine is the spoil
> Of the grimly toil.
> Gloomy, gloomy!
> Ah! but I laugh.
> He is but a fool.
> He has lost!
> He is lost!
> Take the staff!
> Trace the rule
> Of the circle crossed!*

*The God-Eater, vol. ii, p. 135.

We have now seen, more or less, some of the chief influences which have exerted their sway over our poet's mind; and I think we have shown him to be a worthy pupil of the great masters we have had occasion to name. Now that I have pointed out these certain

influences, illustrating them by means of a few quotations, I intend to enter more into the history of his poetry and also the place it fills in the history of English poetry generally. This is not altogether an easy matter. Firstly, in selecting distinctive specimens it is difficult not to help being guided by individual taste; secondly, the labour of sorting the finest out of the fine is a work which needs no small powers of application; and thirdly, how often may not the individual selector be wrong in his choice? But this latter difficulty is easily overcome by the reader, who has only to pick and choose for himself; the work of an appreciative essayist being merely that of producing a characteristic display of what he considers the most attractive wares. It is not intended here in any way to assume immaculacy for our author, far from it, for faults are to be found here as in every other work, great or small, false rime and metre, half a step left out here and there, sometimes a whole one: but taking these poems as a whole, these lapses are remarkably few, and it must also be borne in mind that in nearly every case they are intentional lapses from the orthodox rules of poetic cadence and metre. One command Crowley alone obeys, and that is: that all verse – rime, rhythm, and metre – to be considered as poetry, must be musical.* Without music there can be no poetry, at best but a kind of poetic prose as found in the Prophetic Books of Blake, and in the works of Walt Whitman. Yet in Blake, I think, we do find many consistent irregularities, which have been entirely misunderstood by many of his editors and critics. However, it was not till Swinburne loomed athwart the conscious regularity of the Tennysonian era, a poetic pre-Raphaelite, that, strictly speaking, a conscious and musical irregularity became admissible, wedging its way in, and splitting up the metrical structure of perfect scansion.

*As a good example I will quote the following opening lines of a sonnet addressed to "the Secretary of State," by Wilson Bonchord in Poems composed in Prison:

When Crime's sad victim has been tried and brought

Within the circle of the difficult sphere
Which England's penal statutes appoint him here:
To expiate by patient toil and thought.

Neither the second nor the third line scans; nevertheless the second is good, as it is musical: the extra half-step in the word "difficult" carrying with it a difficulty, and thus emphasizing the meaning; whilst in the third, there is neither scansion nor music.

In "Atalanta in Calydon" we find a further breaking away from the dramatic formalities inaugurated during the post-restoration era: Swinburne seeking a more perfect model in the old Tragedies of Greece. This had already been partially carried out by Keats, who definitely broke away from the Miltonic style of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and was more than half completed by his contemporary, Shelley. But it was not till Swinburne himself seized the finely-strung lyre of the unconsciously irregular author of "Prometheus," and attuned it to the rustle of Blake's angel-winged voice, that it can be said that a certain system of irregularities in metre became admissible in the formal court of poetry.

As the Rossetti brotherhood of painters returned to the stiff and simple elegance as displayed in the "Primavera" of Botticelli, so did Swinburne go back to the simple beauty of Greek tragedy as depicted in Euripides.* Crowley does the same, as we see in "The Tale of Archais," also in "The Mother's Tragedy" and "The Fatal Force"; but in these two latter dramas with this important difference, that instead of applying Greek style to Greek scenery, he applies it to a totally different end, namely to the expression of modern surroundings, or to his own intrinsic ideas, as in the last-named play, which, even more so than in "The Mother's Tragedy" is, as we shall see later on, a subtle discount on present-day morality.

*Rather than Sophocles or Aeschylus.

What Beardsley and Whistler did for art, Crowley is now doing for poetry. Beardsley, especially, succeeded Rossetti just as Crowley is now superseding Swinburne. A poetic iconoclast to the very backbone, we find Crowley, especially in his later works, breaking away from every poetic convention and restraint. At first it makes itself apparent in "The Star and the Garter," which was unwound from that same tangled skein from out of which Browning had ravelled "Fifine," and then, in the full power of manhood, in "Why Jesus Wept"; which one day will find its historic niche in the temple of Poetry, somewhere between the "Hudibras" of Butler and the "Endymion" of Keats.

Though Crowley, as can be clearly seen throughout his works, is not only a great admirer but also a disciple of Browning's, he nevertheless vigorously attacks that great master's cacophony and wilful obscurity of meaning, in that eccentric curiosity of diction "The Sword of Song," in which our ears are assailed by the most monstrous diversity of noises, following in a rapid and dazzling succession till the ideas engendered in our brains are sporting in an outburst of mental leap-frog. The following are a few:

"Fleas kill us"	with	"Aeschylus"
"Trough hock lees"	"	"Sophocles"
"Globule us"	"	"Aristobulus"*

*The Sword of Song, vol. ii, p. 145.

And here is a good example:

> Let me help Babu Chander Grish up!
> As by a posset of Hunyadi
> Clear mind! Was Soudan of the Mahdi
> Not cleared by Kitchener? Ah, Tchhup!
> Such nonsense for sound truth you dish up,

Were I magician, no mere cadi,
Not Samuel's ghost you'd make me wish up,
Nor Saul's (the mighty son of Kish) up,
But Ingersoll's or Bradlaugh's, pardie!
By spells and cauldron stews that squish up,
Or purifying of the Nadi,
Till Stradivarius or Amati
Shriek in my stomach! Sarasate,
Such strains! Such music as once Sadi
Made Persia ring with! I who fish up
No such from soul may yet cry: Vade
Retro Satanas! Tom Bond Bishop!*

*The Sword of Song, vol. ii, p. 148. Browning's cacophony in "The Flight of the Duchess" is truly extraordinary:

"Soul a stir up"	with	"streaky syrup"
"Went trickle"	"	"ventricle"
"Sperm oil"	"	"turmoil"
"Wreathy hop"	"	"Æthiop"
"Matters equine"	"	"French weak wine."

We have mentioned "Why Jesus Wept" as one of the most irregular of Crowley's poems, yet its irregularities are regularly irregular throughout, bearing a similar relationship to a true poem like "Rosa Mundi" that a comic song would to a great oratorio. "Why Jesus Wept" is a satiric farce, "Rosa Mundi" a great love anthem, almost we might say a Wagnerian opera in rime, and comparable in many respects in its continuous though irregular symphony to the "Lycidas" of Milton. Yet, nevertheless, "Why Jesus Wept" is the more characteristic of the two, and certainly the most iconoclastic of any.

In "Orpheus," Books I and II, we find a poetic regularity almost strictly adhered to, not so, however, in Book III, and in "The Argonauts." But it is not till we get to "Rodin in Rime" that we find practically every sonnet and quatorzain possessing some

infringement of the orthodox rules of poetry; yet it cannot be said that these poems, chiefly in iambic verse broken by the occasional introduction of another foot, usually an anapaest, read unmusically on account of its presence. Take for instance:

> Cloistral seclusion of the galleried pines
> Is mine to-day: these groves are fit for Pan—
> O rich with Bacchic frenzy, and his wine's
> Atonement for the infinite woe of man!*

*W.E. Henley, Rodin in Rime, vol. iii, p. 119.

Here "cloistral" is a spondee; "eried pines," an (imperfect) anapaest; and so on.

Again in "La Fortune":

> "Hail, Tyche! From the Amalthean horn
> Pour forth the store of love! I lowly bend
> Before thee: I invoke thee at the end
> When other gods are fallen and put to scorn.
> Thy foot is to my lips; my sighs unborn
> Rise, touch and curl about thy heart; they spend
> Pitiful love. Lovelier pity, descend
> And bring me luck who am lonely and forlorn."*

*W.E. Henley, Rodin in Rime, vol. iii, p. 120. Compare the following verse in Swinburne's poem, The Centenary of the Battle of the Nile:

> The strong and sunbright lie whose name was France
> Arose against the sun of truth, whose glance
> Laughed *large* from the eyes of England fierce as fire
> Whence eyes wax blind that gaze in truth askance.

Here "piti" is a trochee; "lovelier," a spondee; "pity," a trochee. The whole metre breaks up, as if the singer's heart burst in despair.

Whilst in "Bouches d'Enfer" we find such lines as:

> From the long-held leash! The headlong, hot-mouthed girl,*

*Rodin in Rime, vol. iii, p. 119.

in which, as we read, we feel a veritable stretching of the mental leather, as it were; our minds being held back a space by the introduction of the word "long." This quatorzain ends:

> Of smouldering infamy. Bow down in awe!
> It is enough. The Gods are at feast. Withdraw!*

*Rodin in Rime, vol. iii, p. 119.

Again the same mental stress.

All the above are contrary to the rules of scansion, yet nevertheless they are musical. And though in "Rodin in Rime" perhaps Crowley slightly overdoes this introduction of irregular lines, yet they add a great charm, as they do in many of his other poems, producing in their lingering pause or quick jump an ecstatic spasm, if we may so call it, which renders so many of these poems unique. Such as in "Styx" we find:

> The fourth, to draw her kisses and to keep;
> The fifth, for love; the sixth, in sweet despair;
> The seventh, to destroy us unaware;
> The eighth, to dive within the infernal deep.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 183.

"In" would scan better; but by replacing it by "within" we can feel the dark waters close over us as we are borne down their unfathomable depths. Similarly in the following:

> Aching with all the pangs of night
> My shuddering body swoons; my eyes
> Absorb her eyelids' lazy light,
> And read her bosom…*

*Jezebel, vol. i, p. 131.

The extra half-step in "shuddering" in place of discordantly jarring on the metre produces a keener sense of agony in the reader's mind than a word which scanned correctly would do.

In the next passage, taken from "Tannhäuser," we find the introduction of a spondee carrying with it a curious sensation of slowness:

> Chaos, a speck; and space, a span;
> Ruinous cycles fallen in,
> And Darkness on the Deep of Time.
> Murmurous voices call and climb;
> Faces, *half*-formed, arise; and He
> Looked from the shadow of His throne,
> The curtain of Eternity;*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 251. (The italics are mine.)

whilst in the last verse of "The Palace of the World" the sudden dropping of a whole foot produces with it a sudden sense of finality:

> Thine be the kingdom! Thine the power!
> The glory triply thine!

Thine, through Eternity's swift hour,
Eternity, thy shrine—
Yea, by the holy lotus-flower,
Even mine!*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 205.

Further on in the same series of poems a sudden whirring sense of madness is produced by introducing the word "lunatic" into an otherwise regular line:

Silence, deep silence. Not a shudder stirs
The vast demesne of unforgetful space,
No comet's lunatic rush: no meteor whirs,
No star dares breathe. . .*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 209.

Again, in such lines as:

Secure the sacred fastness of the soul,
Uniting self to the absolute, the whole,*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 107.

our ears tell us at once that the extra half-step is intentionally introduced. Whilst in such a line as:

And loving servant of my lady and lord,*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 98.

they do not. The "y" in lady might by some be considered an admissible elision with the "and." But I myself should not pass it, though in the following I should:

> Many the spirits broken for one man;
> Many the men that perish to create
> One God the more; many the weary and wan*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 210.

In the last line of the succeeding verse the metre (I should say) is not unimpeachable:

> Lower, an ocean of flowers,
> Trees that are warmer and leafier,
> Starrier, sunnier hours
> Spurning the strain of all grief here,
> Bringing a quiet delight to us, beyond our belief, here.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 125.

Whilst in the next three cases I consider it distinctly faulty:

> I see the thin web binding me
> With thirteen cords of unity
> Toward the calm centre of the sea.*1.

> Where larkspur and cornflower
> Are blue with sunlight's hour,*2.

> Ring out your frosty peal, and smite
> Loud fingers on the harp, and touch
> Lutes, and clear psalteries musical,
> And all stringed instruments, to indite*3.

*1. Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 31.
*2. Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 103.
*3. Jephthah, vol. i, p. 74.

The first two of the above are quoted from poems published in 1898, and the last from those published a year later. I will not say that they are the only imperfections to be found throughout these works, but I will say that there are very few others. And considering that Aleister Crowley has written about one hundred thousand lines in the space of ten years, or half the quantity produced by Robert Browning in fifty-six, the fewness of imperfections in his work is truly remarkable.

Let us now pass from what I may call the Poetic Iconomachy to the Poetic Iconolatry of these poems; from Aleister Crowley's war against poetic form, to his adoration of poetic imagery; and then to the keynote of the whole of his poetry, and, as we shall presently see, his philosophy as well, namely— Ecstasy.

In "Gargoyles" we find several truly wonderful picture poems. Thus in "The White Cat":

> Hail, sweet my sister! hail, adulterous spouse,
> Gilded with passionate pomp, and gay with guilt:
> Rioting, rioting in the dreary house
> With blood and wine and roses splashed and spilt
> About thy dabbling feet, and aching jaws
> Whose tongue licks mine, twin asps like moons that curl,
> Red moons of blood! Whose catlike body claws,
> Like a white swan raping a jet-black girl,
> Mine, with hysteric laughter…*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 86.

And the following four verses in “Saida” are superb:

The spears of the night at her onset
Are lords of the day for a while,
The magical green of the sunset,
The magical blue of the Nile.
    Afloat are the gales
    In our slumberous sails
On the beautiful breast of the Nile.

We have swooned through the midday exhausted
By the lips – they are whips – of the sun,
The horizon befogged and befrosted
By the haze and the grays and the dun
    Of the whirlings of sand
    Let loose on the land
By the wind that is born of the sun.
. . . . . .
Thrilled through to the marrow with heat
We abode (as we glode) on the river.
Every arrow he launched from his seat,
From the white inexhaustible quiver,
    Smote us right through,
    Smote us and slew,
As we rode on the rapturous river.

Sweet sleep is perfection of love.
To die into dreams of my lover,
To wake with his mouth like a dove
Kissing me over and over!
    Better sleep so
    Than be conscious, and know
How death hath a charm to discover.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 94.

But not until we read "The Eyes of Pharaoh" do we read one of the most astounding paintings in words, I make bold to say, that has ever been written in any language:

> And death's insufferable perfume
> Beat the black air with golden fans
> As Turkis rip a Nubian's womb
> With damascenéd yataghans.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 100.

This one astonishing verse upsets the equilibrium of the whole poem, as it would of any poem; for if the remaining thirteen had been penned in an equivalent vividness of colouring, the effect would have been one of complete overpowerment rather than of a sudden and dizzy joy.

As the aristocratic virtues of one century become the democratic vices of the next, so do the noble renderings of one age of literature become the hackneyed phraseology of the following, this being true whether we are speaking of poetry or prose. Vet one attribute alone remains ever youthful as the ages roll by into the aeons, and that is— Ecstasy; whether we find it in the rapture of Love, the melody of Song, or the fire of Deity, it is what Poe meant by "elevating excitement," and as we have seen, it was because of its absence that he attacked the Epic school of verse.

Ecstasy lies beyond our gnosis; as we shall hereafter see, it carries us out of ourselves, beyond the mere shell of existence, into the very depths of the profound. For the fraction of a second the whole ocean of our being is whirled through a narrow gorge, then once again we

are hurled forth into the eddying cataracts of life, an essential spirit light gilding once again the sepulchral abode of a corpse. For a moment we behold God, face to face, but for a moment only, then all again is night. Keats attained, and so did Shelley and Browning. Read the last verses of the "Prometheus Unbound" and "A Grammarian's Funeral," and all will be plain; and it is this same ecstasy that burns white in these two superb poems, which flames a bright star of beauty guiding us on our long journey across the hundred thousand leagues of the empire of Crowley's pen. We find it shining brightly over almost every page, a fact which renders the task of quoting nigh endless. Already we have cited a dozen or more examples. Volume I flames like a subtly gemmed ring with the ecstasy of many moments, and many of the following citations in this essay will be both brilliant and flashing; and as are the sides of the Heptagonal Vault, so also will be the contents of these seven chapters. But here at least we shall alone content ourselves with quoting from one poem— "Orpheus," and then only loose from the massive setting a few of its flashing stones.

In Book I the invocation of Venus is very fine. The third verse being:

> Down to the loveless sea
> Where lay Persephone
> Violate, where the shade of earth is black,
> Crystalline out of space
> Flames the immortal face!
> The glory of the comet-tailéd track
> Blinds all black earth with tears.
> Silence awakes and hears
> The music of thy moving come over the starry spheres.*

*Orpheus, vol. iii, p. 168.

The song of "The Hours,"*1. and "Spring,"*2. are also magnificent, as are the Invocation of Hecate;*3. the three Judges,*4. and the Furies;*5. the latter of which is one of the most musical lyrics Crowley has as yet written. The Song of Orpheus flashes and flames as we read it:

*1. Orpheus, vol. iii, pp. 145.
*2. *Ibid*, vol. iii, pp. 146, 147.
*3. *Ibid*, vol. iii, p. 177.
*4. *Ibid*, vol. iii, p. 182-187.
*5. *Ibid*, vol. iii, p. 194-199.

The magical task and the labour is ended;
The toils are unwoven, the battle is done;
My lover comes back to my arms, to the splendid
Abyss of the air and abode of the sun.
The sword be assuaged, and the bow be unbended!
The labour is past, and the victory won.

The arrows of song through Hell cease to hurtle.
Away to the passionate gardens of Greece,
Where the thrush is awake, and the voice of the turtle
Is soft in the amorous places of peace,
And the tamarisk groves and the olive and myrtle
Stir ever with love and content and release.

O bountiful bowers and O beautiful gardens!
O isles in the azure Ionian deep!
Ere ripens the sun, ere the spring-wind hardens
Your fruits once again ye shall have me to keep.
The sleep-god laments, and the love-goddess pardons,
When love at the last sinks unweary to sleep.*

*Orpheus, vol. iii, pp. 200.

As also does the song of Orpheus:

O Hawk of gold with power enwalled,
Whose face is like an emerald;
Whose crown is indigo as night;
Smaragdine snakes about thy brow
Twine, and the disc of flaming light
Is on thee, seated in the prow
Of the Sun's bark, enthroned above
With lapis-lazuli for love
And ruby for enormous force
Chosen to seat thee, thee girt round
With leopard's pell, and golden sound
Of planets choral in their course!
O thou self-formulated sire!
Self-master of thy dam's desire!
Thine eyes blaze forth with fiery light;
Thine heart a secret sun of flame!
I adore the insuperable might:
I bow before the unspoken Name.

For I am Yesterday, and I
To-day, and I to-morrow, born
Now and again, on high, on high
Travelling on Dian's naked horn!
I am the Soul that doth create
The Gods, and all the kin of Breath.
I come from the sequestered state;
My birth is from the House of Death.

. . . . . .

I have risen! I have risen! as a mighty hawk of gold!
From the golden egg I gather, and my wings the world enfold.
I alight in mighty splendour from the thronéd boats of light;

Companies of Spirits follow me; adore the Lords of Night.
Yea, with gladness did they pæan, bowing low before my car,
In my ears their homage echoed from the sunrise to the star.
I have risen! I am gathered as a lovely hawk of gold,
I the first-born of the Mother in her ecstasy of old.
Lo! I come to face the dweller in the sacred snake of Khem;
Come to face the Babe and Lion, come to measure force with them!
Ah! these locks flow down, a river, as the earth's before the Sun,
As the earth's before the sunset, and the God and I are One.
I who entered in a Fool, gain the God by clean endeavour;
I am shaped as men and women, fair for ever and for ever.*

*Orpheus, vol. iii, pp. 209, 210.

Such is the living poetry that abides and ever lives on, knowing no youth or age, alone an eternal manhood. Lavishly scattered, we find it throughout the works before us; in "Aceldama," "Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic," "The Temple of the Holy Ghost," "Tannhäuser," "Rosa Mundi," and "Alice." Ecstasy is the keynote here, as it is of all poetry, all literature – aye! of all Life. Without it we cease to be even animals – a dog will bay the moon – mere lumps of sodden clay; with it a flaming crown of glory, angel-voiced, singing amidst the stars the anthem of Eternity.

II

The Chapter known as

The Virgin

In which chapter it is related how beauteous
and fair she was to behold, and with what
joyaunce and jollity she greeted her many
lovers, and how she fed off their kisses
and growing bold was cast forth to
feed amongst the swine.

The Virgin

"TO be a singer of sweet songs," is the great ideal Crowley has enshrined before him; for varied as his powers are, entwined with satire, philosophy and mysticism, as a singer of lyrics and love-songs Aleister Crowley remains unsurpassed, unrivalled, among the host of present-day poets. His thoughts are as subtle, his imagination as gorgeous, his melodies as charming as those of Shelley himself; soft as a summer breeze, fresh as the dawn in May, sunny as a June day, and then furious with burning passion and vitriolic lust. So closely interwoven in spirit are the true lyrics with the remainder of his amatory poetry, that it would be dangerous to attempt to separate them, and such an attempt would almost certainly lead to repetition or a breaking of the chain of psychosexual sensations, dimming that lustre which thrills through these magnificent verses, from the chaste kiss of a mother to the Phaedrian embrace of a Sadistic sow.

In "Why Jesus Wept," we have the ephemeral and headstrong passion of youth; whilst in "The Tale of Archais" we find it burning only as a pure and lambent flame, overcoming all adversity, sacrificing self-love and even self-honour to attain the ideal of its purpose.

Love is the predominant power in the universe; over and over again we shall find this enforced, greater than fame, than wealth, than glory, greater than knowledge, greater than wisdom, greater than the power of the Gods themselves; for they too must worship at the shrine of Love, the shrine of the great World Mother, the mystic Isis, goddess of beauty, mother of love, queen of laughter, mistress of

pleasure. "*I am all that has been, that shall be, and none among mortals has hitherto taken off my veil*."*

*Inscribed on the statue of the Goddess.

Innocent friendship or platonic love can never be a success where the rapture of a kiss is burning on the lips of two lovers; the first spells ignorance and the second failure, for love will out, and if not as a limpid and sparkling stream, then as a turbid and roaring torrent, reckless and horrible. This extraordinary phase of diverted* love is very strongly illustrated in "The Fatal Force," "The Mother's Tragedy," and also in "Jezebel"; not so in "Tannhäuser" and "The Nameless Quest," where love is not restrained, but rather cramped by the gnostic idea of evil in the objective. This curious idea we will go into more fully later on, at present we shall content ourselves in dealing with the first phase of Love – love in youth.

*"Perverted" I object to here, as it is but a synonym of 'converted' from a different point of view.

In "Why Jesus Wept," which is a satirical serio-comedy, mingled with heterodox ribaldry, and a shrewd and sweeping cynicism on the utter rottenness of social life, we find love in youth depicted in the person of Sir Percy Percival, aged sixteen. The first effusion of puberty is described in the-following three lines:

> …what shall slake
> This terrible thirst,
> This torment accurst?*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 28.

This, as is usually the case, finds an outlet in the first pretty maid who happens to cross youth's burning path, and in this case the fair

damozel is Molly Tyson, and the first scene of their meeting is most typical:

> *Sir Percy*. Ah, love, love, how I love you. This is the world! Love! Love! I love you so, my darling. Oh my white golden heart of glory!*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 30.

Eternity is moulded in form of her kiss, and even if "Hell belch its monsters one by: one to stop the way! I would be there" cries Sir Percy as he and Molly rush backwards and forwards kissing and kissing before they can finally part. And no sooner has he parted with her, having sworn eternal love and to meet her at moonrise, than he stumbles across a bedizened hag of sixty-three (society), and in ten minutes, because she calls herself "the wretchedest girl on the wide earth," discovers "she is most beautiful"; "How she speaks! It is indeed an angel singing," and asks if he may call her Angela, and forgets his poor village girl, and utterly overcome when she says, ("I am a poor and simple girl, and my eyes are aching with the sight of you, and my lips are mad to kiss you!") falls into her arms learning his first great lesson; for as Angela says, "it is dangerous, as well as cruel to leave a lover standing."

To wake again to all the effervesence of efflorescent youth:

> Awake! awake!
> There is a secret in our subtle union
> That masters the grey snake.
> Awake, O Love! and let me drink my fill
> Of thee – and thou of me!*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 40.

His subtle union, however, is soon about to vanish, for Angela in a day or so will have just about had her fill:

Angela. Die, then, and kiss me dead!
Sir Percy. I die! I die!
Angela. Thy flower-life is shed
Into eternity,
A waveless lake.*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 41.

He sleeps, and she awake becomes somewhat weary of these "jejune platitudes," these "ululations of preposterous puberty," these very "eructations of gingerbread" and "flatulence of calf-sickness."* Soon he is kicked flying out of her ladyship's bed, and here we must leave him for a time to meet him again and his first love Molly further on, though not under the sunshine of youthful amorosis.

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 41.

A different phase and a much more pleasing one of the impulsiveness of youthful love is given us in that glowing story "The Tale of Archais." There are many mysteries in this poem. Charicles the desire striving after Archais the ideal, failing, and the ideal seeking the lost desire; but outwardly we have, and visible to all, a true poem of the self-sacrifice of Love, and as such I think we should principally read it, the poetry of life and hope, and not the mystic throbs of some deep aspiration.

Charicles and Archais are the golden children of the Tree of Life; she is under the curse of Jove – as all pure love has been under the anathema of some god – and he, blinded by his love, sets the mystic key in the secret lock, opening to his desire the hidden corridor of

knowledge; the spell falls hissing as a snake. The picture of their meeting is beautiful indeed. Thus we find Archais:

> She lay within the water, and the sun
> Made golden with his pleasure every one
> Of small cool ripples that surround her throat,
> Mix with her curls, and catch the hands that float
> Like water-lilies on the wave.*1.
> . . . . . .
> Chance bowed herself across the sunny bars,
> And watched where through the silence of the lawn
> Came Charicles, the darling of the dawn,
> Slowly, and to his steps took little heed;
> He came towards the pool, his god-wrought reed
> Shrilling dim visions of things glorious,
> And saw the maiden, that disported thus,
> And worshipped…*2.

*1. The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 7.
*2. *Ibid*. vol. i, p. 8.

As Percy, "a moment, and he flashed towards her side." He clasps her to his breast, kisses her, is dismayed:

> Her perfect eyelids drooped, her warm cheek paled,
> A tear stole over it.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 8.

He is tender, pitiful, this is no Angela.

> My perfect love, O love! for strange and dread
> Delights consume me; I am as one dead
> Beating at Heaven's gate with nerveless wing.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 8.

Charicles then sings the rather mystic song which opens as follows:

> Man's days are dim, his deeds are dust,
> His span is but a little space,
> He lusts to live, he lives to lust,
> His soul is barren of love or trust,
> His heart is hopeless, seeing he must
> Perish, and leave no trace."

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 9.

He bids her gaze into his eyes,

> With love, my cheeks with passion burn—
> As thy clear eyes may well discern
> By gazing into mine.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 9.

Who could withstand the sweet witchery of such a lover's wooing? least of all Archais; her breast, reluctant yet helpless, heaves with a soft passion, no wise understood, her pulse quickens, she speaks, he is enthralled:

> the piercing flame
> Of love struck through him, till his tortured mind
> Drove his young limbs, the wolf that hunts the hind,
> Far through the forest…*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 9.

And then again bursts from his lips the enraptured song:

Ere the grape of joy is golden
With the summer and the sun,
Ere the maidens unbeholden
Gather one by one,
To the vineyard comes the shower,
No sweet rain to fresh the flower,
But the thunder rain that cleaves,
Rends and ruins tender leaves.
. . . . . .
Ere the crimson lips have planted
Paler roses, warmer grapes,
Ere the maiden breasts have panted,
And the sunny shapes
Flit around to bless the hour,
Comes men know not what false flower:
Ere the cup is drained, the wine
Grows unsweet, that was divine.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, pp. 9, 10.

These last two lines contain the whole secret of this story. The beauty of the clinging love of childhood is tinged with a glowing desire, the pink desire of the bud bursts into the passionate crimson of the rose, and as in "Alice," "The dove gave place a moment to the swine;" – and yet hardly so! the pure desire of man and woman in whatever state of life, the weaving of the golden web of twain into one entity, is not lust, never was lust, never will be lust.

According to the conventional meaning of that word, lust expresses something unhealthy, unclean; and the love Charicles bore Archais was certainly not that. This love, to use a good old English word, was a "lusty" love, that is a healthy love, and not a lustful or perverted

desire. The beauty of nature, the beauty of living, and above all the bright beauty of Archais; intoxicated him; before him whirled visions of loveliness, and as her eyes reflected the passion of his own, as they smiled back on him all the love he bore her, yielding, he caught her up as a flame would another, and the "iron rod of law" grew misty, for they were one, one in body, mind and soul; alone for that moment, sole inhabitants of this World – Infinite. The moment is over, the girl rises up a woman, the wreath of lilies is now a crown of roses, she has plucked the golden fruit of Eden, henceforth she is a priestess of Sorrow; the crushed and bruised flowers cry to her "such as we were we are not, such as thou wert thou canst never be again." The horrid spell falls upon her, and she writhes from his arms a snake.

Charicles trembling, fearful, at last becomes aware that fate has overtaken them; then all the fury of manhood rises in him:

> Erect, sublime, he swore so fierce an oath
> That the sea flashed with blasphemy, and loath
> Black thunders broke from out the shuddering deep.
> He swore again, and from its century's sleep
> Earthquake arose, and rocked and raved and roared.
> He swore the third time. But that Heaven's Lord
> Curbed their black wrath, the stars of Heaven's vault.
> Had rushed to whelm the sun with vehement assault.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 12. Cf. the Qabalistic Dogma of Pistorius: "Schema misericordiam dicit, sed et judicium." The Infinite Being when exercising his power upon the finite must necessarily chastise to correct and not to avenge himself. The strength of the sin does not exceed that of the sinner, and if the punishment be greater than the offence, he who inflicts it becomes executioner and is the real criminal, who is wholly inexcusable, and himself alone deserving of eternal punishment. Any being who is tortured above measure, enlarged by an infinitude of suffering, would become God, and this is what the ancients

represented in the myth of Prometheus, immortalized by the devouring vulture, and destined to dethrone Jupiter. —*The Mysteries of Magic*, p. 120.

Such is the power of Love, undaunted, infuriated in the cause of Freedom, Justice, and Truth. Charicles plunges into the waves of destiny, "And with his strenuous hands the emerald water gripped." Onward he swims striving against Poseidon, god of the ocean, who heaps the sea foam against him, as he makes for the Paphian isle to seek aid from the goddess of Love; and in his blinding anger he sees her not, though she is by his side journeying homeward from Rome. She raises the swimmer to her pearly car and carries him to her fair home, where in the following beautiful symbolic action she promises to restore him his lost love – Archais.

> Then Aphrodite loosed a snake of gold
> From her arm's whiteness, and upon his wrist
> Clasped it. Its glittering eyes of amethyst
> Fascinate him. "Even so," the goddess cried,
> "I will bind on thy arm the serpent bride
> Freed from her fate, and promise by this kiss
> The warmer kisses of thy Archais."*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, pp. 13, 14.

The handmaidens of Aphrodite gather round them, and their silver voices rise in one of those sweet clear songs, already so familiar to our ears, set like a gem in the gold of the narrative. The following rondel I choose for its simplicity and sweetness:

> Sing, little bird, it is dawn;
> Cry! with the day the woods ring;
> Now in the blush of the morn,
> Sing!

Love doth enchain me and cling,
Love, of the breeze that is born,
Love, with the breeze that takes wing.

Love that is lighter than scorn,
Love that is strong as a king,
Love, through the gate that is horn,
Sing!*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 14.

The anger of Zeus is aroused. Aphrodite bids Charicles flee, but his passion is too great, he defies the powers. (They are only gods; would he have succeeded had they been Grundy?) The curse of Zeus is reversed:

His form did change, and, writhing from her clasp,
Fled hissing outward, a more hateful asp
Than India breeds to-day.
. . . . . .
…till day
Dropped her blue pinions, and the night drew on,
And sable clouds banked out the weary sun.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 16.

The whole course of events is now reversed, Charicles a venomous adder, Archais once again her own divine and glorious self. And this is how we find her the second time:

It was a pinnacle of ivory
Whereon she stood, the loftiest of three fangs
Thrust up by magic, in the direst pangs
Of Earth, when Earth was yet a whirling cloud

Of fire and adamant, a ceaseless crowd
Of rushing atoms roaring into space,
Driven by demons from before the Face.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 17.

So beautiful was she, that "the sun forgot his chariot, nor would set"; and in this mystic hour, the marriage of Day and Night, she prayed fervently to Aphrodite, fond goddess of lovers, and there amidst the thunder-smitten stone, beautiful and piteous, she waited, longing for that strong desire of love that had been so rudely snatched from her. Again, Love in the form of Aphrodite listens to her prayer, but is helpless to help her till she has sought aid from the lewd city of Aphaca, where Lust in the grim shape of Priapus dwelt.

The large-lipped drawn-out grinning of that court
That mouthed and gibbered in their swinish sport.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 19.

This curious duality of Love and Lust, or better, of Virtue and Vice, we shall attempt to explain more fully when we deal with the philosophy of Aleister Crowley.

From Priapus, Phallommeda gains her necessary information, and then seeking Charicles, appears first as an old hag, soon to change again into her own brilliant form, thus symbolizing the joy she brought him from out the hideousness of his fate; for during the day he should assume the form of the divinest of divine maidens, and only at the passionate hour of noon, crawl away before the full glory of the sun a wriggling serpent. She bids him seek Zeus, and leaves the rest to him. "To the lascivious shade of Ida's deep recesses" he wends his way:

So fair, her image in the brook might make
A passionless old god his hunger slake
By plunging in the waters, though he knew
His drowning body drowned her image too.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 21.

There he, or now she, meets the great god wandering through the green trees and the cool groves, as Jahveh was wont once to do. Amidst those shades of Ida, where Paris adjudged the prize of beauty, overlooking the blue Hellespont, the greatest sacrifice, and thereby the purest that love can make, was to be demanded, and freely given – the sacrifice of a woman's honour to save her lover; in fact to become a prostitute in body, and a virgin in spirit. He, Zeus, is "weary of women's old lascivious breed," and of "the large luxurious lips of Ganymede." No freshness, no restraint, no virgin breast, no lips "without a taint of lewd imagining," all the nymphs of those green wooded slopes, all are as brazen and cold as the meretrices of a suburrian lupanar, the fire of love having burnt itself out to the ashen lassitude of satiety. At length the god finds her asleep under some shady tree, and creeps towards her – little loath

To waken her caresses, and let noon
Fade into midnight in the amorous swoon.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 21.

His voluptuous lips touch her smooth cheek, she wakes, she flees, she is caught; "panting," "timid," "tremulous":

And he with open lips voluptuous
Closed her sweet mouth with kisses, and so pressed
Her sobbing bosom with a manlier breast
That…*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 22.

She submits, not to the god, but to the man. Within the god, the godhood vanishes; for the power of love rules all, and the god once again becomes incarnated in the form of a divine man.*

*Eros (ש.) descending upon God (יהוה.), transforms God into (יהשוה.) Christ.

So the morning past
And found them linked inexorably fast
Each in the other's arms. Their lips are wed
To drink the breezes from the fountainhead
Of lovers' breath.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 22.

Then all her senses leap to the melodious song of Zeus, a divine lyric; the following are two of its seven beautiful verses:

O lamp of love!
The hissing spray shall jet thee with desire
And foaming fire,
And fire from thee shall move
Her spirit to devour,
And fuse and mingle us in one transcendent hour.

Godhead is less
Than mortal love, the garland of the spheres,
Than those sweet tears
That yield no bitterness
To the luxurious cries
That love shrills out in death, that murmur when love dies.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 23.

The hour of noon approaches, it falls, and the curse resumes its sway; a fiery snake winds its coils round the sleeping god, and hisses in his ear, "awake!" The god has fallen, the god is caught, caught and bound in the lusts of the manhood he assumed. No Galilean is he to be crucified for his own or others' sins, and he wins his freedom at the price of Charicles' liberty. Nature breaks into a welcome chant of joy, the lovers are reunited, the men's praise is for Archais, and the eyes of the maidens are fixed on Charicles. The tale is nearly ended, the lovers wend their way through the joyous throng midst song and chorus, then from the lips of Archais rises:

Light and dark are wed together
Into golden weather:
Sun and moon have kissed, and built
Palaces star-gilt
Whence a crystal stream of joy, love's eternal wine, is spilt.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 24.

Such is one of the most pleasing of Aleister Crowley's poems; touched by the genuine breath of adoration for the beautiful, a jewel set in fiery gold, a crimson sash embroidered with the pearls of the glowing orient; Archais is one of the tenderest and most touching of women, wholly pure, not like Molly Tyson, who afterwards fell to the lot of a worldly old lecher. The rosy couch of her first fiery experience soon withered to a thorny briar bed, as it has for most of us. Her curse was a god's, Molly's Society's – poor Molly! Charicles' love was the love of the hurricane, which carries all before it, typhoonic; he knew no fears, no bonds, he cursed the god who had defrauded him of his loved one; and plunged undaunted into the ocean of adversity; to win back their former state he sacrificed himself. He was no Sir

Percy, flatulent with wind, who could not tell a harlot from a virgin; falling at once a prey to a bedizened old prostitute of sixty-three.

Those who should think the passion displayed in this tale as unbecoming and lustful, must indeed have minds composed of dung and cantharides, disappointed sterile old maids, or sated old matrons, pornophobics of the worst description. We know well the class, half Exeter Hall, half Empire Music-hall; "douée" (as a charming little French brochure describes one of this type), "du plus voluptueux tempérament courut longtemps les aventures… mais ses ans et le grand usage altérèrent ses charmes, et elle prit le parti ordinaire, de donner à Dieu ce qu'elle ne pouvait plus offrir aux hommes, et pleura dans l'hypocrisie trente ans d'amour et de plaisir." We know the type well, and so does Aleister Crowley; his Angela, before she fell into the boiling sulphuric acid, which was being prepared to remove her enamel, was president of a Zenana Mission.

Love is, as must now be apparent, an all engrossing theme in the poetry of Aleister Crowley, every phase almost meeting with an illustration. We have seen the flatulent love of youth, and its counterpart in the divine poetic sincerity of Charicles and Archais; we will now view it in its maturer form, and firstly, in the form of true and sincere love, unconventional and pure, whether under the bond of marriage, or under the boundless bond of free love, between two souls of similar affinity. True love is a pure, unalloyed attraction, urging two souls from their inherited duality into their inherent oneness, that all are capable of attaining, and yet so few attain; and it is on account of the fewness of its adepts, that the magic of their worship has become to the clouded eyes of the many a heinous offence, reflecting a light that they cannot find in their gloomy atmosphere.

Laws are the concrete opinions of the many, morals the abstract sensations of the few. Outside ourselves ethics do not exist, for they are the great faculty of sentient existence. The law of the survival of the fittest is not moral, it is essential; but, manifested through reason it becomes ethical. As regards the aspirations of the sexes, nature cares little whether John loves Ann or Mary. Man, however, cares much. John is not married, Ann is; Nature implants a similar affinity in both, and they verge towards their own magnetic centre. Nature says "unite!" Man, however, thinks otherwise and so builds up a stout *abatis* out of the dead bones of unreasoning ages, fencing Ann in; and even if John does surmount this formidable obstacle, a moral *fougasse* awaits for his impetuous footstep, which will morally blow him to smithereens. Again, John is unmarried, and Mary is in a similar state of bliss, their affinities repel and do not attract: Nature says "keep apart!"; man says "I would rather see you unite with Mary than I would with Ann, affinities be damned!" They unite, and axiomatize the postulate of Hell. Nature now says "part!" man says "Oh! no you don't." Around them are then speedily constructed such labyrinthine entanglements, that few find their way out, and still fewer attempt so difficult a task – hence Churches and Brothels. If John, however, does not marry Mary, Ann squalls, but as the jailer can always let himself out of the prison, so can man, if he does not drop his keys through some matrimonial grating. Ann then locks up Mary in that Bastille of despair which is called Piccadilly (this is no paradox) – hence prudes and nymphs. Thus Nature is scouted and thumped on the nose because she is essential, and man is enthroned in her stead and smacked on the back because he happens to be moral – hence Universities and Lunatic asylums.

In Love, mankind eternally verges between folly and knavery, because man is a non-essential being, and Nature an un-moral power.

But before we enter on the above idea as demonstrated in the poems of Aleister Crowley, it will be necessary to elucidate matters, and first to enter on a brief description of the Essential and the Moral; showing that man as usual has got hold of "the muddy end of the stick"; that the majority of the human species live in a state of purulent hypocrisy and mental indolence, and that the minority should consider themselves exceptionally fortunate if they save their souls from incarceration in the *bolgia* of conventional respectability.

Aleister Crowley's gospel of Love is the gospel of Freedom. As love is one of those particular qualities that cannot possibly thrive under the perception of restraint, so can it only bloom in perfect freedom, whether legalized or not; all other forms are Lust.

Nature is the All-perfect, she is existence taken as a totality, and everything being a part of her, consequently is subject to her government. The inorganic, and what we choose to call the organic, are her two greatest manifestations. Some consider these two as definitely separate; ethers that the organic is but a higher form of the inorganic; and others again that both are illusions, and that Reality, as we suppose it materially to be, does not exist outside our own minds. We do not intend to enter here the illusive paths of Idealism; but we might add, from a strictly logical point of view, that the latter system has much to support it. In all and every one of us lies a certain individual desire, which is strictly subjective, in the individual it is called character, in the nation government. The laws of a country are the compilation of a series of individual characterizations, a series of inner reflections of the outer object. In each one of us there is a slight difference of effect, and this variation results in the survival of the fittest intellect. Now the essential difference between the spirit of an individual and that of a nation is this: the first acts intuitively, the second mechanically; the former propels the latter, whilst the latter reacts as a drag on the former. If the former is in a healthy state so will the latter be; if the latter becomes corrupt it will then react and

contaminate the former. This is the law of all Form – *i.e.*, Government – and Reform.

The outlaw of to-day was the citizen of yesterday, so the law of to-day will become the crime of tomorrow.

Man being inherently lazy, and hence conservative, this power is forever reacting on him, and binding him down to a government unsuited to his times, and it is this power that he has chosen to call – the Moral code; notwithstanding the fact that it is not based in any way on the perceptions he has obtained from Nature's code as it now is reflected, but on that reflection which was obtained by his ancestors, a far less worthy appreciation. And in this inherent conservativeness and horror of change lie most of the tragedies of love; for man trying to quench the natural flame of his desires in a torrent of chilly and criminal atavism, merely floods the virtuous path, leaving the by-ways of vice high and dry, inviting, crying to the sated wanderer.

Man lives by paradoxes and contraries; martyrs and tortures himself, building around him lofty restrictions bristling with moral *frises*, and broken ethical beer-bottles, digging deep trenches around his joys, and then filling them with the tears of exasperation at his lot. All is either monopoly, or slavery, or taboo. Free in his actions he conceived law and solicitors; free in his aspirations, religion and priests; free in his affections, marriage and wives. Inwardly he agrees that marriage is a success only when it comprises a total unison of mind, body and soul, of sympathies and passions; outwardly that it is a perpetual seal, sealed by God. Dr. Maudsley once said, "No one can escape the tyranny of his organization," but woe to the man who cannot dissemble that he can! Marriage, the hackneyed sexual union, is a lie to love, a legalizing of prostitution, an abortive horror, over which broods the grinning form of the Jew-God – God of lechers and harlots, of David and Rahab. What sight more truly pitiable than to

behold the tender heart of some young girl, or the ardent spirit of another, cramped by this unnatural bond, and denied the joys of a beneficent Nature, that yearning to love and be loved. But not with impunity do we thus triumph over our natures; love cannot be so rudely suppressed; the primary want of our being must inevitably conquer. Looking back on history we find few parallels to the general lust of the present day. Two thousand years of the Cross have to-day left as token of its morality 80,000 prostitutes on the London streets alone.* "Can that have been human?" I see you point through the drizzling night to a cramped and shivering form. Can that have been a woman? That living death, degraded by crime, brutalized by vice, vitiated, unsouled; lower than a slave, worse than a dog; spurned by man, shunned by woman, a human wreck, a growing horror? Even so, once a smiling girl, sweet as a rose, pure as a lily; now the bedraggled gin-sodden harridan. O! marriage, thy name is Failure: O! priest, what hast thou done? Cramped the human mind, betrayed thy trust, sacrificed love on the altar of Mammon, leaving the heart as a blighted flower, the soul as a hollow shell, void, execrable.

*In 1861 Henry Mayhew stated that the assumed number of prostitutes in London was about 80,000. And further adds— "large as this total may appear, it is not improbable that it is below the reality than above it. One thing is certain – if it be an exaggerated statement – that the real number is swollen every succeeding year, for prostitution is an inevitable attendant upon extended civilization and increased population." —*London Labour and London Poor*, p. 213.

Even love is sold, the solace of all woe
Is turned to deadliest agony, old age
Shivers in selfish beauty's loathing arms
And youth's corrupted impulses prepare
A life of horror from the blighting bane
Of commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs
From unenjoying sensualism, has filled
All human life with hydra-headed woes.

So sang Shelley. Now let us turn to Aleister Crowley, and we shall find his ideal no less great, noble and true than that of Shelley's, the divinest of the poets and pioneers of Truth, Freedom, and Beauty.

Love is the finding in others what others cannot find in them, and it is of two degrees. The love of a mother towards her child; and the love of man and woman towards woman and man. The first is generally considered to be purer and more ideal, but this idea has only grown out of man's entire ignorance regarding the physical relationships. The mother is in no way purer than the wife, neither is the virgin purer than the mother. The truest definition of chastity is that as given by Benjamin Franklin, which defines chastity as "the regulated and strictly temperate satisfaction without injury to others, of those desires which are natural to all healthy adult beings."* The reason for this idea of uncleanliness though certainly obscure is traceable more particularly to the utter mystery man saw in this supreme function, and also, that all hygienic laws being unknown to him, any disease resulting from the act was attributed indirectly to the woman – instead of to his own want of knowledge – and directly to the supernatural manifesting its wrath through her as a medium; for the supernatural to primitive man's understanding invariably took the shape of malevolent and not benevolent powers. This and the periodic functions of the woman, as well as, as Westermarck says, "the instinctive feeling against intercourse between members of the same family or household," developed the conception of uncleanliness in. an act which has been rightly stated by Geoffrey Mortimer as being "the eternal symbol of love and life, and the purest of human joys," and which act being attributed to supernatural powers came under the authority of religion, and fell into the hands of an interested priesthood, giving them an immense power over women, and through women over men; an influence that has been exercised in every land, and every age, by these spiritual leaders: an influence by which they have in so many cases ruled the minds of men, and by which for so many centuries they have blighted the

happiest prospects of many a human heart. But surely now that we have reached the twentieth century, thousands and thousands of years since these primitive times, should we not shake off these trammels of infant thought, and, assuming our manhood, decry an ideal that is not only brutal but absurd; instead of reverencing it because of its great antiquity, or because of our conservative sympathies with the past days of our fathers. Woman is as clean as man, and a wife married or unmarried as pure as any virgin. Generation is no more filthy than alimentation; both are necessary, both are accompanied by natural appetites; the one maintains the individual, the other the race; both may be carried to extremes, both may become lusts.

*A disciple of Pythagoras once asked him, when was it permitted him to cohabit with his wife? To which that philosopher replied: "When you are tired of resting." Théano, wife of Pythagoras, was also once asked: "How long does it take for a woman to be purified who has known a man?" To which she answered: "If it is with her husband, she is purified by the act, if with another she is for ever defiled." For it is not marriage which sanctifies love, but love which justifies marriage. —EDOUARD SCHURÉ

The world is ever progressing onward, and we must progress with it, or else stagnation and retrogression will set in; and in these competitive times the latter two spell social and moral death. What was good yesterday may be bad to-day, and what is good to-day may be evil to-morrow. What the ultimate end will be, none can tell, for it lies "behind the veil"; but what we must do is very certain, very definite, very sure. We must ameliorate our lot, not by the ephemeral laws of the dead, but through the needs and wants of the living, on the solid foundation of the truest possible morality, based on Nature, and manifested to us through our divine powers of reason. And much of this new morality do we find in the love-gospel of Aleister Crowley.

First turning to the love incarnate in motherhood, we find a touching case in the picture of Cora in "The Mother's Tragedy." Cora Vavasour, late of the halls, yet as true and noble a woman as ever lived, a type of woman that, thank Heaven, is not so uncommon among those whom the prudes call fallen classes. Cora was scarcely, however, one of these; living in luxury she tried to bury the recurring past, "Old hours of horror," and she trusted that "God hath made smooth the road beneath the hearse" of her "forgetful age."

> Let me not shrink! Truth always purifies.
> . . . . . .
> One night I stepped up tremulous on the stage,
> Sang something, found my senses afterward
> Only to that intolerable sound
> Of terrible applause. They shook the sky
> With calling me to answer. And I lay—
> A storm of weeping swept across my frame—
> Till the polite, the hateful Manager
> Led me to face a nation's lunatic
> Roar of delight!*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 157.

That was the beginning, but she soon got over that "and over – yes! the other thing."

She fell sacrificed before Mammon, loved opulence, was quoted on the Stock Exchange, became the toy of the "prurient licksores of society" till her bastard child was born.

> Childbirth sobered me.
> I loved the child, the only human love
> I ever tasted, and I sacrificed
> The popularity, the infamy,

Of my old life; I sought another world.
I "got religion" —how I hate the phrase!—
So jest the matron newspapers…
. . . . . .
For I will do without a mother's name
If only I may keep a son's love still!*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 157.

It is not here that we can enter on the fearful tragedy of these short dozen pages, suffice it to say, that it was that of Phædra and Hippolytus, the sexes however being reversed. Shamed, insulted by her son, she still dares kiss him:

Why I dare
Now take your head between my hands and kiss
Your forehead with these shameful lips of mine,
These harlot lips, and kiss you unashamed?*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 161.

Outraged, ravished by the offspring of her vice, yet child of her heart, she still can say as she sees him stand before her, a fiendish monster, with the bloody razor with which he has just slain Madeline, a pure and innocent girl:

Kill yourself.

Such was her love, her duty to her motherhood; very different indeed was the love of Ratoum. But anon.

Another picture of maternal affection, this time more musical, we find in "The Spring after," of "Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic":

No smallest cloud between me and my bride
Came like a little mist; one tender fear,
Too sweet to speak of, closed the dying year
With love more perfect, for its purple root
Might blossom outward to the snowy fruit
Whose bloom to-night lay sleeping on her breast.*

*Mysteries; Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 94.

True love, the love of self in the soul of another, the poet paints very beautifully in the following charming lines:

Do you recall? Could I forget?
How once the full moon shone above,
Over the houses, and we let
Loose rein upon the steeds of love?
How kisses fled to kisses, rain
Of fiery dew upon the soul
Kindled, till ecstasy was pain;
Desire, delight: and swift control
Leapt from the lightning, as the cloud
Disparted, rended, from us twain,
And we were one:*

*Star and Garter, vol. iii, p. 13.

This melting of the I in you, is the only true possible form of marriage, and the only form that can exalt it over the prostitution of the monde and demi-monde; for it matters little if a woman sell her body for a five pound note, or for a five million pound *dot*. The man who in his turn marries a woman for her wealth is as foul a male prostitute as ever shrieked his lewd obscenities in the street of Sodom, and down the by-ways of Gibeah. Tannhäuser expresses the whole celebration of this union in two pregnant lines:

That is true marriage, in my estimate.
Aspire together to one Deity?
Yes!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 259.

Or again in the song of Nuith:

We are lulled by the whirr of the stars;
    We are fanned by the whisper, the wind;
We are locked in unbreakable bars,
    The love of the spirit and mind.
        The infinite powers
        Of rapture are ours;
We are one, and our kisses are kind.*

*Orpheus, vol. iii, p. 218.

A true wife, that is a woman whose very soul palpitates in harmony with that of her husband or lover, is the greatest joy of life. Burns sang:

To make a happy fireside clime
    For weans and wife,
Is the true pathos and sublime
    Of human life.

And from the other side of the sphere the melodious lines of Kalidasa reverberate with the same perfection of pure wifehood. In the Raghuvançha the stepmothers of Rama greet Sita thus, when she blames herself for the misfortunes which befell her husband:

Dear daughter, rise!

(So said they) "Tis thy spotless life alone
That brought thy Lord and Lakshman through their toils
Triumphant." Then with loving words and true
They praised her, worthy wife of worthy Lord.

What a melody lives in those words, "Twas thy spotless life alone." Rama through all his misfortunes, through all the snares of life, finds ultimately that all his woes are but a teardrop to be swallowed up in that boundless ocean of love – the heart of a chaste and loving wife. And so did Ahinoam in Jephthah when he said:

And my wife's eyes were welcome more desired
Than chains of roses, and the song of children,
And swinging palm branches, and milk-white-elders.*

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 82.

No thunderous note (so common in the poems of Crowley) lies in the above three lines, to roll on into the stillness of Immensity; it is but the song of the nightingale by the rill of life. Here as a vision we see a fair form embroidering the web of existence with the flowers that grow on the banks of life's flowing stream, collecting as she works the stray threads of philosophy, of science, of industry, of war, and of peace; the sweat, the laughter, the tears of existence, to weave them into the great garment of Love.

This again is the true, the Higher Love:

A thousand years have passed,
And yet a thousand thousand; years they are
As men count years, and yet we stand and gaze
With touching hands and lips immutable
As mortals stand a moment;…
The universe is One; One Soul, One Spirit,

One Flame, One infinite God, One infinite Love*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 120. The woman is technically a harlot.

Truly the poet has here refined the dross and poured out before us the glittering metal. Yet what a difference he makes between the two great world forces: the love of man for a good woman, and the love of man for a bad woman; the first is supreme, yet the other is far from being infernal. Listen:

> Yes. A good woman's love will forge a chain
> To break the spirit of the bravest Greek;
> While with an harlot one may leap again
> Free as the waters of the western main,
> And turn with no heart-pang the vessel's beak
> Out to the oceans that all seamen seek."*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 121.

Another, this time a weird, charming little picture of a lewd little mistress with "a generous baby soul," we include here; for such a one at any rate is not a true prostitute, rather a poor deluded girl, yearning to love and be loved, romantic and foolish, yet kindhearted and charitable to a fault: often the plaything of man, and oftener the means of livelihood of some bad woman. As Jenny wrapped in "the homage of the dim boudoir," was Nina; one of that large flotsam of fragile girlhood which forms the better drift of vice, the first to be swallowed in the social Maelstrom.

> Yes: Nina was a thing of nought,
> A little laughing lewd gamine,
> Idle and vicious, void of thought,
> Easy, impertinent, unclean—

Utterly charming! Yes, my queen!
She had a generous baby soul,
Prattled of love. Should I control,
Repress, perhaps, the best instinct
The child had ever had? I winked
At foolish neighbours, did not shirk.
Such café Turc I made her drink
As she had never had had before;
Set her where you are sitting; chatted;
Found where the fires of laughter lurk;
Played with her hair, tangled and matted;
Fell over strict nice conduct's brink,
Gave all she would, and something more.
She was an honest little thing,
Gave of her best, asked no response.
What more could Heaven's immortal King
Censed with innumerous orisons?*

*The Star and the Garter, vol. iii, p. 10. Nina is not a prostitute, of course, in the commercial sense.

What more indeed! Nina is charming, and we wish we could say the same of many a Society dame who holds her breath each time she passes such a one.

We have by now certainly slightly diverged from True Love, let us now enter those enchanting realms of Free Love, which is True Love in its truest form. Nina is our guide, pointing us out the hill-top road which will lead us above the social plain, and awed by the mystic love of woman,

Racing and maddening from the crown of flame,
The monolithic core of mystical
Red fury that is called a woman's heart.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 232.

Enter the sphere of Free Love, and sit by the side of Alice, look into the depth of her eyes, the depths of her heart.

> As a seeker sees the gold
> In the shadow of the stream;

see there her love,

> As a diver sees the pearl
> In the shadow of the sea;

and murmur not above our breath

> Ah! you can love, true girl,
> And is your love for me?*

*The Three Shadows, Rossetti.

"Alice, an Adultery." As golden a book of poetry as Mademoiselle de Maupin is of prose.

The first poem in the book is called "Messaline."*1. It is in a way a foreword to the ensuing sonnet-sequence, and yet in a way it is not, its spirit being more essentially of Lust; for whatever the "unco gude" may say, that of Alice and her lover is not. To adulterate is to debase; but there is no debasement here. Love burns pure as a flame, and if it is, as it is here, between a married woman and a lover who is not her legal husband, so much deeper the lesson, so much vaster the love; defying all for its own sake: and here, as we shall see in the end, sacrifices itself, so as not to tarnish the names of innocent children, which the old harridan Society would otherwise have besmirched

with her foul saliva. In "Messaline" we however have, as the poet says "leprous entanglements of sense"; here is a magnificent passage heated with passion and not a little lust:

> Breast to great breast and thigh to thigh,
> We look, and strain, and laugh, and die.
> I see the head hovering above
> To swoop for cruelty or love;
> I feel the swollen veins below
> The knotted throat, the ebb and flow
> Of blood, not milk, in breasts of fire;
> Of deaths, not fluctuants, of desire;
> Of molten lava that abides
> Deep in the vast volcanic sides;
> Deep scars where kisses once bit in
> Below young mountains that be twin,
> Stigmata cruciform of sin,
> The diary of Messaline.*

*1. In the second edition, the first edition began with White Poppy.
*2. Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 63.

A little further on – before the sonnets commence – another poem greets our gaze and charms our senses, it is called "Margaret":

> The moon spans Heaven's architrave;
> Stars in the deep are set;
> Written in gold on the day's grave,
> "To love, and to forget";
> And sea-winds whisper o'er the wave
> The name of Margaret.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 63.

In these two short poems we have the spirit of Alice offered us, passionate and sublime; a harmonious blending of Messaline and Margaret in the form of one sweet woman.

In none of the sonnets can it be said that there is a single scene of lechery. True we shall have our Buchanans and their ilk, and we still have Rossetti's poems with one of his finest sonnets excised to please Mrs. Grundy; but matters it what the sewer-rat thinks of the linnet's songs? leave him in his dank drain, for we need him not, neither his opinions.

There is a great lesson embodied in this poem. The lesson that Love is only worthy its hallowed name, when free; that it is only worth having when freely given, and worth keeping when freely held, without bond or writ. This freedom we find in the very first sonnet:

> Against the fiat of that God discrowned,
> Unseated by Man's Justice, and replaced
> By Law most bountiful and maiden-faced
> And Mother-minded: passing the low bound
> Of Man's poor law we leapt at last and found
> Passion; and passing the dim halls disgraced
> Found higher love and larger and more chaste,
> A calm sphinx waiting in secluded ground.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 64.

The first day of meeting he gazes on her, and wonders whether Fate had found at last a woman's love for him; hopelessly he turns away and sinks the dream of his soul in despair and "Kindled a corpse-light and proclaimed 'The day!'"

> Thither I fled, busied myself with these;
> When – lo! I saw her shadow following!

In every cosmic season-tide of spring
She rose, being the spring: in utter peace
She was with me and in me: thus I saw
Ours was not love, but destiny, and law.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 65.

Such is True Love, whether it be the love of a virgin, a harlot, or a wife. No man-made law, no convention, no ceremony can create it; for it is spontaneous, anarchic; few are its children, and still fewer its warriors. All that this lover sees breathes "Alice"; all that he hears reverberates with her name; all that he smells holds the clinging scent of her hair, Alice, Alice, Alice! He feels she is beyond him; yet in his ear whispers the Master; whose power is rapture.

I drew a hideous talisman of lust
In many colours where strong sigils shone;
Crook'd mystic language of oblivion,
Fitted to crack and scorch the terrene crust
And bring the sulphur steaming from the thrust
Of Satan's winepress, was ill written on
The accurséd margin, and the orison
Scrawled backwards, as a bad magician must.

By these vile tricks, abominable spells,
I drew foul horrors from a many hells—
Though I had fathomed Fate; though I had seen
Chastity charm-proof arm and sea gray eyes
And sweet clean body of my spirit's queen,
Where nothing dwells that God did not devise.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 66.

The sonnets relating the events of the seventh to the tenth day are dismal, attempting to drown Love in Lust. On the twelfth a little flame burns up, then comes the poem, which Alice receives and reads. Every verse is as charming, simple, and fascinating as the following two:

> One kiss, like snow, to slip,
> Cool fragrance from thy lip
> To melt on mine;
> One kiss, a white-sail ship
> To laugh and leap and dip
> Her brows divine;
> One kiss, a starbeam faint
> With love of a sweet saint,
> Stolen like a sacrament
> In the night's shrine!
>
> One kiss, like moonlight cold,
> Lighting with floral gold
> The lake's low tune;
> One kiss, one flower to fold,
> On its own calyx rolled
> At night, in June!
> One kiss, like dewfall, drawn
> A veil o'er leaf and lawn—
> Mix night, and noon, and dawn,
> Dew, flower, and moon!*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 69.

That Alice was charmed, that the above was a love-philtre, the thirteenth day discloses – the birthday of their first kiss:

> Breasts met and arms enclosed, and all the spring

Grew into summer with the first long kiss.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 70.

They are henceforth lovers, passionate and ardent; and not till now do they discover that man-made honour is but as winter snow. All is hence Alice, as is shown in that sweet and simple song which bears her name:

The stars are hidden in dark and mist,
    The moon and sun are dead,
Because my love has caught and kissed
    My body in her bed.
No light may shine this happy night—
Unless my Alice be the light.
. . . . . .
This night shall never be withdrawn—
Unless my Alice be the dawn.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 71.

Yet Alice is full of fear; they question their love, and Love conquers. The still horror creeps silently on, enveloping them in the shroud that man has woven as the garment of love:

Since our pure shame unworthily destroys
The love of all she had, her girls and boys,
    Her home, their lives: and yet my whisper stirs
    Into live flame her passion, and deters
Her fear from spurning all the day's due joys.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 73.

The *pudibonderie* of the English would call this lust. Indeed, drunken on their own crapulous imagination, choked by their venomous vomit, they cannot see the divine form of Love through the mist of their steaming sensuality. For what reason did man tie woman to him? For what reason did he devise the horrors of indissoluble marriage? And the answer is: that he might ever have at least one poor victim to sate his vile carnalities on. Lust and Indolence are the parents of Marriage and Law, but not even the menials of Freedom and Free Love.

> We clung still closer, till the soul ran through
> Body to body, twined like sunny snakes,
> Sinlessly knowing we were man and wife.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 73.

Alice, still fearful, foresees the end; such love as theirs is too supernal to be platonic; she flies in vain; for she has to console her sad lover with the truth. The storm-clouds gather on the twenty-fifth day:

> Mouth unto mouth! O fairest! mutely lying,
> Fire lambent laid on water – O! the pain!
> Kiss me, O heart, as if we both were dying!
> Kiss, as we could not ever kiss again!
> Kiss me, between the music of our sighing,
> Lightning and rain!*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 76.

A curious conflict this 'twixt love and fear, "honour and lust, and truth and trust beguiled"; they wandered in the scented garden of man's heart, and all their restraint was as ephemeral as the fleeting hour. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make

one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." (N.B. —*Husband*: neither church nor registry office is mentioned!)

Linked in the tiny shelf upon the ship,
My blind eyes burned into her mild ones: limbs
Twined to each other while fine dew bedims
Their quivering skins: lip fastened unto lip:
Whole soul and body frenzied meet and clip;
And the breath staggers, and the life-blood swims!
Terrible gods chant black demoniac hymns
As the frail cords of honour strain and slip.

For in the midst of that tremendous tide
The mighty vigour of a god was mine!
Drunk with desire, her lamentations died.
The dove gave place a moment to the swine!
Rapturous draughts of madness! Out she sighed
Uttermost life's love, and became a bride*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 77. "Many sins are forgiven this woman because she hath loved much."

Not like Adam and Eve, however, did they then discover that they were naked, such epilogues being more especially suited to the author of "Lot and his Daughters" and "The Concubine of Gibeah," than the author of "Tannhäuser" or "Alice." Nevertheless reproach followed, if shame did not, the celebration of love's mystic eucharist. Reproach rises, but falls enamoured to his kisses; all is extremes, there is no heaviness, no deadness of sentiment, the smoke curls as high as the flashing flames, and tears wash out smiles, and blushing cheeks dry tears; all is effluent glory, glorious as a Sun of gold lingering on the blushing bosom of Dawn:

We lay in naked chastity, caressed
Child-like or dreaming, till the dawn repressed
Our sighs: that nuptial yet hath never ceased.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 79.

Still the future rises up before them, as a serpent, "prescience of next year"; the Minotaur, "prodigious offspring of the fatal graft?" But the present is a sublime kiss, and the future as hollow as the emblem of two parted lips, "while love was hovering and our lips were fain?" Soon the parting draws nigh, he attempts to detain her; but he knows he must inevitably fail, as he knew his first kiss must inevitably lead to their great love and surrender. They spend the last melancholy day together:

Strong kisses that had surfeited a score
Of earthly bridals in an hour we squandered.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 84.

And at last:

THE FIFTIETH DAY

At noon she sailed for home, a weeping bride
    Widowed before the honeymoon was done.
    Always before the rising of the sun
I swore to come in spirit to her side
And lie like love; and she at eventide
    Swore to seek me and gather one by one
    The threads of labyrinthine love new spun,
Cretan for monstrous shadows serpent-eyed.

So the last kiss passed like a poison-pain,

Knowing we might not ever kiss again.
Mad tears fell fast: "Next year!" in cruel distress
We sobbed and stretched our arms out, and despaired,
And – parted. Out the brute-side of truth flared;
"Thank God I've finished with that foolishness!"*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 84.

This last line is almost staggering, but such a cruel truth is soon given the lie: "I am a fool, tossing a coin with Fate," says he; and again, "I love you, and shall love you till I die." "I love you, and shall love you all my life." "I love you and shall love you after death." This is the Higher Love; and so ends one of the greatest poems of true and pure love ever written, musical as the breath of stormy Aeolus. Fascinated we read its verses again and again, dazzled with their mystic beauty, their harmony, and, above all, their intense human love. As the Editor says, those who fail to find religion in such poems must indeed be idiots, idiots who would bowdlerize Shakespeare, Shelley, and Browning. Neither was their love a mere selfish gratification of the senses. Anxiously they waited to see "whether the mother stood behind the bride," falteringly he would not part with her till she held the key of the hereafter"; and ultimately they resigned all for the sake of others:

Even while I begged her, I well knew she must.
We could not, loving to see children laugh,
Let cowards twit them with their mother's lust.
Even our own purity confirmed the trust.
How long, O Lord, how long? Too long by half
Till men read, wondering, wedlock's epitaph.*

*Alice, an Adultery, vol. ii, p. 82.

Aleister Crowley is but editor* of these magnificent sonnets; let us now see how the ideas in his own poems correspond.

*The authorship, however, is acknowledged in vol. ii, which was published after this chapter was written.

In the case of Nina, we have already seen that a good heart can throb in a lewd little breast, and can overcome all except a false society; which overwhelms it not by bravery, or craft, or even by cunning, but by the dull and stunning power of a leaden club. In the "Honourable Adulterers" we find a poem strikingly reminiscent of "Alice," a boundless, and what Ydgrunites would call "an illicit love," but more, a well-aimed shaft against the horrors of the social marriage tie, which is denominated as "The devilish circle of the fiery ring," which, as their love grew, "Became one moment like a little thing."

If I am right, the heart of this poem bleeds generous indignation against the marriage bond. We read:

> It was no wonder when the second day
> Showed me a city on the desert way,
> Whose brazen gates were open, where within
> I saw a statue for a sign of sin,
> And saw the people come to it and pray,
> Before its mouth set open for a gin.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 99.

Before this statue he is brought; her bronze and chilly loins are girded with the sacred gold of lust, her lips are lecherous and large, inviting to kiss:

> But somehow blood was black upon them; blood
> In stains and clots and splashes; and the mud

Trampled around her by the souls that knelt,
Worshipping where her false lewd body dwelt,
Was dark and hateful; and a sleepy flood
Trickled therefrom as magic gums that melt.*1.

. . . . . .

I am a man, nor fear to drain the bowl.*2.

. . . . . .

Now some old devil, dead no doubt and damned,
But living in her life, had wisely crammed
    Her fierce bronze throat with such a foul device
    As made her belly yearn for sacrifice.
She leered like love on me, and smiled, and shammed,
    And did not pity for all her breast of spice.*3.

*1. Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic. vol. i, p. 99.
*2. Ibid. vol. i, p. 100.
*3. Ibid. vol. i, p. 100.

Man though he was, he is thrust into her Moloch arms. When lo! a miracle! he is plucked by his own fearlessness from the horrid maw, "Free, where the blood of other men is wet," mingling in life till "ten thousand little loves were brought to birth"; then came the one woman who looked so deeply in his eyes till hers grew, shielding the sun, as a purple ring:

Then in the uttermost profound I saw
The veil of Love's unalterable law
    Lifted, and in the shadow far behind
    Dim and divine, within the shadow blind
My own love's face most amorously draw
    Out of the deep toward my cloudy mind.

O suddenly I felt a kiss enclose
My whole live body, as a rich red rose

Folding its sweetness round the honey-bee!
I felt a perfect soul embracing me,
And in my spirit like a river flows
A passion like the passion of the sea.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic. vol. i, p. 100.

So ends the first part of this mystical and symbolic poem, In the second part the Queen speaks, her love is similar to that of "Alice," if not sublimer: "I was so glad he loved enough to go" – "my arms could never have released his neck." The King dies and soon the Queen also. Love is symbolized in this poem in its higher form as above death. She seeks and finds "There is no sin."

And I? I knew not anything, but know
We are still silent, and united so,
And all our being spells one vast To Be,
A passion like the passion of the sea.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic. vol. i, p. 101.

Besides the freedom of lovers, Aleister Crowley advocates the freedom of the children of love; he does not visit the sins of the fathers on the children, as conventionality cruelly does. Though he is a firm believer in the chain of cause and effect as is strongly shown in "The Mother's Tragedy," he does not carry it further into the realms of Biblical vice. The children of what is known as an illicit love – which in most cases is true free love – have time after time proved themselves better and greater than those engendered in the unimpassioned embrace of the marriage-bed. Shakespeare brings this point out forcibly in King Lear, when Edmund speaks as follows:

…why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?

Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween asleep and wake?

In "Jephthah" we find an almost identical rendering of the above, concerning the children of free love:

Turn not thy face from us in wrath, for we
Are thine own father's children, and his loins
With double fervour gat a double flower;
And we indeed were born of drudging wives,
Pale spouses whom his heart despised, but thou
Wast of a fairer face and brighter eyes,
And limbs more amorous assuaged thy sire;
And fuller blood of his is tingling thus
Now in thy veins indignant at our sin.*

*Jephthah, vol. i, pp. 70, 71.

Thus we find free love is the great, pure, and only true love. Its name has been soiled and fouled by the feculencies of Holywell Street, its celebration misunderstood and prostituted by the Church, and its life threatened and blackguardized by the Law. But wherever two hearts beat in unison, there is its abode, North or South, East or West, it knows no locality, no time, no space; for it is love sublime, eternal, inscrutable; its greatest foe is Lust, and the most fearful form of lust is Marriage: *Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder*.

We have already seen marriage described in "The Honourable Adulterers" and in "The Star and the Garter"; we get a pregnant glimpse of it again in the one speech, "A bargain's a bargain, a thousand a year and a flat in Mayfair are better than Farmer Tyson's

butter and eggs."*1. In these few words are practically summed up the raison d'être of all *mariages de convenance*. The affluent marry out of sensuality, or to engender sons to inherit their selfishness, the middle orders trot their daughters round the London ball-rooms just as strumpets fall in to the cry of *descendez, mesdemoiselles*! Women marry for title, clothing, shelter, and food; men because they think it is cheaper to keep a cow, and once and for all have done with it, than to be constantly running round the corner for a penny-worth of milk; and the lower stratum – the blesséd poor – spend most of their lives in the act of engendering the *elite* of heaven and the scum of this earth, "mere shells, husks of the golden wheat that might grow even here,"*2. if it were not for our prudery, our religion, and our laws.

*1. Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 42.
*2. The Poem, vol., i, p. 57.

Percy – the Percy of "The Poem," and not of "Why Jesus Wept," is optimistic enough concerning that vast army of unsexed women who are degraded by want of food and surfeit of marriage; for it is to these two that their existence as such is chiefly due. If wives were a success, man would not want to go neighing after other women; if food were not so expensive, women would not sell their bodies for offal. Vaughan says to him, pointing to a prostitute, "Do you find beauty in her?" to which Percy answers: "No, but I see in her history a poem, to which I trust that God will write an end!"* And so the God, who is eternal Love at present does – in the Lock Hospital or over Waterloo Bridge. Nevertheless there is a great truth hidden in this line. The truth that love shall triumph over mind, or rather that both shall agree. If the carnal act is foul, it is then as foul in the palace as in the brothel: mere prostitution of the body need not necessarily mean a similar prostitution of the mind, as we saw in the "Tale of Archais." Every woman's body is as free a possession of her own as that of every man is of his own, and what is disgraceful to woman is equally disgraceful to man, and *vice versâ*. Law to be true must be just, and as

long as man wages war against woman for sins that he condones in himself, so long will vice reign supreme, so long will women prove themselves deceivers, harpyiæ and sirenes, let alone Eumenides. Most will recognize the following as the opening scene in Terence's "The Mother-in-Law," which play sums up the matter tersely enough:

*The Poem, vol., i, p. 58.

> *Philotis*. I' faith, Syra, you can find but very few lovers who prove constant to their mistresses. For instance, how often did this Pamphilus swear to Bacchis – how solemnly, so that anyone might have believed him – that he never would take home a wife so long as she lived. Well now, he is married.
>
> *Syra*. Therefore for that very reason, I earnestly both advise and entreat you to take pity upon no one, but plunder, fleece, and rend every man you lay hold of.
>
> *Philotis*. What! Hold no one exempt?
>
> *Syra*. No one; for not a single one of them, rest assured, comes to you without making up his mind, by means of his flatteries, to gratify his passion with you at the least possible expense. Will you not, pray, plot against them in return?
>
> *Philotis*. And yet, upon my faith, it is unfair to be the same to all.
>
> *Syra*. What! unfair to take revenge on your enemies? or for them to be caught in the very way they try to catch you? Alas! wretched me! why do not your age and beauty belong to me, or else these sentiments of mine to you?

So long as we mentally castrate ourselves, so long will this world remain a stew-pot of vice; for it is only when we have realized the ideal of Free Love, and have taken the matrix of prostitution and cut from it the gem which underlies all its gross vulgarity and sensuality, that we shall become initiates in the code of the Essential and

ameliorate our lot. To this poem indeed we trust, that God will write a fitting end.

If at one end of a sequence we find abuse, then at the other extremity we shall inevitably discover disuse; polarity is universal; hot, cold; good, bad, etc. This duality is in reality only apparent, there being no definite line of division. So in Love, if one system of Ethics tends towards abuse, then we may be certain that the reverse will be uselessly sterile, and that the only possible system to follow will as usual lie directly between these extremes, and in this case, in the region of Use. If now, supposing at one end of our pole we find Lust seated crimson as a rose, then at the other we shall find Chastity white as a lily.

This system of extremes has during the world's history exerted an overwhelming force on the will of man. Beholding a satyr he worshipped a virgin; feeling the ills of the flesh, he conceived the bliss of the soul. This diametric opposition, verging ever towards the extreme circumference of utility, has given and is giving birth to numerous world-wide systems and philosophies.

The taboos of the South Seas, the restrictions laid on widow-remarriage in India, the purdah of the Mussulman, the veil of the Vestal, the numerous accounts of Virgin-mothers, all find their origin in this idea. The laws of the Vedas, of Manu, of Buddha, the codes of Confucius and Lao-Tze, the Talmudic books of the Jews, and the Koran of the Mohamedans, all maintain its direct influence and restrictions; and in the West in the old mythologies of Teuton and Celt, in the old Norse sagas, more so in the Roman and Grecian law, and still more so on the Christian edicts of Constantine, Theodoric, Athalaric, and Justinian, and the innumerable codes of the Middle Ages: all of which growing one into the other have produced that truly revolting state of affairs belting the world with Lust. As every one of us has been bred on dead flesh, so every one of us passes

along our way spiritually encumbered with the dead bones of our ancestors' opinions; and living with them we die, only to add more mental tibias and spiritual metatarsals to the groaning back of the future.

In the Kingdom of Love these extremes gave birth to two forces, "Neronic Lust" and "Platonic Affection." From a heterogeneous mass of ics, ists, and ians, sprang the idea that there was an inherent evil in the culmination of the nuptial state; and out of it grew the preying vampirism of Paul. 'This inherent evil supposed to lie latent in matter, as opposed to the bliss of spirit, Crowley sets forth very forcibly in several of his poems. In "The Growth of God" we have most of the argument in the following lines:

> The Shapeless, racked with agony, that grew
> Into these phantom forms that change and shatter;
> The falling of the first toad-spotted dew;
> The first lewd heaving ecstasy of matter.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 178.

The idea grows still more powerfully in the next verse:

> I see all Nature claw and tear and bite,
> All hateful love and hideous: and the brood
> Misshapen, misbegotten out of spite;
> Lust after death; love in decrepitude.
> Thus, till the monster-birth of serpent-man
> Linked in corruption with the serpent-woman,
> Slavering in lust and pain – creation's ban.
> The horrible beginning of the human.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 198. (Also Tale of Archais.)

In Tannhäuser, which is an intensely psychologic drama, we find the Knight speaking thus to Venus:

> Ah, if pure love could grow material!
> There are pure women!

and this is her answer:

> There you make me laugh!
> Remember – I have known such. But besides
> You ask hot snow and leaden feather-flights!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 237.

Which contains a great truth, namely, that platonic love is no love at all. An affection it may be, but love it cannot be if it dare not see its form mirrored in the eyes of a loving woman. Its failure in the end is a certainty; certain ascetics may compel their wills to conquer their natures, but men as a whole cannot. Certain maniacs such as Origen may emasculate themselves for the Kingdom of God, but the great human masses will let the Kingdom of God go to the Devil, if a pretty pair of lips is in question. Not for long in any case can we change our natures, as the anchorites of the Libyan deserts only too fearfully proved; boiling with carnalities they feared to see their own mothers, and were even forbidden to keep in their possession animals of the female sex – O Stylites! they are now in heaven!

> How we clave together! How we strained caresses!
> How the swooning limbs sank fainting on the sward!
> For the fiery dart raged fiercer; in excesses
> Long restrained, it cried, "Behold I am the Lord!"*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 173.

Such is the ultimate end of platonic love. That it has many noble forms, that it sprang from the true abhorrence of the vile, cannot be denied; that its field of combat is an Aceldama, all this is true enough:

> …whose red banners beat
> Their radiant fire
> Into my shrivelled head, to wither Love's desire?*

*Aceldama, vol. i, p. 2.

but that it must die on the field of its choice is also most certain.

In "The Nameless Quest" and "Tannhäuser," we find represented this striving after a more spiritual and platonic ideal of love. In the former, questing for the ideal of his hopes, man falls tangled into the arms of the real; in the latter, entangled, he strives to tear away the meshes of his passion, and at length succeeds in releasing himself from the magic threads.

In "The Nameless Quest," Gereth is in love with the Queen, and the King calls on a knight to go on the Nameless Quest to a certain pillar which lies at the end of the road which leads from Human desire to Divine contentment; around it lie the bones of the "questing slain" unburied, unremembered, unconfessed; Gereth's name is cried aloud, and the King bids him God-speed, girding on him his own true sword, whilst the Queen draws from her finger a ring and places it on his. Then when he has left their presence he notices for the first time:

> There was no jewel in the ring she gave!

for it was the emblem of her total surrender:

> Oh my pure heart! Adulterous love began

So subtly to identify the man
With its own perfumed thoughts. So steals the grape
Into the furtive brain – a spirit shape
Kisses my spirit as no woman can.
I love her – yes; and I have no escape.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 188.

On the Quest he goes, ever tormented by the cry of the inner self, ever striving to overcome it.

Again the curséd cry: "What quest is this?"
Is it worth heaven in thy lover's kiss?
A queen, a queen, to kiss and never tire!
Thy queen, quick-breathing for your twin desire!"
I shudder, for the mystery of bliss;
I go, heart crying and a soul on fire!*1.
. . . . . .
Still, I stepped onward. Credit me so far!
The harlot had my soul: my will, the star!
Thus I went onward, as a man goes blind,
Into a torrent crowd of mine own kind;
Jostlers and hurried folk, and mad they are,
A million actions and a single mind.*2.

*1. The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 188.
*2. Ibid. vol. i, p. 189.

As he proceeds along his weary path, he feels a strengthening within him of the higher self, struggling against his desire, again and again every nerve in him cries, "halt": at last he reaches the land of lost ideals:

The plain is covered with a many dead.

Glisten white bone and salt-encrusted head,
Glazed eye imagined, of a crystal built.
And see! dark patches, as of murder spilt.
Ugh! "So my fellows of the quest are sped!
Thou shalt be with them: onward, if thou wilt!"*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 190.

He sees in the distance the pillar:

Quaintly shaped and hued,
It focussed all the sky and all the plain
To its own ugliness…*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 191.

and yet as he looked again he saw it in another form:

A shapeless truth took image in my brain.

Then from the centre of Eternity came a voice, "Tell thou the secret of the pillar." "Eternal Beauty, One and absolute!" flashes from his tongue. Again the voice asks, "Thou knowest me for Beauty! Canst thou bear the fuller vision?"

Then on my withered gaze that Beauty grew-
Rosy quintessence of alchemic dew!
The Self-informing Beauty! In my heart
The many were united: and I knew.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 191.

And yet:

I was wed
Unto the part and could not grasp the whole.

Thus, I was broken on the wheel of Truth.
Fled all the hope and purpose of my youth,
The high desire, the secret joy, the sin
That coiled its rainbow dragon scales within.
Hope's being, life's delight, time's eager tooth;
All, all are gone; the serpent sloughs his skin!

The quest is mine! Here ends mortality
In contemplating the eternal Thee.
Here, She is willing. Stands the Absolute
Reaching its arms toward me. I am mute,
I draw toward. Oh, suddenly I see
The treason-pledge, the royal prostitute.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 191.

Thus does he fail at the very threshold of his higher self. He hears echoing "Gereth, I am thine!" And falling back on his purpose, the illusions of spirit and mind dissolve to the desolate cry of "Unready." Haggard and worn, back to the court he wends his weary way, back to the King, back to his self's desire; and there, taunted by the husband of the mistress he had denied himself in vain, stung with insult and vile word, he slays him:

Stark dead. The queen – I hate the name of her!
So grew the mustard-seed, one moment's lust.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 192.

Wounded himself, he is nursed back to life by the wife of his adversary.

Ah God! she won that most reluctant breath
Out of corruption: love! ah! love is strong!
What waters quench it? King Shalomeh saith.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 192.

Thus failed the Quest, as all quests against love must inevitably fail. A man who truly loves a woman loves her so intensely that all else is as naught; she grows before him gigantic through the mist of his desire, swallowing him up in the affinity of her being. The King's sword was of little use; the pillar of the Higher Self lay in the salt-encrusted plains, saline with the tears and sobs of failure; the ring emblematic of surrender, without beginning or end, was emblematic also of the eternality of love, that circling girdle of the world.

In "Tannhäuser" we have a similar idea, though reversed; for Tannhäuser enmeshed in the web of the Venusberg, strives against the sensual to gain a spiritual victory; whilst in "The Nameless Quest" the knight, fearful of falling in the sensual slough, seeks, and loses his straight way in the spiritual desert. Thus, as in the latter case, the striving against the desire of a pure love leads to an almost certain failure, so in the former, when sunk deep in the mud of an impure affection, even if released from its circling arms, worldly mercy is as cold to him who has plunged through the Cytherean sea as a winter in Gaul. Thus Ignorance has bound, fettered, and manacled love to the dingy fornices of the lupanar. Once sink, and instead of extending a helping hand, your head is thrust for a second and third time beneath the waters of affliction by the hands of lechers and louts.

The drama entitled "Tannhäuser" is (as the author states in his preface) almost identical with "The Pilgrim's Progress." It is an intricate mass of psychology and philosophy closely interwoven with

a moral – which we shall see more fully developed when touching upon the philosophy of Aleister Crowley – and it is this: that Happiness, Wisdom, Knowledge, and at length Perfection, can no more be gained by solely travelling along the direct and spotless road of Virtue, than man can be evolved from the primal protoplasmic jelly without countless generations of weeping and tortured life. The path of Vice we must tread before we can find the high road of Virtue, and Vice we must wed before we can open the gates of a more perfect understanding. The great Commandment is: "Live in the midst of Vice; but heed that Vice doth not live in thy midst."*

**Vide* Hosea.

"God is the Complex and the Protoplast." And so are we; entwined within us, as in the poem of Tannhäuser, lie the countless threads of inherited tendencies. To suspend our soul on one alone leads only to utter destruction; to climb to heaven we must grasp the whole tangled skein of our experiences and mount from Malkuth to Kether through the gates of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding. That we shall be pestered on our way by swarms of human blow-flies, that we shall tread on the scorpions of religion, the toads of society, and the blind-worms of the law; that around us will whirl the vampires of the past, the kites of the present, the succubi of the future, is certain enough; as a shrieking mass of hideous animosity they will conglobe around us, deafening us with the expletives of earth, blinding us with the fumes of hell, and rendering us insane with the inanities of heaven:

> This were my guerdon: to fade utterly
> Into the rose-heart of that sanguine vase,
> And lose my purpose in its silent sea,
> And lose my life, and find my life, and pass
> Up to the sea that is as molten glass.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 227.

Nirvana. The drowning of self in eternity. Yet if the mind returned not from its abode, and ever rested with God, all would run smoothly enough; but such a possibility is too transcendental to be actual. If it were,

> Then this dull house of gold and iron and clay
> Is happy also – 'tis an easy way!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 227.

But this cannot be. The dice are in God's lap, and in him alone rests the Ultimate goal. In "Tannhäuser" we find the great dual power of redemption, the interminglings of the powers of Virtue and Vice. In him, as in the hero of "The Nameless Quest," they wage an eternal contest, it not being till he has passed through the Venusberg of mental and physical lust, that he attains the graal of his hopes and aspirations:

> O God, Thy blinding beauty, and the light
> Shed from Thy shoulders, and the golden night
> Of mingling fire, and stars and roses swart
> In the long flame of hair that leaps athwart,
> Live in each tingling gossamer! Dread eyes!
> Each flings its arrow of sharp sacrifice,
> Eating me up with poison! I am hurled
> Far through the vaporous confines of the world
> With agony of sundering sense, beholding
> Thy mighty flower, blood-colored death, unfolding!
> Lithe limbs and supple shoulders and lips curled,
> Curled out to draw me to their monstrous world!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 228.

Tannhäuser now enters the palace of the great queen Venus, the false Isis,

> Life! Life! This Kiss! Draw in thy breath! To me!
> To me!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 229.

He is lost!

Act II opens with two beautiful songs. Venus sings the praise of spring and summer, and Tannhäuser that of autumn and winter. He finds the latter chill season the best:

> But best is grim December,
> The Goatish God his power;
> The Satyr blows the ember,
> And pain is passion's flower;
> When blood drips over kisses,
> And madness sobs through wine—
> Ah mine!—
> The snake starts up and hisses
> And strikes and – I am thine!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 230.

In the above we still find the now almost dead echo of his higher self, yet Venus entices him on, comparing their fierce lust to the lukewarm affection of those little lovers who strip their maidens bare, "And find them – naked! Poor and pitiful!" directly the glamour of their foolish honeymoon has tarnished. His uneasiness is soon dispelled: "Come, in this sweet abandonment of self" – whispers the singing voice of Venus, and so following he sings:

Come, love, and kiss my shoulders! Sleepy lies
The tinted bosom whence its fire flies,
The breathing life of thee, and swoons, and sighs,
And dies!
None but the dead can know the worth of love!
. . . . . .
Come, love, thy lips, curved hollow as the moon's!
Bring me thy kisses, for the seawind tunes,
The song that soars, and reads the starry runes,
And swoons!
None but the dead can tune the lyre of love!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 234.

Such are two out of these six superb lyrical verses.

Tannhäuser sleeps. "None but the dead can know the worth of love!" None but the dead, dead to all else. To love is to die and be born again in another world, to slough the skin of the terrene and be robed in all the supernal glory of the celestial. Love changes as Death, it effaces the past, it brightens the future, beautifies as the hand of some mystic artist, all misery, all sorrow, all woe, overwhelming, illimitable.

Now we see the horrid form of his lower self, which he once strove to cast off, bending over him; the Venus of his body rises lecherous over the pure Isis of his soul, the carnal lusting over the Spiritual, as Iago slavered over Desdemona.

Come! ye my serpents, warp his body round
With your entangling leprosy! And me,
Let me assume the belovéd limber shape,
The crested head, the jewelled eyes of death,

And sinuous sinewy glitter of serpenthood,
That I may look once more into his face,
And, kissing, kill him! Thus to hold him fast,
Drawing his human spirit into mine
For strength, for life, for poison! Ah, my God!
These pangs, these torments! See! the sleeper wakes!
I am triumphant! For he reaches out
The sleepy arms, and turns the drowsy head
To catch the dew dissolving of my lip.
Wake, lover, wake! Thy Venus waits for thee!
Draw back, look, hunger! —and thy mouth is mine!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i. p. 234.

The vision of Elizabeth, the loved one of his boyhood – his pure ideal – rises before him.

…so delicate and frail,
Far, white, and lonely as the coldest star
Set beyond gaze of any eye but God's.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i. p. 236.

And he tells Venus of her. To which she answers:

Thine old desire
Was just to touch the mere impalpable.
To formulate the formless…*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i. p. 237.

Again Tannhäuser bursts into song, one of those magnificent lyrics, flashing like a ruby, warm and flaming in the glowing gold of this drama. And thus does his song end:

Whose long-drawn curse runs venom in my veins?
What dragon spouse consumes me with her breath?
What passionate hatred, what infernal pains,
Mixed with thy being in the womb of Death?
Blistering fire runs.
Scorching, terrific suns,
Through body and soul in this abominable
Marriage of demon power
Subtle and strong and sour,
A draught of ichor of the veins of Hell!
Curses leap leprous, epicene, unclean,
The soul of the obscene
Incarnate in the spirit: and above
Hangs Sin, vast vampire, the corrupt, that swings
Her unredeeming wings
Over the world, and flaps, for lust of Death – and Love!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i. p. 239.

"Kill me," cries Tannhäuser. "In the kiss," answers Venus: thus ends Act II.

Act III opens a different scene. The outer materiality of body is all but sated, the starved soul within cries for sustenance; he murmurs "Elizabeth," and then wakes strong through her perfection. Venus still entices, but her power has vanished, and at the name of "Ave Maria!" the exorcism entangled round the souls of the victims of the Venusberg vanishes in a vast roll of thunder and amidst the fierce flashes of dazzling lightning which rush through the leaden sky rending the depths of despair. Tannhäuser is released from his bondage, and the shackles of lust fall from his soul; he is free, and kneeling by a Calvary.

Act IV again brings our knight before the gaze of the world. He has eaten of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil, and has become as a god. He wends his way to the Court of the Landgrave and there meets Elizabeth, "His far-off baby-love," as Venus called her, and whispers to himself, "Cannot purity be brought to know aught but itself?" Herein lies the note of his misfortunes. Purity was but ignorance, and Tannhäuser was now a god, knowing both good and evil:

> Lo!
> Man is made one with God, an equal soul.
> For he shall know
> The harmony, the oneness of the Whole.
> This was my purpose.
> . . . . . .
> Remains the life of earth, which is but hell,
> Destiny's web, and my immense despair.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 253.

And this despair – as sorrow so frequently does – creates in him a deep cynical disgust for the world:

> Man, a bad joke; and God, mere epigram!
> If we must come to that. And likewise love.*1.
>
> Only a donkey fastened to a post
> Moves in a circle.*2.

*1. Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 253.
*2. *Ibid*, vol. i, p. 254.

He taunts them, insults God; and tells all, shouting it far and broad, that his road was the road of the Mount of Venus, the road of Lust, the fiery baptism of Vice which impels Virtue. Then the silence breaks, the foul mob of the Self-sufficient, the spawn of ignorance, and the slime of superstition, let loose their hell-hound voices—fiend! atheist! devil! are hurled at his head; kill him! Crucify him! death! death! But Tannhäuser stands a colossus amid the bursting bubbles of this Stygian mire of corruption, and turning to the Landgrave he says:

> Will they answer you?
> My arm is weary as your souls are not
> Of beastliness: I have drawn my father's sword.
> Hard as your virtue is the easy sort,
> Heavy to handle as your loves are light,
> Smooth as your lies, and sharper than your hates!
> I know you! Cowards to the very bone!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 257.

And he drives them out. To Rome he goes, symbolic of the world's opinion, and relates truthfully his sojourn in the Venusberg, and for telling the truth he is execrated by the Pope:

> So he
> Cried out upon me, "Till this barren staff
> Take life, and bud, and blossom, and bear fruit,
> And shed sweet scent – so long God casteth thee
> Out from His Glory!"*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 260.

When lo! – in the very moment of his supreme despair, his Genius mysteriously manifests, and "darting long rugged fingers and deep eyes" reaches to the sceptre with his word and will:

> Buds, roses, blossoms! Lilies of the Light!
> Bloom, bloom, the fragrance shed upon the air!
> Out flames the miracle of life and love!
> Out, out the lights! Flame, flame, the rushing storm!
> Darkness and death, and glory in my soul!
> Swept, swept away are pope and cardinal,
> Palace and city! There I lay beneath
> The golden roof of the eternal stars,
> Borne upon some irremeable sea
> That glowed with most internal brilliance;*1.
> . . . . . .
> And verily
> My life was borne on the dark stream of death
> Down whirling aeons, linked abysses, columns
> Built of essential time. And lo! the light
> Shed from Her shoulders whom I dimly saw;
> Crowned with twelve stars and hornéd as the moon;
> Clothed with a sun to which the sun of earth
> Were tinsel; and the moon was at Her feet—
> A moon whose brilliance breaks the sword of song
> Into a million fragments; so transcends
> Music, that starlight-sandalled majesty!
> Then – shall I contemplate the face of Her?
> O Nature! Self-begotten! Spouse of God,
> The Glory of thy Countenance unveiled!
> Thy face, O mother! Splendour of the Gods!
> Behold! amid the glory of her hair
> And light shed over from the crown thereof,
> Wonderful eyes less passionate than Peace
> That wept! That wept! O mystery of Love!

Clasping my hands upon the scarlet rose
That flamed upon my bosom, the keen thorns
Pierced me and slew! My spirit was withdrawn
Into Her godhead, and my soul made One
With the Great Sorrow of the Universe,
The Love of Isis! Then I fell away
Into some old mysterious abyss
Rolling between the heights of starry space;
Flaming above, beyond the Tomb of Time,
Blending the darkness into the profound
Chasms of matter – so I fell away
Through many strange eternities of Space,
Limitless fields of Time…*2.

*1. Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 261.
*2. *Ibid*.

Such is the ecstatic rapture of Tannhäuser, in which he loses all perception of earthly love in the intoxication of the divine:

Were it not only that the selflessness
That fills me now, forbids the personal,
Casts out the individual, and weeps on
For the united sorrow of all things.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 261.

And such is the divine love to which we all must attain, "For the united sorrow of all things."

III

The Chapter known as

The Harlot

In which chapter it is related how she decked and betired her worn carrion, and how she standeth at the corners by the parting of the ways, beguiling those who are simple in mind and virtuous, and how she feasteth on their innocence and converteth all she eateth into dung.

The Harlot

IN that masterpiece "Tannhäuser," without any request whatsoever, and without any idiotic introduction, the song of an unknown minstrel breaks unheralded on the astonished ears of the Landgrave's Court:

> Tender the phrase, and faint the melody,
> When poets praise a maiden's purity;
> Platitude linked to imbecility.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 249.

Murmurs of surprise arise, but it is not till he sings,

> As 'mongst spring's sprigs sprouts sunshine's constant face;
> Or as a mill grinds on, with steady pace;
> So sprouts, so grinds, the unblushing commonplace.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 249.

that the murmurs break into an indignant uproar. Insolent scoundrel, rude upstart, abusing our ears with your insults! Crucify him! boycott him! cut him!

The Landgrave's society was shocked by that rude minstrel, and our society is no doubt shocked by the satire of Aleister Crowley. On our book-shelves his works stand literary pickled birches, to administer to our mental ultimatums a corrective dose. A good purgative is an excellent thing taken now and again, it keeps both the bowels free

and the mind clear, and Mrs. Grundy is nothing if she be not constipated.

"Thou poisonous bitch," says Crowley, when be addresses a Spenserian verse to Mrs. Sally G—d, "The gawk and dowdy with the long grey teeth," who jumps to conclusion, instant, out of hand, that: "There is some nasty secret underneath."*1. If Mrs. G—d, or Mrs. Grundy, should happen to peruse this verse in "Why Jesus Wept," she might not be overpleased. If she perused it at all, the violent Cascarian properties of this social drama would probably prove as efficacious as a No. 9 would to the hide-bound bowels of Mr. Atkins. Due invitation is also made, and the following should even entice her prudish cerebellum:

> But stow your prudery, wives and mothers,
> You know as much muck as – those others!
> Your modest homes are dull; you need me!
> Don't let your husbands know; but – read me!*2.

*1. Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 24.
*2. Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 22. Cf. Martial, Epigrams, XI. 16:

> Erubuit, posuitque meum Lucretia librum,
> Sed coram Bruto; Brute, recede, leget.

In this extraordinary volume, which seems to be the child of a promise made to Mr. Chesterton in "The Sword of Song," we find a deeply cynical satire castigating with no little severity the menial servility of modern society, as scathing as a Beverland, as cynical as a Carlyle, and as satirical as a Butler.

Its great theme is the contest "of age and sense with flatulence and youth." We have already shaken hands with Percy, Molly, and Lady Baird (Angela); we have still to be introduced to Lord Glenstrae. The first two form the flatulent element, the latter two the constipated

substance of this drama. Angela, the female quantity; Glenstrae the male: both are outwardly highly moral; both are ready to lay their morality aside with skirt and shirt when opportunity should offer.

When Percy fell in love with Molly, we saw how Lady Angela enticed him from her by her maturer wisdom. Utterly false, the social hag of sixty totally eclipses the girl of sixteen; she backs her knowledge against the latter's innocence, and wins in a canter. So much for morality.

A woman is only as old as she feels; and grey hairs do not count so long as they can be counted; such was the innocence of our early Victorian grandmothers. Nowadays a woman is as young in manner as she is old in years; and as for hair ask the coiffeurs. As cats grow cantankerous in old age, so do women, and Angela is a good example of one of the many vicious, crafty, and crabbed old vixens who monopolize society. When she hears Percy murmur words of love to Molly, she hisses:

> Ah! if there were a devil to buy souls,
> Or if I had not sold mine! Quick bargain, God!
> Hell catch the jade! Blister her fat red cheeks!
> Rot her snub nose! Poison devour her guts!
> Wither her fresh clean face with old grey scabs,
> And venomous ulcers gnaw the baby breasts!*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 30.

Most charitable! But such is the Kingdom of Society.

"Angela" is a lovely name (so thinks inexperienced Percy), and correspondingly the owner must have a lovely nature; and when he has discovered what an abyss yawns between "girl" and "village

girl" he throws himself into the arms of the lovely Angela and listens to her murmuring sighs as she stumbles:

> Ay, love, it is to feel your strength support me! [*Aside.*
> Will the doctors never catch up with the coiffeurs?*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 35.

Percy, the now distraught lover of Angela, turns to his first moony love, and withdrawing his heart proffers her his purse:

> Buy yourself a pretty hat!
> Forget my pretty speeches!*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 38. – "My mind lay there as exhausted as my body! He covered my blushes by the offer of a tiny remuneration." —*Beverland*, p. 405.

"If your heart were as big as your feet, you would have given me five francs instead of five sous." —*Frou-Frou*.

The above needs no comment. Most men will understand it well enough; for there are a hundred thousand women in London who need no editor's appendix or translator's footnote.

> *Enter* GLENSTRAE.
> (To conceive him asketh not
> Imagination's waistcoat buttons undone!
> Any old gentleman in any club in London.)*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 38.

Meeting Molly he asks her for a glass of milk, and comforts her on hearing that she intends going into service, saying: "And so you shall, my dear, so you shall. Come and live with my wife *as her companion*, and we will try and find your lover for you. No doubt the

arts of this – er – designing female will soon lose their power – there, there, no thanks, I beg! I never could bear to see a pretty wench cry – there, there!"* We have now thoroughly grasped the quality of the male element, and the two together, the harlot and the lecher, produce the social code and seven-eighths of the social woes.

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 39. Vide, The Martyrs of Hell's Highway.

"Must I, must I? Oh, sir, have pity!" sobs the poor disillusionized Molly, as the male element who has enjoyed her, now shoves her aside "with the dishes and the wine," a thousand a year, and a flat in Mayfair – quite a lucky girl!

Two years later a woman shouts out, "Won't you come with me, ducky?" This is Molly; a morphia-maniac also appears – this is Percy. Glenstrae is now the President of the Children's Special Service Mission – suffer the little children, etc. And Angela the head of a Zenana Mission. "Think of the poor heathen kept in such terrible seclusion!" The end is as farcical as Society herself. Angela is suffocated in sulphuric acid whilst washing off her enamel, and Glenstrae sawn into thirty-eight pieces whilst playing with little children, by stumbling against a circular saw.

"His Lordship was very fond of children, as you may know. It seems he was pursuing – it is, I am told, an innocent child's game! – one of the factory hands; and – he stumbled."*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 48.

Molly is pronounced *virgo intacta* by twenty-three eminent physicians,*1. and marries Percy who is of course quite reformed.*2.

> Farewell, you filthy-minded people!
> I know a stable from a steeple.

Farewell, my decent-minded friends!
I know arc lights from candle ends.
Farewell! a poet begs your alms,
Will walk awhile among the palms.
An honest love, a loyal kiss,
Can show him better worlds than this;
Nor will he come again to yours
While he knows champak-stars from sewers.*3

*1. Twenty-three Sanhedrin judges.
*2. The satire is against the belief that conversion can put the clock back.
*3. Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 50.

Aleister Crowley's estimate of society is certainly not a very high one, and more especially so when he takes into consideration the *pudibonderie* of the English. Society is but a gaping and toothed gin, as he well shows in "The Honourable Adulterers" where women, the frailer sex, are the unfortunate victims. Man made God, and God made woman out of one of man's wretched little ribs. Regardless of manners, man sucks the wretched little bone as he would the leg of a chicken, tears off the flesh and casts it into the bin. The masses are but sheep, following the bell-wether convention; deprive them of their initial, and they become neither lambs nor tigers but merely asses. Ahinoam in "Jephthah" well described them when he addressed the assembled multitude as:

Ye are as children… I never hear your voice but know
Some geese are gabbling.*

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 81.

Or again, in "The Nameless Quest,"

God's heart! the antics, as they toil and shove!

One grabs a coin, one life, another love.
All shriek.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 189.

Cora Vavasour made a pretty just estimate of society when she called its stulti "prurient licksores of society," for that is exactly what they are; when poor, squalid; when rich, vulgar; the men fond of kitchen-maids, and the women painted and cosmeticized, not only to hide the ravages of debauchery, but to catch new lovers; the boys a breed of cads, and the girls a breed of prudes.

The following is Crowley's estimate of the greatest nation on earth:

O England! England, mighty England falls!
. . . . . .
Her days of wealth and majesty are done:
Men trample her for mire!*

*Carmen Saeculare, vol. i, p. 215.

and for her eldest daughter, America, he also has but scant praise,

Thou heart of coin beneath a brazen breast!
Rotten republic, prostitute of gain!*

*Carmen Saeculare, vol. i, p. 217.

Wealth and luxury are her curse, as they are everywhere else:

The politician and the millionaire
Regain maternal dung.*

*Carmen Saeculare, vol. i, p. 217.

Nevertheless in a patriotic poem entitled "An Appeal to the American Republic," he strongly urges union between Great Britain and the United States.

> That friendship and dominion shall be wrought
> Out of the womb of thought,
> And all the bygone days be held as things of nought.*1.
> . . . . . .
> Are we not weary of the fangéd pen?
> Are we not friends, and men?
> Let us look frankly face to face – and quarrel then!*2.

*1. An Appeal to the American Republic, vol. i, p. 137.

*2. *Ibid*, vol. i, p. 139.

Strongly advocating fraternity between the two great nations, he vehemently deprecates "The hireling quillmen and the jingo crowd."

In a poem called "A Valentine" in "Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic" – though a footnote winks, "nothing more; be it well remembered!" – we find embedded in a slight verse of four lines the nucleus of all true patriotism, greater than power, wealth, or dominion, and that is motherhood:

> Fiercer desires may cast away
> All things most good;
> A people may forget to-day
> Their motherhood.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 121.

This is the condition of the England of to-day: "O England! England, mighty England falls!" because she no longer knows how to bear

Englishmen. Wealth cries for luxury, and luxury sniffs at the hem of lust, and lust rises o'er us a vampire kite to drink dry the blood of our veins.

The two great ideals of our country, as Geoffrey Mortimer rightly says, are the commercial, and the voluptuous.* Every man striving against his brother, struggling and elbowing his way through the seething crowds of human life to satisfy his own personal lusts.

*Blight of Respectability, p. 110.

Gentility has become the lowest plane of mental degradation, and so as the monde sinks in this social earthquake does the demi-monde rise. Phryne trips lightly to-day down Piccadilly, bringing with her no little of the beauties of Praxiteles, and the craft of Apelles. We see her no longer the draggle-tailed prostitute of the more eminently Christian centuries, but as a Venus Anadyomene rising from the sea of human corruption. It was Phryne who uttered those memorable words over the ruins of Thebes: "*Alexander diruit, sed meretrix Phryne refecit*"; and it is now Alice and Rosie, who are uttering them over the ruins of the temple of Vesta. Thais cajoled Alexander into burning the royal palace of Persepolis, and after his death married Ptolemy, King of Egypt; and was it not at the feet of Lais that such men as Demosthenes and Diogenes were to be found? Was it not also Catullus who sang to the fickle Lesbia:

> Give me kisses thousand fold,
> Add to them a hundred more;
> Other thousands still be told,
> Other hundreds o'er and o'er.

And Propertius to the wayward Cynthia:

> Cynthia's unsnaring eyes my bondage tied:

Ah wretch! no loves, till then, had touched my breast,
Love bent to earth these looks of steadfast pride,
And on my neck his foot triumphant press'd.

So it is to-day. Conventionalism is passing along its way chaotic and disordered. Mutinus is worshipped at every street corner, and the goat of Mendes slavers over the revellers as they wend their way home with their Gitons and Messalinas.

"The decay of a people, as well as a family, begins with the preponderance of selfishness,"*1. so says Max Nordau; and similarly Paul Carus writes, "We know of no decline of any nation on earth, unless it was preceded by an intellectual and moral rottenness, which took the shape of some negative creed or scepticism, teaching the maxim that man lives for the pleasure of living, and that the purpose of our life is merely to enjoy ourselves."*2. Even as early as the middle of the seventeenth century, Adrian Beverland in his *Justinianœi de stolatae Virginitatis* [*sic*] noticed this social collapse: "dum puellas nostrates adeo verecundiam suam perfricta fronte excutiant, ut a lupis, tremula clune extentoque collo saltantibus, vix discerni possint."*3. When the rich approach the poor, "altera manu fert panem, penem ostentat altera." Such is another Pantagruelism of Beverland, crude yet to the point. "The girl who of her own accord presents herself to student, soldier or artist, is considered, by Jove! to give a headlong consent to debauchery."*4. So we see that whilst the upper classes are prostituting themselves for social position, rank, and riches, the lower are doing so for a few wretched coins; and the difference? One eats bread, and the other bread and butter. The "unco gude" thrive and heap execrations on the "unco bad." In "Oracles," Crowley states this with the straightforwardness of a Burns:

What fierce temptations might not lovers bring
In London's wicked city?

Perhaps you might yourself have one wee fling,
If you were pretty.

What might not hard starvation drive you to,
With Death so near and sure?
Perhaps it might drive even virtuous you,
If you were poor.*5.

*1. Conventional Lies. Max Nordau.
*2. Fundamental Problems, p. vii.
*3. Beverland, 238.
*4. *Ibid*. 414.
*5. Oracles, vol. ii, p. 5.

And in "Orpheus" he well describes the social trinity:

Nay! virtue is the devil's name for vice,
And all your righteousness is filthy rags
Wherein ye strut, and hide the one base thought.
To mask the truth, to worship, to forget;
These three are one.*

*Orpheus, vol. iii, p. 208.

The moral character of a nation is its true capital, and the two great laws of existence are – "The struggle for Life," and "The struggle for the Ideal," if then the ideal is low, the capital is also wanting, and moral bankruptcy is at hand.

It has been said,

Donna ociosa non può esser virtuossa.
(A woman of leisure cannot be virtuous.)

Which is very true, and neither can a nation. The present ages are peopled with fiends and fools, living outwardly in precadian innocence, but inwardly in all the knowledge of the cities of the plains. The fiend crawls in the slimy dark, and the fool pulls the white sheets of credulity over his head, and like the gaby ostrich chuckles: "I can't see them, they can't see me" – he forgets his odour. Crowley has torn the veil of mock-modesty from off the face of Pseudo-morality, leaving her as bare and hideous to the gaze as the face of the prophet of Khorassan. He has seized the social harlot and hurled her from her throne; has forced open her jaws, and administered a sharp emetic, a mental purgative, a rouser! Let us hope it will clean her out, and do her good.

IV

The Chapter known as

The Mother

In which chapter it is related how Our Lady was
brought to bed of a rose; and how she planted it
in the garden of her heart, and how it grew and
flourished in divers fashions. And how some-
times it appears as white, and at others
as red, and yet still at others both
red and white together, so that
the most wise were sore
perplexed to tell which
was the colour
proper to it.

The Mother

OUT of the countless thousands who tread the slippery and perilous paths of the lower self Tannhäuser was one of the very few who emerged from its clammy darkness purified and sanctified, to soar resplendent into the sunny realms of the higher self; nor did he rest, but entranced in the immensity of hope, rushing on, whirling through the abyss of time and space, he ultimately lost self in the rapture of Nirvana. Again, in others so subtle is the psychology of sense that this hysterical clinging to the Chaste often reacts, hurling its unfortunate aspirant into the arms of Lubentina. The lust after God and the lust after man are near akin. A woman crossed in love and debarred from enjoying the sweet embraces of her lover, will embrace in his stead the sour feet of her God. Similarly, Magdalene, having passionately sought love, and having lost the skein of her desires in the labyrinthine byways of lust, threw her weeping form at the feet of Him in whom she found the ideal of her affection, washing those dusty feet with her tears, and drying them with the long tresses of her hair, still perfumed with the kisses of a thousand lovers. Jesus Christ and John Smith are very nearly related, and a woman who is capable of loving one is also capable of loving the other. Flaubert finely pictures this when he represents Madame Bovary, kneeling at her prie-dieu and addressing to her Lord the same sweet words she had formerly murmured to her lover in the effusions of adultery. So it often happens that the most spiritual are at heart the most passionate. Passion and Religion are the divine Dioscuri, children of Nemesis.

Man, when God became too intangible, too magnificent to approach, conceived a mediator. Jahveh, surrounded by howling beasts and

moulting angels, fenced in by thunder and lightning, was quite cut off from the simple minds of the Suburra, so Christ in those purlieus was manufactured; but He in His turn grew exaltedly dim, magnified as the mist of ages crept around Him, and when romantic love was born, man being no longer able to worship man, enthroned the spotless Virgin in his stead; for in his heart still lingered the sea-born form of Aphrodite, and on his lips the warm kisses of the Cytheræn goddess, Philommedis, Basilea, Isis, or Astarte, call her what you will, of passionate Love. So Christ was enthroned amongst the gods, and His tender mother, the ever chaste Virgin, set on the humbler throne over the destiny of men's hearts; yet awake, the actual man loses the ideals of his dreaming hours, straining to his heart the form of her whom he loves best on earth, deserting his heavenly bride for his earthly spouse. Such is the duality of love – the mundane and the celestial.

Which nations now are the most passionate, the man-worshippers or the woman-worshippers? the latter, and it is for this reason that I included Tannhäuser in the first part of this essay, rather than in the second, dealing with the philosophy of Aleister Crowley. It is this spiritual exaltation, curious as it may seem, which so often links the pure true love to the foul false love. Love of man and woman is normal, love of man and woman for God is abnormal, and the abnormal in its turn breeds the lustful, whether the abnormality lies in the twists of the mind or the aberrations of the soul. Amnon lusted after Tamar, he was a mental monster; Ezekiel devoured dung, he was a spiritual abortion.

That a passionate nature is necessarily a lustful one, is often no more the case than that a lustful one need necessarily be passionate; that lust as well as passion often inhabit the same mind is true enough, and that its forms are monstrous must be apparent to all students of sexual psychology; as the cold-blooded lust of the lecher, who can only find stimulation for his gross lecheries in the horrors of a de

Sade, devouring in security and ease maidens and youths, as the minotaur did of old – "semibovemque virum, semivirumque bovem." This is the lust which is the most horrid, and the most damnable; it takes much to produce a passionate man, but little to engender a lustful one. The present generation possesses a minimum of passion and a maximum of lust. There is no lust of Rome, of Greece, or Arabia, no vice of Sodom, of Paphos, or Lampsacus, that is not practised to-day in any of our larger modern towns. Lust of wealth, lust of ease, lust or renown, lie as cankering worms in our hearts; and the cold bought lust of our marriage-beds and our streets fill our days with woe. Chivalry is dead, and the gilded Ass reigns in the place of the champing Stallion, and brays its goatish desires over the naked form of the sterile Mule.

No longer in this ice-bound age of frozen phalli do we hear sung:

> For, swooning at the fervid lips
> Of Artemis, the maiden kisses
> Sob, and the languid body slips
> Down to enamelled wildernesses.
> Fallen and loose the shaken tresses;
> Fallen the sandal and girdling gold,
> Fallen the music manifold
> Of moving limbs and strange caresses,
> And deadly passion that possesses
> The magic ecstasy of these
> Mad maidens, tender as blue seas.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i. p. 170.

For this is passion, if not quite so pure as some we have already seen, yet still passion of an unlustful nature.

In "The Flight" we find in the following lines a still deeper glow:

The snow-bright weather
Calls us beyond the grassy downs, to be
Beside the sea,
The slowly breathing Ocean of the south.
Oh, make thy mouth
A rosy flame like the most perfect star
Whose kisses are
So red and ripe! Oh, let thy limbs entwine
Like love with mine!*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 91.

In the third act of "The Argonauts," we find the love of Medea is no longer passion, but fiery entrancing lust:

At the midmost hour
His mind given up to sleepless muttering
Of charms not mine – decries Olympian –
All on a sudden he felt fervid arms
Flung round him, and a sweet hot body's rush
Lithe to embrace him, and a cataract
Of amber-scented hair hissing about
His head, and in the darkness two great eyes
Flaming above him, and the whole face filled
With fire and shapen as kisses. And those arms
And kisses and mad movements of quick love
Burnt up his being, and his life was lost
In woman's love at last!*

*The Argonauts, vol. ii, p. 100.

This was the love, or rather lust, of "that filthy sorceress."

We are now rapidly approaching the realms of the abnormal; for good and evil are the toys of love as well as those of fate.

> The nymph and the satyr, the fair and the faulty alike are the guests of these amorous shades.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 90.

The virility of lust is vividly illustrated in "The Blood-Lotus":

> Foam whips their reeking lips, and still the flower-witch nestles to my lips,
> Twines her swart lissome legs and hips, half serpent and half devil, till
>
> My whole self seems to lie in her; her kisses draw my breath; my face
> Loses its lustre in the grace of her quick bosom; sinister
>
> The raving spectres reel; I see beyond my Circe's eyes no shape
> Save vague cloud-measures that escape the dance's whirling witchery.
> . . . . . .
> Clothed with my flower-bride I sit, a harlot in a harlot's dress,
> And laugh with careless wickedness.
> . . . . . .
> And with our laughter's nails refix his torn flesh faster to the wood,
> And with more cruel zest make good the shackles of the Crucifix.*

*Oracles, vol. ii, p. 14.

The nymphomaniac, the Lesbian, the man afflicted with pathic neurosis, satyriasis or priapism is no worse than any other maniac. True, the pornophobic Mrs. Grundy cries shame as she squints askew through the half-closed fingers of her hand, but we refuse to see why this *pudibonderie* of the old "Unco gude" should make the discussion of "nymphomaniacs" a tabooed subject, whilst she trumpets from the top of her holy bordel (St. Paul's) deafening blasts of chaste(!) "bibliomania." Often these unfortunates are of noble and generous character; who, striving against their fearful adversity, have not the strength of will to cast off and slay the dragon of their despair. The horror of this mental struggle is well depicted in "Jephthah" when Jared says:

> Those eyes upon me, torturing my soul
> And threatening revenge? Those fingers gross,
> Purple, and horrible, to blister me
> With infamous tearing at my throat. O Hell!
> Vomit thy monsters forth in myriads
> To putrefy this fair green earth with blood,
> But make not me the devilish minister
> Of such a deed as this!*

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 84.

Such was the almost frenzied exclamation of Jared, when he tried to shake off the awful power that was urging him to become participator in the murder of an innocent girl; and such is also often the terrible struggle that is waged in the mind of the sexual invert. Impelled by energies sometimes in-bred, sometimes self-made, and sometimes but mere matters of locality and education, how often does he struggle – and in vain!

This terrible form of vice, chameleon-like, assumes many colours, one of the principal being that of pleasure under the guise of pain. In such

cases utter satiety of the ordinary forms of pleasure gives birth to the desire for the pain which was once dreaded, and the pleasure that the individual once experienced in himself, and also the pleasure he felt was being experienced by the participator of his actions, changes, growing little by little from a spark into a flaming volcano of scorching pain, which he alone seeks, finding new pleasures in the pain he himself endures, and fresh pleasures in the pain he himself inflicts. This is *Lust*. Peopled with all the horrors of inversion, we pass from the simple realms of prostitution, to the dismal Kingdoms of Sodom and Lesbos. Paederasts and Tribades flock round us, yet we break away from them only to enter the foul jaws of the sexual hell of shrieking flagellants, who rush upon us, as obscene Masochists grovel at our feet; far into its depths we sink, and there at the altar of Phallommeda sits a foul vulture gloating over a corpse; and its name is Necrophilia.

Into the realms of sexual-neurasthenia Aleister Crowley takes us, and it is necessary that he should. His religion, his philosophy, and his psychology, all point to an ultimate blending of our extreme perfections and imperfections – vice and virtue – in one great monistic unity. He that would be wise must know all things, all things that his transient life can enable him to grasp. In the age which produced Rabelais and Boccaccio, vice was flagrantly open, and the lust which the early Christians had first opposed and secondly absorbed, slowly burnt within the society of their days, till it burst out in the lecherous flames of a libidinous papacy. Many witty and lascivious books, which in those times were openly enjoyed, have been handed down to us. In the north the puritanic upheaval, still so felt, set in; and in its first stages it probably was strictly anti-vicious, but in its second merely a screen to hide vice from the public gaze. This, in its turn, led to the good feeling a disgust for the bad, which in our age has developed into an inborn shame which condemns open vice, but tolerates, even endows it, when hidden. Open vice, unscreened and esotericised by religion, would have in the sequence

of events led to an open feeling of disgust, for Nature never permits man to borrow without paying back, the general settlement day will always sooner or later arrive, and then a new epoch of time will be heralded in. Secret vice is the very worst form of vice; like a hidden gin we fall betwixt its jaws unawares. The crass and studied silence that mothers and fathers maintain over their children as regards all subjects of sex is probably responsible for fifty percent: and more of all the sexual crimes and sexual ills of the present day. When mankind has grasped the fact that its organs of reproduction are no more disgusting than its organs of respiration, it will then have grasped a greater truth than all philosophies have ever promulgated, than all religions have ever revealed. "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed": *THIS IS VIRTUE*. "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked": *THIS IS VICE*.

Know Thyself, Be Thyself, Honour Thyself, are the three greatest commandments we can follow. This truth, universal and in its totality, Crowley thunders forth midst sunshine and lightning. If, it is good to kiss, then is it also good to know where kisses may lead to. We have already seen them rising upward from youth through the passion of maturity, concrete and abstract, earthly and spiritual; now let us turn about and descend the slippery road of lust, so essential to the basic knowledge of the good.

Among the extraordinary antipathies and sympathies of the human mind, few are so startling as the frequent attraction of contraries. Good attracts bad, and bad good, in the love-history of life over and over again shall we find this:

> Have they divined
> This simplest spirit-bond,
> The joy of some bad woman's deadly kiss;*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 104.

In the "Lesbian Hell" we see those white unsated women, and in "The Fatal Force" one so flushed with lust, that she has become blind to reality:

> Then said the goddess: "I indeed am pure
> In my impurity; immaculate
> In misconception; maiden in my whoredom;
> Chaste in my incest, being made a god
> Through my own strength.*

*The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 143.

Thus she spoke to the assembled princes and peoples of Egypt, when sixteen seasons past she sat crowned, naked, exultant, pregnant with the child of her own son's begetting. Awed by the enormity of her lust, the multitudes worship their Phædrian queen:

> But the mood passed, and we see
> A lecherous woman whose magician power
> Is broken, and the balance of her mind
> Made one with the fool's bauble, and her wand
> That was of steel and fire, like a reed, snapped!*

*The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 143.

Once again we see her, Ratoum, Queen of Egypt, before the coffin which is supposed to contain the child of her incest, but which holds in reality her leprous and long-forgotten husband. She is maddened with lust and religious frenzy, and stands entranced till the leper rises as from the dead, and S'afi, the child of her whoredom, tears off his mask and shrieks:

I am the hideous poison of thy veins
And foulest fruit of thy incestuous womb.*

*The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 150.

"I am thy mother," is her answer; so, even in her frenzied madness, the greatest force in nature asserts itself. He stabs her, and stabs himself! such also is filial love.*

*Compare story of Semiramis and Ninyas.

In "The Mother's Tragedy" the characters are practically reversed. Ulric, who ravishes Cora, his mother, even sinks deeper in the mire of lust than Ratoum. It is a curious case of love baulked turning to the foulest lust. He is passionately in love with her, lustfully in love; all the exuberance of his youth runs fire in his veins; he sees in the object of his adoration – as Percy saw in Angela – the only waters that would quench his flaming desire. He knows not Cora to be his mother; Cora Vavasour of the halls, and himself her bastard son.

My wife! O Cora, I have loved you so!
My heart is like a fountain of the sea.
I burn, I tremble; in my veins there swims
A torrid ecstasy of madness. Ah!
Ah, God! I kiss you, kiss you! O you faint!
Sweetheart, my passion overwhelms your soul!
Your virginal sweet spirit cannot reach
My fury…*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 159.

Thus in the intoxication of his desire he raves, in her silence he sees her affection, and in the terror of her eyes her love.

Cora is horror-stricken: "you beast!" "you fool!" "I am defiled." He stands dazed and wondering. Then in the following pages she tells him: "I am the mother of thy bastard birth"; he prays, he threatens, and shrieking hurls insult on insult at her:

> Me, the sole pledge of your debaucheries,
> You keep – your love, the mere maternity
> You share with swine and cattle!…
> . . . . . .
> I love you still
> With carnal love and spiritual love!
> And I will have you, by the living God,
> To be my mistress. If I fail in this,
> Or falter in this counsel of despair,
> May God's own curses dog me into hell,
> And mine own life perpetuate itself
> Through all the ages of eternity.
> Amen! Amen! Come. Cora, to my heart!*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 163.

Madeline, whom Cora had hoped to have made Ulric's bride, appears, and for a moment his mad fury slackens only to burst out again, as he drags Cora from the room. When she re-enters her voice is hoarse and horrible:

> O Phædra! lend me of thy wickedness,
> Lest I go mad to contemplate myself!*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 164.

Then turning to Madeline – young, pretty, and foolish – who bids her seek help from the Mother of God, "Our Lady of the seven stars" says:

> Can you not see? I am cut off from God!
> Loathsome bull-men in their corruption linked
> Whisper lewd fancies in my ear. Great fish,
> Monstrous and flat, with vile malignant eyes,
> And crawling beetles of gigantic strength,
> Crushed, mangled, moving, are about me. Go!
> Go! do not touch the carcass of myself
> That is abased, defiled, abominable.*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 65.

Then Ulric enters, evidently now totally mad; the fearful power of his Neronic lust has reft asunder the last thread of his sanity; in his hand he carries a razor, first he slays Madeline, and then, at his mother's bidding, himself:

> A blood-grey vapour and a scorpion steam
> To poison the unrighteous life of God!*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 65.

Thus does this fearful tragedy end. Gruesome with lust and cruelty, Ulric, a horrible perversion, overcome by the violence of his desires, a second Amnon, a second de Sade. His ideal once at least partially pure, broke, as the truth burst on his ear, into a wild and fearful nightmare; and in his brutal fury we find that perhaps the Sadism of to-day is but an Avatar of those past days, when our progenitors, like some still existing savages, carried on their courtship with club and spear, and solemnized their marriage with rape and ravishment.

Still one more phase of perverse love remains for us to study; the curious lust of man for woman as depicted in "Jezebel," a curious manifestation of what is known as Masochism, which after the death

of the object of its fascination, grows almost into the vampire desire of necrophilia. In "A Saint's Damnation," which is included under the same cover, we see the power of love caught in the arms of restraint slowly smoulder into a burning desire:

> Passion to feed upon your shoulders bare,
> And pass the dewy twilight of our sin
> In the intolerable flames of hair.
> . . . . . .
> Give thee my body as a fire to hold—
> O love, no words, no songs – your breast my
> bower!*

*Jezebel: and other Tragic Poems, vol. i, p. 133.

In "Jezebel" we find the same desire, but unfanned by restraint, in whose place stands a woman's disdain. He, the prophet, goes to curse her – but loves her instead:

> For lo! she saw me, and beheld
> My trembling lips curled back to curse,
> Laughed with strong scorn, whose music knelled
> The empire of God's universe.
> And on my haggard face upturned
> She spat! Ah God! how my cheek burned!
>
> Then as a man betrayed, and doomed
> Already, I arose and went,
> And wrestled with myself, consumed
> With passion for that sacrament
> Of shame. From that day unto this
> My cheek desires that hideous kiss.
>
> Her hate, her scorn, her cruel blows,

Fill my whole life, consume my breath;
Her red-fanged hatred in me glows,
I lust for her, and hell, and death.
I see that ghastly look, and yearn
Toward the brands of her that burn.*

*Jezebel: and other Tragic Poems, vol. i, pp. 130-131.

Sleep shuns him, and his parched throat thirsts for the blood of her veins, "Aching with all the pangs of night"; his vision grows more monstrous, a horrible psychopathic mist dims his mind, and all the love he lavished on the body of the living woman turns to a lust for her cadaver:

The spirit filled me. *And behold!*
I saw her dead stare to the skies.
I came to her; she was not cold,
But burning with old infamies.
On her incestuous mouth I fell,
And lost my soul for Jezebel.
. . . . . .
They cast her forth on Naboth's field
Still living, in her harlot's dress;
Her belly stript, her thighs concealed,
For shame's sake and for love's no less.
Night falls; the gaping crowds abide
No longer by her stiffening side.
. . . . . .
"Ah! prophet, come to mock at me
And gloat on mine exceeding pain?"
"Nay but to give my soul to thee,
And have thee spit at me again!"
She smiled – I know she smiled – she sighed,
Bit my lips through, and drank, and died!

. . . . . .

My veins poured out her marriage cup,
For holy water her cruel tongue;
For blessing of white hands raised up,
These perfumed infamies unsung;
For God's breath, her sharp tainted breath;
For marriage-bed, the bed of death.

. . . . . .

The host is lifted up. Behold
The vintage spilt, the broken bread!
I feast upon the cruel cold
Pale body that was ripe and red.
Only, her head, her palms, her feet,
I kissed all night, and did not eat.*

*Jezebel, vol. i, pp. 131-132.

We have passed through many fields, many groves, many wildernesses; we have crossed the pure snowy mountains of Chastity, and the boiling seas of Passion, losing ourselves in not a few of those intricate and unknown by-paths which lead to trackless wastes and gloomy abysms. Aleister Crowley has pointed us the way, twined round the Tree of Knowledge he has offered us fruit, and we have eaten of it with face smiling or awry; we have become as gods knowing good and evil, and having become gods with much striving against adversity, may some day become men; for to become a god is but to become as the image created in the brain of man, but to become a man is to become a progenitor of gods; and then perchance we may realize the sublimity of the Great Motherhood, whose children are as one, a flaming crown of glory twined and interwoven with roses both white and red.

This mingling of the passionate and the chaste we find is the new ideal that Crowley flashes before our dazzled sight. Away with Mary,

immaculate Mother of Christ: away with Messalina, incestuous prophetess of Lust. Away! Away! To the West, to the East, till they meet in some flaming region of equatorial fury, and flashing interfuse and interblend.

Once again must a prophet of the Lord arise and wed a wife of whoredoms, who hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord. Once again must Hosea expire on the crimson lips of Gomer, and from the womb of a harlot must the Christ be reborn a woman, wise, beautiful, and young; who is both Circe and Diana, Isis and Aphrodite, in whose veins course all the fury of Medea, all the abominations of Canidia, who revels in the infernal rites of Sagana and Locusta, and yet is vestal and virgin; white as the driven snow, pure as a mountain rill. One with the pale Mother of Bethlehem and the scarlet harlot of the City of Abominations. Then will the storm-clouds part, and the smoke and steam of the earth vanish, and the social harlot, whose painted buttocks have heaved and hog-wallowed through the centuries, shall be seized and hurled from the rock of Tarpeia, and smothered with the goatish kisses of her lechery midst the charnel glitter of her gold. And the Vestal-courtezan will rise before us, purple and white, clothed in the sun, and set between the moon and the twelve stars of heaven. So another league will be accomplished toward that city which is God.

We have already seen in “The Mother’s Tragedy” and “The Fatal Force,” that the love of the mother, though it could not cause the shadow to travel backwards one degree on the face of the dial, it at least clothed in a white garment of chastity, not only the amorous music-hall artiste, but even the incestuous queen of Egypt. And though “Jezebel” did not love as they loved, her power of loving many exonerated her want of love for one or a few. She like the Circe of old who turned the followers of Ulysses into swine, herself fell a victim entangled in those same meshes she had spun wherein to entrap her unwary fellows. “A woman who is without love,” writes

Lévi, "absorbs and degrades all who come near her; she who loves, on the other hand, diffuses enthusiasm, nobility, and life."*

*The Doctrine of Transcendent Magic, p. 125.

In her we see a contorted symbol of wifehood, whilst in the latter cases, and especially in "The Fatal Force," we find that of Motherhood. The true wife must sacrifice her children before the shrine of her lover, and the true mother must sacrifice her lover on the altar of her children. This is no paradox, no riddle, no twisting of words; for Crowley offers us in the glittering chalice of Eternity the sacred blood of the Bull, the Second Christ; and as the first, the Lamb of God, sprang from the immaculate womb of the Virgin-Mother, so shall this second incarnation spring blood-red from the snowy lips of the great Supernal Mother, androgynous, the Circe-Isis of the ages.

In "Alice, an Adultery," we see a woman passionate in her love, strenuous in her affection, yet in the end failing by abandoning her lover for her children. Not so, however, in "Rosa Inferni," wherein we feel, as we read, a ferocity of passion which burns into us like a hail of molten glass;

> Aha! the veil is riven!
> Beneath the smiling mask of a young bride
> Languorous, luscious, melancholy-eyed;
> Beneath the gentle raptures, hints celestial
> Of holy secrets, kisses like soft dew,
> Beneath the amorous mystery, I view
> The surer shape, a visage grim and bestial,
> A purpose sly and deadly, a black shape,
> A tiger snarling, or a grinning ape
> Resolved by every devilish device
> Upon my murder.*

*Rosa Inferni, vol. iii, p. 91.

A vampire she rises over her lover:

> I see below the beautiful low brow
> (Low too for cunning, like enough!) your lips,
> A scarlet splash of murder. From them drips
> This heart's blood; you have fed your fill on me.*

*Rosa Inferni, vol. iii, p. 92.

Further on in this same series of poems we come across an almost more lurid description of this Messaline in "The Jilt," in which her new-found lover feasts off the agony of her last victim, which still moistens her blood-red lips:

> His death lends savour to our passionate life;
> His is the heart I taste upon your tongue;
> His death-spasms our love-spasms, my wife;
> His death-songs are the love-songs that you sung!
> . . . . . .
> Ah! Sweet, each kiss I drink from you is warm
> With the dear life-blood of a man – a man!
> The scent of murder lures me, like a charm
> Tied by some subtlety Canidian.
>
> Ay! as you suck my life out into bliss,
> Its holier joy is in the deadlier thirst
> That drank his life out into the abyss
> Of torture endless, endless and accurst.
>
> I know him little; liking what I know.
> But you – you offer me his flesh and blood.
> I taste it – never another vintage owe,

Nor bid me sup upon another food!

This is our marriage; firmer than the root
Of love or lust could plant our joy, my wife,
We stand in this, the purple-seeded fruit
Of yon youth's fair and pitiable life.*

*The Jilt, vol. iii, pp. 99, 100.

So we see before us a curious form, at times cold as the marble statue of Pygmalion, and then, when the kiss of Venus had incarnadined those chill lips, all life and passion, transforming those ivory breasts into sharp points of liquid fire, and those still thighs into all the subtlety of twin snakes. Yet that mouth, breathing the purple fire of love, or cold as the dusty lips of the age-worn Sphinx, is one – Rosa Inferni, Rosa Coeli, for that which is below is as that which is above. The latter has still to be published, but the petals of its bursting bud have already in many a fair verse made bright the pages of this essay. 'Twixt these twain we find Rosa Mundi, "the keystone of the Royal Arch of Sex":*1

Single in love and aim,
Double in form and name,*2

*1. Rosa Mundi, vol. iii, p. 52.
*2. Rosa Mundi, vol. iii, p. 54.

that arch which rests on the two great pillars of Solomon's temple, black and white, and contrary, yet their power is one, for they are the limbs of God.

"Rosa Mundi" stands before us crowned, naked, and wonderful. Neither Alice nor Archais, neither Ratoum nor Cora, neither Venus nor Isis, yet the woven filament of all these glowing petals into one

flaming Rose of glory; in whose sceptred-heart burns the white phallus of God, and whose jewelled crown is crimson with the lips of the passionate daughters of Men.

Rose of the World!
Red glory of the secret heart of Love!
Red flame, rose-red, most subtly curled
Into its own infinite flower, all flowers above!
Its flower in its own perfumed passion,
Its faint sweet passion, folded and furled
In flower fashion;
. . . . . .
The Rose of Dew, the Rose of Love and Night,
The Rose of Silence, covering as with a vesture
The solemn unity of things
Beheld in the mirror of truth,
The Rose indifferent to God's gesture,
The Rose on moonlight wings
That flies to the House of Fire,
The Rose of Honey-in-Youth!
Ah! No dim mystery of desire
Fathoms this gulf! No light invades
The mystical musical shades
Of a faith in the future, a dream of the day,
When athwart the dim glades
Of the forest a ray
Of sunlight shall flash and the dew die away!
. . . . . .
Rose of the World, Rose of the Uttermost
Abode of Glory, Rose of the High Host
Of Heaven, mystic, rapturous Rose!
The extreme passion glows
Deep in this breast; thou knowest (and love knows).*

* Rosa Mundi, vol. iii, pp. 51-55.

Thus we end our chapter which we have called "The Mother." And as Diana, Luna, and Hecate are one, so Rosa Mundi, Rosa Coeli, Rosa Inferni, unite Triformis in one great trinity in unity. And as the Moon kisses the Sea, so does Diana embrace the wave-born Aphrodite, as she rises from the blue foam, star of the Deep; she who pours back into the ocean of Eternity the pure waters of inexhaustible chastity mingled with the never-dying flames of inextinguishable love.

At last she has been disclosed to us, she concerning whom it was prophesied in the beginning of Time; and as the hollow sobs of the dying years have rolled back sonorous, rumbling and echoing, into the soundless depths of æonial infinity, she who was promised has at length been revealed; she who will crush the head of that old serpent, who has so long bruised the heel of the children of men who were born in the knowledge of good and of evil.

V

The Chapter known as

The Old Bottle

In which chapter it is related: how it once contained
the dregs of many casks, and how they have all long
since gone dry; and its uselessness, and how
it stinketh when it be uncorked, and its
unprofitableness, also the unfit-
ness thereof to hold the "New
Wine," of which
hereafter.

The Old Bottle

WHAT is religion? In its primitive form, metatarsals; in its ultimate, metaphysics. Our ancestors would walk through the lightning and thunder of the uncivilized day, with a string of charmed knuckle-bones slung round their throats; whilst we in our turn walk through the drizzle and fog of the present decivilized night, with a rosary of ideals twined round our minds: one worshipped a bogey, the other a bogus. *O! sancta simplicitas: homo* indeed is *sapiens*! Have we progressed? Not one whit. Worship is at all times and everywhere one and the same, an insult to the offerer and the receiver alike; sacrifice, the egotism of usurers; prayer, the misdirected energy of idiots; ceremony but an excuse for vice; and dogma but a legitimized imposition. Such is religion!

Why, then, has man ever sought this Moloch of his nights, shedding o'er it his own blood, and drenching it with that of others, if it prove but an incubus of sorrow and despair? Firstly, because most men are fools; secondly, because those who are not are knaves.

> I take no heed of trickery played
> By cunning mad Elijah's skill,
> When the great test of strength was made
> On Carmel's melancholy hill,
> And on the altar stone the liar
> Cried "Water," and poured forth Greek fire!*

*Ahab, vol. ii, p. 123.

If we could be optimistic enough to believe in a (semi-)omnipotent power (pure omnipotency is anachronistic), we should believe this

malady were inflicted on man as are the measles, the croup, and the chicken-pox, so as to stimulate romance, and retard that ultimate uninteresting state perfection. This not being so, we can only suggest that being descended from the flat-nosed *simiæ*, besides being generally flat all round, man must have lost his wits with his tail, both being now exceedingly rudimentary. Having lost his tail, he could no longer swing in the ethereal blue; and then, losing his wits, grew a mental tail, and swung in the deep inane, devising the ideal of discomfort, wherein all pleasures should be considered as evil, and all pains as exceedingly good; chewing aloes he swore they were as melligenous as the sugar cane, called black white, white black, and this fair world the abode of his satanic majesty; beat his wife, swore at the 'kids,' and kicked the cat over the garden wall. Not being able to walk on his head, with his feet in the air, he, however, did and continues to do his best to carry what remains of his fungoid organ of thought as low as he possibly can, his desires in his stomach, and his thoughts in the vicinity of his prostate gland.

There was a time when man did not know how to cook his dinner; we sincerely hope there will be a time when he ceases to cook his thoughts, but that time, in spite of science and art, is in the far here-after.

Some people labour under the idea that a generation or two hence the world will be sprawling at the feet of Reason instead of those of God. Possibly, yet God is still far from being a centenarian, and our heavenly Father bids well to rival our earthly Parr; but as long as we sprawl, what matters it what we sprawl before, if it be the shin-bone of an ass, or the pineal gland of our wretched imagination? Whatever man has touched he has spoilt: one day he was struck with the mystic poetry of the waves, and he promptly hocussed slimy monsters from out the deep; gazing on his lithe and winsome daughter, he held her head under the green flood to satiate the rapacity of the offspring of his deluded imagination, who (he judged) appreciated his dinner, as

well as he did himself. Having devised religion, he by degrees fell into such excesses of worship, that religion bid well to exterminate his whole wretched race; thereupon he disclosed science, which, when it has destroyed his former hobby, will in its turn run riot over all, till it also becomes such a pest, that it too, will have to give way to something better. Never contented, man ultimately finds that his double collection of manna rots. What the end will be no one knows, and few care; that we shall ever reach a state verging on perfection is most improbable; man could not stand it for long unless his worldly span were one of unambitious affluence, and his heavenly one of spasmodic sensuality and forgetfulness. To have plenty of money and no ambitions, to eat like a hog, sleep like a hog, and to breed like a hog; to be in a perpetual state of priapism, and to fall into slumbersome forgetfulness just when the pleasant is beginning to pall, and then to wake again to all the fury of desire. These two states, if we carefully dissect the corpse of religion, we shall find to lie at its basic foundation.

On turning now to the works before us, we find traced therein an elaborate system rising from the fear of primitive man to the veneration of his present-day offspring. Fear, the basal foundation of all gods, found a subtle soil in Ignorance; Ignorance reacted on God, producing Superstition; Superstition, Cruelty; Cruelty, all the tigerish longings of the day and the hoggish gratifications of the night.

Pessimism is necessarily the foundation of all religion; for if man were normally optimistic he would not have conceived such a hierarchy of tyrants as that of his gods. The man who formerly cut himself with flints before a lump of stone or clay, is in no way more foolish than he who prays to an omnipotent conception; the former was jealous and exacting, and so is the latter, the former a thing, the latter an idea, and both an ideal. This evolution is very vividly described in the poem entitled “The Growth of God”:

Fear grows, and torment; and distracted pain
Must from sheer agony some respite find;
When some half-maddened miserable brain
Projects a god in his detesting mind.
A god who made him – to the core all evil,
In his own image – and a God of Terror;
A vast foul nightmare, an impending devil;
Compact of darkness, infamy, and error.

Some bestial woman, beaten by her mates,
In utter fear broke down the bar of reason;
Shrieked, crawled to die; delirium abates
By some good chance her terror in its season,
Her ravings picture the cessation of
Such life as she had known: her mind conceives
A God of Mercy, Happiness and Love;
Reverses life and fact: and so believes.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 179.

This last line practically contains the fundamental basis of all religion. Man finding that Nature was but a thousand-headed hydra, for ever battling with him on the field of the world, fearing her awful powers and dim mysteries, reversed facts which were so unpalatable to him, and drinking deep of the cup of joy during those short moments when it was proffered to his lips, dimly or vividly saw through the intoxicating fumes cloudy realms of perpetual libation, of hope, and of glorious expectations. Heaven and then Hell. The former first, for man is essentially selfish; having found a fat billet for himself, it was not long before he found a lean one for his neighbour:

To divide my devotees
From those who scorned me to the close:
A worm, a fire, a thirst for these;

A harp-resounding heaven for those!*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 43.

The primary object of existence is to keep alive, and all heavens, hells, paradises, gehennas, valhallas, nirvanas, and other abodes of the dead, have never for long exercised such a superabundance of power as to crush and extinguish the flaming desire for existence. The fools having devised God with jam for the good in heaven, were not long in devising Satan with a pickled birch for the naughty in hell. Those who were not fools and who found their bread unpalatably dry, found that butter could be supplied free of cost by literally doing nothing. Anyone familiar with a native city in India is aware of the vast hordes of indolent fakirs who practically do nothing except stand still and gaze vacantly into the clouds uttering, "Rama," "Hanuman," and before they drop their eyes their bowls are full of atta and dhal. Hence priests and kings, those truly greedy anthropophagi:

The vale is black with priests. They fight,
Wild beasts, for food,
The orphan's gold, the widow's right,
The virgin's snood,
All in their maws are crammed within the night
That hides their chosen wood,
Where through the blackness sounds the sickening noise
Of cannibals that gloat on monstrous joys.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 126.

Feeding perhaps first on man's body, the priest soon found, after investing his victim with an immortal soul, that the soul would form an excellent basis for blackmail, enabling man to buy off the terrors of hell through the medium of the priest who held the keys of heaven:

…still death reigns, and God and priests are fed,
Man's blood for wine, man's flesh for meat and bread,*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 106.

And these priests are not dead yet.

As the human race throve so did their gods, the old savage of man's early thoughts grew, and growing became more evil, as their gods so were men, and as men so were their gods, the one continually acting and reacting on the other:

Of obscene deities and apish men,
Rivalling their god in petty filthiness.*

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 19.

Gods sprang from gods:

For the old gods indeed go down to death,
But the new gods arise from rottenness.*

*The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 143.

The first cause, a pervading terror, was grand in its wilfulness compared with the degraded images which soon eclipsed man's reason, monopolizing worship and exacting prayer:

What folly can compare
With such stupidity, as prayer?*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 178.

Crowley very truly remarks in that battering-ram of religious destruction, "Pentecost" – a witty note is appended, quoted from the "Sydney Bulletin," which suggested, that instead of perpetually worrying the Almighty for rain, the people should pray once and for all for a high range of mountains in Central Australia, which would of course supply rain automatically*1. – that man cannot elude fate by such a paltry dodge; for even the god of our imaginings is not quite such an ass as all that. The messenger in "Jephthah" most sensibly remarked, when he rushed with the news of the enemy's approach into the assembly of Israel:

> My lords, take heed now, prayer is good to save
> While yet the foemen are far off; but now
> They howl and clamor at our very gates.*2.

*1. The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 109.
*2. Jephthah, vol. i, p. 69.

Which in other words simply means, as long as man does not see or understand he will pray; when he does, he won't.

Another juggle to elude fate is sacrifice. Sacrifice and prayer have ever run in harness together under the whistling of the priestly lash, "I will brain you if you refuse to render tribute to me," said the primitive chief to his primitive neighbour; "I will put you in jail if you won't pay me your taxes," says the modern government to the modern citizen. And as religion could not possibly restrain her octopus tentacles of cupidity from the game of grab, she also hisses, "Pray to God and he will tie a knot in his bandana and perhaps remember it some day; but above all, sacrifice to me, or by Jove! I will sacrifice you:" and the fool, even in his folly, thought it were better to lose his wits than his brains, and his turnips than his turnip; so he dug and he dug, and he slew and he slew, religion growing fatter and fatter, spawning churches and breeding sects, till unfortunate man

found himself so hedged in by the spiritual, that in order to maintain his life in this world he had to acknowledge the Church's supreme authority, and grovel before her in the dust of degradation. Crowley gives a curious example of this growth, and the ultimate sameness of all religions in that gruesome and weird drama, "The God-Eater."

Maurya the sister of Criosda says:

> Criosda, ever the same! The old world runs
> On wheels of laughter for us little ones;
> To you, whose shoulders strain, the chariot seems
> A poised fiend flogging you to hell.*

*The God-Eater, vol. ii, p. 131.

Criosda, the self-intoxicated God-Eater, drunk on the name of blood, slays his sister, and feasts in true religious frenzy off her corpse – a veritable black mass:

> *Criosda*. With red lips reeking from the sweet foul feast,
> I sang in tuneless agony the spell;
> Rolled athwart space the black words: then some force
> Tore me: I heard the tears drop in my heart.
> I heard the laughter of some utmost god
> Hid in the middle of matter. That was I,
> The hideous laughter of the maniac laugh
> When loathing makes the bed to lust, and twine
> The limbs of agony about the trunk
> Of torture – rapture stabbing through – Maurya!
> Ay, that was I; and I the weeping wolf
> That howls about this hell that is my heart;
> And I the icy and intangible
> That beholds all, and is not.*

*The God-Eater, vol. ii, p. 137.

Looking into the crystal globe he sees the future two thousand years after the horrid murder. The deed has thriven into a religion, and the victim into a god.

> As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
> world without end.*

*The God-Eater, vol. ii, p. 139.

mutters Rupha the hag of eternity, as Criosda falls dead before the mummy of the murdered girl, his sister Maurya:

> Murder a mode
> And love a mode of the unknown that is,
> That not thyself nor I can ever see.*

*The God-Eater, vol. ii, p. 138. The gods of the ancients were all immolaters of men, and loved blood. Moloch only differed from Jahveh by lack of orthodoxy, and the god of Jephthah had similar mysteries to those of Belus.

A fitting cry indeed to herald us into the pustulous domains of Jahveh and his murdered Son.

In dealing with the Christian faith, Aleister Crowley by no means goes simply baldheaded for it like the unread secularist of the sixpenny platform; for, we find a distinct growth from a reverential regard towards its founder, to a satirical disregard for him, and his final dismissal in a jest. Such a mental progression is only natural; from the sublime irrationality of a de Kempis the student will almost inevitably, even unwittingly, pass through the adulations of a Renan, before he assumes the biting satire of a Saladin, or the poetic iconoclasm of a Swinburne.

Christ, firstly, as the Son of God, is divine, omnipotent, in fact he is God; secondly, as the Son of Man, is noble, generous, lovable, in fact, man; but, thirdly, as the offspring of the carnalities of a Byzantine mob, which is the true Christ of history, he assumes a vampire form, a horror fed on the blood of children, the virility of youths, the chastity of maidens. Hardly a single evil of the present day, if traced back a few hundred years, and frequently not half so long as that, but finds its birth in some corruption practised by the Harlot of the seven hills, or the Monster of the six wives. It is only necessary to study such works as those of Buckle or Draper, of White or Stewart Ross, or better still, if time permits, those of ecclesiastical historians, written by the pens of divines, to become aware of the appalling gloom that was cast over the splendour that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome, in that dismal night of a thousand years which lapped the Western world in a sea of blood and tears. Ignorance crushed the mind of Europe, as a hammer of lead, from the time that Constantine – tyrant, murderer, and debauchee – threw in his lot with the yelping mob of Constantinople. On that fateful day a fiery cross shone in the sky,*1. and to this day it has been our lot to carry its cankerous form branded on our hearts and corroded in our minds. Not till now are we waking from the turbid dreams, the feverish lust, and dismal superstition, that sprang from the gaberlunzies of the Suburra:

The Lord's Day.

The foolish bells with their discordant clang
Summon the harlot-ridden Hell to pray:
The vicar's snout is tuned; the curates bray
Long gabbled lessons, and their noisy twang
Fills the foul worshippers with hate; the fang
Of boredom crushes out the holy day,
Where whore and jobber sit and gloom, grown grey
For hating of each other; the hours hang.*2.

*1. *In hoc signo vinces.*
*2. The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 202.

And the pen of Crowley like that of Saladin, Swinburne, and Shelley, is but another douche of cold water to wake the frowsy sleepers of the night, and wash from their gluey eyes the nightmare of Christian Supremacy.

In the earlier poems of Crowley, we find not only a reverential handling of the Christ idea, but an almost orthodox adoration for the Christ Himself. In the last two verses of "Aceldama" this is strongly brought out. "Thy love will stand while ocean winds endure"; and again, "Here I abandon all myself to thee."*1. In "Songs of the Spirit" we find this veneration acutely portrayed, and the Christ as depicted in "The Goad" closely resembles the one as described in "The Farewell of Paracelsus to Aprile." Here is a passage from each:

> I contemplate the wound
> Stabbed in the flanks of my dear silver Christ.
> He hangs in anguish there; the crown of thorns
> Pierces that palest brow; the nails drip blood;
> There is the wound; no Mary by Him mourns,
> There is no John beside the cruel wood;
> I am alone to kiss the silver lips;
> I rend my clothing for the temple veil;
> My heart's black night must act the sun's eclipse;
> My groans must play the earthquake…*2.

> Still as I journey through the waste, I see
> A silver figure more divine arise;
> The Christ usurps the horizon for me,
> And He requickens the forgotten skies;
> His golden locks are burning on my eyes,
> And he with rosy finger points the way,

The blood-wrought mystic path of Paradise,
That leads at last through yonder icy spray
Of Death to the blue vault of the undying day.*3.

*1. Aceldama, vol. i, p. 6.
*2. Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 30.
*3. *Ibid*. vol. i, p. 40.

In the last verse of "A Spring Snow Storm in Wastdale,"*1. there grows a wavering doubt, which leaps out furiously in the "Preliminary Invocation" in "Jephthah," addressed to A.C.S., breaking the shackles of the "improving idea" of Christ:

Let there be light! – the desecrated tomb
Gaped as thy fury smote the Galilean.*2.

*1. Song of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 43.
*2. Jephthah, vol. i, p. 64.

Almost a Shelleyan slur lies in the last of the above words. He is no more the mystic Christ, or the gentle Jesus, but merely a Galilean, of a tribe crude and despised. Very different do we find Crowley's opinions, in his later works, regarding this unfortunate fakir. The glamour of enthusiastic and unsuspecting youth soon disappears to be swallowed up in the reality of a maturer understanding:

He took the universe on trust;
He reconciled the world below
With that above; rolled eloquence
Steel-tired o'er reason's "why?" and "whence?"
Discarded all proportion just,
And thundered in our ears "I know,"
And bellowed in our brains "ye must."*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 181.

In "Why Jesus Wept" our eyes are startled with the following horrid blasphemy, "The badger Jesus skulketh in his holt,"*1. which, after all, is not a quarter so blasphemous as to suppose that Jesus, the Son of God, the Very God, resides in a loaf and a bottle, as the Plymouth brethren did in the same satire – *vide* scene xiii. Finally, instead of allowing this most unfortunate of unfortunate individuals to peacefully ascend to heaven from two places simultaneously he unfeelingly dismisses him, the Omnipotent, in a jest.*2.

*1. Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 40.
*2. The Sword of Song, Ascension Day, vol. ii, p. 163.

Crowley further shows, by quoting the parable of the sheep and the goats, that the historical(?) Christ was to a great extent devoid of pity, and a little further on in the same poem, "Ascension Day," that he was but a cantankerous divider and obstreperous upstart:

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

*The Sword of Song, Ascension Day, vol. ii, p. 158.

Concerning the mother of the eternal God, Crowley has little to tell us, and the Blessed Virgin's *affaire du cœur* with the amiable Gabriel is but touched on for a moment:

> *"Fear nothing, Mary! All is well!*

I am the angel Gabriel."
She bared her right breast; (query why?)*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, p. 60; vol. ii, p. 182.

According to Al Beidâwi, Gabriel blew into the bosom of Mary's shift, which he opened with his fingers, and his breath reaching her womb, caused the conception.

It may also be remembered that the Spanish mare, of Silius Italicus was similarly impregnated by a certain gas or spirit in the atmosphere.

etc., etc., *vide* Koran. But as regards that most irate and truculent old gentleman, J.H.V.H., he has a considerable amount to relate.

How "All Power can be All Wickedness," is a question that not only strikes Crowley's brain as exceptionally incongruous, but must so strike all who ever think at all. How God being Almighty as well as Beneficent can tolerate such a world of suffering as ours for one minute passes all understanding. The God idea in its infancy, as we have already seen, was the child of ignorance and revenge, and Jahveh, in his turn, is but an emanation of this world idea, no better than the rest:

Baal and Jehovah, Ashtoreth
And Chemosh and these Elohim,
Life's panders in the brothel. Death!
Cloudy imaginings, a dream
Built lip of fear and words and woe.
All, all my soul must overthrow."*

*Ahab, vol. ii, p. 123.

Crowley further writes:

Nor can I see what sort of gain
God finds in this creating pain.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 172.

But man the father of God did, for he was naturally bloodthirsty, avaricious, and cruel, and man to-day is but a veneered representative of his forefathers, still suppliant at the feet of the phallic Jahveh:

> That man to-day should not be weaned
> Of worshipping so foul a fiend
> In presence of the living Sun.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 177.

But so it is, and so it will be for many a generation yet to come; cause and effect are but replicas of each other, and if the cause be ignorance, it is useless to look for the wisdom of Solomon in the effect; men's gods are but gilded duplications of themselves, and their ideal but the "resurrection pie" of past feasting. Man loves the mysterious, and his god is but a poor conjuring trick, as is shown in "Pentecost" – "a mysterious way… God moves in to fix up his Maskelyne tricks."*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 168.

Leaving now these satirical poems for other works of Crowley's, we shall find a deep, yet in no way less, intense hatred for the sham ideal of all religions. In "Jephthah" we listen to Jephthah praying to Jehovah, god of hosts, for victory over the Ammonites, notwithstanding the fact that should victory be his lot a general violation of all the virgins of Ammon was to follow:

> And turn their own devouring blade
> On city fired and violate maid,*

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 74.

Chemosh was probably no whit better than Jahveh, and Jephthah has almost as firm a belief in the former as in the latter.* In fact, all were as the ground from which they had sprung and on which they grew.

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 76.

In "The Triumph of Man," a magnificent poem in heroic verse, Crowley unfurls the oriflamme of Reason against the bunting of God, leading us on from the realms of gloating anthropophagi to the "magical brotherhood of kings." The absolute crown and kingdom of desire, the one God sealed in the seas and betokened in the winds. "The Spirit of Mankind!"

> Before the darkness, earlier than being,
> When yet thought was not, shapeless and unseeing,
> Made misbegotten of deity on death,
> There brooded on the waters the strange breath
> Of an incarnate hatred. Darkness fell
> And chaos, from prodigious gulphs of hell.
> Life, that rejoiced to travail with a man,
> Looked where the cohorts of destruction ran,
> Saw darkness visible, and was afraid,
> Seeing. There grew like Death a monster shade,
> Blind as the coffin, as the covering sod
> Damp, as the corpse obscene, the Christian God.
> So to the agony dirges of despair
> Man cleft the womb, and shook the icy air
> With bitter cries for light and life and love.
> But these, begotten of the world above,
> Withdrew their glory, and the iron world
> Rolled on its cruel way, and passion furled

Its pure wings, and abased itself, and bore
Fetters impure, and stopped, and was no more,
But resurrection's ghastly power grew strong.
And Lust was born, adulterous with Wrong,
The Child of Lies; so man was blinded still,
Garnered the harvest of abortive ill,
For wheat reaped thistles, and for worship wrought
A fouler idol of his meanest thought:
A monster, vengeful, cruel, traitor, slave,
Lord of disease and father of the grave,
A treacherous bully, feeble as malign,
Intolerable, inhuman, undivine,
With spite close girded and with hatred shod,
A snarling cur, the Christian's Christless God.
Out! misbegotten monster! with thy brood,
The obscene offspring of thy pigritude,
Incestuous wedlock with the Pharisees
That hail the Christ a son of thee! Our knees
Bend not before thee, and our earth-bowed brows
Shake off their worship, and reject thy spouse,
The harlot of the world! For, proud and free,
We stand beyond thy hatred, even we:
We broken in spirit beneath bitter years,
Branded with the burnt-offering of tears,
Spit out upon the lie, and in thy face
Cast back the slimy falsehood; to your place,
Ye Gadarean swine, too foul to fling
Into the waters that abound and spring!
Back, to your mother filth! With hope, and youth,
Love, light, and power, and mastery of truth
Armed, we reject you; the bright scourge we ply,
Your howling spirits stumble to your sty:
The worm that was your lie – our heel its head
Bruises, that bruised us once; the snake is dead.

. . . . . .

So, passionate and pure, the strong chant rolls,
Queen of the mystic unity of souls;
So from eternity its glory springs
King of the magical brotherhood of kings;
The absolute crown and kingdom of desire,
Earth's virgin chaplet, molten in the fire,
Sealed in the Sea, betokened by the wind:
"There is one God, the Spirit of Mankind!"*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, pp. 105, 107. The sacred pledge of the Rosicrucians was: "Man is God and Son of God, and there is no other God but Man."

Such is Aleister Crowley's magnificent contempt for the God ideals of man, and the Christ ideals of a demented mob. That Christianity has been for the greater part of fifteen hundred years an immense power, few can deny; that it has been a power of good, few will deny, though not a few would like to; that it has been a dragonading power of harm few will assert, and still fewer are aware of; for it has ever been the craft of the Christian Church to pass off on her paramours her worn-out old body as that of untasted virginity.

The Catholic Church, the harlot of the seven hills, comes in for sparse mercy. In Tannhäuser we find the head of this infallible and august body of swindlers mocked as a mountebank, and his power as a "barren staff."*1. In "Ascension Day" the whole Christian Church as a lie, "abortion and iniquity,"*2. whose soldiers are no ardent warriors in triple steel, but loathly and disgusting worms,*3. who only show fight when cornered and not always then – "speared wild cats bravely spit."*4. Neither does Crowley spare that anachronism, Present-day Christianity, which fondly imagines it has succeeded in solving the problem of how to sit on two sides of the fence at one and the same time, to offer Christ to the simple-minded with the one

hand and drain their pockets with the other. Amennatep's description of the pathic Ratoum in "The Fatal Force" may fitly be quoted here as an apt description of modern-day Christianity:

> Her power is gone, and we behold her go,
> Haggard and weary, through the palace courts
> And through the temple, lusting for strange loves
> And horrible things, and thirsting for new steam
> Of thickening blood upon her altar steps.
> Her body wearies of desire, and fails
> To satisfy the fury of her spirit;
> The blood feasts sicken her and yield no strength;
> She is made one with hell, and violent force
> Slips and is weakness, and extreme desire
> Spends supple.*5.

*1. Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 260.
*2. Sword of Song, vol. ii, p. 154.
*3. *Ibid*. vol. ii, p. 141.
*4. The Argonauts, vol. ii, p. 119.
*5. The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 143.

Inane revivals stir her muddy waters, as rise gusts of fetid gas from a disturbed cesspool. Maniacs like Piggott and Evans arise, as also do such religious Ananiases as Dowie and Torrey; all battening as greedy vultures on the mental dead, as they take their place on the eternal towers of silence – true mutilators of corpses. Ulric in "The Mother's Tragedy," tells Cora that "Excess is danger, equally in prayer… as in debauchery."*1. And this the howling mob of religionists can never grasp. We know of the spots in the Agapae, and we know to what they referred:

> Out! out! the ghastly torches of the feast!
> Let darkness hide us and the night discover
> The shameless mysteries of God grown beast,

The nameless blasphemy, the slimèd East—
Sin incarnated with a leprous lover!*2.

*1. The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, p. 163.
*2. The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 168.

Whilst these are seeking the "Monstrous desires of secret things,"*1. others are ranting about athiest death-bed scenes. For these Crowley also has a word:

"Oh, very well!" I think you say,
"Wait only till your dying day!
See whether then you kiss the rod,
And bow that proud soul down to God!"
I perfectly admit the fact;
Quite likely that I so shall act!
Here's why Creation jumps at prayer.
You Christians quote me in a breath
This, that, the other atheist's death;
How they sought God! Of course! Impair
By just a touch of fever, chill,
My health – where flies my vivid will?
My carcass with quinine is crammed;
I wish South India were damned;
I wish I had my mother's nursing,
Find precious little use in cursing,
And slide to leaning on another,
God, or the doctor, or my mother.
But, dare you quote my fevered word
For better than my health averred?
The brainish fancies of a man
Hovering on delirium's brink:
Shall these be classed his utmost span?
All that he can or ought to think?

No! the strong man and self-reliant
Is the true spiritual giant.
I blame no weaklings, but decline
To take their maunderings for mine.*2.

*1. The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 170.
*2. Sword of Song, Ascension Day, vol. ii, pp. 160, 161.

We will now end the poet's utter contempt for this worn-out old creed with the following:

…Vex
My soul no more with mistranslations
From Genesis to Revelations,
But leave me with the Flaming Star
Jeheshua (see thou Zohar!)
And thus our formidable Pigeon-
Lamb-and-old-Gentleman religion
Fizzles in smoke, and I am found
Attacking nothing…*

*Sword of Song, Ascension Day, vol. ii, p. 162.

VI

The Chapter known as

The Cup

In which chapter it is related how the Cup held
the ”New Wine,” and how that wine is quaffed
greedily by all; and how to some it tasteth
as bitter as gall, and yet to others is as
Falernian a hundred and twenty
years old; for that is the age
of the cellar from out of
which it was ta’en.

The Cup

IN the last line of "The Star and Garter" is concentrated the whole of the ethical philosophy of Aleister Crowley. It reads as follows:

> But – had it not been for the Garter, I might never have seen the Star.

In it we find the sublime maxim, almost universal, which has been postulated by all the greatest ethical codes of the world. It is the moral prototype, the Favashi of the Zoroastrian, the Tree of Knowledge of Babylonia and Genesis, the Light and Darkness of Isaiah, the Yakheen and Boaz of Solomon, the Unique Athanor of the Qabalist, the Balance of Hegel; the polarity of the worlds, the great centripetal and centrifugal forces, the harmony of the spheres, the path of the stars, the life of the universe.

Without Vice there can be no Virtue, without Virtue there can be no Vice. Without the one, the other becomes absolutely incomprehensible, and beyond our judgement. Hegel held: "that a thing can only arise through its opposite," and this idea was also held by the Qabalists. Deity created good and evil; and both are absolutely necessary to the existence of each other. Further, the Qabalist does not even recognize their independence as two opposing powers, but as one under the one Supreme Deity; the external visible matter world of evil and darkness, and the internal spiritual higher world of Goodness and Light, beneficent and malevolent as the ancient gods of Babylonia. The unique Athanor of philosophic and moral alchemy was the transmutation of darkness into light. "*Quand l'homme grandit Dieu s'éleve*" – it was but a reconstruction of the same idea as held in

Exodus, xxxiii, Moses was unable to look at God face to face; it was also the same idea as held by Charles Darwin – the theory of Evolution. The growth of the protoplast into man, of evil into good. Khephra, god of the morning emerging from the black thunders of night.

Above us flames the Zodiac, the sign of the Balance lies between Virgo and Scorpio, the eagle is the emblem of good, the scorpion of evil, the eagle-winged serpent of Good and Evil; and it is with this doctrine of Good and Evil that we shall now deal.

As there was darkness before אלהים formed the light, and as knowledge is the outcome of ignorance, so is also virtue the outcome of vice.

ERITIS SICUT DEUS, SCIENTES BONUM ET MALUM.

It was Satan, the Lucifer of Milton, the Devil of Blake, and the Serpent of Genesis, who was the author of Wisdom.*

*נחוש same as משיה

> And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. —Gen. iii, 4, 5.

It was only by casting off God, and breaking away from the essentially bestial quality of unreason, that man paradoxically assumed Godhood. Eliphas Lévi in one of his unpublished letters wrote, "The riddle of the sphinx has two answers which are true only in a third. 'The first is God, the second is man, and the third Man-God.'" This is but the overman of the Egoistical philosophy of Nietzsche. Hermes struck a higher chord when he said: "To create

God, is to accomplish our own creation, to make ourselves independent, impassible, and immortal." Blake demonstrated the at-oneness of Good and Evil very clearly in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." "I tell you no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments," he says, referring to the Decalogue. Further back in his "Proverbs of Hell," he writes:

> You never know what is enough unless you know what is
> more than enough.
> The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.
> The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.
> The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.
> The nakedness of woman is the work of God.
> For everything that lives is Holy.

In Samuel Butler's "Erewhon" we find much the same idea in the following couplet.

> He who sins aught sins more than he ought,
> But he who sins naught, has much to be taught.

Blake further writes in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell":

> A man carried a monkey about for a show, and because he was a little wiser than the monkey, grew vain, and conceived himself as much wiser than seven men. It is so with Swedenborg: he shows the folly of churches and exposes hypocrites, till he imagines that all are religious and himself the single one on earth that ever broke a net.
>
> Now hear a plain fact: Swedenborg has not written one new truth.
>
> Now hear another: he has written all the old falsehoods.

> And now hear the reason: He conversed with Angels who are all religious, and conversed not with the Devils who all hate religion…

Goethe, in Faust, also depicted this same moral idea, and most religions have experienced this unity of Virtue and Vice; the early Christians applauded it, and even now in Christian Churches is still sung the beautiful hymn:

> Nearer, my God, to thee,
> Nearer to thee,
> E'en though it be a cross
> That raiseth me!
> Still all my song shall be
> Nearer, my God, to thee,
> Nearer to thee.

To raise oneself through the vicious and the virtuous, to reside, as Adonis did, six months with Proserpine, and six with Venus, to be as day and night, winter and summer, is no easy path to tread; and if it be necessary for the initiate to gaze on the back parts of Jahveh, it is, however, most certainly not necessary for him to kiss the hind quarters of the goat of Mendes, or to revel in the secret orgies of the Agapae; for the tempting of man is but the tempering of the metal.*

*Yet the virtue of one man may be the vice of another.

The flower which springs from the dunghill assimilates into itself particles of matter, transforming them into the ruby of the poppy and the sapphire of the cornflower; so with us, it is synthetically that we rise, and not analytically. Blake grasped this idea and so did Joseph de Maistre. The Arcanum of Solomon is represented by the two pillars of the temple, Yakheen and Boaz, the two forces, the white and the black; separate and contrary, yet in their polarity they are

uniform, equilibrating their unity. The philosopher's stone, as Hermes declared, consisted in separating the ethereal from that which was gross.

> Thou shalt separate the earth from the fire, the ethereal from the gross, gently, but with great industry.
>
> It ascends from earth to heaven, and again it comes down from heaven to earth, and it is invested with the potency of superior and inferior things.
>
> Thou wilt possess by this means the glory of the whole world, and all darkness will depart from thee.
>
> It is the strong power of every power, for it will overcome all things subtle and penetrate all things solid.
>
> It is thus that the world was created.*

*Hermes.

Tannhäuser also separated the higher from the lower self, the good from the evil. Christ also attempted the same course, not living alone for either good or bad, but for the whole, as Jeláládeen sang, "I am the song and singer," etc., the surest centre of immortality lying in the whole, and not in the part. The Qabalist compared the wicked with the excrement of the great human body, a necessary vivific secretion, and not a poison to the living organism. Waite tells us: "These excretions also serve as a manure to the earth, which brings forth fruits to nourish the body; thus death reverts always to life, and evil itself serves for the renewal and nourishment of good."*1. The most important of all the arcana of the *Magnum opus* was the transformation of darkness into light. Again, we have the white and black triangles, the unique Athanor of moral alchemy, the transmutation of darkness into light. "The stone becomes a plant, the plant an animal, the animal a man, and man greatens into Deity."*2.

*1. The Mysteries of Magic, p. 150.

*2. *Ibid*., p. 30.

> Nothing is absolutely evil, nothing is accursed for ever, not even the archangel of evil, for a time will come when his name and angelic nature will be restored to him.*

La Kabbale, Frank, p. 217.

Thus we rise through the microprosopus of good and evil, to the great ethical macroprosopus which is equilibrated. Many are the tracks and by-paths of life which lead over the mountains, the swamps, the forests of existence to that great road, the road of the Soul.

From the supernal flights of Idealism, we now find Crowley in the most infernal depths of realism striving through a sea of blood towards that flaming pentacle which flares on the dim horizon of Hope. All is night, yet all is expectation; herculean is the task, yet the heart is that of a Titan. Blake saw that "Prisons are built with stones of Law; brothels with bricks of Religion," and so does Crowley. Both in their sagacity perceive that the one great crime is that of exclusiveness. The Christian failing to see this, worshipped the masculine power of wisdom and neglected the feminine power of Intelligence, his God was as the God of most religions a veritable He-God, therein lay his fault; the only philosophy perhaps that grasped the truth was that of the Qabala. The microprosopus was neither masculine nor feminine, but androgynous; and it was left for William Postel to utter one of the greatest world truths when he said, "The Word has indeed become man, but not until the Word has become woman will the world be saved." It is this that Crowley sets vividly out before us in his following ethical philosophy.

"To behold sin in its naked Deformity, is the most certain method to oblige us to love Virtue," such is to be read in the prefatory note of a

curious little volume to be found in the British Museum library under the attractive title of "The prostitution of Quality or Adultery *à-la-mode*." It was through the Garter that in the end the Star was seen, in other words it was through the intimate knowledge of the lewd, bad and vicious, that the tender weeping heart was discovered; the rough matrix contained a gem of surpassing beauty, the horny shell a pearl of perfect loveliness. Charicles had to tread the thorny path before he won his Archais, and so must we, before we can win knowledge, weep many bitter tears. The incessant search after Truth carries us through desert lands of misery and oases of temptation, as is only too vividly illustrated in Tannhäuser.

Aphrodite before she could overcome the wiles of Jove had to seek aid from Priapus;* thus so have we all to do, we must eat of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" before we can pluck the fruit of the "Tree of Life."

*The Tale of Archais, vol. i, p. 18.

The mediaeval spiritualism of "Paracelsus" is curiously modernized, if we may use so crude a word, in the mystical poem "Aceldama." The strife in the former from the kingdom to the crown, in the latter seems to be that of Vice towards Virtue, and though quite one of Crowley's earlier poems, it is, however, one of his most interesting and attractive, and this is how I interpret it.

A soul standing in the lupanar of life, aspiring to grasp the mystic riddle from the chilly lips of the eternal sphinx, salutes us, as we open this frail little volume. Our bodies are not burst asunder as was that of Judas, but our souls are reft and rent, and in the end know not God from Satan, or which of these twain have won. "All the dream is wrought a spider-tapestry" yet the soul stands on the blood-red field of Aceldama:

II.

…whose red banners beat
Their radiant fire
Into my shrivelled head, to wither Love's desire?*

*Aceldama, vol. i, p. 2.

The picture becomes grander still, the child of life becomes old in thought:

III.

I was a child long years ago, it seems,
Or months it may be – I am still a child!
They pictured me the stars as wheeling wild
In a huge bowl of water; but my dreams
Built it of Titan oak, its sides were piled
Of fearful wood
Hewn from God's forests, paid with sweat and tears and blood.

Yet to what does this infinite yearning lead? The soul looks "out to the beyond," and from the shapeless and unstayed there bursts the cry of "Nothing," "But evermore came out by the same door wherein I went."* In verse vi we find the mysticism of Berashith "Nothing was everything"; and in verse vii, the perfection of life in death "Absorbed my life in His, dispersed me, gave me death." This is pure Buddhism.

*Omar Khayyám.

In death is found release, freedom from desire, which fools alone reject. In the spiritual contemplation of life the slags of existence fall to the bottom of the burning furnace of the human soul; the power of empire and glory is shattered, "The golden image with the feet of clay," and the marred vessels of the (All)-mighty potter are cast

outside, from the wheel of Fate – why contemplate what is so unprofitable and useless?

Yet in this mysticism which is more intrinsically of the East, we find an intricate web of Egotism tangled with the utilitarianism of the West; for it seems on reading further that it is not in mere abstraction of the real, but rather in the total absorption of the real, that the Nirvana of bliss is to be arrived at. It is terrible sailing this, Scylla lies to our left, Charybdis to our right, the blood-flecked foam of life is dashed on our lips, it is acrid and intoxicating.

XII.

No prostitution may be shunned by him
Who would achieve this Heaven. No satyr-song,
No maniac dance shall ply so fast a thong
Of lust's imagining perversely dim
That no man's spirit may keep pace, so strong
Its pang must pierce;
Nor all the pains of hell may be one tithe as fierce.

XIII.

All degradation, all sheer infamy,
Thou shalt endure. Thy head beneath the mire
And dung of worthless women shall desire
As in some hateful dream, at last to lie;
Women must trample thee till thou respire
That deadliest fume;
The vilest worms must crawl, the loathliest vampires gloom.

Dividuality the curse of existence must vanish, and it can only vanish through the melting of the discordant ego into the harmonious Whole. If we set ourselves aside on a pillar of purity, we are but dualizing existence, the lees of the wine must be quaffed in the same cup as the wine itself, there is no other choice:

XIV.

Thou must breathe in all poisons; for thy meat,
Poison; for drink, still poison; for thy kiss,
A serpent's lips!…

Then the verse continues, and we see if we may so express it, the great nuptials with the Lords of Lust:

An agony is this
That sweats out venom; thy clenched hands, thy feet
Ooze blood, thine eyes weep blood; thine anguish is
More keen than death.
At last – there is no deeper vault of hell beneath!

Then comes the great reward. We have travelled knee deep through the mire of life, yet if our souls he spotless our abasement, "…bringeth back the sheaves"

XV.

Of golden corn of exaltation,
. . . . . .
With strange intoxications mad and manifold.

It is this curious phase, yearning towards Perfection, which forms the great stumbling-block to all progress in the life of a soul. Priestcraft has drawn a definite line between Vice and Virtue; it has hedged itself round with chastity, veracity, honesty, and modesty, and set itself apart to wage an incessant war on vice, lechery, mendacity, immodesty, etc., etc. And what has been the result of this duality? The very fort of virtuous self-sufficiency, the very citadel of chaste-exclusiveness has become fetid with the horrors of besiegement, the moats are filled with the putrid carcasses of an unjust war; fever reigns, vice laughs, the inhabitants starve, sucking the putrid pus from the wounds of the

dead, and devouring rats and other vermin. Outside in the Camp of Vice, plague reigns and pestilence rules; yet if the summed evils of Virtue and Vice were cast into the balance of Truth, who dare say which would outweigh the other? Everyone knows the degradation as well as the ennoblements of war; the former ever as some leprous brach licking at her heels; the latter a halo of sainthood to be cast o'er the skull of the time-cleansed skeleton, which was once a spongy mass of wriggling larvae. During his life the thief stole, he lied, and he cheated; pursued, he was caught, judged, and nailed to a cross, and in death alone was he promised the subconscious longing of his life – Paradise.

This duality of Virtue and Vice has rent the world, as with a sword, and her garment has been torn asunder. Some say "this is mine!" others "that is mine!" and so the quarrel rages. Yet will they not unite? for the blending of Virtue and Vice means the loss of some supposed comfort, and comfort is the God of man's heart, the Vampire which sucks its life from his shrivelling soul.

In laughter alone we shall never solve the riddle of life, only in the mingling of our smiles with our sobs shall we realize the kiss of God on our brow. Yet the dangers are terrible. How many of us can listen to the voice of Circe without becoming swine? and in the full melancholy of so vast a contemplation, the poet sings:

XVIII.

I dare not to the greater sins aspire;
I might – so gross am I – take pleasure in
These filthy holocausts, that burn to sin
A damnéd incense in the hellish fire
Of human lust – earth's joys no heaven may win;
Pain holds the prize
In blood-stained hands; Love laughs, with anguish in His eyes.

Also he sees how dangerous it is to sip from the cup of "little common sins." Sins nurtured by trust in man's forgiveness; then struck with the horror of the still small voice, he bids God break his unrepentant will, and let the kiss of life:

XXI.

Melt on my lips to flame, fling back the gates of Dis!

This is the true conquest of life, the salvation of a soul wandering through the mazy depths of existence. At length filled with the experience of worldly things seeking the Sublime, he finds it. The kingdom of Dis, the terrors of Death are vanquished, "and, like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind."

Yet how difficult is all this without the guidance of a master hand, the hand which supports but does not hold, directing but never compelling.

Then the Isis of Aceldama is unveiled, and the secret is caught from the age-worn lips of the Sphinx. On the crimson field of the Exoteric the body of exclusive Esoterism lies dead, the soul has sloughed the skin of caste, has riven the fetters of law, has smitten the last head from the hydra of religion; and rises as an eagle-winged serpent, sublime, neither good nor evil, pristine, Adamic, immaculate:

XXIV.

An ecstasy to which no life responds,
Is the enormous secret I have learned:
When self-denial's furnace-flame has burned
Through love, and all the agonizing bonds
That hold the soul within its shell are turned
To water weak;
Then may desires obtain the cypress crown they seek.

It is only when we lose the cherished present, that it looms up through the mist of time as a glorious past; and it is only when we have lost the body of corruption, that its soul rises sublime purifying all; our personality purified by death the great Time Soul lies cradled in our own as the four lips of two lovers are in their bridal kiss. Alone by trampling life's grapes do we gain the vintage of the Soul, the Medean draught of rejuvenescence.

The whole of this wonderful philosophy the poet sums up in the following two verses of extraordinary and extravagant power:

XXVIII.

Aubrey attained in sleep when he dreamt this
Wonderful dream of women, tender child
And harlot, naked all, in thousands piled
On one hot writhing heap, his shameful kiss
To shudder through them, with lithe limbs defiled
To wade, to dip
Down through the mass, caressed by every purple lip.

XXIX.

Choked with their reek and fume and bitter sweat
His body perishes; his life is drained;
The last sweet drop of nectar has not stained
Another life; his lips and limbs are wet
With death-dews! Ha! The painter has attained
As high a meed
As his who first begot sweet music on a reed.

Love alone is immortal, love for the good, love for the bad. Redolent with divinity, it floats onward through life, through heaven, through hell, till the flaming forms of Paolo and Francesca rise before us, an everlasting answer to the eternal word of Love.

Nay? kiss in double death-pang, if you dare!
Or one day I will strangle you within
My heavy hair!*

*Aceldama, vol. i, p. 6.

Slowly, and solely through temptation can man be purified. Burns, who was possessed with the happiest knack of striking the nail full on the head, driving it home at one blow, describes this well in his "Address to the Unco Gude":

What's done we partly may compute
But kenna what's *resisted*.

It is this resistance alone which sanctifies man, body and soul. There is sparse morality in the well-fed, the well-housed, the well-dressed, their existence is indolent, comfortable, affluent; but in the ill-fed, the houseless, the unclothed, there may be much. There is nothing sublime in an oily gourmet passing a baker's shop without wishing to steal a loaf; but in a hungry child whose hollow bowels growl for food the opportunity of theft if resisted is noble. The sleek, smiling society hostess has no need to frequent the streets for gain, but who dare say that the poor hounded outcast has not? HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN AMONG YOU, LET HIM FIRST CAST A STONE AT HER.

Even the Scribes and Pharisees, who were thus rebuked, departed in silence, convicted by their own conscience; but not so our modern Christian *canaille*, from the Pope and the Archbishop and the Patriarch downwards. O, Christians! you daily crucify your Saviour, hourly you drive the rusty nails through His outstretched hands, O "maudite race!" "WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BELLY, WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME, WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS."

Temptation is the Armourer who tries the blade, and Resistance the quality of the steel. How many of the well-fed will bear the test of old Andrea? How many would prove themselves a worthy blade to Ferrara?

Sadness stares around us with hollow tear-drowned eyes, and the days of our joys are wet with the weeping of the night of sorrow. On, on we plod, through life's by-ways and alleys, through mud and slime, onward we must go if we are ever to win the gates of Wisdom and Understanding and attain the Kingdom of the Holy Crown. "Self" we must slay, it is the great sin of life:*1. "The scorpion kisses, and the stings of sin, cling hard within."*2. The small still voice calls to us, yet we must overcome it, in its conquest alone lies our salvation. "Truth" is our St. George, whose sword is as keen as his of "The Nameless Quest," and "Self" the dragon which we must slay:

*1. Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 50.
*2. *Ibid*. vol. i, p. 54.

Central, supreme, most formidable, Night
Gathered its garments, drew itself apart;
Gaunt limbs appear athwart the coprolite,
Veil the deep agony, display the heart;
Even as a gloomy sea,
Wherein dead fishes be,
Poisonous things, nameless; the eightfold Fear,
Misshapen crab and worm,
The intolerable sperm,
Lewd dragons, slime-built. Stagnant, the foul mere
Crawled, moved, gave tongue,
The essential soul of dung
That lived and stung;
That spoke: no word that living head may hear!
. . . . . .
Last, a dark woman pressed

The world unto her breast,
Soothed and caressed
With evil words and kisses of the mouth of Sin.*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p 198.

On we must press, undaunted, against all odds and numbers, as in the spiritual journey towards the Supreme of "The Ultimate Voyage," struggling with the cold wet horrors of life:

…with my sword
Trenchant, that tore their scaly essences—
Like Lucian's sailor writhing in the clutch
Of those witch-vines – I slashed about like light,
And noises horrible of death devoured
That hateful suction of their clinging arms
And wash of slippery bellies…*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 97.

Life is a boiling cauldron of purposes, actions, and desires. At one moment all pessimistic with the "toad-spotted dew"*1. of Reality, at the next all full-hearted optimism, "Yet I believe what e'er we do is best for me and best for you";*2. then as stoical as Marcus, "I conquer, and most silently await the end."*3.

*1. The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 178.
*2. The Sword of Song, vol. ii, p. 155.
*3. Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 52.

All phases of thought are crowded on our minds as we read through these slight volumes. And what is the goal of this "Ultimate Voyage?" A deep and tearless sadness, a growing wonder of how such luxury, such wealth, such satiety can exist cheek by jowl with such squalor, such poverty, such want. Is there a God? Could there

be a God? A power of Light compatible with such dismal darkness. Is there a life eternal? The grim horror of such a possibility grips us by the throat. Is there an eternal Death? Ah! Saviour, deliver us from the misery of our lot; lead us to the realms of eternal Rest, where rich and poor, good and bad, are made one, lost in the depths of the Lethean sea.

And what can all this lead us to, this progress through misery? To the great archetype the Arahat-ship of Buddha. It was by gazing on the sunken eyes of a corpse, so the legend runs, that Gautama forsook pleasure for a life of pity. Life is feodal to Death, and our ultimate sleep is greater than our first awakening. The womb was dark; from out it sprang the thoughtless; the tomb is darker still; into it creeps the thoughtful. The dead are our gods, soon we shall strike our tent for the last time and join the great caravanserai of the departed:

> Wend now thy way with brow serene, fear not thy humble tale
> to tell—
> The whispers of the Desert-wind; the tinkling of the camel's
> bell.*

*The Kasîdah. R. Burton.

This beauty of Death as the releaser from the temptations of life, is finely drawn by the subtle pen of Aleister Crowley. Death is no longer the grub-slimed skull, about whose sticky lips buzz the blue blow-flies of decay; but rather a divine goddess, whose arms are ever about us, and whose kiss is the kiss of a mother closing the eyes of her child in gentle sleep:

> I died the moment when you tore away
> The bleeding veil of my virginity.
> The pain was sudden – and the joy was long.
> Persists that triumph, keenly, utterly!

Write, then, in thy mysterious book of song:
"Death chisels marble where life moulded clay."*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 182.

And again:

Dim winds shall whisper echoes of
Our slow ecstatic breath,
Telling all worlds how sweet is love,
How beautiful is Death.*

*The Argonauts, iv, vol. ii, p. 110.

Thus in this cup which Aleister Crowley offers us, we find that to sip the honey of Virtue is to quaff the wormwood of Vice; they are one, and there must be no comparison. Outside our minds exists neither one nor the other, alone there is Power, Eastwards it verges towards Virtue, Westwards towards Vice – Heaven and Hell – yet in neither is there vitality, for absolutes are without change. Our lives are vital because of the mingling of many dregs; and as in the death of these we can alone check vitality or change, so also in that greater Death can we alone solve the mystery of pure being. Virtue and Vice they are one, being formless and eternal without time or number; for whilst we live death is not, and the purities of state cannot be. We live in a land of mingled cloud and flame, on the marge of the kingdoms of the Positive and the Transcendent, all is as a seething cauldron of finalities; ever boiling up to vanish in the inane. Optimism and Pessimism, the former proffering to us the golden chalice filled with the vanities of life, the latter a leaden cup replete with the excretum of existence.

"Away, away, out of my sunlight," waved Diogenes; he saw before him a man, only a man full of brains and bowels. The maidens of

Athens laughed at him, wizened misogynist and dreary sage, yet even the most beautiful of these monthly would spill her crimson libation to the moon. “Yea! truly, away, away, out of my sight, O shadow of a king; but last night wert thou not fingering the delicate chalice of Campaspe, and a few hours hence will not thy drowsy hand crimson the white womb of thy Mother Earth with the red lees of the grape of Bacchus, so full of the poppies of sleep, and the wormwood of sorrow.”

From the silver goblet of laughter, that leaden cup of weeping, have the nations drunk the dregs of many lives: for the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with pearls and precious stones, hath made them drunk on the golden cup of her abominations, on the wine of her fornications, on the filthy philtres of her whoredoms; and they have become truculent, and boisterous, and mad; cloaking the silken nakedness of the day with their woollen shroud of darkness, and seeking in the depths of night the mysteries of everlasting light.

O Dweller in the Land of Uz, thou also shalt be made drunken, but thy cup shall be hewn from the sapphire of the heavens, and thy wine shall be crushed from the clusters of innumerable stars; and thou shalt make thyself naked, and thy white limbs shall be splashed with the purple foam of immortality. Thou shalt tear the jewelled tassels from the purse of thy spendthrift Fancy, and shalt scatter to the winds the gold and silver coins of thy thrifty Imagination; and the wine of thy Folly shalt thou shower midst the braided locks of laughing comets, and the glittering cup of thine Illusions shalt thou hurl beyond the confines of Space over the very rim of Time.

Thou O seeker after Wisdom, and Virtue, and multiscient Truth, thou O wanderer in the groves of Eleusis, thou, even thou shalt drink of the wine of Iacchus, and thy cup shall be as a triple flame set with sapphire, and beryl, and amethyst; for it is the cup of Adepts, and of Heroes, and of Gods. Then all the absinthial bitterness of thine heart

shall vanish midst the chaunting of souls lost in the ocean of understanding for ever and everlasting.

From the filthy distillations of thy life, and the golden traffic of its quintessential lusts; from the fantastic dews of thy death, and all the gibbous glitter of its mirific mirror, shalt thou be purified: and thy cup shall be as the cusps of the hornéd moon, and thy wine as the blood of the spheres trodden by the angels of God, singing, singing, singing, throughout all Eternity.

Thy joy shall be as the kiss of new-born suns, and thy bliss as a flaming cloud of bridal stars. Thou shalt sit on the throne of Time in the centre 'twixt the four corners of the Universe; and in thy left hand shalt thou hold the Balances of Being, in which thou shalt weigh the suns, and moons, and all the hosts of heaven; and thy foot-stool shall be the Abyss, and thy sceptre a sword of flaming fire, thy crown the Zodiac set with the flashing Stone of the Wise. Robed in glory, and wisdom, and understanding, a light of loveliness, thou, God-voiced with thunder and lightning, shalt breathe forth words of fire to flame forever through the empyrean of heaven and to resound without ceasing beyond the nadir of hell. Thou shalt plunge into the mystery of all things and become as a Sun unto thyself, and with thine own beams shalt thou paint the hueless ocean of thy Godhead. Thou shalt see things as they are; and all shall dissolve around thee, and thou around all, till unity itself become but nothingness in the unutterable bliss of a boundless rapture.

O wine of Iacchus, O wine, wine, wine.

VII

The Chapter known as

The New Wine

In which chapter it is related: how the “New Wine”
which was drawn from the Tavern known as the
“Well of Life” burst the” Old Bottle”; and yet
was not spilt. And wherein it is shown how it
intoxicated the multitudes to dreams in
the which they perceive many things
that are not; and how it openeth
the eye of the wise to the
vision of the One Won-
der which alone is.

The New Wine*1.

ALL philosophies when ultimately reduced to their simplest terms fall either under the subjective or objective systems of thought.*2. The former is ontologic, the latter empiric: the first descends from fiction, whilst the second rises from fact; both, paradoxical as it may seem, are at one and the same time contradictory and identical, merging into a perfect unity, not in the realms of a spiritual or material monism, but in those of a Hylo-Idealistic philosophy, which is Agnostic, and from thence into a Self-Illuminism which baffles definition.

*1. Argument: This chapter attempts to show how all philosophies may be equated in corresponding terms of each other; and how the philosophic principles of Berkeley and Hume, combined, form what may be known as the philosophical theme of Crowleyanity, in which it is demonstrated how all systems are inwardly mystically identical, and outwardly sceptically diverse. Further, how by the study of Berkeley, Hume, and Kant, taken unitedly or separately, the conclusion which is arrived at is, that the Reason alone is inadequate to solve the Great Problem; for ultimately all systems based on a Rational foundation arrive at an inscrutable mystery – "God," "A Something," "An à priori," beyond which they cannot penetrate. Where Agnosticism and Scientific Buddhism end, Crowleyanity begins. By Qabalistically tackling the question, it proposes a Future to all Rational Philosophies, thereby becoming a mystical theurgy, whereby the difficulties set in motion by the conceptions of "Infinite" and "Eternal" are overcome by the annihilation of Time and Space, and the reduction of all rational terms to an absolute inertia in zero. From here Crowleyanity becoming purely mystical becomes symbolic, leading those who follow into the Kingdom of the Adepts; and finally showing how the keynote of all mystical systems of either East or West, is to be found in Ecstasy; and how the former, arriving at this sublime state by purely mechanical methods, are not so suitable to those Western nations as their own poetic mysticism, as found in the divine works of the Christian Fathers, the Alchymistic Philosophers, and the Mystical Poets of Ancient and Modern times.

*2. There is an old saying, "All men are born either Platonists or Aristotelians."

For many centuries now, European thought has been labouring under the *damnosa hereditas* of foregone conclusions. And as religion in the attempt to anthropomorphise power, through the medium of dialectic symbols, lost all footing and plunged headlong into the pandemoniac majesty of Deity, so philosophy, losing all grip of reality by clutching the illusive realism of its own creative faculties, was itself whirled into that furnace of hereditary prejudice, and educational bias, from out of which it has flowed a mass of molten and subservient acquiescence. Lost in the axiomatic whirlpools of egotistical conceit, it has been cast up once again on the shores of unknowable despair, a veritable mass of philosophic pig-iron, of no further use than that of acting as ballast to the good ship which is to carry us across the turbid ocean of raging Eclectics.

Crowley is more than a new-born Dionysus, he is more than a Blake, a Rabelais or a Heine; for he stands before us as some priest of Apollo, hovering 'twixt the misty blue of the heavens, and the more certain purple of the vast waters of the deep. Before the name of That which is beyond life and death, beyond matter and energy, beyond the human and the mortal; he stands, holding before us as a standard, the homologue of the *Labarum* of old, "*In hoc signo vinces… Non timendum est Veritate duce*."

In order to cut a long story short, it may be assumed that so-called modern philosophy finds its founder in the French philosopher Descartes; for it was he who started to unravel the Penelope web of tangled philosophic thought, which had lain sleeping for a thousand years or more upon the sterile shelf of Christian impotence.

His theories of "Innate ideas" raised the anger of Locke, the disciple of Aristotle and Bacon. Revolting from the *cognito ergo sum* of Descartes, he compared the mind to a *tabula rasa*, on which he in his

turn wrote an equal absurdity in the words: *nihil est in intellectu quod non antea fuerit in sensu*. Leibnitz in his day, perceiving the weakness in this axiom, extended its phraseology, but in no way its meaning, by adding *Excipi nisi ipse intellectus*. This weakness in Locke's system became only too apparent to his followers; and Berkeley, as well as Hume, and later still Kant himself, travelling by slightly different roads, ultimately arrived at the same destination: "we cannot go beyond experience."

In the first half of the last century Kant's immediate successors, such as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, swinging round this central point of attraction, though viewing it from different positions, ultimately, like moths round a candle, fell spluttering into the socket, burnt by that same flame they were attempting to explain away. Nevertheless, though at first their Narcissus-like self-worship may seem to have been productive of little good, at least, however, it has brought to blossom one irrefragable and irrefutable fact, and that is: that in some apparently unknown plane, sensation *can* be other than subjective, *i.e.*, in the subject, in other words, that subjective creation can outstep its own creator and *vice versa*. For there is a

> sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
> And rolls through all things.*

*Wordsworth.

To the uninitiated this matter must for the present remain dark, and though at first the neophyte may think that the following solution,

which I trust I shall be able in some little way to explain, is but one on a similar footing to that as set forward by those supernaturalists who dogmatize concerning *credo quia absurdum*, I must bid him now at the very outset remember, that "except he become as a little child, he can in no way enter into the kingdom of heaven"; and further, becoming as a little child it must be remembered that it is as child-like to grasp at that which alone can be solved "in the alembic of the heart, and through the athanor of affliction," as it is for a child to grasp a loaded gun, wotting not of its subtle machinery. For a man becoming as a child, may, like that child which he has become, play with that loaded weapon, nurse that loaded weapon, go to bed with that loaded weapon, expecting nothing of so innocent a toy; and then one day as he presses his *fetish* fondly to his heart, there is a deafening crash; and that child who was once a man, flashes up through the golden gates of Paradise, or is hurled headlong down to Hell. He may become spontaneously, in the twinkling of an eye, a St. Francis preaching to his little sisters the birds, or Egg-Nogg who persists in a state of abnormal flatulency, because he considers himself identical with a bottle of ginger-beer.

The state of illumination above mentioned is by no means an easy one to attain to, and the study of philosophy alone helps us, if we follow it under the shaded light of a critical scepticism; for as a chemist reduces his compounds to their component parts, and then to their elementary conditions; so must we dissect all philosophic arguments which rise up antagonistic to our true selves – that is in harmony with our false selves – seducing our sense to pluck the fruit which is pleasant to the eye, or inducing our understanding in despair, to cast itself down from the pinnacle of the temple into that abyss below, which is the world. Then in the end we shall find all these philosophies are but types of the One, that all things are a unity, that no contradiction can or does exist, and that there is a universal harmony; then, as that terrific night engulfs all and envelops us, O children of the Day! Let us rise up with the whole

dawn of our understanding, encircle and annihilate this dismal unity, and conglobe all into a perfect nothingness, an ineffable bliss – attainment is ours.

> It matters little whether we
> With Fichte and the Brahmins preach
> That Ego-Atman sole must be;
> With Schelling and the Buddha own
> Non-Ego-Skandhas are alone;
> With Hegel and – the Christian? teach
> That which completes, includes, absorbs
> Both mighty unrevolving orbs
> In one informing masterless
> Master-idea of consciousness—
> All differences as these indeed
> Are chess play, conjuring. "Proceed!"
> Nay! I'll go back. The exposition
> Above, has points. But simple fission
> Has reproduced a different bliss,
> At last a heterogenesis!*

*Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 170.

Many roads lead to Philosophy and branch forth from it, as Crowley above shows, and in a short essay like this we intend but to travel through the labyrinthine mysteries of all by the silken clue of one, handed us by Aleister Crowley. And as there are many by-ways, corridors, and blind alleys in this great labyrinth of Parnassus, so in this clue, which has been given us, we shall find many twisted threads, yet all of one fibre, which will lead us, the weary wanderers in the mysteries, to that certain and blissful kingdom which shall be our beginning.

Kant has said, the business of all philosophy is to answer the question ”What can I know?” Huxley, perhaps the astutest philosopher since the days of the magus of Königsberg, observes that it is impossible to answer the question “What can I know?” unless in the first place there is a clear understanding of what is meant by knowledge, and in order to answer this question, “we must have recourse to that investigation of mental phenomena, the results of which are embodied in the science of psychology.”* But the true crux of all philosophic arguments lies, as we hope shortly to show, in a still deeper problem than this, namely: “What is the ’I‘ which causes us to know?” For surely it is but common-sense to first inquire of the engineer how the engine is worked, instead of blundering in attempts to do so for ourselves, without knowledge, or even the necessary instruction as to the subtle adjustment of the different parts. And it is on account of the want of this ”I“ that all science resting on the inquiry “What do I know?” without the “I” being analytically disclosed, must, and does, rest upon knowledge purely accidental or hypothetical.

*Huxley’s Essay on Hume, p. 59.

It is quite as possible for hypothetical arguments to be rightly and wrongly applied, as it is for mechanical tools. A pick-axe is a most useful implement in levelling a road, and equally a most useless one in mending a watch; so also with hypothetical arguments, a subtle and illuminated mystic will discard such mean scaffolding, or at least attain such a perfection in the art of constructing his temple of the Holy Ghost as in time to be able to do without such mental timber. Such scaffold poles are those which support and buttress up the frail edifice of science on the mud of ignorance, in which it and its superstructure will eventually be engulfed; for its whole foundation reposes upon the unequilibrated illusions of the mind, which so long as their influences remain unbalanced, stand as impediments in the way of the inward development of the human race.* And as the

gigantic edifice of the Christian Church was the child of the neuropathic mystagogues of the dark ages of religion, so now the colossal fabric of Scientific Utilitarianism, offspring of a distorted and epileptic steam-mania, has bemerded us with its panting slime, and wound us tight in the arachnoid meshes of its kakodemoniacal web, until we stand before ourselves, no longer *homo sapiens*, but alone, naked and unadorned, a cinder-sprinkled, soot-besmeared, spider-legged, *homo ridiculissimus*!

*Science here as a method is not attacked. For as such, scientific investigations have always triumphed over mystical aspirations, which to say the least, have been chaotic in the extreme. Crowley is never tired of urging a scientific study or the conditions of illumination as the one hope of mastering the subject.

Periodically as the adepts soar above vulgar appreciation, and when vulgar understanding has, swine-like, trodden their pearls of wisdom back into the mud of its own sty, a great wave of materialism sweeps over the face of the globe. This system of thought, built on the illusive phantasmagoria of the mind, found in the West a master-mind to mould it into shape, in the personality of Democritus of Abdera; and from the day when that sage materialized the creations of his brain to that of Büchner and the present-day mud-larks, it has formed the stumbling-block to nearly every great thinker, and the veritable *pus puriens* of the common mind. However, out of the slough grew, as must always happen, a subtle plant; and in the form of Newton, whose scientific demonstration of auto-kineticism, many ages previously adumbrated by Empedocles and Democritus, gave the death-blow to that Empiricism, which may be typified in Locke's assertion that "motion and figure are really in the manna," to which Berkeley attributed a purely mental existence; for he asserts again and again that the only substantial existence is the hypothetical substratum of mind, *i.e.*, spirit.* And this, as Huxley himself states, if pushed to its logical extreme, passes into pantheism pure and simple; and thus through objecting to Locke's primary qualities as things in

themselves, Berkeley returns, through the objection, back to the *causa sui*, or better, *ratio sui* of Spinoza, the spiritual twin of Locke.

*All these philosophers end in the same quandary as the old gentleman who with only one tooth in his mouth tried to spike a pickled onion.

I have taken some little trouble to arrive at this one isolated conclusion, that the Realism of the scholastic philosophers, the materialism of the classical and modern sages, and also, if we choose to extend our scheme, Nominalism, Conceptualism, Theism, Positivism, Spiritualism (Malebranche), Agnosticism (Spencer), all and one, with all the other isms, may, with the slightest trouble in the world, be equated into corresponding terms of Berkeleyan Idealism. And why? Because each individual master, each separate school, like the astronomer in the fable, whilst gazing at his own particular star, fell into the open ditch which yawned unperceived at his feet. And Berkeley: is he the *Ultima Thule*, the stone of the wise? By no means, only I, in the above case, chose to represent the ditch by Berkeley; you may call it Büchner, Spencer, or Hume, for you my readers, if you with sufficient patience pursue what I will now call Crowleyanity* to its ultimate end, will find that William Shakespeare of Avon was not the only man in this fair world who doubted not that by any other name a rose would smell as sweet.

*Not only the lever of Archimedes, but also the fulcrum he could not discover.

Let us now take an infinite series A,B,A,B,A,B. The question asked is: which is first, A or B? And the answer depends entirely upon the direction of thought. Science will say that intelligence is last, and that matter slowly evolves into animal life; in fact, that matter (A) is first, and intelligence (B) is second. The idealists and sankhyâs will put intelligence (B) first, and the series will run B,A,B,A,B,A. Both, however, are indicating the same chain; but Crowley,* like the philosophers of the Vedanta, strides beyond both intellect and matter

to find an "I" (purusha) or self, which is beyond all intellect, and of which intellect is but the borrowed light, as Patanjali says in one of his yoga aphorisms: "The seer is intelligence only, and though pure, sees through the colouring of the intellect."

*This is the earlier Fichtean Crowley, though he has already passed through Schelling to Hegel, and grouped this triad in one, as it were Fichte *in excelsis*; not the middle, who has called the triad "Schelling"; still less the latter, who, perceiving the antinomies of reason, dismisses alike the data and conclusions of all the sciences with an all-embracing scepticism, while he devotes life to the perfecting of an instrument by whose aid we may eventually be able to make a fresh start.

In "Pentecost," Crowley writes:

> You know for me the soul is nought
> Save a new phantom in the thought,
> That thought itself impermanent,
> Save as a casual element
> With such another may combine
> To form now water and now wine;
> The element itself may be
> Changeless to all eternity,
> But compounds ever fluctuate
> With time or space or various state.
> (Ask chemists else!) So I must claim
> Spirit and matter are the same
> Or else the prey of putrefaction.*

*Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 170.

And we intend to take it as such, otherwise, like Mysticus, we, if we enter the vortex of subjectivity and objectivity, "shall be tossed about as the world this 2,500 years."*

*Time, vol. ii, p. 268.

IDEALISM

In the philosophy of Plato idealism took the shape of a strictly formal characteristic, there was nothing in itself, as Kant might have explained it, an idea however dating back long before either Plato or Kant, and to be first found in any degree of maturity in the Upanishads of post-vedic India. Form was reality, and nothing else, it was the sole and only essence. From such metaphysics rose numerous modified forms which may he roughly classed under the name of Spiritualism (Malebranche). They asserted that matter objectively was illusion or maya, and that the world problem could only be considered as a reality subjectively in the thoughts as "thinks," in fact the world real was simply an elaboration of these "thinks." These spiritualistic philosophies stagnating for a time were soon mystified by man's inherent longing for the wonderful,* and developed into various systems of Spiritism and Mysticism, both high and low. Of the latter the most renowned, and in many ways the most profound, was the Philosophy of the Qabalah.

*"The *imagination* of man is naturally sublime, delighted with whatever is remote and extraordinary, and running without control into the most distant parts of space and time in order to avoid the objects, which custom has rendered too familiar to it." —*An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Hume (Religion of Science Library), p. 172.

The Qabalah, if it may be called a philosophy; for it was never synthetical, or concrete, being a conglomerated mass of ecstatic ideals and exalted desires, evolved in the mind of man as an attempt to grasp all possible quantities emanating from the Ain Soph, which in itself remained Zero.

Turning now for a short time from the Mystic to the Idealistic philosophy, we find that though both are closely united, the former founds its system on man's wondering ignorance in trying to link subject and object esoterically, whilst the latter builds up reality in mind perceptions, treating nothing as illusion but the reality of the materialists. Berkeley, when he declared in his transcendental philosophy that *esse=percipi* was only in reality reiterating the idea held ages previously in "The Veil of Maya." Kant threw more fuel on the Berkeleyan argument when he stated in his "Critique of Pure Reason," that we can have no positive knowledge whatsoever of "the thing in itself." Since then this idea of the subjectivity of reality has gained more ground under Hegel, and later in numerous works dealing directly or indirectly with Spiritual Monisms. Even in the middle of the eighteenth century, forty years after Berkeley had stimulated the dry bones of this problem into a vigorous existence, materialism waged but a losing, or at best an unprogressive war against it. Holbach himself had to admit that, though he considered Berkeley's arguments as sheer sophisms, they nevertheless remained unanswerable… Idealism may not be correct, neither may its intenser form Spiritualism; but so far as this argument is of value, neither may Realism nor Materialism; for both these philosophies have, as we have just seen, resolved themselves into an infinite chain of events, which may be expressed under the symbolization of A,B,A,B,A,B, the ultimate issue being the triumph of Agnosticism.

All the wisest from all ages with all their wisdom finally have had to utter "We Know Not," and write "ignoramus" across their life's work. Yet is not this infallibly as it must be, if we search for an absolute truth by relative means; we cannot prove that it does not exist, any more than we can prove that it does; for if we dare to attempt to tread so thorny a path with the utmost success the land we reach is but the land of Weissnichtwo.

The world does not exist outside me. I am the world; but what am I? Herein lies the greatest of riddles.

This question, this gigantic "What?" Crowley sets forth lucidly enough in "Pentecost" and "Ascension Day." He writes:

> To calculate one hour's result
> I find surpassing difficult;
> One year's effect, one moment's cause;
> What mind could estimate such laws?
> Who then (much more!) may act aright
> Judged by and in ten centuries' sight?*

*Sword of Song, Ascension Day, vol. ii, p. 155.

He shows us how utterly inadequate are our powers, how utterly absurd it is of us to hanker after infinite ideals with our finite minds. As a child cries for the moon, so do we cry for our ideal, ultimate, absolute, call it what you will; the First Cause in Philosophy, the God of Religion. In the end our finite understandings burst like bubbles.

The rampant positivism of to-day is so drunk on the spume of the oceanic knowledge of the deep, that it sees no further than the tip of its own glowing nose, upon which roseate point it hypnotises itself into a hypermnemonic state of "Knowallableness"; this, if not more so is certainly quite as fatuous a standpoint to hold as that of Spencer, in his philosophy of the "Unknowable." Both are dogmatisms, and as such condemn the very object of their existence.

It is seldom remembered that the Infinite need not necessarily mean the boundless; for there is the infinitely small, just as there is the infinitely great, as Crowley states in Aceldama;

> The inmost is the home of God. He moulds Infinity.

The great within the small, one stainless unity!*

*Aceldama, vol. i, p. 4.

The power of the small is grandly described in the following;

Yet ants may move the mountain; none is small
But he who stretches out no arm at all;
Toadstools have wrecked fair cities in a night,
One poet's song may bid a kingdom fall.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 110.

And that which is below is as that which is above; for:

Time is to us the Now, and Space the Here;
From us all Matter radiates, is a part
Of our own thoughts and souls.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 119.

So we see:

For Gods, and devils too, I find
Are merely modes of my own mind!*

*Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 177.

"All is illusion," says Criosda.* I and further in that weird play – "The God-Eater" – we already heard him solemnly utter:

*The God Eater, vol. ii, p. 138.

Mystery ninefold closed upon itself
That matter should move mind – Ay! Darker yet

That mind should work on matter? And the proof
Extant, implicit in the thought thereof!
Else all our work were vain. These twain be one.*

*The God Eater, vol. ii, p. 134.

In these five lines we find a clinching of the whole argument. "These twain be one." No more than this did Berkeley ever arrive at:

"But, though it were possible that solid, figured, movable substances may exist without the mind, corresponding to the ideas we have of bodies, yet how is it possible for us to know this? Either we must know it by sense or by reason."* He never denied the material existence of things, and was as much a phenomenalist as an idealist. Crowley, similarly accepting Egoity, does not however reject Non-egoity, but envelops both.

*The Principles of Human Knowledge, p. 39. (Religion of Science Library.)

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

One is pure ether, one pure clay.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 183.

In pure Idealism, objects have no independent existence; but in the above, which is no less than pure Hylo-Idealism, they have. Yet none to the individual brain, until they have been brought into reciprocal relationship to it. If the outer world is an illusion, then the inner world of self is but a delusion, a mere mirrored reflection of shadows cast by some blinding sun; so hope some of us, as Orpheus did when he sang:

This world is shadow-shapen of
The bitterness of pain.
Vain are the little lamps of love!
The light of life is vain!
Life, death, joy, sorrow, age and youth
Are phantoms of a further truth."*

*The Argonauts, iv, vol. ii, p. 110.

This is but the chant of the Brahmin and the Buddhist as it has risen and fallen over the East for hundreds and thousands of years.

There no sun shines, no moon, nor glimmering star,
Nor yonder lightning, the fire of earth is quenched,
From him, who alone shines, all else borrows its brightness,
The whole world bursts into splendour at his shining.
—*Kâthaka Upanishad*, v, 15.

The veil of Maya shrouds the true aspect of things; it cuts off the outer from the inner world, rendering the former esoteric, and the latter exoteric. This idea of the All as the One, is magnificently

described in "The Ultimate Voyage," when the Voice of God – the voice of the Soul that is – says:

> "The last and greatest is within you now."
> Then fire too subtle and omniscient
> Devoured our substance, and we moved again
> Not down, nor up, but inwards mystically
> Involving self in self, and light in light.
> And this was not a pain, but peaceable
> Like young-eyed love, reviving; it consumed
> And consecrated and made savour sweet
> To our changed senses. And the dual self
> Of love grew less distinct, and I began
> To feel her heart in mine, her lips in mine…
> Then mistier grew the sense of God without,
> And God was I, and nothing might exist,
> Subsist, or be at all, outside of Me,
> Myself Existence of Existences.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 98.

This magnificent passage is the very consummation of idealism. The sense of God the crude outer reality growing dim, dimmer, and yet more dim; till finally it is absorbed in Self. And yet when we with our five senses, search for a pure ideal, an absolute truth, a God outside of ourselves, our failure is certain.

To attempt such a course is but to leap into the inane, and he who should set out on the search for God in realms trod alone by reason, is as certain of destruction as he who with mortal foot should attempt to walk the billowy waves of the Galilean sea. Tannhäuser's falsely expressed aspirations begot within him the Venusberg; seeking for that which was beneath his own true self, he failed; and it was not till he awoke from the dream of God, that he was able to free himself

from the drear arms of Materialism. So with us, not until we wake from the God-drunken carouse of the night, and ourselves become as Gods, shall we conceive God. *Hic labor, hoc opus est*:

> This is my secret – in a man's delight
> To lose the stubborn ecstasy for God!
> To thus clear knowledge hath my path been trod
> In deepest hell – in the profoundest sky!
> This knowledge, the true immortality,
> I came unto through pain and tears,
> Tigerish hopes, and serpent loves, and dragon fears,
> Most bitter kisses, salted springs and dry;
> III those deep caverns and slow-moving years,
> When dwelt I, in the Mount of Venus, even I!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 256.

CROWLEYANITY

Quod utilius Deus patefieri sinet, quod autem majoris momenti est, vulgo adhuc latet usque ad Eliae Artistae adventum quando is venerit.

God will permit a discovery of the highest importance to be made, it must be hidden till the advent of the artist Elias. Thus prognosticated Paracelsus,* and further that divine philosopher predicted:

*Paracelsus once assured the students of Avicenna and Galen that his shoe-ties knew more than these two physicians; and that all the universities, and all the writers united were less instructed than the hairs of his beard. How much more now so Crowley.

Hoc item verum est nihil est absconditum quod non sit retegendum: ideo, post me veniet cujus magnale nundum vivit qui multa revelabit. And it is true there is nothing concealed which shall not be discovered; for

which cause a marvellous being shall come after me, who as yet lives not, and who shall reveal many things.

And I for one take it that the prophecy has now been fulfilled: Aleister Crowley is the artist Elias, the marvellous being whom God has permitted to make a discovery of the highest importance in his illuminative philosophy of Crowleyanity, in the dazzling and flashing light of which there is nothing concealed which shall not be discovered.

It has taken 100,000,000* years to produce Aleister Crowley. The world has indeed laboured, and has at last brought forth a man. Bacon blames the ancient and scholastic philosophers for spinning webs, like spiders out of their own entrails; the reproach is perhaps unjust, but out of the web of these spiders, Crowley has himself twisted a subtle cord, on which he has suspended the universe, and swinging it round has sent the whole fickle world conception of these excogitating spiders into those realms which lie behind Time and beyond Space. He stands on the virgin rock of Pyrrhonic-Zoroastrianism, which unlike the Hindu world-conception, stands on neither Elephant nor Tortoise, but on the Absolute Zero of the metaphysical Qabalists.

*_Vide_ Haeckel, "Last words on Evolution," p. 120.

The question now is, what is Crowleyanity or Pyrrhonic-Zoroastrianism? and the answer is as follows:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!" For this day*1. there has been born in Albion a greater than David Hume, and a more illustrious than David Home,*2. even had he been genuine.

*1. 12th October, 1875.

*2. D.D. Home, the Medium.

And he shall be called "Immanuel," that is "God with us," or being interpreted Aleister Crowley, the spiritual son of Immanuel whose surname was Cant!* And as the doctrine taught by Jesus Christ became known as Christianity, so let this theurgy, as expounded by this marvellous being, be known as Crowleyanity: or in other words, according to the mind of the reader – Pyrrhonic-Zoroastrianism, Pyrrhonic-Mysticism, Sceptical-Transcendentalism, Sceptical-Theurgy, Sceptical-Energy, Scientific-Illuminism, or what you will; for in short it is the conscious communion with God on the part of an Atheist, a transcending of reason by scepticism of the instrument, and the limitation of scepticism by direct consciousness of the Absolute. To attain to such an illumination the mind of a Huxley and the soul of a Loyola must be united in one person. And this illumination must be as definite a phenomenon as orgasm, following which we find the material world, and its foundation the world of thought, as honestly set down to hallucination as a ghost would be. Construct the Temple in the place of the Manger, on the site of the ruins of religion and philosophy, but with the stones of the unfinished and abandoned Hall of Science. And in it let Semiramis, heavy with child by the Holy Ghost, possess the couch of labour, once crushed by the agonized form of Mary; and bring to light that unmistakable phenomenon, by which no woman could doubt whether or no she has ever been a mother, and in which no adept can doubt that he is one.

**Vide* Prolegomena. Bohn's ed., p. xxi.

Religion and Science have for many years seemingly run antagonistic to each other, but in reality their antagonism has been of a superficial nature, and fundamentally they at heart are one. The former having postulated an eternal "creator," a something out of something – God; the latter postulated an eternal "creation," a something for ever something – Matter.

"The mere terrestrial-minded man
Knows not the things of God, nor can
Their subtle meaning understand?"
A sage, I say, although he mentions
Perhaps the best of his inventions,
God.*

*Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 176.

Then under the daedal wand of Newton and Berkeley, Science disclosed the fact that Matter is Hylo-Zoic – a fact already supposed by Spinoza – that is, that within Matter itself lives an indwelling energy and power, and also that matter as body solely exists in the automorphism of experience. Yet still do the vapours of Animistic-Materialism cling round the forms of Newton and Berkeley, and out of its blinding smoke issues the flame of Hylo-Phenomenalism or Solipsimal-Automorphism; itself to blind in turn, and to scorch the chill hands of the night which were being extended round its welcome fire. The God-idea clinging to Philosophy, similarly as the phlogiston-idea clung so long to the principles of chemistry. Now follows the philosophic fall. Seeking the Absolute in sense-perceptions, and listening to the chatter of the carnal snake, these wise men, these latter-day philosophers, not finding eternal knowledge in the deific apple, ceased munching so wry a pippin, declaring the God of Religion, the Matter of Science, Unknowable, a thing in itself, like the jinnee in the vase, or dispersed throughout Space as the jinnee when the vase was opened. Or else again, like the present-day Rationalists, they have once more coaxed the Almighty back into his leaden casket, and heaved him out again into the black depths of that ocean of ignorance from which he had been drawn, a bottled "succedaneum."

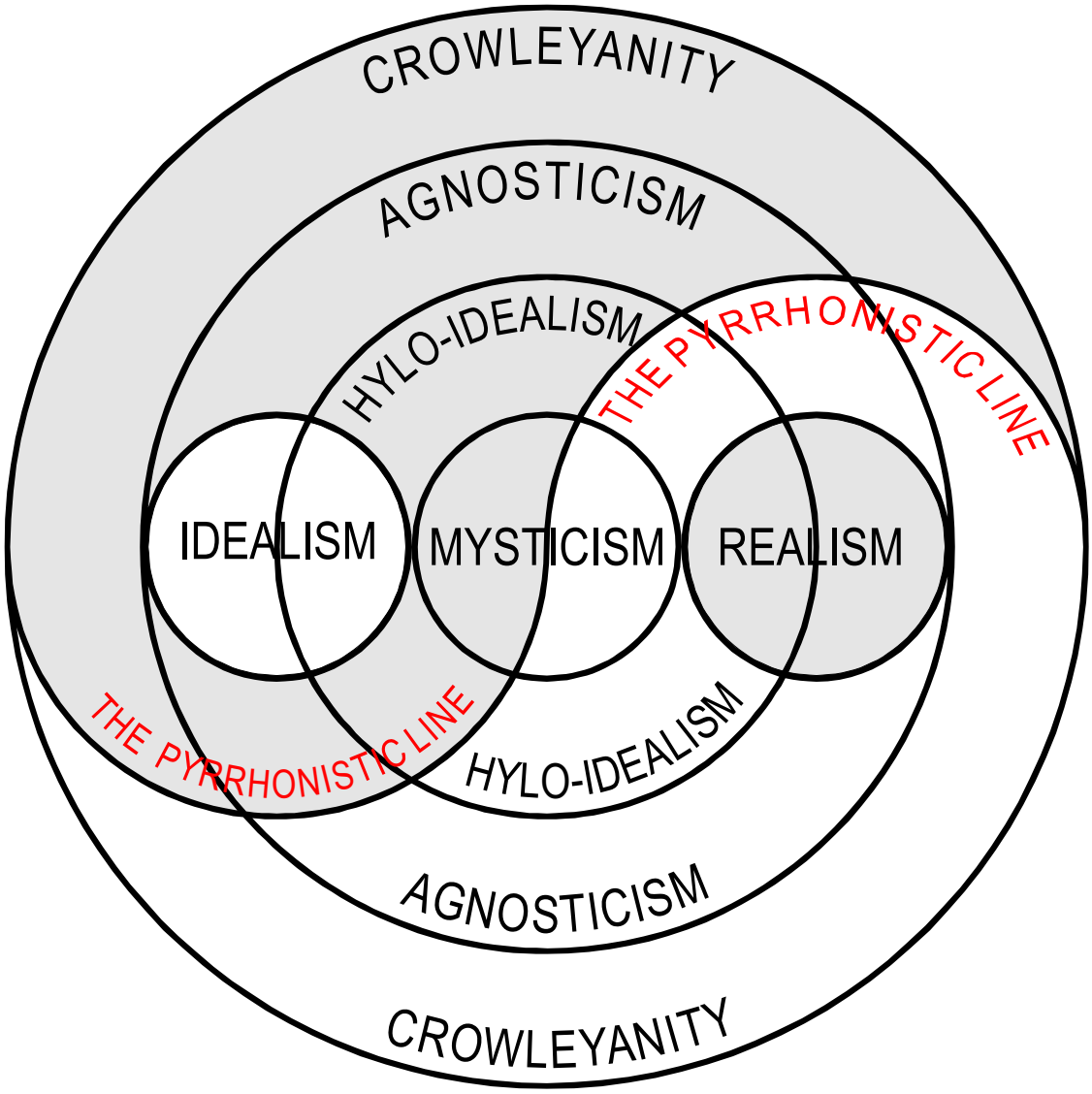
Thus Berkeley, by postulating a God, himself showed that reason was wanting; so the scepticism of Pyrrho was once again applied to the defective mental machinery, which burst like a faulty boiler on due pressure being brought to bear upon it by David Hume. The final judgement of the senses was doubted, but only partially, men sought the link which connected cause and effect – the excluded middle-consciousness, and what may be called super-consciousness; and to attain this end Crowley has applied the whole of his Pyrrhonic-Iconoclasm to break down the vulgar Idealism of Theology, as well as the vulgar Realism of the empirical Sciences.

> There's the true refuge of the wise;
> To overthrow the Temple guards,
> Deny reality.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 176.

In fact to crush and annihilate by means of a sceptical-theurgy the rational fifth-Monarchism of the Scientific cults. Philosophy and Science have up to the present apprehended things *per nos*, from this day forward they will, under the atheistic theurgy of Crowleyanity, know things *per se*. The *Ultima Thule* of our rigorous journey will at last be discernible on the horizon of our minds, and the mixed drinks of the stumbling Scoto-German Bacchantes will give way to the pure amrita of Iacchus.

The above may be symbolized as follows:



In the centre is MYSTICISM which links together IDEALISM and REALISM, or the Ego to the Non-Ego, and at the same time holds them apart. Without it Idealism becomes Absolute Subjectivity, and Realism Absolute Objectivity. (N. B. The circle of Idealism is the only entirely white circle in the symbol, and that of Realism the only entirely black one. The "Jakin" and "Bohaz" of King Solomon's Temple.) Idealism and Realism are further connected by the HYLO-IDEALISTIC circle, which expresses them in terms of science; and the whole is encircled by the ring of AGNOSTICISM, beyond which philosophy as philosophy cannot penetrate. The three circles of Mysticism, Hylo-Idealism (Idealism and Realism), and Agnosticism; or Magic, Science, and Philosophy, are all bisected by the PYRRHONISTIC LINE of doubt which alone vanishes in the circumference of CROWLEYANITY. This is the outer circle of all, forming, with the Pyrrhonistic Line, a perfect YIN and YANG; itself the unutterable T A O.

To attain to the *ne plus ultra* of Crowleyanity, it will be necessary to arrive at a state of desperate despair, a state in which the equilibrium of both body and mind are balancing between conscious alienation and unconscious insanity; and this state is the Cerberus we all have to pass before we can regain the blissful arms of our long-lost Eurydice. To clearly illuminate the Orphic progress through the Plutonic regions of Philosophy, it will be necessary, first of all to satisfy the three heads of the terrible offspring of Echidna's womb, whose names are Berkeley, Hume, and Kant.

BERKELEY

Berkeley, that "God-illumined Adept,"*1. almost at the commencement of his introduction to "The Principles of Human Knowledge," states: "Upon the whole, I am inclined to think that the far greater part, if not all, of those difficulties which have hitherto amused philosophers, and blocked up the way to knowledge, are entirely owing to ourselves – that we have first raised a dust, and then complained we cannot see."*2. And naturally to expect, Berkeley himself, though an Adept of a very high order, starting upwards through the clear atmosphere of the sky, clutched the very fire from the altar of God, and then in his descent to the dusty plains of Earth, caused such a whirlwind to arise, that his immediate successors, and even we who live two hundred years after that storm arose, scarce dare open our eyes for fear of being blinded.

*1. Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 225.
*2. P. 6.

A mystic by nature and a priest by profession, we must, in reviewing his bequests to knowledge, always remember how much of the one side to deduct from the other, should we wish to prove him either an Adept or a Bishop. But with such inborn predilection, and such

outward assumption, it is easy to understand why it was that he threw the whole energy of his life into an attempt to refute the advancing scepticism latent in the works of Hobbes and Locke. He saw, and seeing fought the many children which had sprung from the fertile womb of the Cartesian doctrine, of abstract general ideas and secondary qualities; which alone found birth in the powers of language, and in the delusion of words. But behind the didactic Berkeley stands the mystic, that other Berkeley, whose knowledge has alone been attained by a very few; for he spoke with God face to face.

"Could men but forbear to amuse themselves with words, we should, I believe, soon come to an agreement in this point… that the absolute existence of unthinking things are words without a meaning, or which include a contradiction."*

*The Principles of Human Knowledge, p. 43.

Berkeley, as has only too often been repeated and too frequently misunderstood, did not deny the meaning of *substance* as taken in the vulgar sense – a combination of sensible qualities, and though it may be possible, he stated, "that solid, figured, movable substances may exist without the mind, corresponding to the ideas we have of bodies, yet how is it possible for us to know this? Either we must know it by sense or by reason… But what reason can induce us to believe the existence of bodies without the mind, from what we perceive."*1. This point Crowley fully emphasizes in "Time" when he writes: "a thing is only real *to us* so far as it is known by us; even its Unknowability is a species of knowledge of it: and, by Savitri! when I say real *to us*, I say real absolutely, since all things lie to me in the radius of my sensorium. 'To others' is a vain phrase."*2. And as it has already been shown in the chain A,B,A,B,A,B, it matters not if the Materialist chooses to place his finger on A, or the Idealist on B; so in the above, Berkeley annihilating the idea of a material substratum, at

one and the same moment, unwittingly immolates his own cherished child on that same blade with which he has just sacrificed his foe. And, seeking to supplant the miserable huts of the materialist, Berkeley similarly builds his gorgeous palaces on reason, perceiving not that the foundations of both are the same, and that one like the other will crumble into dust before the blinding storm of dialectic dispute.

*1. The Principles of Human Knowledge, p. 39.
*2. Time, vol. ii, p. 269.

Berkeley, in positing *Esse=percipi*, considered that he once and for all had overthrown scepticism, which he defined as – the disbelief of the senses.*1. In "The Principles of Human Knowledge," he states: "Our knowledge of these (ideas) hath been very much obscured and confounded, and we have been led into very dangerous errors, by supposing a twofold existence of the objects of sense – the one *intelligible* or in the mind, the other *real* and without the mind; whereby unthinking*2. things are thought to have a natural subsistence of their own distinct from being perceived by spirits. This… is the very root of Scepticism… For how can it be known that the things which are perceived are conformable to those which are not perceived, or exist without the mind."*3. Shortly before arriving at this conclusion, he had already stated that as "the infinite divisibility of matter" was now universally allowed by the most approved and considerable philosophers, hence it follows that there are an infinite number of parts in each particle of matter which are not perceived by sense. "…In proportion, therefore, as the sense is rendered more acute, it perceives a greater number of parts in the object, that is, the object appears greater, and its figure varies."*4. In other words the Self of the Idealist as the Not-self of the Materialist, is purely maya, *i.e.*, motion. But a still more important contradiction creeps in here, and curious to say, the very monster Berkeley set out with lance in rest to overthrow, proves but a Quixotic windmill

which sends our gallant knight rolling in the very dust in which he had hoped to lay low the sceptical and monstrous giant. Thus in the place of disproving scepticism he unconsciously cleared the way for the greatest of all sceptics – David Hume.

*1. Time, vol. ii, p. 51.
*2. Berkeley, throughout "The Principles," as well as the "Dialogues," overlooks the Newtonian law of gravity altogether, though he supposes that he himself is not the only thinking entity in the world, his arguments lead one to infer that he is. As an Idealist he proves that nothing can exist except in mind; then finding he has overlooked the question of God, as an Animist adds: that all things, he himself included, cannot exist except in the mind of some Divine Being, failing (perhaps purposely) to see that such a Being was also but a figment of his mind.
*3. *Ibid*. p. 79.
*4. *Ibid*. p. 55.

HUME

Hume, at heart a thoroughgoing agnostic and man of the world, saw the practical falsity of abstruse philosophy, the conclusions of which were at once dissipated by the "feelings of our heart," which reduced "the profound philosopher to a mere plebeian." He forcibly asserts, that ideas of primary qualities are attained by abstraction – "an opinion which if we examine it accurately, we shall find to be unintelligible, and even absurd." He further agrees with Berkeley in stating that: "An extension that is neither tangible nor visible, cannot possibly be conceived," and that, "The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects."*1. And again that the "…universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind

and the object."*2. However, the great unknown waste of this "immediate intercourse" Hume bravely sets out to explore.

*1. An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, p.163.
*2. *Ibid*. p. 161.

As Berkeley had previously got hopelessly bogged in the swamps of God, so Hume, avoiding the shore line, set out on the same quest by way of the desert of Scepticism, without the chart of so divine a knowledge, but with the compass of a more certain direction; nevertheless, soon losing his way in the arid wilderness of doubt, he also left the great riddle unanswered, to leap voiceless midst the desert wind, and to dance songless 'mongst his bleached and rattling bones. Further on we shall see how Crowley, setting out with both chart and compass, like a second Œdipus wrested the secret from the age-worn lips of the Sphinx; for as he himself says:

Eternal mockery is the real;
Eternal falsehood, the ideal.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 93.

However, Hume arrives at a negative result of extraordinary worth. He took Newton's second law of motion,* *i.e.*, of Cause and Effect, and wrote against it a colossal "WHY?"

*Every change of motion is proportional to the force impressed, and is made in the direction of that force.

Berkeley, as we saw above, arrived at the conclusion, that it was impossible to solve the question of relationship between the things which are perceived, and the things which are not perceived; and in the "Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous" he further elaborates this proposition. Hume by a slightly different road arrives at an exactly similar conclusion, namely: how is it possible to judge

the relationship between cause and effect, or in other words the perceived and not perceived?

"The first time a man saw the communication of motion by impulse… (billiard balls)… what alteration has happened to give rise to this new idea of *connexion*? Nothing but that he now *feels* these events to be *connected* in his imagination…"*

*An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, p. 78.

Hume thus arrives at the conclusion that cause and effect can only be *inferred from* each other, and never known. "Beyond the constant *conjunction* of similar objects, and the consequent *inference* from one to the other, we have no notion of any necessity or connexion."*

*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, p. 85.

"Their (bodies) secret nature, and consequently all their effects and influence, may change, without any change in their sensible qualities. This happens sometimes, and with regard to some objects: Why may it happen always, and with regard to all objects? What logic, what process of argument secures you against this supposition? My practice, you say, refutes my doubts. But you mistake the purport of my question. As an agent, I am quite satisfied in the point; but as a philosopher, who has some show of curiosity, I will not say scepticism, I want to learn the foundation of this inference. No reading, no inquiry has as yet been able to remove my difficulty, or give me satisfaction in a matter of such importance. Can I do better than propose the difficulty to the public, even though, perhaps, I have small hopes of obtaining a solution? We shall, at least, by these means, be sensible of our ignorance, if we do not augment our knowledge.

“I must confess that a man is guilty of unpardonable arrogance who concludes, because an argument has escaped his own investigation, that therefore it does not really exist.”*1. And he continues further on: “And though he should be convinced that his understanding has no part in the operation, he would nevertheless continue in the same course of thinking. There is some other principle which determines him to form such a conclusion.”*2.

*1. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, pp. 37-38.
*2. *Ibid*. p. 43.

“We must, therefore, know both the cause and effect, and the relation between them. But do we pretend to be acquainted with the nature of the human soul and the nature of an idea, or the aptitude of one to produce the other? This is a real creation, a production of something out of nothing… such a power is not felt, nor known, nor even conceivable by the mind…”*

*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, p. 69.

We are now fairly on our road to Crowleyanity. Having left Berkeley in the dark, feeling on the dusty shelves of his reason for a flint and steel in the spirituality of God, whereby he may burn in twain the gordian knot into which he has tangled his understanding; we now find Hume, in a similar manner, groping for the handle of some bricked-up door, which will lead him forth from the depths of that same night in which Berkeley has already lost his way.

When Hume states: “he feels events to be connected in his imagination”; he is only reiterating the words of Philonous, when he says: “I have a notion of Spirit, though I have not, strictly speaking, an idea of it. I do not perceive it as an idea, or by means of an idea, but know it by reflexion.” To which Hylas very properly replied: “Words are not to be used without a meaning. And, as there is no

more meaning in *spiritual Substance* than in *material Substance*, the one is to be exploded as well as the other." Philonous, in answering Hylas then asserts acquaintance with that nature of the human soul which Hume declared to be inconceivable. "How often must I repeat, that I know or am conscious of my own being; and that *I myself* am not my ideas, but somewhat else, a thinking active principle, that perceives, knows, wills, and operates about ideas."*

*Three Dialogues, p. 95.

This "human soul" of Hume, the "I myself" of Berkeley are synonymous terms; in fact, they are one with the "purusha" of the Yogins, and the "magical stone" of the philosophic alchymists. Hume arrives at the conclusion: "that there is a species of scepticism, *antecedent* to all study and philosophy, which is much inculcated by Des Cartes and others, as a sovereign preservative against error and precipitate judgement. It recommends an universal doubt, not only of all our former opinions and principles, but also of our very faculties, of whose veracity, say they, we must assure ourselves, by a chain of reasoning, deducted from some original principle which cannot possibly be fallacious or deceitful. But neither is there any such original principle which has a prerogative above others that are self-evident and convincing; or if there were, could we advance a step beyond it, by the use of those very faculties, of which we are supposed to be already diffident. The Cartesian doubt, therefore, were it ever possible to be attained by any human creature (as it plainly is not), would be entirely incurable, and no reasoning could ever bring us to a state of assurance and conviction upon any subject."*1. And that, "a wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to his evidence,"*2. and who can say that a wise adept does not do likewise? And that "These ultimate springs and principles are totally shut up from human curiosity and inquiry" and "are probably the ultimate causes and principles which we ever discover in nature." I On this despairing position of Hume, Kant bases his *à priori*.*3.

*1. Three Dialogues, p. 159.
*2. Ibid. p. 116.
*3. Ibid. p. 29.

BERKELEY AND HUME

Thus Hume arrives at the conclusion that all relationships between cause and effect are based on experience, and behind experience there is, "a certain unknown and inexplicable something."*1. So also does Berkeley in the "Three Dialogues" end in a similar quandary which he calls "God." Starting out on his quest by stating: "Can any doctrine be true that, necessarily leads a man into an absurdity?"*2. he promptly proceeds to travel along that road which he has warned others not to follow, and, having completely lost his way, and overloaded his thoughts with the darkness of night, finding it impossible to continue his journey, knocks at the creaky door of a miserable tavern, and regaling himself on the common wine of that strange country in which he has wandered, proclaims the hour of noon as the clock strikes midnight.

*1. Three Dialogues, p. 165.
*2. *Ibid*. p. 18.

"I conclude," states Philonous, "not that they [sensible things] have no real existence, but that, seeing they depend not on my thought, and have an existence distinct from being perceived by me, *there must be some other mind wherein they exist*. As sure, therefore, as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite omnipresent Spirit who contains and supports it."* Midnight is striking, and we once again begin the eternal (and infernal) chain A,B,A,B,A,B.

*Three Dialogues, p. 65.

PARALLEL EXTRACTS FROM THE "THREE DIALOGUES BETWEEN HYLAS AND PHILONOUS" AND "AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING"

"Away then with all that Scepticism, all those ridiculous philosophical doubts. What a jest is it for a philosopher to question the existence of sensible things, till he hath it proved to him from the veracity of God; or to pretend our knowledge in this point falls short of intuition or demonstration! I might as well doubt of my own being, as of the being of those things I actually see and feel." —P. 91.

"Now, it is plain they [things] have an existence exterior to my mind… There is therefore some other mind wherein they exist, during the intervals between the times of my perceiving them: as likewise they did before my birth, and would do after my supposed annihilation… it necessarily follows that there is an *omnipresent eternal Mind*." —P. 91.

"The sceptic, therefore, had better keep within his proper sphere… For here is the chief and most confounding objection to *excessive* scepticism, that no durable good can ever result from it; while it remains in its full force and vigour. We need only ask such a sceptic, '*What his meaning is? And what he proposes by all these curious researches?*' He is immediately at a loss, and knows not what to answer." —P. 169.

"When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first… to confess, that… mankind… must act and reason and believe; though they are not able, by their most diligent enquiry, to satisfy themselves concerning the foundation of these operations, or to remove the objections, which may be raised against them." —P. 170.

"As to your first question: (how can you conceive it possible that things should exist in God's mind) I own I have properly no *idea*, either of God or any other Spirit; for these being active cannot be represented by things perfectly inert, as our own ideas are." —P. 92.

"For all the notion I have of God is obtained by reflecting on my own soul, heightening its powers, and removing its imperfections. I have, therefore, though not an inactive idea, yet in *myself* some sort of an active thinking image of the Deity. And though I perceive Him not by sense, yet I have a notion of Him, or know Him by reflex ion and reasoning." —P. 93.

"While we cannot give a satisfactory reason, why we believe, after a thousand experiments, that a stone will fall, or fire burn; can we ever satisfy ourselves concerning any determination, which we may form, with regard to the origin of worlds, and the situation of nature, from, and to eternity?" —P. 173.

"The existence, therefore, of any being can only be proved by arguments from its cause or its effect; and these arguments are founded entirely on experience… It is only experience, which teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect, and enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another. Such is the foundation of moral reasoning." —P. 174.

KANT

On Hume's despairing "something," Kant builds his *à priori*, and though the detail of his criticism differs from that of Hume's, in the main result it coincides, arriving at the same unleapable ditch, the limitation of all knowledge regarding the reality of phenomena as revealed to us by our senses. Hume starting with the proposition that ideas are copied from impressions ends in the unknown; Berkeley through a similar process declares bankruptcy in God: Kant does likewise, stating in his "Critic of pure Reason"; "All knowledge (touching an object of mere reason) can be communicated not logically but morally… I am *morally* certain… etc." But what he means by the word "*morally*" he does not explain, postulating in place of an explanation an "*à priori* certainty." To Hume's scepticism he answers: the object is unknowable *per se*, the subject is also unknowable *per se*, because they both vary, consequently ontology is impossible. But the laws and forms of thoughts are universal and irrefragable, and form an unalterable standard of certainty whereby knowledge may be increased. *À priori* laws are not derived from experience, but belong to the inherent structure of the mind. Kant then sets himself to answer the question: How are synthetic judgements *à priori* possible? And his answer is: Unless cognitions are synthetical they can add nothing to our previous knowledge, unless *à priori* they cannot be universal. Unless universal they cannot be apodictically true. Kant's reasoning runs as follows: Firstly, there is a sensibility, a power of being affected by objects, a passive faculty; secondly, an understanding, a faculty recognizing the affectations of the sensibility, this is active, and responds to stimulation. The sensibility, however, has its laws, and to discover them, we must separate those which are multiple from those which are one. The objects are variable, the passive functions of the mind remain invariable, the multiple he calls the material, the invariable he christens form – Space and Time.

Space and Time are therefore the indispensable conditions of all sensation, and according to Kant are not deducible from experience, consequently they are *à priori*. The understanding, similarly as the sensibility, possesses certain forms called judgements, of which there are four classes: "quantity, quality, relation, and modality." These are the *à priori* categories of the understanding, and they are synthetic.

This *à priori* (Crowleyanity affirms) is no innate intuition at all, in fact merely an abstraction from experience, and an equivalence of statement. It may be a postulation of our egoity, but it therefore need not necessarily be so for all other personalities, as it cannot be in any way demonstrated as final. Kant did not have the necessary knowledge of taking into consideration the fact of inherited experiences, as Herbert Spencer was able to do, so worked at a disadvantage, postulating an *à priori* in place of *organised intuitions*.

CROWLEYANITY AND THE PROLEGOMENA

To illustrate the infolding of Crowleyanity, it will be necessary here to run through Kant's Prolegomena, reducing his arguments to the terms of this all embracing philosophy. (To aid the reader, I will place all criticisms of a purely Crowleyan savour in square brackets.*)

*These are the words of Crowley, the student.

Immanuel Kant finding his master David Hume enmeshed in the negative net of an excessive Pyrrhonism, set out to free him from the tangled conception of cause. To accomplish this end, and to avoid falling into the same entanglement of empirical uncertainties (physical), groping about in the dark for some weapon which might enable him to free his unfortunate master, himself fell into the same metaphysical pitfall, and contented himself by declaring his

strangling senior as "free." In other words: "It (the source of metaphysical knowledge) consists, then, in knowledge *à priori*, that is, knowledge derived from pure understanding, pure reason" (p. 11).* [Then it is impossible and its extension zero; for the intension of reason and its forms are alike built up by experience, that of the race (H. Spencer).]

*Bohn's edition of the Prolegomena.

Having postulated metaphysical knowledge, Kant then proceeds to subdivide it into two headings: 1, Analytic; 2, Synthetic judgements; the first Crowley would identify with [verbal propositions], the second with [real]. First Kant states: "All analytic judgements are based entirely on the principles of contradiction… and are… *à priori*" (p. 13), *e.g.*, "Every body is extended," … "Nobody is unextended," e.g., "Gold is a yellow metal."

"Now, to know this, I require no further experience beyond my conception of gold, which contains the proposition that this body is yellow and a metal" (p. 13). [But, answers Crowley, what of the proposition "Gold is a trivalent base? None of these things are analytic. Thus gold must be reducible to the noumenon, and so disappear.]

In the second proposition Kant says: That though there are synthetic judgements *à posteriori*, "there are also others of an *à priori* certainty," which "can never have their source solely… in the principle of contradiction" (p. 13). "*Judgements of experience* are always synthetic. It would be absurd to found an analytic judgement on experience" (p. 14). [Crowley at once answers, "All judgements are founded on experience. This primary fallacy of *à priori* validity is clearly the root of the great follies which follow. 1+1=2 cannot be doubted, but it is a definition, and means nothing, being arbitrary. But 2+2=4 is a synthetic conception.]

Similarly under this synthetic heading, Kant tackles "Mathematical judgements, illustrating his conception of *straight* which has no reference to size, but only to quality, by defining "a *straight* line is the shortest between two points" [which is certainly untrue*: "Two straight lines cannot enclose a space," is better; for in the definition which he gives, Kant does not seem to have grasped the true conception of "straight."] Hume, Kant states, severed pure mathematics from synthetic judgements *à priori*, and herein made a great mistake, as all mathematical judgements he asserts are synthetic. [But is his dogmatism correct? Crowley would disagree.]

*What relation is there between our conceptions of rectitude and length? None, till geometry informs us.

[(*a*.) Mathematics is analytic, because a parabola is but a name, and all its qualities are directly deducible from its definitions, etc., etc., and therefore contained therein, though not seen. (*b*.) Mathematics is based on racial experience, and even on individual learning; only a few highly developed brains can apprehend its propositions. It may be doubted whether any synthetic judgement exists at all; for the moment it is made it becomes analytic. This is obvious of "A" and "E" propositions, and only not so of "I" and "O," because the subject is impure.]

Kant then rejecting metaphysics as a true science (p. 21), asserts, however with confidence, "that certain pure synthetic cognitions are really given *à priori*, namely; pure mathematics and pure natural science… both… partly apodictically certain through mere Reason." [However he fails to quote any such proposition! And his "apodictic certainty" only means that the human mind is unable to transcend that limitation. Thus metaphysics is a mere branch of psychology, for one thing; for another, every result obtained is merely a statement of limitation, and therefore every accession of knowledge is a vision of a

new vista of ignorance. *Summa scientia nihil scire*, has yet another meaning.]

Having then as he thought discovered an *à priori* basis to metaphysics, he places before his reader the crucial problem. "*How are synthetic propositions à priori possible*"? And at the very outset, assuming pure synthetic knowledge from the Reason as real (p. 22), attacks the problem. "How is it possible when a conception is given me, I can pass out of it, and connect it with another which is not contained in the former," and explains the difficulty by assumed knowledge *à priori*, [Rendering Hume's position now impregnable, thanks to ethnology, etc., etc.]; and then Kant asks, "*How is pure mathematics possible*"? [Again falling into the fallacy of supposing his own brain to be without a history, It is curious to note that Kant's *à priori* is but a recasting of the old myth of Pallas, Wisdom, springing full-armed from the brain of Zeus, and like the legend is a strangely false assertion.] Thus, into the trap Kant sets out to rescue Hume from, he himself falls, by asserting that: "it is only by means of the form of sensuous intuition that we can intuite things *à priori*, but in this way we intuite the objects only as they appear to our senses, not as they may be in themselves (p. 29). [Thus Kant himself proves the noumenon, the sole refuge from scepticism, itself to be sceptical.] Kant must have in some way felt the weakness of his argument, since in the following page, he, in true Berkeleyan fashion, in order to upset the sceptic, argues in a circle; and to prove the possibility of *à priori* judgements, insists on the sceptic proving an *à priori* proposition. Having thoroughly entangled the sceptic, as he thinks, he launches out an "apodictic certainty," very similar to Berkeley's "God-idea," and defines "Idealism" to "consist in the assertion that there exist none but thinking entities." [Crowley at once denies the "certainty," and demands an explanation of "thinking."] Then working through the Berkeleyan arguments backwards, he arrives at defining. [Thing as a (unknowable) power to produce sense impressions, which is purely Berkeley or his antithesis according as

the power is conceived as God or Matter.] Here we have struck again the fundamental chain A,B,A,B,A,B.

Having now settled with "Pure Mathematics," he turns to "Pure Natural Science," again assuming at the outset apodictic laws of nature, which Berkeley also assumed, and which Hume proved to be sceptical; such as "substance continues permanent" – a theory on the same footing as papal infallibility, and about a hundred years older – and that all that happens is "determined by a cause according to fixed laws" (p. 42). Concerning which Huxley states: "not one of these events is 'more than probable'; though the probability may reach such a very high degree that, in ordinary language, we are justified in saying that the opposite events are impossible."*

*Essay on Hume, p. 155.

This is even going a step in advance of Hume, who stated: "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature."* As to the conservation of energy and matter, Crowley would say: ["they were arguments in a circle (A); for the use of scientific instruments by which they were discovered, implies these laws."] Kant would not say (A) but "*à priori* truth"; and as to the laws of cause and effect, [if we accept causality, etc., then we must regard all as truly parts of one thing, perhaps even as aspects of one thing.] And Kant, after a series of analytical arguments, comes to the conclusion that the legitimacy of natural laws "rests on the necessary connection of phenomena in an experience, in other words, on the original laws of the understanding," (p. 67). The understanding drawing its laws *à priori* not from nature, but prescribing them to it. [But these original laws of the (Kantian) understanding are themselves the result of the empirical laws of nature, and of an inherited wealth of experience; "Omnia exeunt in O." And it is certainly not far from this to the Ego positing the non-Ego.]

*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, p. 120.

At length, thoroughly entrapped in his own metaphysics, caught by that very same net wherewithal he set out to drag the infinite depths of eternity; he defines the noumenon as the final term of an infinite series, and asserts that the permanence of the soul can only be proved in the life of man, "the proof of which will not be required by us." Then standing aghast as the phantasmagoria of his mind crowd past him; states in the plainest words, that the Reason itself is at fault, and casting it into the balance of Pyrrho, weighs it out in due terms of Crowleyanity.

The following are the four transcendent ideas, or four dialectical assertions of the pure Reason. To each accordingly is opposed a contradictory assumption (p. 87).

	Thesis	*Antithesis*
1	The world has a *beginning* (boundary) in time and space.	The world is *infinite* in time and space.
2	Everything in the world consists of *simple* (parts).	There is nothing simple, but everything is *composite*.
3	There are in the world causes through *freedom*.	There is no freedom, but all is *Nature*.
4	In the series of the world causes there exists a *necessary* being.	There is nothing necessary but in this series *all is contingent*.

"The above is the most remarkable phenomenon of the human Reason, of which no instance can be shown in any other sphere. If, as generally happens, we regard the phenomena of the world of sense as things in themselves; if we assume the principles of their connection as universal of things in themselves, and not merely as

principles valid of experience, as is usual and indeed unavoidable without our Critique; then an unexpected conflict arises, never to be quelled in the ordinary dogmatic way, because both theses and antitheses can be demonstrated by equally evident, clear and irresistible proofs… and the Reason thus sees itself at issue with itself, a state over which the sceptic rejoices, but which must plunge the critical philosopher into reflection and disquiet." [Thus another turning in the road of Crowleyanity has been passed, another milestone has been lost in the distance, a new vista is opening to us, and once again we gaze on the delusive mirage of the Reason, the mere Zill U'llah – The Shadow of God.]

"…Seeing it is quite impossible to get free of this conflict of the Reason with itself, so long as the objects of the sense-world are taken for things in themselves, and not for what they are in reality, namely, mere phenomena, the reader is necessitated thereby again to undertake the deduction of all our knowledge *à priori*" (p. 96). [And since the noumenon can possess no predicate – what is it then that it does possess? It is the Reason itself which is at fault; the delicate time-piece of Kant's intellect has gone wrong, it has ceased to "tick," and with the terrific blow of an *à priori* club, he proclaims it mended, and regulates each chiming clock in the house of many mansions by means of its handless face.] Thus has the great lion of Crowleyanity set the little crab of Konigsberg and his lunar hut in their appointed niche in the great solar mansion of eternity.

At length we have arrived at the end of our first series of arguments, which may be generalized as the infoldment of all rational philosophies into one uncertain philosophic problem. Berkeley, as we have seen, opened the gateway of scepticism, and was the first to vanish in the Absolute ether of Pyrrhonism, which he outwardly symbolized under the form of a Bishop of the Church of England. Hume following, clutched vaguely in the night of doubt at a "something" he could not grasp, and whose watery substance

trickled through his clenched and searching fingers. Kant similarly losing his way in the night of Hume's ignorance, struck a spark on the tail of his shirt, proclaiming the day; but as the flames rose and scorched his fundamental basis, he, also, leapt from his empiric hose into the cool comfort of that watery ocean Hume had attempted to shadow in the palm of his hand. Then behind these three gallant knights clattered along their no less gallant esquires: Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, and in the distance, lost in the dust of Reason, stand the present-day yokels of thought, thinking at appointed hours according to appointed books.

FICHTE, SCHELLING, AND HEGEL

Close on the heels of Kant came Fichte with his unknowable appulse as the only potency of the not-self, which assuaged the raging thirst of inquiry as would a bottle of wine long since dry. Behind him Schelling, who leaping into the clouds, grasped at object and subject as existing actualities, calling the bastard children of his brain manifestations of the Absolute. Then Hegel who, instead of sitting out on the universal stairs with Berkeley's "Bishop," waltzed wildly with some ethereal Absolute, which, whether object or subject, was in no case existence, merely the skeleton of some phantom appearance, having no life in itself, but solely in the absolute mirror of its reflection. Each of these Titans, in his own manner, threw fresh fuel on to the Berkeleyan conflagration, so hoping that, by piling up the blazing mass, they might illumine the entire universe. And how they failed the last five decades have only too directly shown, by their stagnation in the realms of a certain and unknowable Absolute; and in the parasitic growths of Scientific Agnosticism, Scientific Positivism, Scientific Monism, and the general overwhelming materialization of present-day thought. Yet the self *per se* remains just as unknowable in a positive degree, as it would have, had all the ages forever held their peace. Nevertheless the arguments which they set

forth, ideal or material, have in their frantic efforts to support it, forced the whole gigantic structure to the ground. From these ruins of experience Crowley now rises up a fiery phoenix, directing us to the only possible way which will lead us to our much-desired haven of rest.

Motion must cease, irritation must be prevented, Time and Space annihilated, and the divine "I" set free from the sordid rags of the world, to be clothed in the brilliancy of God.* This added "impulse," which in the homogeneous protoplasm causes fission, is as mystical to-day as that added "something" which will cause the mind of one man to admire a Wagnerian opera, and another a drawing by Beardsley. No sound is in the air, vibrations only pass. No sound is in the brain, molecular changes only result. Where then is sound? It is a creation in the mind by the divine "I"; that unextended absolute Passivity, whose dwelling is in that equilibrating activity which balances action and reaction.

*It should never for a moment be forgotten that any attempt to construct a *positive* philosophic system from these data would be strenuously repudiated by Crowley. The danger constantly recurs, because in the normal (educated) man the reason is master. Like the hydra of Hercules, its heads grow again; they must be branded by the torch of illuminism, as well as smitten off by the sword of scepticism.

Hegel (outside the realms of the divine philosophers) was one of the very few who partially grasped the supreme truth of Crowleyanity, when he postulated: "Being and Non-Being are the same." He saw that pure being is, in its last analysis, beyond fertilization, development, or motion, and is practical nothingness.

"The fertilization of Being, according to Hegel, arose by the passing over, as it were, of Being into its antitheses, otherness, or complement – that is, into Non-Being. But this antithesis, otherness, complement, was in a real sense Being itself, for Being and Non-Being, being

equally nothingness, are in the same category. Herein, however, were motion, interaction, stimulus, and no response to stimulus rendered, not only a possibility, but a reality; and Pure Being, thus enriched or fertilized by the double interaction, became manifested as existence – that is, *conditioned* Being. Pure Being, the Unconditioned, the Absolute of *Potentiality* rolled round into pure Non-Being, the Unconditioned; the Absolute of *Impotentiality*, emerged, energized, and conditioned, and became the Limited, the Relative. This is the groundwork of the Hegelian philosophy."*

*Absolute Relativism, p. 114.

Yet once again that added impulse arises in the passing over. What is it? Crowleyanity does not, in words, explain; for being beyond reason, it is both inexplicable and undefinable in rational terms; yet it directs, and the weary traveller, searching for the stone of the wise, has but to follow, guided by the sure and certain hope that if he so will, it *will* guide him to that great and glorious transfiguration he so ardently desires.

TIME

Kant, as we have seen, places both Time and Space in the realm of the *à priori*; a realm utterly devastated by Crowley's scepticism. Spencer in answering the questions, What is Space? What is Time? replied, "Space is the abstract of all relations of co-existence. Time is the abstract of all relations of sequence." These definitions have been found wanting, chiefly on account of the doubtful connotation of the word abstract, but with McTaggart's emendation read:

> Space is the synthesis of all experiences of co-existence.
> Time is the synthesis of all experiences of sequence.*

*Absolute Relativism, p. 14.

So we find that taking the above as general definitions, they may with equal accuracy be applied to either the Ego or the race; in the former case, Space and Time vanishing with the extinction of the individual; in the latter with that of the race. So also if space be defined as "the potentiality of all co-existences," then in the destruction of all existences Space will also cease to be. But if Space be defined "as that eternal actuality wherein all other things or no things may co-exist, then, even on the destruction of all things, Space would still remain."* Yet this definition is extremely faulty, as Time re-mains to be considered; which we shall now deal with.

*Absolute Relativism, p. 15.

In Crowley's essay bearing the name of "Time" the matter is set forth in a dialogue between a British sceptic and an Indian mystic. In it, by a rather different route, he comes to a somewhat similar conclusion to that taught by Eckhart in Germany at the beginning of the fourteenth century. "That the creature apart from the Absolute, that is, God, was nothing, that 'Time, Space, and the plurality which depends on them,' are also nothing in themselves, and that the duty of man as a moral being is to rise beyond this nothingness of the creature, and by direct intuition to place himself in immediate union with the Absolute."*1. The two disputants, Scepticus and Mysticus, set out by agreeing that the unknowable is unreal, and as the latter says with Berkeley, "a thing is only real *to us* so far as it is known by us."*2.

*1. The Real History of the Rosicrucians, A. E. Waite.
*2. Time, vol. ii, p. 269.

When Scepticus asks Mysticus, "How old are you?" and receives the answer, "I am but an ultimate truth, six world-truths, fourteen grand generalizations, eighty generalizations, sixty-two dilemmas, and the

usual odd million impressions,"*1. he is receiving a much more correct and scientific answer to his question than if Mysticus, like Mahatma Agamya, answered, "sixty-two." Mysticus then turning to Scepticus asks him the seemingly simple question, "What is a 'year'?"*2. Scepticus answers something about the earth moving round the sun, and is at once shown by Mysticus that a man stating a fact in reference to "Since the Derby was run," would be more intelligible than he who would say, "Since May, such and such a day"; "…for his memory is of the race, and not of a particular item in the ever changing space-relation of the heavens, a relation which he can never know, and of which he can never perceive the significance; nay, which he can never recognize, even by landmarks of catastrophic importance."*3. Scepticus at once grasps the absurdity of such a situation by picturing the cross-examination of a farm-hand by a lawyer:

*1. Time, vol. ii, p. 269.
*2. *Ibid*. vol. ii, p. 270.
*3. *Ibid*. vol. ii, p. 272.

"Now, Mr. Noakes, I must warn you to be very careful. Had Herschell occulted α Centauri before you left Farmer Stubbs' field'? while the instructed swain should not blush to reply that Halley's Comet, being the sole measure of time in use on his farm was 133° S., entering Capricorn, at the very moment of the blow being struck."*1. Scepticus goes on to state that H. G. Wells has put his finger on the very spot whence all research must begin: and that is, "the illusionary nature of the time-idea."*2. "You would say that of two men born on a day, dying on a day, one may be young, the other old… *he lives the longest who remembers most*."*3. Mysticus considers the definition insufficient unless the "vividness of each impression" is added to the "number of impressions." Scepticus then shows that it would be possible in thought to construct a scale of vividness from *a* to *n*, by which we could erect a formula to express all that a man is. "For

example, he might be: 10 *a*+33125 *b*+890 *c*+800112 658 *e*+992 *f*+…+…+…*n*, and, if we can find the ratio of *a*:*b*:*c*:*d*:*e*:*f*…:*n*, we can resolve the equation into a single term, and compare man and man."*4.

*1. Time, vol. ii, p. 273.
*2. *Ibid*.
*3. *Ibid*. vol. ii, p. 273-274.
*4. *Ibid*. vol. ii, p. 274.

It therefore follows that "all states of consciousness are single units, or time marks, by which we measure intervals." So that Time is wholly and solely founded on experience, or response to stimulus; and in no way on any *à priori* judgement as postulated by Kant.

Berkeley has shown us that it is impossible to form an abstract idea of motion distinct from the body moving,*1. also that "motion being only an idea, it follows that if it be not perceived it exists not;"*2. and in the "Three Dialogues" he again maintains this indisputable fact:

*1. Principles of Human Knowledge, p. 11.
*2. *Ibid*. p. 62.

> *Phil*. And is not time measured by the succession of ideas in our mind?
>
> *Hyl*. It is.
>
> *Phil*. And is it not possible ideas should succeed one another twice as fast in your mind as they do in mine, or in that of some spirit of another kind?
>
> *Hyl*. I own it.*

*The Dialogues, p. 35.

This clinches the whole argument between Mysticus and Scepticus, as it did between the two disputants Philonous and Hylas.

THE QABALAH

Before entering upon Aleister Crowley's ontological essay on Space, it will be as well first to run through, briefly though it may be, some of the more important *eclaircissements* of the Qabalah, and the influence this divine theurgy has alike borne on his poetry and philosophy; for his analysis of space is based on the ontological assertion of the absoluteness of the Qabalistic Zero.

Worshippers of a personal God are by nature ultra-materialistic. Their God is but a friend, a mighty man who will eventually pull them out of the present bog of existence; being too lazy to do so themselves, they invest him with special powers; once fashioned, the next step was to endow him with an immortalizing energy, and then, curious to say, they discovered he had given them, as a slight reward, an immortal soul for all the trouble they had taken in turning him out a really nice, amiable, and respectable Deity. Having magnified their friend into a God, they then proceeded to enlarge their enemy into a Devil. This gross materialism in accordance with the universal law of polarity, set in motion by the hand of Idealism, produced as effect a fanciful spiritualism, which sought in the mysteries of life an answer that lay still on the cold lips of Death. These two powers, the Pantheonic materialism and the Gnostic spiritualism, bore the hybrid – Christianity.

As all religions have finally become subservient to an interested priesthood, so have all religions (however spiritual they may have been in their youth) been materialized and sacrificed on the altar of gain. To this rule Christianity forms no exception; once crudely and sincerely spiritual, it has become deceitfully materialistic.

God, who was formerly an Almighty Pleroma, is now but the moke which carries the priest's eggs to market; and Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer, the stick with which the wretched old jennet is beaten along. Christianity is no longer what its name implies, the system of doctrines as taught by Christ, but diametrically the reverse, the system of desires as wrought by Man. It is no longer "Sell all," but "Seize all"; or "Give all," but "Get all." Mammon is the God of to-day, and modern Christianity is absolute and unadulterated materialism. As such it is not necessary to look far for its antithesis. Religions decay through materiality, and whenever religions decay mysticism arises; for materiality cannot explain existence, neither can it quench the thirst of man. Since Christianity has suffered from senile decay, what have we found? A new religion? No. An old religion? Yes. Rejuvenated? Yes. Man is too lazy to build if he can reconstruct. The great mass of the people yearn for something better than the existing conceptions of Faith; leaderless, disunited, they fall an easy prey to the charlatans who ever keep their finger on the social pulse, and are ever as willing to pose, when opportunity is offered, as seer, clairvoyant, or palmist, as they are as trickster, tout, or quack. And the result? A vast drift of earnest aspirations seething in an ocean of ignorance. The great thoughts of old prostituted to the gains and stupidity of modernity, a great libel foisted on the past to satisfy the credulity of the present; a systematized thieving from the statue of Isis to adorn the idol of Mammon, god of bankers, brigands, and beggars. Astrology gave us astronomy, and Alchemy gave us chemistry, both were antagonistic to the ideas of their day; let us hope that Psychical Research will give us a purer metaphysics.

Now the question before us here, is: how does all this decaying and growing of ideals affect the poetic philosophy of Aleister Crowley? And the answer is as follows:

To the writer of this essay it seems on reading Aleister Crowley's poems that the revolt against existing ideals and morals is more the

outcome of spontaneous intuition than of meditative scepticism: and so strong is the current, and so diverse and intricate are its eddies, that for one who is not an adept, it seems almost a forlorn hope to plunge into the boiling cataract of his ontologic philosophy, with any expectation of reaching the further bank in safety. It would perhaps seem safer to forego such an attempt altogether, but so alloyed have these mystical ideas become with the general structure of his philosophy, that such a course is rendered impossible, so that the failure of safety would be only more ignominious than the failure of attempt.

Aleister Crowley as we have seen is no Christian, neither is he a gullible spiritualist, nor a gross materialist. Seeking an answer to the mystery, he first finds it in the ontology of the Qabalah, and then finally through Mysticism and Agnosticism, to their reconciliation in a neo-Hermeticism, a neo-Rosicrucianism – which we have already called Crowleyanity.*

*Not only has Crowley succeeded in finding all the scattered pieces of Osiris which Isis discovered, but also his phallus which she could not find.

Yet though he does not end at that barrier beyond which the Rationalist cannot proceed, he by no means rejects common sense and understanding as his Epode on Nature clearly shows.

> Nature my name is called. O fruitless veil
> Of the strange self of its own self begotten!
> O vision laughterless! O shadowy tale!
> . . . . . .
> I am Nature and God: I reign, I am, alone.
> None other may abide apart: they perish,
> Drawn into me, into my being grown.
> None other bosom is, to bear, to nourish,
> To be: the heart of all beneath my zone

Of blue and gold is scarlet-bright to cherish
My own's life being, that is, and is not other;
For I am God and Nature and thy Mother.
. . . . . .
I am: the greatest and the least: the sole
And separate life of things. The mighty stresses
Of worlds are my nerves twitching. Branch and bole
Of forests waving in deep wildernesses
Are hairs upon my body. Rivers roll
To make one tear in my superb caresses,
When on myself myself begets a child,
A system of a thousand planets piled!
. . . . . .
…I wheel in wingless flight
Through lampless space, the starless wildernesses!
Beyond the universal bounds that roll,
There is the shrine and image of my soul.*

*Orpheus, vol. iii, pp. 156, 157.

Many of the believers in the Qabalah, as those in the Vedas, will give an almost endless antiquity to the ideas contained in their books. In one degree at least they are right, for the mysticism as contained in these systems of thought is as old as thought itself.

The great system of the Qabalah is one of emanation – a type of spiritual monism, an attempted explanation of the nature of the Deity, within the limitations of mind. Its correspondence with the Talmud is more of method than material. That it was of slow growth is very certain, that it is a conglomerated mass of a multitude of efforts is also most sure. The Zohar is its corner-stone, and the date of its construction extends probably from the second to the seventh century of the present era. Much of its logic, psychology, metaphysics, philosophy, and theology, is drawn directly from the

Midrash. To make it superior to profane literature its simplicity has at various times been cloaked in a truculent obscurantism, many of its students delighting in paraphrases and hermeneutical constructions. Because of their unintelligibility words were transposed, numericalisms added, till at last much if not all its sense was lost in a maze of mental legerdemain, and in such exegetical methods as Gematria, Temurah, and Notariqon, which on the very face of the argument seem to condemn a system which aimed at supplying mankind with a great and beautiful truth.

We should not like to say that Aleister Crowley's poems are entirely guiltless of the accusation of obscurity; but to the uninitiated more lies below the surface than is ever dreamt of; and we do not consider that the use which he frequently makes of words, or rather names of an inward grace, should be considered as obscure. It is not difficult for the most uninstructed in the Qabalah to discover that Binah is equivalent to inspiration or understanding, that Chokmah means wisdom or revelation, or in fact to grasp the simpler ideas contained in the Sephirotic Scheme. Without such knowledge, in fact, half the pleasure is lost in not understanding these poems, and a false idea of an attempt to "flummox" the reader's mind arises. A mystery is simply an unanswered riddle. If to a person who knows not a single word of Urdu, I use such expressions as "suar," "sala," "bahinchut," they to his mind will be entirely sterile of meaning; but not so, however, to the initiated, who would highly appreciate them (unless applied to himself). Such use of words appears only absurd to these who fail to understand their meaning. A word may be charged with meaning just as a battery may be charged with electricity. Unconditionally there is little difference, beyond the literation, between "Hocus-pocus" and "Gee-up." If I say the latter to my towel-horse, I do not expect it to break into a canter; if, however, I say it to my pony, and it holds the key of this mystery, I do; so with any other word. I say "hocus-pocus," and the gullible are wrapped in mystery; or better I say "Hoc Est Corpus" over some bread and wine, and the

devout suppliant becomes filled with religious fervour. As in physics there is a kinetic force, so in metaphysics there is a kinetic ideation. To the Qabalist, the Qabalah unlocks as a key the corridor of the soul, and the pent-up sense rushes forth as some prisoner released from his dungeon, a mingled mass of emotion and reality. To the sceptic no change takes place, far his mind is sterile and unable to conceive, but his ignorance in no way proves that the Qabalah is mere Buncombe. Because a weak man cannot lift a certain weight, that is no criterion that a strong man cannot. There is truth in everything, and truth lies beyond mere utility. If we cannot understand, it is sheer falsehood to say Yes or No, the agnostic mode being the only right course open to us; yet if it were put to us to answer such a question as "Is the reverse of the moon studded with tintacks?" "No!" would naturally be the correct answer, and not, "I cannot tell you"; for as long as the bastion of our doubt is stronger than the cannon of our enemies' assertion, we then, temporarily at least, have every right to answer in the negative.

To be a student of the mysterious is a very different thing from being a mystic. That the author was the latter must surely be disproved on reading "Ascension Day" and "Pentecost," that he belongs to the neo-mystics or theosophists is openly denied in a note to the former poem, and in the preliminary invocation to "Jephthah." In which latter poem the following may be aptly quoted as showing how that, when reason lies fallow, modern spiritism is steadily supplanting Christianity:

> Master, the night is falling yet again.
> I hear dim tramplings of unholy forces:
> I see the assembly of the foully slain:
> The scent of murder steams: riderless horses
> Gallop across the earth, and seek the inane:
> The sun and moon are shaken in their courses:
> The kings are gathered, and the vultures fall

Screaming, to hold their ghastly festival.*

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 66.

The search after Mystery is finely described in the opening dedication of "The Songs of the Spirit":

Mine was the holy fire that drew
Its perfect passion from the dew,
And all the flowers that blushed and blew
On sunny slopes by little brooks.
Mine the desire that brushed aside
The thorns, and would not be denied,
And sought, more eager than a bride,
The cold grey secret wan and wide of sacred
books.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 29.

It is in this search that the soul unfurls its wings and sweeps into the infinite ether of existence, bending its course towards God in its own unutterable ideal.

With burning eyes intent to penetrate
The black circumference, and find out God.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 32.

In "The Alchemist," or in that beautiful poem "The Farewell of Paracelsus to Aprile." "Struggling in vain to what one hopes the best."* We find this larger hope is here the keynote, as it is in so many of Crowley's poems; to mention perhaps the most noted, we find this sacred flame flashing forth in "Aceldama," "Paracelsus," "The Ultimate Voyage," "The Nameless Quest," "The Neophyte," and in

"Tannhäuser." Many of the poems in "Songs of the Spirit" and "The Holy of Holies," hold fast to this idea; and it is this ideal, the progression from the Kingdom to the Crown, from Malkuth to Kether, which constitutes one of the most beautiful doctrines of the older and simpler Qabalah.

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 40.

The Qabalah guides us to a divine theurgy. According to the Zohar it is impossible to know God, herein the Qabalah is Agnostic, it forbids the representation of God, herein it is Rational. The Ain Soph is the "All-pervading," the "Non Ens" dwelling in the "Non Est," it is inscrutable to man's mind; this vast Pleroma, Corona Summa, The All, is formless, and is symbolized by a circle, it is Nothing. As the Ain Soph is the closed eye of the Unknown Darkness, so is Macroprosopus, who resides in the crown Kether, the open eye of the Vast Countenance. And from Macroprosopus through Wisdom (Chokmah, masculine) and Understanding (Binah, feminine) there is emanated the Lesser Countenance – Microprosopus. The relation between these two is idealistic, being the relation of the Absolute as it really is, to the Absolute as it is conceived by man. And it is the search after this relationship – God – that Crowley so frequently and ardently depicts. Awful and terrible is its path; the very blood of the heart hisses, as water on hot iron, as it rushes through its fiery veins fanned by a flaming soul:

> By the sun's heat, that brooks not his eclipse
> And dissipates the welcome clouds of rain.
> God! have Thou pity soon on this amazing pain.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 41.

Struggling on, the hideous path is strewn with bleached bones,*1. and salt encrusted heads,*2. of those who have failed:

*1. Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 42.
*2. The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 190.

So I press on. Fresh strength from day to day
Girds up my loins and beckons me on high.
So I depart upon the desert way,
So I strive ever toward the copper sky,
With lips burnt black and blind in either eye.
I move for ever to my mystic goal
Where I may drain a fountain never dry,
And of Life's guerdon gather in the whole,
And on celestial manna satisfy my soul.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 42.

All the "Unholy phantom faces"*1. of self, and of sin, will be lost, and all the misty distortions that crowd the brain*2. will fade and wither:

*1. Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 50.
*2. *Ibid*. vol. i, p. 42.

So shalt thou conquer Space, and lastly climb
The walls of Time,
And by the golden path the great have trod
Reach up to God!*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 54.

And then:

…there gleams from Heaven
The likeness of a Man in glory set;
The sun is blotted, and the skies are riven—
A God flames forth my spirit to beget;

And where my body and His love are met
A new desire possesses altogether
My whole new self as in a golden net
Of transcendental love one fiery tether,
Dissolving all my woe into one sea of weather.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 43.

In many other of these poems do we find depicted other phases of the philosophy of the Qabalah; one, the Hermetic maxim, "That which is above is as that which is below," we find stated in "The Philosopher's Progress":

That which is highest as the deep
Is fixed, the depth as that above:
Death's face is as the face of Sleep;
And Lust is likest Love.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 34.

In "The Quest" and in several parts of "Tannhäuser," we are conveyed into the maze of mystic numbers, which we do not intend to enter here. "My womb is pregnant with mad moons and suns,"* and yet we ultimately feel, on reading deep into these mystical poems, "Too wise to grieve, too happy to rejoice."

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i. p. 166.

With one number, however, or rather with the primal symbol of all numbers – 0 (zero), we shall deal. In a slender pamphlet entitled "Berashith," Aleister Crowley ontologically asserts the *Absoluteness of the Qabalstic Zero*.* Let us as shortly as possible now see how he arrives at this ultimate genesis.

*Berashith, vol. ii, p. 236.

The ancient Hebrew Qabalah was as closely connected with Assyriology, as it was with Babylonian and Egyptian thought, Hindu mythology, and the philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads; its conception of the supreme God was ineffable, for He bore neither name nor attribute, being beyond the power of human conception. Over the face of the whole world we find earnest thought arriving at or towards such a conclusion. In ancient China we hear Lao-Tze declaring: "What is there superior in Heaven and Earth, and from which Heaven and Earth sprung? Nay, what is there superior to Space and which moves in Space? The great Tao is the parent of Space, and Space is the parent of Heaven and Earth, and Heaven and Earth produced men and things…" A similar conception of the Wisdom is held in the Chaldaic, *Memrah*; in the *Vach*, or word, of the Rig Veda; in the *Honover* or word, of the Zend Avesta; in the *Avalôkitêsvara*, or *Kwan-Yin*, the *Sakti* of *Amitâbha*, the boundless light of the later Mahayana Buddhists. Again we find it in the conception of *Prana* or life spirit of ancient India; the Atharva-veda says: "Reverence to Prana, to whom the universe is subject, who has been lord of all, on whom all is supported." Prana is the Purusha or AUM, the totality of Brahman, Vishnu, and Siva, of Past, Present, and Future. The Wisdom of the Book of Proverbs, and the later Book of Wisdom; it is also the same power as the *Eden illa-ah* of the Zohar, the *Be' Raisheeth* of many Qabalists and Talmudists, the *Logos* of Philo and St. John, and the *Sophia* of Plato.

All the above are Absolute ideals, and so can bear only a relationship and no proportionate value whatever to our finite understanding, they can only be watched, and have never been realized; and for this reason is it that they have never been appreciated by the mass of their so-called believers:

I will not look at her; I dare not stay.

I will go down and mingle with the throng,
Find some debasing dulling sacrifice,
Some shameless harlot with thin lips grown grey
In desperate desire, and so with song
And wine fling hellward…*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 169.

Such is the step of their duality, when they face the awful unity of their existence.

…their logic fails,
Their jarring jargon jingles – even such
An empty brazen pot – wise men deride
The clouds that mimic whales.
. . . . . .
Man's darkness is a leathern sheath,
Myself the sun-bright sword!*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, pp. 104, 105.

Yet Crowley puts into the mouth of Tannhäuser the following as answer to the simple Elizabeth's assertion, "but God is absolute Good!"

God slips you, He is Undefinable!
Not good! Not wise! Not anything at all
That heart can grasp, or reason frame, or soul
Shadow the sense of!*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 258.

Such a definition whether applied to God or the Ain Soph is one and the same. In the Qabalistic Dogmas of Pistorius we read even as

regards Kether, the Crown, "There is no name among Qabalists by which the supreme King is designated; they speak of the crown only, which proves the existence of the King, and they say that this crown is Heaven." If so of Kether, how much more so of the Ain Soph!

Above the Crown Kether, the first Sephirah, is the (אין), *i.e.*, *Ain*, the No-Thing. "It is so named because we do not know, that which there is in this Principle, because it never descends as far as our ignorance, and because it is above Wisdom itself."*

*Zohar, iii, fol. 2886 (Meyer).

"Not only does the Qabbalah repudiate the adage *ex nihilo nihil fit, i.e.*, 'From nothing, nothing is made,' that is, nothing can come from nothing, but it does not believe in the absolute annihilation of anything which has ever existed. 'There is not anything new under the sun.'*1. 'Not any Thing,' says the Zohar, 'is lost in the universe, not even the vapour which goes out of our mouths, as all things, it has its place and destination, and the Holy One, blessed be It! makes it concur to Its works; not anything falls into the void, not even the words and the voice of man, but all has its place and its destination."*2.

*1. But Crowleyanity may be new, for it is *not* under the sun.
*2. Qabbalah. Isaac Meyer, p. 124.

"All things of which this world is composed, spirit as well as body, will again enter into the Principle, and into the root from which they went out."*

*Zohar, Part ii, fol. 218b.

The Qabalist Abram ben Dior, says: "When they (the Qabalists) affirm, that All Things have been drawn from No-Thing, they do not

wish to speak of nothing properly to say, for never can being come from Non-being, but they understand by Non-being, that, which one can conceive of, neither by its cause nor by its essence; it (the No Thing) is in a word, the Cause of Causes; it is It whom we all call the Primordial Non-being, because It is anterior to the entire universe…"

No clear formulated reply can naturally be given to the Formless, all we can know concerning it is: that Something emanates from No-thing; that out of the Formless emerges the Formed, how and why remains unanswered: this alone is the only meaning we can give to creation *ex nihilo*.

Crowley explains the Qabalist's position thus: "The Qabalists explain the 'First Cause,' by the phrase: 'From 0 to 1, as the circle opening out into the line' …I am bound to express my view that when the Qabalists said Not, they meant Not, and nothing else. In fact, I really claim to have rediscovered the long-lost and central Arcanum of those divine philosophers."*

*Berashith, vol. ii, p. 236.

"I ASSERT THE ABSOLUTENESS OF THE QABALISTIC ZERO."

"When we say that the Cosmos sprang from 0, what kind of 0 do we mean? By 0 in the ordinary sense of the term we mean 'absence of extension in any of the categories.'

"When I say 'No cat has two tails,' I do not mean, as the old fallacy runs, that 'Absence of cat possesses two tails,' but that 'In the category of two-tailed things, there is no extension of cat!'

"Nothingness is that about which no positive proposition is valid. We cannot truly affirm: 'Nothingness is green, or heavy, or sweet.'

"Let us call time, space, being, heaviness, hunger, the categories. If a man be heavy and hungry, he is extended in all these, besides, of course, many more. But let us suppose, that these five are all. Call the man X; his formula is then $X^{t+s+b+h+h}$. If he now eat, he will cease to be extended in hunger; if he be cut off from time and gravitation as well, he will now be represented by the formula X^{s+b}. Should he cease to occupy space and to exist, his formula would then be X^0. This expression is equal to 1; whatever X may represent, if it be raised to the power of 0 (this meaning mathematically, 'if it be extended in no dimension or category'), the result is Unity, and the unknown factor X is eliminated.

"This is the Advaitist idea of the future of man; his personality, bereft of all its qualities, disappears and is lost, while in its place arises the impersonal Unity, The Pleroma, Parabrahma, or the Allah of the Unity-adoring followers of Mohammed. (To the Mussulman fakir, Allah is by no means a personal God.)

"Unity is thus unaffected, whether or no it be extended in any of the categories. But we have already agreed to look to 0 for an Uncaused.

"Now if there was in truth 0 'before the beginning of years,' THAT 0 WAS EXTENDED IN NONE OF THE CATEGORIES, FOR THERE COULD HAVE BEEN NO CATEGORIES IN WHICH IT COULD EXTEND! If our 0 was the ordinary 0 of mathematics, there was not truly absolute 0, for 0 is, as I have shown, dependent on the ideas of categories. If these existed, then the whole question is merely thrown back; we must reach a state in which the 0 is absolute. Not only must we get rid of all subjects, but of all predicates. By 0 (in mathematics) we really mean 0^n, where n is the final term of a natural scale of dimensions, categories, or predicates. Our Cosmic Egg, then, from which the present universe arose, was Nothingness, extended in no categories, or, graphically, 0^0. This expression is in the present form

meaningless. Let us discover its value by a simple mathematical process!

$$0^0 = 0^{1-1} = 0^1/0^1 \text{ [Multiply by 1 = n/n]}$$

$$\text{Then } 0^1/n \times n/0^1 = 0 \times \infty$$

"Now the multiplying of the infinitely great by the infinitely small results in SOME UNKNOWN FINITE NUMBER EXTENDED IN AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF CATEGORIES. It happened when this our Great Inversion took place, from the essence of the nothingness to finity extended in innumerable categories, that an incalculably vast system was produced. Merely by chance, chance in the truest sense of the term, we are found with gods, men, stars, plants, devils, colours, forces, and all the materials of the Cosmos: and with them, space and causality, the conditions limiting and involving them all."*

*Berashith, vol. ii, pp. 236, 237.

Thus from the Hegelian abstraction of the *non ens* we have at last touched bottom, and have come down to the facts of real life. Empty space is the postulate of all metaphysics, but all absolute quantities finally must be beyond the finitely reasoning mind.

SPACE

This assertion of the Absolute Zero may truly at first sight appear to be a somewhat exaggerated statement; but on due consideration it will be disclosed, that not only do all physics and metaphysics rest on this bed-rock of nothingness; but, that also both abstract philosopher and scientist alike, have in no way leapt its fiery circumference. When the scientist eternalizes matter and motion by asserting their absolute indestructibility, he is merely asserting an absolute unity, which in

reality is a synonym of absolute nullity – 0=1, but he at once, to propitiate his Reason, forsakes his God – (Ain Soph) – and sacrifices his only begotten son (Unity) on the blood-stained altar of Evolution, by ascribing to it a tendency to dividuality, thus barbarously immolating his sacred child by rendering him one with the divine *fiat* of Genesis.*

*"Heaven and earth and the ten thousand things come from existence, but existence comes from non-existence." "The T A O begets unity, unity begets duality; duality begets trinity; and trinity begets the ten thousand things." —*Lao-Tze*.

Berkeley, nearly two hundred years ago now, answered the scientists apparently for all time, by stating: "…it seems no less absurd to suppose a substance without accidents, than it is to suppose accidents without a substance." And that, "though we should grant the unknown substance may possibly exist, yet where can it be supposed to be? That it exists not in the mind is agreed; and that it exists not in place is no less certain – since all place or extension exists only in the mind, as hath been already proved. It remains, therefore, that it exists nowhere at all"*1. *i.e.*, in the Absolute Zero. And again he asserts, this time by the word of Philonous: "Consequently every corporal substance being the *substratum* of extension must have in itself another extension, by which it is qualified to be a *substratum*: and so on to infinity? And I ask whether this be not absurd in itself, and repugnant to what you granted just now, to wit, that the *substratum* was something distinct from and exclusive of extension?"*2. And what is pure extension? – Absolute Zero.

*1. The Principles of Human Knowledge, p. 69.
*2. The Three Dialogues, p. 45.

Thus the whole cosmic process resolves itself under the one great law of Inertia; so that the entire Universe lies before us, as Luther said of God, "A blank sheet on which nothing is found, but what we

ourselves have written." Or again, in the words of the divine Spinoza: "final or first causes are only figments of the human mind," bubbles which must burst before the finite can once again dissolve into the infinite atmosphere of eternity. This seeming duality is that which Crowley infers when he states: "In any category, infinity excludes finity, unless that finity be an identical part of that infinity."*

*Berashith, vol. ii, p. 234.

Laugh, thou immortal Lesbian!
Thy verse runs down the runic ages.
Where shalt thou be when sun and star,
My sun, my star, the vault that span,
Rush in their rude, impassive rages
Down to some centre guessed afar
By mindless Law? Their death embrace
A simple accident of space?*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 85.

"In the category of existing things, space being infinite, for on that hypothesis we are still working, either matter fills or does not fill it. In the former, matter is infinitely great; if the latter, infinitely small. Whether the matter-universe be 10^{10000} light-years in diameter, or half a mile, it makes no difference; it is infinitely small – in effect, Nothing."* In the first case being infinitely great all else is crowded out, and it=0; in the second being infinitely small, the unmathematical illusion of the Hindus called "maya" vanishes likewise in 0. So likewise does Theism resolve into Pantheism, which itself dissolves into Atheism; the $1=\infty=0$.

*Berashith, vol. ii, p. 234.

Another triumph for Crowleyanity:

> Things as they are – of these take hold,
> Their heart of wonder throb to thine!
> All things are matter and force and sense,
> No two alone. All's one: the gold
> Of truth is no reward divine
> Of faith, but wage of evidence.
> The clod, the God, the spar, the star,
> Mete in thy measure, as they are!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 85.

The sum total of the Vedantist Crowley sums up as follows: "'I' am an illusion, externally. In reality, the true 'I' am the Infinite, and if the illusionary 'I' could only realize Who 'I' really am, how very happy we should all be!"* Here we have the great law of re-birth operating nowhere in nothing.

*Berashith, vol. ii, p. 235.

Thus the universe is laid open before us as some huge ledger, upon which each being is working as a clerk; some are called directors, some accountants, some cashiers, yet great or small, high or low, from the amoeba to man, they are all scribbling, scribble, scribble, and counting, counting, counting, again and again, "all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth," as Huxley says, "transitory forms of parcels of cosmic substance wending along the road of evolution, from nebulous potentiality, through endless growths of sun and planet and satellite… back to that indefinable latency from which they arose."*

*Cited in vol. ii, p. 246.

As Crowley writes:

> Where is thy fame, when million leagues
> Of flaming gas absorb the roll
> Of many a system ruinous hurled
> With infinite pains and dire fatigues
> To build another stupid soul
> For fools to call another world?
> Where then thy fame, O soul sublime?
> Where then thy victory over Time?*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 85.

Some few work out its gigantic columns of intricate fractional figures, and close for ever the huge volume before them; yet the multitude works on, and though individually they may falsify and erase, scribble over, or blot out; yet never at any moment is the inaccuracy of one single mite discounted in the general balance; so the bitter tears of one man go to blot out the sweet laughter of another, and as the sparkling stream and the muddy river both pour back their boiling waters into that great ocean, from out of which they sun-kissed arose, so do action and reaction once again unite to build up that great unity which is Nothing. Not one farthing is ever lost, absolute co-operation exists, and the dividend Mysticus offered Scepticus is paid out without fault or fail, to all those most assiduous workers whose skill and craft never tarries or tires: "In the first year Dhyana; in the second, Samadhi; and in the third, Nirvana."*

*Time, vol. ii, p. 280.

In the beginning (*sic*) there is the ledger (Inertia) = 0; in the middle there is the ledger open, action balanced by re-action (Inertia) = 0; and in the end there is again (Inertia) the ledger closed = 0. This Idealism, if I may so call it, is very similar to the conditioned and

unconditioned of Hegel, to the metaphysical unity underlying the Athanasian Creed, and also to the Hindu Philosophy which Crowley so thoroughly grasped, when seeing the slough into which Spencerian Agnosticism was bound to lead, he broke away from Buddha and the Buddhistic doctrines of scientific doubt:

So lifts the agony of the world
From this mine head, that bowed awhile
Before the terror suddenly shown.
The nameless fear for self, far hurled
By death to dissolution vile,
Fades as the royal truth is known:
Though change and sorrow range and roll,
There is no self – there is no soul!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 85.

TIME AND SPACE

One question still remains before we dismiss the question of Time and Space, and that is their homogeneity and accidental reality in the Ego. Being forms of extension, Space permits Size, and Time, Number, *i.e.*, in Consciousness. This is the meaning of "Time is the fourth Dimension." So the hard thinking of Crowley arrives eventually at the transcendental idea of considering Space as a plane, and nearness as Time.

"Can Space be identified with Matter (Akasa, means both), and Time with Motion?" Crowley answers, "Yes." [For in extension Space is the single immovable consciousness; Time the extension in number, the motion of the immobiles. A moving body must move in Time; for it is the succession of consciousnesses. "It is here" – "it is there," that makes us say, it moves. It is a succession of consciousness in a single

consciousness, that makes us say, it is of an extended body or idea. This taken together reduces the universe to a lot of *minima cogitabilia*, linked only by Time; Anima explained by Ratio.* Space is Geometry: Time is Arithmetic, *i.e.*, the geometrical conception, the mathematical conception. Thus, if I {see/think of} a blue pig ten times, that is ten blue pigs; yet in Space there is but one blue pig. Can we reduce Space – which I spiritually comprehend so well, intellectually so badly – to a form of Time (which, *vice versa*?) Yes, if we suppose that a really accurate {definition/division} of consciousness would show that only the "minimum cogitabile" was truly apprehended at once.] Thus in the comprehension of Crowleyanity Space seems "Anima," Time "Ratio."

*Angelus Silesius also beautifully shows how Time and Space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul, in the Cherubic Wanderer, where he writes:

> Rise above Space and Time, and thou canst be
> At any moment in Eternity.
>
> Sit in the centre, and thou seest at once,
> What is, what was; all here and all in heaven.
>
> I am as great as God, and he as small as I;
> He cannot me surpass, or I beneath him lie.
>
> Self is surpassed by self-annihilation;
> The nearer nothing, so much more divine.
>
> Who is as though he were not – ne'er had been –
> That man, oh joy! is made God absolute.

BUDDHISM

As regards the beginning of all things the Buddhist is discreetly silent, he (as Crowley says) neither prevaricates like the Hindu, nor openly lies like the Christian.

In the Is'a Upanishad we read:

> Into dense darkness he enters
> Who has conceived becoming to be naught,
> Into yet denser he
> Who has conceived becoming to be aught.

In the second discourse of the Bhagavad-Gītā we also read:

> Uncleavable He, incombustible He, and indeed neither to be wetted nor dried away; perpetual, all-pervasive, stable, immovable, ancient, unmanifest, unthinkable, immutable He is called.

This is very much like the Athanasian Creed, after having defined God in every possible way, to end up by describing him as "incomprehensible." Not so the Buddhist who went back to the older vedic conception:

> In the beginning there is existence blind and without knowledge; and in this sea of ignorance there are appetences formative and organizing. —*The Questions of King Milinda*.

We must, however, pass by the question of beginning, and see how the Buddhistic ideals have affected the poetry and philosophy of Aleister Crowley.

According to Buddhism, existence is sorrow, the cause of sorrow is desire, the cessation of sorrow is the cessation of desire, which can only be realized by following the Noble Eightfold path. This intimate connection between sorrow and desire, as we have seen, is vividly described by Crowley in many of his poems. In "The Nameless Quest" we find the yearning "For One beyond all song."*

*The Temple of the Holy Ghost, vol. i, p. 189.

In "The Triumph of Man" we again find the same idea crystallized, but in "The Ultimate Voyage," the aspirant, on his spiritual journey towards the Supreme Knowledge, at one point on his journey all but attains Nirvana.

In many other poems do we find this idea of Nirvana. In "Why Jesus Wept" we have:

> Thy flower-life is shed
> Into eternity,
> A waveless lake.*

*Why Jesus Wept, vol. iii, p. 41.

Which reminds us of Sir Edwin Arnold's:

> OM, MANI PADME, OM! The Dewdrop slips
> Into the shining Sea!

Again, in "The Farewell of Paracelsus to Aprile":

> My whole new self as in a golden net
> Of transcendental love one fiery tether,
> Dissolving all my woe into one sea of weather.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 43.

Or,

> Those souls that cast their trammels off, and spring
> On eager wing,
> Immaculate, new born, toward the sky,
> And shall not die
> Until they cleave at last the lampless dome,
> And lose their tent because they find their home.*

*Songs of the Spirit, vol. i, p. 55.

Which compares with:

> Till like the smoke of mountains risen at dawn,
> The cloud-veils of the Ain are withdrawn.
>
> Pure spirits rise to heaven, the bride.
> Pure bodies are as lamps below.
> The shining essence, glorified
> With fire more cold than fresh-fallen snow,
> And influences, white and wide,
> Descend, re-gather, kindle, grow,
> Till from one virgin bosom flows a river
> Of white devotion adamant for ever.*

*Jephthah, vol. i, pp. 83, 84.

We might expect to find this idea in "Tannhäuser," and do in the following verse:

> This were my guerdon: to fade utterly
> Into the rose heart of that sanguine vase,

And lose my purpose in its silent sea,
    And lose my life, and find my life, and pass
Up to the sea that is as molten glass.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 227.

One more quotation we will give from the song of Parthenope in "The Argonauts."

O mortal, sad is love! But my dominion
    Extends beyond love's ultimate abode.
Eternity itself is but a minion,
    Lighting my way on the untravelled road.
Gods shelter 'neath one shadow of my pinion.
    Thou only tread the path none else hath trode!
Come, lover, in my breast all blooms above,
    Here is thy love!*

*The Argonauts, vol. ii, p. 108.

The true Buddhist scorns the selfishness of heaven, the idea of hell is utterly repugnant to him, to feel that he is gaining eternal bliss whilst others are sinking into everlasting torment, burns into his heart and tortures his very soul; rather would he be reborn in the lowest depths of Orcus and point out to others the path of salvation, than attain to the uttermost bliss, whilst others are being damned. George Eliot, knowingly or unknowingly, set the true lyre of Buddhism reverberating in her grand and noble prayer, "The Choir Invisible."

May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony.
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty.

Be the sweet presence of a good diffus'd
And in diffusion ever more intense!
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

In the song of Orpheus we listen to the glittering and mystic consummation of bliss:

This world is shadow-shapen of
    The bitterness of pain.
Vain are the little lamps of love!
    The light of life is vain!
Life, death, joy, sorrow, age and youth
Are phantoms of a further truth.

Beyond the splendour of the world,
    False glittering of the gold,
A Serpent is in slumber curled
    In wisdom's sacred cold.
Life is the flaming of that flame.
Death is the naming of that name.
. . . . . .
That star upon the serpent's head
    Is called the soul of man:
That light in shadows subtly shed
    The glamour of life's plan.
The sea whereon that lotus grows
Is thought's abyss of tears and woes.
. . . . . .
Until the lotus and the sea
    And snake no longer are,
And single through eternity
    Exists alone the star,
And utter Knowledge rise and cease

In that which is beyond the Peace!*

*The Argonauts, vol. ii, pp. 110-111.

Buddhism may be called the religion of Science, notwithstanding the fact that it arose in the East hundreds of years before what we call modern science was born. The youth of systems, as of individuals, is lost in the mist of the past, unknown to themselves, dimly apparent to others, they proceed through wondering childhood, ambitious youth, maturity, and decay. The crucibles and retorts of the alchymists are but the toys of youthful Chemistry, its dolls and tin soldiers: God and devil, angel and goblin, are but the fairies of Grimm or Andersen, or the gnomes who spring through the flooring of Drury Lane to the amazement of little children. The human first adores images, then imaginations; the little girl who loves her doll will neglect it to tend her youngest little brother or sister, whom she will kiss and pinch in the true fashion of the human; and when scarcely in her teens will commence those necessary and attractive adornments to enable her shortly to have a real little doll of her own. The little boy will forsake his brave little man in tin, in order to watch the soldiers in the park, or turn the coal cellar into a robber's den, or the garden seat into a pirate's bark, poetically he is realizing the grim struggle which lies before him; both doubt their toys, and eagerly peer into the dark corridor of Life, which, alas, is so often but a Blue Beard's chamber of despair. So with religions and philosophies, in doubt they arise, with doubt they thrive, and by doubt they are urged on; Hope, like a will-o'-the-wisp, dances before them, leading them through marsh and mire, down dale and o'er hill, deep through the frozen forest, and the broad sun-scorched plain, over seas and oceans, over continents, and worlds, far, far through universes and systems, past stars, past comets and suns, deep into the depths of unutterable mystery; and there through the æons midst, the birth of worlds, in the very womb of Time sunk on some fleeting asteroid, is the aspirant, "O Hope! O Hope! Where hast thou led me, ever near

me, never with me?" "On, on, O weary one, past man, past gods, on, on to the rim of Time": then from the parched lips bursts the echoing cry, "Agnosco, Agnosco."

The hyperbola of Time, the parabola of Infinity, lie far to the north in the hyperborean regions of the Unknowable. Knowledge is but a ring smitten into the face of the waters, around it grows another ring, the ring of a greater knowledge, around that yet another, it is the ring of a higher knowledge still, countless rings upon rings surround rings; then, as he has reached some far distant one, man in his presumption shouts, "I have found God"; blinded by the glittering projection of circles, dazzled by the greater brilliancy of the jewels in their setting; "He has found God." "No, no, O deluded one! not even the ring that fits the little finger of God, hast thou discovered, and, if thou hadst, it and its God who wears it would be but the smallest gem in the ring of still some other God, perhaps even of some other man, who worships yet some other God, who himself is but again some gem in the endless ring of Eternity."

Yet hope, ever hope; for as a child lisping its alphabet learns how to probe the depths of dark and cryptic books; so we, we too, have to travel many an arduous league before we can obtain that crown of Wisdom which is stored up for us. Be the God that we can, grasp but the first ring, but grasp it well, and be thankful if it but fit our little finger; trusting that the flashing gems, fiery in its golden setting, will light our way to the discovery of the next, and the next! – and the next! till we become one with the whirling gems of Eternity.

This religion of Scientific-Buddhism, either through the narrow circumference of its founder's opinions, or through that of his followers, becoming rational, became absurd, when drawn out to its logical conclusions, as Crowley himself shows in "Pansil"*1. and "The Three Characteristics."*2. In the former he bares the fact that in the "First Precept" Buddha himself, by speaking this commandment,

violated it, and in a note very truly says: "The argument that the 'animals are our brothers' is merely intended to mislead one who has never been in a Buddhist country. The average Buddhist would, of course, kill his brother for five rupees, or less."*3. The mere fact of breathing breaks the second precept. Buddha, being an habitual adulterer,*4. constantly broke the third; and the fourth and fifth likewise.

*1. Vol. ii, p. 192.
*2. Vol. ii, p. 225.
*3. Vol. ii, p. 192.
*4. It would be easy to argue with Hegel-Huxley that he who thinks of an act commits it (*cf*. Jesus also in this connection, though He only knows the creative value of desire), and that since A and not-A are mutually limiting, therefore interdependent, therefore identical, he who forbids an act commits it. Vol. ii, p. 193.

AGNOSTICISM

Ex Oriente Lux. As old as the Vedas is the idea of Agnosticism, though in name it is not yet forty years of age. Everywhere we look we find the 'Αγνώστῳ Θεῷ of Paul, midst the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, the Chaldeans, the Aryans, and the Chinese, and its light is focussed in the greatest of the great: Socrates and Plato, Malebranche and Descartes, Locke and Spinoza, Hume and Berkeley, Swedenborg and Kant, Hegel and Comte, Tyndall, Spencer, and Huxley. Declining the mimetic, seeking the idiosyncratic, and standing by the eclectic, it has stood and grown a Colossus of Thought, ever young, ever virile, as age after age has gathered round it, and as the years have swept by it on their path to oblivion.

Between the theist and the atheist stands the agnostic, and as the most vital point of attack is that which lies nearest to the object to be attacked, the great danger to theistic churches was threatened not

from the atheistical extremity, but from the Agnostic frontier. The Agnostic said, "I do not know," the theist said, "I do," hence the uninterrupted warfare of 3,000 years or more, in which the priest has ever been ready to lie for the greater glory of his God, as S'afi well said:

Then speak the truth, if so a priest
May tune his tongue to anything but lies.*

*The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 142.

And of the gods of this greater glory, Amenhatep a few lines further on informs us:

For the old gods indeed go down to death,
But the new gods arise from rottenness.*

*The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 143.

The pantheistic idea, which is so near akin to the agnostic, we find set in the fine prayer of Jephthah,* and still more so in the final words of Tannhäuser:

*Jephthah, vol. i, p. 78.

I say, then "I"; and yet it is not "I"
Distinct, but "I" incorporate in All.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 261.

It further finds development in the last four lines of "Ode to Poesy":

No man;
No petty god, but One who governs all,

Slips the sun's leash, perceives the sparrow's fall,
Too high for me to fear, too near for man to call.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 115.

And arrives at full manhood in such fine lines as the following:

God is the Complex as the Protoplast:
He is the First (not "was"), and is the Last.
(Not "will be")…*1.

God slips you, He is Undefinable.
Not good! Not wise! Not anything at all.*2.

Isis am I, and from my life are fed
All stars and suns, all moons that wax and wane,
Create and uncreate, living and dead,
The mystery of Pain.
I am the Mother, I the silent Sea,
The Earth, its travail, its fertility.
Life, death, love, hatred, light, darkness, return to me—
To Me!*3.

*1. Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 226.
*2. *Ibid*. vol. i, p. 258.
*3. *Ibid*. vol. i, p. 262.

What God is in Himself the Agnostic declares is not given man to understand, much less to discuss, and this maxim finds full affirmation in "Ascension Day," when Crowley writes:

I deny nothing – at the term
It is just Nothing I affirm.*

*The Sword of Song, vol. ii, p. 163.

Man is but an ephemeron:

> We float upon the blue
> Like sunlight specks in dew,
> And like the moonlight on the lake we lie.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 95.

Yet he rises:

> Golden, the electric spark of man is drawn
> Deep in the bosom of the world, to soar
> New-fledged, an eagle to the dazzling dawn
> With lidless eyes undazzled, to arise,
> Son of the morning…*

*The Fatal Force, vol. i, p. 145.

finds Freedom as his God:

> And Freedom stands, re-risen from the rod,
> A goodlier godhead than the broken God.*

*Mysteries: Lyrical and Dramatic, vol. i, p. 107.

It was in the winter of 1619 that Descartes made the famous resolution to "take nothing for truth without the clear knowledge that it is such." Thus Jove-like he discrowned the authority of a thousand years, and though the symbolization of his ideas was often at variance with the logic of his facts, it is to him alone that present-day agnosticism must look back on as its founder. Berkeley, as we have seen, carried the Cartesian principle to its logical result; Hume, on the other hand, "proved that, in a multitude of important

instances, so far from possessing 'clear knowledge,' that they may be so taken, we have none at all; and that our duty therefore is to remain silent, or to express at most, suspended judgment."*

*Huxley's Hume. p. x.

This, the mob of mankind are very loath to do, for instead of honestly expressing nine-tenths of their knowledge in terms of doubt, they cast the whole onus of Absolute or Noumenal knowledge on to the back of some aching and asinine deity.

By postulating Unknowability, which if treated as an absolute term is also a positive one (God), Spencer the Transfigured Realist was hoisted by that very same petard he had himself intended to tie to the wagging tail of the Christian Deity. Thus by rendering all knowledge automorphological, in order to annihilate the unity of thirty-nine articles without parts or passions, rearing himself up, he plunged down, creating in his fall, "a footless stocking without a leg" – Unknowability.

In "Eleusis" Crowley illustrates this, and says:

"Evolution is no better than creation to explain things, as Spencer showed."*

*Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 228.

Huxley the sublime philosopher, the true agnostic, the periphery of whose knowledge extended far into those mirrored realms wherein Spencer only saw his own distorted countenance, seeing well that Hylo-Idealistic-Solipsism led the whole sentient creation from sub-rational matter to rational man, was sufficiently a true agnostic not to deny the possibility of a divine Solipsism, leading rational man to a super-rational God, but yet not sufficiently illuminated to transmute

"I doubt" into "I know." However, Huxley grasped the great and grand truth that the natural philosopher who examines worlds, suns, and stars, is in reality only experimenting on his own "inner consciousness," beyond which to him there is Nothing.

These stars thou seest
Are but the figuring of thy brain.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 89.

This Nothing, this absolute nihility, is again the Qabalistic Zero. Huxley did not belong to that now rapidly growing school (*sic*) of crapulous scientists who inflate themselves, like the frog in the fable, with the gases produced from an eightpenny box of chemicals with which they intend to solve in some dingy attic the flashing mysteries of the spheres. The *Caput Mortuum* was his playground, but the *Anima Vitae* eluded his eager grasp; yet this greatest of modern philosophers, curious to say, stood almost alone, on one side growling science asserting, "There is no Archaeus," on the other religion howling "There is! There is!" Yet as a positive and a negative formulate Zero, so these twain were as one yelping pack of jackals, who prowl by night fearing the brightness of the day.

Huxley aptly sums up the standpoint an Agnostic should take in the following:

> If a piece of lead were to remain suspended of itself in the air, the occurrence would be a "miracle" in the sense of a wonderful event, indeed; but no one trained in the methods of science would imagine that any law of nature was really violated thereby. He would simply set to work to investigate the conditions under which so highly unexpected an occurrence took place, and thereby enlarge his experience, and modify his hitherto unduly narrow conceptions of the laws of nature.*

*Huxley's Hume, p. 155. "It will be said that these are miracles, but we reply that miracles, when they are genuine, are simply facts for science."

"A philosopher has declared that he would discredit universal testimony rather than believe in the resurrection of a dead person, but his speech was rash, for it is on the faith of universal testimony that he believed in the impossibility of the resurrection. Supposing such an occurrence were proved, what would follow? Must we deny evidence, or renounce reason? It would be absurd to say so. We should simply infer that we were wrong in supposing resurrection to be impossible."

"*Ab actu ad posse valet consecutio*." —E. Lévi, *The Doctrine of Transcendent Magic*, pp. 121, 158; also *vide* p.192.

This is the method of true science, the great white magic of the Black Goddess:

> Gape wide, O hideous mouth, and suck
> This heart's blood, drain it down, expunge
> This sweetening life of mire and muck!
> Squeeze out my passions as a sponge,
> Till nought is left of terrene wine
> But somewhat deathless and divine!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 98.

Huxley continues: "The day-fly has better grounds for calling a thunderstorm supernatural than has man, with his experience of an infinitesimal fraction of duration, to say that the most astonishing event that can be imagined is beyond the scope of natural causes."* And that there is no such thing as the violation of the laws of nature, but merely a violation of that understanding which falsely interprets a "something" which reason alone cannot grasp.

*Huxley's Hume, p. 156.

How different is this agnosticism from the agnosticism of Spencer; which postulates as its first great principle, the unknowability of the Absolute, of whom we can conceive no proportion whatsoever, but whose relationship to us becomes closer and closer as we proceed along the way of the knowable – and perhaps actually becomes known when we ourselves become unknowable, *i.e.*, pure adepts. The second great principle is the Conservation of Matter and Energy, or in other words the law of Cause and Effect. A law we have gone to some length in demonstrating to be apodictically untenable, though highly probably *à posteriori*. Crowley, like Hume and Huxley, solely identifies it as a law based upon inference. This sequence of events is vividly demonstrated in "The Mother's Tragedy." Cora thinks, "God hath made smooth the road beneath the hearse of my forgetful age." Not so however:

> They know not, learn not, cannot calculate
> How subtly Fate
> Weaves its fine mesh, perceiving how to wait;
> Or how accumulate
> The trifles that shall make it master yet
> Of the strong soul that bade itself forget.*

*The Mother's Tragedy, vol. i, pp. 156-7.

Qabalistic Dogma of Pistorius.

Factum fatum quia fatum verbum est.

A supreme reason governs all, and hence there is no fatality; all which is must be; all which happens ought to take place. An accomplished fact is irrevocable as destiny, but destiny is the reason of the Supreme Intelligence. — The Mysteries of Magic, p. 123.

This law of Cause and Effect logically leads us to the third great principle of both Buddhism and Spencerian Agnosticism – "The absence of an Ego."

In support of this assertion, Crowley quotes from Huxley's "Evolution and Ethics," and considers it to be an admirable summary of the Buddhist doctrine.*

*The Sword of Song, Science and Buddhism, vol. ii, p. 246.

The Ego does not exist. It is morning; I walk down the hill to catch a train; as I walk I literally leave shreds of myself behind me. I am no longer the "I" of five minutes ago, fleeting I pass along life's way. A minute gone by my footstep crushed a daisy, there is woe in the land of flowers; yet a few seconds past and I slew a fly, there is weeping in the land of insects. I speed to catch the train, I slip, and in a dazzling flash am converted into a glutinous mass of jelly and crushed bones. Crumpled as some much-written palimpsest I am thrown to the basket of the dead, a useless manuscript. When was I, "I"; in the morning when I crushed the daisy, when I slew the fly, or when I was converted into pulp? Which? The Buddhist answers, "you were never 'I,'" the Agnostic answers, "You were never 'I,'" both merely state – see that on the papyrus of thy life thou inscribest what is good, what is beautiful, for others must read it, it is thy soul.

Change, change, no stability. The "is" is not as the "was," and the "was" is not as the "will be"; every cause has its effect: "Freewill" is the postulate of Morality, "Determination" of Science. Thus in Buddhism we find Anikka, Dukkha, and Anatta, and in Agnosticism Change, Sorrow, and Absence of an Ego; and in both: That to deny all religions is a sublime act of faith.

> The metaphysics of these verses
> Is perfectly absurd. My curse is
> No sooner in an iron word
> I formulate my thought than I
> Perceive the same to be absurd.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 170.

And this fleeting changeful "experience," Huxley says, is necessarily "based on incomplete knowledge," and is "to be held only as grounds of more or less justified expectation" … "On the other hand, no conceivable event however extraordinary is impossible."*

*Huxley's Hume, p. 157.

Thus all changeability is uncertainty, from the Gods and the Suns which we worship, to the kisses we shower on our loved ones' lips; as Crowley sings:

Why must despair to madness drive
The myriad fools that fear to die?
God is but a fervid phantom drawn
Out of the hasty-ordered hive
Of thoughts that battle agony
In the melancholy hours of dawn.
When vital force at lowest ebbs
Anæmic nerves weave frailest webs.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 85.

And the five senses stand naked and shivering in the freezing night of doubt, the fire is dead, and on the hearth crouch the spectral ashes no longer to flame in the starlight.

Foolish prostitute!
You slacked your kiss upon the sodden youth
In some excess of confidence, decay
Of care to hold him – can I tell you which?
Down goes the moon – one sees the howling bitch!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 91.

The Agnostic principles of Crowleyanity may briefly be summed up as follows:

Believe nothing until you find it out for yourself.

Say not "I have a soul," before you *feel* that you have a soul.

Say not "There is a God," before you experience that there is a God.

You can never understand until you have experienced.

You can never experience until you have got beyond reason.

Those five paths lead us to one road, the road of "Knowledge and Doubt"; beyond which to the inept there is impenetrable night, and to the adept undying brilliancy. "Know or Doubt! is the alternative of highwayman Huxley; 'Believe' is not to be admitted; this is a fundamental; in this agnosticism can never change; this must ever command our moral, as our intellectual assent."*

*The Sword of Song, vol. ii, p. 208.

Thus Reason ends by whispering: "I am agnostic; I cannot answer yea or nay." This is the crowning triumph of the nineteenth century! Kant has proved beyond all doubt, that by empirical means we can never hope to penetrate beyond the tremendous night of Reason; then came Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, they, peering into the depths of the Darkness, here and there saw some fleeting asteroid; after them came Huxley, who glooming into the depths, far in the distance, saw the whirling cloud of stars, still beyond him must we go, beyond that trembling cloud which hovers as some tired dove on the horizon of our minds, past nebulæ of stars and molten suns singing midst new-

born spheres and hoary-headed worlds, “I would that I were the sky that I might be all eyes to behold thee,” till the stars circle about us, and the wild comets speed by, and suns embrace suns, and the moons melt shrieking through the firmament. Then all powers will dissolve, and the great golden dawn effulgent will flash through the portals of night, standing before us bride of our desire, robed in a minion suns, the stars flaming in her hair, incarnate symbol of perpetual youth.

So we feel with Crowley that:

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

*The Sword of Song, p. 207.

And that:

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

*The Sword of Song, p. 207.

The sun of true Agnosticism breaks through Buddhism (vol. ii, p. 247), and now the Vega of illuminism, the flashing star of Crowleyanity drowns the sun of Agnosticism, and reduces the whole infinite ether to a flaming Crown of glory. This, all yearning hearts must hope, will be the great golden coronation of the centuries hereafter.

Surrounded by fools on every side, we are apt as Agnostics to consider ourselves the only torch-bearers of truth; and through ignorance, joining ourselves to a particular body, hoist on high our spluttering brand of mundane tar, declaring we have discovered that light which moved on the face of the waters, before sun or moon or stars were created. We rank the great adepts with the madmen of God, whose miracles are mere imitations, whose powers are mere pretensions, and whose illumination is mere reflection; but what is it then these great beings imitate, pretend to, or reflect? Here lies the dark question which no denial can disprove, no assertion comprehend, and which work alone through the alembic of our hearts can reveal and accomplish.

THE ADEPTS

It is this something, this light which every Adept sets out to discover; for, whether in the dark night of the neophyte, or the noonday brilliancy of the supreme magus, Reason deserts us, and we at length are forced to seek a diviner illumination beyond those dark realms of rational understanding.

Crowley writes on this point, in "Eleusis," as follows:

> Not while reason is, as at present, the best guide known to men, not until humanity has developed a mental power of an entirely different kind. For, to the philosopher, it soon becomes apparent that reason is a weapon inadequate to the task. Hume saw it, and became a sceptic in the widest sense of the term. Mansel saw it and counsels us to try Faith, as if it was not the very fact that Faith was futile that bade us appeal to reason. Huxley saw it, and, no remedy presenting itself but a vague faith in the possibilities of human evolution, called himself an

agnostic: Kant saw it for a moment, but it soon hid itself behind his terminology; Spencer saw it, and tried to gloss it over by smooth talk, and to bury it beneath the ponderous tomes of his unwieldy erudition.*

*Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 228.

This may be further amplified by the following quotation from Eckartshausen:

In time and space knowledge is but relative. Is it not true that all which we call reality is but relative, for absolute truth is not to be found in the phenomenal world. Thus your natural reason does not possess its true essence, but only the appearance of truth and light: and the more the *essence of light* inwardly fades, and the man confuses himself with this appearance, and gropes vainly after the dazzling phantasmal images he conjures.*

*The Cloud upon the Sanctuary, p. 3.

This appearance of Truth is practically what the Hindu would call "maya," in which all created beings live. There is a way which leads beyond it, and any man can discover it, if he be fit and willing, and this way leads to God.

The Absolute Truth lying in the centre of mystery is like the sun, it blinds ordinary sight, and man sees only the shadow. The eagle alone can gaze at the dazzling light, likewise only the prepared soul can bear its lustre. Nevertheless the great *Something* which is the inmost of the Holy mysteries has never been hidden from the piercing gaze of him who can bear the light.*

*The Cloud upon the Sanctuary, p. 30.

The whole progress of the Adept is to speed out of this changing shadow-land into the full blaze of the sunlight; in the words of the Qabalist, "to attain to the Crown," and those of the Christ, "To be one with the Father." Now a curious vista opens out before our gaze, and it is this; A man or woman to become an adept need neither possess great intellect, great genius, nor great knowledge, in fact, in many cases the more ignorant and crass have been the aspirants, the more speedy has been their illumination (Christ the carpenter); for the less have they had to conquer, and the lower, and therefore less rational, have been their symbols. "Most others, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, lose themselves in metaphysical speculation only proper to those who are already Adepts."*1. Ignorance or Knowledge have nothing to do with illumination any more than pig has to do with Chicago pork; yet as there are standards of knowledge, so are there degrees of illumination; for there is not the slightest doubt that Booth and Robert Evans stand on a much lower footing than a St. Augustine or a Paracelsus; yet nevertheless, Boehme, who was only a shoemaker, ranks with them.*2. "It is no doubt more difficult," writes Crowley, "to learn 'Paradise Lost' by heart than 'We are seven,' but when you have done it, you are no better at figure skating."*3. So a Boehme may rank with an Augustine, whilst an Evans may not.

*1. Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 220.

*2. Whittling shoe soles seems at one time to have been a special calling for mystics, besides Jacob Boehme, there was George Fox, and John Bunyan; also Eliphas Lévi was the son of a shoemaker. It might be noted here that in India all leather workers are considered unclean, and in caste rank with sweepers and pork butchers.

*3. Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 228. After the colossal fable of Œdipus we find the gracious poem of Psyche, which was certainly not invented by Apuleius. The great magical arcanum reappears here under the figure of a mysterious union between a god and a weak mortal abandoned alone and naked on a rock. Psyche must remain in ignorance of the secret of her ideal royalty, and if she behold her husband she must lose him. —E. Lévi, *The Doctrine of Transcendent Magic*, p. 16.

Inspiration does not enter into the understanding, it illuminates a deeper part of the Ego, and under its influence the imagination is diverted from the speculative understanding to more active powers which release the imprisoned "I." When once these powers are released from the earthy grasp of the understanding, and the Ego sloughs its outward empirical skin, we then become mystics; nevertheless, "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not." So the mystic's work lies here in life, and the greatest and most divine mystics have probably been those whose *naïveté* of soul was such, that they knew not that they were mystics; and whose illumination has become so brilliant, that they cannot even find expression in the most divine of symbols. Such adepts who arrive at so exalted a plane, keep silence, as Crowley says: "the first and last ordeals and rewards of the Adept are comprised in the maxim 'Keep Silence'!"*

*Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 221. "TO KNOW, TO DARE, TO WILL, TO KEEP SILENT, are the four words of the magus, inscribed upon the four symbolic forms of the Sphinx.

"To command the elements, we must have overcome their hurricanes, their lightnings, their abysses, their tempests.

"In order to DARE we must KNOW; in order to WILL we must DARE; we must WILL to possess empire, and to reign we must BE SILENT." —E. Lévi, *The Ritual of Transcendent Magic*, pp. 30, 190.

> Call "homo sapiens" him who thinks;
> Talkers and doers – missing links!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 94.

In his essay "Eleusis," Crowley suggests that the world's history may roughly be divided into a continuous succession of periods, each embracing three distinct cycles – of Renaissance, Decadence, and

Slime. In the first the Adepts rise as artists, philosophers, and men of science, who are sooner or later recognized as great men; in the second the adepts as adepts appear, but seem as fools and knaves; and in the third, that of Slime, vanish altogether, and are invisible.* Then the chain starts again. Thus Crowley writes:

*Dionysius thus describes the mystical adept: "Then is he delivered from all seeing and being seen, and passes into the truly mystical darkness of ignorance, where he excludes all intellectual apprehensions, and abides in the utterly impalpable and invisible; being wholly His who is above all, with no other dependence, either on himself or any other; and is made one, as to his nobler part, with the Utterly Unknown, by the cessation of all knowing; and at the same time, in that very knowing nothing, he knows what transcends the mind of man." —*De Mysticâ Theologiâ*, cap. i, p. 710.

> Decadence marks the period when the adepts, nearing their earthly perfection, become true adepts, not mere men of genius. They disappear, harvested by heaven: and perfect darkness (apparent death) ensues until the youthful forerunners of the next crop begin to shoot in the form of artists.*

*Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 222.

During this period of darkness comes the swarm of materializing and secularizing worshippers, who perceive only the gross symbols and not the truth that lies behind them: "The Church which begins to exteriorise," says Crowley, "is already lost."* And he continues further on in the same essay:

*Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 221.

> Now when Paganism became popular, organised, state-regulated, it ceased to be individual: that is to say, it ceased to exist as a religion, and became a social institution little better

than the Church which has replaced it. But initiates – men who had themselves seen God face to face, and lived – preserved the vital essence. They chose men, they tested them; they instructed them in methods of invoking the Visible Image of the Invisible. Thus by a living chain religion lived in the Mysteries of Eleusis.*

*Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 225.

Thus true religion consists in a spontaneous outburst of passionless illuminism, and not in the regular ranting of the boundless buncombe of a bawdy book.

Better be a Shaker, or a camp-meeting homunculus, or a Chatauqua gurl, or a Keswick week lunatic, or an Evan Roberts revivalist, or even a common maniac, than a smug Evangelical banker's clerk, with a greasy wife, and three gifted children – to be bank clerks after him!

. . . . . .

That is, if religion is your aim: if you are spiritually minded.*1.

. . . . . .

Go out one night to a distant and lonely heath, if no mountain summit is available: then at midnight repeat the Lord's Prayer, or any invocation with which you happen to be familiar, or one made up by yourself, or one consisting wholly of senseless and barbarous words. Repeat it solemnly and aloud, expectant of some great and mysterious result.

I pledge myself, if you have a spark of religion in you, that is, if you are properly a human being, that you will (at the very least) experience a deeper sense of spiritual communion than you have ever obtained by a course of church-going.*2.

*1. Eleusis, vol. iii, p. 225.

*2. *Ibid*. vol. iii, p. 224.

The Irishman whose first question on landing at New York was "Is there a Government in this country?" and on being told "Yes," instantly replied: "Then I'm agin it,"*1. must have travelled many a league along the road to adeptship, and if ten such men be found in any State at the same time, then a period of decadence may be said to have begun; but it is not every day that ten righteous men can be found in Sodom; for the inhabitants of that city of the plains, like those of Ephesus, traduce in every way those who threaten their occupation. "Therefore, O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves." (Mahaparanibbana Sutta, ii, 33.)*2.

*1. The Sword of Song, vol. ii, p. 206.
*2. Cited, vol. ii, p. 255.

YOGA

Now comes the supreme question: How is this inward mystery revealed? And the answer is: In the East by Yoga, and in the West by Magic. "Thus East and West from A to Z agree…"* In the East, by an entirely artificial and scientific method, in the West by a stimulation and sudden outflowing of the poetic faculty. The East, we may take it, is almost entirely static; whilst the West is wholly dynamic. Yet their methods, whatever they may be, ultimately harmonize (as everything ultimately must do), leading the aspirant through various stages of illuminism, till he stands out from the illusions of his birth, and becomes one with that higher glow of glory in exalted states of Ecstasy or Samâdhi.

*Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 173.

Crowleyanity has now led us through the realms of sceptical idealism, in which rationalism has been found completely wanting as a constructive force, and through which we have travelled with satyr and nymph and many other profaners of the sanctuary. And, as of old, the scented courtezans revelled in the mysteries of Eleusis, and the vine of Iacchus was trampled by Bacchic feet, so to-day we find once again the farces of Aristophanes redacted on the grand stage of the world on which the great actors have played their part, and have retired behind the scenes. So once more, much to the joy of little children, the little Rationalias, the little Secularias, the harlequinade has again begun. Sinbad has sailed away with all his treasure; Aladdin has departed, and has not forgotten to take with him his wonderful lamp. No more Jinn are to be unbottled from their sleep of a thousand years; the moon-faced ones have passed away, some singing, some laughing, some weeping; and in their place have come the clowns and pantaloons of modern thought, hurling rational sausages at each others' heads, and waylaying unwary curates, foolish young women, and the inarticulate guardians of the peace.

We are indeed living in an approximate age, when in proportion to the simple distance, instead of the square of that distance, inversely our knowledge becomes known; yet curious to say, as Rousseau once said: "The choice which is opposed to Reason comes to us from Reason. We have made the god of love blind because he has better eyes than we have, and sees things which we cannot perceive."*1. So are we now making the Sublime ridiculous, and like the Bhikkhu can no longer see the "dainty lady" but in her place "a set of bones."*2. Not until we understand ourselves, shall we understand the world of God, and not until we have replenished the lamp of our soul with love, will it burn up into a brilliant immortality. Our port to reach is that divinity which abides in us, mud-bound though it be in the clay of its surroundings, for as Lamartine said: "Humanity is as a weaver working on the reverse of the web of Time. One day will come when

passing to the other side, she will behold the wonder and beauty she has woven, in the place of the loose threads and knots of the reverse." That day God will be manifested.

*1. J.J. Rousseau, "Emile," I, 4, ed. Garnier, p. 230.
*2. Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 104.

The secret theurgy of the ages is neither science, nor ethics, philosophy, nor religion; for it is *the* science, *the* ethics, *the* philosophy, *the* religion of all times, and when manifest in the heart of the adept, the full blaze of a divine glory will descend, life will be vanquished, and the soul set free.

To attain to this freedom is the end of life; in this respect both yogi and mystic agree, and that everything which entails the loss of freedom is sin, therefore change is sin and illusion; maya, and our great object is to get beyond this changeable changeability into an unchangeable changelessness.

The yogi proposes to himself no less a task than to master the entire universe, and finding that the mind has the reflexive power of looking back into its own depths, does his utmost to develop this power by turning the mind, as it were, by artificial means, inside on itself, concentrating all its powers on itself, and stopping it at every turn from wandering outside of itself. Then the mind, slowly learning its own nature, analyzes itself and discovers the Divinity which is itself.

> And I have ceased to think!
> That is, have conquered and made still
> Mind's lower powers by utter Will.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 177.

To attain this end eight stages of perfection have to be accomplished: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Prânâyâma*, *Pratyâhâra*, *Dhâranâ*, *Dhyâna*, and *Samâdhi*, the last being that state of super-knowledge in which Self and its shadow become one, an extended form of Kant's *à priori*.

Existence is change, and change is sorrow, therefore we must overcome existence.

Existence, as we know it, spins
A fatal warp, a woof of woe.
There is no place for God or soul.
Works, hopes, prayers, sacrifices, sins
Are jokes. The cosmos happened so:
Innocent all of guide or goal.
Else, what were man's appointed term?
To feed God's friend, the coffin-worm!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 84.

Crowley further states in a short foreword to these "Images of Life and Death": "To me life and death have most often appeared in majesty and beauty, in solemnity and horror; in emotions, to be brief, so great that man had no place therein. But there are moods, in which the heights are attained indirectly, and through man's struggle with the elemental powers."*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 84.

Only by energy and strife
May man attain the eternal rest,
Dissolve the desperate lust of life
By infinite agony and zest.
Thus, O my Kali, I divine
The golden secret of thy shrine!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 98.

The strife to attain to this golden secret we have already seen depicted in so many of Aleister Crowley's poems. But what is it? And Crowley at once, with East and West, answers, "a higher state of consciousness."

> That a higher consciousness exists is certain; that it is unknowable is certain… unless indeed, we can truly unite it with itself.*

*Time, vol. ii, p. 281.

And that this supreme union is possible he explains:

> Prevent sense-impressions from reaching the sensorium and there will at least be a better chance of examining the interior. You cannot easily investigate a watch while it is going: nor does the reflection of the sun appear in a lake whose surface is constantly ruffled by wind and rain, by hail and thunderbolt, by the diving of birds and the falling of rocks.*

*Time, vol. ii, p. 281.

In fact, throughout the whole of volume ii of the collected works runs a great river of esoteric mysticism, which in the earlier works was a glittering network of sparkling streams.

In "Time" we find the commandments of *Yama* and *Niyama* mentioned, though we must never forget that the conditions of success vary for every individual, and that Crowley might advise one pupil to drink more, and another to abstain. He doubts

That extreme virtue is a necessary condition for one who is desirous of attaining this state of bliss.*

*Time, vol. ii, p. 276.

In the beginning of "Pentecost" descriptions of *Asana* and *Prānāyāma*:

In strange and painful attitude,
I sat, while he was very rude.
With eyes well fixed on my proboscis,*1.
I soon absorbed the Yogi Gnosis.
He taught me to steer clear of vices,
The giddy waltz, the tuneful aria,
Those fatal foes of Brahma-charya;
And said, "How very mild and nice is
One's luck to lop out truth in slices,
And chance to chop up cosmic crises!"
He taught me A, he taught me B,
He stopped my baccy and my tea.
He taught me Y, he taught me Z,
He made strange noises in my head,
He taught me that, he taught me this,
He spoke of knowledge, life and bliss.
He taught me this, he taught me that,
He grew me mangoes in his hat.
I brought him corn; he made good grist of it—
And here, my Christian friend, 's the gist of it!*2.

*1. The monks of Mount Athos substituted, as a gazing-point, the navel for the nose. —Vaughan, *Hours with the Mystics*, p. 57.
*2. The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 166.

In "Science and Buddhism" there is a vivid description of *Pratyâhâra*:

> The work is comparable to that of an electrician who should sit for hours with his finger on a delicately adjusted resistance-box, and his eye on the spot of light of a galvanometer, charged with the duty of keeping the spot still, at least, that it should never move beyond a certain number of degrees, and of recording the more important details of his experiment. Our work is identical in design, though worked with subtler – if less complex – means. For the finger on the resistance-box we substitute the Will; and its control extends but to the Mind; for the eye we substitute the Introspective Faculty with its keen observation of the most minute disturbance, while the spot of light is the Consciousness itself, the central point of the galvanometer scale the predetermined object, and the other figures in the scale, other objects, connected with the primary by order and degree, sometimes obviously, sometimes obscurely, perhaps even untraceably, so that we have no real right to predicate their connection.*

*Science and Buddhism, vol. ii, p. 151.

Dhâranâ is mentioned at some length in "Pentecost":

> Olympus in a nutshell! I
> Have a superior faculty
> To reasoning, which makes absurd,
> Unthinkable and wicked too,
> A great deal that I know is true!
> In short, the mind is capable,
> Besides mere ratiocination,
> Of twenty other things as well,
> The first of which is concentration!
>
> Bloom, Concentration's midnight flower!
> After much practice to this end

I gain at last the long-sought power
(Which you believe you have this hour,
But certainly have not, my friend!),
Of keeping close the mind to one
Thing at a time – suppose, the Sun.
I gain this (Reverence to Ganesh'!)
And at that instant comprehend
(That past and future tenses vanish)
What Fichte comprehends. Division,
Thought, wisdom, drop away. I see
The absolute identity
Of the beholder and the vision.*

*Vol. ii, pp. 173-174.

Then we come to the advanced stage known as *Dhyâna*. In "Science and Buddhism" Crowley states:

> In a certain meditation one day I recorded:
>
> I was (*a*) conscious of external things seen behind after my nose had vanished. (*b*) Conscious that I was *not* conscious of these things. These (*a*) and (*b*) were simultaneous.
>
> I subsequently discovered this peculiar state of consciousness classified in the Abhidhamma. That it is a contradiction in terms I am perfectly aware; to assign any meaning to it is frankly beyond me; but I am as certain that such a state once existed, as I am of anything.*

*Science and Buddhism, vol. ii, p. 256.

This is quite true, for on attaining to such an advanced stage of illumination, language rapidly fails us, and we break through the dialectic veil and enter that life which lies "behind," solely expressed by means of symbols.

"What can I know?" asked Kant, as we have already seen. "What *is* Knowledge?" asks the Yogi or mystic, and his question is the right one of the two.

I see a cat.

Dr. Johnson says it is a cat.

Berkeley says it is a group of sensations.

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

Spencer says it is a mode of the Unknowable.

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

. . . . . .

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

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

This: that "I see a cat" is not only an unwarranted assumption, but a lie; that the duality of consciousness ceases suddenly, once the rate of change has been sufficiently slowed

down, so that, even for a few seconds, the relation of subject and object remains impregnable.*

*Science and Buddhism, vol. ii, pp. 207-208.

This state of relationship is either a very high stage of Dhyâna or Samâdhi itself, the whole quintessence of the five senses reflecting their full glory on the mirror of their own quiescence: the sun raised to the power of a quintillion flaming on the surface of an infinite facetless diamond.

There is a lake amid the snows
Wherein five glaciers merge and break.
Oh! the deep brilliance of the lake!
The roar of ice that cracks and goes
Crashing within the water! Glows
The pale pure water, shakes and slides
The glittering sun through emerald tides,
So that faint ripples of young light
Laugh on the green. Is there a night
So still and cold, a frost so chill,
That all the glaciers be still?
Yet in its peace no frost.
Arise!
Over the mountains steady stand,
O sun of glory in the skies
Alone, above, unmoving! Brand
Thy sigil, thy restless might,
The abundant imminence of light!
Ah!
O in the silence, in the dark,
In the intangible, unperfumed,
Ingust abyss, abide and mark
The mind's magnificence assumed

In the soul's splendour! Here is peace;
Here earnest of assured release.
Here is the formless all pervading
Spirit of the World, rising, fading
Into a glory subtler still.
Here the intense abode of Will,
Closes its gates, and in the hall
Is solemn sleep of festival.
Peace! Peace! Silence of peace!
O visionless abode! Cease! Cease!
Through the dark veil pass on! The veil
Is rent asunder, the stars pale,
The suns vanish, the moon drops,
The chorus of the spirit stops,
But one note swells. Mightiest souls
Of bard and music-maker, rolls
Over your loftiest crowns the wheel
Of that abiding bliss, Life flees
Down corridors of centuries
Pillar by pillar, and is lost.
Life after life in wild appeal
Cries to the master; he remains
And thinks not.
The polluting tides
Of sense roll shoreward. Arid plains
Of wave-swept sea confront me. Nay!
Looms yet the glory through the grey,
And in the darkest hours of youth
I yet perceive the essential truth,
Know as I know my consciousness,
That all division's hosts confess
A master, for I know and see
The absolute identity
Of the beholder and the vision.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. i, pp. 175-176.

In a note to "Time," Dr. Maudsley explains the state of ecstasy or Samâdhi as follows:

> The "ecstasy," if attained, signifies such a "standing-out," εκ-στασις, quasi-spasmodic, of a special tract of the brain as, if persisted in, involves the risk of a permanent loss of power, almost in the end a paralysis of the other tracts. Like other bad habits it grows by what it feeds on, and may put the fine and complex co-ordinated machinery quite out of gear. The ecstatic attains an illumination (so-called) at the expense of sober reason and solid judgement.*

*Time, vol. ii, pp. 280-281.

Crowley's answer to this is:

> Mysticus would not, I think, wish to contest this view, but rather would argue that if this be the case, it is at least a choice between two evils. Sober reason and solid judgement offer no prize more desirable than death after a number of years, less or greater, while ecstasy can, if the facts stated in the Dialogue are accepted, give the joys of all these years in a moment.

Récéjac says concerning this state:

> When the will succeeds in gaining admission to the imagination, and the attention is fixed upon a moral object, such a case of mono-ideism becomes the most noble of hallucinations. The nature of the facts in this case admits a prolonged attention, for the moral object, far from being exhausted like objects of sense in one single intuition, extends

> and increases the longer it is dwelt on. Such an object will express itself in the mind which is generous to give it persistent attention, under symbols which become more and more intense until the soul, all absorbed in them, is sublimely hallucinated, and returns to itself full of eloquence, enthusiasm, and courage.*

*The Bases of the Mystic Knowledge, p. 249.

Thus Crowley again writes of this exalted state:

> Let human thought itself expand—
> Bright Sun of Knowledge, in me rise!
> Lead me to those exalted skies
> To live and love and understand!
> Paying no price, accepting nought—
> The Giver and the Gift are one
> With the Receiver – O thou Sun
> Of thought, of bliss transcending thought,
> Rise where division dies! Absorb
> In glory of the glowing orb
> Self and its shadow!*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 183.

And,

> Within the charméd space is nought
> Possible unto thought.
>
> There in their equilibrium
> They float – how still, how numb!
>
> There must they rest, there will they stay

Innocent of the judgement day.

Remote from cause, effect retires.
Act slays its dams and sires.

There is no hill, there is no pit.
They have no mark to hit.

It is enough. Closed is the sphere.
There is no more to hear.

They perish not; they do not thrive.
They are at rest, alive.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 104.

"Ecstacy or vision begins when thought ceases, *to our consciousness*, to proceed from ourselves. It differs from dreaming, because the subject is awake. It differs from hallucination, because there is no organic disturbance: it is, or claims to be, a temporary enhancement, not a partial disintegration, of the mental faculties. Lastly, it differs from poetical inspiration, because the imagination is passive." — W.R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 14.

MYSTICISM*

This is "the peace which passeth all understanding," a conscious communion with the Absolute by paths which lie beyond the dialectical; when the consciousness is full of God and is carried outside itself by a sublime alienation which cannot be made intelligible in words; and even if we could do so, we should assimilate to our minds the very qualities which constitute our minds, concerning which it is equally a lie to exclaim. Yea or Nay! There is no equivalence of motion in Samâdhi, Samâdhi being beyond motion, a perfect equilibrium. Yea and Nay are extensions in

maya, and can give no true perception of Samâdhi to the inquirer, beyond a nebulous symbolization, in which Samâdhi can alone be ill clad, and which word-rags are by the ignorant so often mistaken for the perfect conception itself.

*The word Mystery comes from the Greek Μυστηρία a word ultimately derived from the root Μυ (MO) a sound produced by the opening of closed lips. It may be noted here that OM the sacred utterance of India is pronounced by exactly opposite methods.

To remain before its inquirers silent, as Christ before his judges, is the only possible status regarding Samâdhi compatible with the Truth. Samâdhi is the engineer who manipulates the engine. If you wish to discover how that engine is worked, go to him and not to the (ir)rational cogs, levers, and wheels; and as to explain the engineer in terms of his engine is to sin against the Holy Ghost, so to express in definite terms, outside symbolization, the state of Samâdhi which is inexpressible – is also to sin against the Word; for Samâdhi surpasses all rational quantities including Egotism and Altruism, Time and Space. Passing to that state beyond progress, which is pure freedom and divine Will, man reaches the stage when he ceases to think empirically under the schemata of Time and Space. The mind at such moments reaches heights wherein another light succeeds to the light of experience; there is a mental "whirl" which, though irrational to pure reason, has an incalculable value, probably depending on certain higher laws unknown to the rational world. When the soul has reached this point, law, in the rational sense of the term, has ceased to have any existence, and it henceforth enters into direct communion with the Good; which is its own law.

Thus when we have raised our hearts to the n^{th} power, we become as Gods *knowing* good and evil; and if this raising of the heart, which Crowley so brilliantly sets forth throughout his works, can in any

way lead a man into a nobler and higher insight of himself, no one can ever doubt then that it is right for him to so raise it.

We have already seen from Dr. Maudsley what dangers have to be expected by those who chose this hill-top track to follow. Others from a similar point of vantage attack it as being pure autohypnosis and nothing else. But curious to say. if such be the case why is it that the greatest sages of all times have been able to attract within their focus so many hundreds of millions of *rational* beings? they themselves being only irrational and pathological mystagogues. If such men as Krishna, Mahomet, St. Augustine, Moses, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Buddha, Plato, Jesus, and a host of equal and lesser names, owed their power to self-hypnosis, then indeed self-hypnosis is the key which in this world will unlock the fast closed corridor of its mysteries.

Crowley strongly attacks this kitchen-knavery:

> You weary me with proof enough
> That all this meditation stuff
> Is self-hypnosis. Be it so!
> Do you suppose I did not know?
> Still, to be accurate, I fear
> The symptoms are entirely strange.
> If I were hard, I'd make it clear
> That criticism must arrange
> An explanation different
> For this particular event.
> . . . . . .
> Surely, your best work always finds
> Itself sole object of the mind's
> In vain you ply the brush, distracted
> By something you have heard or acted.
> Expect some tedious visitor—

Your eye runs furtive to the door;
Your hand refuses to obey;
You throw the useless brush away.
I think I hear the Word you say!*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, pp. 178, 179.

I am; and by my fancy: if my reason
Will thereto be obedient, I have reason;
If not, my senses better pleased with madness
Do bid it welcome. —*Winter's Tale*.

Others attain to a certain degree of illumination, and then stumble, seeking such occult powers as clairvoyance and clairaudience:

Received the gift – the Holy Ghost;
Such gift implying, as I guess,
This very super-consciousness.
Miracles follow as a dower;
But ah! They used the fatal power
And lost the Spirit in the act.*

*The Sword of Song, Pentecost, vol. ii, p. 182.

Whilst others not attaining, attempt a short cut by the means of such drugs as opium and hasheesh, the latter of which is most powerful in producing a state of pseudo-Samâdhi.

To make me as one dead:
To loose the girders of the soul, and gain
Breathing and life for the Intelligible;
Find death, yet find it living.*

*Tannhäuser, vol. i, p. 256.

> In the midst of my complicated hallucination, I could perceive I had a dual existence. One portion of me was whirled unresistingly along the track of this tremendous experience, and the other sat looking down from a height upon its double, observing reassuring, and serenely weighing all the phenomena.*

*The Hasheesh Eater, pp. 23-86.

Probably Samâdhi itself acts somewhat like this. But hasheesh produces at times under certain conditions severe suffering, and the yogi does not undergo such, for he leaves it in his wake. Hasheesh may in some way be the loosener of the girders of the soul,*1. but this is all. Huxley says: "The influence of diet on dreams; of stimulants upon the fulness and the velocity of the stream of thought; the delirious phantoms generated by disease, by hashish, or by alcohol; will occur to everyone as examples of the marvellous sensitiveness of the apparatus of ideation to purely physical influences."*2.

*1. The girders of the soul which give her breathing are easy to be loosed. — CHALDEAN ORACLES, *Psell*. 32, *Pleth*. 8.
*2. Huxley's Hume, p. 106.

> Not by the pipings of a bird
> In skies of blue on fields of gold,
> But by a fierce and loathly word
> The abomination must be told.
> The holy work must twist its spell
> From hemp of madness, grown in hell.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 98.

Others again do not possess the stability of mind, the natural health and strength so necessary in this severe mental struggle, and as Ribot says: "It is all confined to an alienation, in the etymological sense, of

certain states of consciousness which the ego does not consider as its own, but which it objectivates, and finally, by placing it outside itself, ends by attributing an actual existence independent of its own."* Others attain but a glimpse. Maimonides long ago noticed:

*Les Maladies de la Personalité, p. 110.

> Learn that Prophecy is an emanation from God which flows, through the intermediary of the active Intellect, upon the rational Faculty first, and then upon the imaginative Faculty; it is the highest degree of a man, and the term of perfection, to which the species may aspire; and this state is the highest perfection of the imaginative Faculty… If the emanation flows into the imaginative Faculty only, and if the rational Faculty remains behind, either on account of original structure, or from disuse, then is constituted the class of men called men of the State, diviners. There come to men of this class, even when they are awake, wonderful visions… similar to prophetic visions… They delight much in them, believing they have acquired all sciences without study.*

*Guide for the Perplexed, chap. 36, 37.

But all those who really do attain, attain, and remain silent.

The "Hindu practice," says Mysticus in "Time," "bears out Western speculation, whether we take the shadowy idealism of Berkeley, or the self-refuted Monism of Haeckel. All these men got our results, and interpreted them in the partial light of their varied intellect, their diverse surroundings and education. But the result is the same physiological phenomenon, from Plato and Christ to Spinoza and Cankaracharya, from Augustine and Abelard, Boehme and Weigel in their Christian communities to Trismegistus and Porphyry, Mohammed and Paracelsus in their mystic palaces of Wisdom, the

doctrine is essentially one: and its essence is that existence is one. But to my experience it is certain that in Dhyâna the Ego is rejected."*

*Time, vol. ii, p. 275.

This is absolutely true of Berkeley when in the Dialogues he writes:

> To know every thing knowable is certainly a perfection; but to endure, or suffer, or feel anything by sense, is an imperfection. The former, I say, agrees to God, but not the latter. God knows or hath ideas; but the ideas are not conveyed to Him by sense as ours are…*

*Three Dialogues, p. 106.

God to him is a mahayogi.

It is absolutely true of Hume, but Hume, studiously avoiding the word God, could find no helpmeet to fill his place:

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.*1.
>
> We only feel the event, namely, the existence of an idea, consequent to the command of the will: But the manner, in which this operation is performed, the power by which it is produced, is entirely beyond our comprehension… The command of the mind over itself is limited, as well as its command over the body;*2. and these limits are not known by reason, or any acquaintance with the nature of cause and effect, but only by experience and observation, as in all other natural events and in the operation of external objects. Our authority

over our sentiments is much weaker than over our ideas; and even the latter authority is circumscribed within very narrow boundaries. Will anyone pretend to assign the ultimate reason of these boundaries, or show why the power is deficient in one case and not in another?

…Can we give any reason for these variations, except experience? Where then is the power, of which we pretend to be conscious? Is there not here, either in a spiritual or material substance, or both, some secret mechanism or structure of parts, upon which the effect depends, and which, being entirely unknown to us, renders the power or energy of the will equally unknown and incomprehensible?

…We are ignorant, it is true, of the manner in which bodies operate on each other: Their force or energy is entirely incomprehensible: But are we not equally ignorant of the manner or force by which a mind, even the supreme mind, operates either on itself or on body? Whence, I beseech you, do we acquire any idea of it? We have no sentiment or consciousness of this power in ourselves. We have no idea of the Supreme Being, but what we learn from reflection on our own faculties.*3.

*1. *Cited in Huxley's Hume, p. 195.

*2. Hume, "An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding." "We are not able to move all the organs of the body with a like authority, though we cannot assign any reason besides experience, for so remarkable a difference between one and the other" (p. 67).

This is possible by Hatha Yoga. And some yogis have become so perfect in the control of their various organs that they have been able to stop the heart beating at will, etc.

*3. An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, pp. 70, 75.

Hume is ignorant of the Supreme Being, yet his ignorance is so naive, that he all but lifted the veil of Isis. His "Ignorance" is in every way equivalent to Berkeley's "God."

It is absolutely true of Kant, who set himself the question, "Must we believe that Mysticism is like some vast ocean, the empire of illusion?"* And then again and again answered in the negative.

*Critique of Pure Reason, i, p. 304.

He proposed time after time that Reason be its own end, founded upon Right and Duty, and in the Freedom of the "Person," the moral sublimity of "Duty":

> It is not so much because it is subject to the moral law that the person has sublimity, but because it gives that law to itself, and is not subject to it on any other condition.*

*The Bases of Morals, p. 87.

Expressing himself with regard to the free-being, Kant says: "In him no act would be born, and no act would perish."*

*Critique of Pure Reason, p. 140.

In other words the "free-being" is a "yogi" pure and simple.

Kant's *à priori* takes the place of Hume's "Ignorance," which we have seen was none other than Berkeley's "God."

It is absolutely true of Huxley, who was as astute a thinker as Hume:

> The succession of mental states in ideation is not fortuitous…
>
> Thus the idea of the word horse presented itself to my mind, and was followed in quick succession by the idea of four legs, hoofs, teeth, rider, saddle, racing, cheating; all of which

ideas are connected in my experience with the impression, or the idea, of a horse and with one another, by the relations of contiguity and succession (a). No great attention to what passes in the mind is needful to prove that our trains of thought are neither to be arrested, nor even permanently controlled, by our desires or emotions. Nevertheless, they are largely influenced by them. In the presence of a strong desire, or emotion, the stream of thought no longer flows on in a straight course, but seems, as it were, to eddy round the idea of that which is the object of the emotion. Every one who has "eaten his bread in sorrow," knows how strangely the current of ideas whirls about the conception of the object of regret or remorse as a centre; every now and then, indeed, breaking away into the new tracts suggested by passing associations (b), but still returning to the central thought. Few can have been so happy as to have escaped the social bore, whose pet notion is certain to crop up whatever topic is started; while the fixed idea of the monomaniac (c) is but the extreme form of the same phenomenon.

And as, on the one hand, it is so hard to drive away the thought we would fain be rid of; so, upon the other, the pleasant imaginations which we would so gladly retain are, sooner or later, jostled away by the crowd of claimants for birth (d) into the world of consciousness; which hover as a sort of psychical possibilities, or inverse ghosts the bodily presentments of spiritual phenomena to be, in the limbo of the brain. To that form of desire which is called "attention," the train of thought, held fast, for a time, in the desired direction, seems ever striving to get on to another line (e), and the junctions and sidings are so multitudinous.*

(a) Yoga teaches that by concentrating the whole mind upon "horse" these ideas will be withheld, and the ultimate state arrived at will be "horse" pure and simple (ecstasy).

[But this theory involves Scholastic-Realism; like all others, it is a false reflection of the L.V.X.]

(b) This breaking away Yoga prevents.

(c) Conscious or sub-conscious, but not superconscious.

(d) This birth is prevented by Yoga.

(e) This is overcome by Yoga.

*Huxley's Hume, p. 107.

Huxley, like Hume, diagnosed with an almost incredible minuteness all the symptoms of this mental unstability, but could not in all the wonders of their laboratories, and in all the wisdom of their pharmacopoeia, discover a single or certain cure; and yet, strange to say, it is within the grasp of all from the most ignorant clodhopper to the most sapient sage.

Now turning back from the present day, we shall find that amongst those, whom we may call the divine philosophers, those in the West have in their illumination triumphed over those in the East. And as the spontaneous flashing of the heavens is a grander sight than the watching of an artificial thunderstorm produced in a halfpenny test tube; so in the West, though the state arrived at was one similar to that worked out on Eastern principles, it was intensely more regal and majestic; for whilst the rishi sat in a howling jungle, contemplating the tip of his nose, the mystic philosopher was groping in the charnel-house of death, midst drear effigies of the living, and dread symbols of the dead, and lit the same triple flame of glory, losing himself in that *poetic* vision of rapture, so entirely unknown in the *prosaic* East. And curious to say, that while the East was applying mechanical means to attain a divine illumination, the West arrived at a similar position on the circumference of eternity, by a diametrically opposite road; applying the whole of her artificial faculties to a perfecting of her material needs – hence the growing triumphs of the West… "And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord:

and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz" (2 Kings, 20).

All the world round the key which opens the treasure-house is Ecstasy.

Myself being idle for an hour
I dare one thing to speculate:
Namely, that life hath cusps yet higher
On this our curve: a prize, a power
Lies in our grasp: unthinking Fate
Shall build a brain to nestle nigher
Under the ultimate Truth: I burn
To live that later lives may learn.

Wisdom and Love, in tenser glow!
Beauty and strength, increase and burn
Be brothers to the law of life!
Things as they are – their nature know!
Act! Nor for faith nor folly turn!
The hour is nigh when man and wife,
Knowing, shall worship face to face.,
Beget and bear the royal race.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, pp. 85, 86.

This is the divine union of the active י with the passive הוה formulating Tetragrammaton, and of the ש descending upon the יהוה formulating Christ.* It is the old story of Dévaki or of Mary, in which the aspirant falling into an ecstatic state, is visited by the divine essence; in the one case under the form of Mahadèva, in the other under that of the Holy Spirit; and losing consciousness of all worldliness, in a boundless bliss the divine child is conceived.

*Similarly with one voice Eckart and Tauler, Ruysbroek and Suso exclaim: "Arise, O man! realize the end of thy being: make room for God within thy soul, that he may bring forth his Son within thee." —Vaughan, *Hours With the Mystics*, p. 300.

So has it been with all those who have realized their divine self. St. Augustine symbolizes it under a divine act of copulation.*

*Curious to say in the case of women (*e.g.*, Schwester Katrei and Nun Gertrude), illumination and ecstasy at once symbolize themselves under the forms of neurosis, as in the East generally the illuminati symbolize divine union under the grossest forms of sexual pathology. The Christian saints (celibates), also indulged in the same system of symbolization.

> What is it, then, that I love when I love my God? What is he whom my soul feels above itself? I have tried to grasp it in my own intelligence, above all images of things, but at the moment when I reach that seat of being I cannot fix my gaze, and I fall back helpless into the common thoughts. I have carried away nothing from this vision but a memory full of love, and as it were a regretful longing for things whose perfume is felt but which are out of reach. What is it, then, that I love, O my God when I love you? It is not beauty of bodies, nor the glory which passes, nor the light which our eyes love; it is not the varied harmony of sweet songs, nor the aroma of perfumes and sweet flowers, nor the voluptuous joys of carnal embraces. No, it is none of these that I love when I love my God; and yet in this love I find a light, an inner voice, a perfume, a savour, an embrace of a kind which does not leave the inmost of myself. There in the depths of the soul glows something which is not in space, there a word is heard which has no syllables: thence there breathes a perfume which no breezes waft away: there food is always savoured and never eaten: there are embraces which never ask to end… Sometimes, O God, you create a stale of soul in me so extraordinary,

> and you fill me with so intimate a joy, that, if it lasted, all life would be different… Who shall understand, who shall express God? What is it that comes thus by moments to shine into the eyes of my soul and make my heart beat with fear and love? It is something quite other than myself, and for this reason I am frozen with terror; it is something identical with myself, and therefore I am kindled with love.*

*St. Augustine, Confessions, vii, ix, x.

Similarly John Tauler writes:

> The more the Bridegroom loves the Bride, the more bitter will be the cup he gives her to drink. "The cup is that she is to cease from all her own thoughts… for she can take pleasure in nothing that is not her own." She must be made like the Bridegroom, and humbly submit to the process, and joy in suffering for his sake, until she "is wholly purified from all faults and stain of sin, and become perfectly fair and unspotted." Her wedding gift is "The Holy Ghost." He sheds forth upon the Bride the torrent of divine love… insomuch that the Bride loseth herself and is intoxicated with love, so that she forgets herself, and all creatures in time or eternity together with herself… The joy that the Bride hath with the Bridegroom is so vast that no senses or reason can apprehend or attain unto it."*

*John Tauler, by W.P. Swainson, p. 13.

These two men had glimpses into total consciousness, of which clear consciousness, as Ribot says, is but a small portion, just as distinct vision is but a small portion of total vision.*

**Vide* note Science and Buddhism, vol. ii, p. 258.

The mystic, as the yogi, sets out to know the unknowable, and as "it is just as grave an illusion to attribute morality to a stone as it is to think to find the supernatural in the world of phenomena,"*1. so in the inmost depths of the ego alone, itself unthinkable, lies the source of all mystic experience. "I live, yet not I, but God in me." This is the *suspense* of Job, the *sleep* of Solomon, the *silence* of St. John, arrived at by fixing the mind upon one single object of thought, so that the treasures of representation which lie dormant in the memory, flow towards that one object and overwhelm and engulf it in a divine glory, as Eckartshausen says: "With, however, the development of the new organ… the curtain is all at once raised, the impenetrable veil is torn away, and the cloud before the Sanctuary lifts, a new world suddenly exists for us, scales fall from our eyes, and we are at once transported from the phenomenal world to the region of truth.*2.

*1. The Bases of the Mystic Knowledge, p. 64.
*2. The Cloud upon the Sanctuary, p. 12.

When this cloud has been lifted: "Eloquence, poetic genius, and every faculty transcending human mediocrity, all represent under different names that destructive, tyrannical power which brings everything under subjection and which does not permit the reception of ideas except in one single direction,"* are exalted in one single mono-ideism and the result is a very high state of contentment.

*Ribot, The Psychology of Attention.

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment," to all who would arrive at their true state of "Self-hood." God*1. here represents any one object, for in the end all objects are the same. I look at a bug*2. and my five senses tell me it is

flat, of a certain odour, brown, etc., etc.; only phenomena which I cannot get behind; the mirror of my senses is defective, so I proceed to try one of a more perfect make – the "superconscious"*3. – then I look again: the insect has changed, is changing, it is no more a bug, but a bogey, fire surrounds it, it is Lucifer, prince of the Bottomless Pit, now a great calm, and the fumes of Hell part, and the winds roar, and the earth quakes: "How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations." "Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the frost of the vintage is come down." And Lo! There is a voice of the howling of shepherds – or a voice of the roaring of young lions – or a burning bush – or a flaming chariot – or a still small voice, and joining myself to God I become one spirit with him. As:

*1. Deus est sphæra intelligibilis, cujus centrum est ubique et circumferentia nusquam. —*St. Bonaventura*.

*2. Bug has the same etymology as bogey, bogle, bogus, which is derived from Welsh bwg, a hobgoblin, a spectre, a spirit.

*3. Man I wouldst thou look on God, in heaven or while yet here,
Thy heart must first of all become a mirror clear.
ANGELUS SILESIUS, *The Cherubic Wanderer*.

O night!
Fade, love! Fade, light!
I pass beyond Life's law.
I melt as snow; as ice I thaw;
As mist I dissipate: I am borne, I draw
Through chasms on the mountains: stormy gusts
Of ancient sorrows and forgotten lusts
Bear me along: they touch me not: I waste.
The memory of long lives interlaced
Fades in my fading. I disintegrate
Fall into black oblivion of Fate.
My being divides. I have forgot my name.

I am blown out as a thin subtle flame,
I am no more.*

*Orpheus, vol. iii, p. 213.

And

Nor shall the mind revoke at ease
    These myriad cressets from the sun;
Constrained in sober destinies
    Thought's river shall its ripples run
    Into the one, the one, the one, the one.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 97. I may here point out that not only in their Sapphic brilliance, but also in their mirrored mysticism, so many of Crowley's poems are akin to the esoteric teaching of the Sufi poets of Persia, such as Jeláladdín and Jámi. A very beautiful parable of Jeláladdín runs as follows:

One knocked at the Beloved's Door; and a Voice asked from within, "Who is there?" and he answered, "It is I." Then the Voice said, "This House will not hold Me and Thee." And the Door was not opened. Then went the Lover into the Desert, and fasted and prayed in Solitude. And after a year he returned, and knocked again at the Door. And again the voice asked, "Who is there?" and he said, "It is Thyself," and the Door was opened to him. —Cited in E. Fitzgerald's Salámán and Absál.

As do the following lines of Jámi:

Gaze, till Gazing out of Gazing
Grew a BEING Her I gaze on,
SHE and I no more, but in One
Undivided Being blended.
All that is not one must ever
Suffer with the Wound of Absence;
And whoever in Love's City
Enters, finds but Room for ONE,
And but in ONENESS Union.

And those of Feridoddin Attar:

Joy! joy! no mortal thought can fathom me.
I am the merchant and the pearl at once.
Lo, time and space lie crouching at my feet.
Joy! joy! when I would revel in a rapture,
I plunge into myself and all things know.

And again in the Epilogue to vol. ii.

Consciousness and sense to shatter, ruin sight and form and name!
Shatter, lake-reflected spectre; like, rise up in mist to sun;
Sun, dissolve in showers of nectar, and the Master's work is done.
Nectar perfume gently stealing, masterful and sweet and strong,
Cleanse the world with light of healing in the ancient House of Wrong!
Free a million million mortals on the wheel of being tossed!
Open wide the mystic portals, and be altogether lost!*

*Epilogue, vol. ii, p. 283.

The ecstasy of the saints and mystics, is, this entering into the kingdom of God which is within them.* Hugo de Saint-Victor says: "The soul, dead to the world and to itself, sleeps in bliss, and yields itself utterly to the kisses of the spouse, in absolute repose of the senses." St. Bonaventura calls this mystic identification *synderesis*, and describes it as "the joy of being uplifted to a super-intellectual love." St. Theresa, that in the ecstatic state: "the soul no longer knows what it is doing… whether it speaks or is silent: it is a blissful extravagance… I have often been carried away by it… there is such perfection of joy that soul and body cannot express it… if they could the perfect union of all the powers would be at an end."

*I.N.R.I.

So Crowley finely describes:

> Death from the universal force
> Means to the forceless universe
> Birth. I accept the furious course,
> Invoke the all-embracing curse.
> Blessing and peace beyond may lie
> When I annihilate the "I."
>
> Therefore, O holy mother, gnash
> Thy teeth upon my willing flesh!
> Thy chain of skulls wild music clash!
> Thy bosom bruise my own afresh,
> Sri Maharani! draw my breath
> Into the hollow lungs of death!
>
> There is no light, nor any motion.
> There is no mass, nor any sound.
> Still, in the lampless heart of ocean,
> Fasten me down and hold me drowned
> Within thy womb, within thy thought,
> Where there is nought – where there is nought!*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 99.

> And yet what bliss,
> When, dying in the darkness of God's light,
> The soul can pierce these blinding webs of nature
> And float up to the nothing, which is all things—
> The ground of being, where self-forgetful silence,
> To emptiness – emptiness fulness – fulness God—
> Till we touch Him, and, like a snow-flake, melt
> Upon his light-sphere's keen circumference!
>
> *The Saint's Tragedy.*

"Is there a faculty of perception?" asks St. Augustine, "independent of the senses, which, acting by means of an internal organ, is enabled to give a completer knowledge than ordinary experience?" Crowleyanity, once and for all, answers: Yes! and this faculty becomes active during the ecstatic state, under the illumination of which mental representations become more stripped of empirical conditions, and in an inverse proportion to which, as the mind withdraws into itself the consciousness is wiped out.

> …its unextended source,
> Became the magic utterance that makes Me,
> Dissolving self into the starless sea.*

*Rosa Mundi, vol., iii, p. 52.

CEREMONIAL MAGIC

We have already pointed out some of the reasons which rendered the illumination of the West so much more poetic in nature than that attained by the East. We will now show the chief means which were employed by the adepts of the West in gaining this end.

Though, as it would be only natural to expect, the Christian Church strongly repudiated the idea of connection between her Ceremonial practices and those of Magic,*1. for she has always denied relationship to those who live outside the brothel, the asylum, and the jail; and further, in this case, burnt and destroyed countless thousands of innocent and erudite persons on the authority of a divine book she had rendered obscene by her whorish thumbmarks; nevertheless, in spite of her Lodges and her logic, the greatest of her sons and daughters, as we have already seen, were mystics and magicians pure and simple; this no doubt accounts for the comparative safety and dignity with which the early fathers travelled

in the East, and the greatest of her ceremonies were entirely of a magical nature. I defy any one to find any essential difference between the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the practices of Raja Yoga; space here does not permit me to draw parallels, though I have collected a considerable number. And as with Ignatius, so with other true saints of the Church,*2. and so also with the countless magical ceremonies which have tinted the atmosphere of the West: they are all one.

*1. This term must not be confounded with that applied to Theobald's toy-shop, or to such jugglery as performed by Maskelyne and Colley.

*2. A good example is that of Hugo de St. Victor. He made a three-fold division, the lowest being *Cogitatio*, the next *Meditatio*, and the last and highest, *Contemplatio*.

On a similar basis Richard de St. Victor erected six stages of contemplation:

1. In imaginatione secundum solam imaginationem.
2. In imaginatione secundum rationem.
3. In ratione secundum imaginationem.
4. In ratione secundum rationem.
5. Supra rationem sed non praeter rationem.
6. Supra rationem videtur esse praeter rationem.

Nevertheless, though at heart one, many extraneous differences do exist, and it behoves any true searcher after Truth to discover for himself the straightest road towards his ultimate home which he long ago first left; to ask help of none, to live alone, as he will have to die alone, to heed no man, to work out his own salvation, to see that his staff is stout, and that his lamp burns brightly, lest he fall into that great slough of rational dung-wallowing which besets his path. To voyage like our father Ambrose through thunder and lightning, past the sun, and the moon, and the stars, as Crowley most curiously depicts in "Ambrosii Magi Hortus Rosarum,"* that mysteriously symbolic progress through the Tarot, the ten numbers and the twenty-two letters.

*Ambrosii Magi Hortus Rosarum, vol. ii, p. 212. I do not hesitate to add here that had this extraordinary Essay been written in the days of Albertus Magnus, it would now be considered one of the most important and curious of magical works; many religions have been founded on less.

When along the shores of the Ægean sea a mysterious voice proclaimed: "Great Pan is dead!" Christianity was born; and like all the other great truths, it contained a great lie: Pan was not dead, but he was snoring in that drunken night which cloaked the debaucheries of the classic day, and as the night grew darker, and the dismal vapours of the middle ages rolled on, blotting out one by one the remaining stars of that past wonder which was Rome, great Pan stirred himself, and awoke. But the crystal wine of Iacchus had long since soured in the thunders of those dark days, yet, with death-pale lips, he drank the blood-red wine of witchcraft. "Hark! the cock crows! Farewell till to-morrow, to-morrow night! A lingering farewell, and kisses upon kisses!" … "Let the sparks fly upward, and the embers glow! We will back to our old Gods again."*

*The Bride of Corinth, Goethe.

There is an idol in my house
By whom the sandal always steams.
Alone, I make a black carouse
With her to dominate my dreams.
With skulls and knives she keeps control
(O Mother Kali!) of my soul.*

*Gargoyles, vol. iii, p. 97.

Crowley's interpretation of Ceremonial Magic, the getting back to the old gods, so to say, is lucidly described, under the terms of a rational system, in his introduction to the "Goetia" of King Solomon. It is as follows:

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

Now, this fact is our base. What is the cause of my illusion of seeing a spirit in the triangle of Art?

Every smatterer, every expert in psychology, will answer "That cause lies in your brain."

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

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

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

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

. . . . . .

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

I can and will.

The spirits of the Goetia are portions of the human brain.*1.

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

The names of God are vibrations calculated to establish:

(*a*) General control of the brain (Establishment of functions relative to the subtle world).

(*b*) Control over the brain in detail. (Rank or type of the Spirit.)

(*c*) Control of one special portion. (Name of the Spirit.)

. . . . . .

I trust that the explanation will enable many students who have hitherto, by a puerile objectivity in their view of the question, obtained no results, to succeed; that the apology may impress upon our scornful men of science that the study of the bacillus, should give place to that of the baculum. the little to the great – how great, one only realises when one identifies the wand with the Mahalingam, up which Brahma flew at the rate of 84,000 yojanas a second for 84,000 mahakalpas, down which Vishnu flew at the rate of 84,000 crores of yojanas a second for 84,000 crores of mahakalpas – yet neither reached an end.*2.

*1. Carlyle also partially grasps this idea in "Sartor Resartus" when he writes:

"Witchcraft and all manner of Spectre-work, and Demonology, we have now named Madness, and Diseases of the Nerves. Seldom reflecting that still the new question comes upon us: What is Madness, what are Nerves? Ever, as before, does Madness remain a mysterious-terrific, altogether *infernal* boiling-up of the Nether Chaotic Deep, through this fair-painted vision of Creation, which swims thereon, which we name the Real. Was Luther's Picture of the Devil less a Reality, whether it were formed within the bodily eye, or without it? In every the wisest Soul lies a whole world of internal Madness, an authentic Demon-Empire; out of which, indeed, his world of Wisdom has been creatively built together, and now rests there, as on its dark foundations does a habitable flowery Earth-rind." —*Sartor Resartus*.

*2. The Sword of Song, vol. ii, pp. 203-205.

This not only carries out the philosophy of Fichte, but also that of Paracelsus when he said, there is "nothing in heaven or earth which does not exist in man." In fact this "one pointedness" is the crowning glory of Crowleyanity. In the East it is arrived at by meditation, "the absolute restraint of the mind to the contemplation of a single object, whether gross, fine, or altogether spiritual"* in the West by ceremonial magic.

*Berashith, vol. ii, p. 242.

> Now true magical ceremonial is entirely directed to attain this end, and forms a magnificent gymnasium for those who are not already finished mental athletes. By act, word, and thought, both in quantity and quality, the one object of the ceremony is being constantly indicated. Every fumigation, purification, banishing, invocation, evocation, is chiefly a reminder of a single purpose, until the supreme moment arrives, and every fibre of the body, every force-channel of the mind, is strained, and in one overwhelming rush of the Will in the direction desired. Such is the real purport of all the apparently fantastic directions of Solomon, Abramelin, and other sages of repute. When a man has evoked and mastered such forces as Taphtatharath, Belial, Amaimon, and the great powers of the elements, then he may safely be permitted to begin to try to stop thinking. For needless to say, the universe, including the thinker, exists only by virtue of the thinker's thought* (Berkeley, Hume, etc.).

*Berashith, vol. ii, p. 242.

"These are real, these illusions: I am of them, false or frail."*1. And they cannot be overthrown even by travellers in Morocco who administer to possessed Moors Seidlitz powders, first giving the alkali, and then the acid, the patients firmly believing that in the

effervescence consequent to the evolution of gas, the evil spirit has been dislodged from their interior. For if they firmly believe the spirit was dislodged, there can not be the slightest doubt on this point, the spirit being a temporary part of the "brain," as all other "ideas" must be from the idea of "constipation" – which Seidlitz powders will also remove – to that of Heaven and Hell,*2. which Swedenborg also dislodges.

*1. Epilogue, vol. ii, p. 283.
*2. We are ourselves both Heaven and Hel (Omar Khayyám).

At last we have arrived at the close of a difficult yet intensely interesting journey. Crowleyanity has led us through more marvels than Dante ever bore witness to in the "Paradiso" and the "Inferno." His may have been a Divine Comedy, but here before us has been unrolled the vast drama of a Sublime Tragedy: "All arguments are arguments in a circle," and there is a home to which we all one day shall have to return, to the celestial home of crowning glory. Some spur and spare not, others linger, and others dawdle in the by-ways and lanes of existence, yet the most tardy will one day catch up with the fastest and a time will come when the tortoise will be one with the hare. All is one, either a mass of impressions (Locke, Hume), or a mass of consciousness (Berkeley and Fichte), all is unity, controversy is verbal, dispute the mere beating of the winds with a tattered fan. Religion is bankrupt, philosophy is bankrupt, science is bankrupt, none will be discharged, we must fend for ourselves… Hark!

> We are the poets! We are the children of wood and stream, of mist and mountain, of sun and wind! We adore the moon and the stars, and go into the London streets at midnight seeking Their kisses as our birthright. We are the Greeks – and God grant ye all, my brothers, to be as happy in your loves! and to us the rites of Eleusis should open the door of Heaven, and we shall enter and see God face to face.

. . . . . .

Under the stars I go forth, my brothers, and drink of that lustral dew: I will return, my brothers, when I have seen God face to face, and read within those eternal eyes the secret that shall make you free.

Then will I choose you and test you and instruct you in the Mysteries of Eleusis, oh ye brave hearts, and cool eyes, and trembling lips! I will put a live coal upon your lips, and flowers upon your eyes, and a sword in your hearts, and ye also shall see God face to face.

Thus shall we give back its youth to the world, for like tongues of triple flame we shall brood upon the Great Deep – Hail unto the Lords of the Groves of Eleusis!*

*Eleusis, vol. iii, pp. 229, 230.

That which was to be said hereon is spoken, Amen without lie, Amen and Amen of Amen.


HKA