

THE HERMIT'S HYMN TO SOLITUDE.

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammasam-
buddhasa.

Venerable Lord and Best of Friends.

We, seeing the cycle in which Maha Brahma is perhaps more a drifting buoy than ourselves, knowing that it is called the walking in delusion, the puppet show of delusion, the writing of delusion, the fetter of delusion, are aware that the way out of the desert is found by going into the desert. Will you, in your lonely lamaseraï, accept this hymn from me, who, in the centre of civilisation, am perhaps more isolated than you in your craggy fastness among the trackless steppes of your Untrodden Land?

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

PARIS, A.B. 2446.

I.

MIGHTIEST self! Supreme in Self-contentment!
Sole Spirit gyring in its own ellipse;
Palpable, formless, infinite presentment
Of thine own light in thine own soul's eclipse!
Let thy chaste lips
Sweep through the empty aethers guarding thee
(As in a fortress girded by the sea
The raging winds and wings of air
Lift the wild waves and bear
Innavigable foam to seaward), bend thee down,
Touch, draw me with thy kiss
Into thine own deep bliss,
Into thy sleep, thy life, thy imperishable crown!

Let that young godhead in thine eyes
Pierce mine, fulfil me of their secrecies,
Thy peace, thy purity, thy soul impenetrably wise.

II.

All things which are complete are solitary ;
The circling moon, the unconscious drift of stars,
The central systems. Burn they, change they, vary ?
Theirs is no motion beyond the eternal bars.
Seasons and scars
Stain not the planets, the unfathomed home,
The spaceless, unformed faces in the dome
Brighter and blacker than all things,
Borne under the eternal wings
No whither : solitary are the winter woods
And caves not habited,
And that supreme grey head
Watching the groves : single the foaming amber floods,
And O ! most lone
The melancholy mountain shrine and throne,
While far above all things God sits, the ultimate alone !

III.

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

And, being in one tune securely bound,
Even as a star became the soul of silence most profound.

IV.

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

V.

All change, all motion, and all sound, are weakness!
Man cannot bear the darkness which is death.
Even that calm Christ, manifest in meekness,
Cried on the cross and gave his ghostly breath,
On the prick of death,
Voice, for his passion could not bear nor dare
The interlunar, the abundant air
Darkened, and silence on the shuddering
Hill, and the unbeating wing
Of the legions of His Father, and so died.
But I, should I be still
Poised between fear and will?
Should I be silent, I, and be unsatisfied?
For solitude shall bend

Self to all selffulness, and have one friend,
Self, and behold one God, and be, and look beyond
the End.

VI.

O Solitude! how many have mistaken
Thy name for Sorrow's, or for Death's or Fear's!
Only thy children lie at night and waken—
How shouldst thou speak and say that no man hears?
O Soul of Tears!
For never hath fallen as dew thy word,
Nor is thy shape showed, nor as Wisdom's heard
Thy crying about the city
In the house where is no pity,
But in the desolate halls and lonely vales of sand:
Not in the laughter loud,
Nor crying of the crowd,
But in the farthest sea, the yet untravelled land.
Where thou hast trodden, I have trod;
Thy folk have been my folk, and thine abode
Mine, and thy life my life, and thou, who art thy
God, my God.

VII.

Draw me with cords that are not; witch me chanted
Spells never heard nor open to the ear,
Woven of silence, moulded in the haunted
Houses where dead men linger year by year.
I have no fear
To tread thy far irremeable way
Beyond the paths and palaces of day,
Beyond the night, beyond the skies,
Beyond eternity's
Tremendous gate; beyond the immanent miracle.
O secret self of things!
I have nor feet nor wings
Except to follow far beyond Heaven and Earth and Hell,

Until I mix my mood
And being in thee, as in my hermit's hood
I grow the thing I contemplate—that selfless soli-
tude!