

# NOTES TO ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST

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

## NOTE TO INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
AN APPRECIATION  
BY ALEISTER CROWLEY.\*

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

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

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

May I premise that, mentally obsessed, mono-maniac indeed, as we must now consider Shakespeare to have been on these points, he was yet artful enough to have concealed his

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

advanced views—an imperative necessity, if we consider the political situation, and the virginal mask under which Queen Bess hid the grotesque and hideous features of a Messaline. Clearly so, since but for this concealment even our Shakespearian scholars would have discovered so patent a fact. In some plays, too, of course, the poet deals with less dangerous topics. These are truly conventional, no doubt; we may pass them by; they are foreign to our purpose; but we will take that stupendous example of literary subterfuge—*King Lear*.

Let my digress to the history of my own conversion.

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

*A priori* this is then certain. But—

Who killed Rousseau?

I, said Huxley

(Like Robinson Crusoe),

With arguments true,—so

I killed Rousseau!

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

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

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

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

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

“This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

of-Paris, stick-in-the-mud our scholars have always made him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regan gravely rebukes her; recommends, as it were, a course of Six Easy Lessons in Mind-

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gloucester enters, and exhibits himself as a prize fool by shouting in disjointed phrases what everybody knew. Great news it is, of course, and on discovering Edmund, he can think of nothing more sensible than to ask for more! "Kent banished thus! And France in cholera parted! And the king gone to-night! sub-scrib'd his power! Confin'd to exhibition! All this done upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?" (Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 23-26).

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

Edmund, once rid of him, gives us the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In fact, Lear is going mad; the tottering intellect, at no time strong ("Tis the infirmity of age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself," I. i. ll. 296-7), is utterly cast down by drink and debauchery: he even sees it himself, and with a pointless bestiality from the Fool, fit companion for the—king—and in that word

## THE SWORD OF SONG

we see all the concentrated loathing of the true Shakespeare for a despotism, massed in one lurid flame, phantasmagoric horror, the grim First Act rolls down.

### II.

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

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

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

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

Here is a man, deprived on just cause of

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

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

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

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

### III.

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

It was then, and is even now, the practice of some—for example, the emigrés of the French Revolution—to invite foreign invasion as a means of securing domestic reaction. The blackguardism implied is beyond language: Shakespeare was perhaps thinking of the proposal, in Mary's reign, to react to Romanism by the aid of Spanish troops. But he will go further than this, will our greatest poet; it were ill that the life of even one child should atone for mere indignity or discomfort to another, were he the greatest in the realm. To-day we all agree; we smile or sneer if any one should differ.

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

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

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

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

#### IV.

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

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

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

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

true Christian; at the death of his beloved mistresses he cries,

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

At the moment of death his great nature (self-accusatory, as the finest so often are) asserts itself, and he forgives even the vilest of the human race,—"I pant for life: some good I mean to do Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send, Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ Is on the life Lear and on Cordelia. Nay, send in time." (ll. 245-249).

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

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

"Yet Edmund was beloved."

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

#### V.

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

This criticism is perhaps true in part; but I will not insult the intelligence of my readers. I will leave it to them to take the obvious step and work backwards to the re-exaltation of Lear, Cordelia, Edgar and company, to the heroic fields of their putty Elysium (putty, not

<sup>1</sup> This may merely mean "despite the fact that I am dying—though I am almost too weak to speak." If so, the one phrase in the play which seems to refute our theory is disposed of. Execution of such criminals would be a matter of routine at the period of the play.

Putney) in their newly-demonstrated capacity as “unnatural” sons, daughters, fathers, and so on.

But I leave it. I am content—my work will have been well done—if this trifling essay be accepted as a just instalment towards a saner criticism of our holiest writers, a juster appreciation of the glories of our greatest poet, a

possibly jejune yet assuredly historic attempt to place of the first time William Shakespeare on his proper pedestal as an early disciple of Mr. George Bernard Shaw; and by consequence to carve myself a little niche in the same temple: the smallest contributions will be thankfully received.

NOTES TO ASCENSION DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. *One Tree.*<sup>11</sup>—Note the altered value of

\* C rowley c onfuses tw o common pastoral amusements—throwing wooden balls at cocoanuts and sticks at Aunt Sally.

the metaphor, such elasticity having led Prof. Blümengarten to surmise them to be india-rubber trees.

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

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

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

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

42. Βατραχομομαχία.<sup>16</sup>—Aristophanes Batachoi.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“152. A b ista influenza dependet vita omnium.

“153. A b hac influenza dependet cœli & terra; pluviae beneplaciti; & alimenta omnium.

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

“155. Tredecim fontes olei magnificentiæ boni, dependet a barba hujus influentiæ gloriose; & omnes emanant in Microprosopum.

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

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

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

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

"160. Et propterea omnis ornatus ornatum ab ista influentia dependent.

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

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

"163. Nisi enim illæ literæ ascenderunt in Seniores, reliquæ istæ literæ non stabilirentur.

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

"165. Certe enim ab influentia omnia dependent.

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

"167. B eatus ille, qui ad hanc usque per tingit."

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

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

"497. Et cum ista frons detegitur tunc excitantur D omni Judiciorum, contra illos qui non erubescunt in operibus suis.

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

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

"500. In libro D issertationis Scholæ Raf Jebha Senis dicitur : Frons est receptaculum frontis Senioris. Sin minus, litera C heth inter duas reliquas interponitur, juxta illud : (Num. xxiv. 17) **וְהִכָּהוּ** et confringet angulos Moab.

"501. Et alibi diximus, quod etiam vocatur **הַצַּדִּיק**, literis vicinis permutatis : id est, superatis.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

83. *You.*<sup>26</sup>—You !

86. "*O'erleaps itself and falls on the other.*"<sup>27</sup>—*Macbeth*, l. vii. 27.

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

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

ཨ། ལམ་སོང་ཡིང་མོ་དང་སྐྱང་པོ་

སྐྱང་མོ་སོང་

སྐྱང་མོ་སོང་སྐྱོད་པོ་དང་རྒྱུད་

པོ་དང་སོང་

ཞི་མ་ནི་ལག་སྐྱོར་ཅིག་ཅིག་

ཐང་ཏེ་ཅིས་

ཐྱེར་པ་ཡིན་ཐོས་ཐག་ཏུ་

ཅ་ལྟལ། །

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

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

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

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

PANSIL.

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

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

I find myself confronted with the crux: that a Buddhist, convinced intellectually and philosophically of the truth of the teaching of Gotama; a man to whom Buddhism is the equivalent of scientific methods of Thought; an expert in dialectic whose logical faculty is bewildered, whose critical admiration is extorted by the subtle vigour of Buddhist reasoning; I am yet forced to admit that, this being so, the Five Precepts‡ are mere nonsense. If the Buddha spoke scientifically, not popularly, not rhetorically, then his precepts are not his. We must reject them or we must interpret them. We must inquire: Are they meant to be obeyed? Or—and this is my theory—are they sarcastic and biting criticisms on existence, illustrations of the First Noble Truth; reasons, as it were, for the apotheosis of annihilation? I shall so that this is so. Let me consider them "precept upon precept," if the introduction of the Hebrew visionary is not too strong meat for the Little Mary§ of a Buddhist audience.

\* *Lycidas*, line 130.

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

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

§ A catchword for the stomach, from J.M. Barrie's play "Little Mary."

THE FIRST PRECEPT.

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

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

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

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

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

Far be it from me to suggest that this is a defence of breathing, eating and drinking. By no means; in all these ways we bring suffering and death to others, as to ourselves. But since these are inevitable acts, since suicide would be a still more cruel alternative (especially in case something should subsist below mere Rupa), the command is not to achieve

\* Fielding, in "The Soul of a Peopple," has reluctantly to confess that he can find no trace of this idea in Buddha's own work, and called the superstition the "echo of an older Faith."—A.C.

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



the impossible, the already violated in the act of commanding, but a bitter commentary on the foul evil of this aimless, hopeless universe, this compact of misery, meanness, and cruelty. Let us pass on.

#### THE SECOND PRECEPT

The Second Precept is directed against theft. Theft is the appropriation to one's own use of that to which another has a right. Let us see therefore whether or no the Buddha was a thief. The answer is of course in the affirmative. For to issue a command is to attempt to deprive another of his most precious possession—the right to do as he will; that is, unless, with the predestinarians, we hold that action is determined absolutely, in which case, of course, a command is as absurd as it is unavoidable. Excluding this folly, therefore, we may conclude that if the command be obeyed—and those of Buddha have gained a far larger share of obedience than those of any other teacher—the Enlightened One was not only a potential but an actual thief. Further, all voluntary action limits in some degree, however minute, the volition of others. If I breathe, I diminish the stock of oxygen available on the planet. In those far distant ages when Earth shall be as dead as the moon is to-day, my breathing now will have robbed some being then living of the dearest necessity of life.

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

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

#### THE THIRD PRECEPT

This precept, against adultery, I shall touch but lightly. Not that I consider the subject unpleasant—far from it!—but since the English section of my readers, having unclean minds, will otherwise find a fulcrum therein for their favourite game of slander. Let it suffice if I say that the Buddha—in spite of the ridiculous membrane legend,\* one of those foul follies which idiot devotees invent only too freely—was a confirmed and habitual adulterer. It

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

would be easy to argue with Hegel-Huxley that he who thinks of an act commits it (cf. Jesus also in this connection, though he only knows the creative value of desire), and that since A and not-A are mutually limiting, therefore interdependent, therefore identical, he who forbids an act commits it; but I feel that this is no place for metaphysical hair-splitting; let us prove what we have to prove in the plainest way.

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

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

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

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

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

#### THE FOURTH PRECEPT

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

Apart from this there can hardly be much doubt, when critical exegesis has done its damndest on the Logia of our Lord, that Buddha did at some time commit himself to some statement. "(Something called) Consciousness exists" is, said Huxley, the irreducible minimum of the pseudo-syllogism, false even for an enthymeme, "Cogito, ergo sum!" This proposition he bolsters up by stating that whoso should pretend to doubt it, would thereby but confirm it. Yet might it not be said "(Something called) Consciousness appears to itself to exist," since Consciousness is itself the only witness to that confirmation? Not that even now we can deny some kind of existence to consciousness, but that it should be a more real existence than that of a reflection is doubtful, incredible, even inconceivable. If by consciousness we mean the normal consciousness, it is definitely untrue, since the

## THE SWORD OF SONG

Dhyanic consciousness includes it and denies it. No doubt "something called" acts as a kind of caveat to the would-be sceptic, though the phrase is bad, implying a "calling." But we can guess what Huxley means.

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

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

### THE FIFTH PRECEPT.

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

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

and

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

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

But what is intoxication? unless it be the loss of power to use perfectly a truth-telling set of faculties. If I walk unsteadily it is owing to nervous lies—and so for all the phenomena of drunkenness. But a lie involves the assumption

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

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

‡ "While as for Quilp Hop o' my Thumb there  
Banjo-Byron that twangs the strum-strum there."

—BROWNING, *Pachiarotto* (said of A. Austin)

tion of some true standard, and this can nowhere be found. A doctor would tell you, moreover, that all food intoxicates: all, here as in all the universe, of every subject and in every predicate, is a matter of degree.

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

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

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

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

Yes! Do not believe that the Buddha was a fool; that he asked men to perform the impossible or the unwise.† Do not believe that the sorrow of existence is so trivial that easy rules

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

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

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

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

easily interpreted (as all Buddhists do interpret the Precepts) can avail against them; do not mop up the Ganges with a duster; nor stop the revolution of the stars with a lever of lath.

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

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

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

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

117. *Fives.*<sup>34</sup>—Dukes.

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

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

139. *Cain.*<sup>37</sup>—Gen. iv. 8.

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

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

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

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

#### PREFACE\*

In the fevered days and nights under the Empire that perished in the struggle of 1870,

\* To a collection of MSS illustrating the "Psychopathia Sexualis" of von Krafft-Ebing. The names of the parties have been changed.

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

In England such wild song found few followers of any worth or melody. Swinburne stands on his solitary pedestal above the vulgar crowds of priapistic plagiarists; he alone caught the fierce frenzy of Baudelaire's brandied shrieks, and his First Series of Poems and Ballads was the legitimate echo of that not fierier note. But English Art as a whole was unmoved, at any rate not stirred to any depth, by this wave of debauchery. The great thinkers maintained the even keel, and the windy poets lay not for their frailer barks to cross. There is one exception of note, till this day unsuspected, in the person of George Archibald Bishop. In a corner of Paris this young poet (for in his nature the flower of poesy did spring, did even take root and give some promise of a brighter bloom, till stricken and blasted in latter years by the lightning of his own sins) was steadily writing day after day, night after

night, often working forty hours at a time, work which he destined to entrance the world. All England should ring with his praises; by-and-by the whole world should know his name. Of these works none of the longer and more ambitious remains. How they were lost, and how those fragments we possess were saved, is best told by relating the romantic and almost incredible story of his life.

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

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

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

The legal father, left by himself with a squalling child to amuse, to appease in his tantrums,

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

and to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, was not a little perplexed by the sudden disappearance of his wife. At first he supposed that she had been translated, but, finding that she had not left behind the traditional mantle behind her, he abandoned this supposition in favour of quite a different, and indeed a more plausible one. He now believed her to be the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse, with variations. On arrival in Egypt he hired an old native nurse, and sailed for Odessa. Once in Russia he could find Gog and Magog, and present to them the child as Antichrist. For he was no persuaded that he himself was the First Beast, and would ask the sceptic to count his seven heads and ten horns. The heads, however, rarely totted up accurately.

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

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

He told Mathilde Doriac that he had been to Eton and Cambridge—neither institution, however, preserves any record of such admission. The imagination of George, indeed, is tremendously fertile with regard to events in his own life. His own story is that he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1856, and was sent down two years later for an article which he had contributed to some University or College Magazine. No confirmation of any sort is to be found anywhere with regard to these or any other statements of our author. There is, however, no doubt that in 1861 he quarrelled with his family; went over to Paris, where he settled down, at first, like every tuffhead, somewhere in the Quartier Latin; later, with Mathilde Doriac, the noble woman who became his mistress and held to him through all the terrible tragedy of his moral, mental, and physical life, in the Rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière. At his house there the frightful scene

of '68 took place, and it was there too that he was apprehended after the murders which he describes so faithfully in "Abysmos." He had just finished this poem with a shriek of triumph, and had read it through to the appalled Mathilde "avec des yeux de flamme et de gestes incohérentes," when, foaming at the mouth, and "hurlant de blasphèmes indicibles," he fell upon her with extraordinary violence of passion; the door opened, officers appeared, the arrest was effected. He was committed to an asylum, for there could be no longer any doubt of his complete insanity; for three weeks he had been raving with absinthe and satyriasis. He survived his confinement no long time; the burning of the asylum with its inmates was one of the most terrible events of the war of 1870. So died one of the most talented Englishmen of his century, a man who for wide knowledge of men and things was truly to be envied, yet one who sold his birthright for a mess of beastlier pottage than ever Esau guzzled, who sold soul and body to Satan for sheer love of sin, whose mere lust of perversion is so intense that it seems to absorb every other emotion and interest. Never since God woke light from chaos has such a tragedy been un-rolled before men, step after step toward the lake of Fire!

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

are small blemish on a series of poems whose originality is always striking, and often dreadful, in its broader features.

We cannot leave George Bishop without a word of inquiry as to what became of the heroic figure of Mathilde Doriac. It is a bitter task to have to write in cold blood the dreadful truth about her death. She had the misfortune to contract, in the last few days of her life with him, the same terrible disease which he described in the last poem of his collection. This shock, coming so soon after, and, as it were, as an unholy perpetual reminder of the madness and sequestration of her lover, no less than his infidelity, unhinged her mind, and she shot herself on July 5, 1869. Her last letter to Madame J—— S—— is one of the tenderest and most pathetic ever written. She seems to have been really loved by George, in his wild, infidel fashion: "All Night" and "Victory," among others, are obviously inspired by her beauty; and her devotion to him, the abasement of soul, the prostitution of body, she underwent for and with him, is one of the noblest stories life has known. She seems to have dived with him, yet ever trying to raise his soul from the quagmire; if God is just at all, she shall stand more near to His right hand than the vaunted virgins who would soil no hem of vesture to save their brother from the worm that dieth not!

The Works of George Archibald Bishop will speak for themselves; it would be both impertinent and superfluous in me to point out in detail their many and varied excellences, or their obvious faults. The *raison d'être*, though, of their publication, is worthy of especial notice. I refer to their psychological sequence, which agrees with their chronological order. His life-history, as well as his literary remains, gives us an idea of the progression of diabolism as it really is, not as it is painted. Note also, (1) the increase of selfishness in pleasure, (2) the diminution of his sensibility to physical charms. Pure and sane is his early work; then he is carried into the outer current of the great vortex of Sin, and whirls lazily though the sleepy waters of mere sensualism; the pace quickens, he grows fierce in the mysteries of Sapphism and the cult of Venus Aversa with women; later of the same forms of vice with men, all mingled with wild talk of religious dogma and a general exaltation of Priapism at the expense, in particular, of Christianity, in which religion, however, he is undoubtedly a believer till the last (the pious will quote James ii. 19, and the infidel will observe that he died in an asylum); then the full swinging of the tide catches him, the mysteries of death become more and more an obsession, and he is flung headlong into Sadism, Necrophilia,

all the maddest, fiercest vices that the mind of fiends ever brought up from the pit. But always to the very end his power is unexhausted, immense, terrible. It is delirium does not amuse ; it appals ! A man who could conceive as he did must himself have had some glorious chord in his heart vibrating to the eternal principle of Boundless Love. That this love was wrecked is for me, in some sort a relative of his, a real and bitter sorrow. He might have been so great ! He missed Heaven ! Think kindly of him !

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

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

173. *The liar Copleston.*<sup>42\*</sup>—Bishop of Cal-

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

Letters and Telegrams: BOLESKINE  
FOYERS is sufficient address.

Bills, Writs, Summons, etc. : CAMP XI,  
THE BALTORE GLACIER, BALTIKISTAN

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

(or the feminine of any of these), as shown

- by underlining it,  
 Courtesy demands, in view of the  
 (a) tribute to your genius  
 (b) attack on your (1) political  
     (2) moral  
     (3) social  
     (4) mental  
     (5) physical character  
 (c) homage to your grandeur  
 (d) reference to your conduct  
 (e) appeal to your finer feelings

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

Your humble, obedient servant,

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

cutta. While holding the see of Ceylon he wrote a book in which “Buddhism” is described as consisting of “devil-dances.” Now, when a man, in a position to know the facts, writes a book of the subscription-cadging type, whose value for the purpose depends on the suppression of these facts, I think I am to be commended for my moderation in using the term “liar.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

De Acosta (José) Natural and Moral History of the Indies.

Alison, Sir A. . . History of Scotland.

Benzoni . . . History of the New World.

Buckle . . . History of Civilisation.

Burton, J. H. . . History of Scotland.

Carlyle . . . History of Frederick the Great.

Carlyle . . . Oliver Cromwell.

Carlyle . . . Past and Present.

Cheruel, A. . . Dictionnaire historique de la France.

Christian, P. . . Histoire de la Magie

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Clarendon, Ld. . . History of the Great Re-  
bellion.  
De Comines, P. . . Chronicle.  
Edwards, Bryan . . . History of the B rish C olo-  
nies in the W. Indies.  
Elton, C . . . Or iginals of English History.  
Erdmann . . . History of Philosophy, Vol.  
II.  
Froude . . . History of England.  
Fyffe, C. A. . . History of Modern Europe.  
Gardiner, S. R. . . History of the C ivil War in  
England.  
Gibbon . . . Decline and Fall of the  
Roman Empire.  
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Middle Ages.  
Hugo, V. . . . Napoléon le Petit.  
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Migne, Abbé . . . Œuvres.  
Montalembert . . . The Monks of the West.  
Morley, J. . . . Life of Mr. Gladstone.  
Motley . . . . History of the Dutch Re-  
public.  
Napier . . . Hi story of the Peninsular  
War.  
Prescott . . . History of the Conquest of  
Mexico.  
Prescott . . . History of the Conquest of  
Peru.  
Renan . . . Vi e de Jésus.  
Robertson, E.W . . . Historical Essays.  
Rosebery, Ld. . . Napoleon.  
Shakespeare. . . Histories.  
Society for the  
Propagation  
of Religious  
Truth . . . Tr ansactions, Vols. I.-  
DCLXVI.  
Stevenson, R. L. . . A Footnote to History.  
Thornton, Ethel-  
red, Rev. . . . History of the Jesuits  
Waite, A. E. . . . The Real History of the  
Rosicrucians.  
Wolseley, Ld. . . Marlborough.

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

366. *Shot his Chandra*.<sup>56</sup>—Anglicé, shot the moon.  
388. *The subtle devilish omission*.<sup>87</sup>—But what are we to say of Christian dialecticians who quote “All things work together for good” out of its context, and call this verse “Christian optimism?” See Caird’s “Hegel.”  
Hegel knew how to defend himself, though. As Goethe wrote of him :  
“ They thought the master too  
Inclined to fuss and finick.  
The students’ anger grew  
To frenzy Paganinic.\*  
They vowed they’d make him rue  
His work in Jena’s clinic.  
They came, the unholy crew,  
The mystic and the cynic :  
He had scoffed at God’s battue,  
The flood for mortal’s sin—Ic-  
thyosaurian Waterloo !  
They eyed the sage askew ;  
They searched him through and through  
With violet rays actinic  
They asked him ‘Wer bist du ?’  
He answered slowly ‘Bin ich ?’ ”  
387. *The Fish*.<sup>58</sup>—Because of *ἰχθῦς*, which means Fish, And very aptly symbolises Christ. — *Ring and Book* (The Pope), ll. 89, 90.  
395. *Dharma*.<sup>59</sup>—Consult the Tripitaka.  
409. *I cannot trace the chain*.<sup>60</sup>—“How vain, indeed, are human calculations !”— *The Autobiography of a Flea*, p. 136.  
412. *Table-thing*.<sup>61</sup>—“Ere the stuff grow a ring-thing right to wear.”— *The Ring and the Book*, i. 17.  
“This pebble-thing, o’ the boy-thing.”  
—CALVERLY, *The Cock and the Bull*.  
442. *Caird*.<sup>62</sup>—See his “Hegel.”  
446. *Says Huxley*.<sup>63</sup>—See “Ethics and Evolution.”  
459. *Igrasil*.<sup>64</sup>—The Otz C hiim of the Scandinavians.  
467. *Ladies’ League*.<sup>65</sup>—Mrs. J.S. Crowley says : “The Ladies’ League Was Formed For The Promotion And Defence of the Reformed Faith Of The Church of England.” (The capitals are hers.) I think we may accept this statement. She probably knows, and has no obvious reasons for misleading.  
487. *Sattva*.<sup>66</sup>—The Buddhists, denying an Atman or Soul (an idea of changeless, eternal, knowledge, being and bliss) represent the fictitious Ego of a man (or a dog) as a temporary agglomeration of particles. Reincarnation only knocks off, as it were, some of the corners of the mass, so that for several births the Ego is constant within limits ; hence the possibility of the “magical memory.” The “Sattva” is this agglomeration. See my

\* Paganini, a famous violinist.

“Science and Buddhism,” *infra*, for a full discussion of this point.

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

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

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

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

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

But surely there is some one who is the object of universal reprobation among Christians ? Permit me to offer myself as a candidate.

Sink, I beseech you, these sectarian differences, and combine to declare me at least Anathema Maranatha.

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

I.

Existence being sorrow,  
The cause of it deisre,  
A merry tune I borrow  
To light upon the lyre :  
If death destroy me quite,  
Then, I cannot lament it ;  
I’ve lived, kept life alight,  
And—damned if I repent it !

Let me die in a ditch,  
Damnably drunk,  
Or lipping a punk,  
Or in bed with a bitch !  
I was ever a hog ;  
Muck ? I am one with it !  
Let me die like a dog ;  
Die, and be done with it !

\* Famous Adelphi villain.

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

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

V.

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

Let me die in a ditch,  
Damnably drunk,  
Or lipping a punk,  
Or in bed with a bitch !  
I was ever a hog ;  
Muck ? I am one with it !  
Let me die like a dog ;  
Die, and be done with it !

616. *A lizard*.<sup>71</sup>—A short account of the genesis of these poems seems not out of place here. The design of an elaborate parody on

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



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

Ascension Day consisted of :—

- p. 2,\* I flung . . .
- p. 4. Pray do . . .
- p. 5. "But why . . .
- p. 7. Here's just . . .
- p. 9. I will . . .
- to p. 18, . . . but in Hell ! . . .
- p. 19, You see . . .  
to end.

Pentecost consisted of :—

- p. 22, To-day . . .
- p. 26, How very hard . . .
- to p. 28, "Proceed !" . . .
- p. 30, Nor lull my soul . . .
- to p. 32, . . . and the vision.
- p. 34, How easy . . .  
to end.

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

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

[\* These page references have been altered to conform to the pagination of this e-text— T.S.]

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

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

I accuse the English language : *anthropo-phagous* must always remain a comic word.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"My God will punish you when you die !"

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

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

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

If he confines his strictures to the translators of that well-known Eastern work the "Old Testament" I am with him ; any modern Biblical critic will tell him what I mean. It took a long time, too, for the missionaries (and Tommy Atkins) to discover that "Budd" was not a "great Gawd." But then they did not want to, and in any case sympathy and intelligence are not precisely the most salient qualities in either soldiers or missionaries. But nothing is more absurd than to compare men like Sir W. Jones, Sir R. Burton, Von Hammer-Purgstall, Sir E. Arnold, Prof. Max Müller, Me, Prof. Rhys Davis, Lane, and the rest of our illustrious Orientalists to the poor

and ignorant Hindus whose letters occasionally delight the readers of the *Sporting Times*, such letters being usually written by public scribes for a few pice in the native bazaar. As to "Babus" (Babu, I may mention, is the equivalent to our "Mister,") and not the name of a savage tribe), Mr. Chesterton, from his Brixton Brahmaloka, may look forth and see that the "Babu" cannot understand Western ideas; but a distinguished civil servant in the Madras Presidency, second wrangler in a very good year, assured me that he had met a native whose mathematical knowledge was superior to that of the average senior wrangler, and that he had met several others who approached that standard. His specific attack on Madame Blavatsky is equally unjust, as many natives, not theosophists, have spoken to me of her in the highest terms. "Honest Hindus" cannot be expected to think as Mr. Chesterton deems likely, as he is unfortunately himself a Western, and in the same quagmire of misapprehension as Prof. Max Müller and the rest. Madame Blavatsky's work was to remind the Hindus of the excellence of their own shastras,\* to show that some Westerns held identical ideas, and thus to countermine the dishonest representations of the missionaries. I am sufficiently well known as a bitter opponent of "Theosophy" to risk nothing in making these remarks.

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

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

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

This note is hardly intelligible without the review referred to. I therefore reprint the

\* Sacred Books.

portion thereof which is germane to my matter from the *Daily News*, June 18, 1901:—

To the side of a mind concerned with idle merriment (*sic*!) there is certainly something a little funny in Mr. Crowley's passionate devotion to deities who bear such names as Mout and Nuit, and Ra and Shu, and Hor makhou. They do no seem to the English man to lend themselves to pious exhilaration. Mr Crowley says in the same poem:

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

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

Moreover, the poets of Mr. Crowley's school have, among all their merits, some genuine intellectual dangers from this tendency to im port religions, this free trade in gods. That all creeds are significant and all gods divine we willingly agree. But this is rather a reason for being content with our own than for attempting to steal other people's. That affectation in many modern mystics of adopting an Oriental civilisation and mode of thought must cause much harmless merriment among the actual Orientals. The notion that a turban and a few vows will make an Englishman a Hindu is quite on a par with the idea that a black hat and an Oxford degree will make a Hindu an Englishman. We wonder whether our Buddhistic philosopher's have ever read a florid letter in Baboo English. We suspect that the said type of document is in reality exceedingly like the philosophic essay written by Englishmen about the splendour of Eastern thought. Sometimes European mystics deserve something worse than mere laughter at the hands (*sic*!) of Orientals. If there was one person whom honest Hindus would never have been justified in tearing to pieces it was Madame Blavatsky.

That our world-worn men of art should believe for a moment that moral salvation is possible and supremely important is an unmix'd benefit. But to believe for a moment that it is to be found by going to particular places or reading particular books or joining particular societies is to make for the thousandth time the mistake that is at once materialism and superstition. If Mr. Crowley and the new mystics think for one moment that an Egyptian desert is more mystic than an English meadow, that a palm tree is more poetic than a Sussex beech, that a broken temple of Osiris is more supernatural than a Baptist chapel in Brixton, then they

are sectarians, and only sectarians of no more value to humanity than those who think that the English soil is the only soil worth defending, and the Baptist chapel the only chapel worth of worship (*sic*). But Mr. Crowley is a strong and genuine poet, and we have little doubt that he will work up from his appreciation of the Temple of Osiris to that loftier and wider work of the human imagination, the appreciation of the Brixton chapel.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

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

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

“Existence is mis’ry  
I th’ month Tisri

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

At th’ fu’ o’ th’ moon  
I were shot wi’ a goon.  
(Goon is no Scots,  
But Greek, Meester Watts.)  
We’re awa’ tae Burma,  
Whaur th’ ground be firmer  
Tae speer th’ Mekong,  
Chin Chin! Sae long.  
[Long sald be lang:  
She’ll no care a whang.]  
Ye’re Rautional babe,  
Audra McAbe.”

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

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

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

## NOTES TO PENTECOST

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

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

### THE INITIATED INTERPRETATION OF CEREMONIAL MAGIC\*

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

Even when we learn that the Bible, by a

\* This essay forms the introduction an edition of the “Goetia” of King Solomon

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

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

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

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 Aka sha, 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

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

## THE SWORD OF SONG

told, that by Akasha is mean the Chitakasha. The Chitakasha is situated in the "Third Eye," i.e., in the brain. By assuming higher dimensions of space, we can assimilate this face to Realism; but we have no need to take so much trouble.

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

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

These consist of:

(1) Sight.

The circle, square, triangle, vessels, lamps, robes, implements, etc.

(2) Sound.

The invocations.

(3) Smell.

The perfumes.

(4) Taste.

The Sacraments.

(5) Touch.

As under (1)

(6) Mind.

The combination of all these and reflection on their significance.

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

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

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

I can, and will.

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

Their seals therefore represent (Mr. Spencer's

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

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

projected cube) methods of stimulating or regulating those particular spots (through the eye).

The names of God are vibrations calculated to establish:

(a) General control of the brain. (Establishment of functions relative to the subtle world).

(b) Control over the brain in detail. (Rank or type of the Spirit).

(c) Control over one special portion.

(Name of the Spirit.)

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

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

If, then, I say, with Solomon:

"The Spirit Cimieries teaches logic," what I mean is:

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

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

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

(1) Brings up facts from sub-consciousness.

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

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

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

(4) Business capacity may be stimulated.

(5) Abnormal states of the body may be

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

corrected, and the involved tissues brought back to tone, in obedience to currents started from the brain.

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

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

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

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

But I reach an end.

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

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

26. *MacGrigor*.<sup>5</sup>—The Mage.

29. *Abramelin*.<sup>6</sup>—The Mage.

32. *Ancient Rituals*.<sup>7</sup>—From the Papyrus of MRS. Harris.†

33. *Golden Dawn*.<sup>8</sup>—These rituals were later annexed by Madame Horos,‡ that superior Swami. The earnest seeker is liable to some pretty severe shocks. To see one's "Obligation" printed in the *Daily Mail*!!! Luckily, I have no nerves.

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

\* The Phallus of Shiva the Destroyer. It is really identical with the Qabalistic "Middle Pillar" of the "Tree of Life."

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

‡ Vide the daily papers of June-July 1901.

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

58. बस ॥<sup>10</sup>—Enough.

60. कि वास्ते ।<sup>11</sup>—Why?

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

61. *Strange and painful attitude*.<sup>13</sup>—Sid-dhasana.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

86. *Swinburne*.<sup>19</sup>—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

146. *Tahuti*.<sup>25</sup>—In Coptic, Thoth.

\* Title of a (forthcoming) collection of papers on mountain exploration, etc. [Unpublished—T.S.]



even what we mean when we say so; but the limits of knowledge, slowly receding, yet never so far as to permit us to unveil the awful and impenetrable adytum of consciousness, or that of matter, must one day be suddenly widened by the forging of a new weapon.

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

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

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

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

Time and again, in the history of Science, a period has arrived when, gorged with facts, she has sunk into a lethargy of reflection accompanied by appalling nightmares in the shape of impossible theories. Such a nightmare now rides us; once again philosophy has said its last word, and arrived at a deadlock. Aristotle, in reducing to the fundamental contradictions-in-terms which they involve the figments of the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, the Platonists, the Pyrrhonists; Kant, in his *reductio ad absurdum* of the Thomists, the Scotists, the Wolffians,—all the warring brood, alike only in the inability to reconcile the ultimate antinomies of a cosmogony only grosser for its pinchbeck spirituality; have, I take it, found their modern parallel in the ghastly laughter of Herbert Spencer, as fleshed upon the corpses of Berkeley and the Idealists from Fichte and Hartman to Lotze and Trendelenburg he drives the reeking fangs of his imagination into the palpitating vitals of his own grim masterpiece of reconciliation, self-deluded and yet self-conscious of its own delusion.

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

We then await his dawn.

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

"Audax omnia perpeti

Gens humani ruit per vetitum nefas."\*

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

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

Have we such a fact to hand? We have.

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

I see a cat.

Dr. Johnson says it is a cat.

Berkeley says it is a group of sensations.

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

Spencer says it is a mode of the Unknowable.

But none of them seriously doubt the fact that I exist; that a cat exists; that one sees the other. All—bar Johnson—hint—but oh! how dimly!—at what I now know to be—*true?*—no, not necessarily true, but *nearer the truth*. Huxley goes deeper in his demolition of Descartes. With him, "I see a cat," proves "some-

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

† Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*.

thing called consciousness exists." He denies the assertion of duality: he has no datum to assert the denial of duality. I have.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But that a field for research is opened up no sane man may doubt. Nor may one question that the very first fact is of a nature disruptive of difficulty philosophical and reasonable; since the phenomenon does not invoke the assent of the reasoning faculty. The arguments which reason may bring to bear against it are self-destructive; reason has given consciousness the lie, but consciousness survives and smiles. Reason is a part of consciousness and can never be greater than the whole; this Spencer sees; but reason is not even any part of this new consciousness (which I, and many others, have too rarely achieved) and therefore can never touch it: this I see, and this will I hope be patent to those ardent and spiritually-minded agnostics of whom Huxley and Tyndall are for all history-time the prototypes. Know or doubt! is the alternative of the highwayman Huxley; "Believe" is not to be admitted; this is fundamental; in this agnosticism can never change; this must ever command our moral as well as our intellectual assent.

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

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

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

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

\* Author of a text-book on "Formal Logic."



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Talking of fish-stories, read John xxi. 1-6

\* A twentieth century medium.

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

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

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

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

*Lyre and Lancet.*

*Recipe for Curried Eggs.*

The physiologist reproaches  
Poor Mr. Crowley, "This encroaches  
Upon your frail cerebral cortex,  
And turns its fairway to a vortex.  
Your cerebellum with cockroaches  
Is crammed; your lobes that thought they  
caught "X"

Are like mere eggs a person poaches.  
But soon from yoga, business worries,  
And (frankly I suspect the rubble  
Is riddled by specific trouble!)  
Will grow like eggs a person curries."  
This line, no doubt, requires an answer.

*The last Ditch.*

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

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

*Up, Guards, and at 'em!*

Second, your facts are neatly put ;  
—Stay ! In that mouth there lurks a foot !  
One surgeon saw so many claps  
He thought : "One-third per cent., perhaps,  
Of mortals 'scape its woes that knock us,  
And bilk the wily gonococcus."  
So he is but a simple cynic  
Who takes the world to match his clinic ;  
And he assuredly may err  
Who, keeping cats, think birds have fur.  
You say : "There's Berridge, Felkin,  
Mathers,  
Hysterics, epileptoids, blathers,  
Guttersnipe, psychopath, and mattoid,  
With ceremonial magic that toyed."  
Granted. Astronomy's no myth,  
But it produced Piazzi Smyth.  
What crazes actors ? Why do surgeons  
Go mad and cut up men like sturgeons ?  
(The questions are the late Chas. Spurgeon's.)  
Of yogi I could quote you hundreds  
In science, law, art, commerce noted.  
They fear no lunacy : their on lead's  
Not for their noddles doom-devoted.  
They are not like black bulls (that shunned  
reds  
In vain) that madly charge the gothead  
Of rural Pan, because some gay puss  
Had smeared with blood his stone Priapus.  
They are as sane as politicians  
And people who subscribe to missions.  
This says but little ; a long way are  
Yogi more sane that such as they are.  
You have conceived your dreadful bogey,  
From seeing many a raving Yogi.  
These haunt your clinic ; but the sound  
Lurk in an unsuspected ground,  
Dine with you, lecture in your schools,  
Share your intolerance of fools,  
And, while the Yogi you condemn,  
Listen, say nothing, barely smile.  
O if you but suspected them  
Your silence would match their awhile !

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

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

*The Bard a Brainsy Beggar.*

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

*Alpine Analogy.*

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

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

Therefore poor Crowley lights his pie,  
Maintains : "The small-shot kills the snip,  
But spares the tiger ;" goes on joking,  
And goes on smirking, on invoking,  
On climbing, meditating,—failing to think  
of a suitable rhyme at a critical juncture,  
Ah !—goes on working, goes on smoking,  
Until he goes right on to Woking.

637. *No one supposes me a Saint.*<sup>54</sup>—On inquiry, however, I find that some do.  
686. *Amrita.*<sup>55</sup>—The Elixir of Life : the Dew of Immortality.

## NOTES

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

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

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

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

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

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

755. *Heart*.<sup>61</sup>—

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

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

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

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