

ALICE WESLEY TORR OR ALEISTER CROWLEY?

With one thing and another to worry me I was a nervous wreck all this March and April of 1908. I was wasting my time in constructing anagrams on my name to publish this book under. Which shows how dependant the best of us is on his in'ards. If an Army marches on its belly, so does a philosopher think on his. My best on another's

So lost indeed was I in this jungle of delusion that I was quite surprised when one beautiful sunset in May, sitting at ease under the shadow of the Lion de Belfort, I became aware of a temptation of the devil. Quite a number of people had been asking me during the last few months to compromise with respectability. And by Jove! I nearly did! I was ill—forgive the wavering! I am wise in time, luckily, and my "Retro Satanus" takes this form.

Let me define my position. It is quite true that my attitude to real life, the life of Nature, is perfectly "sane" and "wholesome." In a perfect society I should regard even my "Alice" as perverted art: for in a sane world one is insane to proclaim sanity. But art (which is the Word of the Masters to the World) must move with that world and follow it into its corruption, redeeming the same. The simple humanity, the great guffawing indecency, of Shakespeare is well enough for the pagan society of Elizabeth. The splendid savage Jehovah is sane enough and grand enough for nomadic Israel. But since then the World is Christianized, and there is a need for the bitterness of Shelley and Byron, the intense "justification by sin" doctrine of Swinburne. Perhaps we are wrong to have thought of

Swinburne as having recanted; it may be that he said to himself: "Well, I'm sick of these dogs! I will write simple lyrics and shut out the world." Still, the result is not good. Moreover we who are in the forefront of the fight are annoyed with Achilles—and anyhow there is no excuse for such a Patroclus as Watts-Dunton!

Well, however that may be, here we are in the fight; and if I am called an anarchist, "soit!" But I throw my bomb with a difference. If I do not throw a physical bomb, it is only because there is none big enough. For the Government is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and the canaille, and it is for us aristocrats to throw the bombs. There can be no peace between Socrates and Athens, between Jesus and Jerusalem. We must then first throw moral bombs, and this book is mine!

It is a curious position. All my sympathy is with my own class—birth, education, wealth, courage, pride. These are my heritage. But all my own people are busy pretending to live the dirty, stinking, lousy, poor; Coriolanus "licking the breech of a leprous hangman." (Not Crowley, this time: Catullus).

So that on mature consideration I drop the Revd. C. Verey of "Clouds without Water"—it is only one more satire. The invention was not cowardice but art. My sympathies are entirely with the alleged author of the Quatorzains; in a world of Winnington-Ingrams it is about the best that any one can do.

At the same time, I have a foible: I should like to produce ideal poetry; poetry free from the false conditions of modern crapulence. "Clouds without Water" and this World's Tragedy are mostly nonsense to a Nina Olivier or a Dorothy Lamb, those avatars of Pagan art. But to a Dilke, lamed by a kick from the British ass; or to a Burton, swimming in the Sea of Glue—they must seem miracles

of virility and truth. Natural love and love of Nature are poetry everywhere; and (idleness!) I hope one day to be able to leave the English hypocrites to their own beastliness, and live in my own world. Until I am wanted; in the hour of battle.

One thing I must ask; let this book be assiduously circulated among the young. There is hope there if anywhere. Let me seduce the boys of England, and the oldsters may totter unconverted to their graves. Then these boys, becoming men, may bring about the new heaven and the new earth. You are not a Crowleian till you can say fervently "Yes, thank God, I am an atheist." For the 'transvaluation of all values' must yet again take place, when those are all dead and damned who have forced us into the painful position we now occupy.

The "man-eating beasts because of whom we dare not love thee", once gone, we can revive the true cultus of the Logos; the chastity-mongering masturbators once swept away, we can without reproach follow our natural inclination to purity: the lawyers and millionnaires and demagogues once squelched, we can enjoy our property without alarm.

Young men! there is the enemy. I am no coward, I hope; and believe that I may make a fairly good general—at least no traitor. But without an army I am useless; a Napoleon at St Helena.

Give me my army, young men; and we will sweep these dogs into the sea.

Those in the front rank will have the honour of getting killed first.