

THE ATTAINMENT OF HAPPINESS

A Restatement of the Purpose of Mystical Teachings

BY ALEISTER CROWLEY

THE best and wisest of men are always seeking a solution of the problem of human sorrow. There is one which the wandering ascetics of the world have always known. Whoever said "The kingdom of heaven is within you" certainly knew the best solution of the problem. Man is, in reality, only a very little lower than the angels. He is far more independent of circumstance than most people are aware. Happiness is not so utterly beyond his reach as those who do not climb spiritual mountains suppose.

But there are remedies nearer than the mighty pyramid of Chogo Ri, and the tented pavilion of the massif of Kangchenjanga.

You can woo the butterfly—the poppy bud.

You can float, like a butterfly in the enchanted air. You have only to draw a little of the hydrochloride of cocaine into your nostrils, and you become full of intense virility and energy, a devourer of obstacles. To smoke a few pipes of opium, and you rise to the cloudless and passionless bliss of the philosopher. To swallow a little hashish and you behold all the fantastic glories of fable, and those a thousand-fold; or to woo a flask of ether—breathing it as if it were the very soul of your Beloved—and you will perceive the heart of Beauty in every vulgar and familiar thing.

Every one of these drugs gives absolute forgetfulness of all misfortune; nay, you may contemplate the most appalling catastrophes imminent or already fallen upon you; and you care no more for them than does Nature herself.

THE only drawback to the use of drugs is that the phenomenon of *toleration* is so soon set up, and the effect diminished; while for weaklings there is always the danger of the formation of a habit, when the treacherous servant becomes master, and takes toll for the boon of his ephemeral heavens by the bane of an abiding hell.

These remarks have only been introduced to emphasize the fact that happiness is an interior state; for every one of these drugs gives happiness supreme and unalloyed, entirely irrespective of the external circumstances of the individual. It would be folly to fill the apartment of an opium-smoker with the masterpieces of Rembrandt or Sotatsu, when a dirty towel or a broken chair suffices to flood his soul with more glories than it can bear; when he realizes that light itself is beautiful, no matter on what object it may fall, and when, if you asked him what he would do if he were blind, he would descend, from Heaven, to reply that darkness

was more lovely still, that light was but a disturbance of the serenity of the soul, a siren to seduce it from the bliss of the contemplation of its own ineffable holiness.

BUT why should we talk of drugs? They are only the counterfeit notes, or at best the fiat notes of a discredited government, while we are asking for purest gold. This gold can be ours for the asking.

We may begin by reassuring ourselves. The gold is really in the vaults of every man's treasury. The mystic quest is not a chimaera. The drugs assure us of that. They have not put anything supernatural into us; they have found nothing in us that was not already there.

should not burglariously use such skeleton keys as morphia is that by so doing we are likely to hamper our locks.

We see, then, that we are but so little lower than the angels that the most trifling stimulus raises us to a plane where we enjoy—without consideration even of what it is that we enjoy! Our trouble is due entirely to the law that action and reaction are equal and opposite. We have to pay for the pleasure with pain. We sat up all night, last night, and so to-night we must go to bed early; we drank too much champagne at supper, and now, in the morning, it is the turn of Vichy. The question then has always been whether we can overcome this law of duality, whether we can reach—one step—to that higher plane where all will be ours.

MYSTICISM supplies the answer. The mystic attainment may be defined as the Union of the Soul with God, or as the soul's realization of Itself, or—but there are fifty phrases to define the attainment. Whether you are a Christian or a Buddhist, a Theist or an Atheist, the attainment of this state is as open to you as is nightmare, or madness, or intoxication. Religious folk have buried this fact under mountains of dogma; but the study of comparative religion has made it clear. One has merely to print parallel passages from the mystics of all ages and religions to see that they were talking of the same thing. One even gets verbal identities, such as the "That Tao which is Tao is not Tao" of the Chinese, the "Not That, not That" of the Hindu, the "Head which is above all Heads, the Head which is not a Head" of the Qabalist, and the "That is not, which is" of a modern atheistic or pantheistic mystic.

Mysticism, unless it be a mere barren intellectual doctrine, always involves some personal religious experience of this kind: and the real strength of every religion lies, consequently, in its mystics. The conviction of truth given by any important spiritual experience is so great that although it may have lasted for a few seconds only, it does not hesitate to pit itself against the experience of a lifetime, in respect of reality. The mystic doubts whether he, the man, exists at all, because he is so certain of the existence of him, the God; and the two beings are difficult to conceive intellectually as co-existent!

NOW the extreme state of Being, Knowledge and Bliss, which characterizes the intermediate stages of mystic experience, is a thousandfold more (Continued on page 134)



You can float like a butterfly in the enchanted air
Drawn by Sydney Joseph

They have merely stimulated us. All the peace, the joy, the love, the beauty, the comprehension that they gave us; all these things were in us, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, and soul of our soul. They are in our treasury, safe enough; and the chief reason why we