

rostered in him from the beginning of civilization is gratified in the most perfect form. Born, as all poor mortals are, ignominiously fettered, weighed down with shackles, the one thing he might reasonably hope for is an all-powerful above him; instead of which he is confronted by the horrible problem of free will. Brought up, as he has been, to rely upon everything, from the omnipresent policeman to an omnipresent God, and yet required, with all these carefully loosened fibers, to shape events, he clings to all institutions, Church or State, and finds in them his only retreat from life. In the noble institution of war his subjection reaches the lowest depths of its infamy; he is put into a uniform.

Englishmen, those young lords of illusion, those last inheritors of the world's romance, look charmingly in "the khaki," but see it upon some people of the South, where beyond romance and passion there is something hard and unsentimental! I have seen a company of Italians after an all-night route march. They came up over the brow of a hill in the early morning as though they were being born out of the rising sun. File after straggling file, squat and spare, some in step, some not, their faces and heads white with the white dry dust of the road—to—Rome, their empty faces like masks made by a cruel young sculptor too much bent upon betraying life. It was a thing to remember, those peaked crowns and flat back-heads, and all the expressions there are of vacuity being borne along above the same garments. Well, they had satisfied their need for dependence while the rest of mankind were crying out upon God or upon science.

If there were nothing else to drive men to war there

would be the madness of change. In the many years that I have lived, and in all my wanderings to and fro through many lands, I have only met one man who wanted to live for ever with all things and people exactly as they are; and that static contentment of mind, it seemed to me, spoke very excellently well for that man's life. But for the rest of us there is always the mirage of change. In our childhood there was the fairy who "took a wand—," and for our youth the myths of metamorphoses; but for our age there is only war: war, a destruction of the existing and a recreation of the unchangeable, a magic that does not work, a metamorphosis that is the same thing too bloodied over, too torn, too mangled, too unchangeably the same.

And, as one strains back the petals to gaze into the heart of this thing, there is "immolation" written upon the very core. And before this last mystery one draws back; here is a veil that a bolder than I must lift. Men have seen stars hurl themselves into the nothingness of the abyss, and souls shrivel before dreams of their own making; they have seen the frost lay waste the earth's surface, and the hot sun parch already fevered places, and the moth's wings curl in the flame of the candle: these things are immolation.

And what of the women, while men palpitate with the tremor of the earth's bosom, and destroy themselves with the earth's will to destruction, and are blown upon the rhythms of creation—what are the women doing? Do they not still give birth to children?

So the basic note of creation sounds, through ecstasy, in destruction. There is no will but the earth's will. As long as the stars swing in sublime stupidity, so long is war.

THE PURPLE MANDARIN

By ALEISTER CROWLEY.

There is a purple mandarin

With mystic madness in his eyes;
He hath deflowered the virgin Sin,
And she hath made him overwise.
He eats, he drinks, he sleeps, he sports;
He never speaks his thoughts.

Well knoweth he the Way of Phang,
Matching the Yang against the Yin;
He marketh Tao in God and dung,
Seeth the secret—"soul is skin."
With power and sight behind his will
He chooseth to keep still.

For he hath dreamed: A blossom buds
Once in a million million years,
One poppy on Time's foamless floods,
A cup of cruelty and tears.
Its heart secretes a sacred gum
—Man's only opium.

O mystic flower! O midnight flower
Chaste and corrupt as patchouli!
A silver saint—a porcelain tower—
A flame of ice—a silken sea—
A taint—a vice—a swoon—a shame—
Pure Beauty is thy name!

I sought thee in Sahara's sand,
Hunted through Himalayan snows;
Gods led me friendly by the hand—
Me blind! where every soul-wind blows.
I was more foolish than my kin,
The purple mandarin.

He dreamed—I followed. Then the Gods
Who mock at Wisdom spun the wheel,
Reversed the incalculable odds
And flung out laughing—flint to steel—
The one impossible event:
Pure Beauty came—and went.

Come back to me, my opium-flower,
Chaste and corrupt, my saint of sin,
My flame of ice, my porcelain tower
—I hate the purple mandarin
Who gurgles at me in his fall:
"Dream's wiser, after all."