

KONX OM PAX

DEDICATION AND COUNTER-DEDICATION

WITH A NOTE ON OBSCURITY

WHEN the Neophyte enters upon the Path of Evil, there confronteth him the great angel Samael. In vain he saith that he is come from between the pillars and seeketh the hidden Knowledge in the Name of Adonai; the angel answers him: "I am the Prince of Darkness and of Evil. The wicked and rebellious man gazeth upon the face of Nature, and findeth therein naught but terror and obscurity; unto him it is but the darkness of the darkness, and he is but as a drunken man groping in the dark. Return! for thou canst not pass by."

Equally, when the Neophyte enters upon the Path of Good, doth the great angel Metatron arrest him with the words: "I am the angel of the Presence divine. The wise man gazeth upon the material world, and he beholdeth therein the luminous image of the Creator. Not as yet canst thou bear the dazzling brilliance of that Light. Return! for thou canst not pass by!" These commonplaces of the bastard mysticism of mountbacks, crude and imbecile as they seem to one who has "passed by," are curiously apt to mine intention of the moment.

Essays in Light! I hear somebody exclaim. The man was obscure enough before, but now . . . !!! Very like. 'Tis the first time I have written careless of lucidity. By the usual paradox, I may expect some solemn fool to assert that nothing ever was so plain, and (with a little luck) the rest of the solemn fools—brief, all England—to follow them: till Konx om Pax replace Reading without Tears in every Infant School.

Yet, suppose this were to happen, how would the world be advanced? In no wise. For the brilliance wherein we walk will be but thick darkness to all those who have not become so blind that light and darkness are akin. The light wherein I write is not the light of reason; it is not the darkness of unreason; it is the L.V.X. of that which, first mastering and then transcending the reason, illumines all the darkness caused by the interference of the opposite waves of thought; not by destroying their balance, and thereby showing a false and partial light, but by overleaping their limitations.

Let not the pedant exclaim with Newman that I avoid the Scylla of Ay and the Charybdis of Nay by the Straits of No-meaning.

A thing is not necessarily A or not-A. It may be outside the universe of discourse wherein A and not-A exist. It is absurd to say of Virtue that it is green or not-green; for Virtue has nothing to do with colour. It is one of the most suggestive definitions of KONX—the LVX of the Bretheren of the Rosy Cross—that it transcends all the possible pairs of opposites. Nor does this sound nonsensical to those who are acquainted with That LVX. But to those who do not, it must (I fear) remain as obscure and ridiculous as spherical trigonometry to the inhabitants of Flatland.

Kant and others have remarked on the similarity of our hands and feet, and the impossibility of one replacing its fellow in ordinary 3-dimensional space. This to them suggested a space in which they can be made to coincide.

Similarly, a constant equilibration of all imaginable opposites will suggest to us a world in which they are truly one; whence to that world itself is but the shortest step.

All our contradictories are co-ordinate curves; they are on opposite sides of the axis, but otherwise are precisely similar, just as in the case of the hands quoted above. If they were not similar, they would no longer be contradictories, but contraries.

People who begin to think for themselves usually fall into the error of contradicting normal ideas as taught by their seniors.

Thus, one learns that marriage is right and adultery wrong. One thinks, and finds the beauty of the latter, the sordidity of the former; perhaps ending, with a little wit, in defending marriage because the delights of adultery are impossible without it. This attitude is good enough, indeed, while one is talking to the grovellers; but what educates the clergy (since miracles still happen) is a truism to an actress.

If in the jungle two elephants fight lustily, he shall do little who champions either; rather snare both, tame both, ride both, as the charioteer of the Tarot with the opposing sphinxes, black and white.

Nor, O man, believe thou that finality is anywhere to be reached in words. I balance A and not-A (a), and finding both false, both true, transcend with B. But whatever B is, it is as false and true as b; we reach C. So from C to c, and for ever. Not, as Hegel thought, until we reach an idea in which no seed of self-contradiction lurks; for that can never be.

The thinkable is false, then? (once more!) Yea, but equally it is true.

So also the old mystics were right who saw in every phenomenon a dog-faced demon apt only to seduce the soul from the sacred mystery; right, too, they who “interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with the soul.” Yet the latter is the higher formula; the narrowing of the Magic Circle to a point is an easier task than the destruction of that circle (and all both within and without) by the inrush of a higher dimension.

Alas! but either way is the Last Step; lucky are most of us if only we can formulate some circle—any circle!

Nor avails it, O man, to transcend the reason by ignoring it. Thou must pass through the fire to Adonai-Melekh, child of earth! Thou canst not slip by on either side. Only when the Destruction of the Babel-Tower of Reason comes as an actual catastrophe of thy career canst thou escape from the ruins. Otherwise, what answer hast thou (O perfect mystic!) to whom the doctor speaks of men “self-hypnotized into cataleptic trances,” to whom the historian denies thy Christ or Mahomet, to whom the ethicist flings his snarls of “anti-social”; whom, indeed, all men, thyselves the foremost, charge with insanity, with ignorance, with error?

Naught but an infinite skepsis saves thee here. Do not defend thy Christ; attack the place of thine opponent; challenge all his premisses, dispute the validity of his most deepest axioms, impugn his sanity, doubt his existence!

On thine own formula he is but a demon dog-faces, or God.

Destroy him, or be he: that is enough; there is no more to say.

Dear children of earth, long have you dwelt in darkness; quit the night and seek the day! Seek not to imitate the language of the wise; 'tis easy. There is no royal road to illumination; that which I say in Light is true to the children of Light; to them of darkness is a confusion and a snare.

Knew ye what agony the nimble acuteness of mine own dialectic was to me, ye would not envy me, O dullards! For I fear ever, lest I be replacing truth of thought by mere expertness of mechanic skill. Then, seeing the thought as fear, I quench it masterly. Whence rise other evil things; the thought “Is this too mere trickery of the mind?” “Is this too cowardice?” and others by the score.

So answering one by one, and one and all, reason breaks down, and either deep sleep loosens all my limbs, and darkness falls upon my soul, or else—

But you know what else, dear children of the Light.

To you, Konx Om Pax—Light in Extension—is your natural home. You have written these essays by my pen; not on you need I bestow them; but—

*To all and every person
in the whole world
who is without the Pale of the Order;
and even to Initiates
who are not in possession of the Password
for the time being;
and to all those who have resigned
demitted,
or been expelled
I dedicate
this Revelation of the Arcana
which are in the
Adytum of God-nourished Silence.*

While, on the other hand:

St. Paul spoke up on the Hill of Mars
To the empty-headed Athenians;
But I would rather talk to the stars
Than to empty-headed Athenians;
It's only too easy to form a cult,
To cry a crusade with "Deus Vult"—
But you won't get much of a good result
From empty-headed Athenians.

The people of London much resemble
Those empty-headed Athenians.
I could very easily make them tremble,
Those empty-headed Athenians.
A pinch of Bible, a gallon of gas,
And I, or any otherguess ass,
Could bring to our mystical moonlight mass
Those empty-headed Athenians.

In fine, I have precious little use
For empty-headed Athenians.
The birds I have snared shall all go loose;
They are empty-headed Athenians.
I thought perhaps I might do some good;
But it's ten to one if I ever should—
And I doubt if I would save, if I could,
Such empty-headed Athenians.

So (with any luck) I shall bid farewell
To the empty-headed Athenians.
For me, they may all of them go to hell,
For empty-headed Athenians.
I hate your idiot jolts and jars,
You monkeys grinning behind your bars—
I'm more at home with the winds and stars
Than with empty-headed Athenians.