

But I know this now : that land is not so far as my flesh is from my bones ! it is even Here and Now.

If there is one cloud in this tranquil azure, it is this thought : that conscious beings exist who are not thus infinitely happy, masters of ecstasy.

So to remove this cloud have I cheerfully dedicated all I have, and all I am.

That I do not overvalue ecstasy is shown by this, that I am not one who denies himself the good things of this world.

There are too many mystics going about like the fox who lost his brush. They cannot enjoy life, and so make believe to have something better.

But I dine at the *Café Royal*, instead of munching nuts and "sirloin of carrots" ; I make expeditions to the great mountains of the Himalayas, and hunt buffalo and tiger in the jungles of the Terai ; I love beauty in painting and sculpture ; I love poetry and music ; and I love flesh and blood.

There is nothing that you enjoy that I do not enjoy as much as you do ; and I bear witness that nothing is worthy to be compared with ecstasy.

What is the path to this immortal land ?

To the Oriental, whose mind is, so to say, static, meditation offers the best path, a path which to us seems (and indeed is) intolerably irksome and tedious. To the Western, whose mind is active and dynamic, there is no road better than ceremonial. For ecstasy is caused by the sudden combination of two ideas, just as hydrogen and oxygen unite explosively.

A similar instance in a higher kingdom will occur to every one.

But this religious ecstasy takes place in the highest centres of the human organism ; it is the soul itself that is united to its God ; and for this reason the rapture is more overpowering, the joy more lasting, and the resultant energy more pure and splendid, than in aught earthly.

In ritual, therefore, we seek continually to unite the mind to some pure idea by an act of will. This we do again and again more and more passionately, with more and more determination, until at last the mind accepts the domination of the Will, and rushes of its own accord toward the desired object. This surrender of the mind to its Lord gives the holy ecstasy which we seek. It is spoken of in all religions, usually under the figure of the bride going forth to meet the bridegroom. It is the attainment of this which makes the saint and the artist.

Now in our ceremonies we endeavour to help everybody