

THE REVIVAL OF MAGICK.

By THE MASTER THERION.

The obvious course for one who wishes to write on Magick is to invoke the God Thoth, for He is Lord both of magick and of writing.

In truth, that is the very apt slip for our leash of silence. The word used by Sir Walter Scott for Magick is "gramarye," and a ritual of magick is a "grimoire," "grimorium," or grammar; all from gramma, a letter. Thoth, scribe of the Gods, was probably just a man called Tahuti—the Egyptian form of the Coptic word Thoth—who invented writing. Fust, one remembers, who invented printing, became Faust, the "black magician." The first great miracle of progress, after the conquest of fire, was this art of writing.

Magick then may be defined for our present purpose as the art of communication without obvious means. Curiously, the new harnessing of that form of fire—I use the word in its old magical sense—called electricity to the shafts of the car of progress was followed by a new art or rather series of arts of communicating without obvious means; the telegraph, the telephone, and now Hertz's discovery (exploited by one Signor Marconi) of wireless telegraphy.

Now no man doubts the existence of a supreme and illimitable power, whether he conceive of it as soulless, unconscious and mechanical, or as spirit, self-conscious, and self-willed. You may think the Sun to be God; some very ignorant and some very illuminated people have done so; but the fact is disputed by none, that the Sun, within the limits of its own system, is, physically speaking, the source of all light, heat, Energy in all its forms, as well as of the earth itself, Being or Matter in all its forms as we know it.

Now if we wish to obtain heat from the Sun, we can go and sit on Palm Beach; or we can dig up solar energy in the form of coal—and so on; in a hundred ways we can make communication with that material source of heat. Very good; magick pretends to be able to do the same thing with the Secret Source of all Being and all Form, all Matter and all Motion.

It claims to be able to draw water from the Fountain of All Things, according to its needs, by certain methods. And though ordinary prayer is a part of Magick, this point is to be considered, that in the purely religious theory, God may or may not think it fit to answer prayer. This then is the great heresy of Magick—or of religion, if you happen to be a Magician! The Magician claims to be able to force a favorable answer. If he tries to make the Elixir of Life, and fails, he has simply failed. He is a bad Magician, just as a chemist is a bad chemist who tries to make Oxygen and fails. The chemist does not excuse himself by saying that it was the Will of God that he should not make Oxygen that day!

The explanation is simple. What the Magician

calls God is merely the divine Emanation in himself. And the reconciliation with orthodox theology follows at once. The Magician is using the formula of Hermes Trismegistus, "That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, for the performance of the miracles of the One Substance." That is to say, in order to perform his miracle he must call forth his own God in the Microcosm. That is united with the God of the Macrocosm by its likeness to it; and the Macrocosmic force then operates in the Universe without as the Magician has made it operate within himself; the miracle happens. Now then it follows that unless the will of the magician be really at one with the Will of the Cosmos, this likeness does not exist, this identification does not take place. Therefore the magician cannot really perform any miracle unless that be already the Design of the Universe. So that he who sets out by saying "I will impose my will on all things" ends "Thy will be done."

It is possible, indeed, to perform magic in other ways by other formulae, but all such efforts are mere temporary aberrations from the path; at the best they are mistakes; persisted in knowingly they become black magic; and in the worst event the sorcerer is cut off by his own act from the Cosmos, and becomes a "Brother of the Left Hand Path." This truth is taught by Wagner in Parsifal. Klingsor was unable to comply with the requirements of the Graal Knights; he could not harmonize Love and Holiness; so he mutilated himself, and was for ever debarred from even a possibility of redemption.

It was because the Church misunderstood this doctrine, and saw in magic but a rival power, that she strove with all the agony of fear to suppress it. Soon only charlatans dared to practice it, because they were known to be harmless. The whole thing fell into contempt.

When I was twenty-two years of age I devoted myself to the attainment of adeptship, or whatever you like to call it. That was indeed the question: what should I call it? (For I am first of all a poet, and expert in the use of words.) I decided to call my life-work *magick*. For this very reason, that it was fallen so utterly into disuse. I cut myself deliberately off from the modern jargon "theosophy," "occultism," and so on, all words with an up-to-date connotation. I would make my own connotation, and impose it on the world. The only chance of confusion was with prestidigitation, and that not being of the same universe of discourse, hurt no more than the homonymity of "box," "game" and a hundred other words. There was something of boyish defiance, too, no doubt, in my choice of the word. However, I labelled myself with it, and I used good gum!

It has been necessary to insist that Magick is done by an identification of the magus with the Supreme in order to show how in practice one goes to work.

There are two branches of this one tree; we may conveniently call them the Catholic and Protestant.

The Protestant method is that of direct prayer.