

THE SOUL OF THE DESERT

By ALEISTER CROWLEY

"I, too, am the Soul of the Desert ; thou shalt seek me yet again in the wilderness of sand."—*Liber LXV. v. 61.*

I THE JOURNEY

THE soul is in its own nature a well, perfect purity, perfect calm, perfect silence ; and as a well springs from the very veins of the earth itself, so is the soul nurtured of the blood of God, the ecstasy of things.

This soul can never be injured, never marred, never defiled. Yet all things added to it do for a time trouble it ; and this is sorrow.

To this language itself bears witness ; for all words which mean unhappy, mean first of all disturbed, disquieted, troubled. The root idea of sorrow is this idea of stirring up.

For many a year man in his quest of happiness has travelled a false road. To quench his thirst he has added salt in ever increasing quantities to the water of life ; to cover the ant heaps of his imagination he has raised mountains wherein wild beasts and deadly prowl. To cure the itch, he has flayed the patient ; to exorcise the ghost, he has evoked the devil.

It is the main problem of philosophy, how this began. The Rishis, seven that sate upon Mount Kailasha and considered, thus answered, that the soul became self-conscious and crying,—"I am That !" became two even in the act of asserting that it was One. This theory may be found not too remote from truth by whoso returns to that tower upon the ramparts of the soul and beholds the city.

But let us leave it to the doctors to discuss the cause of the malady ; for the patient it is enough to know the cure and take it. Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, are not worth the simplicity of Jordan. The prophet has spoken ; it is our concern only to obey : and so sweet and so full of virtue are these waters that the first touch thrills the soul with the sure foretaste of its cure.

Doubt not, brother ! reason indeed may elaborate complexities ; are not these the very symptoms of the disease ? Use but the rude common sense, heritage of simpler and happier forefathers, that they have transmitted to thee by the wand.

The cure of disease is ease ; of disquiet, quiet ; of strife, peace.