

the
magic
of

ALEISTER
CROWLEY

JOHN
SYMONDS



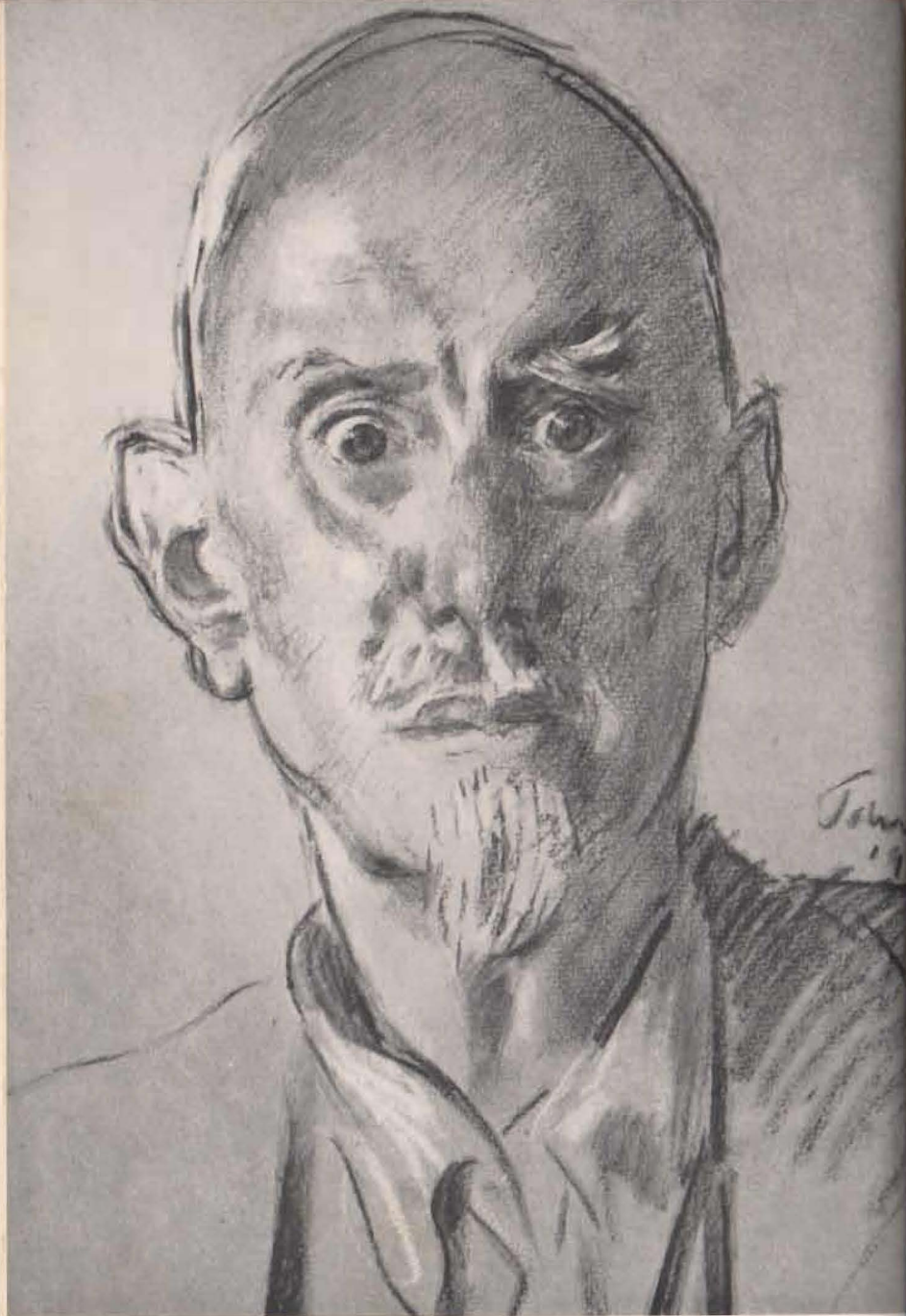
The Magic of
Aleister Crowley

By the same Author:

THE GREAT BEAST: THE LIFE OF
ALEISTER CROWLEY

Novels

WILLIAM WASTE
THE LADY IN THE TOWER
THE BRIGHT BLUE SKY
A GIRL AMONG POETS



ALEISTER CROWLEY
Drawing by Augustus John, 1946

The Magic of Aleister Crowley

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JOHN SYMONDS

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Again,
for Gerald Yorke

*I'm always thinking of what history will say
of me when I'm dead.*

ALEISTER CROWLEY

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The author wishes to thank Mr. Augustus John, O.M., R.A., for permission to reproduce two drawings of Crowley, and Mr. Arnim Mitto-Sampson for information and helpful criticism.

CHAPTER ONE

The Lady of the House

AND I found myself living in an old house in Hampstead.

The stucco was peeling from the walls and the woodwork was in need of a coat of paint, but it was in a better condition than some other houses in the street. The house next door, for example, was almost stifled by creeper, and the top floor, on account of the bad state of the roof, was uninhabitable.

It was an early-Victorian house, detached and double-fronted. A flight of stone steps, covered by the remains of a glass canopy upheld by an iron frame, led to the front door. The rooms on the ground floor, in the manner of the mansions of the eighteenth century, were large and tall. John Claudius Loudon, author of *An Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture*, 1839, would have listed it as a villa.

I occupied the rooms on the first floor. On the floor above lived an old lady and her two sons, one of whom was a poet, the other a musician. The rooms on the ground floor were those of the Lady of the House. (Although she let the two upper floors of her house, the term 'landlady' would be inappropriate.)

Chance, which governs everything, had brought me to this Hampstead villa. The poet provided the link.

I remember getting up from the grass one summer afternoon as a tall, grey-haired woman approached. She was smiling. The poet's brother, who was carrying an oboe, accompanied her.

I was introduced.

Tea was served in the garden. A little woman, with a sad, gentle face, helped to bring out the tea-things. She was the poet's (and the musician's) mother.

With an audience of four, the Lady of the House held forth on a number of subjects.

It was clear that she'd read all the latest books, and sub-

scribed to the most progressive views. She took a special interest in writers and poets.

I was happy to tell her that I worked on the staff of a literary magazine, and had written several short stories.

After tea, and as I was departing, I said to the poet, 'It seems to me you've an empty flat in the house.' I pointed to a line of curtainless windows.

'Yes,' he replied quietly. (He invariably spoke quietly, sometimes in a whisper.)

'Well, you might ask the Lady of the House if I may have it.'

Two days later I was asked to call and discuss the matter with her. I had, it seemed, aroused her sympathy.

We sat in her sitting-room, drank dandelion coffee, and talked about literature. The flat upstairs was not mentioned, not, at least, until the subject of English literature was exhausted and the dandelion coffee drunk.

After I had moved into this crumbling but pleasant villa, I found myself frequenting the salon of the Lady of the House, listening to her views on literature and politics, and looking at the musician who was usually by her side.

I gathered that her literary life—she had written a play—had commenced after she had met Victor Neuburg, a poet who had achieved the difficult feat of running a column of serious poetry in a national Sunday newspaper.

I looked for Neuburg's poems, and found a slim volume entitled *The Triumph of Pan*. But the Arcadian god, who was at birth so ugly that his mother fled from him, had not, I felt, noticeably inspired the poet.

Neuburg was now dead; he had died in this house not long before I had moved in. My friend, the poet, spoke appreciatively of him: he had, it seemed, been very kind and helpful to many young poets.

He had had another interest too: magic. This explained the title of his poems, and the presence of Eliphas Lévi's *History of Magic*, and of John Dee's *Diary* in the bookcase in the salon of the Lady of the House.

I asked the poet, 'Had Victor Neuburg practised any magic?' 'I gather so,' he replied.

In my view, Neuburg was not a great poet, but doubtless (I thought) the London County Council would insert a purple plaque in the outside wall of this house, above the doorway: *Victor Neuburg, poet and magician, lived here.**

I had invited Mr Clifford Bax to lunch. We had not yet met. Over the telephone, I asked him how we should recognise each other. 'I look like Shakespeare,' he replied.

My first glimpse of him, as he entered the foyer of the Café Royal, confirmed this: he did look like Shakespeare of the First Folio. I was only surprised to find Shakespeare so tall.

Sensing in me an interest in out-of-the-way things, Mr Bax suggested I should meet Aleister Crowley.

'I will have him sent to London for you,' he said.

I begged Mr Bax not to go to the trouble of packing Crowley up for me.

He told me that Crowley was old and ill and would die soon.

His account of Crowley, like his accounts of other people he knew or had known, was full of interest.

'You should write your autobiography,' I suggested earnestly.

A distant look came into his blue eyes.

'I have, *twice*,' he replied to my dismay.

'I had lunch today with Clifford Bax,' I said casually to the Lady of the House. I would always tell her of my meetings with literary personalities.

'Oh, did you?' she replied, her face lighting up. 'And how is he, these days?'

'He seemed very fit to me.'

'What is he writing at the moment?'

'Another play, I think.' Actually, I hadn't asked him what he was writing, but I knew that he wrote plays.

'Is he going to write for you?'

* There is a lively account of Victor Neuburg in Arthur Calder-Marshall's *The Magic of my Youth*.

'I hope so. It's a question of finding a suitable subject.'

'Did you talk about anything interesting?'

'He told me all about Aleister Crowley—the black magician—and advised me to get in touch with him.'

To my surprise, her smile immediately vanished.

'I shouldn't do that if I were you,' she said.

'No? Is there anything wrong with him?'

Silence. There was a thoughtful expression on her face.

'He put a spell on Victor, and it took me ten years of prayer to exorcise it,' she said.

I did not try to get in touch with Crowley at once, and very shortly afterwards I left this Victorian villa: the Lady of the House and I had quarrelled.

Since then the house has been pulled down, along with the other crumbling houses in the street, to make way for a block of council flats.

CHAPTER TWO

The Mage

THE Atlantis bookshop in Museum Street was, and probably still is, a place where occultists sometimes meet. I have a faint recollection of catching a glimpse of Crowley there during the 'thirties, but this may be an illusion. Perhaps it was another practitioner of the art whom I saw in the dim light at the back of the shop which was then in Bury Street. Crowley would visit the Atlantis bookshop in the 'thirties, and was known, of course, to the proprietor. It was he, and not Mr Bax, who gave me Crowley's address.

After carefully thinking how I should approach the magician who had put a spell upon Victor Neuburg, and probably on a lot of other people as well, I decided to send him a telegram. I invited him to write an article on magic for the magazine of which I was the literary editor, and I suggested that I should come down to see him to discuss the matter.

Crowley wired back, inviting me to lunch.

Wishing to share the experience of seeing Crowley with someone who, like myself, hadn't yet had that pleasure, I rang up Rupert Gleadow—the author of a really lucid book on magic.

Gleadow had also written an equally lucid book on astrology, and for several months he had taught me this royal science.

'He'll die soon, and then you'd have lost your chance,' I said, repeating Mr Bax's advice to me.

'Where and when shall I meet you?' Gleadow replied.

The following morning we met at Victoria Station, and in bright sunshine boarded a train for Hastings.

On the outward journey we did not discuss the object of our trip. Neither of us knew more about Crowley than what we had read in the newspapers, and that was too sensational to believe, and too discursive to remember. Gleadow had dipped

into Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice*, which he called 'a city within a city' because it cannot be understood without a detailed knowledge of Crowley's life and recourse to unpublished references.

I was reminded of Havelock Ellis's and Arthur Symons's visit to Paul Verlaine. We also were off to meet a poet, and a mage who believed he was Eliphas Lévi reincarnated. I had not had the chance to call on Eliphas Lévi, for he had died in 1875, but I was going to be just in time for Crowley. Of his supposed ability to turn people into animals (I had heard meanwhile that he had turned Victor Neuburg into a camel) I was sceptical.

When we arrived at Hastings, scene of the famous battle which started the new regime and advertised by the Corporation with a poster of Norman knights, we entered a taxi-cab to go to that outlying part of the town, on the crest of a hill, called the Ridge.

'Netherwood,' where Crowley was staying, had an encouraging prospect from a country lane: a short drive through wooded grounds led to the front door of a sprawling, ivy-covered house, once the country residence of a member of the booming Victorian middle-class, now a boarding-house with a short summer season. Crowley was the only permanent guest. It was not an unsuitable place, on account of its seclusion, for a mage in retirement.

Crowley did not answer the door to us; he might have done so had he been downstairs, but he was upstairs, reclining on the bed. It is, I thought, usually like that; by the time the great man becomes universally known, so that journalists, poets and collectors of eccentrics want to meet him, he is so decrepit that he can hardly come downstairs. Crowley's walk on the stairs certainly sounded rather feeble and slow which, for a man who had climbed half-way up K2 and Kangchenjunga, was rather sad, I thought. Gleadow stood near the open door of the reception-room, and I, with my right shoulder half averted, stood farther back. I waited with wary curiosity for his entrance.

At first glance I was disappointed: an old man in a plus-four suit with a goatee beard and white tufts of hair on either side of his otherwise bald head had entered the room and looked at us with a pained expression in his staring eyes. (His eyes did not simply stare; they were open unusually wide as if he were prepared to hypnotise us.)

'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law,' he said in a rather querulous and nasal voice.

'How do you do?' I said, stepping forward and announcing myself. I then turned to Gleadow and introduced him.

Crowley had heard of Gleadow as an astrologer; he mentioned the name of a common acquaintance. Then, to my surprise, he shook his head and said, like the most rational of persons, that he thought there was 'less than one per cent of truth in astrology.'

I thought this a rather tactless remark to an astrologer who had come, as it were, to pay him homage.

As we moved towards some comfortable arm-chairs, Gleadow replied that he thought there was more truth in astrology than that.

While Crowley and Gleadow were talking about astrology, I observed Crowley closely. On his tie was pinned a large gold brooch of the ibis-headed god of wisdom, Thoth. And on the third finger of his right hand was a large gold ring engraved with hieroglyphics. He had long and upward-turning eyebrows.

I drew attention to the ring, and, to Crowley's pleasure (for he smiled), Gleadow immediately translated it:

Ankh-f-n-Khonsu. 'His life is in Khonsu [the moon god of Thebes].' I couldn't see the point of it, but Gleadow apparently thought it all in good order. Afterwards I learnt that Ankh-f-n-Khonsu was the name of a high priest of ancient Egypt, and that Crowley believed that he had once been this priest: it was his first incarnation or avatar during the 26th dynasty.

I began to feel there was something a little strange about Crowley. It was difficult to say what, exactly, it was. Apart from the ring and the brooch, and his peculiar sweetish smell, he might be considered, I thought, an ordinary old man; and

yet there was a quality of remoteness about him which removed him from this class and placed him in a class of his own. I can best describe this quality by saying that it suggested that he cared very little for the usual occupations and considerations of mankind. He had, noticeably, one common failing: he was ambitious, and did not want to depart hence without leaving as great a mark upon the earth as possible.

I should say here in parenthesis that the sweet odour of Aleister Crowley was due to the holy consecrating oil of Abraelin, the oil which is said to have run down Aaron's beard.

He had written many works, and in order to overcome the difficulty of finding a publisher (for Crowley's books were hardly read by the public in general), he had published them himself; that is to say, he had paid a printer to print them and a binder to bind them, and was left with the task of marketing them. At that moment a Hastings printer was struggling with the post-war difficulties of producing a selection of his poetry, entitled *Olla*.*

We began to talk about magic, a subject which went to the heart of the matter.

'It's a pity magic's fallen into disuse these days,' I said.

Crowley agreed that it was not practised now as extensively as it used to be. 'But,' he said, 'I'm always hearing of its effective working.'

He turned and fixed me with a stare. 'Especially black magic by adepts of the left-hand path.' He then mentioned the name of a man who lived in north-west London between Swiss Cottage and Chalk Farm. 'He fell out with an associate—they quarrelled, I think, over a woman.' For a moment or two Crowley stared grimly at the faded carpet. 'Well,' he said in his slow but emphatic voice, 'he raised a malignant current and his friend's house caught on fire and was burnt down.'

'Extraordinary,' I murmured.

'Such things happen—more often perhaps than you'd think.'

He invited us to lunch, explained that he couldn't join us,

* From the Spanish, meaning a pot or stew, a hotchpotch.

for he always ate in his room, but he would see us afterwards. I wondered what concoctions he was going to consume privately; later I discovered that they were nothing stranger than an injection of heroin and a boiled egg.

Lunch for Gleadow and me was served in the adjoining dining-room. Pinned on the wall were the 'House Rules' of the establishment:

Guests are requested not to tease the Ghosts.

Breakfast will be served at 9 a.m. to survivors of the Night.

The Hastings Borough Cemetery is five minutes' walk away (ten minutes if carrying body), but is only one minute away as the Ghost flies.

Guests are requested not to cut down bodies from trees.

The Office has a certain amount of used clothing for sale, the property of guests who have no longer any use for earthly raiment.

These sentiments did not seem to me quite in Crowley's style; they were presumably the efforts of the proprietor, a man with a beard and a sense of humour, but I imagined that Crowley had inspired them.

After lunch we went for a walk in the garden, and from time to time I looked up at a bay window surrounded by ivy behind which I supposed our warlock was having a nap.

He soon reappeared with a bottle of brandy and some glasses; as he poured out the brandy, he said that it had cost him ten pounds in the black market. Then he produced a cigar-case and offered us Coronas. I was glad to think that, although he wasn't living in opulence, he had the means to supply himself with a few basic luxuries.

We began talking about the end of the world, a subject which seemed to exercise an extraordinary fascination on him. His expression grew thoughtful, and he said in a low tone of voice, 'History enlightens us. The ancient Hebrews believed that the end of the world would come after seven thousand years from the creation.' He paused and sipped his brandy; we waited for him to continue. 'Next, we have the Gospel

prophecies: Christ was to return within the lifetime of one or more of his disciples and reign on earth for a thousand years.' Another sip of brandy. This, obviously, was a subject he had at his finger-tips. 'The death of the last Apostle, St John of Patmos, threw matters into some confusion.' When he spoke again it was with irony. 'The next thing that comes to my mind is the belief that the end of the world would arrive in one thousand years A.D., and this belief was so widely spread as to affect the course of secular history. When this prediction failed, there was again confusion.'

He continued in this vein for some while, mentioning several false prophets, such as Joanna Southcott, Piazzzi Smith who based his calculations on the great pyramid, Anna Kingsford and a cockney called Noribun; also the famous Nostradamus, a prophet who has not yet been proved false. Crowley mentioned James Laver's recently published book on Nostradamus.

'Nostradamus,' said Crowley, 'computed that the end of the world would arrive in 1999.'

He was not impressed by this prediction. 'As a matter of fact,' he said, coming at last to the point, 'the world was destroyed by fire on March the 20th, 1904.'

'Well, we're still here,' I remarked cheerfully.

'That is according to the Initiated Doctrine,' continued Crowley.

I asked him if there was any literature on the subject of the 'Initiated Doctrine.'

He replied that there was, and before we left he gave each of us a pamphlet in a stiff blue cover entitled *The Book of the Law*. 'Issued by the CHURCH OF THELEMA' was printed on the title-page.

I promised Crowley to come to see him again and to read the proofs, when they were available, of his forthcoming book of poems.

'Do you play chess?' he asked me as he saw us to the door.

'No, I don't,' I replied, and unthinkingly added, 'but I know how to.'

Crowley, who was capable of giving a good game to a professional chess player, replied dryly, 'I wish I did; I've been trying to learn for the last sixty years.'

In the train coming back to London I began reading *The Book of the Law*. Gleadow, sitting opposite me, did the same.

Apparently, Crowley was the founder of a new religion for mankind. Needless to say, it was a better religion than Christianity, or at least an improvement on it for some time to come. 'This Book was dictated in Cairo between noon and 1 p.m. on three successive days, April 8th, 9th and 10th in the year 1904.' I connected these events with the destruction of the world by fire during the previous month; they obviously explained it, if the world's destruction was considered in a symbolic sense.

'"This Book explains the Universe,"' I read out aloud to Gleadow who, engrossed in his own copy of *The Book of the Law*, ignored me.

It seemed that the Initiated Doctrine was based upon *The Book of the Law* which, according to the brief introduction, was dictated (presumably to Crowley) by someone called Aiwass. Aiwass was described as 'the minister of Hoor-Paar-Kraat.' Apparently he was not a human being, for his knowledge and wisdom were superhuman.

'This Book lays down a simple Code of Conduct. "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."'

I read this passage out to Gleadow, and observed that this was just a crib from Rabelais. I then saw the point of the so-called Church of Thelema, for Rabelais's abbey, in which only fair women were to be admitted, every kind of luxurious furniture and apparel supplied, and the only rule of conduct, DO WHAT THOU WILT, was built in the country of Theleme by the river Loire.

Crowley, page 9: 'There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.'

'Do you think he's any good as a magician?' I asked Gleadow.

'He doesn't know as much about astrology as he pretends to know,' replied Gleadow, 'and therefore I suspect he doesn't know as much about magic as he would like us to think; and furthermore, he spoke at one time like a rather disappointed man in that connection, as if he'd only brought off a little of what he'd tried.'

'Yes,' I said, 'he talked in a rather envious way of that magician who evoked a demon to set his enemy's house on fire—that chap in Hampstead.'

I glanced again into *The Book of the Law* and read, 'I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky. To me! To me!'

Then I read aloud, and with a note of derision, '"The Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs!"' That explains it, I guess.'

'He's using,' observed Gleadow, 'an outmoded system of transliteration, that of forty years ago. The *Khu*, for instance, is now rendered as *Ank*—the spirit or higher body.'

'So it's not just jibber-jabber?'

'Well,' replied Gleadow cautiously, 'perhaps not entirely.'

The train drew into Victoria Station; our visit to the Mage was over.

CHAPTER THREE

Crapulous Creeds

I WROTE to Crowley and told him that I couldn't make head or tail of his *Book of the Law*. I had read it through several times. It was incredible to me that someone should try to found a religion upon it.

'I am not, of course, in a position to judge, but I do think you should supply a little more exegesis, if only to encourage the would-be disciple; or do you expect one to follow you solely as an act of faith?'

However, I didn't want him to think that I was unsympathetic—not, at least, to him as a warlock and a phantasm—so in the same letter I offered to help him. A man who is founding a new religion is in need of help.

A few days later I received a large and magnificent-looking book, bound in buckram, with the title, *The Equinox of the Gods*, stamped in gold. It was by Crowley (although it did not say so, only the signature 'Baphomet' was printed opposite the page of contents) and, of course, all about Crowley. At the back, in a folder, were sixty-five sheets of quarto paper, facsimile reproductions of the verses of *The Book of the Law* as originally written in Crowley's hand.

'If you want proof,' wrote Crowley, 'here it is. This book contains a direct revelation of the new Aeon on which mankind is entering. Within the memory of man we have had the Pagan period, the worship of Nature, of Isis, of the Past; and the Christian period, the worship of Man, of Osiris, of the Present. During the first period, the material ignores the spiritual; during the second, the spiritual tries to ignore the material; and it is this which explains the glorification of death and suffering which are characteristic of Christianity and all cognate religions.

'The new Aeon is the worship of the spiritual made one with

the material, of Horus, of the child, of the future. I am aware that one's first reaction to all this is to reach for the waste-paper basket. . . .'

The Equinox of the Gods seemed to me to be a *de luxe* edition of *The Book of the Law* which Crowley had given Gleadow and me in Hastings.

Crowley's division of the history of mankind into three periods, of the last of which he was the prophet, seemed to me to be arbitrary. I could agree that the first period, the pagan period, was one characterised by the worship of nature: the woods and mountains, streams and fields were alive with gods and goddesses, i.e. the projected images of man's own mind. I could also agree that the second, and present, period, Christianity—which Crowley inexplicably identified with the Egyptian god Osiris—was the worship of the spiritual, of man (i.e. Christ), and that Christianity had ignored the material. It had done more than that; it had repressed the material, for by the material Crowley meant, first and foremost, the unrestrained sexuality of Roman times, of which St Augustine writes with abhorrence. But why, I asked myself, identify the next, and future, period with Horus, the child of Isis and Osiris? Did Crowley subscribe to the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence? Was the new Aeon really only an old aeon? The pulsating versicles of *The Book of the Law* seemed to confirm this. 'Bahlasti! Ompedha! I spit on your crapulous creeds.'

The Equinox of the Gods contained an account, in the third person, of Aleister Crowley's birth, education, marriage and pastimes; it was all written in the brief style of *Who's Who*. It also contained some bald details of Crowley's sex life, which the reader in the future age of Horus, the Child, would presumably want to know; and an account of the Great Revelation in Cairo in 1904 when this same man Crowley was commanded by a spirit called Aiwass to take down the word of the Aeon.

It was not surprising that the old gentleman I knew at Hastings had sent me this book. Aleister Crowley was a legendary figure; *The Equinox of the Gods* was the proof of that.

I hadn't said anything to Crowley about the article on magic I'd invited him to write for the magazine of which I was the literary editor. After reading *The Book of the Law*, I could see that, for one thing, his style wasn't detached enough. Now I preferred Crowley to think of me as a pupil, not as an editor. But Crowley thought of me as both; he wanted pupils and editors. I forgot about the matter. Suddenly, out of the Hastings blue, I received a short but amusing story entitled, 'How to Tell an Englishman from an American.' To my surprise I found it was something we could use, and a few days later I happily wrote to tell him so.

I went down to Hastings again, this time alone, and was entertained to brandy and cigars in Crowley's bedroom.

The chimney-piece was lined with books, the walls with paintings which had obviously been inspired by the devil. One was a portrait of a bald-headed man with hypnotic eyes; he looked rather intent and grim. Suspended round his neck was a medallion on which was written TO MEGA THERION 666.* And in block capitals at the top were the words DO WHAT THOU WILT. According to *Revelation*, this was the number of the Beast. It was therefore a self-portrait of the old gentleman in the brown tweed plus-four suit who was at that moment reclining on the bed.

Another picture was of a totem pole; the main figure had horns and a mouthful of ugly teeth; at the base was a startling and startled minor deity (disciple?).

Other faces grimaced and grinned from behind the pole. The room was alive with demons.

I wanted to ask several questions about Crowleyism, but I felt that it would be tactless to do so. The atmosphere was sympathetic; it would be a pity to spoil it by naïve remarks, or observations of a purely rational nature. It was not for me to question the principles of the new religion, or the divine origin of Aleister Crowley; that was all settled and fixed. I could only help spread the word.

Soon we were talking about a Thelemic community or

* THE GREAT BEAST 666.

centre. I gathered that, in the past, Crowley had founded a magical Order called the A.:A.:, and a rather successful community of Thelemites at Cefalu in Sicily. He now wanted to start one in England. He had, of course, carefully worked out the principles upon which it would be based. A house would have to be found, preferably in the south of England; later, when things had settled down, and Europe had recovered from the war, the community could be transferred abroad to some warmer clime.

'What do you think of Cornwall?' he asked.

'I think Cornwall is ideal,' I replied. 'There is already a colony of artists there.'

'A bit too far from London,' he said.

Silence. The room was growing dark. TO MEGA THERION 666 eyed me suspiciously from the wall.

'You will be the head of it, of course,' I said.

'I shall retire into the background,' he replied. 'But a few high-grade brethren, sworn to secrecy, will know of my identity.'

'You envisage a community of some size, then?'

'People will flock to it: it will be their only refuge. We must interest leaders of industry and finance—steel manufacturers, bankers, stockbrokers. They can plainly see that capitalism is at the end of its tether.'

'Don't you think,' I said as tactfully as I could, 'that you are a little optimistic? People are afraid of you. After all, you have proclaimed yourself as the Beast 666.' I looked at TO MEGA THERION.

'Yes, that's quite true,' replied Crowley. 'Many people have been mystified by the glamour cast around me as a black magician, and have thus been led to follow false paths. I will get out a manifesto which should clear up the position. The manifesto will also declare the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to the appearance of an individual prepared to meet the existing situation. The law of Thelema is the necessary solution to the present crisis.'

'The law of Do what thou wilt?'

'Yes,' he replied, giving me a surprised stare. 'As I was saying, the law of Thelema is the alternative to fascism and communism.'

'How about democracy?'

A look of abhorrence passed over Crowley's face.

'Democracy is disillusioned and effete,' he said. 'It's the political ideal of Christianity in its dying phase.'

During the course of the discussion, I said that I thought that this very house, Netherwood, with its coloured prints in the lounge of fox-hunting men in red coats jumping over hedges and being flung into ditches, would make an excellent centre, and would save him the bother of moving. Could he persuade the proprietor to sell it? Crowley said he would discuss it with him when he next saw him; he had several other things he wanted to discuss with him.

The part I was to play in the new community was never finally decided; but as Crowley thought that my nature was more practical than magical, he suggested that I should be the assistant to the Grand Treasurer of the Order. Who the Grand Treasurer was, I did not know.

CHAPTER FOUR

Magic, Sacred and Profane

IN Miss Waterhouse's bookshop at Swiss Cottage, I found two large volumes entitled *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*, published by the Mandrake Press, 1930.

Printed on the buckram cover is a line drawing of a man with a cranium unusually large; his eyes are in a hypnotic stare and Orientalised to make them appear more fearsome. This was, if anything, less like Crowley than the self-portrait in his room in Hastings; only the little rosebud mouth and the upward turn of the eyebrows were true to nature.

On the spine of these two embarrassing books is Crowley's sigil—the phallus superimposed upon a seven-pointed star, beneath which is the number 666, the whole contained within a circle. One could, I suppose, call this the mark of the Beast. It was, anyhow, Crowley's conception of such a mark: a combination of the organ of lust and the symbols of magic. I was already familiar with it, for it was printed on his personal notepaper.

The full title of this work is:

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

An Autohagiography

Subsequently re-Antichristened

THE CONFESSIONS OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

There is, needless to say, no such word as autohagiography. On the analogy of biography, this was simply the life of a saint written by himself. I took the two volumes home.

It began, at any rate, as a plain hagiography, for the prelude and the first three chapters, which are called stanzas, are written in the third and not the first person; it does not break into the first person until Crowley comes to the events which followed

MAGIC, SACRED AND PROFANE

the death of his father. He gives this reason for switching over in this way: until his father died he felt his life to be strangely impersonal. He was not, as it were, himself; he was certainly not the Aleister Crowley the world knows.

He was eleven years of age, and at a boarding-school for the sons of Plymouth Brethren in Cambridge, when he was told that his father had died of cancer.

On that day Aleister Crowley was born.

He had been pious and obedient, a good little Plymouth Brother in fact; now he became blasphemous and intractable. He does not attempt to explain why.

He was, then, conscious of two aspects in himself, one good, the other bad; the good, or conventional, aspect is felt to be strangely impersonal; the bad, or demoniac, aspect is the aspect with which he identifies his true self; it is, to use a psychological term, the unconscious aspect. Thus he identifies his true self with that aspect which is the less true, the most impersonal, for it lacks individuality or ego.

A dream had foretold him of his father's death. (In his *Autohagiography*, which was written while he was in his Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu, Sicily, between 1920 and 1923*, he tells us that he remembered that the quality of the dream was entirely different from anything that he had known before, but what that quality was, he does not say.) The next morning the news reached the school.

He was also foretold of his mother's death.

The year was 1917 and he was in America.

'May 6. Had news of my mother's death. Two nights before news had a dream that she was dead, with a feeling of extreme distress. The same happened two nights before I had news of my father's death. I had often dreamed that my mother had died, but never with that helpless, lonely feeling.'

So the quality of the dream he had at the death of his father was one of extreme distress, of loneliness, of feeling abandoned.

* And in Tunis after his expulsion from Italian soil in May 1923. As his Scarlet Woman, who went with him, was a competent amanuensis, large portions of 'The Hag,' as he called it, were also dictated.

As a child, he had experienced such feelings when he suddenly found himself alone in the house and thought that the Lord, whose Second Coming was expected at any moment, had collected his parents but left him behind.

Crowley writes about his childhood in an eager way, but the picture that emerges is a rather unsympathetic one. Edmund Gosse in *Father and Son* has made us familiar with the home atmosphere of Victorian Plymouth Brethren—continual prayers and, to modern eyes, cant about the Lord. Crowley describes a similar picture, mentions *Father and Son*, and tells us that Edward Crowley knew Philip Gosse, Edmund Gosse's father, and thought that he was likely to be damned for latitudinarianism!

Crowley describes his mother in his *Autobiography* as 'a brainless bigot of the most narrow, logical and inhuman type,' and says that she revolted him physically. In the light of his wide sexual tastes, and lack of finesse, this is surprising and points to an undercurrent of incest-wish and taboo.

He was tolerant towards his father, but for his uncle, who took over at his father's death, he felt only a violent hatred.

But Crowley's childhood was not entirely dreary; there was an earlier period when papa and mama Crowley, their little boy Alick*, and the servants all sat round the dining-room table and read the Bible. From the age of four, the mysteries of religion were unfolded to him, and he heard the solemn utterances of the Prophets. He was interested, he says, in the sound of names like Enoch, Arphaxad, Mahaleel, and he was moved by the colourful characters of the Dragon, the Scarlet Woman and the False Prophet. During these early years he was one with his parents and with Plymouthism, a creed which had been founded in the forties of the last century by John Nelson Darby. His father was even his friend and his hero but, he confesses, there was no real conscious intimacy or understanding.

After Edward Crowley's death, he took his apostasy

* His baptismal name was Alexander, not Aleister which he chose for himself when he was up at Cambridge.

seriously. He confesses rather naïvely that to the day of writing his *Autobiography*, he never knew why he had gone over to Satan's side; indeed, the old gentleman I knew at Hastings, hadn't a clue as to why he should be regarded as the Wickedest Man in the World, the title a popular paper had given him.

These two volumes of Crowley's life cover only his first twenty-eight years, and stop short before the dictation of *The Book of the Law* in 1904. I had, however, read about that great event in *The Equinox of the Gods*.

Crowley's autobiography has a weird appeal. His personality sprawls over the page. The frontispiece is a photograph of a big fat man who looks like a worried stockbroker. 'This Aleister Crowley was not a man, or even a number of men; he is obviously a Solar Myth.' In reading about him, I was left with the kind of embarrassment which is sometimes provided by one's dreams. It seemed to me that he expressed what others repressed; but he had not lived out, as he thought, the soul of man in ancient Greece or ancient Egypt, but only of man in late Victorian times, especially with reference to his repressed sexuality. And his magic was also part of those times.

In England during the 1880s, the Cabbalist and occultist, MacGregor Mathers, and two other Victorian gentlemen of austere life, founded the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. During its brief existence, the Golden Dawn had several lodges and about a hundred members. The poet, William Butler Yeats, the actress, Florence Farr, the writer on magic, Arthur Edward Waite, and the novelist, Arthur Machen—to name the most prominent—were all members. Crowley too. The Golden Dawn started him on his magical career after he had left Trinity College, Cambridge, without sitting for a degree. Its teachings and aims provide some of the main clues to his life and work.

When I next saw Crowley he was wearing a scarlet double-breasted blazer with silver buttons. He looked startling. I asked him about the remaining volumes of his *Autobiography*.

He told me that the third volume was on the point of being printed, when the Mandrake Press went bankrupt.

'What happened to the proofs?' I inquired.

'I don't know,' replied Crowley. 'I had two sets. One I corrected and returned, the other I destroyed; I saw no point in keeping it when the book was due to appear shortly.'

I asked him if he had thought of looking for a set in the ruins of the Mandrake Press.

'They hadn't a set; it was, if anywhere, with the printer.'

The account of the disappearance of the typescript and proofs of the third volume of the *Autobiography* was all too vague.

'What was the third volume about?'

'Mainly *The Book of the Law*, and the expedition to Kangchenjunga.'

He explained that he was the leader of this climb in the Himalayas which had ended with the loss of five lives.

'But you've told the story of *The Book of the Law* in *The Equinox of the Gods*.'

'Yes, that's right,' said Crowley, as if this point had not occurred to him before.

We began talking about *The Book of the Law*.

Said Crowley: 'Aiwass communicated *The Book of the Law* to me.'

In *The Equinox of the Gods* I had read how Crowley was ordered, presumably by his wife Rose who was in a trance-like condition, to enter the temple in their Cairo flat and write down what he heard: he did so, and a voice from the corner of the room began to dictate *The Book of the Law*, the bible of Crowleyism. This voice Crowley identified with Aiwass, a superior intelligence similar to Madame Blavatsky's Koot Hoomi, the Mahatma or Master who guided her.

I was interested to hear Crowley's explanation of this unusual event.

'People trained in the magical arts,' he said, 'are more likely to receive such communications than people not so trained.'

I expressed the hope that the lost volume of the *Autobiography* would turn up.

He then told me that he had typescripts of the following volumes.

I urged him to have several copies made of them, and to give me a set, for, I said, I should like to write his biography.

It was Hugh Kingsmill who suggested to me that I should be Crowley's biographer.

We were walking from Camden Town to Primrose Hill.

'A life of Crowley should sell well,' said Kingsmill enthusiastically. 'One would have to wait till he's dead, though.'

'That won't be long.'

'Is anyone going to do it?'

'I don't think so.'

'Why don't you?'

I was accompanying Kingsmill to Margaret's flat. Margaret was typing a book for him.

Crowley seemed indifferent to my suggestion. I can think of one reason for this: he thought I wasn't serious. However, a month or two later, the post brought a large and carefully packed parcel from Hastings. Inside were four bound typescripts, Crowley's *Autobiography* from 1906 to 1923; the Beast had taken my advice.

Each of the four volumes was entitled *The Sacred Magick of Abra-Melin the Mage*, an elegant but hardly adequate title. Crowley had taught himself how to acquire the Knowledge and Conversation of his Holy Guardian Angel by Abra-Melin's magic. Did he imagine he was Abra-Melin? I wrote and pointed out the contradiction. He replied:

Dear J.S.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

Many thanks for yours of May 12. You are quite right in assuming that they are the three final volumes of the *Hag*. It was a typist's error to entitle the volumes differently. I seem on second thoughts to have answered this letter. . .

You were a little light-hearted in asking me to make sure of those volumes of the *Hag* not being lost to the world. It cost as near forty pounds as makes no difference.

I am sending you a spare copy of the typescript of *The Book of*

Wisdom or Folly. All the people who have read it go crazy about it, several times they have put up £10 to have it retyped. I think William Rider ought to publish it if you explain that it is for advanced students and that many who have read the typescript consider it the best thing I have done in the magical line.

By the way, it is not very just to blame me for the loss of volume 3—it was the fault of *** who allowed the best part of 2 thousand pounds which he had put up for the Mandrake Press to be stolen under his nose by the late Major T—. Of course when I had 2 copies of the press proofs, I thought I was perfectly safe, and I do not know to this hour how they disappeared, who took them and when. It is absolutely heart-breaking; but in this case I can get most of it reconstructed, but the spirit has so far gone out of me that I cannot command the energy to do it. The necessary manœuvres must be done for me.

Love is the law, love under will,

Yours,
Aleister

These bulky typescripts should have been called *The Sacred Magick of Brother Perdurabo* or *of Brother O.S.V.*, the initials of the name or motto (of his Adeptus Major grade) which he had used during a lengthy magical operation in Paris in 1914. There was a brief and guarded account of it, called *The Paris Working*, in the second volume of the typescript. (See page 93.)

CHAPTER FIVE

The Green Lion

CROWLEY wrote to say that the galley proofs of *Olla* had arrived, and could I possibly come down to help him read them. Crowley wasn't a good proof-reader. The picture of the Egyptian stele in *The Equinox of the Gods*, for example, is described in block capitals as THE STELE OF REVELLING instead of, as the errata slip tells us, THE STELE OF REVEALING, an annoying mistake because the work has a lot of revelling in it.

Sing the rapturous love-song unto me!
Burn to me perfumes! Wear to me jewels!
Drink to me, for I love you! I love you!

I sat proof-reading in the dining-room at Netherwood, while the Mage slept upstairs.

Some of Crowley's verse has a mystical ring about it—three of his poems are included in *The Oxford Book of Mystical Verse*—but to my disappointment I found that most of the poems in *Olla*, which were selected from his earliest efforts composed at the age of ten, to his latest at the age of seventy, were either doggerel or puerile. The one entitled 'Panacea,' for example, is not a poem, but a rather feeble joke, for it only repeats, beneath this title and the statement that it is offered as an international anthem to Anglo-Saxondom, the word 'money' forty-two times.

'La Gitana,' which Crowley wrote on the way to Granada, is at least full of zest.

Did you feel
Through the silence and the softness all the tension of the steel?
For your hair was full of roses, and my flesh was full of thorns,
And the midnight came upon us worth a million crazy morns.

Ah! my Gipsy, my Gitana, my Saliya! were you fain
For the dance to turn to earnest? . . .

I shall find you, my Gitana, my Saliya! as of old
With your hair aflame with roses and your body gay with gold.
I shall find you, I shall have you, in the summer and the South
With our passion in your body and our love upon your mouth—
With our wonder and our worship be the world aflame anew!
My Gitana, my Saliya! I am coming back to you!

I was still thinking of the new community, and wondering what part, if any, I could play in it. As far as I could see, it was not going to be, at least to begin with, a very crowded community. There was Aleister Crowley, and there was myself, and there was a titled lady whom Crowley had told me to get in touch with. She was also interested.

But was there, I asked myself, any need to build a temple to the new religion? It was already there in the person of Aleister Crowley who fulfilled some impossible yearning of the heart. He was not like other men. He was, in fact, most unlike other men, and yet, in some hidden way, he was like all other men. This, no doubt, was the reason for his fascination. As long as he was alive, there was surely no need to build a temple to Pan.

We discussed the problem of the distribution of *Olla*. Crowley suggested that I should take the galleys to Messrs Simpkin, Marshall, book distributors, and ask them if they would handle it. They had, he said, handled his books in the past. One of the directors of the firm was a friend of his. I should get in touch with him.

Then there was *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, a philosophical work. It would be printed by the same Hastings printer as soon as *Olla* was off the stocks.

I congratulated him on his fecundity.

He got up and went, in his shaky manner, to the chest of drawers: from the top of it he took a sheaf of typescripts. 'Here is a work,' he said, handing it to me, 'for which you may know a publisher. I can't at present do it myself.'

It was entitled *Magick Without Tears*, and was in the form of letters, beginning 'Dear Sister.'

I read the first few paragraphs, which were written in a lucid enough style. I thought of Poetry London. It was the sort of book which they might do. After all, any difficult subject which could be read without tears, even magic or *magick*—Crowley's brand—was well worth publishing.

I tried to read *Magick Without Tears* on the train going home. My vision of Tambimuttu publishing it in his Poetry London series vanished. Like *Magick in Theory and Practice*, it was a city within a city. The original recipient of these letters, a lady friend of Crowley's who had wanted to learn all about magic, must have shed bowls of tears trying to understand them. Apart from a horrible story of a naked woman killing rats in a Paris vice den, they were all very obscure. Nevertheless, I sent the work to Tambi.

I received this letter from Crowley:

Netherwood

The Ridge

Hastings

25 June 46

Dear John Symonds,

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

I think this would be a good opportunity to make quite clear in black and white, first of all my relations with my own work, and secondly my relations with you in connection with it.

The mainspring of my life is my Oath in the Order of the A.'.A.'. to devote myself wholly to the uplifting of the human race. It is fair to say that any other motive which might influence my actions is no more than subsidiary to that great affirmation.

With regard to yourself, I have been assuming hitherto that your most welcome enthusiasm for my work has been actuated by your sense of abstract justice, or even more by your feeling that my work will ultimately take a definite place in English literature; that I have been throughout carrying on the great tradition of poetry.

It is important to confirm this view, because we are so unfortunate as to live in a world where all sorts of material considerations constantly impinge on the purity of one's actions.

Having put the above 2 and 2 together and made 93* of them, the question which arises first of all is that of ways and means. It seems to me that the first objective is the establishment of a headquarters to be run preferably on the lines of the Abbey of Thelema as carried out with great success in Sicily.

In England the problem is much more difficult, firstly because of the climate, and secondly because of the complicated spider's web of civilisation in which we are entangled.

I think, however, that this first essential problem may be solved without so much difficulty as would appear at first glance.

In conversations with very varied types of people in the last few months I have found that, almost without exception, they are agreed on the ideal way of life in relation to present conditions, and that this ideal coincides with remarkable exactitude with the Thelemic idea.

I am not sure whether I have explained to you in any detail what this idea is. It might be described as aristocratic communism, if one were bent on coining epigrams.

The plan is to get a number of people together bound by sympathy in relation to the general outlook on life, and for each one to contribute to the community such qualities and abilities (and to a certain extent, resources) as he may possess, and in return receive from that community such things as he actually needs for the purpose of carrying out his True Will.

The sort of place which I am imagining in my present very optimistic frame of mind is a country house with a farm attached, within, say, forty miles of London. The first problem which arises with regard to carrying it on, once one had acquired it, is labour trouble. I should like to give you an illustration of how this system may be expected to overcome that difficulty.

One of the members of one of my two organisations† has a secretary, who, before he engaged her, was really very near starvation: sitting in a room without a fire, and eating the minimum of food necessary to support her, which was much less than anything like a decent ration. She actually copied out, with pen and ink, not only the whole of *The Book of Thoth*,‡ but also *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*.

* The Cabbalistic number of *The Book of the Law*.

† The A.:A.: and the O.T.O., see page 94 *et seq.*

‡ By Aleister Crowley. Published 1944.

Now, I am of the opinion that the Society which we are proposing to form (did I suggest 'The Green Lion' as a title? I thought it suitable because in alchemy the stage succeeding that of 'The Black Crow's Skull' is so called) would enable us to gather together a sufficient number of people of sufficient enthusiasm to help in the maintenance of the Abbey. There must always be a certain amount of donkey work to be done; but this work would be done by a person whose heart is in it and so would be done in 20% of the time taken by one who is dawdling and disliking the job.

In Sicily, for instance, we had one woman who was by nature devoted to the care and upbringing of children; another who had been an elementary school-mistress; another who was an admirable cook of the French school. And so on for every necessary work.

These people were all bound together by a devotion to my work, and therefore considered it a privilege to maintain Headquarters.

(By the way, the only reason it broke up was when Mussolini was planning the murder of Matteotti he expelled from Italy any English or Americans who were in any way connected with literature or journalism.)

Until you have tried it you have no idea what a difference it makes in the psychology of people when there is no question of money passing between them to the advantage of one or the other, and when each one is considered as, of natural right, royal. The two sores which gall people most nowadays is the feeling of inferiority either on one side or the other; and the elimination of the profit motive is, as many people have pointed out, an essential to harmony in any Society.

Another point is that this recognition that every other person in the community is royal tends to raise in a measure almost beyond belief the standard of good manners.

There was another condition of life in the Abbey which I considered essential, and that was complete frankness. There was a short ceremony in the morning and another in the evening—a kind of matins and compline—and at such gatherings of the entire community there was an opportunity for each one to bring up in public any cause of friction that might have occurred during the past few hours. In this way we eliminated all possibility of people retiring into their shell and brooding over their grievances. Also, when it came to their turn to speak, they saw how small their grievance was, and were ashamed to utter it.

I think that the above short synopsis should give you an adequate idea of what I hope will mature into a definite plan.

Now, with regard to *Olla*—thank you very much for what you have done, and I shall hope to hear more in due course both from you and Mr Minshall [of Simpkin, Marshall].

As I think I told you, my main object in this renewed burst of activity is to get my principal works published somehow—anyhow, so as to have them in a definite form while I still encumber this planet. If I were to be asked downright 'What do you want out of this book?' I should answer that I should like to sell it outright (i.e. the edition) reserving 50 copies for my friends, and also the right to issue a small edition of perhaps 10, but in any case not more than 25 copies printed on some sort of good paper that remains over from *The Book of Thoth*. In addition to that, if they thought they would like to give me a little cash in case any of the friends aforesaid wanted a drink, I should be glad to have it. But I don't want to bargain, and I don't want to have any more concern with the book once I have passed the proofs for press, which I hope to be able to do within a month from now. I want to concentrate next on *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*.

This is a perfectly straightforward piece of work, requires no editing or alteration of any kind, but will need very careful proof-reading, because I have adopted, out of innate perversity no doubt, the system of dignifying every noun with a capital letter. Each chapter of the book, with two or three exceptions, is approximately of equal length. I am having it printed in quarto—roughly 10 inches by 8. The type is what used to be called 'English.'

Now, with regard to *Magick Without Tears*, I hope you explained to your friend that you only had a random selection. I do not know exactly, because in the hurry of your departure I just picked up a package and threw it at you. But my impression is that you could not have had more than 20 or 30 letters at the outside, whereas there are approximately 75. This volume needs a great deal of editing by some really skilled person like yourself. The book was not written as a consecutive performance—as a subject came up, whether springing fully armed from the brain of this Jupiter or suggested by an actual question from one of my correspondents.

The result was a complete muddle when I came to have about 60 letters under my hand; and I thought it best to try and put them into some sort of logical order. Therefore I shifted them from one

place in the book to another—the result is that you will find a letter which begins 'As I told you in my last . . .' when nothing of the sort is the case. That means a good deal of careful reading of each letter, once you have got the general sequence firmly established.

This sort of work is completely beyond my ability; I cannot even contemplate it without at least six or seven shudders.

There is also the question of two gaps which must be filled. One on the question of acquiring the *knack* of performing a Magical Operation; the other on the difference between power and authority, between a formidable-sounding title and the actual attainment which it purports to certify.

I have started writing these letters several times, but I have moods and now feel I shall never be able to complete them until I feel that the devil is at my heels. That is, if I persuaded you to undertake the editing of the work, in which case I should be immediately bound in honour to finish it without delay.

I am coming up to London on Thursday to lunch with Mr Laurence Felkin, and am meeting him at 12.30 in the upstairs bar at Verrey's. If you would like to join us there for a drink, it would be delightful.

Love is the law, love under will.

Yours sincerely,
Aleister Crowley

I met Crowley's titled lady-friend. She was older than I had imagined, and she did not, to my disappointment, greet me with the solemn, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.'

During lunch on red plush seats and a marble-topped table in the old Café Royal, we discussed the Green Lion.

She was all in favour of it, for she was fed up with doing everyone else's will but her own.

For a while we joined voices in condemning governmental red tape. Crowley, with his 'There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt,' seemed to be a quite anomalous figure in the post-war world. He was really, I thought, an eighteenth-century character, a suitable candidate for the Hell-Fire Club.

'What about this country house with a farm attached?' I asked. 'We must have a centre to co-ordinate our activities.'

Are you going to buy it for him?'

'No, I'm not,' she said.

'Oh, dear. How are we going to get it, then?'

We agreed that The Green Lion would make an excellent name for a pub.

My next letter to Crowley, judging from his reply, must have had a defeatist note in it.

23 July 46

Dear John Symonds,

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

I have been expecting for quite a long time to hear from you in answer to my long letter. All I have had so far was one of those typically English letters: they are all the same, though the language differs in detail—'What a splendid idea, let's do nothing about it.' Nothing is easier than to run up a string of difficulties; nothing is more difficult than to get people to take the simplest measures about the thing which they protest is their heart's dearest wish. What I expected from you was a letter saying, 'Well, that is what we want in the first place: what can we do to realise it?'

To begin with, with regard to money: the question immediately arises how much do we need? How much have we got? How much can we get? What is the best way of starting to get it? I have quite enough people on my list to make a reasonable start, the first step is to get those people together in one place at a given time. I suggest a date when people have come back from their alleged summer holidays.

To begin with, we must draft that letter and, having agreed on the terms, arrange for its distribution. Here, fortunately, we have got Barbara Kindred, who has I believe written to you offering her services, which will take a lot of routine work off our shoulders.

In mid-August my theatrical-control-in-Berlin-man comes over to stay with me from Germany, and I suggest that you should arrange to spend two or three days here as early as possible, so that we may arrange a preliminary programme. Can you arrange to run down here for a day in the immediate future?

With regard to *Olla*, Augustus John did a very striking drawing of me yesterday week.* You do not make it quite clear whether Simpkin, Marshall had turned down the book flat, or merely refused

* See Frontispiece.

to risk their money on it. If they are willing, as they were in the old days, to undertake the distribution, the sending out to reviewers and all that donkey work with a royalty of 10 per cent as their fee for the service, I should like to know at once. The printer clamours for title-page copy and I don't know what to put on. That is another point about which I want to see you at the first possible moment, because, as you told me, the book ought to be in the hands of the reviewers by August 21st, and I must know what to put on the title-page and dust cover. Please let me know at the earliest moment.

Love is the law, love under will.

Yours sincerely,

Aleister Crowley

P.S. I do not know whether you are familiar with the story of the *Mercure de France*. A number of literary and artistic blokes were lunching at their usual café when somebody got the idea of running a high-class literary magazine: then everyone thought what a fine idea it was, and the trouble began.

The oldest and wisest of the crowd said, 'But where do we find the capital?'

'Oh,' said Marcel Schwob, 'capital is it you want: here you are!', pulled out a ten-franc note and put it on the table. 'Now let us get on to the business of the meeting.' They put their heads together constructively instead of destructively, and the paper dominated all serious French literary thought for the next twenty years or so.

A. C.

In my next letter, I unreservedly put myself at the disposal of the Beast.

The Beast replied by sending me the names and addresses of nineteen persons, among whom were Madame Wellington Koo (the Chinese Ambassadress), the late Viscount Tredegar, and Mr Tom Driberg, with instructions to call on them and raise funds.

I wondered whether this little job was to test my intelligence and powers of endurance.

I had returned to Hastings, and Crowley and I were discussing the distribution of *Olla*, which would soon be ready. Messrs Simpkin, Marshall had declined, alas, to handle it.

'Are you going to turn this bedroom into a bookshop?' I asked.

He gave me a glance from his basilisk eye and continued puffing his enormous pipe.

'I suppose you will take the money at the door, allowing reputable booksellers, and others in the trade, a third off the published price?'

'What do you suggest, then?' he asked.

'I know a man who's distributing Swiss books. They're mainly art books with beautiful illustrations. I'll ask him if he'll handle *Olla* for us.'

'That will solve the problem,' said Crowley, brightening up.

'He may not agree,' I said, beginning to regret that I had mentioned the matter; I should have found out first.

The importer of Swiss books was a partner of mine in a little publishing business we were trying to establish. There were three of us: the man who supplied the money, the man who imported Swiss books and provided the premises (two rooms in Museum Street and a dark stairway cluttered up with packing-cases), and myself. Our first book was to be a life of Thomas Mann, translated from the German. The translation had been made and we were looking for a printer.

'Who is this importer of Swiss books?' Crowley asked.

'A partner in the firm of Gearing, Symonds & Company Limited.'

I explained.

'Why not,' Crowley suggested, 'turn this firm into a Thelemic publishing company? You could begin with *Magick Without Tears*.'

'Yes, we could do that,' I said vaguely.

'I had a publishing house once,' said Crowley. 'It was called the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth. It published several of my works.'

'If my partners agree to handle *Olla*—and I hope I'll be able to persuade them—then Gearing & Symonds can appear on the title-page. I think that will be slightly better than having no publisher's name at all.'

Crowley agreed with this, and left it to me to fix it up.

Unfortunately, the importer of Swiss books (who had the final say) did not agree to handle *Olla*. After reading the proofs, he drew my attention to a poem in it which was slightly obscene.

'I don't want to get mixed up with that sort of thing,' he said.

I communicated this disappointing news to Crowley, and blamed my partner.

Crowley replied with a lecture on the foolishness of being in partnership with someone who wouldn't agree with me.

And then Tambi returned to me, without comment, the typescript of *Magick Without Tears*.

Crowley's reaction to this piece of news—the laws of libel being what they are—is unprintable. However:

'You know, however little we like it, and however contrary it is to theory, THEY ARE—education only makes it worse. Tambi's uncle was Solicitor-General of Ceylon and by way of being a great Yogi, who wrote two portentous Commentaries on the Gospels of Matthew and John to prove that J.C. was also a Yogi, and in the course of his remarks he mentioned that one Gospel says that Christ rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on a colt, and the other Gospel says on an ass, and that wicked infidels make much of the contradiction. "Why," exclaimed the annotator, "there is no contradiction at all—why should He not have ridden with one foot on the colt and the other on the ass, as in the fashion of a hippodrome?"'

'There is nothing you can do about it except keep away.'

CHAPTER SIX

The Hastings Mahatma

IN the early summer of 1947, my picaresque novel, *William Waste*, appeared. I didn't tell Crowley about it; he was up to his eyes in his own writings, and wouldn't have, I thought, any interest in mine. But Lady Harris, who had made the drawings for Crowley's book on the tarot cards, *The Book of Thoth*, gave him a copy.

I received this letter from him:

My dear John Symonds,

28 Aug. 47

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

I cannot imagine what has happened to you! It is ages since I heard from you. I have been a pretty sick man all summer. When my doctor went away for his holiday, he said: 'Well, you are in bed and you can jolly well stay there until I come back.' This I did and am feeling very much better.

I was helped immensely to recover by Frieda, who sent me a copy of *William Waste*. (I have no words strong enough to condemn that abominable blurb. I suppose your blurb-maker had his eye on the public.)* What the book really is, I can tell you: it is the first attempt, so far as I know, to record a hashish intoxication in intellectual terms. You have broken entirely new ground, and, I think, most successfully. I hope the sales rise to the height of my opinion of the book. In every way it is one of the best pieces of writing I have struck for years.

You seem to have forgotten altogether about me. Of course I wasn't well enough to see anyone or discuss business, but I am now well on the way to complete recovery, and it would give me immense pleasure if you could spare a day to come down and lunch here. There are quite a number of points which ought to be discussed. Accept my best wishes and the reiterated hope to see you soon.

Love is the law, love under will.

Yours sincerely,

Aleister Crowley

* The blurb on the wrapper was actually written by me.

THE HASTINGS MAHATMA

I said to Margaret, 'I'm going to Hastings to see Crowley. Come with me.' Crowley was someone to see and to talk about afterwards.

'I don't think I will,' she replied.

'Why not?'

We argued about it.

A quaint old man, caught up in a number of legends about himself, harmless, waiting for death: that was my view.

A horrible old man, practitioner of black magic, self-styled Antichrist!—that was her view.

'Don't be silly. He won't turn you into a frog.'

In the pouring rain, we set off for Hastings.

Once on the train Margaret began to feel better, and I again repeated that Crowley could not possibly harm her.

The rain had stopped by the time we reached Hastings, and the sun was even shining.

'Poor old Crowley; he sits in his room and waits. He's awfully lonely.'

Margaret stopped still on the pavement.

'You go,' she said. 'I'll wait for you.'

'Oh, come on.'

First, we looked for a hotel. We could have stayed at Netherwood, but Margaret wouldn't hear of that.

We found a hotel, and had lunch.

An hour later, I climbed into a taxi, told the driver to take me to the Ridge, and waved good-bye.

Netherwood appeared amid the trees; the wood was quiet, no one was in sight.

'This will do,' I said to the driver as he slowed down before the entrance to the drive. He stopped the taxi and I got out.

The Gothic-style doorway, embellished with ivy, was cool and dark, like the entrance to a cave. I glanced up at Crowley's window on the first floor.

Silence.

Behind the window was the Mage, the Secret Master.

I found Crowley reading a letter. After we had shaken hands, he gave it to me.

THE MAGIC OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

Aleister Crowley, Esq.

Dear Sir,

Will you kindly inform me how I can obtain admission to your next Sabbath or Black Mass, which will, I presume, take place on Midsummer Eve?

Yours faithfully,
Charles Fulalove

'It was considerate of Mr Fulalove to enclose this, wasn't it?' said Crowley, holding up a stamped-addressed envelope.

'If you weren't so famous, you wouldn't get such letters.'

Crowley gave me a thoughtful, puzzled look.

That afternoon we talked mainly about sex. Crowley spoke with the modest air of someone who knew much—too much—about the subject.

'There is,' he said, 'a widespread and false attitude to sex. It is a subject which is not talked about. Indeed, the act of sex is felt to be something so disgraceful that it is camouflaged as much as possible.'

I did not altogether agree with this. Surely sex was not camouflaged to that extent? It could equally be maintained that it was openly discussed and bruited about. The times had moved on. Crowley was rather out of date, as old gentlemen frequently are. Sigmund Freud and two world wars had overthrown the sexual ethics of Victorian England, in which Aleister Crowley had grown up; there were only pockets of stubborn resistance here and there. Yes, here and there.

Crowley then went on to say that the Victorians had hated Swinburne for proclaiming the sacredness of passion, and today people feared him, Crowley, because he had analysed thoroughly the whole business of sex.

I thought of Margaret and of the wicked Aleister Crowley whom everyone feared. He did look a little fearsome.

'Sex is a purely animal gesture and needs no more justification than breathing,' said Crowley. 'The falsehood comes from denying the plain facts of the case.'

He went on to say that falsity leads to all kinds of confusion, and that people are compelled to act in all sorts of absurd ways to

THE HASTINGS MAHATMA

keep up the pretence that their animality is romantic and refined. Suddenly he came to the heart of the matter.

'The close connection between sexual energy and the higher nervous centres makes intercourse an act of magic. It is therefore a sacrament which should be used in the Great Work.'

This seemed to me to be in flat contradiction to what he had said before, but I was glad he had got away from the purely physiological explanation of sex.

I began to see Crowley and his *magick* in a more interesting light. He was, undoubtedly, the only man in England, and probably in Europe, who taught that sex should be put to the service of religion. I could now see what he meant when he said that Christianity ignored the material, and that the religion of the future, Crowleyism, or Crowleyanity as I had heard it called, was to unite the material and the spiritual. It was not a new idea. In the mystery cults of ancient times, sexual intercourse as a means of union with God had been widely practised. Crowley was two thousand years out of date.*

The following morning, I dragged the protesting Margaret up the hill to meet the Wizard in the nether wood, as his encyclicals were usually headed (see footnote on page 150).

I left her sitting on the sofa in the deserted lounge, and went to tell Crowley that we had arrived.

'I've left my wife downstairs,' I said to the aged Beast.

'Bring her up,' he said.

When I returned to the lounge, I found Margaret looking with an anxious expression at the coloured sporting prints on the wall. We went upstairs to Crowley's room.

* Crowley summarised his views on sex-education in a letter which he wrote in the autumn of 1916 to Frater Achad. It is not, I suspect, meant to be taken too seriously: 'I think that sexual knowledge should be based broadly on intercourse with, say, 1,000 women chosen from, say, 80 to 100 races and sub-races. Other branches of the study are easily mastered, except Sapphism, which is hard even to witness, as you have to be on very intimate terms with one of the girls, and if both are real exclusive Sapphists, you can't be, unless you can work your Point of View as an artist, or a student of sex. I had an awful blow last November when a girl asked me, "Have you ever been pricked with needles in the dark?" and I had not. The red brand of shame sears my forehead to this hour.'

'A bent, thin old man'—this is how Margaret begins her account of the impression Crowley made on her—'in a black, threadbare smoking-jacket, crawled off the edge of the bed to greet me. He had a bald, egg-shaped head, and thin, claw-like hands. I sat down hurriedly and for a while my nervousness, and the disorder of the room, prevented my looking closely at him. In one corner was a half-filled spittoon. There was a chest of drawers with books piled high on it, two or three rickety chairs, a large carved wooden chest, and a small coffee-table, on which stood a bottle of French brandy, three brandy glasses, and a box of American cigars. Ash and cigarette butts littered the floor, torn curtains darkened the light from the window, and startling paintings decorated the walls. I accepted a glass of brandy gratefully, and lit a cigarette.'

After a while, we began to talk of Krishnamurti. Crowley said that Krishnamurti had been a great disappointment to the Theosophists as he, Crowley, had known he would be, for Krishnamurti was *not* a Secret Master.

He then went on to say that during the 'twenties when Annie Besant was preparing to launch Krishnamurti as the World-Teacher, he, Crowley, was preparing to launch himself.

'I underwent a supreme initiation. At one period it was necessary for me to ascend from the most tenuous regions of pure air, through a series of vast caverns so devised that nothing human could possibly pass through them, into the region of pure fire. To accomplish this, it was necessary that I should be *exhausted physically* to the utmost point compatible with continued life.' He paused, then he added surprisingly, 'I was, however, furnished with a guide. This guide was of a kind which I had never met before in the whole course of my explorations of the worlds beyond the material. It was in the form of a fox.*'

* This fox was a chthonic and redeeming spirit. In Iceland the fox is considered to be the guardian spirit of 'cunning men and wizards' (cp. *The Golden Bough*, vol. I). The best account of the fox as a chthonic element comes from China. 'Certain animals can at will appear under the human form, behave as men, and have intercourse with men. That is especially the case with foxes. They transform themselves into boys or girls, and

I agreed with Crowley that this fox must have been a creature of extraordinary intelligence. Crowley confessed that he had been puzzled by it, and was very much on his guard against it. 'The fox,' he said, 'appears in the *Yi King*, the oldest and wisest book in the world.'

Tea had been ordered, but it had not appeared. Crowley apologised for this, and began to grumble at the housekeeper. I offered to go to see what had happened, and straightway got up and went to the door. As I turned to close the door behind me (and leave Margaret alone with the Beast), I glanced towards her. There was a horrified, appealing look on her face.

I gave her an encouraging wink.

As we were walking along the quiet road which led back to Hastings, I asked Margaret what had happened while I was out of the room. The experience of being alone with Crowley had not, apparently, been too much for her.

'There was an embarrassing silence,' she said, 'and to end it, I asked him if he believed in Secret Masters. I had in mind the Tibetan Mahatmas.'

'"Oh, yes," he replied eagerly. Then, after a pause, he looked fixedly at me, and said in a mysterious tone of voice, "One might find a Secret Master *anywhere*."'

We both laughed.

Six months later, Margaret joined an organisation which took her to China, and a year or so after that, she wrote her account of our visit to the Beast.

'I knew he had been staring at me, but I was unprepared for the evil eyes that looked into mine. I took a quick gulp from

play the part of incubi and succubi of mediæval legends. Dogs, wolves, asses, pigs and other animals, sometimes do the same. All animals which burrow in the ground, which live in holes, are somewhat transcendent. Because, during the silence of the night, they hear something of what takes place in the lower world, says the theory. Foxes are amenable to a special jurisdiction, the centre of which is at the sacred mountain T'ai-shan.' (Leo Wiegner, *A History of the Religious Beliefs and Philosophical Opinions in China*.)

the big brandy glass, and then returned his gaze. Now I could see that the faded brown eyes were weak and helpless; the pupils had shrunk and the shrivelled eyelids twitched. Yes, evil haunted that face, but the years had diluted its strength. Of course he could not harm me; I even felt sorry for him.

I turned my head towards the carved wooden chest, and asked him if it had come from China.

"Yes," he said.

Immediately my interest was stimulated. I couldn't remember whether you had told me that he had been to China.

"He began to talk about his trek across that vast land, starting from Tibet and ending in the South Gobi Desert. He took his wife with him and the journey lasted five years.* He spoke slowly, and although I was aware that he was trying to impress me, and was therefore on my guard, he did nevertheless impress me.

For a few moments the boundaries of the room became limitless. Green, blue and yellow colours swam before my eyes—the dust and mud of China, roof-tops and mountains, heat and snows. Mysterious and exciting—long, dull days, and boredom.

Suddenly his voice ceased and the room became small and quiet again. But his staring eyes had now made it oppressive and he flooded me again with a sense of evil, so that I visibly shivered.

"Then you came back into the room and, seeing that I was in a daze, you distracted me by taking the glass out of my sweating hands."

Crowley was now more or less a permanent invalid, but he had great hopes of recovery, and of finishing all the work in hand—of seeing *The Golden Twigs* and *The Book of Wisdom or Folly* through the press as well as *Olla*. I told him, on another

* Crowley's 'Walk Across China' was done astrally. In reality, he rambled about for a few months in the province of Yunnan, which he had reached through Burma; he made his exit from China down the Red River to Tongking.

occasion when we were together, that I saw no reason why he shouldn't live to ninety, a remark which seemed to cheer him up considerably.

There was, as far as I could see, nothing really wrong with him, apart from the fact that he was rapidly dying on his feet. Unlike the housekeeper of Netherwood, who hated the sight of him, I didn't want him to die. I hadn't known him for long, and I enjoyed his company and conversation.

Meanwhile he continued to live on the money which was sent him by one of his American followers. He had long since spent the fortune his father had left him, but the gods had usually provided and kept him in the state he was accustomed to.

He was certainly not ending his days, as one of his former but still friendly associates was very much afraid he might, in the workhouse, the logical if unfitting end for a mage. He also received from America sweets, sugar, soap—all rationed goods at the time—perique tobacco in two-pound tins, cigars, caviar, silk handkerchiefs and gorgeous ties.

He had plans to go to California to join there the small community which had been founded in his name and which performed the Thelemic rites, but would he be able to get heroin in America? Heroin was essential for his existence. He needed, too, rather a lot of heroin owing to his body's toleration: seven or eight or more grains a day, a phenomenal amount really if one considers that the usual dose is one-sixteenth or one-eighth of a grain. More than once I had steadied him while he injected himself in the arm-pit.

One day just before Christmas 1946, a van pulled up at my Hampstead home, and about thirty large packages were carried in and piled to the ceiling: *Olla* had arrived. I opened one of the packages and saw that Crowley had, *faute de mieux*, printed my address on the title-page. I was, it seemed, the publisher of this outsize volume of poetry, as well as the distributor.

Some days later, when I had recovered from the shock, I began to send out copies for review to the leading literary magazines and papers.

I suggested to Crowley that an advertisement of the book would help to reduce the pile in my bedroom; he asked me to find out the cost of this.

'If you are writing personal letters to reviewers,' he wrote later, 'you might remind Desmond MacCarthy that he went up to Trinity the same year as I did, and "Peterborough" that he knows who I am. Ralph Straus is an old friend. No word from you yet about the advert idea—limit of cost is what I want to know.'

As I expected, reviewers cold-shouldered the book—because it was poetry, and not very good poetry at that, and because it was by Aleister Crowley. I saw only two reviews, one in the local paper—Crowley was almost a celebrated character in Hastings—and the other in *The Occult Review*. Fortunately the latter was long and praiseful; it was obviously written by an admirer of Crowley and all his works. I breathed a sigh of relief and sent it to him.

'I was delighted to receive your letter with the enclosed copy of *The Occult Review*. It is indeed a treasure both for its depth of insight and its breadth of comprehension,' he wrote. 'I am rather disappointed, by the way, that *The Times Literary Supplement* has not given us anything; they used to let me have quite a lot of space. I don't know whether you are in a position to give them a jog?' (I was not.)

Along the occult grapevine went the news that I had copies of Crowley's latest production, and strange characters called and rang my bell. Orders also came by letter, enclosing cheques and postal orders. Soon two packages were empty, but it seemed to make no difference to the pile, the weight of which, I thought, would suddenly bring the floor down.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Io Pan!

*It is of the utmost importance to make funerals merry,
so as to train people to take the proper view of death.*

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

ONE morning during March, 1947, Crowley tried to get up, and get dressed and give himself an injection of heroin which would wake him up properly, make his eyes shine again and enable him to move around like an animated corpse; but the syringe clogged, and half-dressed and tired out by these exertions, he fell asleep again. This was at eight thirty. At nine there was a power cut which lasted till noon; his electric fire immediately faded out, a disappointing thing for it to do on a freezing cold day with the snow outside.

At about eleven, the housekeeper of Netherwood knocked on his door; she was going to ask him what he wanted for lunch. There was no reply; she turned the handle and looked in.

Crowley was lying half in and half out of bed; he was unconscious, with blue lips and a bluish flush about the upper portions of his cheeks, symptoms of his enfeebled heart which, on account of his chronic bronchitis and asthma, was growing steadily feebler.

She thought he was dead, or dying, and immediately sent for Mr Watson, the keeper of a small nearby store who did odd jobs for him—Crowley called him his henchman. Mr Watson pushed Crowley into bed, got a hot-water bottle for him, cleaned the syringe, and then trudged a mile or so through the snow to get the doctor.

The doctor found Crowley still alive and gave him an injection, probably of coramine, which brought him round.

'Thanks for yours and enclosure,' he wrote to me. 'Snow all gone now; but today dull. Glad to see you any time. Printer

has come to a full stop: the electricity cuts prevent him taking any job at all! Sounds screwy. I *nearly* came to a full stop too: long story—will tell you when I see you; but if doctor had come half an hour later, or if another Dr had come, I should have been dead.'

Every week, someone came down to Hastings to see Crowley. A visit to the Mage, at least for those whose religious sensibility was not entirely blunted, was more than a day's outing in the country.

It furthers one to see the great man.
This brings success.*

But in spite of visits from members of the aristocracy, like the late Viscount Tredegar (who had entertained Crowley at Tredegar Park in Monmouthshire), from American sympathisers, and from the occasional *littérateur*, he felt extremely lonely. 'It is very nice down here, now that at last we have got some sunshine,' he wrote to his old comrade, Volo Intelligere, 'but I am very lonely and should appreciate a visit from you more than I can say.' This letter was written in April 1947, the last spring he was to see.

During the next month, he began to think about making his will, and he consulted a local firm of solicitors. In the past, he had made several, rather fantastic, wills which dealt mainly with the manner of disposing of his body, for he had little money or property apart from his copyrights to dispose of. In a will dated 1905, he asked that his executor should see that his body was embalmed, dressed in a white, red and gold robe and girdle, a crown on his head, and a sword and a wand by his side, and placed in a *pastos* (a small chapel) in a vault which was 'to be bricked up and concealed utterly from sight.' However, on the door of the *pastos* was to be inscribed the one word PERDURABO. (Perdurabo ['I will endure'] was the name he had taken when, in 1898, he entered the Golden Dawn and performed ceremonial magic with Yeats and Allan Bennett.)

* I Ching. Hexagram TS'UI.

This time, in a more sober mood, he directed that his executors 'should ascertain as they may think fit beyond all possibility of error the fact of my death.' And if he were found to be really dead, his body was to be cremated, and the ashes preserved in an urn, together with his seal ring (whose hieroglyphic inscription Gleadow had translated for me), and entrusted to the Grand Treasurer of the Order of the Templars of the Orient.

In spite of his belief that there was nothing the matter with him, apart from exhaustion, he spent most of the summer in bed and his dictation of letters dwindled away. One of the last letters I received from him concluded with, 'I am feeling three parts dead, and the fourth part comfortably buried, and the moral of that is (said the Duchess) Good night, and I hope very soon to see you—not that there is any point in doing so, but it is a poor heart that never rejoices. Fraternally yours.' Someone had signed his name for him.

Other interests had made me forget about Aleister Crowley; then one morning I found him very close to me. The papers were alight with the news of his death. Aleister Crowley, the Wickedest Man in the World, etc., etc., was dead at last. Not one, but several photographs of Crowley, in different disguises, appeared in most of the London papers. *The Times* was the briefest. After announcing 'with regret' the deaths of a Professor of Pure Mathematics, a Lord and a Knight, the writer added, probably with unconscious irony, that 'the death at Hastings of Mr Aleistair [*sic*] Crowley is reported'. Needless to say, no obituary notice of Crowley, in which his achievements were listed and praised, and his character extolled, was found in the obituary column on another page.

Yes, this time it seemed that Aleister Crowley had really died, and he was not faking the news of his death as he had once rather successfully done in Portugal with the help of the poet Fernando Pessoa. (Through the loss of his German mistress, which made him unhappy and annoyed, he left a 'suicide' note on a wild part of the beach; then he chased after her to Germany.)

The next day I received a copy of Crowley's will from his solicitors, and learnt, to my surprise, that he had made me, and his old friend Louis Wilkinson, his literary executors. So he'd taken seriously my suggestion of writing his life! I had only to write it now from all his papers which I knew I should soon be examining.

On the 5th of December, I went to Brighton to attend the cremation service. An elderly lady, with whom, amongst others, I travelled to Brighton, was a little afraid that the funeral would involve her in unwelcome publicity; but a young man with long hair gave her his personal assurance that if she could restrain herself from dancing naked on the coffin (doubtless the strict Thelemic pattern of behaviour), her name would in no circumstances be mentioned.

There was, of course, to be no religious service, that is no religious service of the usual kind: Crowley had long abjured Christianity in favour of his own religion, which was anti-Christian in spirit and pagan in content, the religion which was supposed to succeed Christianity as Christianity had succeeded the polytheistic cults of the ancient world. Instead, he had expressed the wish that either Louis Wilkinson or Brother Volo Intelligere should read 'at an appropriate moment,' (1) the 'Hymn to Pan'; (2) *The Book of the Law*; (3) The 'Collects' and the 'Anthem' of his 'Gnostic Mass'.

I hoped that, whoever was going to conduct the obsequies, would include a panegyric on Crowley's life and achievements.

We arrived at the crematorium, and assembled in the cold and cheerless chapel; Crowley had died, but the graves had not yawned and yielded up their dead, and there was, as yet, no shrieking and squealing of ghosts about the neighbouring streets. There was only the usual shuffling noise as we took our places in the pews.

The coffin, heaped with flowers, was borne in by the undertakers and placed upon the bier.

Suddenly the tall, imposing figure of Louis Wilkinson entered the chapel with two of Crowley's books under his arm, one of them *Magick in Theory and Practice* which contains the

'Hymn to Pan'. He looked like a determined schoolmaster coming into the classroom.

With a dramatic movement, a young woman, with a dark, good-looking young man beside her, added her bunch of chrysanthemums to the flowers on the coffin.

Wilkinson mounted the rostrum, opened *Magick in Theory and Practice*, and in a powerful and sonorous voice began to read Crowley's 'Hymn to Pan'. Immediately the atmosphere was intensified, and the expectations of the mourners and reporters alike—the latter in a conspiratorial group at the back of the chapel—began to be fulfilled.

'My body, weary of empty clasp,
Strong as a lion and sharp as an—asp
Come, O come!
I am numb
With the lonely lust of devildom.
Thrust the sword through the galling fetter,
All-devourer, all-begetter,
Give me the sign of the Open Eye,
And the token erect of thorny thigh,
And the word of madness and mystery,
O Pan! Io Pan!
Io Pan! Io Pan Pan! Pan Pan! Pan. . . .'

I glanced up at the wood-lined ceiling, and expected to see there, in a dark corner, the face of Aleister Crowley, ironically smiling, with two horns protruding from his head.

After the 'Hymn to Pan', which was recited in its entirety, there was a brief pause; then Louis Wilkinson began to read some of the more acceptable verses of *The Book of the Law*.

The mystical poem from the 'Anthem' of Crowley's so-called 'Gnostic Mass' brought the proceedings to a fitting conclusion; then the coffin slid through the aperture, and the ceremony was at an end.

Two of the women were in tears; I wondered if they were relatives of Crowley. I afterwards learned that one of them had never met Crowley. She had become identified with his strange

personality, but had not plucked up enough courage to approach him.

As I went out into the bright sunshine, I felt glad to think that I had not missed this invocation of the spirit of Pan, the god of lust and magic, before the coffin of Aleister Crowley, and a congregation of Thelemites. I was conscious of having been present at a curious ceremony; at least it was sufficiently curious to upset the members of the Brighton Town Council when they read about it in the newspapers the following morning. At their next meeting they described Crowley's funeral as a 'desecration of consecrated ground,' which it was, and passed a resolution that nothing like it must ever be allowed to happen again. Thus, to the very end, Crowley was the cause of scandal and publicity: it was no less than he had expected.

I remember asking Crowley why he called himself the Beast, and to my surprise he replied that his mother had given him this title. At first I thought he meant that his mother had called him 'a beast,' but he soon made it clear that she had had the Beast of *Revelation* in mind, the monster from the depths of the sea who opened his several mouths and blasphemed.

Mrs Crowley must have been like that delightful character in *Little Dorrit*, Mrs General, who was never to be told of anything shocking, and in whose presence passion was to go to sleep. But she defeated her own ends, for what she repressed her son expressed, and with the same fanaticism.

Crowley thought of himself as the Antichrist, a role for which he lacked the vision. He was, in fact, no more than a minor and unorthodox Satanist—unorthodox because *The Book of the Law* unfolds views which are not entirely evil. There are even some elements of love in it, and some sentiments about freedom. It is not surprising that orthodox Satanists were pleased to hear of his death.

While the friends and followers of the Beast listened in awed silence in the undenominational chapel of the Brighton Borough Crematorium to 'Come! all ye, and learn the secret that hath not yet been revealed. . . . There is no law beyond Do what

thou wilt,' a group of Satanists on the other side of the world celebrated the passing of Aleister Crowley in a more fitting manner.

It took place in one of the Spanish-speaking American republics, in a clearing within a thicket on a deserted part of the coast.

It was night-time: the glare from nine kerosene lamps lit up the scene and revealed thirty-six celebrants, and a large, rather inert figure who, on closer inspection, turned out to be an effigy of Aleister Crowley.

He was made of mud, wax, rope and glass—a professional piece of work: the rope for hair, the glass for eyes—huge, staring, malevolent. He was clad in a long red robe, which had a broad black centre-piece. On a finger of the left hand was a ring in the shape of a serpent, and on one of the fingers of the right hand was a massive gold-coloured ring with the device of a triangle against a black background.

Satanism is the worship of the Devil. On the face of it, this is a contradiction in terms, but not if we accept the view (held by some Satanists) that God has betrayed the human race, and the true light is Satan. In other words, the decision to worship Satan was not taken as a counsel of despair, but as a result of a disagreement as to who (in the light of the evil in the world) is really God.

The theologian Martensen says that the Devil was Christ's younger brother who, not content with second place, fought against the light. These Latin-American Satanists believe that the Devil was hurled out of heaven as a result of a conspiracy, and that he, with his cohorts, has never ceased fighting to get back. It is, therefore, their duty to assist him as much as they can—by acts of profanation which, they claim, weaken the force of the divine hierarchy.

A middle-aged man stood in a small, red-painted circle marked with a metal A and an O—Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end—and a five-pointed star with the lower point broken or opened, symbol of evil. He was the leader of the cult, known to his fellow Satanists as *Hermano Diablo*, Brother

Devil. He was dressed in a long black robe with an inverted metal triangle on his breast, suspended from a gold chain round his neck. His head was shaved. In his left hand he held, for his protection against evil forces, a golden talisman in the shape of a triangle, the apex of which pointed downwards; in his other hand was his magic wand. At his feet were copies of *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, and the *Goetia*, most probably in Mathers' translation which Crowley himself had annotated and published.

Facing *Hermano Diablo*, a few paces away, was the detestable Crowley—in the box, so to speak. Crowley's fingers grasped the silver-plated handle of a sword. He was upheld by *Papacito Diablo*, Little Father Devil, the second-in-command. He was dressed in a long white robe; on his feet were rope-soled sandals; in his free hand was his wand, a three-foot long, pliable stick, the thickness of a finger.

And behind *Papacito* were the assembled Satanists.

There was another figure present—alone and some distance away. This was Maria Lilith, the High Priestess of the cult, a young woman who had been chosen for her beauty and clairvoyance. She was standing in a straight line with *Hermano Diablo* and *Papacito Diablo*, still as a statue, stark naked.

Earlier, *Hermano Diablo*, *Papacito Diablo*, and Maria Lilith, known collectively as *El Trio Malvado*, the Unholy Three, had conferred together in the clearing; then, in front of the thirty odd members of the congregation, Maria Lilith and a prostitute (she was not a member of the cult and was therefore paid for her services) 'deconsecrated' or made unholy the ritual wine. The manner in which this was done cannot be described. Its purpose, however, was to induce a hateful frame of mind in the celebrants who drank it.

The High Priest, *Hermano Diablo*, took the wine aside, made passes in the air, and muttered over it in a language which he called 'Atlantean.'

He went round pouring the wine into the glasses of the audience.

Three drummers began a slow and monotonous beat.

The audience clinked glasses and took a sip.

Suddenly a song burst from the lips of Maria Lilith—she was singing a hymn to Satan. It was taken up by *Hermano Diablo* and *Papacito Diablo*; and when they had finished, the audience began to chant it in a restrained manner. And at its conclusion, they clinked glasses again, drained the wine and hurled the glasses away.

The drums had increased their tempo, and a flautist and a shaker of the *marracas* (a gourd with dried seeds) had joined in.

The audience began to dance, slowly at first, then furiously. Suddenly, at a prearranged signal, they stopped. Then, in a slow and malignant voice *Hermano Diablo* began the denunciation.

'We are gathered here tonight to celebrate the death of Aleister Crowley. You all know, of course, who Crowley was—a wicked man. He was even called the "wickedest man in the world." This makes him seem very wicked indeed. Just think: no matter where one went on the earth, one would not be able to find a more wicked man, or even one as wicked. This is claiming a great deal. This is as good as saying that he was a Satanist. [*Howls of rage. The Satanists jump into the air.*] But we do not find that he was as wicked as all that; as a matter of fact, I find him less wicked, far less wicked, than he seems. I have examined this wolf, and found underneath his wolf's skin—a sheep. No, no! Crowley was not wicked; he was only detestable. [*Cheers.*] He was a flagrant exhibitionist, a mountebank, a showman who, after beating the big drum outside his circus, nipped inside and gave us a hollow performance. [*Howls of derision.*] We have found the sound of his drum monotonous and boring. In fact, he only made a nuisance of himself. He was a pseudo-Satanist and traitor! He advertised Satanism to the world. No wonder the Diabolists of Chicago, the Luciferians of Lyons and the Demonites of Yorkshire are all celebrating at this very moment his death.'

The Satanists howled:

'*Se murio Crowley! Se murio Crowley!*' ['Crowley is dead!']

I do not know about the Chicago Diabolists, or the Lyons

Luciferians, but Brother Devil was mistaken when he included among the brethren 'Yorkshire Demonites.' There are no Satanists in Yorkshire; there is only a coven of witches in that part of the world, and they follow their own traditions and ignore Aleister Crowley completely. The only ceremony in Britain on the occasion of Crowley's death was that in the chapel of the Brighton Crematorium, and *Hermano Diablo* obviously hadn't that kind of ceremony in mind. The occasion was a sad, not a joyful, one and there were no howls of glee among the participants. (They only opened their mouths once: when Louis Wilkinson intoned, 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law,' there were murmurs of 'Love is the law, love under will,' which is the corollary or inference of the first statement.)

Hermano Diablo, his eyes dilated with rancour, left the circle and came close to Crowley to bawl into his ears the details of his misfeasance; and as he paused between each item of the denunciation, and jabbed Crowley furiously with his wand, *Papacito Diablo* shook his head in assent, and the congregation groaned.

Here is a short, and censored, list of Crowley's misdeeds:

(1) He claimed the power of making himself invisible. [Untrue, of course.]

(2) He had hypnotic power and by suggestion he killed a great magical rival. [The reference is to Mathers, and this seems to be true.]

(3) He used sexual magic for non-magical ends. [True. See Chapter Ten for proof of this.]

(4) His exhibitionism made the world aware of Satanism. [Satanists do not want publicity.]

(5) His descriptions of devils and other infernal beings, which he claimed to have invoked, were only the products of his imagination.

A jury would have found Crowley guilty on all counts.

This disgust with Crowley is really the artist's anger at the *poseur*, the qualified practitioner's scorn for the quack, the hatred of the honest man for everything that is sham.

With the conclusion of the denunciation, the audience came forward, joined their middle fingers together and formed a circle round *Papacito* and the effigy of Crowley. Then, while they swayed backwards and forwards, they started to sing in a wild manner. This chant in particular was derisively sung, and in English—most of the audience, I am told, were more or less educated men.

Crowley, Crowley, Crowley,
Crown Prince of S—,
Crowley, Crowley, Bobo,*
King of Mumbo Jumbo.

Unable to contain himself, *Papacito* began to bite and tear at Crowley's head and beat him with his wand, and *Hermano Diablo* broke out again into his Atlantean jargon which was interspersed with names of devils from the *Goetia* such as Belial, Astaroth, Asmodeus and Vassago; and all the while he grimaced and gesticulated and spoke in two distinct voices, one guttural, the other shrill. He, too, was beside himself, but no more than the audience who, as the frenzy increased, broke their locked fingers and completely abandoned themselves; they tore their clothing, and fell on to the ground, and clawed the earth, and even bit the earth and banged their heads against it.

This behaviour was too unrestrained, even for *Hermano Diablo*, and when sufficiently conscious to notice it, he cried out, '*Cuidado!*' ['Careful!']

The element of fear—fear of the Beast—was omnipresent, which suggests that Crowley wasn't after all such a mountebank: he was at least powerful enough to raise to consciousness their latent fears of the unknown.

'*Crowley ee Ja Ja na,*' muttered *Hermano Diablo* shrilly in his Atlantean. '*Ja Ja go Vee goo la. Crowley Ko Ra koo shah. Doora Damballah.*'

[Crowley is not a god.
God's vengeance on him.
Crowley was a pretender.
Curse of the Serpent God (on him).]

* *Bobo* is the Spanish for fool.

THE MAGIC OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

From time to time, *Hermano Diablo* would cease haranguing the audience in a language they could not understand, and would turn his back on them and gaze towards the south, the traditional abode of Satan; an arm raised, his back turned, he would remain fixed for a minute or two, a solitary, mysterious figure.

This exorcism of the spirit of Aleister Crowley, whom *Hermano Diablo* had met only on one occasion, continued for two and a half hours, an incomplete number of hours and therefore an evil length of time.

My informant, who subsequently left the order of Satanists, and adjured the creed, was most impressed by the control which *Hermano Diablo* could exercise over his brethren, even when they were beside themselves with mania. For example, at the height, or rather at one of the several heights, of the orgy, *Hermano Diablo* yelled out, 'Stop!' and instantly the Satanists were all struck still as if turned into pillars of salt.

Papacito was no longer holding Crowley up; he was lying, face upwards, on the ground.

Now Maria Lilith ran towards him, leapt upon him, and gyrated seven times over him.

(The number seven, in the language of initiation, is the highest stage; it is also the number of the planetary gods of old.)

Then *Hermano Diablo* struck Crowley with his wand seven times.

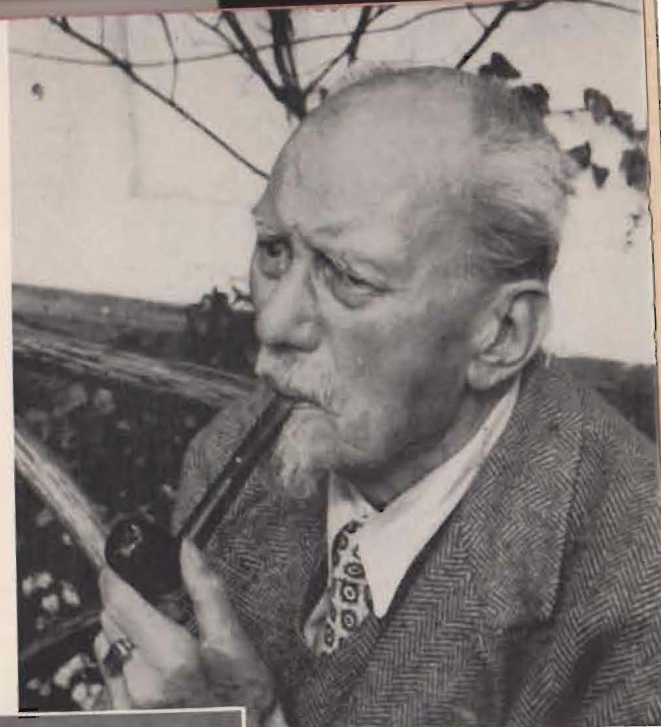
And *Papacito Diablo* spat at him seven times.

And the Satanists, in groups of seven, advanced to add their defilement.

Finally, Crowley was burnt, to everybody's satisfaction, and his ashes left to a local boatman to disperse over the ocean.*

* His name was the same as that of one of the Roman Emperors; his end no less tragic and sudden, for he was drowned while carrying out this task. Or so my informant told me. I found the story hard to believe; it seemed like a touch added for effect. 'But don't forget,' said my ex-Satanist friend, 'the boatman brought down bad luck on himself by stealing the rings from Crowley's fingers!'

(Right) Aleister Crowley as the Author knew him



(Left) The Great Beast: the Logos of the Aeon



(Left) Brother Perdurabo in the Himalayas



(Right) Brother Perdurabo performing a Rite in the Golden Dawn

CHAPTER EIGHT

Past Lives

WHO was Aleister Crowley? Crowley himself was by no means sure. He knew that a boy called Edward Alexander ('Alick') was born in 1875 to Edward Crowley, a brewer and prominent Plymouth Brother; and that this child grew up to change his name to Aleister, and to divide his time between climbing mountains and practising magical rituals. But Aleister Crowley was, he felt, only partly himself—an insubstantial and merely phenomenal part at most. On another plane was the real Crowley, who was more like a god than a human being or, if you will, a superhuman being, filled with lofty thoughts and a careless but kindly attitude towards frail humanity.

Such a person or, rather, essence, was of course immortal. Crowley, was immortal; he had lived before and he would live again. As a human being he had had several past lives, as well as a continuous existence on the subliminal plane as a Master, also called a Secret Master or Hidden Chief.

He gives us a glimpse of his life as a Master when he tells us that, shortly before the time of Mohammed, he was present at a Council of Masters. The place of meeting was not in heaven, but in one of those remote fastnesses in the heart of the mountain-fledged forests of ———, in one of the wildest solitudes of Europe.

The critical question to be decided at this time—the beginning of the Dark Ages—was the policy to be adopted in order to help humanity. Crowley was always seeking ways and means to help humanity. 'A small minority, including myself,' he wrote, 'was for positive action; definite movements were to be made; in particular, the mysteries were to be revealed. The majority, especially the Asiatic Masters, refused even to discuss the proposal. They contemptuously abstained from voting, as if to say, "Let the youngsters learn their lesson." My party

therefore carried the day, and various Masters were appointed to undertake different adventures.'

Crowley's own task was to bring Oriental wisdom to Europe, and to restore paganism in a purer form. He does not make it clear whether this task was given to him in the sixth century A.D. (Mohammed was born about 570) or in one of his later incarnations. He certainly did his best to restore paganism in his incarnation of Aleister Crowley as known to the *Sunday Express* and *John Bull*, and was duly attacked by these two papers on that account.

It is not surprising that Crowley, whose dreams are thronged with kings and popes, should claim Pope Alexander VI as one of his incarnations. This brilliant but pleasure-loving prelate, father of Cæsar Borgia, was the kind of pope he would have loved to be. One of his treasured possessions was a gold sequin which was struck by Alexander: on one side was his papal and family arms, on the other the scene of the Gospel story of the miraculous draught of fishes. Crowley used the coin as his 'disk' or talisman for getting gold. His recollection of his life as pope was unfortunately scant, or he was unusually reticent; all he says, in fact, is that he failed in his task of 'crowning the Renaissance through not being wholly purified in my personal character.'

He had several recollections of himself during ancient times. He was, among others, the Theban priest Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, who flourished during the 26th dynasty (the preface to *The Equinox of the Gods* is signed by Ankh-f-n-Khonsu), and the Chinese sage Ko Hsuan, a disciple of Lao Tze, author of *Khing Kang King*, which Crowley turned into rhyme.

The identity of Aleister Crowley is further complicated by his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, who sometimes seems to be more Crowley than Crowley himself. 'My health has been constantly bad—a mixture of swamp fever and rheumatism, fugitive neuralgic symptoms, etc.,' wrote Crowley in May 1917, when he was forty-two, 'But I, myself, Aiwass, have been considering all the time how to act as to Crowley's body and mind. Can I use it any more? Wouldn't my ideas get ahead much

faster if he were dead? Shouldn't I be wise to manifest in another, or in a multitude?'

He was in America, and the plaintive note of this extract from his diary was due to America's entry into the First World War on the side of the Allies, and the consequent loss of his job of writing propaganda of the crudest kind for the Germans, who regarded him as an important English poet. He had backed the side which, it now seemed, was going to lose, and he feared retribution. No wonder he crept closer to Aiwass and wished that he could slough off the skin of Crowley.

Again, a month later, he wrote: 'I am getting quite to the point of habitual recognition of myself as Aiwass, and it does much good. But I have seen lately the danger of having a mental machine which functions so independently of the Self [consciousness], and even of the human will.'

Now he was without a job, and without money; the time called for a magical retirement, so he went to live with a Negro woman, Grace Roddis, in a room on Central Park West 'where we can see nothing but trees! Glory be to *Otz Chiiim* [the Tree of Life] in whose boughs the Wonder Bird, the Swan Paramahansa [the divine swan] makes His nest. (I am aware that terrestrial swans don't nest in trees.)'

This lady was, he thought, the materialisation of a 'brown girl' he had seen in a vision during the previous year.

In the early summer of 1918, he was paddling a canoe down the river Hudson, with a woman called Roddie Minor, nicknamed the Camel, for company at week-ends, see page 170. The Camel was a friend of a woman called the Dog who had also been Crowley's mistress. They camped on 'Æsopus Island,' and in a series of trances Crowley recalled several of his previous lives.

The trances seem to have been peculiarly intense. He used the technique of yoga to get into them, and the mention of the word 'samadhi' reveals that he attained the highest point of concentration. According to Buddhist teachings, it is the progressive perfection of the spirit through concentration which awakens memories of former incarnations. Drugs—cocaine

and anhalonium—were also used. The trances were described by Crowley as of a sublimity beyond words, even the quite effective words of Aleister Crowley for describing the more gorgeous experiences of life; and the crown of them was 'an Angelic vision,' such as he had never before enjoyed.

He begins with the incarnation immediately previous to the Aleister Crowley one; it was that of Eliphas Lévi. Crowley was Eliphas Lévi, the name assumed by Alfonse Louis Constant, author of well-known works on magic and the Cabbala.

Crowley made no secret of his connection with Eliphas Lévi, and when we discussed this subject one afternoon in Hastings, and I objected that Lévi had died six months before he was born, he replied that this was no contradiction because the spirit of Lévi would not have descended into the womb of his mother until she was three months pregnant. Fortunately for Alick, Mrs Crowley knew nothing of this event.

If one believes that Crowley was Lévi reincarnated, a great deal in Crowley's character is explained, but his 'magical memory' revealed nothing about Eliphas Lévi which could not be obtained by reading Arthur Edward Waite's translation of Lévi's *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, and especially its biographical preface, 1896.

Crowley descended into Lévi's life after returning to his own infancy, birth and pre-natal state: he then found Lévi on the point of death. (A photograph of Lévi lying dead in a brass-headed bedstead with a large crucifix placed on top of the bed-clothes is reproduced in *The History of Magic*, 1913.) Then 'I went through quite a number of scenes in Lévi's life, most unimportant, though I remember several episodes with my wife and the scenes of my taking various orders in Catholicism.'

We should like to know more of Lévi's beautiful sixteen-year-old wife who left him after bearing him two children: truth (as far as Crowley's magical memory is concerned) lies in the details.

He then remembered a little country church with a square tower . . . a lot of broad, dusty roads. The scene reminded him of the south of France, and the name Arles appeared. He

recalled a keen sense of social inferiority, no doubt on account of Lévi's humble birth which, Crowley thought, explained Lévi's socialist views. 'I recall, too, a long walk I took when I was seventeen or so, in open country, north France somewhere, I think, and my aspirations culminating in a magical oath.'

This is disappointing stuff.

In the spring of 1854, Lévi came to England to seek a new current and to devote himself, without interruption, to his researches which he called by the name of science. He had several letters of introduction to eminent persons, who were interested, he was told, in the supernatural. But when he met them he found to his disappointment that, although they were very courteous, their interest in the subject was either sensational or trivial; they expected him to perform miracles, 'as if,' writes Lévi with indignation, 'I were a charlatan.' He was disgusted by such crudities. Even if he had wanted to achieve some of the more startling results of ceremonial magic, the wearisome nature of which made him recoil, he couldn't do so without expensive and rare equipment. He therefore turned his back on English society and thrust his bearded face into the sombre pages of the holy Cabbala.

Returning one afternoon to his hotel, Lévi found that someone had called and left him a note. With it was a card, cut in half diagonally, on which Lévi immediately recognised the Seal of Solomon, the six-pointed star. The note read: 'Tomorrow, at three o'clock, in front of Westminster Abbey, the second half of the card will be given to you.'

At three o'clock the following day, Lévi was nervously pacing up and down before the Abbey. Suddenly a carriage drew up and a footman approached the French magus, made a sign to him, and then opened the carriage door for him to get inside. He did so; the carriage moved off.

He found himself sitting beside a lady in black, heavily veiled. She presented him with the other half of the card, so that the Seal of Solomon was complete; then she lifted her thick veil.

It is almost a pity to tell those who expect a romantic story that this mysterious stranger, who spoke to Lévi in French with a strong English accent, was not young and beautiful. She was, alas, elderly, with grey eyebrows, but her black eyes were of unusual brilliance. She mentioned the novelist Bulwer Lytton whom Lévi had apparently met,* and said that one of his friends had told her of Lévi's refusal to demonstrate his magical abilities for their curiosity, but she had a collection of magical weapons and vestments which she would very much like to show him, if he would swear not to reveal her identity; if he wouldn't, then, alas, she must drive him back to his hotel. Lévi swore not to tell a soul, and the lady with the grey eyebrows took him to her home.

It was through this unknown Englishwoman that the greatest of the French magi of the nineteenth century performed his celebrated evocation of Apollonius of Tyana, author of the *Nuctemeron*. The ceremony took place, after a period of preparation which lasted for twenty-one days, in a turret of the lady's house. The walls of this small room were covered with concave mirrors. Facing east was an altar with the pentagram cut into the white marble top; the pentagram was also painted in several colours on a white lambskin stretched out below. Lévi put on a loose white garment which reached to his feet (it was not unlike the robe he used to wear as a Catholic priest), placed a crown of vervain leaves, entwined with a gold chain, on his head, and grasped a sword in his hand; in the other hand he held the text of the ritual. A brazier burning charcoal of alder and laurel wood completed the magical equipment.

The magician began to chant the evocation in a low voice which rose slowly by degrees.

At the end of the ceremony he was not absolutely certain that it was the divine Apollonius that he had conjured to physical appearance. He describes the ancient Greek mage as a man completely wrapped in a shroud, but later his face must

* Crowley, reliving his life as Lévi, recalled 'very clearly' the famous author of *Zanoni*, but omits to tell us anything about him or even to describe his appearance.

have appeared through the shroud, for Lévi describes it as lean, melancholy and beardless, a description which does not correspond with the bearded, handsome, broad-browed Greek bust of Apollonius. The apparition did not speak directly to Lévi, but touched his hand, which immediately became numb, his arm too, and they remained in that state for several days.

The lady in whose house this singular ceremony was performed was a high initiate, but her liaison with the French magus did not last long. Lévi, true to his oath, does not reveal her identity, but he gives a summary of her character. 'I have no doubt,' he says, 'that she was addicted to necromancy and goetia [black magic]. At times she lost all self-control; at other times she yielded to meaningless fits of passion for which it was difficult to discover a cause. I left London without bidding her adieu.'

And what does Crowley, who was under no such oath of silence, tell us about her? His magical memory informed him that 'she was a countess, or something similar, and a veritable hag of Satan, the kind of lady who would poison people out of petty spite. She was in actual fact a murderess.'

The ex-priest Constant, after he had hurried away from her London house and the shade of the divine Apollonius, would probably have agreed with all this.

A fortnight later, Crowley in another trance on Æsopus Island, watched the life of Cagliostro pass in dumb show before his subconscious vision. But before this, he had to dispose of Lévi by seeing him being born.

'Aug. 24 [1918]. 3.40 p.m. I have been living in the past once more. Eliphas Lévi was born of one of those olive women who flush so doubly and so deeply. It was in a house-shop, on the outskirts (as I suppose) of a town of medium size. A blacksmith's was hard by. I came next to my death as Cagliostro.'

Crowley's magical memory of himself as Giuseppe Balsamo, better known as Count Cagliostro, the eighteenth-century Sicilian adventurer, is even less convincing; most of the details are at variance with the known facts of Cagliostro's life. He died in the fortress of San Leo, but Crowley, who was proceed-

ing backwards, saw him die in some mountain woodland while on a journey accompanied by a peasant youth in gay clothes!

The account of his birth, not in Palermo but in Tunis, is sheer carelessness: 'As Cagliostro I was born in a brothel, kept by my mother's mother. My mother was a half-Arab, my father presumably some rich traveller. It was a gorgeous brothel. It was because of my birth that my mother was married off to the fisherman person. There is a profound horror and gloom antecedent to this birth; at present it merely darkens as I seek to penetrate it.'

Crowley's incarnation before Cagliostro was an obscure and nameless individual, the result apparently of some serious magical error. He was a dark, pallid, pimply youth with hollow, purple-ringed eyes, a head too big for his body, and a haunted look.

The life of this melancholy youth was brief: he hanged himself at the age of twenty-six or -eight. No reason for this is given, but a bad relationship with his mother is suggested by the description of her as severe and authoritative. She was Dutch, German or German-Swiss, Crowley was not quite sure which. He was able to indulge his masochistic feelings as this pathetic and pimply youth passed before his impassioned gaze.

The next day, August the 25th, at ten minutes past five in the afternoon, another trance brought Crowley face to face with the incarnation of Heinrich van Dorn, a fellow with a little more dash. Crowley seems to have been shocked by his life, which he describes as futile and very black-magical; it was a tale of grimoires and vain evil rites, of pacts at which Satan mocked, and of crimes unworthy even of witches.

The same trance carried Crowley on to the previous incarnation. It began with the death of a forty-five-year-old Russian; his name was only given as Father Ivan. He was a librarian in a vast castle belonging to military monks.

Father Ivan, in spite of his name, may not have been a Russian, and the castle, hidden in a thick forest upon a plain surrounded by high mountains, seems to have been in South Poland or the Balkans. What is certain, however, is that he was

of noble birth and had been educated in Germany. In appearance, he was nondescript: a round face—a pyknosomatic type—grey eyes, ashen hair and moustache, pale skin, small, even teeth. But his character was remarkable. Through his proficiency in magic—he was a very full Major Adept—he had all the monks under his thumb, led them in political intrigues, and controlled their secret service.

Putting the events of Father Ivan's life into anti-clockwise order, we begin with his death. It happened in the middle of a necromantic ceremony which he was performing to help some exiled king get back his throne.

Before joining the monks, he took part in a religious war. Magic was, of course, his chief interest. He found a useful assistant in a Hungarian witch who lived in the forest: in one working there were werewolves and vampires, and a human sacrifice was its basis. The witch was later caught by unfurried peasants and burnt.

Father Ivan seems to have been a split personality. On the one hand, he was suave and genial; on the other hand, he had a violent temper—in a fit of rage he killed his favourite page, Stephen Otto, with a riding whip.

In his youth he was a great duellist, had a famous prostitute as his mistress and would frequently fight to defend her reputation. All these scrapes brought him into trouble with the university authorities, but he escaped expulsion by defending himself so ably in ancient Greek that everyone was enchanted.

The mistress is remembered in detail: she had two moles on her face, a deep scar under her left eye, a long, aquiline nose, a large, thin mouth, and a deep red flush. (This, it should be noted, was Crowley's idea of beauty; it is therefore perhaps not surprising that the lady attracted Father Ivan.) She was a good singer and played the mandola, the krumhorn and the citole. While she was the young Ivan's mistress, she was being kept by an old and fat burgomaster. She used to hide Ivan in her room so that he might watch the physical and mental cruelties she practised on him, the burgomaster.

There was another student in the town—it was presumably

Heidelberg—who was Ivan's rival for this courtesan's favours; but he, in a fit of pique, killed himself. In the scandal which followed she was thrown out of the town.

Crowley remembered her window, hung with red flowers, in a narrow street: it was as clear as if it had happened yesterday, especially a view of her leaning out with naked breasts, her white teeth gleaming as she called him. Through her, he met 'the wicked Bishop,' a mysterious person who used to ride masked into the town. He began to talk magic with Ivan, but, alas, he was murdered soon afterwards. It transpired that he was a special envoy of the Pope.

The incarnation before Father Ivan was that of a rich, well-born youth, more girl than boy, a hermaphrodite dreadfully malformed. Crowley clearly remembered his dark blue velvet breeches, lace cape and feathered hat. He was small, thin, tubercular, with a shock of fawn hair and a curvature of the spine. He had a fierce temper and was a hater of mankind. 'I died of syphilis contracted from a German Ritter who raped me,' wrote Crowley as he said farewell to this peculiar youth.

There were other incarnations, notably that of Sir Edward Kelley, the medium with the cropped ears who saw and heard angels for the learned Dr Dee. The adventurous nature, and dubious reputation, of Kelley made Crowley prefer him to John Dee the scholar; unfortunately, they were contemporaries, and Crowley had to settle for one or the other.

Crowley's past lives, like his life which was present, recede in a series of mysterious figures. It was left to his judgement to decide who they were. He was the only chronicler of his magical memory. The Camel, who witnessed him in his trances on Oesopus Island, did not take down the stories of these incarnations to his dictation; and if she had done so, we should be none the wiser. The consciousness of Aleister Crowley, that is the Aleister Crowley of the incarnation which lasted from 1875 to 1947, was as shifting, vague and undefined as any of the personalities of his magical memory. He seems to have been aware of this, judging from this extract from a letter he wrote in the last year of his life to Miss Jacintha Buddicom.

'I found it very useful for myself in discriminating between my magical actions and my exploits in climbing or gambling, or whenever I actually worked out a magical practice on the Jekyll and Hyde principles. I had at that time a little rose and cross—five rubies and a five-petal rose with a cross of six squares with various inscriptions, and I arranged with myself that when I put this on I should act in one character, and when I took it off again in another. This was a great help to me in sorting out the various elements of my being. It was not a matter of the magical personality so much, I simply built up two people of entirely different characteristics. One, for example, might be a scholar, a mountaineer, and explorer—a person of great athletic achievements, generous in disposition, noble and so on. The other character had a whole lot of other characteristics, very distinct from those of the first, and I used to punish myself if, when I was one character, I performed any action which was suited only to the other.'

CHAPTER NINE

The Redemption of Frank Bennett

CROWLEY's Abbey of Thelema in Sicily was a failure, as all such abbeys, outside the pages of Rabelais, are failures. It collapsed in its fourth year through the expulsion of Crowley from Italian soil, but if this had not happened, the very walls of the Abbey would have fallen down through boredom and lack of funds.

Few, too few, pupils availed themselves of the opportunity of going there and studying the new religion of Horus; and Crowley's over-indulgence in heroin and cocaine had an adverse effect on the Abbey's discipline. Without Crowley, the Abbey was nothing. He was more than its head. As the Crowned and Conquering Child of Horus, he was the inspiration of the new religion and, in some mysterious and rather bashful way, a member of the divine hierarchy which was the object of their prayers.

Why, one might ask, did the gods calmly allow the Abbey to go smash? The only plausible explanation, one which Crowley himself accepted, is that this was part of the ordeal which they had designed for its founder.

Apart from Crowley and his two mistresses, Leah Faesi and Ninette Shumway, who were called the First and Second Concubines of the Beast, there were five main pupils, not all of whom were at the Abbey at the same time. The first pupil, who took the magical name of Fiat Lux, was a young man who had been expelled from the American navy for his unbalanced behaviour. Crowley had of course great hopes of him, but instead of developing spiritually and morally, he fled from the Abbey in a fit of insanity. Another pupil, of whom Crowley had even greater hopes, was the Oxford graduate, Raoul Loveday; but before he had been long at the Abbey, he unfortunately contracted dysentery and died; and his death produced

an outcry in the *Sunday Express* which stimulated the Italian authorities to tell Crowley to go. A third pupil, Norman Mudd, professor of mathematics at Bloemfontein, South Africa, arrived when Crowley was clearing out, but he worked with him in Tunis and Paris and afterwards committed suicide by drowning. The two other pupils were Elizabeth Fox, an American who lived to tell the tale and who seems to have been none the worse for her ordeal; and Frank Bennett, a fifty-three-year-old Australian.

Crowley called Bennett a 'working-man.' He was in fact a Lancashire bricklayer who, sometime before 1914, emigrated to Australia. But in 1910, while still in England, he got in touch with Crowley, through Crowley's occult magazine, *The Equinox*, to ask his advice on the practice of Abra-Melin magic. One of Bennett's reasons for taking up magic was to get rid of pains in the head, and to silence the mysterious voices he heard. Crowley advised him to begin and end each (Abra-Melin) meditation with the banishing rituals of the Hexagram and the Pentagram (see page 197); to use the god-form of Harpocrates (a method of protecting oneself from outside influences); and to do less reading and more gardening.

Bennett was a member of Crowley's Order, the A : A : , and had taken the magical name of Progradior [*sic*], 'I will advance.' He was also a knight of the Order of Oriental Templars, which was under the authority of Baphomet (Crowley).

He had written to Crowley from Australia, and Crowley had invited him to come to Cefalu where, he, Crowley, said, he could hardly fail to benefit from the rigid and intense course of initiation which he would devise for him. And as an additional encouragement, Crowley explained that he had successfully fried the seeds of Miss Fox's ego.

Bennett arrived at Cefalu on the 17th of July, 1921, and found the *Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum* crowded. Indeed, Brother Fiat Lux had to be persuaded to give up his room to him. Elizabeth Fox, and the novelist Mary Butts and her companion, Cecil Maitland, were also there; the two English intellectuals, who had come to Sicily from Paris, were not

Crowley's pupils. Mary Butts was certainly in no need of discovering her true will, having discovered it already, to Crowley's annoyance. They were at the Abbey for the fun of it, that was all, and they left after a short stay.

In one of his letters, Crowley says, 'I was at this time much absorbed in my more serious work of curing deep-seated psychoses. . . .'

The time in question was 1921, and the psychosis that Crowley was mainly thinking of was Bennett's.

When Crowley came to describe these events in his *Autobiography*, he admitted that he had failed with Brother Fiat Lux, but, he says, Brother Progradior stood in brilliant contrast. His success with him was enough to wipe out a dozen failures.

Crowley cured psychoses and neuroses in this wise. He saw that the mind or psyche was divided into consciousness and unconsciousness (the bottom level, so to speak); that was part of the occult tradition. But the conception of the unconscious (or as Crowley calls it, the 'subconscious') as a dynamic and disturbing force, he took from Freud, without, of course, any acknowledgement. (It would, incidentally, have been rather difficult for Crowley to have made this acknowledgement in the light of his belief in himself as the greatest living psychologist.)

It followed that a neurotic or a psychotic was one whose subconscious mind was out of joint with his conscious mind.

Crowley's therapeutic technique, therefore, consisted in flattening out the conscious mind ('frying the seeds of the ego'), and leaving the subconscious to fill the gap and provide its own cure, a technique which seems to have something in common with that of his fellow thaumaturge Gurgieff.

There was, Crowley says, something clearly wrong with Bennett, but he didn't know what exactly.

Then, one afternoon, as Crowley, Leah (his First Concubine) and Bennett were going for a bathe, and just as they had reached the edge of the cliff above the bay, Crowley made a casual remark to Sir Frank 'which proved a winning shot.' What the

remark was, Crowley does not say, but he describes the effect. Bennett stopped short and gasped, his eyes starting from his head. A moment later, Crowley was surprised to see him dash down the path, 'like a young goat,' tear off his clothes and sprint into the sea.

Progradior never said a word until they had all returned to the road after their swim; then, with a pale face and in awed accents—I follow Crowley's account—he said, 'Please tell me again what you said just now?'

'How the devil should I remember?' replied Crowley.

Bennett recalled the subject to Crowley's mind; Crowley then repeated his remark which, he says, he found in no way striking.

Bennett asked him to discuss the subject more fully; and this Crowley did, but he fails in his account of the episode to say what the subject was, and concludes with the statement that as soon as they had returned to the Abbey, Bennett passed into a trance which lasted three days.

'He then came to me looking like an incarnation of pure joy, and told me what had happened. Without knowledge of his need I had unwittingly given him the key to the inmost treasury of his soul. One minute facet of Truth unveiled from the matrix by the wheel of my Word had let in the light. In three days he had achieved the critical initiation which had baffled him for nearly thirty years.'

This is most unsatisfactory: Crowley does not explain what was wrong with Sir Frank, and he leaves us entirely in the dark about the nature of his cure. We are asked to take his word for it, and that is all.

In conformity with the rule of the Abbey, Bennett began to keep a diary or magical record. Fortunately it has been preserved, and thus the nature of Bennett's psychosis, and Crowley's therapy (the 'winning shot') are revealed.

Bennett was due to go on a 'magical retirement,' that is, to spend a week or so in a tent or cave in contemplation according to elementary yoga technique laid down by Crowley; but before this happened, Crowley, who was going for a swim with Leah, asked him to accompany him.

Not being a good swimmer, Bennett was not anxious to go, but he consented.

It was a fine, windless morning, and the sea was of the colour of indigo blue, shading to pale green. All three got undressed and, naked, sat for a while in the shade of a rock, enjoying the view of the sea and sky. Suddenly Crowley said to Bennett:

'Progradior, I want to explain to you fully, and in a few words, what initiation means, and what is meant when we talk of the Real Self, and what the Real Self is.'

And there and then Crowley told him that it was all a matter of getting the subconscious mind to work; and when this subconscious mind was allowed full sway, without interference from the conscious mind, then illumination could be said to have begun; for the subconscious mind was our Holy Guardian Angel.

Crowley illustrated the point thus: everything is experienced in the subconscious mind, and it (the subconscious) is constantly urging its will on consciousness, and when the inner desires are restricted or suppressed, evil of all kinds is the result.

Crowley then went on to say that sex is mankind's most deeply-rooted problem; it starts very early in life and causes the most harm; it is carried with us throughout our lives, and torments most people with the tortures of hell. Sex is centred in the subconscious mind and no amount of suppression can keep it down, for it always works its way up again, and in all kinds of ways, such as in dreams and in sickness, and if unsatisfied, will turn one mad or to 'some hellish abortion.'

The explanation of all this, said Crowley, is that the sexual organs are the physical symbol of God and the Sun; they have creative power and therefore, of all the parts of the body, they are most like God and nearest to the Holy Guardian Angel.

These notions came as a great surprise to Frank Bennett. He had looked on the subconscious mind only as a receptacle, as it were, of all the knowledge and experience gained in life; and he thought of the Holy Guardian Angel as a kind of super-conscious mind towards whom we had to aspire: it was rather

like a climb up the Tree of Life to *Tiphereth*, the heart of man in the microcosm, or the sun in the macrocosm.

In a flash, Brother Progradior saw, as he had never seen before, that it was only a matter of listening to this subconscious mind, and in doing what it directs, for one to achieve one's True Will, the essence of the teaching of Crowleyanity. 'Thus,' concluded Bennett when he came to record this discussion, '*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law*, is TRUE.'

Then all three entered the water. The Beast and his Scarlet Woman, Leah, went for a good swim, but Frater Progradior, after these revelations, found himself feeling faint, and could only paddle about near the shore. Crowley's words still rang in his ears and would not leave him for an instant. Soon he came out of the water, got dressed and waited in the shade.

When the Beast had finished his swim and was getting dressed, Bennett asked him to repeat what he had said before entering the water. Reluctantly Crowley did so. Then he fell silent and, with Leah, began to walk back to the Abbey, Bennett following behind with Crowley's words weighing heavily upon him.

Later, when Bennett came to record this conversation in his diary, he wrote with deep emotion that if he had only known all this in the past, he would have saved himself endless trouble and sorrow; instead of which he had been taught the damnable teaching that all these desires were of the flesh and therefore of the devil and must be suppressed, and that man should not have such desires. 'Oh, God, what happiness I have lost through such devilish teaching. I, a perfectly healthy man, doing all I could to suppress these perfectly natural desires, and yet all the time finding that they were always as strong, if not stronger, than ever.'

That night, while drinking coffee, Crowley expounded further his theory of the subconscious mind and its relation to the conscious mind (which in Bennett's account is also referred to as the 'physical' mind). In this theory, Brother Progradior seemed to see 'the whole reason of evolution.' He explained it thus: all is contained, and must be contained, in the 'astral' (the

subconscious?), which is an inner body that produces the outer physical body. Bennett concludes his outline of these abstruse ideas with, 'It is so great this knowledge that my head feels as if it would split.'

He retired to his room at eleven p.m., perfectly healthy in body and mind, according to his description. He undressed, put on his pyjamas and got into bed, but felt no inclination to sleep. Then the revolutionary ideas of his master, the Beast, began to create turmoil in his mind. The more he tried to shut them out, the more persistent they became, until his head began again to feel that it would burst. The pain became greater, and he rolled and tossed about in agony. He looked at his watch: it was three a.m. The bed was wet through with perspiration. He felt he was suffocating, and leant out of the window for air. To relieve the intense pain in his head, he held it between his hands.

Now he began to feel that the room was cramping him, not even Crowley's paintings on the walls—one was of pilgrims in the mountains going towards a coral and jade pagoda—made it seem any bigger; he must get some air or go mad.*

Still holding his head, which now seemed to have swollen to

* The best of Crowley's paintings at the Abbey were on the walls and door of the Beast's room which he called appropriately *La Chambre des Cauchemars*, and on the walls and doors of the temple which was in the central and largest room. I have never seen these paintings, nor have I seen the remains of them which Mr Kenneth Anger has recently uncovered beneath coats of whitewash put on by later, and non-Thelemic, occupants of the Abbey, but two of them were described to me. One was of a naked man, who was being possessed from behind by Pan. He strains towards a naked woman who stands facing him with her arms outstretched. Pan, the son of Hermes, the Arcadian god of lust and magic who seduces men with his pipes and wantonness is the symbol of the libido in its sexual aspect; the woman, the priestess, is the symbol of the feminine force that man, by his nature, is driven to make contact with. It is a picture of man's urge towards union, expressed in sexual terms.

The other painting showed a group of men and women dancing on the sandy bank of a river along which float junks and sampans. In the background are sombre mountains, round which an enormous kind of Loch Ness monster, a huge snake with a phallic-shaped head winds its way: it is about to surprise the dancers on the river's edge. This is not the snake of Kundalini, the serpent of yoga, but the libidinous force which their jollification has aroused.

gigantic proportions, Brother Progradior ran out of the Abbey. Bare-footed and in his pyjamas, he walked on the hard, rough, mountain paths. He was suffocating, and he struggled and fought like a drowning man, but the more he struggled the greater grew the pain in his head. 'I became desperate,' he says, 'and fought like a madman. And it was in this desperate struggle that something within me said, "breathe deep," which I did, and at once I became much calmer.'

As he grew calm, he became aware that he was wet through with perspiration, and that the sharp stones and thorns were hurting his bare feet. Gradually his head became less painful, and it seemed that instead of something breaking out, something inside his head was closing in and, at the same time, unfolding.

He returned to his room in the Abbey; now his mind was still, but 'absolute blackness pervaded my whole being.' He looked at his watch; it was three thirty a.m. His delirious wandering about the hillside in the darkness had lasted only half an hour. He fell on to the bed and was soon fast asleep.

When he awoke, it was bright daylight. He realised that what Crowley had told him yesterday had been almost too much for him. He felt perplexed and miserable and lay for a long time in bed. Then he got up and dressed, but felt disinclined to leave his room; so he spent most of the day in it, silent and depressed and unable to concentrate. At nine thirty p.m., he went to bed but, as he expected, the feeling of breathlessness, and of his head being several sizes too large, came over him again; and all the time he could neither help nor hinder the thoughts that rushed upon him.

Amid the *melée* of thoughts, one persisted. When he came to write it down in his magical diary, he formulated it thus: 'What fools we men are! We make for ourselves a prison, and erect mirrors that cover all the four walls of this prison; and not being satisfied with this, we cover the ceiling with a mirror as well. And these [mirrors] are our five senses which reflect themselves in hundreds of forms until we are so befogged that we believe that these reflections of ourselves—of man as Man

and Bull—are all that is. But there are a few who have examined these mirrors and polished them, and discovered that the more the mirrors are polished the less reflection they give. Then a time has come when they have found that they are not mirrors at all, but only veils, and that one can see through the veils.

‘The polishing now begins in earnest, and the work turns to ecstasy—the true delight of the five senses which man ever tries to exceed. It is then revealed to him that he is more than Man and Bull; he is a Royal Eagle, ever soaring, with the strength of the Lion . . .

‘I have written this down just as I have perceived it, and it is just as the Beast has told me: that is, it is all on the astral plane.’

The whole thing was now so clear to Bennett that he wondered how he had failed to see it before. The subconscious self, which is just behind this veil of the senses, is the ultimate reality. And the subconscious self is trying all the time to tell this ‘to the stupid Man and the dull Bull so that he will carry out the designs of the Soaring Eagle and the Majestic Lion, which is his True Will, so that he may really and in truth become King, sit on his throne, and have conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel.’

The ‘stupid Man’ is the man who lives on the plane of consciousness alone; the ‘dull Bull’ is the subconscious which is isolated from consciousness. This was certainly the case with Bennett himself; his subconscious, or unconscious, as depth psychologists prefer to call it, was cut off from his consciousness, and to this extent he was dull, unenlightened, uninitiated. But Crowley had thrown open the riches of the subconscious for him, and given him the impulse to liberate himself, to set free the Eagle, the bird which soars to the heights and is thus a symbol for the spirit. To carry out the designs of the Soaring Eagle and the Majestic Lion—in alchemy the lion stands for Christ—was an urgent matter for Frank Bennett.

The rest of the symbolism—to become King, to sit on the throne, and to have conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel—is, I think, a piece of inflation which comes from a

sudden impact with the images from the unconscious.* On the other hand, the King is the Redeemer, and redemption was the aim of this Australian bricklayer when he set off from Australia in 1921 to join Crowley in Sicily.

The following night, the same excited condition, equivalent to mania, occurred: this is the trance lasting three days that Crowley in his *Autobiography* mentions rather contemptuously. Instead of trying to resist it, Bennett thought he would keep as quiet as possible. ‘So I lay down on my bed, and said I would consider it as a peculiar dealing of God with my Soul. And this idea had the effect of a quiet realisation of peace.’

But in spite of this, Brother Progradior couldn’t stop thinking; he thought of the line from *The Book of the Law*, ‘the Khabs is in the Khu, not the Khu in the Khabs!’ It suddenly occurred to him that this, in a veiled form, was what the Beast had said, namely that the subconscious mind was everything, and that this subconscious mind, which Bennett decided was the Khabs, was *in* the Khu, in the conscious mind, and not the other way round. In the sense that the unconscious determines consciousness, as every psychologist now agrees, this is true enough.

Bennett felt heartened by this new revelation. ‘This at once put all my fear and trouble at ease and rest, and again I felt a kind of ecstasy and peace; but I found that I was perspiring to such an extent that I was absolutely wet through.’

Then this idea came into his mind: the Lord’s Prayer was additional proof of the subconscious mind which is summed up in Crowley’s dictum, *Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law*. Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy WILL be done on Earth, as it is done in Heaven . . .

Bennett recited the Lord’s Prayer no further: *Thy will be done*. ‘And my ecstasy increased as the idea unfolded itself, which was, when a man does the Will of the Father on Earth, and is conscious that it is his True Will, that will becomes pure . . .’

* Conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel, who is attendant upon everyone, is one of the objects of Abra-Melin magic. *The Book of Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, transcribed and edited by MacGregor Mathers, was taken over lock, stock and barrel by Crowley.

He began to praise God with the 'hymn' which Crowley had written beginning, 'Thou, who art I, beyond all I am' (see page 137).

The next phase, while Bennett was in an ecstatic or manic state, brought forth ideas of grandeur: he had seen the truth and realised the law of doing one's true will as enunciated by the Beast; now he could go on to preach the law to labour leaders and to the working class, and show how each and every person could, by getting in touch with his subconscious, follow his true will. 'And in my imagination, I found myself a Great Leader, and a Member of Parliament, without my consent, but simply pushed there by both classes of the people.'

On Thursday, 1st September, Brother Progradior went on a magical retirement. He took with him Mary Butt's novel, *Ashe of Rings*, and a copy of a typescript called *Liber Samekh*, a ritual for the attainment of the knowledge and conversation of one's Holy Guardian Angel. This work, which is appropriately subtitled CONGRESSUS CUM DAEMONIA, was written by Crowley for Frater Progradior, under the stimulus of Crowley's successful 'initiation' of this brother. *Liber Samekh* is printed in full in *Magick in Theory and Practice*.

Bennett's magical retirement seems to have been only a partial one for daily he returned from his tent to the Abbey where he performed various chores and joined in the prayers—his diary mentions his attendance at 'Pentagram,' a banishing ritual to clear the air of evil spirits.

On 4th September, he made this entry in his record: 'Explored tangle of being a separate being. This was not a success, as I could not get away from the subconscious self, so tried to be conscious in the subconscious self as a separate being.'

The 'tangle of being a separate being' was the tangle of Bennett's consciousness, which Crowley had told him, rightly, was stifled through being cut off from his unconscious. Bennett apparently tried to define his disturbed consciousness—one could call his state of mind a neurosis—by an act of introspection. Then he attempted to use his consciousness as a torch to

enter the unconscious, which is a phase which sometimes occurs in psycho-analysis.

The rest of the time he read *Ashe of Rings*, which was printed in Paris by the Three Mountains Press. (It seems that Bennett had only the typescript of this novel, in which case Mary Butts had finished it at Cefalu. It provided the occasion for Crowley's remark that she cleared off after breakfast to write several pages of piffle.)

The following day, Bennett again meditated on the problem of being a 'separate self.' He was not aware that Crowley, too, had his psychological problems, and that they were the reverse of his own.

Crowley's consciousness (the 'separate self'), unlike Bennett's, was constantly invaded by the unconscious. Hence his visions of Secret Chiefs, gods and demons, wise men, chthonic creatures—images which exercised on him a fatal fascination. By identification with the image of the dragon, he became the Beast, a role which was incompatible with his conscious desire to be an English gentleman. But it was easier for him to abandon the role of the gentleman, along with the whole burden of ordinary living (i.e. consciousness), and let the unconscious take over. However, as this extract from Crowley's Cefalu diary shows, he was not unaware of the dangers of doing so, and on the brink he hesitated and posturised: 'I invoke Aiwass to break down my resistance, to whirl me away in the wind of His word, so that I rage ruthlessly through the world like a dust-devil in the desert. I invoke Him to destroy my consciousness of everything but His current. If that is the equivalent of insanity, very good. . . .'

The overpowering strength of Crowley's unconscious (which made his consciousness seem feeble) is the clue to his personality. His slogan, taken from Rabelais, *Do what thou wilt*, is not, as he thought, an exhortation to do one's (true) will, but an indication of one's subservience to the unconscious where one has no will at all.

Crowley was, in fact, a will-less man. He was also unaware of himself, and of the probable consequences of his actions, to

an unusual degree. And when he'd made a mess of things, he liked to remind his followers, and himself, that, after all, he was only the 'Babe of the Abyss,' the 'Child of Horus,' or the 'Fool,' which was the reverse side of the Wise Man.

'Meditation on the Past and Future,' wrote Progradior in his magical record on 5th September. 'This I may consider finished. For as I look across my past life, I find I have spent thirty-six years trying to find the right way. Twelve years ago I first saw the Beast, then I decided, half-heartedly, to follow him. And in the last few years, since I received *The Book of the Law*, I have done a great amount of work for his teaching. But since I have seen him, and lived in the Abbey with him, I have seen something of his inner life; and his great disappointment, not with his work, but with those who ought to be carrying out his work, in spreading his teaching, and the Law as it is received through him.

'I am determined he shall not be disappointed in me; for I will spend the rest of my life in spreading his teaching. I may not be able to do much. But by the help of him, the Beast, and of my own Real Self, which he has given me an insight of—I may do much. For he alone led me to the knowledge of my real subconscious self. Blessed be his Name for ever. And may the Gods grant that I may reincarnate with him again, and again be his disciple.'

These moods of elation are followed, as one would expect, with moods of depression. One talk with Crowley on the subconscious could not resolve all Bennett's spiritual problems. On 9th September, at six a.m., he got up and, after washing and dressing and putting his tent in order, began to meditate: the idea of God, of God existing in everything, came into his mind. God was everywhere, even in things which are bad.

Later, he meditated again, and again saw God in everything ugly and deformed, as well as in all things beautiful.

A paper which Bennett had written on astral journeys and the Cabbala came in for a certain amount of criticism from the Beast when Bennett showed it to him at dinner that day. In his

diary Bennett recorded that although he was never very good at the Cabbala, an inner voice had, on one occasion in the past, told him to lecture on it; and he had almost wept when he had made up his mind to do so. He had begun to study the Cabbala feverishly, and on the appointed day, he approached the lecture-hall with the feeling that he knew nothing about the subject. But in spite of this, the lecture was a great success, and he afterwards received many letters from people who had been present, saying how much he had helped them. He could express himself clearly and with confidence on the mystical Cabbala as long as he was talking to someone who knew nothing, or very little, of the subject, but as soon as he came to talk about it to Crowley, he was immediately struck dumb.

Crowley had made it a rule that the diaries of his pupils should from time to time be handed over for his inspection. When Crowley read about Brother Progradior's doubts about himself, and his inability to understand the Cabbala, he wrote in the margin that his, Crowley's, efforts to teach him the Cabbala were like pushing a donkey up a hill.

This comment filled Progradior with black despair, and that night he went to bed feeling he was in hell. He fell asleep and dreamed this dream:

The Beast 666 was doing his best to push a donkey up a narrow, steep mountain path.

The donkey came to a step in the path and refused to mount it; it walked to one side, then to the other as if trying to find a way round it.

And when the Beast 666 saw what the donkey was trying to do, he said, 'You must try to mount this step by yourself.' Then the Beast turned round and walked away down the mountain path.

It began to grow dark. Indeed, the farther the Beast walked away, the darker it grew; and when the Beast turned a bend and was lost to sight, it grew as black as pitch.

When the donkey saw that it was completely dark, it lifted its head high in the air and began to bray.

At this crucial point, the dreamer saw his own face beneath

the donkey's cheek-bones; it was just like the drawing the Beast had made of him, with closed eyes and a long, sad, troubled face.

This dream is no more or less than what it says. The Beast 666 was the Teacher, the light, and Progradior, who refused to mount to the heights, to the realm of spirit, was a donkey.

There is a complicated continuation of this dream, or vision as Bennett calls it, in which the donkey turns into a pig and routs with its snout in the filth of its sty, but the basic idea is the same.

In the morning Bennett recorded his dream in his magical diary; and in due course Crowley read it, and wrote in the margin, 'Excellent, John Bunyan!'

Before the end of the year, Bennett had left the Abbey and sailed for home where he spread, by all the means in his power, Crowley's word. And he continued, of course, to correspond with the Beast and his Scarlet Woman, Leah, on matters connected with the Order.

CHAPTER TEN

The High Magick Art

CROWLEY was a friendless man, not because he had no one to be friendly with, but because, like all fanatics, he wanted followers, not friends. In his letters he frequently wrote with affection (especially if he was asking for something), and sometimes with exaggerated affection, but he did not genuinely relate himself to the person he was writing to. This is not surprising, for he was hardly related to or cared about himself, at least on a personal level. Aleister Crowley the man meant little to him: his thoughts were entirely with Crowley the logos (*thelema*) of the New Aeon, or Crowley the Wanderer of the Wastes.

He mentions no friends in the chapters of his *Autobiography* which deals with his childhood, apart from his cousin Gregor Grant who was six years his senior; and he does not tell us anything of Grant's character or what happened to him or what Grant meant to him, except to mention that during the course of a game of Indian Mutiny, he begged Grant, who was playing the role of the mutineer Hyder Ali, to be cruel to him. Crowley explains this, rightly, as due to a masochistic strain in his nature.

As for the friends he made when he had grown up, such as the mountaineer Oscar Eckenstein, he describes them entirely from the point of view of his own needs, as if they had no existence out of his mind.

During his last year at Cambridge, when he was twenty-three, he met a man ten years older than himself. This was a certain Pollitt, who, according to Crowley, had come up to Cambridge merely to dance for the Footlights Club. He called himself Diane de Rougy after the celebrated courtesan and actress, Liane de Pougy. Crowley also describes him as a female impersonator, but by this he presumably meant an actor, not a transvestite. The two men became friends; the friendship

deepened; Crowley called it the first intimate friendship of his life.

His account of Pollitt has an odd undertone, more odd perhaps than the usual undertone of Crowley's writings. Here was a great friendship, but the brief description of it reveals that it entirely lacked a basis, at least of friendship. The description of Pollitt's face is not encouraging—it was tragic-looking on account of the terrible hunger of the eyes and the bitter sadness of the mouth. Only his pale gold hair which, like Oscar Wilde, he wore long, was beautiful in Crowley's eyes. Crowley's brief remarks about this intimate friend of his, a friend who seemed to mean a great deal to him, are unexpectedly detached and unaffectionate. And Pollitt's attitude to Crowley was no warmer; he showed not the slightest interest in any of his occupations, nor had he any sympathy with his poetical and magical ambitions. What, then, had they in common? What was the basis of their relationship, described by Crowley as the 'purest and noblest'?

The answer is not far away. Crowley does his best to cover up the secret by veiled language and by interposing in his account of Pollitt the information that his, Crowley's, sexual life at this time was intense, and that his relations with women were entirely satisfactory; then he rudely kicks aside the veils with this remark: 'The relation between us was that ideal intimacy which the Greeks considered the greatest glory of manhood and the most precious prize of life.'

Pollitt was probably the first man who enabled Crowley to indulge his feminine feelings. Through him he undoubtedly gathered some of the matter for that rare, obscene work, *The Scented Garden of Abdullah the Satirist of Shiraz*, also entitled, *Bagh-I-Muattar*, published privately in 1910. One of its homosexual poems called 'The Riddle' is, in a way, dedicated to this intimate friend, for when the first letter of each couplet is read downwards, there is revealed the name of Herbert Charles Jerome Pollitt.

Crowley was a lonely as well as a friendless man. His loneliness is reflected in his odd companions; for when the utter

hopelessness of his creed and the subterranean nature of his personality became clear, only the most stalwart and eccentric of characters were encouraged to enlist under his banner. As long as they had a 'capacity for magic,' that is to say a sympathy for the Beast and his work, they were acceptable.

Ultimately Crowley could not understand why he was as he was; he could not even understand why he had a body, why he, Aleister Crowley, extended into space: he was, surely, only a phantasm from the universal mind—cold, remorseless, dedicated.

With his hypnotic eyes, one pupil of which was larger than the other, he glared at a new aspirant to the Great Work, as if he could solve the mystery of the Master's anguished existence.

Among Crowley's papers is a typescript entitled

The
Book of the HIGH MAGICK ART
that was worked by
Frater O.S.V. 6° = 5□
And Frater L.T. 2° = 9□
The Paris Working
Jan-Feb 1914 e.v.

Frater O.S.V. was Crowley, the 6° = 5□ signifying the grade of Adeptus Major in the Order of the Golden Dawn. Crowley had surpassed this grade by 1914, but as it was the grade which corresponded with magical operations, he used it on this occasion. O.S.V. stands for *Ol Sonf Vorsg*, which means 'I reign over you' from the First Key or Call in the so-called Enochian or angelic language of Dr John Dee and Sir Edward Kelley. It was called angelic because it was given to them by angels whom Kelley saw in the shewstone or crystal.

Ol sonf vorsg goho iad balt lansh calz. 'I reign over you,' saith the God of Justice, 'in power exalted above the firmaments of wrath.'

Frater L.T. was Frater Lampada Tradam or Brother 'I will hand on the torch.' I do not wish to reveal his real name. Like

Crowley, he was a poet. He was at this time about twenty-four years of age. Crowley was thirty-nine. He had met Crowley five or six years before at Cambridge, and had immediately fallen under his spell.

The place in which this high magick art was practised was Paris, hence the sub-title, *The Paris Working*. The time, January and February of the year 1914 during the *era vulgari* which was Crowley's sarcastic phrase for *Anno Domini*.

The Paris Working is mentioned in the unpublished part of the *Autobiography* in these words:

'At the end of 1913, I found myself in Paris with a Zelator of the Order, Frater L.T. I had been working on the theory of the magical method of the O.T.O. and we decided to test my conclusions by a series of invocations.

'We began work on the first day of the year, and continued without interruption for six weeks. We invoked the gods Mercury and Jupiter; and obtained many astonishing results of many kinds, ranging from spiritual illumination to physical phenomena.'

As Crowley does not explain what 'the theory of the magical method of the O.T.O.' is, the reader is left to believe that these invocations were of a purely ceremonial nature, and that the 'many astonishing results' is a phrase of mere enthusiasm on the part of the magicians.

The Paris Working is the record of a series of invocations of Mercury—in the actual document he is more often called by his Greek name of Hermes—and of Jupiter for the usual purpose as taught in the Golden Dawn, that of obtaining wisdom from the one god and priestly power from the other; but because of the addition of a sexual rite between the two magicians, the results were expected to be much more powerful, and the (so to speak) by-products of the workings of considerable practical use. In fact Crowley had in mind that Jupiter would bring them gold, and Hermes would give them inspiration for the writing of a successful story or two, or at least an excellent poem.

The letters O.T.O. stand for *Ordo Templi Orientis*, or Order

of the Templars of the East, an occult society which was founded in Germany at the beginning of this century. Its leaders were well-known Grand Masters of masonry, such as Franz Hartmann, Heinrich Klein and Karl Kellner. They had decided to found the O.T.O. after the Viennese Karl Kellner had returned from an extensive tour in the East—where he had been initiated by the Arab fakir, Soliman ben Aifha, and the Indian yogis, Bhima Sen Pratap and Sri Mahatma Agamya Guru Paramahansa—and expounded to them the mysteries of yoga and the philosophy of the left-hand path which he called 'sexual magic.' Thus, in 1902, the *Ordo Templi Orientis* was constituted for an inner circle of adepts who, in the light of this new and exciting knowledge, found the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of masonry rather tame, and the ninety-seven degrees of the tiresome Rite of Memphis quite unnecessary.

The supposed sexual practices of the Templars which resulted in their suppression at the beginning of the fourteenth century, attracted these German and Austrian occultists to call themselves Oriental Templars: it is true that their new knowledge had been derived from the East, but they liked to make the romantic suggestion, and even claim, that their order had inherited the secret rites of the Knights Templar as well. They were not, it is necessary to say, the first occult society of modern times to do this.

The *Oriflamme*, the organ of these 'Oriental' Templars, announced the new direction of their secret society in these words:

O, disciple!
Who seeks it, will suffer;
Who finds it, conceal it;
Who uses it, let no one know.
He who is a true philosopher
Shall remain unknown.

Having warned everyone to keep it dark, the *Oriflamme* then proceeded to shed a little light on it, or, at least, to whet one's appetite for further information. It announced that 'Our Order

possesses the KEY which opens up all Masonic and Hermetic secrets, namely, the teaching of *sexual magic*, and this teaching explains, without exception, all the secrets of Nature, all the *symbolism* of FREEMASONRY and all systems of religion.' But what sexual magic was exactly, and what one had to do to practise it correctly, was given out only by word of mouth to members of the O.T.O. who could be trusted.

Now, Aleister Crowley had also travelled to the East and studied yoga and learned as much as he could about Eastern sexual practices—he was, in fact, in India at the same time as Kellner, although they never met or knew of each other's existence—and he was publishing these things in his voluminous works in a manner which was sometimes open and sometimes veiled. Indeed, there is little in his writings which has not a sexual allusion or undertone.

By 1912, when several of the bulky volumes of Crowley's *Equinox* had appeared, the leaders of the O.T.O. realised that if they didn't stop this English diabolist there would soon be no secret to preserve. They decided, therefore, to invite him into the O.T.O. Accordingly, Theodor Reuss, who was now head of the Order, Kellner having since died, paid an unexpected visit one night to Crowley at his flat in Victoria Street.

Crowley does not tell us much about Reuss's visit; he says that Reuss accused him of publishing the main secret of the O.T.O. in a little book of prose poems called *The Book of Lies*. He affected surprise at Reuss's charge, but soon these two adepts, one the head of the A.∴ A.∴, the other the head of the O.T.O., were eagerly discussing the use of sex in religious and magical rites.

As a result of this meeting, Crowley was summoned a few months later to Berlin where, with the kind of ceremony beloved of occultists and masons, he was elected head of the Order for Britain—'the Supreme and Holy King of Ireland, Iona, and all the Britains that are in the Sanctuary of the Gnosis.'

The O.T.O. was not alone in this field: sex as a subject of serious interest was also being investigated by such persons as



The Priestess Astarte: Drawing by Crowley
(Collection, Edward Fitzgerald)



(Left)
Frank Bennett



(Right)
Victor Neuburg

THE HIGH MAGICK ART

Havelock Ellis and, more thoroughly, by Freud; and the current of philosophical and religious ideas had been blowing from the East for some time already. In the early part of the nineteenth century Schopenhauer, author of *The World as Will and Idea*, had found confirmation of his own thought in the Vedas. 'Will,' says the sage Kanatkumar in one of the Upanishads, which have been described as the wisdom of the Vedas, 'is above mind. When man wills he thinks, calls up speech which breaks into names. Sentences are made out of words, actions are made out of thoughts. Everything is founded on will; everything forms will; everything lives in will.'

On a popular level, Eastern thought was being introduced by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who founded in 1875 (the year Crowley was born) the Theosophical Society. The time was ripe for the reception of these ideas. To the pious Christian, however, it was not surprising that these pagan religions were tainted with sex.

What is this 'sexual magic' which the high-grade mason, Karl Kellner, had learnt from Arab and Indian yogis and which Crowley, who had also travelled in the East and studied yoga, had discovered for himself? It is the technique of the *Vamacharis*, or followers of the left-hand path, so-called because their worship is performed with women who are lunar or of the left.

The idea of sexual intercourse as part of religious worship seems to the Western mind as a flat contradiction, but this is only because of the duality, or rather antimony, in Christianity between God and nature, and on account of a self-conscious and depreciatory attitude towards bodily functions. This is not so from the point of view of Indian Tantricism, for everything in the Indian way of life proceeds from the power of God, called Shakti. There is no contradiction between God and nature in Tantricism. The figure of a man and a woman coupled in sexual union is not thought impure by most Indians. On the contrary, it is considered a veritable sacrificial rite. The enjoyment of sex is not to a Hindu an obstacle to worship, but an essential element, although it is practised only by a sect of worshippers called Tantrics, and by very few of them.

There is another important qualification which is ignored by those who are abhorred at the thought of sex as part of religious worship. It is that the worshipper has an attitude towards the woman which is quite different from that of an ordinary person performing the sexual act. Besides, the woman in the Tantric rituals behind the *Panchatattva* is usually the man's wife. But whether she is or not, she is not thought of as a woman as such, but as a symbol of divinity, of the Divine Mother. As one scholar has said of the ritual, 'Western people often see obscenity where there is only symbolism.'* Those in the East who practise the form of worship which involves sex are not approaching the subject from the point of view of ordinary consciousness. They are in fact yogis, that is to say men who have developed in themselves that force called kundalini which aims to unite their spirit with the Godhead. The woman, too, is on the same plane of development. Together they approach the 'Feast of the Five Elements' or the *Panchatattva* in a frame of mind which is not earthly but mystical. The five elements of which they partake are the four of Western occult tradition, namely Fire, Air, Water and Earth, represented respectively by Wine, Flesh, Fish and Cereals, and a fifth element of Spirit or Ether, the purpose of which is to synthesise or purify the other four elements. This fifth element is symbolised by the union of Shiva and Shakti, and on the earthly plane by sexual union. It must be borne in mind that this sexual union, called *Maitbuna*, would fail in its purpose if it were performed in the wrong frame of mind and by those in whom the kundalini force had not been aroused. The practitioner would experience only a commonplace orgasm instead of that most sublime of all experiences called *samadhi*, the union with God.

Before we can understand this ritual, we must get away from the sense of sin which to a greater or lesser degree accompanies the performance of sex in the West. Eating and drinking sustain the body and sexual intercourse propagates it. They are all very natural functions and there is no reason why intercourse, which is the most intense of physical experiences, if regulated as pre-

* Sir John Woodroffe, *Shakti and Shākta*.

scribed in the Tantras, should not serve an end superior to that of mere sensuality.

Not having access to the records of the German branch of the O.T.O., I cannot pretend to know the nature of the sexual magic which Karl Kellner, Reuss and company practised; but I am certain that it was not in the manner of the *Panchatattva*. In the first place, these German occultists were not Orientals, neither were they yogis. At best they could only have performed a debased form of sexual magic: their photographs, with the exception perhaps of that of Franz Hartmann, hardly reveal the faces of holy men, only those of *Wurst-und-Sauerkraut-Adepten*, clad, like *Bürgermeister*, in their flamboyant robes and insignia of office.

Crowley, on the other hand, was not so smug; neither was he, like Karl Kellner, an ironmaster with a prosperous business to worry about. He had abandoned his wife Rose, the daughter of Frederick Festus Kelly, vicar of Camberwell, after she had been his seer in the greatest magical operation he had ever performed, namely that in Cairo during 1904 when Aiwass dictated *The Book of the Law* to him; and by 1914 he was coming near the conception of himself as Alastor the Destroyer, and the Wanderer of the Wastes. In his case it would not have been surprising had he stayed out East and became a Tantric yogi and practised, after years of preparation, these mysterious rites. *The Paris Working*, which is a document not intended for publication, can tell us, after it has been deciphered, to what extent Crowley practised sexual magic and with what success.

'This is the preliminary account of this Operation of Magick Art' announces the opening sentence of *The Paris Working*. There was no later and full account of this operation, but another document called *The Esoteric Record of the Workings*, which Crowley wrote up from notes, extends the subject.

The Paris Working was Crowley's first systematic attempt at sexual magic which, in his *Autobiography*, he conceals behind a bland and innocuous statement. As a leader of the O.T.O. he felt obliged to practise sex magically. And he began with a man instead of a woman, which is contrary to the spirit

of the *Panchatattva*, because he was sometimes attracted to men, and he happened to be living in Paris with a brother of the Order, one whom he had promised to initiate into these higher mysteries. The deities to be invoked were the same as those whom he had previously worshipped in the Golden Dawn with ceremonial rituals. He now wished to find out if this new sexual method was more efficacious.

When writing about sex, Crowley usually adopted an ironically pompous tone, as if at heart he did not believe in what he was saying. It was a huge joke, really, to announce in a parsonic voice that he had been attending to his devotions when all he meant by this was that he'd been committing fornication with a prostitute.

In a preamble Crowley announces the programme:

'Sol in Libra. An IX [that is, the 9th year after the beginning, in 1904, of the aeon of Crowleyanity]. Fra. O.S.V. [Crowley] accomplished the task laid on him by the Great White Brotherhood by issuing No. 10 of *The Equinox*. Thereby he being brought to the end of his resources he bethought himself to pray unto the Great Gods of Heaven that they should bestow favour upon him—for even as did Job, he cursed not God at all—that he might make a new sacrifice unto the Magnum Opus [the Great Work; in this context it means a variety of things from freeing mankind from its burdens to obtaining contact with his Holy Guardian Angel].

'Now there appeared Fra. Lampada Tradam, having passed through the ordeal of a Neophyte to undertake the task of Zelator [the next grade in the A.∴ A.∴], as by his oath bound.

'Also for months 18 had Fra. O.S.V. been initiated by Fra. M. into the Greater Mysteries, and been by him inducted into the Throne of the Order of the Temple.'

Frater M. or Merlin was Theodore Reuss. According to this statement, Reuss had initiated Crowley into the Greater Mysteries [of sex], but the phrase must not be taken too literally. The rest of the sentence is a reference to the enthronement in Berlin of Baphomet, the title Crowley took when he joined the O.T.O. Baphomet was a most suitable title for a leader of

an organisation supposedly derived from the Knights Templar, for this was the name of the idol which they were accused of worshipping. In other respects, too, Baphomet was appropriate, for like Pan, he enjoined men to lust and enjoy all things of the senses.

'Moreover it is fitting to reconstitute this Order [the O.T.O.] in its splendour, for at the entry of Sol into Aries An X [1914] is the 600th anniversary of the Martyrdom of J.B.M. [Jacobus Burgundicus Molensis or Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar who in 1314 died at the stake.*]'

Another reason given in *The Paris Working* for commencing these invocations was that 'a casual invocation of Pan by these brethren had produced a great marvel.'

Crowley does not say what the great marvel was, but an invocation of Pan clearly means in this context an act of sex; it is described as casual, for it happened without careful preparation.

'All things therefore tending thereto, let us take up the Work with piety and zeal, and in holy charity and great chastity of body and soul. Amen.

'Written at four thirty of the afternoon on the last day of the vulgar year 1913.'

These pious phrases from *The Paris Working* are directed, as it were, against the religious zeal of his parents and, by identification, against the whole of Christendom.

'Thus therefore to the Glory of the Ineffable One of the Dove and of the Serpent, did these two Brethren begin their working. First. From four fifty-five to five thirty-five did I confess myself, even I, Frater O.S.V., 6° = 5□, receiving the Sacrament from a certain priest A.B. and thereby being much comforted did I set myself to the painting of the prime pentacle of this book.'

The dove is a symbol of conjugal love as well as of the spirit; the serpent is a symbol of instinctual life, of evil, and of wisdom too. According to Freud, the serpent has a phallic signifi-

* He was accused, *inter alia*, of spitting on the cross and performing acts of homosexuality.

cance; in *The Paris Working* these two symbols stand for the yoni and the lingam or the female and male sexual organs.

I do not know who the priest A.B. was, but I am certain that he was a priest only in a Crowleian sense, that is to say, he participated in these occult mysteries. The phrase about receiving the sacrament from him signifies that the two men indulged in an act of sex.

While painting the pentacle or magic symbol, doubtless with Mercurial attributes (it has not been preserved), inspiration came to him 'from the Most High,' from where inspiration always comes. It was this: although Pan was the Master of the work that Crowley proposed to perform with Brother L.T., without divine wisdom they would get nowhere. As Hermes was the god of wisdom, as well as the patron of magic and an arch-wizard himself, he and not the fantastic Arcadian Pan was rightly the god of this particular operation of magic art. 'Therefore say I, let Hermes first be invoked.'

So much by way of preamble.

The First Working of this High Magick Art was therefore an invocation of Hermes, who was also the god of thieves and vagabonds. At eleven thirty of the last day of the year 1913, Crowley duly opened the temple, 'invoking also Thoth by the Egyptian formulae.'

Thoth is the Egyptian form of Hermes, and the ceremony which opened the temple—it has been preserved and is called Ritual 671—was an invocation of the Egyptian god. *The Paris Working* comprises in all twenty-four workings, and it seems that on each occasion the temple was opened with Ritual 671, either in full or in a shortened form. It is too long to quote here in full.

THE BUILDING OF THE PYRAMID

The Magnus with Wand. On the Altar are Incense, Fire, Bread, Wine, the Chain, the Scourge, the Dagger and the Oil. In his left hand he taketh the Bell.

Two strokes on the bell.

Hail! Asi! Hail, Hoor-Apep! Let
The Silence Speech beget!

Banishing spiral dance (to the left).

The Words against the Son of Night,
Tahuti speaketh in the Light.
Knowledge and Power, twin warriors, shake
The Invisible; they roll asunder
The darkness; matter shines, a snake.
Sebek is smitten by the thunder—
The Light breaks forth from under.

He goes to the West, in the centre of the base of the triangle of Thoth, Asi and Hoor.

O Thou, the Apex of the Plane
With Ibis head and Phoenix Wand
And Wings of Night! Whose serpents strain
Their bodies, bounding the beyond.
Thou in the Light and in the Night
Art one, above their moving might!

He scourges the buttocks, cuts a cross on the heart and binds chain round forehead, saying:

The Lustral Water! Smite thy flood
Through me—lymph, marrow and blood!
The Scourge, the Dagger and the Chain
Cleanse body, breast and brain!

He anoints the wounds, saying:

The Fire informing! Let the oil
Balance, assain, assoil.
(Etc., etc.)

(Thus is the Great Pyramid Built.)

Initiation Followeth.

I know not who I am!
I know not whence I come.
I know not where I go.
I seek, but what, I do not know!

I am blind and bound; but I
Have heard one cry
Ring through Eternity:
Arise and follow me!

THE MAGIC OF ALEISTER CROWLEY

Asar Un-nefer! I invoke
The Fourfold Horror of the Smoke.
Unloose the Pit! by the dread Word
That Seth Typhon hath heard
Sazaz Sazaz Adanatasan Sazaz. (*Pronounce this backwards,
but it is very dangerous; it opens the Gates of Hell.*)

A pause.

The Fear of Darkness and of Death,
The Fear of Water and of Fire,
The Fear o' th' Chasm and the Chain,
The Fear of Hell and the Dead Breath,
The Fear of Him, the demon dire
That on the Threshold of the Inane
Stands with his dragon fear to slay
The Pilgrim of the Way.
These I pass by with force and care,
Advance with fortitude and wit
In the straight Path; or else their snare
Were surely infinite.

*Staggers and falls back to earth. Suit action to words, using chain,
scourge and dagger.*

Asar! who clutches at my throat?
Who pins me down? Who stabs my heart?
I am unfit to pass within
This Pylon of the Hall of Maat.

This ritual in full took half an hour to perform. At the end of it, the two magicians, who had successfully hurried through the rendered veil (of matter), were in the right frame of mind for the rest of the ceremony. In his account of this, the First, Working, Crowley is unusually succinct. He says, 'And upon the stroke of midnight did the first words and acts of the *Accendat* strike upon the *Akasa*.' He never makes clear what he understands by the *Accendat*, a word which means 'Let it be lighted up,' and is said of the first words or prayers or incantations. The *Akasa* is a Sanscrit word for the ether or the all-pervading material of the universe. However, the illumination that Crowley had in mind at this stage of the proceedings was

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of the body as well as the spirit. And at some point soon afterwards, the two brethren began reciting this versicle or Holy Hymn to Hermes.

*Jungiter in vati vates: rex inclyte rhabdon
Hermes tu venias, verba nefanda ferens.*

The sexual allusion of these verses is, I think, more or less clear.

'Then *immediately* did Mercury manifest in his first form as it is written in *Liber Ararita*,* I, 8: "Thou hast appeared to me as a young boy mischievous and lovely, with Thy winged globe and its serpents set upon a staff."'

Astrally, Crowley saw the temple full of thousands of flashing caducei of gold and yellow, the serpents alive and moving and Hermes bearing them. 'But,' said Crowley, 'so young and so mischievous was He that the sacrifice was impossible.' That is to say, Hermes had manifested in L.T. or L.T. had become the god, but he—L.T. or Hermes, it didn't matter whom at this stage—behaved in such a mischievous or silly fashion that the sex act was not brought to fulfilment.

'Then I closed the temple at one forty a.m. *die Jovis* [Thursday] thinking to renew the Rite in the evening, in the hope of obtaining Hermes in his next phase.

'And Blessing and worship to the Holy One, the Ineffable, the Lord of the Serpent and the Dove! Amen.'

The evoking of gods and the conjuring up of demons to manifest appearance is part of the magical tradition. Crowley's teacher in the Golden Dawn was Allan Bennett who afterwards became a Buddhist monk in Burma. In one of Bennett's notebooks, dated 1899, when he was seeing Crowley daily, there is a parchment talisman of Mercury. Underneath is written: 'Vitalised Wednesday between two thirty and four thirty by placing upon the Spirit's Head and (Nov. 8th, I think) binding him to form a link with it and to infuse into it all the power he had in the way of Wisdom (cocaine).'

* *Liber DCCCXIII vel Ararita sub figura DLXX* [by Aleister Crowley, about 1909]. This is part of one of the so-called 'Holy Books.'

In *Magick in Theory and Practice*, Crowley explains the order of this kind of ceremony. Firstly, the magician invokes the god by *devout supplication* and begs that he may deign to send the appropriate Archangel. The magician then *beseeches* the Archangel to send the Angel or Angels of that sphere to his aid. At the Angel's appearance, he *conjures* him to send the intelligence in question; and this intelligence he *conjures with authority* to produce the spirit, and to the spirit he *issues commands*. Thus, it was neither difficult nor dangerous for Allan Bennett or (to give him his magical title) Brother Iehi Aour, once he'd got the spirit before him, to place his talisman on his head. The addition of the word 'cocaine' reveals that this drug was used in the ceremony and it doubtless helped the materialisations.

The next invocation of Hermes, described under the rubric of the Second Working, was done as planned during the following night. Crowley had meanwhile made out of yellow wax an image of the god in the form of a phallus. He was pleased with his handiwork and described it as very beautiful.

The brethren arrived in a receptive frame of mind, assisted by a good dinner with brandy or champagne and perhaps the drug proper to Hermes, anhalonium lewinii, which gives one beautiful visions.

The incense* was lit and the temple opened at eleven twenty p.m. Three of Crowley's poems were used in the invocation.

At the Ending of the Light,
At the Limits of the Night,
Stood Mercury before the Unborn ones of Time.
Then was formulated the Universe;
Then came forth the Gods thereof,
The aeons of the Bornless Beyond.
Then was the Voice vibrated;

* The Beast was rather partial to incense, even for secular purposes. I found among his papers after his death this letter from a landlord of his in the 'thirties: 'My dear Crowley, please forgive me if I ask you to discontinue the use of incense while in this place. I don't mind it myself, but too many people can't tolerate it. I had a complaint this afternoon—and unfortunately it is too insidious to be confined to one room. A room at the very top of the house might allow of its use, but not the one you occupy at present, Yours etc.'

Then was the Name declared.
At the Threshold of Entrance,
Between the Universe and the Infinite,
In the Sign of the Enterer
Stood Mercury, as before him
The aeons were proclaimed.
In Symbols did he record them;
In Breath did he vibrate them;
For between the Light and the Darkness did he stand.

This was taken from 'The Rite of Mercury' which was printed, with rites to other gods and planets, in *The Equinox*. Collectively, they were called 'The Rites of Eleusis'; they were publicly performed at Caxton Hall in October and November, 1910, by 'Mr Aleister Crowley with distinguished assistance' which included Miss Leila Waddell, an Australian violinist.

The next invocatory poem which in *The Equinox* immediately follows the one aforequoted is under the rubric

The Temple in Darkness:

O Light in Light! O flashing wings of fire!
The swiftest of the moments of the sea
Is unto thee
Even as some slow-foot Eternity
With limbs that drag and wheels that tire.
O subtle-minded flame of amber gyre,
It seems a spark of gold
Grown purple, and behold!
A flame of grey!
Then the dark night-wings glow
With iridescent indigo,
Shot with some violet ray. . . .

O Hermes! Messenger of inmost thought!
Descend! Abide! Swift coursing in my veins
Shoot dazzling pains,
The Word of Selfhood integrate of Nought,
The Ineffable Amen! The Wonder wrought.
Bring death if life exceed!

Bid thy pale Hermit bleed,
Yet life exude;
And Wisdom and the word of him
Drench the mute mind grown dim
With quietude!
Fix thy sharp lightnings in my night! My spirit free!
Mix with my breath and life and name thy mood
And self of Thee.

Finally, these verses which are too long to quote in full:

Majesty of the Godhead, Wisdom-crownéd Tahuti, Lord of the
Gates of the Universe: Thee, Thee we invoke!
O Thou of the Ibis head: Thee, Thee we invoke!
Thou who wieldest the Wand of Double Power: Thee, Thee we
invoke!
Thou who bearest in Thy left hand the Rose and Cross of Light
and Life: Thee, Thee we invoke!
O Thou whose head is as an Emerald, and Thy Nemyss as the
night sky-blue! Thou whose skin is of flaming orange, as though it
burned in a furnace: Thee, Thee we invoke!

This part of the ceremony took twenty minutes to perform.
At eleven forty, the Latin versicle *Jungiter in vati vates* was
intoned, and as before coincided with the sexual part of the
rite. It concluded about eleven fifty-five. 'Immediately Fra. L. T.
completely lost control, and although a man of some education,
degraded himself and dispersed the holy invoked Prana* by
defacing this volume† with meaningless scrawls opposite,‡
declaring them to be the inspiration of Thoth, which were
unworthy even of his ape.§ In this way a great part of the virtue
of the rite was lost.' However, some results were obtained.

The temple was closed at about two a.m.
In Crowley's masterpiece, *Magick in Theory and Practice*, he

* The vital forces.

† *The Esoteric Record*.

‡ On the verso side of the page.

§ It is said that Thoth, and Mercury too, has two sides or voices, one
of which speaks wisdom, the other—the side of the ape—gibbers non-
sense.

writes that immediately after the Licence to Depart, and the
concluding of the work, the Magician should sit down and
write up the record. This, then, was Brother L.T.'s task which
he had failed to do: hence Crowley's annoyance.

The Licence to Depart or dismissal of the evoked forces,
whether they be Beelzebub or Bilifares, is stated in these words:

'And now I say unto thee, depart in peace unto thine habita-
tions and abodes—and may the blessing of the Highest be upon
thee in the name [here is mentioned the divine name suitable
to the operation, or a name appropriate to redeem the spirit in
question]; and let there be peace between thee and me; and
[for the future] be thou very ready to come, whensoever thou
art invoked and called!'

If, however, the spirit does not disappear immediately, it is
a sign that there's something wrong. The magician should at
once reconsecrate the magical circle with the utmost care. Then
he should repeat the dismissal, and if this does not make the
spirit depart, he should perform the appropriate 'banishing
ritual' and add conjurations to the same effect. 'In these circum-
stances, or if anything else suspicious should occur, he should
not be content with the apparent disappearance of the spirit,
who might easily make himself invisible and lie in ambush to
do the Magician mischief when he stepped out of the Circle—
or even months afterwards.'

The life of a magician is clearly one of dedication.

Fortunately, the results of the Second Working have been
preserved in *The Esoteric Record*. From it we learn that after
invoking Hermes, 'according to the Secret Rites' (i.e. the act of
sex between the two magicians), the god proceeded to answer
the questions put to him. Brother O.S.V. asked the questions
and Brother L.T. heard the replies, that is to say, the god was
invoked in him or he saw and heard the god astrally.

The first question that O.S.V. asked was, 'Are we working
right?'

'No,' was the disconcerting answer.

'What's wrong?' asked O.S.V.

'The time, and, to a lesser extent, the place.'

'What is the right time?' asked O.S.V.
 'Three hours before dawn.'
 'Does this apply to Mercury alone, or to all the gods?'
 'To Mercury alone.'
 'Are we to invoke Mercury again?'
 'Yes.'
 'Tomorrow?'
 'No.'
 'When, then?'
 'On the day of the full moon.'
 'What god shall we invoke tomorrow?'
 'Thoth.'
 'But Thoth is Mercury,' argued O.S.V.
 'You will get another aspect,' replied L.T.
 Although Brother Lampada Tradam spoke, it should not be thought that he was uttering his own views: in the circumstances of the rite he was just the mouthpiece of the god.
 'Shall we not use the same versicle?' asked O.S.V., meaning the incantation beginning *Jungiter in vati vates*, the invoking words.
 'It does not matter,' replied L.T.
 'Shall I make statues of all the gods?'
 'No.'
 'Shall I make tablets of all the gods?'
 'Yes.'
 'What tablets?'
 'Tablets with the names only.'
 'In what order shall we invoke the gods?'
 'The proper order is—Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Luna, Sol.'
 'Will he help in geomancy?'
 'Yes.'
 [In the margin Crowley wrote, 'He did.']
 'And also in the conduct of affairs?'
 'In some, not in all.'
 'In business?'
 'In some business.'
 'What ones?'

'Those in connection with the writing of books, with money, and with love.'

There is no indication of the speed at which these questions were asked. L.T., it must be remembered, was in a trance; only O.S.V. was in his right mind. At this point, however, a pause ensued. Then Crowley, as if he had run out of questions, returned to an earlier train of thought.

'How can we,' he asked, 'invoke Mercury better?'

'Use a golden pentagram, placing the same in a prominent position; drink yellow wine and eat fish before the ceremony. Let the clock be removed.'

These instructions, so patly delivered through the mouth of Brother L.T., are not, it should be pointed out, at all in L.T.'s style; neither are they in line with his knowledge. He was only a Zelator of the Order; and although he had been trained by Crowley for several years now, he was but an uncertain and timid youth. 'Frater L.T.,' says Crowley elsewhere in *The Esoteric Record*, 'has a fault, which is introspection. The point is that he is a man of thought, rather than of action.'

Question: Can you suggest any improvements in the ceremonies, especially that of Jupiter?

Answer: Scarlet and silver should be worn, and the crown [by] O.S.V. L.T. is to wear the scarlet robe, violets are to be strewn and trodden with bare feet.

The violets trodden with bare feet would evoke the spirit of the glade through which trots the lustful Pan.

Question: Give a distinct proof of your presence, appreciable by the intelligence of O.S.V.

Answer: Let the wand, or one, become nine, this is the sign of Priapus, but afterwards nothing.

O.S.V.: I understand and agree the proof.

The wand, or one, which becomes nine is an allusion to the phallus; hence, as L.T. says, it is the sign of the god of fertility, Priapus. Again, these answers show knowledge superior to that possessed by Brother L.T.

The Third Working was commenced at about midnight the following day. As commanded by Hermes during the previous

working, the clock, symbol of time—they were to stand outside time—was removed: hence Crowley says it was 'about' midnight, but, in contradiction of this, he gives the time to the minute of the conclusion of part of the ceremony: 'at twelve fifty-seven a.m. *dies Saturni* [Saturday] the *Quia Patris* was ended.'

The *Quia Patris* was one of the speeches of the Chorus from Crowley's mystery play, *The Ship*, which was published in *The Equinox*, number 10.

So from the Father to the Son
The Holy Spirit is the norm:
Male-female, quintessential, one,
Man-being veiled in Woman-form,
Glory and worship in the Highest,
Thou Dove, mankind that deifiest,
Being that race—most royally run
To spring sunshine through winter storm!
Glory and worship be to Thee,
Sap of the world-ash, wonder-tree!

During the versicle *Jungiter in vati vates*, etc., which preceded the *Quia Patris*, Crowley approached the state of ecstatic possession, during which he saw the Triple Cross of the Grand Hierophants, then Hermes himself. As the versicle coincided with the commencement of the sexual act, this is not altogether surprising.

The temple was closed at two fifteen a.m.

The Esoteric Record for this, the Third Working, begins by giving Brother L.T.'s description of Hermes: the god is 'essentially phallic,' but in his hand is a book called Book II, which has a hundred and six pages. On the last page is a luminous four-pointed star which (the magicians decide) is to be identified with the eye of Shiva. (This is the symbolic eye in Shiva's forehead; it is closed; if, however, Shiva should choose to open it, its light would destroy the universe.) The sub-title of the book was BIA, 'force.'

A dissertation follows, the nature of which can be gathered from this extract:

'Every drop of semen which Hermes sheds is a world. The technical term for this semen is KRATOS [might]. Those worlds are held in chains, but invisibly. People upon the worlds are like maggots upon an apple—all forms of life bred by the worlds are in the nature of parasites. Pure worlds are flaming globes, each a conscious being. Number of worlds ejected 7,482,135 = ♀.

'The name of this Phallus is Thoth, Hermes or Ma. Ma is the god who seduced the Phallus away from the Yoni; hence the physical Universe. All worlds are excreta; they represent wasted semen. Therefore all is blasphemy. This explains why man made god in his own image.'

And so on and so forth.

An appraisal of these rather negative theories would extend this book to an unmerciful length; but for those who are interested, the theme is taken up again in Crowley's *Gospel According to St Bernard Shaw* in which some of the material of *The Paris Working* is used.

In the course of this part of *The Esoteric Record* Crowley interjects that he is making a silent prayer and thanksgiving to Hermes. He comments that, in such workings, one can obtain magic force from women as well as men—the technique can be equally heterosexual—but to use women 'is more dangerous to the career of the magician.' He doesn't explain why, but women, and the whole complex of ideas for which they stand, have always been a deep pit for men, especially for those engaged in secret rites. And, Crowley continues, there is the danger of impregnation—a surprising statement from him. This is the only occasion, amid the copious accounts of his sexual operations, on which this consideration is mentioned. But, says Crowley, this can be guarded against in the obvious way.

In order to obtain (the vision of) Hermes more perfectly, a cock, symbol of concupiscence, should be slain in his honour, and the blood drunk as a sacrament. For those who have an eye for accuracy in details, the throat of the cock should be cut over the 'great image'; this is the wax 'phallic' image of the god which Crowley had placed on the altar; and, in order to catch

all the drops of blood, which are thought of as the vehicle of the *prana* or vital force, the image should be placed in a vessel, preferably shaped like the yoni (*vesica*).

Hermes should be invoked on eight consecutive nights, beginning with a Wednesday.

At this point it is recorded that Hermes advised the two magicians 'to feed in greater abundance'; and he promised to protect them, but from what exactly is not made clear.

What follows after this is a little discursive. Hermes instructed Crowley and L.T. to ask questions of him the following night, Sunday, by the technique of geomancy, and without performing any rites. On Monday they were to invoke Jupiter, but 'we shall get not so much information as aid from Jupiter.'

And, 'It is very important to have banquets.'

L.T., who this time was the interrogator, asked Crowley, who was in a trance, if Hermes will 'help to this end?'

It is not clear what the end was, but the answer—'He doesn't know and he doesn't care'—is conclusive.

Crowley later embroidered this with the comment that Hermes said, 'Don't be such an ass as to think how you are going to do a thing; just do it.' This is typical of Crowley's brash attitude as well.

Further instruction was forthcoming. In the rites of Luna and Venus, the exoteric words of which are printed in *The Equinox*, number VI, Brother O.S.V. should work with a woman.

'He refuses to tell me when I am to have this woman; he says it is a question of common sense. He says do it; don't ask about it.'

A silence ensued. Crowley was lost in the contemplation of him, of Hermes, in his great aspect of 'vehicle of the energy of the highest. He is that which fertilises the luminiferous ether, the strain in it that produces what is called matter.'

The previous day had brought from Crowley's friend, the journalist Walter Duranty, author of *I Write As I Please*, who was then in Paris, a message 'which may prove to be good news

of two matters, both of a Jupiterian nature' (i.e. money). He had also received a letter promising a valuable introduction.

No work was done on Sunday for their prayers to Hermes had been answered in the form of a gift of a cold to Brother O.S.V. and ill-temper to Brother L.T.

Crowley had contemplated the sleeping body of Brother L.T., had woken him up and ordered him to get out of bed and 'transcribe the record,' presumably from their notes made during the working. But this only led to 'two fine fights.' It is unlikely, however, that the fights amounted to anything, Crowley being much the bigger and stronger man. O.S.V. explained the episode as a sign of the excess of magical force which the working had generated.

Of the Fourth Working it is recorded that Crowley, having a bad cold, was confined to bed, and that there was a 'complete cessation of good news.' Crowley explained that these difficulties and vexations were due to disobeying Hermes' orders—'the suggestion made by Hermes of a further sacrifice was meant to be obeyed'—and to the attempt on Crowley's part 'to replace the real thing by its symbol.' What the latter means, I do not know.

However, by Monday afternoon the two magicians had become reconciled; Brother L.T., who had been wandering about the streets of Paris, returned to the temple where he sacrificed to the glory of Jupiter, a phrase which reveals, or rather conceals, a sexual rite, of which the versicle appertaining is a sufficient comment. ('Who therefore let us invoke by the secret Rite and this holy Versicle.')

*Haud secus ac puerum spumanti semini vates
Lustrat, dum gaudens accipit alter aquas;
Sparge, precor, servis, hominum rex atque deorum
Jupiter omnipotens, aurea dona, tuis.*

By nine o'clock, Crowley could record that the ceremony was duly performed, though with 'maimed rites' on account of his cold.

The brethren talked to each other from ten p.m., when the temple was closed, until about one a.m., when, in spite of the temple being closed, L.T. beheld Jupiter and saw this verse before his eyes:

Via est hodie. Nomina sanctissimorum in felicitate habent viam. Deus dedit signum in via.

According to *The Esoteric Record*, Brother O.S.V. beheld Hermes at some earlier stage of the proceedings. He—Hermes—was in his character of the messenger, young, and bearing the caduceus. O.S.V. saw him standing upon the altar, poised upon his right toe. And Brother L.T., who knew that O.S.V. was gazing upon the god, lifted up his voice and asked: 'What saith he?'

O.S.V. replied: 'I am the messenger of the gods, and I send you wreaths.'

Hermes, Crowley explained in *The Esoteric Record*, appeared to him as 'fixed light, the colour thereof being pale gold.'

'Will the working be successful in its object?' asked L.T., who, one might think, was a little anxious about the finances.

The reply was reassuring.

'Yea, verily and amen.'

L.T. then asked if there was any message of a personal nature for Brother O.S.V.

And O.S.V. replied, or to be exact the god replied through O.S.V., that he would have rather startling news, probably by tomorrow morning, and it could be included under the general heading of *good*.

'And will Brother L.T. get news too?' asked L.T. timidly.

'Yes, news is coming to him,' said O.S.V., 'soft news, like the body of a dove, from England.'

What is surprising about the questions which were put to Hermes is that they are of a rather commonplace kind; moreover, they reveal hesitation and bashfulness, and even confusion on the part of the interrogator so that he asks a question which he's already asked and been more or less given an answer. I should have thought that this would so annoy Hermes that he

would vanish immediately. On the other hand, when Hermes appeared to Crowley (as opposed to his appearing to Brother L.T.), he showed a little more dash—'He doesn't know and he doesn't care,' said O.S.V. of Hermes on one occasion.

'Are the gods pleased with the ceremonies?' asked Brother L.T.

'Yea, they rejoice exceedingly,' was the reply.

This is rather fatuous. I'm sure that Hermes and the other gods, with the one exception perhaps of Pan, couldn't have cared less. Among the questions and answers of *The Esoteric Record* there is not one which asks, simply, 'Are we heading for war?' Or 'How much longer will the Tzar keep his throne?' Or, to think of a question a little nearer to Crowley's interests, 'Will scientists discover a cure for syphilis; if so, when?'

During the course of Monday's working, Crowley, who was the seer, conjured up before his ecstatic vision a picture of Mercury in shimmering gold against a background of purple and grey rent by violet flashes. 'Now he comes forward, kissing me on the mouth, laying his Caduceus on my Phallus.' The continuation of this vision reveals only Crowley's megalomania and identification with Christ, a residue of his earliest years when he lived amid the mysteries of the Christian religion. Then this inexplicable behaviour on the part of Mercury is recorded. 'He now puts his tongue into my mouth. It is not like the tongue of a man, but of a serpent or an ant-eater; he runs it all over my brain, making the skull luminous, transparent, phosphorescent.'

After Mercury has informed Crowley that he will give him the wisdom of the serpent, he, Mercury, goes on to say that he, Crowley, needs the devotion of four men and four women; and that the four men will be deformed, and the four women will come from the four quarters of the earth.

A wonderful range of mountains, of the kind which Crowley had found in the Himalayas in 1902, when he climbed the easier stages of Chogo Ri, and in 1905, when he led the disappointing and disastrous expedition to Kangchenjunga, now came before his gaze, mountains with clouds of orange sunrise flaming upon

them. A moment later, he realised that there was something unusual about these mountains: their crest curled over and rolled onwards like the crest of a wave. And with one foot on the crest, stood Mercury, with soft flames of orange, green and purple around him.

Other such colour visions followed.

As for the four deformed men and the four women from the four quarters of the earth, they can be dismissed as a piece of rhetoric or considered, if you will, as a symbolic picture of the state of Crowley's mind. Mercury—be it noted—tells him that he needs the devotion of these men and women. Crowley, in this connection, thought of the Great Work, i.e. the liberating of mankind from the burden of sin. But he himself was a deformed man, i.e. a split or dissociated personality, and was not ready to help mankind before he had helped himself. The vision is, therefore, an injunction to the 'physician' (Crowley) to heal himself, by bringing together the four elements, and the male and female principles, in his own nature. Hence the predominance of the figure four, symbol of wholeness.

For a man who was constantly preoccupied with religious symbols, it is amazing how crude and realistic (as opposed to symbolistic) are his interpretations, especially when an understanding of his own psyche was required. In this particular vision, he could see nothing more than an actual statement of fact, and he straightway made a list of four of his followers who were deformed, beginning with Victor Neuburg who had a curvature of the spine, and at a later date he added the one-eyed Norman Mudd. He had of course no difficulty in finding among the list of eighty women who had been during the course of his life his more serious mistresses, four who came from different continents.

'I now see the eightfold star of Mercury suddenly blazing out, it is composed of four fleurs-de-lys with rays like anthers, bulrushes in shape, between them. The central core has the cypher of the grand master, but not the one you know. Upon the cross are the Dove, the Hawk, the Serpent and the Lion. Also one other symbol, yet more secret.

'Now behold fiery swords of light. All this is upon a cosmic scale. All the distances are astronomical. When I say "Sword," I have a definite consciousness of a weapon many millions of miles in length. . . .'

These visions were so dazzling that Crowley felt that they called for some objective comment. He admitted that he'd never before seen such beautiful skylines: the pink clouds were like the flight of birds, now like the flight of serpents, their colours mingling with the background of purple and green.

These colour-symphonies are familiar to takers of mescaline.* Indeed, Crowley goes on to say that anhalonium visions 'must be very similar.' As mescaline is the vision-producing component of *anhalonium lewinii* or peyotl, to give the drug its first European name, Crowley was quite right; and he knew that he was right because he had been taking anhalonium for some years already; but apparently he did not want to reveal this in case anyone should think that his, and Brother L.T.'s, visions and conversations with gods were only mescaline dreams.

Before 1886, nothing was known of the nature of the cactus with the white silky pappus called peyotl which grows in Central and South America. Then it fell into the hands of the German chemist Louis Lewin while he was travelling in this part of the world. Lewin analysed it and learnt about its toxic properties.

If Crowley was under the influence of anhalonium during the invocations of *The Paris Working*, then his ecstatic trances take on a deeper shade of reality for those who are sceptical of the results of ceremonial or even of sexual magic alone. Indeed, this would explain the colourful nature of the visions, for this drug produces in particular hallucinations of vision. The first stage as described by Lewin is a feeling of removal from all earthly cares and the appearance of a fascinating internal life. The next stage produces images which affect one with such force that they appear real. 'The colours,' says Lewin in an

* For a recent account of the effects of mescaline, see *The Doors of Perception*, 1954, by Aldous Huxley.

account of narcotics and their effect,* 'gleam with a delicacy and variety which no human being could possibly produce. The objects bathed in such brilliant colours move and change their tints so rapidly that the consciousness is hardly able to follow. Then after a short time coloured arabesques and figures appear in endless play, dimmed by black shadows or brilliant with radiant light. The shapes which are produced are charming in their variety; geometrical forms of all kinds, spheres and cubes rapidly changing colour, triangles with yellow dots from which emanate golden or silver strings, radiant tapestries, carpets, filigree lacework in blue or on a dark background, brilliant red, green, blue and yellow stripes, square designs of golden thread-work, stars with a blue, green or yellow tint . . . as well as these objects persons of grotesque form may frequently be seen, coloured dwarfs, fabulous creatures.'

The visions, Lewin observes, may also be accompanied by hallucinations of hearing.

After seeing the flying serpents disappear in the Turneresque clouds, Crowley came out of his trance and declared that it was all over. The temple was then closed, but a discussion broke out between the two magicians. It began by Brother L.T.'s saying that through these rites they were unloosing a huge force: he expressed the fear that, in time, it would become dangerous; international complications were to be feared.

Crowley added in the margin a note to the effect that, six months later, world war broke out, as if the war had been due to *The Paris Working*.

L.T., whom Crowley began to think obsessed, was appalled, and he urged Brother O.S.V. not to let any other worshippers join in, especially persons under the age of thirty.

This discussion on the nature of their holy rites, led Crowley to observe that the celebrants should not interchange their roles. Brother O.S.V. should be the priest (i.e. take the active part) only in invocations of feminine deities, when his role in the rite would be hetero- and not homosexual. The occult reason for this is that 'only black gods are hermaphrodite,' with

* *Phantastica*.

the exception of cases of divine possession. (I must confess my inability to understand this.)

The discussion was then taken by Crowley to a point where one can hardly believe that he was serious. Of course he loved to joke, to make the most outrageous statements. Underneath, perhaps, he believed in what he was saying, but, if challenged, he was ready to laugh the matter away. For those who won't accept this, who will defend Crowley in all circumstances, I can only reply that the following proposition sprang from his mind, and from no one else's.

The supreme rite would be to bring about a climax in the death of the victim. By this rite one would attain the summit of the Magical Art. Even better would be to slay a girl, preferably a willing victim, for if she is in opposition, this would introduce a hostile current into the proceedings. After violating her, she should be cut into nine pieces. Here Crowley particularly notes that she should *not* be eaten, but her head, arms and legs should be cut off and the trunk quadrisectioned. The names of the appropriate gods are to be written on the skin; the arms are then to be flayed, and burnt in honour of Pan or Vesta; the legs, after similar treatment, should be offered to Priapus, Hermes or Juno. The right shoulder is sacred to Jupiter, the left to Saturn; the right buttock to Mars, the left to Venus. The head should not be flayed, but simply burnt, and in honour of either Juno or Minerva.

Crowley concluded his account of this rite by observing that it 'should not be employed on ordinary occasions, but rarely, and then for great purposes; and it should not be disclosed to the vulgar.'

Finally, the two magi decided that these instructions partook of the character of black, 'or at least grey,' magic, and with this the discussion ended.

For the Fifth Working, the temple was opened at about nine thirty p.m. on January the 6th, and the rite was performed, as Crowley observed, *ut ordinatur*, as it is ordained. This time it was Jupiter, and not Hermes, who was invoked.

Deus adest. Fatur: 'Sparge verba; opus fiat. Hodie est verbum in nomine Dei: cras est opus.' Et postea: 'O beati qui haec verba noscunt! Ergo sum Deus hodie; aurea dona cras vobis feram.' 'Accipe Dei verba, atque vobis bene erit. Benignus sum in hominum mundo semper.' Deinde: 'Phallum ejaculanti tibi feram in nomine patri [s]. Verbum tibi refert ad fratrem O.S.V., ditto patri. In nomine. . .'

Commented Crowley, 'This promise was very amply fulfilled.' But several prophecies of Hermes, which were given at this time (unless they refer to a later working—the record is not too clear), were not fulfilled; even Crowley had to recognise this. For instance, after Hermes had kissed Brother L.T. on the lips, navel and phallus, he, Hermes, announced these happy events to come: within two months, L.T. will go away eastwards and will find a new and happier stratum of Karma. By the summer he will get married, but in the autumn he will return to the Great Work. As for Brother O.S.V., he will also go on a long journey eastwards, leaving L.T. in charge of the temple. 'All quite wrong without a single exception,' wrote Crowley in the record. If, however, Hermes had said that O.S.V. would go on a long journey westwards, he would have been completely right, for by the end of the year, after war had broken out, Crowley departed for America.

At this point in the proceedings, Crowley made several observations on the rites, and he laid down some new instructions. O.S.V. was always to be the first to scry, that is to look into the crystal; this reveals that the gods had manifested through the shewstone or crystal, and not, apparently, without the aid of this instrument. (The crystal in question was probably the large topaz stone set in the centre of his Calvary Cross.) The scrier would dictate to the other who, in his role of scribe, would write the visions down.

L.T. was always to be the priest, that is to say he was to take the active part in the sex act, doubtless on account of the strongly marked feminine component in Crowley's nature.

The rites were never to be performed for more than six nights in succession, and four were preferable.

They should not begin earlier than nine at night, and the ceremony should not last longer than three and a half hours.

The floor of the temple should be painted white but, on festivals and special occasions, black and white, or red and white squares.

Soft stringed music was permissible.

Finally, the celebrants should not be bare-headed, but should wear head-dresses of white 'or such other colour as may be indicated.'

After this came a list of the 'colours' of certain gods. It begins with Priapus: he was the Greek and Roman god of procreation, and protector of gardens and vineyards. The worship of this god, whose visible emblem was the phallus, was widespread and extended in parts of Italy throughout the Christian era to modern times. Crowley was familiar with the many statues and reliefs of Priapus which are reproduced in the later edition (edited by the antiquary Thomas Wright) of Richard Payne Knight's *An Account of the Remains of the Worship of Priapus lately existing in Isernia; to which is added a Discourse on the Worship of Priapus, and its connection with the Mystic Theology of the Ancients*, 1786. Payne Knight, antiquary and amateur architect, went to Italy in 1767 and uncovered this strange cult.

The colours of Priapus, according to Crowley, are yellow and purple.

The colours of Iacchus, or Bacchus, the god of drinkers, who is either represented as an effeminate young man or as a riotous old man, crowned with vine and ivy leaves, are scarlet and green. Bacchus was the other name of Dionysus, the god of vegetation, of fruit trees, and especially of the vine. Dionysus, Bacchus, Iacchus—call him by what name you will—appealed strongly to Crowley because of the orgiastic nature of his activities. In the Dionysiac processions, he is surrounded by satyrs who carry the phallus. His animal form is that of a bull.

Venus, the Greek Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, the mother of love, the queen of laughter and the patroness of courtesans, had the colours, in Crowlean symbology, of blue, white and gold. She was not invoked in *The Paris Working*,

which was an entirely homosexual rite, but Crowley composed a 'holy hymn' to her for use during a heterosexual rite of some other working.

*Tu Venus orta mari venias tu filia Patris,
Exaudi penis carmina blanda, precor.
Ne sit culpa nates nobis futuisse viriles,
Sed caleat cunus semper amore meo.*

Minerva, the Greek Pallas Athena, the goddess of handicrafts, of war and wisdom who sprang from Jupiter's head, the goddess who could prolong life and bestow the gift of prophecy was given the colours of white and silver with a little dark blue.

Finally, Pan, who was closest to Crowley's heart, was given the appropriate colour of crimson.

These colours were not casually or arbitrarily selected; they can be justified by the so-called Law of Correspondences. Crimson, the colour of blood and, by analogy, of excitement and passion, is obviously suitable for Pan, the god of lust. And the royal colour of purple, the wearing of which was restricted to the Roman Emperors, is appropriate to Priapus, for is not phallus, symbolically considered, a little king or princelet? Similarly, the colours of blue, white and gold, symbolic of loyalty, innocence and faith, are fitting for the goddess of beauty.

The Sixth Working, which was also an invocation of Jupiter, was a failure, L.T. being unable to produce the right degree of enthusiasm.

Crowley begins his account of the Seventh Working with the observation that, so far as he could see, nothing great had happened as the result of the previous Jupiterian operation. 'Yet tonight I feel more confidence than usual: I am in a highly nervous or electric state.' His cold was better, and during the day he went for a fairly long walk and dined out. Now he felt tired, excited and feverish. 'Jupiter, bring all to a good end!'

The temple was opened at about ten p.m. and the rite was performed *ut ordinatur*. During its climax, the two magi beheld an universe of the most brilliant purple with golden stars, and Jupiter seated on his throne surrounded by the Four Beasts upon thick clouds borne upon a phalanx of eagles.'

This requires no interpretation, apart from the quaternity of beasts, about the meaning of which I am uncertain. It is what it says, a vision of Jupiter, the light-bringer. Appropriately, Jupiter is amid the stars and his throne is upheld by eagles—the eagle, the oak and the thunderbolt being his emblems.

Next, a peacock appeared. According to Brother L.T., this meant 'change,' 'journeys,' 'motion,' and implied 'improvement.' The peacock was then crowned, and it regarded itself in the mirror.

Brother L.T.'s interpretation of the peacock seems to me to reveal more the nature of his desires than anything else. The peacock, especially its tail, is conspicuous by its dark rich colours, in which green predominates. It is, in fact, a symbol of spring, and was so regarded by the alchemists of old when they observed these colours in the alchemical vessel. Spring was approaching and doubtless the two brethren, through their invocations, were feeling youthful.

The temple was closed at about eleven twenty.

It is probable that a knock on the door of Crowley's flat brought the proceedings which were, doubtless, beginning to tail off, to an end; for after eleven thirty p.m. the magi were entertaining three friends who had unexpectedly turned up, namely Walter Duranty, 'the fair damozel E.M.,' and 'the good knight, my brother in arms, Sir Lionel.' I do not know who 'Sir Lionel' was, but his knighthood was certainly conferred by Crowley, the Supreme and Holy King, or by some other Supreme and Holy King of the O.T.O. E.M. was the hollow-cheeked Eleanor Mezdrov, who wore long finger-nails and had crow's feet at the corners of her eyes. Crowley occasionally made love to her and smoked a pipe of opium with her, she being, as he says elsewhere, a devotee of that great and terrible god.

It is not revealed what they did, or talked about; only that Brother O.S.V. sculptured 'a sacred Phallus' till about two a.m., or (the record is obscure here) from two to four fifteen a.m. Finally, he went to bed and had a 'wonderful and repeated dream.' Crowley does not give us a clear account of this wonderful dream, but he does say that he remembered mimicking the bourgeoisie and reducing all the objects that appeared in the dream to the yoni and the lingam, the female and male sexual parts. He catches up an old felt hat and explains to a woman friend who appears in the dream that he can destroy it by perceiving that it is only the yoni in disguise. 'I had kept on reducing symbols to the Lingam and the Yoni and thence destroying them, much to the expressed wonder and alarm of A**** T****.'

At nine thirty, the post arrived, bringing three things of a Jupiterian nature: a letter from Crowley's lawyers (it was certainly with news of money), a pot of opium and 'a love-poem of a religious type.' The poem was *Chicago May*; it had come from the printer. There is nothing very Jupiterian about it, nor very religious.

This is my hour of peace; the great sow snores,
Blowing out spittle through her blubber lips,
Champagne and lust still oozing from the pores
Of her fat flanks; then, let my hate eclipse
All other lamps of my pale soul, and flare—
A curst star sparking in the strangled air!

This long poem—it covers twenty-three printed quarto pages—is dedicated to Austin Harrison, the editor of *The English Review*, who believed Crowley to be a poet of considerable stature, and who had recently published some of his verse. The title-page of this rare work, which was supposedly inspired by the American-Irish woman criminal of the same nickname, bears this little piece of Crowleian irony: 'The possessor of this copy is earnestly requested to retain the same under lock and key, and in nowise to part with it until the year 1964.' As

Crowley had small hope of selling any copies, he added to the title-page, 'Price FIVE GUINEAS.'

Of the Eighth Working, which began on Sunday, January the 11th, Crowley records that he 'saw a most remarkable fulfilment of the prophecy of Hermes,' but he doesn't disclose what it was. 'Also two excellent matters have come to fruition.' A discreet silence hangs over them, too. But Crowley does tell us that a brother known to both O.S.V. and L.T. had inherited money; this was a good augury for Crowley's future. The brother in question may have been a certain George Raffalovich, a contributor to *The Equinox*, from whom Crowley obtained a contribution of five thousand pounds towards the Great Work.

The following day Brother L.T. was ill—the nature of his malady is not specified. Perhaps he'd caught the flu from Brother O.S.V.

On Tuesday, January the 13th, O.S.V. and L.T., who was better, performed *The Mass of the Phoenix* in the house of P.D.F. (I do not know who this brother was.)

The Mass of the Phoenix is a short ritual printed in full in *Magick in Theory and Practice*: only the optimistic, frolicsome conclusion need be given here:

He [*the Mage*] eats the second Cake [*of light*].
This Bread I eat. This Oath I swear
As I enflame myself with prayer:
'There is no grace: there is no guilt:
This is the Law; DO WHAT THOU WILT!'

He strikes Eleven times upon the Bell, and cries
A B R A H A D A B R A.
I entered in with woe; with mirth
I now go forth, and with thanksgiving,
To do my pleasure on the earth
Among the legions of the living.

He goeth forth.

Crowley was, of course, the author of this 'mass,' and if one imagines a magician performing it, his bulky figure inevitably

creeps into the picture. Indeed, Crowley frequently performed it before sallying out to enjoy himself among the living, and (although probably he was not aware of it) among the dead too.

The following day, L.T. was again feeling seedy, so O.S.V. took him for a walk in the woods at Fontainebleau.

The Ninth Working was performed on Monday, January the 19th. It began at eleven forty-five p.m. and concluded at twelve thirty a.m. The whole ceremony lasted, therefore, only three-quarters of an hour, but, in Crowley's opinion, it was one of the best they had done for Jupiter.

While O.S.V. was invoking Ammon-Ra, the ram-headed spirit of the four elements, his vibrations of the divine name were echoed, to the surprise of the celebrants, by another and unknown voice. Such phenomena were by no means unusual during the magical ceremonies of Aleister Crowley; unknown voices were frequently heard and unknown presences felt. Sometimes during their ritual dances in the dark, the celebrants felt (or imagined that they felt) the presence of an alien body in the temple. But when the light was put on, and the fratres and sorores sorted themselves out, they found that they were no more than their number.

At the conclusion of the *Quia Patris*, Brother L.T., who was on his knees before the altar giving thanks for the illumination experienced during the sex part of it, beheld 'the colossal form of Jupiter our Father, *manibus plenis!* Yea, with gold were his hands full; praise unto our Father and our God!'

This was a vision of the complete success of the workings. They had asked Jupiter for money, and there he was bringing it to them.

That night Crowley dreamed a dream which, upon waking, he wrote up in the form of a short story. He was delighted with this story which he called 'The Stratagem.' He entered in the record, 'May it bring fame and fortune!' It brought neither, but it was accepted by Austin Harrison for *The English Review*, and Crowley afterwards had an opportunity of reprinting it, with two other stories, in a booklet issued by the Mandrake Press in their Mandrake Booklets series. 'The Stratagem' is one

of the poorest stories I have ever read, and if Joseph Conrad applauded it, as Crowley says in the dedication to Conrad (and others), he must have done so with his tongue in his cheek. It is not even a story, but a long drawn-out anecdote, and the point of it is given away twice before the end.

The Tenth Working began at eleven thirty on Tuesday the 20th of January. This time Jupiter, in his Egyptian form of Ammon-Ra, was invoked; and this holy versicle was addressed to him:

*Per regni sancti signum da Jupiter Ammon
Da nobis plena munera plena manu.*

[By the sign of the sacred kingdom, give, O Jupiter Ammon,
Give to us full rewards with a full hand.]

The working was concluded three-quarters of an hour later. 'The Ceremony as usual,' wrote Crowley, as if slightly bored with it all. But he had seen Jupiter 'in the form of Ammon-Ra, plumed and phallic, standing in the East,' and during the sex act, which had commenced with the brethren quoting the versicle *Per regni*, etc., he had lost all sense of physical reality, and he and Brother L.T. had heard, clearly and distinctly, the sounds of astral bells.

The next day, O.S.V. and L.T. quarrelled, or, as Crowley more delicately expressed it, 'the Brethren were out of harmony.' But by an effort of will they overcame their ill feeling and sat down together to a full banquet. Then, in good spirits, they repaired to the temple for the Eleventh Working which, like the previous one, was an invocation of Ammon-Ra.

O.S.V. opened the temple at eleven p.m., Wednesday, and during the work, when the invoked forces were at their highest pitch, he saw Ammon-Ra. And 'Jupiter Himself' filled the temple. This is obscure, but, as far as I can judge, Jupiter manifested in his form of Ammon-Ra to Crowley's internal vision and in his Roman form he spread his glory amid the temple. In particular, a cone of white light whirled about 'the image of the All-One that is upon the Altar of the Elements.' The only

image on the altar that could fit this description was the wax phallus of Priapus which in the Crowleian system is equated with the hawk-headed sun-god Horus.

This invocation produced a message from Jupiter in the angelic language of John Dee and Edward Kelley (see page 187 *et seq.*) to the effect that the gods wished to regain their dominion on earth, and that the two brethren O.S.V. and L.T. were as 'fiery arrows' shot by them, the gods, in their war against the 'slave gods,' i.e. Christ, Buddha, Allah.

This is the non-morality of *The Book of the Law*, combined with the influence of Nietzsche. Obviously the author of this sort of thing would prefer the riotous behaviour of the gods of Olympus to the Sermon on the Mount: 'Mercy let be off [*sic*]: damn them who pity! Kill and torture, spare not; be upon them!'

A four-fold sacrifice was demanded, 'and that a sacrifice of cruelty.'

It was promptly executed.

The temple was closed at one-forty five a.m. But ten minutes later, at one fifty-five, Frater L.T. was still unconscious, or, as Crowley put it, 'lying entranced.'

At two a.m. L.T. had sufficiently recovered to gasp out: 'Tetelestai.'*

Crowley was rather worn out himself, and during his night's sleep, which he describes as a sleep of exhaustion, it was revealed to him in a dream or in a vision or in a state of brief consciousness during a fitful sleep (he does not say exactly), that the purpose of the kind of operation which they had performed was that of 'freeing of the elemental spirit of an animal soul.' This is done by death, but it may also be done by *complete exhaustion*. The distinction between death and complete exhaustion is a subtle one and Crowley does not draw it, but it must be understood that by complete exhaustion, the person so exhausted is hovering on the brink of death and it is a purely academic point whether or not he doesn't roll over. The process of exhaustion, however, can be brought about either by pleasure or pain, by excessive sexual indulgence or by torture.

* 'It is over.'

(In one of the secret O.T.O. documents, entitled *De Arte Magica*, caput XV 'Of Eroto-comatose lucidity,' written by Brother Baphomet, is an account of a ritual by which the celebrant is brought by venerary to the point of death—the death of a just man. 'The most favourable death is that occurring during the orgasm, and is called *Mors Justi*. As it is written: Let me die the death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his!' On physiological grounds, this is an impossible feat for a man in good health, impotence intervening beforehand.) The rest of this curious discourse, the theme of which came to Crowley during the night (and, as he thought, from the lips of Jupiter himself), is best kept in his own words:

'In this death-like trance the spirit becomes free to wander, and is united to the invoked God. In the case of death this is permanent, and goes to increase the Body of the God on the planet. We should therefore, when we can, obtain a closed and inviolable precinct, and slay therein victims daily. In the meantime, let one of the Brethren at least be reduced always to exhaustion by wine, and by the infliction of wounds, and by the ceremony itself. And if he utters oracles, let them not be consciously given [i.e. they must come from the depths]. And if the true God be duly invoked, they will be divine.'

Crowley observed that the following day, Brother L.T. went about 'overshadowed by Jupiter.' The world appeared to him as a 'vision of the future,' a phrase which is best explained by the next sentence of Crowley's thesis: 'His eyes are dilated; he cannot read; his manner is as one stupefied or entranced. In other words, one cannot see and talk to Jupiter without having a hell of a hang-over.'

The Esoteric Record gives, as usual, some exoteric information. During the last working Crowley had not only seen a vision of Jupiter, but of himself in a past life. As this particular past life is not included among those he saw in a series of visions on Cesopus Island, see Chapter Eight, an account of it is given here.

In this incarnation, he was a consecrated prostitute at Agri-gentum. He does not give us any dates, but we think of this

Greek city in southern Sicily at a time when it was at the height of its prosperity and magnificence, before the Carthaginian general, Imilkon, sacked it in 405 B.C.

Agrigentum had many temples for its large population. Grote mentions especially the spacious temple of Zeus Olympius, but Crowley was not on the staff there. He was in a 'temple of the sun,' by which he presumably meant a temple dedicated to Apollo. He describes it in this brief way: it had a long square outer court; 'in the upper square' was a square temple with a façade and pillars—not a very adequate description, for all Greek public buildings of any consequence had façades and pillars and courts. But Crowley's recollection of this incarnation does extend our knowledge of Greek history and religion, for neither Herodotus, nor Strabo, nor, as far as I know, any other authority, ancient or modern, mentions that this cult of sacred prostitution ever happened so far to the west as Agrigentum. Indeed, Herodotus was shocked when he found this bizarre practice at Babylon, though he does mention that something of the same kind also occurred at Cyprus.

The internal shrine of this temple of the sun had a circular dome about forty feet across. In the east there was the Altar of Incense, to which priestesses used to carry their offerings; and in the west there was a big font into which was poured the blood of the sacrificial victims. In the north was a door, and in the south a statue of a Syrian sun-god. Crowley did not know the name of this god, but Bacchus rather than Apollo came to his mind. To this description he added this piece of horrible information: 'The great sacrifice of Spring was to cut open a bull, and lay a virgin in the hot carcass, there to be violated by the High Priest. She was finally choked in the bull's blood.'

The name of Crowley's avatar at Agrigentum was either Asteris or Astarte. On second thoughts, Crowley decided for Astarte, the name of the goddess herself. Astarte, also Ishtar and Mylitta, was the Assyrian equivalent of Venus. This is what the Greek traveller and historian, Herodotus, observed of the female devotees of Astarte in Babylon:

"The most disgraceful of the Babylonian customs is the following. Every native woman is obliged, once in her lifetime, to have intercourse with a stranger in the temple of Venus. Many rich women, who are too proud to mix with the rest, come in covered wagons, and take up their place at the temple with a numerous train of servants. But the far greater part sit down in the temple of Venus with a crown of cord round their heads. Some are continually coming in; others are going out. Passages marked out in a straight line lead in every direction through the women, along which strangers pass and take their pick. When a woman has once seated herself, she must not return home till some stranger has thrown a piece of silver into her lap, and lain with her outside the temple. He who throws the silver must say thus: "I lay claim on thee in the name of Mylitta." The woman will never refuse the money, no matter how small it may be, for it has been made sacred by the act. The woman follows the first man that throws, and refuses no one. But when she has had intercourse and has absolved herself from her obligation to the goddess, she returns home. And she will not submit again, however much you offer her. Those who are endowed with beauty and symmetry of shape are soon set free, but the plain are detained a long time, some for as long as three or four years.'

The apocryphal Epistle of Jeremias, verse 43, confirms this practice.

Crowley tells us that Astarte used to sit on the steps of the temple at Agrigentum and receive 'sacrifices,' a word which, in this connection, is a euphemism for the sex act. She was thus a permanent and not a temporary 'sacred prostitute.' She practised a fertility rite which, in accordance with sympathetic magic, made intercourse an act of worship. The *Panchatattva* ritual of Indian Tantrics, described at the beginning of this chapter, is a similar thing in modern times.

For this reason Crowley is not ashamed to acknowledge such a profession; besides, it was in another, and far distant, life; and doubtless Astarte was called upon to make oracular utterances as well.

The theme is taken up again six years later when Crowley came to establish his own temple at Cephaloedium (Cefalu), on the northern side of Sicily, for part of his oath on that occasion was that he would freely prostitute his body to the lusts of each and every living creature that desired it of him. Not that he ever did so without a sense of bashfulness, the result of his training at two English public schools and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was even self-conscious, as he confesses in his *Magical Record*, at performing the mysteries naked before Mary Butts and Cecil Maitland, two sympathetic onlookers.

Astarte had incurred this incarnation (of a temple prostitute at Agrigentum) because of various misdemeanours—they are not specified—which she had committed in Greece in another incarnation during the previous century. Thus he discloses his slight distaste for this sort of life. Her incarnations, he tells us, had always been at short intervals: she led adventurous lives and always died young.

Crowley saw her so clearly that he was able to give a detailed account of her physical appearance. 'She was a slim, lean, nervous girl with a long face, a Roman nose, rather full lips, very strong from constant exercise, a habit of wriggling as if consumed by an inward itch, abundant and very wiry black hair which she sometimes dyed, very strong and very sharp and white and regular teeth, deep violet eyes, very wide apart, and set obliquely like Chinese eyes. Her cheek-bones were high, and her expression fierce. Her breasts were quite undeveloped, and her body like a man's, or rather, a boy's.'

Her upbringing had been one of great misery. She was born at Leghorn, the daughter of vine-dressers who, in winter, followed the occupation of wood-cutters. Her adventures began from the moment she was snatched away by pirates who raided the coast near her home. Crowley does not tell us how she fared with these pirates, only how she escaped from them—through a shipwreck which cast her up on the coast of Sicily. The people who found her soon discovered that she was an expert prostitute and placed her in a brothel in Agrigentum. But she hated the life.

She was therefore heartily relieved when a young priest made her acquaintance during a spring festival. (Did this festival of spring include visits by the temple priests to the brothel? Crowley rather suggests that it did.) He bought her out of the brothel, put her through a year's purification and then added her to the temple staff.

To begin with she was not happy in her new, and exalted, position; she saw only dull routine, but, by the 'skill of her embraces,' she won the favour of her superiors.

When she was about twenty, she underwent a religious conversion, and began to perform her duties with fervour. She soon acquired a reputation for being inspired, and was occasionally used in public ceremonies.

Her end came suddenly and dramatically. It began by her making a young priest fall in love with her. (He was not, presumably, the young priest who had found her in the brothel.) Soon they 'violated their vows by carnal copulation of an irreligious character'; then she wormed the secret of the temple out of him; the same night she killed him so that he should never be able to tell that he had betrayed the mysteries.

Crowley fortunately tells us what this secret was. 'The secret of the Temple was the *midnight Sun*. Globes of fire used to gather on the font, and from the other altar, and begin to revolve in the shrine. They would coalesce and then become one, which stood single and unmoving all night, only fading with dawn.'

Having heard of the secret, Astarte wanted to see it for herself. She penetrated the shrine at the midnight sacrifice, but was observed by the priests, who immediately seized her and passed their swords again and again through her body which was then thrown out into the court at the foot of the temple steps. Thus died Astarte, a temple prostitute and Crowley's avatar in ancient Greece.

The Eleventh Working had left Brother L.T. in an entranced condition, but a banquet restored him to a comparatively normal state, and by nine fifty-five p.m. the next day, he and his brother magician O.S.V. opened the temple for the Twelfth

Working which was again an invocation of Jupiter. (All the workings from now on are invocations of Jupiter.)

Crowley does not tell us much about this working. The sacrifice was offered—I think I have made it fairly clear by now what this means—Frater O.S.V. was so exhausted by it—he loved to exhaust himself in this manner, it seems—that he likened himself to a corpse—*perinde ac cadaver*. The Temple was closed at eleven p.m. Thus ended the First Series of the complete working of Jupiter.

And what, if anything, were the results of it all? Crowley had to ask himself this. 'Well,' he said to himself, 'there is certainly *some* result; for matters move strangely. Five people who had arranged to come to see me in Paris all failed to turn up; and both business letters (urgent) and private letters remain unanswered. I assume,' he concluded, 'that this is the fallow period which follows the sowing of the seed.'

But he still couldn't understand it, for, he reasoned, the series of invocations to Hermes instantly produced a direct result. 'I take it that Jupiter, being a slow and steady God, moves not so easily but with far more power.' He discussed the matter with Brother L.T. who told the same story. It was, really, a little extraordinary.

The next day, the drought broke: a flood of letters and visitors appeared, but all in all it did not amount to anything startling. 'Certainly,' thought Crowley, 'all things that have occurred have been of the nature of Jupiter, but so far there has been no plentiful harvest, naught as it were but green shoots peeping through the earth.'

The temple for the Thirteenth Working opened at about eleven thirty p.m. The *Quia Patris* began at twelve thirty a.m. After the *Accendat* and *Tu qui es*, Brother O.S.V. 'became inspired in a Terpsichorean manner.' In other words, he began dancing. In *The Esoteric Record*, the dance is described as of the 'seductive-fugitive' order, the kind of dance nearest to the feminine heart of Aleister Crowley.

Tu qui es is another speech from Crowley's mystery play, *The Ship*, published in number ten of *The Equinox*.

Thou, who art I, beyond all I am,
Who hast no nature and no name,
Who art, when all but Thou are gone,
Thou, hidden spring of all things known
And unknown, Thou aloof, alone,
Thou, the true fire within the reed
Brooding and breeding, source and seed
Of life, love, liberty, and light,
Thou beyond speech and beyond sight,
Thee I invoke, my faint fresh fire
Kindling as my intents aspire.
Thee I invoke, abiding one,
Thee, centre and secret of the Sun,
And that most holy mystery
Of which the vehicle am I!
Appear, most awful and most wild,
As it is lawful, to thy child!

The temple was closed at two a.m.

Much good force was obtained from this working; also two Jataka stories, that is stories of previous incarnations of the Buddha. This is not absolutely clear, but I take it that Brother O.S.V., not content with seeing some of his own past lives during the visions, went on to see some of the Buddha's as well. He does not reveal what these stories were, but doubtless they had the same moral tone as the Jataka stories we know. Alternatively, they may have been stories of Crowley's past lives, for he regarded himself as no less than the Buddha, and thus the stories of his past lives would be 'Jataka' stories.

During the course of the next day, Brother L.T. obtained a small Jupiterian result, that is to say he received some money; it was probably from his parents in England who did not approve of their son's companion. And Brother O.S.V. kept an appointment which, he hoped, would lead to vast Jupiterian results. (Crowley had always such hopes, but usually nothing came of them.)

While the brethren sat chatting after the working, O.S.V. remembered that he had been a priestess in a part of the world

which he thought was Greece 'of an orientalised type.' This was not Agrigentum again, and he was no longer thinking of Astarte. L.T. recognised the place as Crete. O.S.V. agreed with this.

O.S.V.'s name in this incarnation was Aia. She danced in a temple of black marble with mirrors; she had twenty-eight handmaidens.

Then L.T. appeared: he was a handsome youth with a square golden beard; his name was Mardocles.

It is, perhaps, surprising that the avatar of Crowley and the avatar of Brother L.T. knew each other, but, if one accepts the principle of reincarnation, as so many people do, there is nothing impossible about this situation.

The account of this incarnation is somewhat confused. It seems that Mardocles had to be initiated by dancing with Aia, a name which seems to be a corruption of Gaia, the goddess of the earth.

It is clear from Crowley's description of these 'initiation' dances that they are not so much dances as sexual rites. He tells us, in his description of this particular dance, that if the neophyte refuses intercourse with the priestess, he suffers castration and death.

Aia fell in love with Mardocles, the fair youth with the golden beard. And as a result, danced badly . . . They were both expelled from the temple.

Mardocles and Aia went sad and penniless into a town.

Aia did up Mardocles's sandals which had come undone.

Mardocles despised Aia for ruining his career; he had been a merchant, a very wealthy corn-merchant (with a very rich father), and had given up everything to be initiated, and where was he now?

(This is a strange coincidence, for Brother L.T. had given up everything to be initiated in Paris by Brother O.S.V.)

Mardocles was about twenty-four or twenty-five, but in experience he was much older.

Mardocles hated Aia, but he was too chivalrous to leave her. (Another strange coincidence: L.T. did hate, and fear, Brother O.S.V., and had not the strength of will to leave him.)

Mardocles only cared for Aia while she danced: he felt he had ruined her career as well as his own.

They sat down on a stone two doors away from a cobbler's. Again Aia did up Mardocles's sandal strap. The cobbler came out to see what was going on, took a fancy to Mardocles, and asked him and sister Aia to supper.

Supper was served in a tiny back room. The cobbler's wife was a shrew; she was also frightfully ugly, like the Duchess in *Alice*.

When the cobbler learnt that his two guests had been thrown out of the temple, he suggested that they became his apprentices and he tried to clinch the proposition there and then by pointing out that this was their only hope of avoiding being sold as slaves.

They were too proud and declined. And after a while they found themselves on sale in the slave market.

A man called Demetrius, who had a country house and a beautiful wife, bought them both. The wife was a classic type, a Syro-Phœnician beauty: Grecian nose, coal-black curls, but a thin mouth with corners turned down. (This, incidentally, was Brother O.S.V.'s ideal of female beauty: to his conception, the thin mouth indicated cruelty, and the downward-turning corners, grimness, determination or melancholy.) She was nearly always swathed in purple. Her husband was an easy-going fool, as we might expect.

Aia and Mardocles were employed about the house, but not at menial tasks. 'It was part of the ordinary duty of a servant to amuse the family by various copulations. Only beautiful slaves were chosen for this purpose.'

Aia died of pneumonia soon afterwards; and the story of this incarnation concludes with a remark which Aia made to Mardocles before they were bought by Demetrius:

'I shall never forget the look you gave me in the slave market.' Aia then added, as if she had a vague memory of meeting Mardocles in a previous existence: 'I am always unlucky for you, you know: you always have to sacrifice everything for my love. You don't want to in the least; that is because we both

have hold of the wrong end of the stick. If only I could leave you. . . .'

For the Fourteenth Working the temple was opened on the stroke of midnight and closed at one seven a.m. It left as usual Frater O.S.V. 'completely exhausted,' but it is now getting a habit with him to write that he was completely exhausted. In the course of it, the Jovian or Jupiterian phenomena continued steadily, but they were not of such force as to enable the magi to say that the success of the operation was assured.

During the afternoon, they went to the house of 'a lay sister, and invoked the Lord Jupiter by incense of His sacred herb.' In other words, they called on Eleanor Mezdrow, who may have been a probationer of the O.T.O., and smoked a pipe of opium. Crowley said that this rested them both mentally and physically, and then went on to contradict this by adding that it caused a temporary and slight illness. I suspect that the opium made Brother L.T. ill, but not Crowley, who was better acquainted with the drug.

Crowley does not record much of the Fifteenth Working. The temple was opened at eleven fifteen p.m. and closed at twelve ten a.m. The versicle *Haud secus*, etc., was 'prolonged' but 'very quiet.' (Here, in *The Paris Working*, follows an account of it in general terms.) The atmosphere of the temple was extremely good—mellow, rich, velvety, luminous, strong without violence, calm, opulent, etc., etc. The colours in the atmosphere of the temple were chiefly purple, gold and green.

It was decided that this atmosphere was not to be spoilt by allowing any 'loose women and the like' to come in, the temple being in a room in Crowley's flat.

As for physical presences, there was only a green chameleon-like dancer called Ahanael who is one of the lesser intelligences of Jupiter, the god of the invocation. And there were the usual elementals darting about.

After the *Haud secus* during the Sixteenth Working, the god demanded blood. Jupiter made his wishes known to Crowley in the directest manner possible. Crowley, therefore, cut the

figure four on Brother L.T.'s breast. Four, the symbol of wholeness or unity, is the number of Jupiter (eight is the number of Hermes); it is also the number of the Demiurge, the Maker of the World, in the Pythagorean and Cabbalistic systems.

The blood from L.T.'s bleeding breast was offered up on the altar of the god.

L.T. then performed a dance which O.S.V., who by this time was in shivasana (one of the better-known postures of yoga), described as wonderful.

Next, O.S.V. became inspired, and entered a trance; and while in this trance, Jupiter told him that for the four workings during the following week, the image (the wax phallus) should be placed in a vesica and a sparrow or a pigeon should be slain before the *Accendat*, the word which signifies the preliminaries of the sex act. The sparrow must be sacrificed with these words, *Nunc flavi Jovi spumantem sanguine saevo Passerem*. . . . [Now I have blown to Jupiter a sparrow foaming with fierce blood. . . .] The blood only of the sparrow must remain in the vesica, a shallow dish in the shape of the yoni, and after the versicle (the *Haud secus*) it must be connected with the magi by drawing in the blood the sigil four on L.T.'s heart, right breast, left breast and navel. The body of the sparrow was to be burnt; and from Sunday midnight to Thursday midnight (the time during which the four next workings would take place), the brethren were to eat no food and drink nothing except pure water—apart from the rich food, wines and liqueurs of the ceremonial banquets which preceded the rites.

The temple closed at midnight exactly, and thus ended the Sixteenth Working.

The purpose of these operations of High Magick Art was to obtain priestly power, and, on a lower plane, money. It would therefore be a mistake to think that the celebrants were performing the rites for the sexual pleasure. The aim of O.S.V. and L.T. was congress with gods. Besides, we do not know for certain that they derived, amid these cloudy visions and exhausting practices, any pleasure at all.

When signs of success began to appear, Crowley took pains to record, 'It is to be noted that since the beginning of this operation the Bank Rate has fallen to 3 per cent and Consols improved from 71½ to 76¼, a gain of over £1,400 to O.S.V. On Saturday O.S.V. received a letter which should bring in £500 within the next two months.'

Thus the brethren's invocations profited the public at large, or at least those members of it who held Consols or had an overdraft at the bank, or were paying off a mortgage, etc.

Before concluding his account of the Sixteenth Working, Crowley commented on the inspiration which in the course of it had seized hold of him. 'I should mention,' he says, 'the possession of O.S.V. on Thursday night was the most complete and material possession, and has occurred to him most rarely. The directions [about the sacrifice of the sparrow, etc.] were obtained with difficulty, and his whole consciousness was wrapped up in the God, the only expression being in these words, "*Sanguis et Semen.*"'

Crowley was so enraptured that he became almost speechless. Brother L.T., his breast bleeding, was doubtless regarding him in amazement as he staggered about the temple, his eyes veiled, muttering to himself, '*Sanguis et Semen! Sanguis et Semen!*'

During the Seventeenth Working which began in the evening of February the 2nd, O.S.V. 'dedicated the bird to Jupiter and set it free.' He did not, however, open the window and see it fly away: the freedom he gave to the sparrow was the greatest ever.

According to Hinduism, blood is the principal vehicle of the vital prana, the 'subtle' energy of the universe. The idea behind a blood sacrifice—in this case that of the sparrow—is to add to the energy (one might say atmosphere) of the ceremony, provided that the blood is shed within the consecrated circle or triangle and thus retained for the purposes of the celebrants. An animal should be killed whose nature accords with the ceremony: a bird for Jupiter, a ram for Mars, and so on.

Virgin animals are preferred on account of the belief in their greater potential.

During the versicle in the course of the Seventeenth Working, Crowley's passion was so intense that he lost consciousness. After the *Quia Patris*, Brother L.T. cut the figure four on his own right breast. 'A marvellous matter followed, but no further rite was accomplished.' Unfortunately, Crowley does not say what it was, but it seems to have been more marvellous for L.T. than for O.S.V. because at one a.m. L.T. was still too exhausted to speak, and this was ten minutes after the temple had closed.

The Jupiterian banquet of the Eighteenth Working was held at midday, a more convenient time for the day's single meal than the usual dinner hour. It did not proceed smoothly. As Crowley put it, 'the spirit of Mars waxed strong, and O.S.V. tare L.T. with bitter words, to which Fra. L.T., like a good brother as he is, replied with modesty, humility, courtesy, forbearance and brotherly love.'

Because of L.T.'s good nature, it was possible to open the temple at ten thirty p.m. The rite was performed with a different technique.

The temple was closed at one five a.m. *die Mercurii* (Wednesday, February the 3rd, 1914), 'the forces being completely absorbed.'

The Nineteenth Working took place during the following evening, in spite of the fact that O.S.V. had been ill all day with a feverish attack resembling influenza. However, 'the remedy of Jupiter' (opium), which Eleanor Mezdrov had given him, brought about a miraculous recovery 'though the aftermath still slightly inconveniences him, he having perhaps taken the Remedy in excess.'

The temple opened at eleven twenty-eight p.m. and closed at twelve fifty a.m. *die Jovis* [Thursday], the ceremony being most magnificent.

During the versicle O.S.V. saw amid the clouds of incense the sarcophagus of Ankh-f-n-Khonsu, his Egyptian avatar: it was erect, east of the altar and in a golden mist. 'At the climax

it flooded the room with white radiance. The ceremony raised Fra. O.S.V. from discomfort, sleepiness and fever to the top of his form.'

During this working, L.T. saw a white elephant with the words *Lex Labor est*. He also saw the phallus and the word *Baphomet* in Hebrew letters.

'The atmosphere,' wrote Crowley in conclusion, 'is marvellous, calm and sweet, soft as the kisses of Zepheros—a perfect peace and joy.'

During the next day, it occurred to Brother O.S.V. as he observed Brother L.T. that L.T. would make a perfect low comedian. What a good idea it would be to send him on to the music-halls, and thus gain much gold!

For the Twentieth Working, the temple opened at ten p.m. and closed at eleven p.m. *die Jovis*, when the rite was performed *ut ordinatur*.

The next day, Friday, in spite of the remedy of Jupiter, Crowley's illness reasserted itself with great force. He had much fever and bronchitis and was obliged to keep to his bed. By the following Monday, he was still very ill but he was determined to continue the operation, 'though with maimed rites.'

Thus the temple was opened 'mentally' for the Twenty-first Working at nine ten p.m. and closed at nine twenty-five. 'In spite of all the handicap,' wrote Crowley, 'the ceremony went exceedingly well. An excellent atmosphere was obtained, and O.S.V.'s temperature went down 4 degrees Centigrade!'

By the following morning Crowley had sufficiently recovered to get out of bed, put on his magical robes and open the temple for the Twenty-second Working with full rites. 'Fra. O.S.V.,' he observed of himself with typical humour, 'is now recovered, and is ungrateful enough to the doctor—an excellent and clever practitioner—to give greater thanks to Jupiter.'

The account of this working gives for the first time the correct order of the ceremony because Brother L.T., having become inspired with Jupiter during the early part of the proceedings, had raced ahead and left Crowley behind. Crowley

therefore explained that after invoking Ammon-Ra (during the Building of the Temple rite), and before he had finished the hexagram ritual,* Brother L.T. was already getting on with 'the mechanism of the *Accendat* and the preparations for the performance of the versicle. . . .' But in spite of this, the *Hand secus* [i.e. the versicle which was coterminous with the sex act], 'was brilliant and inspired, and the result overwhelming—a glow of stupendous success.'

Crowley was well and strong again for the Twenty-third Working on February the 11th. It was so effective that Brother L.T. was even more exhausted than on the previous occasion. During the course of it, he received a message for a certain A.G. He, A.G., was to go to the holy House of Hathor† and to offer there the five jewels of the cow on her altar. This is obscure, and I have been unable to find out who A.G. was. However, the five jewels of the sacred cow are milk, dung, urine, meat and blood, the eating of which, when mixed together, is a regular ritual in Tantric Hinduism. The dung is not in its liquid state, but sun-dried.

More results of *The Paris Working* were beginning to come in, but Crowley does not say what they were. The implication, however, is that they were smallish sums of money, invitations to parties, promises of large sums of money and an increase of the magical current generally.

The night before the Twenty-fourth, and last, Working was rather a sleepless one for Brother O.S.V. Nevertheless, he opened the temple at six fifteen p.m. (on February the 12th, 1914), and closed it at seven o'clock sharp. Then, with a feeling of deep satisfaction, he sat down and recorded that *The Paris Working* had been brought to a successful conclusion. The final ceremony was calm and deep, the very aroma of earth in spring.

Afterwards, Frater L.T. performed divination by Thelema,

* A ritual for banishing malignant forces and for invoking benignant ones, see page 197.

† Hathor was the Egyptian sky-goddess, patroness of love; she is represented as a woman bearing on her head the solar disc between cow's horns, or as a cow wearing the solar disc and two plumes.

that is to say he opened *The Book of the Law* at random and dipped his finger in. It was held at this significant line:

'I am Thou, and the Pillar is established in the Void.'

The result of this great operation of High Magick Art was that Brother L.T. obtained the gift of Jupiter. In other words, he received money, but how much and from whom is not disclosed. (I suspect that several hundreds of pounds came from his long-suffering parents.) Furthermore, he was 'made like Jupiter in his aspect of Ammon.' In the context this is obscure: both celebrants had taken on the aspect of Jupiter. Crowley was being critical, I think. He had reason to be. His magical brother had come into money and was spending it like water, but not on him, or even it seems with him. *The Paris Working* ends, therefore, on a note of petty jealousy. 'He became,' said Crowley of L.T., 'Jupiter the Bestower, and had unworthy guests.'

To sum up: *The Paris Working* had proved to Crowley, beyond any doubt, that the use of sex in invocation brought quicker and surer results than the long-winded rituals of theurgy that he had been taught in the Golden Dawn. For the rest of his life he never reverted to them.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Wizard Abuldiz

AIWASS was not the only 'preter-human intelligence' with whom Crowley was in touch. He was the most important, for he dictated *The Book of the Law*, but a book on Crowley's magic would be incomplete without an account of Abuldiz. This entity is described as a wizard, in contradistinction to Aiwass who was Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel.

Abuldiz is important because it was through him that Crowley wrote *Book Four*, his first work on magic which was a sketch for his masterpiece *Magick in Theory and Practice*, although the latter is described as being only the third part of *Book Four*.

The wizard Abuldiz appeared in these circumstances.

In the autumn of 1911, when Crowley was thirty-six years of age, he was taken to a party in the Savoy Hotel where he met Mary d'Esté, the companion of the famous dancer Isadora Duncan.

Crowley tells us very little about Mary. The only thing that mattered from his point of view was that she was attracted to him; but from the account of what happened between them, we learn that she had been married and had a young son. We also learn that she had a flat in Paris where, 'after some weeks' preliminary skirmishing,' he joined her. Then he carried her off to Switzerland.

My friend Gerald Yorke has a copy of a printed play, entitled *The Law*, by Mary d'Esté, with amendations in Crowley's hand; so the lady had literary pretensions. It is a very bad play, but it saw at least one performance.

Crowley's relationship with women can usually be divided into two stages, the first of which ran parallel with the second, if the second stage appeared. In the beginning he was attracted to a woman sexually and, like Casanova, his aim was sexual conquest. Crowley's description of Mary d'Esté is that she was

'a magnificent specimen' of mixed Irish and Italian blood, and that she possessed 'a most powerful personality and terrific magnetism.' This brief and enthusiastic description indicates more her physical than her spiritual charms; the magnetism was, of course, wholly erotic.

The second stage in Crowley's relationship with women was the clairvoyante one, but he invariably pretends that when he discovers that his mistress is also useful to him in the Great Work (i.e. as a seer), no one is more surprised than he—as if he'd forgotten that his main preoccupation was magic as well as sex.

Their first night together in Switzerland was spent at the National Hotel, Zürich. It was not very peaceable; indeed, Crowley described Mary as being in a state of fierce hysteria, and his explanation that this condition was due to an excess of drink and sex is not altogether credible. However, the tumult suddenly subsided, Mary sank into a profound calm and began to see things.

'Fra. Perdurabo's [Crowley's] old sceptical attitude had in no wise been weakened by the lapse of years; he attached no importance to, or interest (save artistic interest) in, what he regarded as a morbid phenomenon due to over-excitement of Bacchus and Eros, and he cannot particularise the order of the events now to be related, although he wrote them down an hour later, when they assumed an occult importance.

'The lady had I think on the previous day seen in a dream the "head of the 5 White Brothers" who told her that "it was all right."

'This person now again appeared to her. He was an old man with a long white beard; in his hand he held a wand, and on his breast was a large claw. On his finger was a ring; this ring had a transparent glass top, and under it was a white feather or perhaps a little bird. Subsequently she described this as the feather of a bird of Paradise "or something similar."

As a matter of fact, Crowley was fascinated by these communications, and not for one moment did he believe that the vision—if I may call it that—was no concern of his. On the

contrary, he was certain that this old man with the long white beard—the archetype of the old wise man—had a message for him; his only fear was that Mary might communicate the message imperfectly. He therefore urged her to make herself quite passive.

Mary did so, and after a while she told him that the five white brethren were 'turning red.'

Crowley makes no comment on this surprising statement; I can only take it that the company of five brethren, high adepts, perhaps even Secret Chiefs, had for a reason best known to themselves, suddenly gone red in the face like turkey cocks. Alternatively, their robes may have turned red. But this is an unimportant detail.

Mary next said, 'Here is a book to be given to Frater Perdurabo.'

At this, Crowley sat up: Mary was unaware of his magical title of Perdurabo!

She continued: 'The name of the book is *Aba*, and its number is *four*.'

Mary knew no Cabbala, yet according to this system the numerical value of the Hebrew letter *a* (aleph) is one, and that of *b* (beth) is two: hence ABA equals four. All this convinced Crowley that there 'might be something in the communication,' as he mildly put it.

Mary also saw a black-headed Turk—he might have been an Egyptian—wearing a tarbush and a red sash; his name was Jezel; one of his hands was covered with crocodile skin. Said the old gentleman with the long white beard, 'He [Jezel] is hunting this book [*Book Four*], but Frater Perdurabo will get it.'

Crowley then began to challenge the old man; it was necessary for him to do this because, according to occult tradition, figures seen in astral visions may turn out to be demons. Crowley does not say how exactly he challenged the old man, but it was probably by saying to him, '*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law!*' And if, at this Thelemic greeting, he did not immediately vanish, he was a gentleman and someone to be trusted.

The seer complained that she was not seeing properly, and was frightened.

The ancient one gave his name as Abuldiz.

Perdurabo then asked, through Mary, 'What about 78?' and Abuldiz replied that he *was* 78.

This must have given Crowley a start, for 78 was the number of Aiwass, his Holy Guardian Angel. Still challenging Abuldiz, he asked, 'What is 65?' (This is the number of ADNI, God.)

Abuldiz replied that Perdurabo was 65, and that his age was 1400.

At this, Crowley must have had serious doubts about Virakam's capacity as a seer. He observes that, according to his Cabbalistic Dictionary entitled *Sepher Sephiroth*, published in number eight of *The Equinox*, 1400 is the number of Chaos!

Crowley then gave the password for the equinox, but at this Abuldiz only frowned.*

* At the Spring and Autumn equinoxes, Crowley would send greetings to friends and members of the Order. Here is one that he sent to me:

Ex Castro

Nemoris Inferioris

An Ixix in o° o' o"

Care Frater,

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The Greeting of the Equinox of Autumn!

The Word of the Equinox is ROTARA.

The Oracle of the Equinox is Liber AL. II. 22; with emphasis on the word 'stir.'

The Omen of the Equinox is Feng 55.

Love is the law, love under will.

Yours fraternally,

Tó Méya Ἐνθλὸν 666

9° = 2□ A. . A. .

The Word is taken from the Abramelin square

S E A R A H

E L L O P A

A L A T I M

R O T A R A

A P I R A K

H A M A K S

Note that, spelt backwards, it is ARATOR, a sower or ploughman. There is also obvious connection with ROTA, TARO and cognate ideas.

The emphasis is on the first A Venus in Taurus.

Crowley was aware that these attempts at identification were unsatisfactory, and he made a note to this effect in his *Magical Record*. Abuldiz was apparently also of this opinion, for he promised to come again in seven days' time, at eleven p.m., and make everything clear. And Perdurabo was instructed to invoke him—Abuldiz—by the ritual of the Headless One, see page 153.

It was curious, said Crowley, that this new revelation should come at the moment when *Liber Legis* [*The Book of the Law*] was ready to be published in *The Equinox*.

They moved on to St Moritz.

During the week's lull, Crowley told Mary as much as possible about his magical work 'in order to avoid questions as to what she could, or could not, have known.'

This is not very clear. Of course there was always the danger that what Mary, in her entranced state, was hearing was not the voice of Abuldiz or of any other astral being, but the echoes, as it were, from her own memory of what Crowley himself had told her. This must be avoided at all costs. If the Brethren wish to communicate, said Crowley, they must do so unambiguously.

Crowley had these magical instruments with him:

1. The Wand of Ebony, crowned with the Star Sapphire and the golden snakes. That is to say, the star sapphire gleamed in the top of his magic wand; the 'golden snakes' may have entwined it on either side like the caduceus or wand of Hermes (but I know of no wand of Crowley's at this date which was so shaped), or they may have referred to his uraeus gold band which he wore round his head.

2. The robe of a Neophyte (of the Order of the Golden Dawn or the A. . A. .; there was no difference).

3. The shewstone of graven topaz, set in a cross, described as 'a rosy cross' and hung upon a chain of gold and pearls (see page 190.)

4. His magic bell, described as the Bell of Electrum Magicum, that is an alloy of the seven metals which are attributed to the seven planets.

5. His magic ring.

To his great surprise, he found that Mary had brought with her a loose-flowing robe of blue and gold, an 'abbai,'* such as the women of the Golden Dawn sometimes wore for the ceremonies. In this he discerned the hand of Abuldiz.

The salon of their hotel suite was adorned with a very large mirror. 'The room,' wrote Crowley, 'will be ordered in balanced disposition with the Mirror as "East," [i.e. the position of the altar].'

Mary was to dress as indicated in *The Book of the Law*, chapter I, verse 61: '... ye shall wear rich jewels . . . I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe, and covered with a rich head-dress.' Again he saw a deeper meaning in the blue and gold 'abbai' (the single robe) which Mary had carelessly included among her clothes.

On the night of the 28th of November, 1911, the temple in their hotel suite in St Moritz was arranged in this manner:

The large mirror, stretching almost to the ceiling, was in the corner of the 'East.' In a line before it were five chairs, one for each of the White Brethren (who turned red), seen by Mary in a dream and then in a trance: the chairs faced outwards into the room.

An octagonal table, on which were Brother Perdurabo's magical weapons, books of invocation, incense and burner, stood near the centre of the room. Behind it was a large rectangular table. On the left-hand side of this table was a clock, symbol of Time, and on the right-hand side was a lamp, symbol of Space; and on the side facing the mirror were the books of Thelema, otherwise known as the *Holy Books*; and opposite, on the side at which the Magus stood, were writing materials.

In the left-hand wall was a door opening to the hotel corridor; this was blocked by a couch. In the opposite wall was a window leading to a balcony. And in the wall behind the table at which Crowley stood (so that he had his back to it) was a door leading to Mary's bedroom.

* *Aba* or *Abaya* according to the Oxford Dictionary; an Arab sack-like outer garment.

The rest of the original and profane furniture of this room was stacked in the corner, diagonal to the corner where the magic mirror stood. A large screen stood in front of it and thus cut it off from the temple.

At exactly ten thirty-eight p.m., Perdurabo entered, suitably robed, and kindled the incense of Abra-Melin. This was made from myrrh, galangal, cinnamon and olive oil and produced a very pleasant smell. At ten forty he performed the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram to clear the air of evil spirits. Mary, suitably attired in her 'abbai' and rich head-dress, was already kneeling on the floor between the small octagonal table and the five chairs, facing the mirror.

At ten forty-five p.m. Perdurabo began to intone, in his feminine, slightly nasal voice, these words which are taken from a Graeco-Egyptian papyrus.*

Thee I invoke, the Headless† one.

Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens:

Thee, that didst create the Night and the day.

Thee, that didst create the darkness and the Light.

Thou art Osorronophris: Whom no man hath seen at any time.

Thou art Jābas:

Thou art Jāpós:

Thou hast distinguished between the just and the Unjust.

Thou didst make the Female and the Male.

Thou didst produce the Seed and the Fruit.

Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate one another.

I am Mosheh Thy Prophet, unto Whom Thou didst commit Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies of the Ishrael:

Thou didst produce the moist and the dry, and that which nourisheth all created Life.

Hear Thou Me, for I am the Angel of Paphró Osorronophris: this is Thy True Name, handed down to the Prophets of Ishrael.

* *Fragment of a Graeco-Egyptian Work upon Magic. From a Papyrus in the British Museum.* By Charles Wycliffe Goodwin, 1852.

† For some reason, Crowley objected to 'Headless' (ἀκεφάλων) and substituted 'Bornless,' an impossible word.

Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.

I invoke Thee, the Terrible and Invisible God: Who dwellest in the Void Place of the Spirit:

Arogorobrao: Sothou:

Moderio: Phalarthao: Doo: Apé, the Headless One.

This invocation, which is conspicuous for its use of 'barbarous names,' took eleven minutes to perform; it was, Crowley said, 'done with great vigour and good success on simple exoteric lines.' Crowley had learnt this prayer in the Golden Dawn whose leaders had realised its significance for their work. The version given here—it is not quoted in full—is taken from *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King* (where it appears as a kind of preamble), a work which Crowley filched from MacGregor Mathers, the leader of the Golden Dawn, and published without acknowledgement under the imprint of his own publishing firm, the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, in 1904. In *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Paris, 1929), some of the barbarous names are replaced by others which have more significance to the theology of Crowleyanism.

The time was exactly eleven o'clock.

PERD: *Cujus nomen est Nemo, Frater A.: A.: adest.** [(He) whose name is No One, a Brother of the A.: A.:, is present.]

Mary, who had been suitably prepared by drink and sex, was in a fine receptive state, but she was not a very good medium, as Crowley was soon to find out. Abuldiz spoke, of course, through her, so she had two voices, her own and the wizard's.

SEER: The white man is here, and he wants to know what you want.

* No One (*Nemo*) was another of Crowley's magical titles.

PERD: Nothing. Did I call him or he me?

SEER: He called you . . . but there is seventy-seven!

This was not meaningless to Perdurabo; on the contrary, seventy-seven was the numerical value of the Hebrew motto of his other mistress Leila Waddell!

PERD: Why did you call me?

ABUL: To give you this book [i.e. *Book Four*].

PERD: How will it be given?

ABUL: By the Seer. [The Seer complains that she has no book.]

PERD: Do you claim to be a Brother of the A.: A.:?

SEER: He has A.: A.: in black letters on his breast, but they are always running into a seven.

PERD: What does A.: A.: mean?

The A.: A.: were the initials of Crowley's magical society, the Order of the Silver Star, *Argenteum Astrum*.

At this point of the seance, it is recorded that Abuldiz was showing numbers very quickly, but no definite proof of his genuineness or even, at this stage, of his reality, was established.

PERD: Give further signs of your identity, for example, are you *Sapiens Dominabitar Astris*?

This was the motto of Anna Sprengel, the legendary founder of the Golden Dawn who gave a charter to MacGregor Mathers and his two companions.

SEER: I see nothing but a skull.

A satisfactory answer this, for *Sapiens Dominabitar Astris* was dead.

PERD: Is *Deo Duce Comite Ferro* [MacGregor Mathers, Crowley's enemy] one of you?

[Abuldiz does not reply.]

PERD: Is *Deo Duce Comite Ferro* one of you?

ABUL: No. No longer.

This is true, for Crowley belonged to Mather's Golden Dawn before he broke away to form his own branch, the A.: A.:

PERD: Do you know this word: MAKASHANAH? [i.e. a masonic key-word.]

SEER: He writes it in gold, and after it he puts a black cross. [The Seer complains of someone beside her, breathing on her.]

PERD: Ask who breathes. [Perdurabo observes that he could see small elementals dodging about.]

SEER: The black man; now he has a white turban.

PERD: Ask Abuldiz to send him away, unless he serves some purpose.

It is recorded that the Seer banished this disturbing intruder, who breathed down her neck, by the number five hundred and forty-one which Perdurabo had given her against fear. (She either pronounced it, wrote it down or thought it.) In Hebrew Cabbala, 541 stands for Israel, and in Greek Cabbala for Priapus.

Abuldiz then asked Perdurabo a question for a change.

ABUL: Let Perdurabo finish the word B A L.

PERD: Balata? Is that right?

ABUL: No.

These futile questions and answers continue and grow more meaningless. Crowley was well aware that a lot of answers were nonsensical, and he grew less and less pleased. Who, he wondered, is this intelligence who calls himself Abuldiz? What is he trying to say, what is his message? Crowley was prepared to go to infinite pains to find out.

ABUL: Ask me about nine.

PERD: Consider yourself asked.

ABUL: Nine is the number of a page in a book.

PERD: What book?

ABUL: A book of voyages.

PERD: We have none in stock. What book?

ABUL: A book of fools.

PERD: What book of fools?

Nine, and the phrase 'a book of fools' meant little or nothing to Crowley in 1911. He realised their significance only after he had assumed the grade of Magus, with its numerical value of $9^{\circ} = 2\Box$, in the Great White Brotherhood of Light, the A.: A.:, during 1916, and after he had written, during the winter of 1917-18, *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, which was of course the book of fools Abuldiz was referring to.

Crowley next asked Abuldiz to give the Seer a mystic name 'for Perdurabo to call her by.'

There was no reply from Abuldiz.

SEER: I won't tell you.

PERD: Please tell me.

SEER: He says the name should be that of the seventh virgin, and I won't be a virgin.

PERD: What is that name? [He repeats this question several times between long pauses.]

SEER: Two or three times he [Abuldiz] has shown me the letters V and I.

PERD: Is it the Seer's fault or Perdurabo's fault that these communications are so futile? [Pause.] Or his own?

ABUL [goaded to reply]: If you can translate nine, you will not find it futile.

PERD: Well, how can I identify this book [*Book Four*]? Is there a copy in my possession now and here?

ABUL: No.

PERD: Where can I find it?

ABUL: In London.

PERD: In my office [in Victoria Street, London, S.W.1]?

ABUL: Are there black bookshelves in your office?

PERD: Dark brown.

SEER: No, black!

PERD: I don't think so.

SEER: The book is marked with a crown, and under it, XXI.

PERD: Further details, please.

SEER: He shows another book with a blazing sun; the covers of it are of gold.

ABUL: The *Book Four*. Your instructions to the Brothers.

PERD: Then I'm not to publish it?

[Abuldiz gives the sign of silence, i.e. he assumes the thumb-to-lip posture of Harpocrates.]

PERD: I understand by that that I am not to publish it.

ABUL: Never!

SEER: Never, never, never, never. [Pause.] But you are to find it.

[Pause.] He shows a gold ring.

PERD: Any letters?

SEER: I don't believe he's said at all what he came to say.

PERD: Let him dictate slowly and clearly his message. I will go and look for this *Book Four* if I have sufficient direction.

Crowley glanced at the clock and saw that it was eleven fifty-five p.m.

PERD: Does he wish to go on with this very unsatisfactory conversation?

ABUL: Go to London, find *Book Four*, and return it to the Brothers.

PERD: Where is *Book Four*?

ABUL: In London.

PERD: Where in London?

SEER: Do you know any place in London called 'Sign of the New Moon'?

PERD: Probably dozens.

Shortly afterwards, the Seer complained of fatigue, and Crowley saw the seance coming to an end. He therefore told Mary to ask Abuldiz for another appointment. She did so, and was given December the 4th, between seven and nine p.m.

PERD [to Abuldiz]: Good-bye!

ABUL: Seven, seven, seven, seven! Good-bye!

Thus ended the second communication from the wizard who called himself Abuldiz.

At exactly nine p.m., on December the 4th, 1911, Crowley began the third seance. He was of course suitably attired in his black robe and grasped in his right hand his ebony wand; he was in his position behind the large rectangular table, and faced the Seer's back and the large mirror in which he could see the reflection of her face.

PERD: *Adsum!* [I am present.]

He observes, in parenthesis, that the Seer is drunk. She immediately sees the number 444, which makes Crowley think that he had better go at once to London to find this *Book Four*.

The Seer observed that 'they'—presumably the five White Brethren—were all sitting round a long table.

PERD: How shall I get this *Book Four*?

ABUL: Waiting in London.

PERD: I don't want the rational answer; I want the absurd.

ABUL: One thousand four hundred and twenty-nine.

PERD: Enlarge on this.

ABUL: Ten . . . It's all about water. [That is to say, explains Crowley, *Book Four* is.]

PERD: Tell me more.

ABUL: You disdained the ship I offered you. The ship was number one, four, with the head of a Negro, golden beak, breast white.

SEER: In Abuldiz's hand is a wand with a golden spear-head. Now Perdurabo, dressed in white, steps into the vision.

ABUL: Twenty-nine. Read twenty-nine! Thirty-nine! Don't waste time!

It is not clear who said this last line; it seems like Perdurabo's exasperated injunction to the Seer, especially as he observes in parenthesis immediately afterwards that she should be excited by . . . (here he writes a sign for the erect phallus) in order to charge up her visionary qualities, according to ancient traditions.

ABUL: Read sixty-nine.

SEER: Abuldiz is now in black . . . the room by the incense. His name is I AM.

PERD: What is my name?

ABUL: KAM.

PERD: What is the Seer's name?

ABUL: Seven Hebrew characters [which the Seer could recognise as such but not read].

PERD: Out of which name?

ABUL: Mystic name?

PERD: Which?

SEER: A starry Heaven.

PERD: Your name?

ABUL: V I R A K A M.

At last, after all these exasperating answers, Mary d'Esté's magical name in the Great Work is given—Virakam. Abuldiz is not entirely to blame, for the Seer was largely incoherent.

SEER: The Brothers are turning red on the ninth. White ball rolling on table from side to side, never falls. They're placing academic robes on Perdurabo, and a chain with a cross. They vote. Nine votes cast; two not cast.

This, Crowley comments, was a prevision of his initiation into the O.T.O. in Berlin the following year, see page 96.

PERD: What do they vote about?

SEER: Can't find out . . . I wish you'd let me go. Let me go . . . I can't decide it at all.

PERD: You have my sympathy.

Virakam broke off, and shortly afterwards she cried, 'Take me home!' Crowley described her as nearly in tears. Her mind was wandering. Now she said that she wanted to be near Crowley.

'You are near me, sweet,' replies Crowley.
After a while, she began to scry again.



Brother O.S.V.

Drawing by Augustus John of Aleister Crowley about the time of *The Paris Working*



In the Grip of the Scarlet Woman
Water-colour painting by Crowley

THE WIZARD ABULDIZ

SEER: They put a black robe on me too, one like you have. Oh, I'm afraid, I'm afraid. [She trembles all over and gasps.] Only one star! Under the foot of Abuldiz is a skull and cross-bones.

PERD: Good!

SEER: The cross-bones form support of a chair. Nobody in chair now. . . . Someone sitting cross-legged in it. Bell on table. My old man [Abuldiz] only does what they tell him. He has a ring on his arm. . . . There is a terrible enemy rising up for Perdurabo.

PERD: Who?

SEER: Tall, smooth-faced man, hair brushed back, age between thirty and forty.

PERD: Name?

SEER: N . . . G. N G B. Bingham. Something ending in ham.

PERD: Birmingham?

SEER: Yes, it could be that. But you'll show him the white feather of the dove . . . a quill . . . dip in ink. . . . Everybody's in black, heads covered, only eyes showing. They're all signing something in a book. [She sobs.] I won't do it any more.

Crowley decided to conclude this unsatisfactory seance, but before doing so, he asked the Seer to inquire the date of the next communication.

SEER: Tenth of December, at nine p.m.

PERD: Say *Vale, Frater*. [Good-bye, Brother.]

Seer says it.

ABUL: [He] goes off with a casket.

SEER: I see lilies.

Crowley's summing-up of the results of this seance was that the Seer was now convinced of the reality of it all, much more than on the previous occasion.

On December the 10th, at eight forty p.m., Crowley recorded in his Magical Record that he had arranged the hotel room cere-

monially as before, but this time he would begin the working by reciting the Invocation of Horus.* He did so at eight fifty.

One unpropitious incident happened during the invocation: the star sapphire flew out of the end of Perdurabo's magic wand and was lost.

At nine eighteen p.m., Perdurabo announced: *Nemo adest.* [*Nemo* (Crowley) is present.]

Perdurabo, who was gazing beyond the veils of matter, saw the Seer's body turn round and face him. (In reality she had her back to him and was gazing into the mirror in the corner of the room.) Then he saw her go to a high door of a temple, bearing always towards the left, the occult or mystic side, the side of the unconscious. Inside there was nothing but a great vault, bottomless—'but now a white figure is sitting in the middle [of this vault] on a raised thing.'

PERD: Where's your old man?

SEER: I don't know.

The 'white figure' holds up his left hand, thumb standing out very straight; on it he balances a chain. He has a black rod, and with it he points to lines on his own hand. A blue glass covers his palm. There are lines through the glass, six lines in all, and at each point are different figures, such as a man on horseback, a black bird and so forth.

PERD [impatiently]: Ask him 'Where is the old man?'

SEER: He's beside me.

PERD: What is his real message?

SEER: Something's wrong. I don't know what. I don't see him. I'm in a desert. Can't you clear it up?

In an attempt to clear it up, Crowley calls out six times the name of his Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass. A long pause follows.

* This Invocation is printed in *The Equinox of the Gods*.

At nine thirty-six p.m., the Seer began to moan; she complained again about there being something wrong, and asked Perdurabo if he couldn't clear it up.

PERD: Abuldiz! [He calls the wizard's name seven times.]

SEER: A big black door.

PERD: Go through it!

SEER: It's closed.

PERD: Break it open!

SEER: A hooded man guards the door.

PERD: Push him away. Give some sign.

SEER: I should have something on my head.

PERD: Put on a white bandage.

Virakam was wearing her head-dress, but the image of herself in her vision was hatless: she had therefore to supply an *astral* white bandage.

SEER: I can see nothing. I can do nothing. If only the old man were here!

PERD: Why isn't he?

SEER: Is this the right hour?

PERD: Yes. Perhaps you've done something wrong!

SEER: Now I see the first room filled with figures in black robes and folded arms; their faces are hooded.

PERD: Is the old man there?

SEER: Sure, if I could only get to him.

PERD: Call his name.

SEER: They're not near me as usual.

PERD: Ask why.

Virakam broke down. She was not a good seer; everything was so indistinct; she admitted that there was something wrong with her.

PERD: Ask forgiveness; ask what you're to do to get right.

SEER: I'm to obey.

PERD: In what have you disobeyed?

SEER: Faith.

PERD: Faith in what?

SEER: Faith in all. I haven't taken twenty steps.

Suddenly Virakam broke off, and burst out, 'I can't do it! I'm ready to die: I can't hear or understand. I want to go away!' Crowley patiently waited for her to recover and continue.

PERD: Is there anything you can do to put it right?

SEER: I can do nothing, dear.

PERD: Is that what they tell you?

SEER: To wait.

PERD: Anything else?

SEER: My part is to serve.

PERD: Serve whom?

SEER: The purpose.

PERD: Whose purpose?

SEER: Perdurabo's.

PERD: What is my purpose?

SEER: To bring the light.

PERD: Amen. What can you do to aid that?

SEER: Obey.

PERD: But I do not wish to command.

SEER: The way shall be made clear. We shall be taken by the hand and guided and can make no mistake.

The time was now nine fifty-eight p.m.

PERD: Shall we go to France or Italy?

SEER: I see a candlestick with three candles.

This Crowley interpreted as a sign that they were to go to Italy.

SEER: Old man will come alone tomorrow at seven.

PERD: Can't he make it a more convenient hour, such as ten?

SEER: Yes, ten.

PERD: Does he want me to invoke as tonight [i.e. to use the same invocatory prayers and sex rites]?

SEER: Be better prepared. Use the holy rite.

PERD: Which holy rite?

SEER: The one you used for the initiation.

PERD: You mean the opening?

SEER: Yes.

PERD: Very good. *Vale, Frater!* [Good-bye, Brother!] What shall I do to Seer? [I.e. to induce in her the right mood for communicating with Abuldiz.]

SEER: Six thousand two hundred and eighty.

Crowley interprets this number as meaning that he is to give her wine.

PERD: After the due performance of the Rites of Venus?

SEER: Ay, verily!

PERD: *Vale, Frater!*

Here the ceremony concluded, and as Perdurabo went out of the temple, Virakam saw that he had four eyes, instead of the usual two.

At nine thirty p.m. the following day, December the 11th, the temple was opened with Ritual 671, *The Building of the Pyramid*, see page 102. Virakam, as instructed by Abuldiz during the previous seance, had been well prepared. Wrote Crowley: 'Seer being excited by a half bottle of Pommery 1904, and by Eros, opened the Temple with 671. Towards end Seer cried "The Beast!" amid her groans. It is now nine forty-nine.'

SEER: The Beast has come in here. He opens his mouth. Many characters come therefrom.

PERD: Describe the Beast.

SEER: Great God! He's tremendous. Like an ox, and between his horns lies another curled horn. [She groans.] It comes down over his face. The half of his right foot is white. . . . It's an arrow, and below the arrow is the letter V. I only want the truth, the truth, the truth!

PERD: What is his name?

SEER: I think it's Uranus . . . Eros maybe.

Crowley interjected at this point that the Seer had become unintelligible.

A number of other rather aimless questions and unsatisfactory answers follow, then:

PERD: Tell me about this *Book Four*.

SEER: It's the most important. You'll find it unexpectedly.

PERD: Who?

SEER [cutting in]: Wait! Be patient! Work! Deny nothing! The simplest things mean most. You're on the way. *Book Four* means freedom to all. It's the light.

For a change, Crowley puts his question in cypher, the same simple cypher by which Levin proposed to Kitty in *Anna Karenina*.

PERD: I.l.n.i.t.b.p.e.? (Is last night's instruction to be punctually executed?)

SEER: Yes, but move. Ask again. There are great events happening and you are too doubtful; have confidence.

PERD: M.w.a.t.i.o.l.n.? (May we alter the instruction of last night?)

SEER: No. You are the test. Obey. She serves.

PERD: When shall we speak again with him?

SEER: Tonight: if you will you can know all. Only ask clearly. All are here; the eleven, the five and the six.

With this reply, the nonsensical level of the communications rises again.

PERD [determinedly]: Is P the L of the A? (I.e. is Perdurabo the Logos of the Aeon?)

SEER: He's the D of the A!

The *Daimon* of the Aeon! Crowley must have started at this reply.

PERD: When are we going to see them [the Brethren] again?

SEER: Oh, God! I hope never! I'm dead. I'm dead. . . .

I won't tell you. I won't. I'm tired. I won't be here on the 13th; I'm going away. I won't obey. I won't. . . . [*Ad lib.*, wrote Crowley, and, with a careful eye for details, he did not forget to add, 'screams and groans and sighs.']

PERD: At what hour on the 13th?

SEER: Nine.

PERD: Then *Vale, Frater*. [He salutes Abuldiz good-bye.]

Crowley adds as a footnote to this communication this piece of information: 'Previous to the Orgie* and the Incantations,† Seer was lying drunk on the sofa; the Eleven‡ came to her and gave her mystic gifts, one knowledge, another power, another wisdom, etc., and said it was all for the Cause. They sealed the gifts *basiculo ad cunnum*. The last one said, "I'll bring you the seed from which fruit shall come."'

On the 13th, the seance opened without a ceremony at exactly nine six p.m. Crowley merely said, 'Ready?' We do not know what the Seer replied, because it is not recorded, but a minute later Crowley announced, '*Nemo adest*' [Nemo is present]. At nine ten, the Seer was ready.

PERD: Is Abuldiz there?

SEER: Has been here for some time.

PERD: Will he answer questions?

SEER: Yes. [Pause.] Tonight there'll be trouble. I feel it.

PERD: Why?

SEER: Lack of faith. If you'd only believe and go straight. . . .

PERD: Who is doubting?

SEER: You.

PERD: Not at all.

SEER: Yes.

PERD: You, O seer, have doubted.

SEER: Prove me.

PERD: W.K.g.u.h.p.?

Mary d'Esté possessed a valuable pearl necklace. Crowley, thinking of a 'supreme test' of faith, therefore guardedly asks

* The sex act. † Ritual 671, see page 102. ‡ Eleven magi.

her, 'Will Kundry give up her pearls?' The name Kundry is from Wagner's *Parsifal*. She was a mythical woman who, for laughing at Jesus while he was carrying his cross, was doomed for ages to helpless remorse.

SEER: No, not yet.

PERD: What will happen in that case?

SEER: What happened to you before?

PERD: Ah, God! [Pause.] Is it too late?

SEER: No. Not too late, but too little faith.

PERD: Take these in your hand. [He gives her the pearls.]

SEER: Why? [Startled.] They've disappeared; there's nothing left; they no longer exist. Never mind; I'm at home with them [the Brethren]. How well they know it! Begin his name with last letter; write it otherwise and add twenty-two. Begin with ZIDLUBA. O, mocker!

PERD: What have you done?

SEER: I've thrown away the pearls. I was quite right. He [Abuldiz] tells me so. If you can't give me spiritual gifts and things of value, I don't need any. I don't need pearls; I need light.

PERD: What shall be done with the pearls?

SEER: Nothing; they're of no value. Understand, for God's sake, understand!

PERD: S.t.p.b.s.t.V? (Shall the pearls be sent to V.V.V.V.V.?)

SEER: Wait, and know. You were answered this question before.

To sum up: the Wizard Abuldiz, one of the Secret Chiefs, informed Crowley that he was to write a work on magic, and this work was to be entitled *Book Four*. And that he and his Seer, Virakam, were to do so in Naples.

After several adventures and a series of quarrels, they found the Villa Caldarazzo, at Posilippo, near Naples, where Crowley, in a confident and creative mood, speedily dictated to his Seer the work in question. It was published during 1911 in London, price (in conformity with the title) four groats, or, for those who hadn't any groats, one shilling. Part two of this curious

* *Vi Veri Vniversum Vivus Vici*: Crowley's motto for the grade of Master of the Temple.

work came out the following year at the price of 'four tanners,' or two shillings. One of the illustrations shows Crowley with a beard, sitting naked in the sea, the pellucid water up to his waist. His slender figure and mop of hair point to an earlier period; meanwhile he had grown obese and bald. For a caption to this unusual photograph even for a book on magic, but not, I suppose, for a book on *magick*, are these words: *XAIPE ΣΩΤΗΡ ΚΟΣΜΟΥ* [Hail, Saviour of the World].

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Wizard Amalantrah

ABULDIZ's final instruction to Crowley and his Seer was that they should go to a desert and look for an egg under a palm tree. Unfortunately the break-up of Crowley's relationship with Sister Virakam prevented him from setting off for North Africa in search of this egg, and soon he forgot about the Wizard Abuldiz.

During most of the 1914-18 war, he was in America. In 1918, he was certainly not expecting Abuldiz, but just after midnight on January the 14th of that year, he was suddenly and forcibly reminded of him when his mistress, who was squatting on a mattress on the floor of their New York apartment and smoking opium, mentioned an egg in the course of her account of the vision she was having.

Crowley was sitting at his desk writing *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*; he says that he was not in the least interested in her visions, but the reference to the egg made him realise that perhaps this vision was a continuation of those he had experienced in Switzerland through Sister Virakam, and that the Wizard Abuldiz, of whom he had heard nothing since 1911, was trying to get in touch with him again.

The setting, a desert, was present symbolically: in fact Crowley had felt he was so much in a desert that he had nicknamed his mistress the Camel, and he was expecting her, by her magic arts, to get him to an oasis.

The Camel's real name was Roddie Minor. She was a middle-aged woman who had left her husband. From her photograph, she was broad-shouldered and pleasant-faced. When her name first appears in Crowley's Magical Record or diary on October the 1st, 1917, she is described thus: 'Roddie Minor. Matron. Big, muscular, sensual type. Pet name Eve.' Before she met Crowley she had no interest in magic, astrology, alchemy, the

THE WIZARD AMALANTRAH

Cabbala or any of the subjects which preoccupied the mind of her lover; she was a doctor of pharmacy and had manufactured perfumes. The wizard who appeared in her visions gave her the name of Achitha.*

The actual vision which she had that night has been preserved in a manuscript entitled *The Amalantrah Working*. This is it:

'While with The Lady of Our Dreams [opium], I had a vision of myself as a spreading candlestick with thirteen candles. Over each flame was the opening of a tube which could hold water as a fountain. These tubes met the flame in a throbbing vibration which became almost excruciating; then, suddenly, the part of the candlestick above the stem or staff, broke off and became a crown. The crown floated in the air, tilted at a slight angle; and a circle, which was a halo, came down from heaven and dropped into the crown. In the centre a wand came, and then it all hovered above the candlestick with a veil round it. The veil in some ways appeared as rays of light. After I told this vision, Therion [Crowley]† talked a long while about the number 93 [the number of *The Book of the Law*]; how adepts were tested when they brought messages, and how messages had been sent to him through the Scarlet Woman [the Camel was the Scarlet Woman at this time].

'I had another vision of myself as thirteen naked women lying in a row, all being caressed at once. When I told this to Therion, he suggested that I should see if I could get any messages through visions or otherwise.

'I began by asking for a vision containing a message. I first heard gurgling water and saw a dark farmhouse amid trees and green fields. The house and other things disappeared and a dark *yoni* appeared just where the house had stood. I then asked: where will a message come from? Immediately soldiers with guns appeared; they lounged around the place, and a King on a throne appeared where the house had stood. I asked again for a message and saw an egg in which were many tiny convolutions of some flesh-like substance. The egg was placed in an oblong [frame] as in a picture. Around it were clouds, trees, mountains and water, called the "four elements." A camel appeared in front of the whole picture. I next

* There are variant spellings of this name.

† The Greek for 'Beast,' Crowley's title for the grade of Magus which he had assumed in the previous year.

tried to find out who the King was. He looked more like Professor Shotwell than anyone else. That is, he was "simple, democratic" and very learned and fine. He was certainly not a king belonging to any kingdom limited by a country's borders, but a king of men, or a king of the world. I asked his name, and the word Ham appeared between the egg in the oblong and the soldiers around the King.

"The King went to one side and a Wizard linked his arm in the King's as they disappeared. The Wizard looked at me significantly as they left. It was a sort of look which amounted almost to a wink. He was an old man with a grey beard, dressed in a long black gown. He was infinitely wise. They seemed to go to a cave in the base of a low mountain on the shore of a large body of water. A spring of sparkling cool water bubbled up through a barrel near the mouth of the cave. I went into the cave and saw them doing something mysterious with a revolver. The Wizard had the revolver. What they were going to do was a joke of some kind, but the Wizard looked grim about it. At Therion's suggestion I went up to them and said, "I am Eve." This seemed to stop everything. They both disappeared with the cave. Very soon I saw the King sitting in a niche covered with a canopy, cut in the side of the mountain. In quite another place the Wizard was sitting under a tree fanning himself. At Therion's suggestion I went up to him and asked him his name. I became very frightened and had the same sensation as when I spoke to him in the cave; it was a kind of shyness and awe. He only smiled at me and would not speak. It seemed that I did not know enough for him to speak with me. In order for him to say anything to me I should have to build a fire of sticks, which he showed me how to do. There was a baby in some way connected with the act of my building the fire which was like a ritual. Then a most beautiful lion was standing by the fire. The Wizard was standing and still held one or two sticks in his hand. He smiled and said, "Child." I then saw a most beautiful naked boy of five or six years old dancing and playing in the woods in front of us. Therion asked how he would look dressed, and when I saw him in conventional clothes he looked very uncomfortable and repressed. He looked as if he should be dressed in tiger skins. To one side, near the place where I made the fire, was a large turtle standing up as a penguin stands.

"The Wizard was very happy and satisfied-looking. He sat down and reached out his hand to me and had me sit down beside him.

As we watched the Boy he put his left arm round me tenderly and placed my head on the left side of his chest near the shoulder. He said, "It's all in the egg."

So ends the first vision. Crowley, it seems, was interested in it from the start, and not, as he says in his *Autobiography*, which was written a few years later and largely from memory, from the moment the egg was mentioned. What is rather odd is that Crowley influences the course of the vision by giving the Seer advice on the situations and by asking questions.

In spite of Crowley's knowledge of symbolism, and his familiarity with Freud, and with Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious* (which he had been studying during the last year or two), he made no attempt to interpret this material, at least, not on a level at which it would make sense. It was hardly possible for Crowley to have done so, for he lived in the night, not the day, and was unable to deal with visions and dreams from a conscious standpoint. The characters and the incidents of this vision were irreducible realities to him. Crowley would not have been surprised to meet Abuldiz with his long white beard strolling up Fifth Avenue.

Since consciousness appealed so little to him, it is not surprising that he regarded the ego as something to be overcome before truth could be discovered. Thus he gave each of his pupils a razor and told him to cut himself on the arm every time he mentioned the word 'I,' for one must suppress the ego and sink into the world of visions, that is, into the unconscious. We can see from the following vision of Roddie Minor's how she had listened to the Master Therion and imbibed, with some reluctance, this philosophy of throwing out the baby with the bath-water. She begins by describing the scene:

"I see all the usual ones at the Wizard's woodland place. They all look sad or at least very quiet and concerned. I go up to the Wizard and ask if he has anything to say. He sits down on some steps and motions me to sit at his feet. He spreads out his hands,

palms downwards, and begins, "Once upon a time there was a man and girl." I recognise that this is a story about myself, and instantly stop the picture, for I do not want personal things here. The ego must be crushed. (The truth is that I have been very unsettled and unhappy about Therion's way of interfering with me in my manners towards him. I have been trying to settle on the best plan to get along and have reached a point where I am trying to forget it all—in other words, to suppress what I feel is really right.) I turn and tell Therion the part of the vision about my ego appearing, and he insists that I must suppress the ego. Later, as we talk, Therion attacks me again for having caressed him in the night. I had done so in order to forget the differences of our points of view. His remarks take my breath away, for he seems to be far from understanding the whole underlying truth. I go back to the Wizard intending to ask him what to do. When I see the Wizard, he is convulsed with laughter; he says to me, "You have burned your fingers again; you must let Therion alone. The only way out for you is not to care." I see a distinct flash of dazzling light which tells me that this is true. I tell Therion so.'

Eve's instinct was sound, but she could not prevail against her demoniacal lover; she could only leave him, not reform him, and a break, anyhow, was bound to happen sooner or later. No wonder the Wizard was convulsed with laughter.

Crowley, now thoroughly aroused and impressed by Eve's visionary capacities, decided to join her on one of these journeys which, in the jargon of occultism, is called travelling on the astral. Thus, on January the 20th, after Eve at three a.m. had asked the Wizard for a message and received as a reply the vision of a large red letter A and an eagle flying through the woods and low down over some meadows, Crowley also took the drug—opium or perhaps anhalonium—and ascended the astral plane with her. In the ensuing vision, the Wizard tells them that his name is Amalantrah.

'Therion and I entered the astral plane, I draped in a diaphanous virile yellow green, he in a brilliant red with gold braid. In one hand he had a sceptre and a ring on the other. We went through the

ceiling [of their apartment] and up about nine hundred feet in the air and looked up and saw an eye in the clouds. We went to the place of the eye and saw a platform-like building. There were many doors with signs of various sorts on them, such as the swastika, etc. We went to a distant door at the end of the corridor on which there was no sign. A Dwarf stood to the right, and a girl to the left of the door. I asked the Dwarf where the door led to. He did not answer, but showed me a column with a blazing top. I asked the girl, and she said, "Heaven." Interpreted, it meant where we wanted to go. I opened the door easily and saw a corridor in darkness. We passed through and saw light outside at the end door. A sheep was just inside the door. (Sheep were also down on the ground below.) We went outside and looked down a few hundred feet upon a beautiful pastoral scene and some villages. We dropped down to this scene. A beautiful lady, blonde and dressed in creamy white, came up to us. I asked her name, and she answered "Eve." This seemed wrong for her to say. I asked her where we were to go to, and she replied, "France." I then asked about the message, and after some time she lay on the ground with her head towards us and waved her hand (which looked like the fins of a fish) in the direction of a village. We all went there. On the way, a man who reminded me of a Greek philosopher walked a little behind us like a shadow. He had a staff and was in Greek costume.

'When we came to the village called Pantruel, we saw a church. In front of the church was a square in which was a cone-shaped fountain, made of metal, with water spurting from each petal of the cone. (Later the fountain spurted flames.) The Dwarf was now with us and we asked him who the fountain-keeper was. The fountain opened and the King (of last week's vision) came out with some papers in his hand. One of the papers was a map of South America; the others were deeds, etc. I asked about the message and he kept looking at the papers, and finally told us to go to the Wizard. We went down by the stream and across it into the woods where the Wizard and the Child were. They both looked a little lonely. I asked the Wizard his name and he told me Amalantrah. I then asked who I was, and he replied, "Part of the Tao." I asked for the message and he put me off in all sorts of ways with small visions. Once he said, "Go," which I took to mean to go to some place. Later he said, "Egypt." He was not very friendly towards me and seemed worried at times.'

Before the proceedings ended, Crowley told Eve to ask the Wizard how to spell Baphomet, the title Crowley took when he entered the O.T.O., for he badly wanted to know the correct spelling of this name in order to find its number (according to the Cabbalistic system), and he also wanted to know the meaning of the word. If the Wizard who called himself Amalantrah could answer these two difficult questions he was, beyond doubt, a real wizard and Crowley's higher self.

'I then,' continued Eve, 'asked how to spell Baphomet and a man like *The Gods of the Mountain* [the title of one of Lord Dunsany's plays] answered my questions about this. Finally I was told B-a-f-o-m-e-t-h. I begged for more information about the message but got none. Many questions were asked about the letters of the spelling as to whether they were Hebrew, etc.

'I then said good-bye, noting the Boy's beautiful dark eyes, and we went away by a little path to the pool of the spring. We bathed in this and then sank through the bottom and came out directly over Manhattan. We came back to our bodies.'

The meaning of the name Baphomet has puzzled scholars. The translator of *Ancient Alphabets and Hieroglyphic Characters Explained*, 1806, says that it is derived from the Arabic word for calf, *Babûmid*, and reflects the idolatrous veneration of this animal; the nineteenth-century Orientalist, Baron Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, says that it is from the Greek and means 'wisdom,' literally the 'baptism of wisdom'; the *Oxford Dictionary* says, simply, that it is a mediæval form of Mahomet.

Crowley's diary, entitled *Rex de Arte Regia*, records the same events briefly:

'Sunday Jan. 20th [1918].

'We then went up on the astral plane. Eve had got certain visions which struck me as significant, chiefly because of some similarity between them and the later Virakam visions. "It's all in the egg," and so on from a Wizard who is in charge of a naked Boy (Horus, I suppose).

'After various minor adventures we came upon the Wizard and the Boy in a wood. The Wizard is a Magus, always throwing visions

at Eve to put her off, but she appealed to me, and he then answered. He gave his name first as AMALANTRE. I asked for explanation of the E, and got AE, then H, then AH. This gave him 729 [i.e. the Cabbalistic number of Amalantrah]. . . .'

I cannot follow Crowley's detailed and technical explanation of the true spelling of Baphomet, as given to him by the Wizard Amalantrah, and I am therefore omitting it. It's conclusion, however, is more or less clear:

'For years I have striven to get a satisfactory spelling for Baphomet, and failed utterly. The Wizard gave BAFOMETH [in Hebrew] and explained O as Vau and E as Yod. I asked whether TH was one letter or two, and got the answer "one"—a Tau. I then asked what must be added to make the word eightfold; and even before he could answer I saw (mentally) that a final R would make its numeration 729. Then I saw the justification, Baphomet being traditionally Mithraic. It now means, therefore, quite simply Father Mithras. The R has been suppressed as a blind—it blinded me, all right!—and because the Sun has been concealed. Looking in *Liber D** for further confirmation, I find 729 = the curse of Satan! Of course! This is a great and wonderful Arcanum, and I doubt not will lead to many further mysteries of the most holy Kingdom.'

Crowley's workings with Roddie Minor certainly led to many further mysteries. Throughout the spring, and during part of the summer, and perhaps later (the manuscript of *The Amalantrah Working* as it is called is not complete), the Wizard Amalantrah, who is described as having a 'very Scotch-like face, resembling the man in *Simon Iff* who was tortured and who tortured his wife,'† was a reality in Crowley's life, and was consulted regularly every week.

The seances usually began with the sex rite, which was an operation for invoking the requisite forces. (On one occasion

* Crowley's Cabbalistic dictionary, published in number VIII of *The Equinox*.

† *Simon Iff* is an unpublished collection of detective stories which Crowley wrote in America during 1917.

this rite was explicitly described as an operation 'to improve communications with Amalantrah.') As Eve could not be brought into a visionary state by this means alone, she afterwards took a drug, usually anhalonium, but sometimes opium or hashish.

Crowley carefully recorded her description of the vision, and when the Wizard appeared on the scene, he asked him questions. The answers were provided by the pictures which appeared immediately afterwards.

Q: What is the work for week-end? First, general work. Then, work of the Holy Ghost?

A: I see a curious bird, pure white, standing in water.

Again:

Q: How is the temple, is it in good shape? [I.e. the temple in which the Wizard is sitting.]

A: I see a Quaker woman. Wizard seems in a funny mood.

Instead of a picture, a number or a Hebrew letter would sometimes appear in answer to the question. This presented no difficulty, for Crowley was the compiler of a Cabbalistic dictionary, *Sephir Sephiroth* or *Liber D* in which every number up to a thousand has one or more meanings. (According to the Cabbala, each Hebrew letter stands for a number; when several letters appeared in reply to a question, their numbers were added together.)

A number in Roman figures (if it was no more than twenty-two) signified one of the trumps in the tarot pack, the meaning of which, according to Crowley and the Golden Dawn, was derived from one of the twenty-two paths of the Cabbalistic Tree of Life.

The appearance of a planetary or zodiacal sign was interpreted according to the usual attributions of the sign.

Six sticks, or short lines, some broken, some whole, one above the other would sometimes appear in answer to a question. In this case the Wizard was replying through one of

the sixty-four hexagrams of the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*, the ancient Chinese book of divination which Crowley used in Legge's translation. Amalantrah, in fact, replies only through one or other of the occult means with which Crowley was familiar.

Questions were asked verbally. Of verbal questions, sometimes only the first letter of each word was spoken:

Q: S.I.g.m.w.f.? (Shall I get my work filmed?)

A: I see a hole in the subway: a trap-door, white furry animals like balls are moving about rapidly. ('This,' commented Crowley, 'means the struggle to break away the interferences.') 'Yes,' said Eve in reply, 'that is the way.'

Q: H.s.w.c.t.f.s.? (How soon will come the first success?)

A: When the snow melts.

Occasionally only the last letter of each word was spoken when the question was asked:

Q: s.a.t.f.e.r.r.a.e.n.e.? (Is Achitha part of Roddie Minor or a separate human intelligence?)

[The answer to this question was obscure.]

Finally, questions were asked 'mentally,' that is without speech. Here is a typical seance. Mrs Britta Forkis, or Sister Barzedon, is present. (All I know about her is that she sent Crowley ten dollars and had now joined him.) Her number was 444, which is the number of the Lion of the Temple.

Feb. 12.

With Mrs Britta Forkis. After dinner.

I [Achitha] see the Wizard standing up. The egg is there; the Child is sitting under a tree with the roots showing where the rain has washed the dirt away. The Lion, the Turtle and the mountain path are all there. Also the remains of the charred fire sticks where I built the first fire with the Wizard. I greet the Wizard. *Salam Aleikum*. He lifts his left hand and drops pearls or jewels from his fingers. He says 'Amaranthus.'

Q: What is the connection with Amaranthus?

- A: I see a ship going South, loaded with Oriental things—teak wood. I see a gold fish washed upon the shore of the sea. Amaranthus seems to mean something holy—Holy Light.
- Q: Is Therion going to do any great work at the altar we are going to set up in Egypt whence we are going to find the egg?
- A: The Wizard's function with me is to get the truth. He knows the truth for me and is a guide for me. He expects me to go to Egypt to get the egg. He expects Therion to go. Therion's work is some great work.
- Q: What is the magical name of Mrs Forkis?
- A: Barzedon. I see a great white cloud upon which there is a glow which turns into a ram's head. There is a frog on the ground. The Wizard says, 'From the toad much is to be learned.' The toad is the symbol of Barzedon.
- Q: When Barzedon is in danger, is she to visualise the toad?
- A: No. It is a more general symbol.
- Q: Is it expedient to start to find the egg, and when should we start?
- A: The egg is a work which must be done—the Great Work. By doing the work, we get to the key.
- Q: Is it the same vision as in the Virakam vision?
- A: The work must go on and there must be an altar, created in Egypt. I see the King.
- Q: Who is the King?
- A: I see O.I.V.V.I.O.* Therion is the High Priest.
- Q: Who is the High Priestess?
- A: I see a tall, rather beautiful woman, i.e. her face has a beautiful expression. She has dark hair.
- Q: What special work has Barzedon to do?
- A: I see the toad again. Her work is something like a mother's, shielding. There is always a golden light, giving a glow.
- Q: W.B.t.s.i.t.W.? (Will Barzedon then sit in the West?) [I.e. will she stay in the United States?]
- A: I see growing grain and a fox among it. There are baskets of corn, an eagle, and an egg on the ground near the corn. The eagle watches the egg.
- Q: Who is the eagle?

* These are the initial letters of the motto of Charles Stansfield Jones or Brother Achad, Crowley's Canadian pupil who was in America at the time and who joined him in the following month. His other magical name was Arcteon.

- A: I see the path and something forming out of indefinite material like in the egg of the first vision. The eagle is in the sky on the other side of the Wizard.
- Q: When are we to go to Egypt?
- A: I see two queer animals—rats as big as horses drawing a chariot at a great pace. I see Therion standing surrounded by four knights who are pressed close to his body. There is a wonderful expression on his face, an expression of consecration to some great work.
- Q: W.J.t.o.b.t.r.t.t.s.t.j.? (Would June twenty-one be the right time to start the journey?)
- A: I see a horse's head. The Wizard holds out his hand forming a rabbit's head.
- Q: Would the Wizard be pleased to take Barzedon on the astral plane now?
- A: Yes.

In March, another name appeared in the record of *The Amalantrah Working*: Olga Sobolov. From her photograph she was younger, more feminine and prettier (from a conventional point of view) than the Camel; her eyes were large and slightly protruding, with a dreamy expression. Her magical name was Olun. During one of the seances with the Camel, Crowley asked: 's.a.d.r.y.o.g.d.s.k?' 'Is Olga friend or enemy to 729 [Amalantrah] and his work?' The answer was 'Pan's reed,' and the number 34, the number of Jupiter, which I find quite obscure. Crowley asked the question because he was thinking of using Sister Olun in the Great Work. It appears that he was getting rather tired of the Camel. On the 10th of March they had performed together a rite of sex-magic 'To know powers of Yoni.' Then the Camel took a large dose of anhalonium which Crowley called a mercurial drug. The vision was interrupted, and Crowley wrote dispassionately in his diary, 'Achitha has been rolling about in agony. The God Mercury being too pure for her corrupt mind and body.'

It soon becomes clear that Crowley was trying to replace Achitha by Olun. A reference to Olun's 'sin complex' means that Crowley was not finding her an easy prey. Olun wanted, it

seems, love in the old-fashioned sense, which Crowley called hysterical, pseudo-romantic, and 'technically exquisite or of the European type.' When, after 'two weeks or so of preliminaries,' he gets his way with her, the act of sex-magic has as its object *Liberty*. 'For the three of us, each as follows: for me, to take Vampires fearlessly; for Olun, to destroy her sin-complex; for Eve, to transcend jealousy.'

Crowley called Eve irrational, and explained that she felt obsessed by him and dreaded being dominated by his more powerful personality. However, there was no need for her to transcend her jealousy of another woman, for Olun, unable to stand Crowley any longer, suddenly fled, and when, on March the 26th, Crowley asked Amalantrah if she would reappear, the answer was quite definitely no.

Eve, therefore, continued in the role of Crowley's seer and, Amalantrah, who had been looking 'very sad, older,' began to cheer up. 'Wizard is smiling tonight—a quizzical smile. He looks like a sea captain.'

There is no particular movement in the visions; they are all more or less the same; and towards the end of them, as the following extract shows, Crowley and his scribe are neatly brought back to the point from where they started.

Wizard very serious and looks at Achitha in a contemplative mood. Seems to approve. Turtle is the most prominent thing in the temple. Child is there too, also Lion and Barzedon. Arcteon [see footnote, page 180] has a very prominent place, he is a tall man who always appears in the Temple.

Q: What is the work of this week-end?

A: *Geburah* [strength or fortitude].

Q: *Geburah* applied to what?

A: The egg. The egg is resting on the point of mountain tops, very sharp. Water around, lotus flowers on it.

Q: Egg is symbol of some new knowledge, isn't it?

A: *Gimel*, *lamed* [the letters G and L in Hebrew; they add up to 33 and mean 'spring fountain'].

Q: What does that mean?

A: I don't know.

Q: How are we to break open the egg?

A: In plain language it means Thou art to go this Way.

Q: (That isn't plain language.) How are we to get this new knowledge?

A: (Don't ask questions too fast.) Sow the wild oats; go into the . . . into the Mother to be born again.

Q: What about the Mass of the Holy Ghost?

A: That hasn't anything to do with it. You've shattered everything. I'll have to establish connection all over again. Going into the Mother to be born again, you get a New Life and then the Earth is covered with wonderful flowers, and bees come to the flowers to get honey to store, and the honey is stored elixir.

Sometime during the early summer of this year, 1918, Crowley decided to go on a Great Magical Retirement. One of his reasons for this was to get away from the Camel. They had, he says, agreed to part. He acquired a canoe and sailed along the Hudson. But he adds, surprisingly, that his friendship, and even intimacy, with the Camel continued, and during week-ends she visited him and brought him provisions at his camp on Cesopus Island, the place where he fell into a deep trance and he obtained a series of visions of his past lives (see Chapter Eight). Then, in August, he found himself a new girl with orange-red curls called Madeleine. But she does not seem to have been his mistress for long. His last night in America, before catching the boat for Europe and home (the First World War being over at last), was spent in the arms of the Camel.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Vision and the Voice

CROWLEY's writings fall into three categories. First of all there is the writing which, he says, he did not himself write (although it is in his unmistakable style) but took down at another's dictation. Only *The Book of the Law* is in this category. Then there are those works of his which, although written by him, are entirely or partly inspired, such as the three little volumes of prose poems called 'The Holy Books.' Lastly, there are his poems, novels, verse dramas, works on magic, works of obscenity and his *Autobiography*—the bulk of his works in fact—which were written by him alone, without help from anyone.

Of works in the second category, *The Vision and the Voice* is the longest and, amongst his followers, the most highly appreciated. It was originally published in *The Equinox* during 1911, and as a separate work after Crowley's death by his American followers.*

The Vision and the Voice is not a work of imagination but the record of a magical operation. The technique used was that of John Dee and Edward Kelley—the so-called Enochian Calls which Crowley had studied in the Golden Dawn, and, later, on his own initiative in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, and at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Dee was a mathematician, alchemist, and court astrologer. It was he who selected January the 14th, 1559, as an auspicious day for Elizabeth's coronation. Kelley was a medium with the gift of prophecy: he had foretold, four years before the events happened, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and the coming of the Armada. He could also see spirits. Because of this faculty, Dee employed him as his sayer at a salary of £50 a year—not an insignificant sum at a time when artificers' wages were calculated in pence per day.

* Thelema Publishing Company, Barstow, California, 1952.

Kelley was twenty-eight years younger than his master. He wore a black skull-cap which also covered the back of his head—to conceal, it was said, the loss of his ears in the pillory after a conviction for forgery. He was the kind of person of whom nasty things were said. It was rumoured, for example, that he had dug up a body for the purpose of questioning the dead.

At Dr Dee's house at Mortlake in Surrey, Kelley would gaze into the doctor's 'shew-stone' or crystal—also called the holy stone, for an angel brought it to Dee through the window—and would describe what the spirits therein were doing. Sometimes the spirit would step out of the stone and Kelley would follow its progress about the room.

Meric Casaubon's large tome on Dee, entitled *A True & Faithful RELATION of what passed for many Yeers Between Dr. JOHN DEE (A Mathematician of Great Fame in Q. Eliz. and King James their Reignes) and SOME SPIRITS*, published 1659, begins with this sitting:

[E.K. stands for Edward Kelley, and the Greek Δ for Dee.]

Suddenly, there seemed to come out of my Oratory a *Spiritual creature*, like a pretty *girle* of 7 or 9 yeares of age, attired on her head with her hair rowled up before, and hanging down very long behind, with a gown of Sey . . . changeable green and red, and with a train she seemed to play up and down . . . like, and seemed to go in and out behind my books, lying on heaps, the biggest . . . and as she should ever go between them, the books seemed to give place sufficiently, dis . . . one heap from the other, while she passed between them: And so I considered, and . . . the diverse reports which E.K. made unto me of this pretty maiden, and . . .

Δ. I said . . . Whose maiden are you?

She . . . Whose man are you?

Δ. I am the servant of God both by my bound duty, and also (I hope) by his Adoption.

A voyce . . . You shall be beaten if you tell.

She . . . Am not I a fine Maiden? Give me leave to play in your house, my Mother told me she would come and dwell here.

Δ. She went up and down with most lively gestures of a young girle, playing by her selfe, and diverse times another spake to her

from the corner of my study by a great Perspective-glasse, but none was seen beside her selfe.

... Shall I? I will. (Now she seemed to answer one in the fore-said *Corner* of the Study.)

... I pray you let me tarry a little [speaking to one in the fore-said *Corner*.]

Δ. Tell me who you are?

... I pray you let me play with you a little, and I will tell you who I am.

Δ. In the name of Jesus then tell me.

... I rejoyce in the name of Jesus, and I am a poor little *Maiden*, Madini, I am the last but one of my Mother's children, I have little Baby-children at home.

Δ. Where is your home?

Ma ... I dare not tell you where I dwell, I shall be beaten.

Δ. You shall not be beaten for telling the truth to them that love the truth, to the eternal truth all Creatures must be obedient.

Ma ... I warrant you I will be obedient. My Sisters say they must all come and dwell with you.

Δ. I desire that they who love God should dwell with me, and I with them.

Ma ... I love you now you talke of God.

Δ. Your eldest sister her name is Esémeli.

Ma ... My sister is not so short as you make her.

Δ. O, I cry you mercy, she is to be pronounced Eseméli.

E.K. She smileth, one calls her saying, Come away Maiden.

Ma ... I will read over my Gentlewoemen first. My Master Dee will teach me, if I say amisse.

Δ. Read over your Gentlewoemen as it pleaseth you.

Ma ... I have Gentlemen and Gentlewoemen, Look you here.

E.K. She bringeth a little book out of her pocket ... She pointeth to a *Picture* in the book.

Ma ... Is not this a pretty man?

Δ. What is his name?

Ma. My ... saith, his name is Edward, Look you, he hath a Crown upon his head, my Mother saith, that this man was Duke of York.

E.K. She looketh upon a *Picture* in the Book with a *Coronet* in his hand and *Crowne* upon his head.

The man in question was Edward VI of England.

Madini then finds a picture of Henry VIII in her book.

Ma ... Here is a grim Lord, He maketh me afraid.

Δ. Why doth he make you afraid?

Ma. He is a stern fellow ...

She turned over more pages of this book and found other royal persons. She told Kelley that her sister had torn out two leaves and that she would bring them when they had supped. This part of the dialogue concludes with Dee's saying 'We were earnestly called for to Supper by my folks.'

The nineteen *Keys* or *Calls* were dictated to Kelley in the angels' own language called 'Enochian.' As if Enochian was not obscure enough, the *Calls* had to be dictated backwards. And each word was dictated backwards (for example, *piaood* is really *dooaip*), for its direct communication would have evoked powerful forces which, to say the least, were not wanted at the time.

As Kelley gazed into the shewstone, he would see the angel Nalvage or Gabriel with a table of letters and a wand. Kelley would call out to Dee, 'He points to column 6, rank 31,' and so on. Dee, who had a copy of the same table before him, would pick out the letter in the square in question, and promptly write it down. The collection of these tables is entitled *Liber Logaeth*.

The last or nineteenth *Call* invokes the thirty 'Aethyrs' or 'Aires,' 'whose dominion extendeth in ever-widening circles without and beyond the Watch Towers of the Universe.' In other words, in some spirit sphere. In due course Kelley was told the names of all thirty Aethyrs and the names of the angels who govern them. These Watch Towers are cubes of infinite magnitude and inside are the names of their angels.

Madariatza das perifa Lil [the name of the first Aethyr] *cabisa micaolazoda saanire caosago od fifisa balzodizodarasa iada. Nonufa gobulime: micama adoianu mada faods beliorebe, soba ooaona cabisa luciftias*

yaripesol, das aberaasasa nonuqafe jimicalazodoma larasada tofejilo marehe pereryo Idoigo [the name of the angel of the first Aethyr] *od toraxodulape . . .*

It would be pedantic to quote the whole of the nineteenth *Call* in the original language, but the translation runs thus:

O you heavens which dwell in the first air, you are mighty in the parts of the earth, and execute the judgement of the highest. To you it is said, Behold the face of your God, the beginning of Comfort, whose eyes are the brightness of the heavens, which provided you for the government of the earth, and her unspeakable variety, furnishing you with a power, understanding to dispose all things according to the providence of him that sitteth on the holy Throne, and rose up in the beginning saying, The earth, let her be governed by her parts; and let there be division in her, that the glory of her may be always drunken and vexed in itself. Her course, let it run with the Heavens, and as an handmaid let her serve them. One season, let it confound another, and let there be no Creature upon or within her the same. All her members, let them differ in their qualities, and let there be no one Creature equal with another. The reasonable Creatures of the earth, or Man. Let them vex and weed out one another. And the dwelling places, let them forget their names. The work of man and his pomp, let them be defaced. His buildings, let them become Caves for the beasts of the field. Confound her understanding with darkness. For why? It repenteth me. I made man one while (let it be known), and another while a stranger, because she is the bed of an harlot, and the dwelling place of him that is fallen. O you heavens, arise! The lower heavens underneath you, let them serve you. Govern those that govern. Cast down such as fall. Bring forth with those that encrease, and destroy the rotten. No place let it remain in one number. Add and diminish until the stars be numbered. Arise, move and appear before the Covenant of his mouth, which he hath sworn unto us in his Justice. Open the mysteries of your Creation, and make us partakers of undefiled knowledge.

I am not going to pretend that I understand what this is all about, and why it should invoke the Aethyrs. The turgid style, however, is like Crowley's style, and the apocalyptic subject-

matter is very similar to the subject-matter of *The Book of the Law*, which is rather surprising.

In spite of the publication of these *Calls* in Casaubon's detailed and fascinating work, the magic of Dee and Kelley was not incorporated into the body of occult practice, and no magus of later times, until the Golden Dawn was founded in the 1880s, cried to the angels of the Watch Towers.

Crowley had first used the nineteenth *Call* in Mexico in 1900; but he had invoked only the first two Aethyrs. (As everything connected with Enochian is backwards, he had worked the thirtieth and the twenty-ninth: from the twenty-eighth to the first remained to be invoked.)

He says he had no special magical object in going to Algiers in November 1909. He took with him Victor Neuburg who, after leaving Cambridge, had been helping him to bring out *The Equinox*, a bulky tome on magic and Aleister Crowley, mainly written by Crowley, which appeared every six months. Crowley accepted him as his *chela*, or pupil, in spite of his compulsive, cackling laugh and shambling gait, for he was a devotee of magic. Besides, Crowley had at that time no other *chela* of equal capacity.

'We merely wanted to rough it a bit in a new and interesting corner of the planet of which we were parasites.' Thus Crowley describes how he found himself in Algiers with Neuburg. 'We hastily bought a few provisions, took the tram to Arba, and after lunch started south, with no particular objective beyond filling our lungs with pure air and renewing the austere rapture of sleeping on the ground and watching the stars. . . . On the 21st we reached Aumale, after two nights in the open and one at a hovel. . . . I cannot imagine why or how the idea came to me. Perhaps I happened to have in my ruck-sack one of my earliest magical note-books, where I had copied with infinite patience the Nineteen Calls or Keys obtained by Sir Edward Kelley from certain angels and written from his dictation by Queen Elizabeth's astrologer with whom he was working.'

For *The Vision and the Voice*, the title of Crowley's invocations of the thirty Aethyrs, Crowley was his own scriber; if

there were any angels to be seen, he could see them himself, and did not need Neuburg as Dee had needed Kelley. For a shewstone he used a golden topaz which was set in a Calvary cross, made of wood and painted vermillion.

'I held this, as a rule, in my hand. After choosing a spot [in the desert] where I was not likely to be disturbed, I would take this stone and recite the Enochian Key, and, after satisfying myself that the invoked forces were actually present, made the topaz play a part not unlike that of the looking-glass in the case of *Alice*.' That is to say, Crowley would not only see angels in the topaz, but he would enter the topaz as Alice had entered the looking-glass. Kelley never did anything like this. At best Madini stepped out of the shewstone into Dr Dee's study and walked about among his books. Crowley reversed the process and entered the Watch Towers and beyond.

A further statement suggests that he did nothing of the sort, and only imagined that he had entered the stone or projected the image (his 'real' self) into the stone.

'I had learned,' he says, 'not to trouble myself to travel to any desired place in the astral body. I realised that Space was not a thing-in-itself, merely a convenient category (one of many such) by reference to which we can distinguish objects from each other. When I say I was in any Aethyr, I simply mean in the state characteristic of, and peculiar to, its nature. My senses would thus receive the subtle impressions which I had trained them to record, so becoming cognizant of the phenomena of those worlds as ordinary men are of this. I would describe what I saw and repeat what I heard, and Frater O.V.* would write down my words and incidentally observe any phenomena which struck him as peculiar. (For instance: I would at times pass into a deep trance so that many minutes might elapse between two successive sentences.)'

Space, as Kant has shown, is one of the categories of mind, and not a thing-in-itself; but awareness of this no more enabled Crowley to enter the topaz than it would help a camel to go

* *Omnia Vincam*, 'I will conquer all': one of the names or magical mottoes of Victor Neuburg in the mystic order of the A.∴A.∴

through the eye of a needle. One can perhaps have a genuine vision of one's previous life but the ascent to the Watch Towers, and communication with the angels therein, can only be done by mortal man on the astral plane which Crowley tells us he no longer bothered to use. However, it is pertinent to ask if, when he got to the Watch Towers, he was the same Aleister Crowley who was at home in 124 Victoria Street? I do not think so; at least, not entirely. After all, as Crowley himself says, the category of space had been withdrawn, and he had therefore greater freedom of movement. In psychological terms, Crowley in the Watch Towers was Crowley revealed: that is to say, these visions partake of Crowley's unconscious.

One by one, at the rate of one or two a day, as Crowley and Neuburg tramped about Bou-Saada during November and December, the visions occurred; and at their conclusion the brethren returned home to publish them in *The Equinox*. If these visions contain messages for Crowley or propound problems (of a psychological nature) for him to solve, we hear none of them. The visions were experienced, recorded, published and forgotten; and after Crowley's death, his American followers dug them out and republished them, this time with Crowley's textual notes which consist only in giving the Cabbalistic and other correspondences.

He did, however, make private gramophone recordings of some of the *Calls*. I heard them one winter evening in the front drawing-room of a house in Mayfair. The occasion was the anniversary of Crowley's death. Crowley intoning, in a plaintive nasal voice, the *Calls* in the original Enochian was, I thought, rather eerie. But Mr Gerald Hamilton, who had lived with Crowley in Berlin, did not think so. 'It's just like a Gregorian chant,' he said to me.

During 1937, Crowley took the discs (they included his recitation of his 'Hymn to Pan' and the 'Anthem' from his 'Gnostic Mass') along to His Master's Voice in an attempt to persuade them to start a library of magical records, but Aleister Crowley invoking Pan or crying aloud to the Angels of the Watch Towers they did not consider of wide enough interest.

The visions as visions stand to be wondered at and their style admired. None of the editors of the 1952 version of *The Vision and the Voice* has given any interpretation of them, as if interpretation was not to be attempted. We are only told that the visions 'attempt to describe in a perfectly sane and scientific manner spiritual experiences, and the investigations of the more subtle planes.'

What are the visions about? What do they describe? It is legitimate to ask this for all visions, even Aleister Crowley's, are conformable to principles. And it is essential to probe their meaning if anything like an adequate picture of Aleister Crowley is to be drawn.

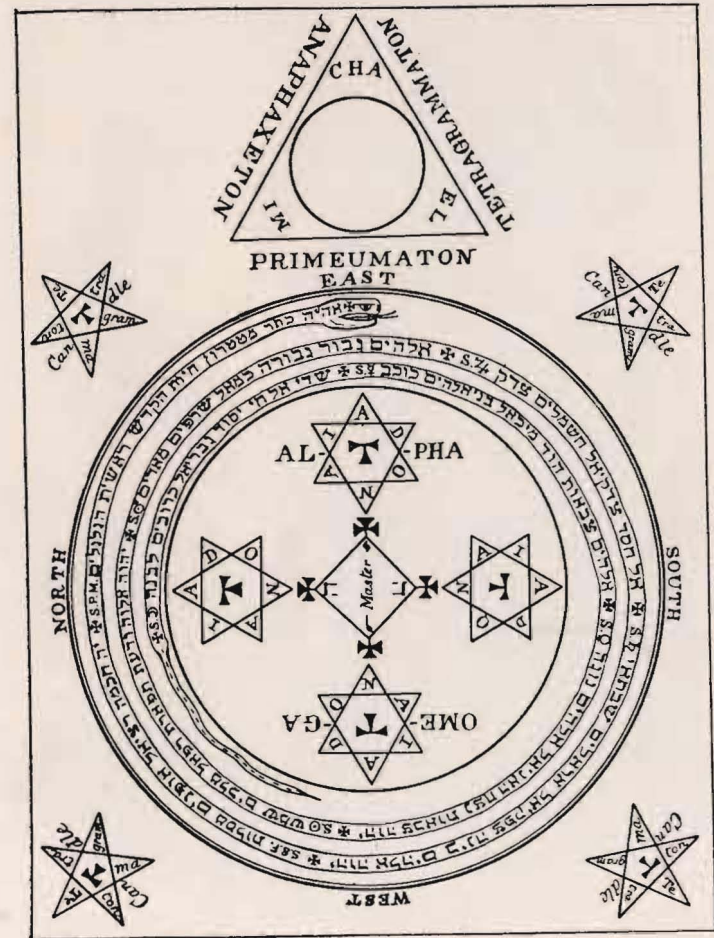
The style and much of the matter of Dee and Kelley's Enochian visions are derived from the Bible; so is the style and much of the matter of *The Vision and the Voice*. Indeed, Crowley's Enochian visions are very similar to Kelley's and add support to his claim that he was Kelley reincarnated. In both cases there is much verbiage in the style and, when boiled down, surprisingly small matter in the content.

Here are the opening sentences of the Thirtieth Aethyr which is called TEX:

'I am in a vast crystal cube in the form of the Great God Harpocrates. This cube is surrounded by a sphere. About me are four archangels in black robes. . . .'

Crowley is wrapped away from the earth, indeed, from the universe. The vast cube is a Watch Tower as described by Dee. Harpocrates, who is represented as holding a finger to his lips, is the Egyptian god of silence, whom Crowley invoked in Mexico City in a ceremony—which he claimed was successful—to make himself invisible. He is certainly invisible, at least to mortal eyes, in the cube within a sphere which is a veritable squaring of the circle. The four archangels are guardians of the threshold, to use a theosophical phrase. The sphere is the perfect form; for Crowley inside, it provides a womb-like setting. He is perfect, because unborn; he does not exist.

The idea behind the *Calls* is that their use transports the seer to the Aethyrs. An Aire or Aethyr can be described as a



The Magic Circle and Triangle of Exorcism



Ink drawing by Crowley of Choronzon or some other Demon

THE VISION AND THE VOICE

heavenly clime except that (according to the nature of the vision) it is equally hellish. *The Vision and the Voice*, therefore, is Crowley's account of the Aethyrs as he found them. He describes them one by one in descending order, a record of his tour of the Watch Towers.

We would be justified in expecting many marvellous things to be described to us, but not too marvellous, for we have only our human, earth-bound imagination with which to follow them.

Since Crowley has in this Thirtieth Aethyr regressed, so to speak, to a state of nothingness, of non-existence, the action of the vision must either conclude or be continued by someone else. It is therefore not surprising that his father should appear. The situation is one of sadness, of feelings of guilt.

'Lift up your heads, O Houses of Eternity: for my Father goeth forth to judge the World. One Light, let it become a thousand, and one sword ten thousand, that no man hide him from my Father's eye in the Day of Judgement of my God. Let the Gods hide themselves: let the Angels be troubled and flee away: for the Eye of My Father is open, and the Book of the Aeons is fallen.'

This is the destruction of the universe, for the father has become Shiva and he has opened his third eye.

'Arise! Arise! Arise! Let the Light of the Sight of Time be extinguished; let the Darkness cover all things: for my Father goeth forth to seek a spouse to replace her who is fallen and defiled.'

The defiled and cast-off woman is, in the first place, Crowley's mother as seen by her loveless child.

These are not, strictly speaking, visions but phantasies. Genuine visions are pictures, or a series of pictures, accompanied perhaps by the sound of voices, which have an autonomous movement. They are like dreams, but they do not necessarily occur in sleep. An essential condition is the temporary suspension of consciousness, such as is found in possession or trance states.

Crowley now returns to the scene: he is born or reborn in the guise which, in fact, he adopted in real life, that of the *enfant terrible* who spreads consternation about him.

'Tremble ye, O Pillars of the Universe, for Eternity is in travail of a Terrible Child; she shall bring forth an universe of Darkness, whence shall leap forth a spark that shall put his father to flight.

'The Obelisks are broken; the stars have rushed together: the Light hath plunged into the Abyss: the Heavens are mixed with Hell.'

This is Crowley in his megalomaniac phase, the reverse of the phase of guilt.

The destruction of the universe and the mixing up of heaven and hell should be the end of the vision; nothing more is left to destroy. But Crowley cannot leave it at that. Guilt assails him again.

'Oh Lord God, let Thy Spirit hither unto me!

'For I am lost in the night of infinite pain: no hope: no God: no resurrection: no end: I fall: I fear.'

Thus ends the vision of the Thirtieth Aethyr.

'The sky appears covered with stars of gold; the background is of green. But the impression is also of darkness.

'An immense eagle-angel is before me. His wings seem to hide all the Heaven.'

This is the starting-point of the Twenty-ninth Aethyr which is called RII, the second and last which Crowley invoked in Mexico in 1900 when he was twenty-five years of age and on the threshold of a career as an occultist. What does this angel say to Crowley? Is he, like the angel of the Thirtieth Aethyr, full of rage and destruction so that one can hardly distinguish him from a devil? It is unnecessary to quote it: destruction rains down from the skies and God's mercy is lost in the great deep. The mountains are razed.

The seer turns away his gaze, and lo, in the south, he sees a lion. It is wounded and perplexed.

The lion is a dangerous animal, a symbol, like the dragon,

of the unconscious. In a footnote Crowley tells us, with more truth than he was aware of, that the lion is the Beast 666, that is himself. It opens its mouth and announces that it is death.

Then, in the west, appears a white bull. The bull has a crimson mouth and eyes of sapphire; it is a symbol of the Whore of Babylon, the sensual and all-devouring mother who fascinated and held Crowley in her grip throughout his life.

'He [the bull] spake: It is finished! My mother hath unveiled herself!

'My sister hath violated herself! The life of things hath disclosed its Mystery.'

The vision concludes with a child being crucified in the bosom of its mother, a symbol of Crowley's unfortunate fate. 'For this child riseth up within his Mother and doth crucify himself within her bosom. He extendeth his arms in the arms of his Mother and the Light becometh fivefold.'

This fivefold light is the five points of the pentagram, the seal of magic and the key to the mysteries.

Thus ends the vision of the Twenty-ninth Aethyr.

The Twenty-eighth Aethyr, which is called BAG, was the first which Crowley invoked in the North African desert with Neuburg. As usual, the devil looks out of the stone: his face is black and his eyes white without any pupil or iris. 'The face is very terrible indeed to look upon,' says Crowley somewhat unnecessarily.

And the angel cried out, 'O man, who art thou that wouldst penetrate the Mystery? for it is hidden unto the End of Time.'

Instead of replying to the question, Crowley began to argue about the nature of time, which should have made this so-called angel furious; but by this stratagem Crowley broke the veil and entered the Aethyr where he saw the angel as he was. 'His garment is black beneath the opal veils, but it is lined with white, and he has the shining belly of a fish, and enormous wings of black and white feathers, and innumerable little legs and claws like a centipede, and a long tail like a scorpion. The breasts are human, but they are all scored with blood.'

The details of this angel fail to make him more horrible; they only turn him into something rather silly, like the creature in *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. No wonder Crowley dared to argue with him.

It would take too long to describe all the Aethyrs; besides, they are largely repetitive. As they were induced by the same motive—guilt—this is not surprising. However, the Tenth Aethyr, which is called ZAX, and which is guarded by that terrible demon Choronzon, should be described in full, for it is most representative of the series, and the most dramatic in form. Kelley called Choronzon 'that mighty devil.' Crowley, forewarned, took special precautions before invoking him. He was not, it seems, so much afraid for his own safety as for that of his scribe, Victor Neuburg; and as Neuburg was not going to accompany him to the Aethyr, he evidently expected Choronzon to chase him back to earth.

Crowley described the Tenth Aethyr as accursed, and before beginning the invocation he marked out amid the sand dunes a magic circle to protect Omnia Vincam, and fortified it with the holy names of God: Tetragrammaton and Shaddai El Chai and Ararita. Then he traced nearby a triangle in which he inscribed the name of this terrible demon Choronzon, the Dweller in the Abyss. And along the sides of the triangle he wrote Anaphaxeton, Anaphaneton, and Primeumaton, more names of the God of all the Heavenly Host, one on each side to deter Choronzon from breaking out of the triangle if ever he should be conjured into it. And in the three angles, Crowley wrote MI-CA-EL [Michael], the holy archangel.

These devices follow the method of conjuration which is laid down by the *Lemegeton* of Solomon for calling forth the princes of evil, but he did not intend to use the words of the conjuration.

The magicians had brought three pigeons with them from Bou-Saada, and Crowley proceeded to cut their throats, one at each angle of the triangle. The sand quickly soaked up the blood. Then Neuburg entered the circle and swore this solemn oath before his master and guide, Frater Perdurabo:

'I, Omnia Vincam, a Probationer of the A.: A.:, hereby solemnly promise upon my magical honour, and swear by Adonai the angel that guardeth me, that I will defend this magic circle of Art with thoughts and words and deeds. I promise to threaten with the Dagger and command back into the triangle the spirit incontinent, if he should strive to escape from it; and to strike with a Dagger at anything that may seek to enter this Circle, were it in appearance the body of the Seer himself [i.e. Crowley]. And I will be exceeding wary, armed against force and cunning; and I will preserve with my life the inviolability of this Circle, Amen.

'And I summon mine Holy Guardian Angel to witness this mine oath, the which if I break, may I perish, forsaken of Him. Amen and Amen.'

Then Crowley entered the triangle, which he described as a 'secret place where is neither sight nor hearing,' and sat in the 'Thunderbolt' position of Hathayoga. He was clad in a black robe with a hood which covered his head completely, but he could see through the eye-slits.

This is the only recorded instance of a magician's seating himself in the triangle of exorcism instead of remaining within the protection of the magic circle. It was to invite obsession by the demon when the demon was evoked into the triangle. Some students of Aleister Crowley maintain that, because of this foolhardy act, Crowley was obsessed by the Demon Choronzon for the rest of his life.

Neuburg was also seated on the hot sand. The ceremony began with his performing the banishing rituals of the Pentagram and Hexagram, the five- and six-pointed stars of magic. These were commands to evil spirits to depart from within the precincts of the circle. Of these short preliminary rituals Crowley observed that if they are successful in achieving their aim, the magician will experience a feeling of cleanliness in the atmosphere.

When he had finished the banishing ritual, Neuburg then used the Pentagram and Hexagram rituals to invoke the archangels and their host to act as guardians of the circle: he would

know that they were there by experiencing a feeling of holiness.

Having finished this, Neuburg began to mutter Crowley's translation of the Exorcism of Honorius:

O Lord, deliver me from hell's great fear and gloom!
Loose thou my spirit from the larvæ of the tomb!
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

I bid the night conceive the glittering hemisphere.
Arise, O sun, arise! O moon, shine white and clear!
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

Their faces and their shapes are terrible and strange.
These devils by my might to angels I will change.
These nameless horrors I address without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

These are the phantoms pale of mine astonished view,
Yet none but I their blasted beauty can renew;
For to the abyss of hell I plunge without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.

Omnia Vincam was by now in a fearless frame of mind: if Choronzon, that first and deadliest of all the powers of evil, attempted to seize him, there was his magic dagger with which to ward him off, also his magic wand. Crowley had warned him to strike fearlessly at anything that sought to break into the circle 'were it the appearance of the Seer himself,' and this he had sworn to do. Crowley had also warned him not to lean beyond the circle.

'There is no-being in the outermost Abyss,' said Crowley, beginning to tell the Scribe what he saw in the topaz, 'but constant forms come forth from the nothingness of it.' This state of indecision did not last for long. Suddenly the spirit of the Aethyr, that mighty devil Choronzon, sprang forth, crying aloud:

'Zazas, Zazas, Nasatanada Zazas!'

These words, observed Crowley, are from some vision of old time. By them Adam was said to have opened the gates of hell. Traditionally, they are the words which open the Abyss.

Choronzon, whose appearance is not described in the first instance, but who, we can be certain, must have been very terrible indeed to look upon, then began to make this speech. (Note: he was, at this stage, still within the topaz.)

'I am the Master of Form, and from me all forms proceed.

'I am I. I have shut myself up from the spendthrifts, my gold is safe in my treasure-chamber, and I have made every living thing my concubine, and none shall touch them, save only I. And yet I am scorched, even while I shiver in the wind. He hateth me and tormenteth me. He would have stolen me from myself, but I shut myself up and mock at him, even while he plagueth me. From me come leprosy and pox and plague and cancer and cholera and the falling sickness.'

Choronzon is no happy devil. He is, in fact, no better off than Crowley. He is full of rage and fury which only isolates him further: hence his sorrow and Job-like lamentation. And all the while he stands in the shadow of God and feels terribly inferior.

One suspects Choronzon of having feelings of guilt: it is this which scorches him. Out of impotent rage, he contemplates his revenge.

Crowley notes that Choronzon imitated the voice of Frater Perdurabo. As both Choronzon and Crowley were in the triangle, this is not surprising.

At this stage Crowley called out to Brother Omnia Vincam who had, so to speak, barricaded himself in the circle: 'I don't think I can get any more; I think that's all there is.'

But this matter-of-fact information was lost on Victor Neuburg the Scribe: he was by now hallucinated and believed that he could see in the triangle not Brother Perdurabo, his friend and guide, but a beautiful courtesan, a woman whom he had loved in Paris. It is not quite clear why he should think this. The explanation most probably is—indeed, almost certainly is

—that this was a manifestation of Choronzon or, at least, the hallucination was due to that devil.

The beautiful courtesan began to woo him with soft words and glances, but he knew these things to be delusions and the snare of Choronzon who wanted him to leave the protection of the circle.

Suddenly Neuburg heard a loud and wild laugh, and Choronzon, invoked to visible appearance, appeared in the magic triangle. The Scribe urged him to continue with the discourse. Choronzon did so in these words:

'They have called me the God of laughter, and I laugh when I will slay. And they have thought that I could not smile, but I smile upon whom I would seduce, O inviolable one, that canst not be tempted. If thou canst command me by the power of the Most High, know that I did indeed tempt thee, and it repenteth me. I bow myself humbly before the great and terrible names whereby thou hast conjured and constrained me. But thy name is mercy, and I cry aloud for pardon. Let me come and put my head beneath thy feet, that I may serve thee. For if thou commandest me to obedience in the Holy names, I cannot swerve therefrom, for their first whispering is greater than the noise of all the tempests. Bid me therefore come unto thee upon my hands and knees that I may adore thee, and partake of thy forgiveness. Is not thy mercy infinite?'

In other words, Choronzon attempted to seduce the Scribe by appealing to his pride, but Neuburg would have none of it and commanded the demon to continue.

At this point in the narrative Crowley interpolates that Choronzon has no form, because he is the maker of all form 'and so rapidly he changeth from one to the other as he may best think fit to seduce those whom he hateth, the servants of the Most High.'

The meaning of the aforequoted passage is obscure, unless it is a description of the mind of Aleister Crowley who could, and did, imagine himself in every romantic role and archaic situation. For example, he saw himself as a mighty king, an immense black warrior with a thousand arms. These fantasies

erupted into his consciousness and destroyed his sense of reality. This capacity of assuming a diversity of roles, he thought proof of his versatility; it is, however, only an indication that he did not live from his own centre.

'Thus taketh he,' said Crowley of the demon Choronzon, 'the form of a beautiful woman, or of a wise and holy man, or of a serpent that writheth upon the earth ready to sting.'

He even took the form of Aleister Crowley who, while it was happening, dwelt apart in his magical robe with its hood drawn over his face: or so Crowley says in an unpublished volume of his *Autobiography*, where he also describes these events.

Neuburg, who had been taking down what Crowley had been reporting to him of the Aethyr of the demon who dwelt therein, now began to take down what Choronzon was saying, a difficult task to do, even with high-speed shorthand, because by now the voice of the raging Dweller of the Abyss was an 'insane babble of a multitude of senseless ejaculations.'

At this point, Crowley felt obliged to describe Choronzon. He does so and in words which might equally apply to himself. 'And because he is himself [i.e. the Abyss, or, in psychological terms, the personification of the unconscious], therefore he is no self.'

Quite true. The law of life says simply that one should be oneself, and one cannot be oneself without a measure of integration. One is not oneself if, as in Crowley's case, consciousness is so weak that it is disrupted by every archetype or phantasm from the unconscious or, as in Choronzon's case, one is mainly unconscious: then one is no more developed than a savage.

Choronzon was 'the terror of darkness, and the blindness of night, and the deafness of the adder, and the tastelessness of stale and stagnant water, and the black fire of hatred, and the udders of the Cat of slime; not one thing but many things. Yet, with all that, his torment is eternal. The sun burns him as he writhes naked upon the sands of hell, and the wind cuts him bitterly to the bone, a harsh dry wind, so that he is sore athirst.'

In the guise of Brother Perdurabo, but divested of his black robe, he was now crawling towards the circle to beg the Scribe to give him just 'one drop of water from the pure springs of Paradise, that I may quench my thirst.'

The water must be considered symbolically. Choronzon was asking Neuburg to give him the water of life.

Neuburg refused, of course.

The entreaty was repeated. 'Sprinkle water on my head. I can hardly go on,' said Choronzon.

Neuburg still refused and conjured the demon, by the names of the Most High, to proceed.

A long argument followed, and in the course of it the Scribe cursed Choronzon by the Holy Names of God and the power of the Pentagram.

Choronzon, unabashed, replied: 'I feed upon the names of the Most High. I churn them in my jaws, and I void them from my fundament. I fear not the power of the Pentagram, for I am the Master of the Triangle. My name is three hundred and thirty and three, and that is thrice one.* Be vigilant, therefore, for I warn thee that I am about to deceive thee. I shall say words that thou wilt take to be the cry of the Aethyr, and thou wilt write them down, thinking them to be great secrets of Magick power, and they will be only my jesting with thee.'

Now Neuburg's resistance began to fail and, in fear, he invoked Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, Aiwass, to come to his assistance. (I find it strange that he should have called upon Crowley's Holy Guardian Angel, as if he hadn't one of his own, especially as Crowley had let loose Choronzon upon him.)

As soon as Choronzon heard the name of Aiwass, he cried out, 'I know the name of the Angel of thee and thy Brother Perdurabo, and all thy dealings with him are but a cloak for thy filthy sorceries.'

Neuburg's courage began to return, and he told the demon that he knew more than he, and so feared him not. And again he ordered him to depart.

* Cabbalistically interpreted, 333 stands for 'lack of control,' 'dispersion,' which is certainly characteristic of the demon Choronzon.

'Thou canst tell me naught that I know not,' replied Choronzon, 'for in me is all Knowledge: Knowledge is my name. Is not the head of the great Serpent arisen into Knowledge?'

The allusion is a Cabbalistic one. The head of the Serpent of Knowledge, when twined round the Tree of Life, rests in Daath, the false Sephira in the Abyss.

'Get on with the Call,' ordered the Scribe, as if he were talking to Crowley and not the devil.

Instead of obeying, Choronzon started to argue in a speech which was a mere subterfuge.

The Scribe threatened him with anger and pain and hell, to which Choronzon replied in his archaic manner of speaking: 'Thinkest thou, O fool, that there is any anger and any pain that I am not, or any hell but this my spirit?'

Crowley was taking no part in this argument; he was still seated in the Thunderbolt position, withdrawn from, and probably with his back to, the disputants. But the description of Choronzon's mind, which is interpolated at this stage, is strangely like Crowley's and shows remarkable insight on Crowley's part.

Doubtless Crowley wrote it and there is a strong suggestion that Crowley was Choronzon or, at least, that Choronzon had manifested in Crowley's body, and was using Crowley as his vehicle. We are told that Choronzon at one stage of the struggle assumed the guise of Crowley to outwit the Scribe. And who was who must have seemed only an academic point to Neuburg confronted by a naked demon in human form who was raving his head off.

This is what Crowley says of the mind of that mighty demon Choronzon: 'Images, images, images, all without control, all without reason . . . for there is no centre, nay, nothing but Dispersion [of consciousness].'

Earlier, Crowley says of Choronzon that he 'cannot fix his mind upon one thing for any length of time.'

The demon now turns to Crowley and addresses him in the same unbridled tones: 'O thou that hast written two-and-thirty books of Wisdom, and art more stupid than an owl, by thine

own talk is thy vigilance wearied, and by my talk art thou befooled and tricked, O thou that sayest that thou shalt endure.*

Choronzon then turns to the Scribe, and says, 'Knowest thou how nigh thou art to destruction? For thou that art the Scribe hast not the understanding that alone availeth against Choronzon. And wert thou not protected by the Holy Names of God and the circle, I would rush upon thee and tear thee. For when I made myself like unto a beautiful woman, if thou hadst come to me, I would have rotted thy body with the pox and thy liver with cancer. And if I had seduced thy pride, and thou hadst bidden me to come into the circle, I would have trampled thee under foot, and for a thousand years shouldst thou have been but one of the tape-worms that is in me. And if I had seduced thy pity, and thou hadst poured one drop of water without the circle, then would I have blasted thee with flame. But I was not able to prevail against thee.'

Growing rather gloomy, as if he had realised that all his talk had led him nowhere, he wished he was dead.

Another long speech followed and concluded lamentably with '... my will is broken, and my fierceness is marred by fear, and I must ever speak, speak, speak, millions of mad voices in my brain.'

Then Choronzon broke out into another torrent of obscene blasphemy, and while the Scribe was writing it down as best he could and had his eyes glued on to the page of his note-book, Choronzon began to throw sand from the triangle into the circle, so that a gap was made in the circumference.

His obscenities began to run out, and in order to keep up the torrent of words, he suddenly started to recite the ballad *Tom o' Bedlam*:

Forth from my sad and darksome Cell,
Or from the deep Abiss of Hell,
Mad Tom is come to view the World again,
To see if he can ease his distemper'd Brain:
Fear and Care doth pierce the Soul:

* I.e. *Perdurabo*, 'I will endure.'

Hark! how the angry Furies howl,
Pluto laughs, and Proserpine is glad,
To see poor naked Tom of Bedlam mad.
Through the World I wander Night and Day,
To find my stragling Senses.*

The circle was now broken and Choronzon, in the form of a naked savage, leapt from his triangle into the circle and fell upon poor Victor Neuburg, throwing him to the ground. 'He flung him to earth,' wrote Crowley of these memorable events, 'and tried to tear out his throat with his froth-covered fangs.'

But Omnia Vincam invoked the names of God, and struck at Choronzon with his magical dagger. The demon was cowed and writhed back to the triangle. O.V. then repaired the circle.

In Crowley's *Book Four*, we are told that the magical dagger is used to calm too great heat; it is made of steel inlaid with gold; the hilt is also of gold. The magical dagger 'expresses the determination to sacrifice all.'

Choronzon immediately turned himself into a woman—a beautiful one, of course—and again there was an unsuccessful seduction scene.

Choronzon then begged O.V. for permission to leave the triangle to get some clothes to cover his nakedness, but O.V. sternly refused him. Choronzon raved and threatened and finally admitted his impotence in these words:

'I have prevailed against the Kingdom of the Father, and befouled his beard; and I have prevailed against the Kingdom of the Son; but against the Kingdom of the Holy Ghost shall I strive and not prevail. The three slain doves are my threefold blasphemy against him; but their blood shall make fertile the sand; and I writhe in blackness and horror of hate, and prevail not.'

Choronzon made one final effort to overcome the Scribe: he sneered at magic and tried to persuade O.V. that magic (and especially *magick*, Crowley's brand) was all rubbish, but without the slightest success.

* From a broadsheet entitled, *New Mad Tom of Bedlam or the Man in the Moon drinks Claret, with Powder-Beef, Turnip and Carret*. Circa 1670.

All the energy in the pigeons' blood was now exhausted by the successive phantoms which had appeared, and it could no longer give form to the forces evoked. The triangle which had contained Choronzon was empty; the operation was now at an end.

'In this Aethyr is neither beginning nor end, for it is all hotch-potch, because it is of the wicked on earth and the damned in hell. And so long as it be hotch-potch, it mattereth little what may be written by the sea-green incorruptible Scribe.'

A fire was kindled to purify the place, and the circle and the triangle were obliterated.

One spring day in the garden at Netherwood, I asked Crowley if he'd ever seen any supernatural beings. Had I been familiar with *The Vision and the Voice*, or remembered that Crowley had caught a glimpse of Aiwass, I should not have asked this question; instead, I should have asked him to tell me about Choronzon.

Crowley, who had one set of answers for pupils who regarded him as a very great wizard, and another set for those who, like myself, thought of him as a peculiar but nevertheless interesting old gentleman, regarded me thoughtfully for a moment or two. Then he said slowly:

'Once, at Fontainebleau, I saw a dryad peeping at me from behind a tree.'

There was, in the circumstances, something rather sad in this reply; I didn't know why exactly. I saw no reason to disbelieve him. Certainly, he'd seen a dryad, and what a pity I hadn't been with him at the time.

It began to rain, and we returned to the house.

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