

The Sword of Song

Called by Christians the Book of the Beast

Aleister Crowley

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THE SWORD OF SONG

CALLED BY CHRISTIANS

THE BOOK OF THE BEAST

1904

TO MY OLD FRIEND AND COMRADE IN THE ART

BHIKKHU ANANDA METTEYA

AND TO THOSE

FOOLS

WHO BY THEIR SHORT-SIGHTED STUPIDITY IN

ATTEMPTING TO BOYCOTT THIS BOOK

HAVE WITLESSLY AIDED THE

CAUSE OF TRUTH

I DEDICATE THESE MY BEST WORDS

[This book is so full of recondite knowledge of various kinds that it seems quite ineffective to annotate every obscure passage. Where references and explanations can be concisely given, this has been done.]

"You are sad!" the Knight said, in an anxious tone; "let me sing you a song to comfort you."*

"Is it very long?" Alice asked.

"It's long," said the Knight, "but it's *very very* beautiful. The name of the song is called 'The Book of the Beast.'"

"Oh! how ugly!" cried Alice.

"Never mind," said the mild creature. "Some people call it 'Reason in Rhyme.'"

"But which *is* the name of the song?" Alice said, trying not to seem too interested.

"Ah, you don't understand," the Knight said, looking a little vexed. "That's what the name is *called*. The name really *is* 'Ascension Day and Pentecost; with some Prose Essays and an Epilogue,' just as the title is 'The Sword of Song' you know, just in the same way, just in the same way, just in the same way . . ."

Alice put her fingers in her ears and gave a little scream. "Oh, dear me! That's

harder than ever!" she said to herself, and then, looking determinedly intelligent: "So *that's* what the song is called. I see. But what *is* the song?"

"You must be a perfect fool," said the Knight, irritably. "The song is called 'Stout Doubt; or the Agnostic's Anthology,' by the author of 'Gas Manipulation,' 'Solutions,' 'The Management of Retorts,' and other physical works of the first order—but that's only what it's *called*, you know."

"Well, what *is* the song then?" said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered.

"If I wished to be obscure, child," said the Knight, rather contemptuously, "I should tell you that the Name of the Title was 'What a man of 95 ought to know,' as endorsed by eminent divines, and that . . ." Seeing that she only began to cry, he broke off and continued in a gentler tone: "*it means*, my dear . . ." He stopped short, for she was taking no notice; but as her figure was bent by sobs into something very like a note of interrogation: "You want to know what it *is*,

* This passage is a parody on one in "Alice through the Looking-Glass."

I suppose!" continued the Knight, in a superior, but rather offended voice.

"If you would, please, sir!"

"Well, *that*," pronounced the Knight, with the air of having thoroughly studied the question and reached a conclusion absolutely final and irreversible, "*that*, Goodness only knows. But I will sing it to you."

PRELIMINARY INVOCATION.

NOTHUNG.*

THE crowns of Gods and mortals wither;
Moons fade where constellations shone;
Numberless aeons brought us hither;
Numberless aeons beckon us on.
The world is old, and I am strong—
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Here, in the Dusk of Gods, I linger;
The world awaits a Word of Truth.
Kindle, O lyre, beneath my finger!
Evoke the age's awful youth!
To arms against the inveterate wrong!
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Sand-founded reels the House of Faith;
Up screams the howl of ruining sect;
Out from the shrine flits the lost Wraith;
"God hath forsaken His elect!"
Confusion sweeps upon the throng—
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

Awake to wound, awake to heal
By wounding, thou resistless sword!
Raise the prone priestcrafts that appeal
In agony to their prostrate Lord!
Raise the duped herd—they have suffered
long!
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

My strength this agony of the age
Win through; my music charm the old
Sorrow of years: my warfare wage
By iron to an age of gold:—
The world is old, and I am strong—
Awake, awake, O Sword of Song!

* The name of Siegfried's sword.

INTRODUCTION TO "ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST."

NOR a word to introduce my introduction! Let me instantly launch the Boat of Discourse on the Sea of Religious Speculation, in danger of the Rocks of Authority and the Quicksands of Private Interpretation, Scylla and Charybdis. Here is the strait; what God shall save us from shipwreck? If we choose to understand the Christian (or any other) religion literally, we are at once overwhelmed by its inherent impossibility. Our credulity is outraged, our moral sense shocked, the holiest foundations of our inmost selves assailed by no ardent warrior in triple steel, but by a loathly and disgusting worm. That this is so, the apologists for the religion in question, whichever it may be, sufficiently indicate (as a rule) by the very method of their apology. The alternative is to take the religion symbolically, esoterically; but to move one step in this direction is to start on a journey whose end cannot be determined. The religion, ceasing to be a tangible thing, an object uniform for all sane eyes, becomes rather that mist whereon the sun of the soul casts up, like Brocken spectre, certain vast and vague images of the beholder himself, with or without a glory encompassing them. The function of the facts is then quite passive: it matters little or nothing whether the cloud be the red mist of Christianity, or the glimmering silver-white of Celtic Paganism; the hard grey dim-gilded of Buddhism, the fleecy opacity of Islam, or the mysterious medium of those ancient faiths which come up in as many colours as their investigator has moods.*

* "In order to get over the ethical difficulties presented by the naïve naturalism of many parts of those Scriptures, in the divine authority of which he firmly believed, Philo borrowed from the Stoics (who had been in like straits in respect of Greek mythology) that great Excalibur which they had forged with infinite pains and skill—the method of allegorical interpretation. This mighty 'two-handed engine at the door' of the theologian is warranted to make a speedy end of any and every moral or intellectual difficulty, by showing that, taken allegorically, or, as it is otherwise said, 'poetically' or 'in a spiritual sense,' the plainest words mean whatever a pious interpreter desires they should mean" (Huxley, "Evolution of Theology").—A. C.

If the student has advanced spiritually so that he can internally, infallibly perceive what is Truth, he will find it equally well symbolised in most external faiths.

It is curious that Browning never turns his wonderful faculty of analysis upon the fundamental problems of religion, as it were an axe laid to the root of the Tree of Life. It seems quite clear that he knew what would result if he did so. We cannot help fancying that he was unwilling to do this. The proof of his knowledge I find in the following lines:—

"I have read much, thought much, experienced much,
Yet would die rather than avow my fear
The Naples' liquefaction may be false . . .
I hear you recommend, I might at least
Eliminate, decrassify my faith
Since I adopt it: keeping what I must
And leaving what I can; such points as this . . .
Still, when you bid me purify the same,
To such a process I discern no end . . .
First cut the liquefaction, what comes last
But Fichte's clever cut at God himself? . . .
I trust nor hand, nor eye, nor heart, nor brain
To stop betimes: they all get drunk alike.
The first step, I am master not to take."

This is surely the apotheosis of wilful ignorance! We may think, perhaps, that Browning is "hedging" when, in the last paragraph, he says: "For Blougram, he believed, say, half he spoke,"* and hints at some deeper ground. It is useless to say, "This is Blougram and not Browning." Browning could hardly have described the dilemma without seeing it. What he really believes is, perhaps, a mystery.

That Browning, however, believes in universal salvation, though he nowhere (so far as I know) gives his reasons, save as they are summarised in the last lines of the below-quoted passage, is evident from the last stanza of "Apparent Failure," and from his final pronouncement of the Pope on Guido, represented in Browning's masterpiece as a Judas without the decency to hang himself.

"So (i.e., by suddenness of fate) may the truth be flashed out by one blow,
And Guido see one instant and be saved.
Else I avert my face nor follow him
Into that sad obscure sequestered state
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul
He else made first in vain: which must not be."

* Probably a record for a bishop.—A. C.

This may be purgatory, but it sounds not unlike reincarnation.

It is at least a denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment.

As for myself, I took the first step years ago, quite in ignorance of what the last would lead to. God is indeed cut away—a cancer from the breast of truth.

Of those philosophers, who from unsailable premisses draw by righteous deduction a conclusion against God, and then for His sake overturn their whole structure by an act of will, like a child breaking an ingenious toy, I take Mansel as my type.*

Now, however, let us consider the esoteric idea-mongers of Christianity, Swedenborg, Anna Kingsford, Deussen and the like, of whom I have taken Caird as my example. I wish to unmask these people: I perfectly agree with nearly everything they say, but their claim to be Christians is utterly confusing, and lends a lustre to Christianity which is quite foreign. Deussen, for example, coolly discards nearly all the Old Testament, and, picking a few New Testament passages, often out of their context, claims his system as Christianity. Luther discards James. Kingsford calls Paul the Arch Heretic. My friend the "Christian Clergyman" accepted Mark and Acts—until pushed. Yet Deussen is honest enough to admit that Vedanta teaching is identical, but clearer! and he quite clearly and sensibly defines Faith—surely the most essential quality for the adherent to Christian dogma—as "being convinced on insufficient evidence." Similarly the dying-to-live idea of Hegel (and Schopenhauer) claimed by Caird as the central spirit of Christianity is far older, in the Osiris Myth of the Egyptians. These ideas are all right, but they have no more to do with Christianity than the Metric System with the Great Pyramid. But see Piazza Smyth!† Henry Morley has even the audacity to claim Shelley—Shelley!—as a Christian "in spirit."

Talking of Shelley:—With regard to my open denial of the personal Christian God, may it not be laid to my charge that I have dared to voice in bald language what Shelley

* As represented by his Encyclopædia article; not in such works as "Limits of Religious Thought."—A. C.

† An astronomer whose brain gave way. He prophesied the end of the world in 1881, from measurements made in the Great Pyramid.

sang in words of surpassing beauty: for of course the thought in one or two passages of this poem is practically identical with that in certain parts of "Queen Mab" and "Prometheus Unbound." But the very beauty of these poems (especially the latter) is its weakness: it is possible that the mind of the reader, lost in the sensuous, nay! even in the moral beauty of the words, may fail to be impressed by their most important meaning. Shelley himself recognised this later: hence the direct and simple vigour of the "Masque of Anarchy."

It has often puzzled atheists how a man of Milton's genius could have written as he did of Christianity. But we must not forget that Milton lived immediately after the most important Revolution in Religion and Politics of modern times: Shelley on the brink of such another Political upheaval. Shakespeare alone sat enthroned above it all like a god, and is not lost in the mire of controversy.* This also, though "I'm no Shakespeare, as too probable," I have endeavoured to avoid: yet I cannot but express the hope that my own enquiries into religion may be the reflection of the spirit of the age; and that plunged as we are in the midst of jingoism and religious revival, we may be standing on the edge of some gigantic precipice, over which we may cast all our impedimenta of lies and trickeries, political, social, moral, and religious, and (ourselves) take wings and fly. The comparison between myself and the masters of English thought I have named is unintentional, though perhaps unavoidable; and though the presumption is, of course, absurd, yet a straw will show which way the wind blows as well as the most beautiful and elaborate vane: and in this sense it is my most eager hope that I may not unjustly draw a comparison between myself and the great reformers of eighty years ago.

* So it is usually supposed. Maybe I shall one day find words to combat, perhaps to overthrow, this position. P.S. As, for example, page 185. As a promise-keeper I am the original eleven stone three Peacherie.—A. C.

I must apologise (perhaps) for the new note of frivolity in my work: due doubtless to the frivolity of my subject: these poems being written when I was an Advaitist and could not see why—everything being an illusion—there should be any particular object in doing or thinking anything. How I have found the answer will be evident from my essay on this subject.* I must indeed apologise to the illustrious Shade of Robert Browning for my audacious parody in title, style, and matter of his "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." The more I read it the eventual anticlimax of that wonderful poem irritated me only the more. But there is hardly any poet living or dead who so commands alike my personal affection and moral admiration. My desire to find the Truth will be my pardon with him, whose whole life was spent in admiration of Truth, though he never turned its formidable engines against the Citadel of the Almighty.

If I be appealed of blasphemy or irreverence in my treatment of these subjects, I will take refuge in Browning's own apology, from the very poem I am attacking:

"I have done: and if any blames me,
Thinking that merely to touch in brevity
The topics I dwell on were unlawful—
Or worse, that I trench with undue levity
On the bounds of the holy and the awful—
I praise the heart and pity the head of him,
And refer myself to Thee, instead of him,
Who head and heart alike discernest,
Looking below light speech we utter
Where frothy spume and frequent splutter
Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest!"

But I have after all little fear that I am seriously wrong. That I show to my critics the open door of the above city of refuge may be taken as merely another gesture of contemptuous pity, the last insult which may lead my antagonists to that surrender which is the truest victory.

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS.

* *Vide infra*, "Berashith."

ASCENSION DAY

Curious position of poet.

I FLUNG out of chapel¹* and church,
 Temple and hall and meeting-room,
 Venus' Bower and Osiris' Tomb,²
 And left the devil in the lurch,
 While God³ got lost in the crowd of gods,⁴ 5
 And soul went down⁵ in the turbid tide
 Of the metaphysical lotus-eyed,⁶
 And I was—anyhow, what's the odds?

What is Truth?
 said jesting
 Pilate: but
 Crowley waits
 for an answer.†

The life to live? The thought to think? Shall I take refuge
 In a tower like once Childe Roland ‡⁷ found, blind, deaf, huge, 10
 Or in that forest of two hundred thousand
 Trees,⁸ fit alike to shelter man and mouse, and—
 Shall I say God? Be patient, your Reverence,⁹
 I warrant you'll journey a wiser man ever hence!
 Let's tap (like the negro who gets a good juice of it, 15
 Cares nought if that be, or be not, God's right use of it),¹⁰
 In all that forest of verses one tree¹¹
 Yclept "Red Cotton Nightcap Country":
 How a goldsmith, between the Ravishing Virgin
 And a leman too rotten to put a purge in, 20
 Day by day and hour by hour,
 In a Browningsque forest of thoughts having lost himself,
 Expecting a miracle, solemnly tossed himself
 Off from the top of a tower.
 Moral: don't spoil such an excellent sport as an 25
 Ample estate with a church and a courtesan!

Alternative theories of Greek authors. Browning's summary.

"Truth, that's the gold!"¹² But don't worry about it!
 I, you, or Simpkin¹³ can get on without it!
 If life's task be work and love's (the soft-lippèd) ease,
 Death's be God's glory? discuss with Euripides! 30

* The numbered notes are given at p. 190.

† Bacon, "Essay on Truth," line 1.

‡ "Childe Roland to the dark Tower came."—BROWNING.

Or, cradle be hardship, and finally coffin, ease,
 Love being filth? let us ask Aristophanes!
 Or, heaven's sun bake us, while Earth's bugs and fleas kill us,
 Love the God's scourge? I refer you to Aeschylus!
 (Nay! that's a slip! Say we "Earth's grim device, cool
 loss!—")

35 Better the old Greek orthography!—Aischulos!¹⁴
 Or, love be God's champagne's foam; death in man's
 trough, hock lees,
 Pathos our port's beeswing? what answers Sophocles?
 Brief, with love's medicine let's draught, bolus, globule us!
 40 Wise and succinct bids, I think, Aristobulus.¹⁵
 Whether my Muse be Euterpe or Clio,
 Life, Death, and Love are all Batrachomyo¹⁶—
 Machia, what? ho! old extinct Alcibiades?
 For me, do ut—God true, be mannikin liar!—des!

45 It's rather hard, isn't it, sir, to make sense of it?
 Mine of so many pounds—pouch even pence of it?¹⁷
 Try something easier,¹⁸ where the bard seems to me
 Seeking that light, which I find come in dreams to me.
 Even as he takes two feasts to enlarge upon,
 50 So will I do too to launch my old barge upon.
 Analyse, get hints from Newton¹⁹ or Faraday,²⁰
 Use every weapon—love, scorn, reason, parody!
 Just where he worships? Ah me! shall his soul,
 Far in some glory, take hurt from a mole
 55 Grubbing i' th' ground? Shall his spirit not see,
 Lightning to lightning, the spirit in me?
 Parody? Shall not his spirit forgive
 Me, who shall love him as long as I live?
 Love's at its height in pure love? Nay, but after
 60 When the song's light dissolves gently in laughter!
 Then and then only the lovers may know
 Nothing can part them for ever. And so,
 Muse, hover o'er me! Apollo, above her!

I, of the Moderns, have let alone Greek.²¹
 65 Out of the way Intuition shall shove her.
 Spirit and Truth in my darkness I seek.
 Little by little they bubble and leak;
 Such as I have to the world I discover.
 Words—are they weak ones at best? They shall speak!

Apology of
 poet.
 Skeleton of
 poem. Valu-
 able fact for
 use of lovers.
 Invocation.

Imperfect
 scholastic at-
 tainments of
 author remed-
 ied by his
 great spiritual
 insight.
 His intention.

His achievement. Plan of poem "Conspuez Dieu!"	Shields? Be they paper, paint, lath? They shall cover 70 Well as they may, the big heart of a lover! Swords? Let the lightning of Truth strike the fortress Frowning of God! I will sever one more tress Off the White Beard²² with his son's blood besprinkled, Carve one more gash in the forehead²³ hate-wrinkled:— 75 So, using little arms, earn one day better ones; Cutting the small chains,²⁴ learn soon to unfetter one's Limbs from the large ones, walk forth and be free!— So much for Browning! and so much for me!
Apology for manner of poem. A chance for Tibet.	Pray do not ask me where I stand! 80 "Who asks, doth err."²⁵ At least demand No folly such as answer means! "But if" (you²⁶ say) "your spirit weans Itself of milk-and-water pap, And one religion as another 85 O'erleaps itself and falls on the other;²⁷ You'll tell me why at least, mayhap, Our Christianity excites Especially such petty spites As these you strew throughout your verse." 90 The chance of birth! I choose to curse (Writing in English²⁸) just the yoke Of faith that tortures English folk. I cannot write²⁹ a poem yet To please the people in Tibet; 95 But when I can, Christ shall not lack Peace, while their Buddha I attack.³⁰
Hopes. Identity of poet. Attention drawn to my highly decorative cover.	Yet by-and-by I hope to weave A song of Anti-Christmas Eve And First- and Second-Beast-er Day. 100 There's one *³¹ who loves me dearly (vrai!) Who yet believes me sprung from Tophet, Either the Beast or the False Prophet; And by all sorts of monkey tricks Adds up my name to Six Six Six. 105 Retire, good Gallup!³² In such strife her Superior skill makes <i>you</i> a cipher!

* Crowley's mother.

Ho ! I adopt the number. Look
 At the quaint wrapper of this book ! *
 110 I will deserve it if I can :
 It is the number of a Man.³³

So since in England Christ still stands
 With iron nails in bloody hands
 Not pierced, but grasping ! to hoist high
 115 Children on cross of agony,
 I find him real for English lives.
 Up with my pretty pair of fives !³⁴
 I fight no ghosts.

Necessity of
 poem.

“ But why revile ”
 120 (You urge me) “ in that vicious style
 The very faith whose truths you seem
 (Elsewhere)³⁵ to hold, to hymn supreme
 In your own soul ? ” Perhaps you know
 How mystic doctrines melt the snow
 125 Of any faith : redeem it to
 A fountain of reviving dew.
 So I with Christ : but few receive
 The Qabalistic Balm,³⁶ believe
 Nothing—and choose to know instead.
 130 But, to that terror vague and dread,
 External worship ; all my life—
 War to the knife ! War to the knife !

Mysticism *v.*
 literal interpretation. Former
 excused.

No ! on the other hand the Buddha
 Says : “ I’m surprised at you ! How could a
 135 Person accept my law and still
 Use hatred, the sole means of ill,
 In Truth’s defence ? In praise of light ? ”
 Well ! Well ! I guess Brer Buddha’s right !
 I am no brutal Cain³⁷ to smash an Abel ;
 140 I hear that blasphemy’s unfashionable :
 So in the quietest way we’ll chat about it ;
 No need to show teeth, claws of cat about it !
 With gentle words—fiat exordium ;
 Exeat dolor, intret gaudium !

Buddha re-
 bukes poet.
 Detailed
 scheme of
 modified poem.

* It had a design of 666 and Crowley’s name in Hebrew (which, like most names, adds up to that figure) on the reverse.

	We'll have the ham to logic's sandwich Of indignation : last bread bland, which After our scorn of God's lust, terror, hate, Prometheus-fired, we'll butter, perorate With oiled indifference, laughter's silver : " Omne hoc verbum valet nil, vir " !	145 160
Aim of poet. Indignation of poet. Poet defies his uncle.	Let me help Babu Chander Grish up ! As by a posset of Hunyadi³⁸ Clear mind ! Was Soudan of the Mahdi Not cleared by Kitchener ? Ah, Tchhup ! Such nonsense for sound truth you dish up, Were I magician, no mere cadi, Not Samuel's ghost you'd make me wish up, Nor Saul's (the mighty son of Kish) up, But Ingersoll's or Bradlaugh's, pardie ! By spells and caldron stews that squish up, Or purifying of the Nadi,³⁹ Till Stradivarius or Amati Shriek in my stomach ! Sarasate, Such strains ! Such music as once Sadi Made Persia ring with ! I who fish up No such from soul may yet cry : Vade Retro, Satanas ! Tom Bond Bishop !⁴⁰	155 160 165
Whip and spur. Sport- ing offer. The <i>Times</i> Com- petition out- done.	You old screw, Pegasus ! Gee (Swish !) up ! (To any who correctly rhymes⁴¹ With Bishop more than seven times I hereby offer as emolum- Ent, a bound copy of this volume.)	170
Sub-species of genus Chris- tian included in poet's strictures.	These strictures must include the liar Copleston,⁴² Reverend F. B. Meyer, (The cock of the Dissenter's midden, he !) And others of the self-same kidney :— How different from Sir Philip Sidney ! But " cave os, et claude id, ne Vituperasse inventus sim." In English let me render him ! 'Ware mug, and snap potato-trap ! Or elsey it may haply hap	175 180

Panel * in libel I bewail me !
 (Funny how English seems to fail me !)
 185 So, as a surgeon to a man, sir,
 Let me excise your Christian cancer
 Impersonally, without vanity,
 Just in pure love of poor humanity !

Here's just the chance you'd have ! Behold
 190 The warm sun tint with early gold
 Yon spire : to-day's event provide
 My text of wrath—Ascension-tide !
 Oh ! 'tis a worthy day to wrest
 Hate's diadem from Jesus' Crest !
 195 Ascends he ? 'Tis the very test
 By which we men may fairly judge,
 From the rough roads we mortals trudge
 Or God's paths paved with heliotrope,
 The morals of the crucified.
 200 (Both standpoints join in one, I hope,
 In metaphysic's stereoscope !)
 But for the moment be denied
 A metaphysical inspection—
 Bring out the antiseptic soap !—
 205 We'll judge the Christ by simple section,
 And strictly on the moral side.

But first ; I must insist on-taking
 The ordinary substantial creed
 Your clergy preach from desk and pulpit
 210 Each Sunday ; all the Bible, shaking
 Its boards with laughter, as you read
 Each Sunday. Ibsen ⁴³ to a full pit
 May play in the moon. If (lunars they)
 They thought themselves to be the play,
 215 It's little the applause he'd get.

I met a Christian clergyman, †
 The nicest man I ever met.
 We argued of the Cosmic plan.
 I was Lord Roberts, he De Wet.⁴⁴

Ascension Day.
 Moral aspect
 of Christianity
 to be discussed
 to prejudice of
 the metaphysical.

Orthodoxy to
 be our doxy.†
 Gipsies barred.
 Henrik Ibsen
 and H. G.
 Wells

Parson and
 poet. Fugitive
 nature of
 dogma in these
 latter days.
 The Higher
 Criticism.

* Scots legal term for defendant.

† A Romany word for woman.

‡ The Rev. J. Bowley. The conversation described actually occurred
 in Mr. Gerald Kelly's studio in Paris.

He tells me when I cite the "Fall" 220
 "But those are legends, after all."
 He has a hundred hills ⁴⁶ to lie in,
 But finds no final ditch ⁴⁶ to die in.
 "Samuel was man; the Holy Spook
 Did not dictate the Pentateuch." 225
 With cunning feint he lures me on
 To loose my pompoms on Saint John;
 And, that hill being shelled, doth swear
 His forces never had been there.
 I got disgusted, called a parley, 230
 (Here comes a white-flag treachery!)
 Asked: "Is there anything you value,
 Will hold to?" He laughed, "Chase me, Charlie!"
 But seeing in his mind that I
 Would not be so converted, "Shall you," 235
 He added, "grope in utter dark?
 The Book of Acts and that of Mark
 Are now considered genuine."
 I snatch a Testament, begin
 Reading at random the first page;— 240
 He stops me with a gesture sage:
 "You must not think, because I say
 St. Mark is genuine, I would lay
 Such stress unjust upon its text,
 As base thereon opinion. Next?" 245
 I gave it up. He escaped. Ah me!
 But so did Christianity.

Lord George
 Sanger * on the
 Unknowable.
 How the crea-
 tures talk.

As for a quiet talk on physics sane ac
 Lente, I hear the British Don
 Spout sentiments more bovine than a sane yak 250
 Ever would ruminate upon,
 Half Sabbatarian and half Khakimaniac,
 Built up from Paul and John,
 With not a little tincture of Leviticus
 Gabbled pro formâ, jaldi,† à la Psittacus 255
 To aid the appalling hotch-potch; lyre and lute
 Replaced by liar and loot, the harp and flute

* Proprietor of a circus and menagerie.

† Hindustani: quickly.

Are dumb, the drum doth come and make us mute :
 The Englishman, half huckster and half brute,
 260 Ravesh through his silk hat of the Absolute.
 The British Don, half pedant and half hermit,
 Begins : "The Ding an sich *—as Germans term it—"
 We stop him short ; he readjusts his glasses,
 Turns to his folio—'twill eclipse all precedent,
 265 Reveal God's nature, every dent a blessed dent !
 The Donkey : written by an ass, for asses.

So, with permission, let us be
 Orthodox to our finger-ends ;
 What the bulk hold, High Church or Friends,
 270 Or Hard-shell Baptists—and we'll see.

Basis of poem
 to be that of
 the Compro-
 mise of 1870.

I will not now invite attack
 By proving white a shade of black,
 Or Christ (as some ⁴⁷ have lately tried)
 An epileptic maniac,
 275 Citing some cases, "where a dose
 Of Bromide duly given in time
 Drags a distemper so morose
 At last to visions less sublime ;
 Soft breezes stir the lyre Aeolian,
 280 No more the equinoctial gales ;
 The patient reefs his mental sails ;
 His Panic din that shocked the Tmolian ⁴⁸
 Admits a softer run of scales—
 Seems no more God, but mere Napoleon
 285 Or possibly the Prince of Wales" :—
 Concluding such a half-cured case
 With the remark "where Bromide fails !—
 But Bromide people did not know
 Those 1900 years ago."
 290 I think we may concede to Crowley an
 Impartial attitude.

Non-medical
 nature of poem.
 Crowley J.

And so
 I scorn the thousand subtle points
 Wherein a man might find a fulcrum
 295 (Ex utero Matris ad sepulcrum,

No mention
 will be made
 of the Figs and
 the Pigs.

* *Vide infra*, Science and Buddhism, and the writings of Immanuel Kant
 and his successors.

- Et præter—such as Huxley tells)
I'll pierce your rotten harness-joints,
Dissolve your diabolic spells,
With the quick truth and nothing else.
- Christian pre-
misses ac-
cepted. Severe
mental strain
involved in
reading poem.
- So not one word derogatory
To your own version of the story !
I take your Christ, your God's creation,
Just at their own sweet valuation.
For by this culminating scene,
Close of that wondrous life of woe
Before and after death, we know
How to esteem the Nazarene.
Where's the wet towel?
- 300
- 305
- Let us first
- The Ascension
at last ! This
is a common
feat. Prana-
yama.
- Destroy the argument of fools,
From Paul right downward to the Schools,
That the Ascension's self rehearsed
Christ's Godhead by its miracle.
Grand !—but the power is mine as well !
In India levitation counts
No tithe of the immense amounts
Of powers demanded by the wise
From Chela ere the Chela rise
To Knowledge. Fairy-tales ? Well, first,
Sit down a week and hold your breath
As masters teach ⁴⁹—until you burst,
Or nearly—in a week, one saith,
A month, perchance a year for you,
Hard practice, and yourself may fly—
Yes ! I have done it ! you may too !
- 310
- 315
- 320
- 325
- Difference be-
tween David
Douglas
Home, Sri
Swami
Sabapati
Vamadeva
Bhaskara-
nanda Saras-
wati and the
Christ.
Latter com-
pared to
Madame Hum-
bert.
- Thus, in Ascension, you and I
Stand as Christ's peers and therefore fit
To judge him—"Stay, friend, wait a bit !"
(You cry) "Your Indian Yogis fall
Back to the planet after all,
Never attain to heaven and stand
(Stephen) or sit (Paul) ⁵⁰ at the hand
Of the Most High !—And that alone,
That question of the Great White Throne,
Is the sole point that we debate."
I answer, Here in India wait
- 330
- 335

- Samadhi-Dak,⁵¹ convenient
 To travel to Maha Meru,⁵²
 Or Gaurisankar's ⁵³ keen white wedge
 340 Spearing the splendid dome of blue,
 Or Chogo's ⁵⁴ mighty flying edge
 Shearing across the firmament,—
 But, first, to that exact event
 You Christians celebrate to-day.
 345 We stand where the disciples stood
 And see the Master float away
 Into that cloudlet heavenly-hued
 Receiving him from mortal sight.
 Which of his sayings prove the true,
 350 Lightning-bescrawled athwart the blue?
 I say not, Which in hearts aright
 Are treasured? but, What after ages
 Engrave on history's iron pages?
 This is the one word of "Our Lord";
 355 "I bring not peace; I bring a sword."
 In this the history of the West ⁵⁵
 Bears him out well. How stands the test?
 One-third a century's life of pain—
 He lives, he dies, he lives again,
 360 And rises to eternal rest
 Of bliss with Saints—an endless reign!
 Leaving the world to centuries torn
 By every agony and scorn,
 And every wickedness and shame
 365 Taking their refuge in his Name.
No Yogi shot his Chandra ⁵⁶ *so.*
Will Christ return? What ho? What ho!
 What? What? "He mediates above
 Still with His Sire for mercy, love,—"
 370 And other trifles! Far enough
 That Father's purpose from such stuff!
- You see, when I was young, they said:
 "Whate'er you ponder in your head,
 Or make the rest of Scripture mean,
 375 You can't evade John iii. 16."

Former compared to Kerubim; as it is written, Running and Returning.

Shri Parananda applauds Yogi. Gerald jeers at Jesus.

John iii. 16.* Its importance. Its implied meaning.

* "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Exactly ! Grown my mental stature,
 I ponder much : but never yet
 Can I get over or forget
 That bitter text's accursed nature,
 The subtle devilish omission,⁶⁷ 380
 The cruel antithesis implied,
 The irony, the curse-fruition,
 The calm assumption of Hell's fevers
 As' fit, as just, for unbelievers—
 These are the things that stick beside 385
 And hamper my quite serious wish
 To harbour kind thoughts of the " Fish." ⁶⁸

My own vague
 optimism. Im-
 possibility of
 tracing cause
 back or effect
 forward to the
 ultimate.
 Ethics
 individual.

Here goes my arrow to the gold !
 I'll make no magpies ! Though I hold
 Your Christianity a lie, 390
 Abortion and iniquity,
 The most immoral and absurd
 —(A priest's invention, in a word)—
 Of all religions, I have hope
 In the good Dhamma's ⁵⁹ wider scope, 395
 Nay, certainty ! that all at last,
 However came they in the past,
 Move, up or down—who knows, my friend ?—
 But yet with no uncertain trend
 Unto Nibbana in the end. 400
 I do not even dare despise
 Your doctrines, prayers, and ceremonies !
 Far from the word " you'll go to hell !"
 I dare not say " you do not well !"
 I must obey my own mind's laws, 405
 Accept its limits, seek its cause :
 My meat may be your poison ! I
 Hope to convert you by-and-by ?
 Never ! I cannot trace the chain ⁶⁰
 That brought us here, shall part again 410
 Our lives—perchance for aye ! I bring
 My hand down on this table-thing, ⁶¹
 And that commotion widens thus
 And shakes the nerves of Sirius !
 To calculate one hour's result 415
 I find surpassing difficult ;

One year's effect, one moment's cause ;
 What mind could estimate such laws ?
 Who then (much more !) may act aright
 420 Judged by and in ten centuries' sight ?
 (Yet I believe, whate'er we do
 Is best for me and best for you
 And best for all : I line no brow
 With wrinkles, meditating how.)

Well, but another way remains.
 Shall we expound the cosmic plan
 By symbolising God and man
 And nature thus ? As man contains
 Cells, nerves, grey matter in his brains,
 430 Each cell a life, self-centred, free
 Yet self-subordinate to the whole
 For its own sake—expand !—so we
 Molecules of a central soul,
 Time's sons, judged by Eternity.
 435 Nature is gone—our joys, our pains,
 Our little lives—and God remains.
 Were this the truth—why ! worship then
 Were not so imbecile for men !
 But that's no Christian faith ! For where
 440 Enters the dogma of despair ?
 Despite his logic's silver flow
 I must count Caird⁶² a mystic ! No !
 You Christians shall not mask me so
 The plain words of your sacred books
 445 Behind friend Swedenborg his spooks !
 Says Huxley⁶³ in his works (q. v.)
 "The microcosmic lives change daily
 In state or body"—yet you gaily
 Arm a false Hegel cap-à-pie—
 450 Your self, his weapons—make him wear
 False favours of a ladye fayre,
 (The scarlet woman !) bray and blare
 A false note on the trumpet, shout :
 "A champion ? Faith's defender ! Out !
 455 Sceptic and sinner ! See me ! Quail I ?"
 I cite the Little-go. You stare,
 And have no further use for Paley !

Caird's interpretation of Hegel. His identification of it with Christianity proved to be mystical. His interpretation false.

Mysticism does not need Christ. Krishna will serve, or the Carpenter. The Sacred Walrus. God, some Vestments, and Lady Wim- borne.	But if you drink your mystic fill Under the good tree Igdrasil ⁶⁴ Where is at all your use for Christ? Hath Krishna not at all sufficed? I hereby guarantee to pull A faith as quaint and beautiful As much attractive to an ass, And setting reason at defiance, As Zionism, Christian Science, Or Ladies' League, ⁶⁵ "Keep off the Grass!" From "Alice through the Looking-Glass."	460 465
Fearful aspect of John iii. 16.	Hence I account no promise worse, Fail to conceive a fiercer curse Than John's third chapter (sixteenth verse).	470
Universalism. Will God get the bara* slam?	But now (you say) broad-minded folk Think that those words the Master spoke Should save all men at last. But mind! The text says nothing of the kind! Read the next verses! †	475
Eternal life. Divergent views of its desirability. Buddhist idea.	Then—one-third Of all humanity are steady In a belief in Buddha's word, Possess eternal life already, And shun delights, laborious days Of labour living (Milton's phrase) In strenuous purpose to—? to cease! "A fig for God's eternal peace! True peace is to annihilate The chain of causes men call Fate, So that no Sattva ⁶⁶ may renew Once death has run life's shuttle through." (Their sages put it somewhat thus) What's fun to them is death to us! That's clear at least.	480 485 490
Dogma of Belief.	But never mind! Call them idolaters and blind! We'll talk of Christ. As Shelley sang, "Shall an eternal issue hang	495

* Great slam—a term of Bridge-Whist. Bara is Hindustani for great.

† John iii. 18, "He that believeth not is condemned already."

On just belief or unbelief ;
 And an involuntary act
 Make difference infinite in fact
 Between the right and left-hand thief?
 500 Belief is not an act of will ! ”

I think, Sir, that I have you still,
 Even allowing (much indeed !)
 That any will at all is freed,
 And is not merely the result
 505 Of sex, environment, and cult,
 Habit and climate, health and mind,
 And twenty thousand other things !
 So many a metaphysic sings.
 (I wish they did indeed : I find
 510 Their prose the hardest of hard reading !)

Free will.
 Herbert
 Spencer.

“ But if,” you cry, “ the world’s designed
 As a mere mirage in the mind,
 Up jumps free will.” But all I’m pleading
 515 Is against pain and hell. Freewill
 Then can damn man? No fearful mill,
 Grinding catastrophe, is speeding
 Outside—some whence, some whither? And ⁶⁷
 I think we easier understand
 Where Schelling (to the Buddha leading)
 520 Calls real not-self. In any case
 There is not, there can never be
 A soul, or sword or armour needing,
 Incapable in time or space
 Or to inflict or suffer. We
 525 I think are gradually weeding
 The soil of dualism. Pheugh !
 Drop to the common Christian’s view !

If there is free
 will how can
 there be pain
 or damnation?
 not-Self being
 an illusion.
 Self or not-Self
 real? Chute
 d’Icare.

This is my point ; the world lies bleeding :—
 (Result of sin ?)—I do not care ;
 530 I will admit you anywhere !
 I take your premisses themselves
 And, like the droll despicable elves
 They are, they yet outwit your plan.
 I will prove Christ a wicked man

I have pity :
 had Christ
 any? The
 Sheep and the
 Goats.

(Granting him Godhead) merciless 535
 To all the anguish and distress
 About him—save to him it clung
 And prayed. Give me omnipotence?
 I am no fool that I should fence
 That power, demanding every tongue 540
 To call me God—I would exert
 That power to heal creation's hurt;
 Not to divide my devotees
 From those who scorned me to the close:
 A worm, a fire, a thirst for these; 545
 A harp-resounding heaven for those!

Will Satan be
 saved? Who
 pardons Judas?

And though you claim Salvation sure
 For all the heathen⁶⁸—there again
 New Christians give the lie to plain
 Scripture, those words which must endure! 550
 (The Vedas say the same!) and though
 His mercy widens ever so,
 I never met a man (this shocks,
 What I now press) so heterodox,
 Anglican, Roman, Methodist, 555
 Peculiar Person— all the list!—
 I never met a man who called
 Himself a Christian, but appalled
 Shrank when I dared suggest the hope
 God's mercy could expand its scope, 560
 Extend, or bend, or spread, or straighten
 So far as to encompass Satan
 Or even poor Iscariot.

God's fore-
 knowledge of
 Satan's fall and
 eternal misery
 makes him re-
 sponsible for it.
 If he and
 Judas are
 finally re-
 deemed, we
 might perhaps
 look over the
 matter this
 once. Poet
 books his seat.
 Creator in

Yet God created (did he not?)
 Both these. Omnisciently, we know! 565
 Benevolently? Even so!
 Created from Himself distinct
 (Note that!—it is not meet for you
 To plead me Schelling and his crew)
 These souls, foreknowing how were linked 570
 The chains in either's Destiny.
 "You pose me the eternal Why?"
 Not I? Again, "Who asks doth err."
 But this one thing I say. Perchance
 There lies a purpose in advance 575

Tending to final bliss—to stir
 Some life to better life, this pain
 Is needful : that I grant again.
 Did they at last in glory live,
 580 Satan and Judas⁶⁹ might forgive
 The middle time of misery,
 Forgive the wrong creation first
 Or evolution's iron key
 Did them—provided they are passed
 585 Beyond all change and pain at last
 Out of this universe accurst.
 But otherwise ! I lift my voice,
 Deliberately take my choice
 Promethean, eager to rejoice,
 590 In the grim protest's joy to revel
 Betwixt Iscariot and the Devil,
 Throned in their midst ! No pain to feel,
 Tossed on some burning bed of steel,
 But theirs : My soul of love should swell
 595 And, on those piteous floors they trod,
 Feel, and make God feel, out of Hell,
 Across the gulf impassable,
 That He was damned and I was God !

heaven suffers
 Hell's pangs,
 owing to re-
 proaches of
 bard.

Ay ! Let him rise and answer me,
 600 That false creative Deity,
 Whence came his right to rack the Earth
 With pangs of death,⁷⁰ disease, and birth :
 No joy unmarred by pain and grief :
 Insult on injury heaped high
 605 In that quack-doctor infamy
 The Panacea of—Belief !
 Only the selfish soul of man
 Could ever have conceived a plan
 Man only of all life to embrace,
 610 One planet of all stars to place
 Alone before the Father's face ;
 Forgetful of creation's stain,
 Forgetful of creation's pain,
 Not dumb !—forgetful of the pangs
 615 Whereby each life laments and hangs,
 (Now as I speak a lizard⁷¹ lies
 In wait for light-bewildered flies)

Ethical and
 eloquent de-
 nunciation of
 Christian Cos-
 mogony.

Each life bound ever to the wheel ⁷²
 Ay, and each being—we may guess
 Now that the very crystals feel!— 620
 For them no harp-resounding court,
 No palm, no crown, but none the less
 A cross, be sure! The worst man's thought
 In hell itself, bereft of bliss,
 Were less unmerciful than this! 625
 No! for material things, I hear,
 Will burn away, and cease to be—
 (Nibbana! Ah! Thou shoreless Sea!)
 Man, man alone, is doomed to fear,
 To suffer the eternal woe, 630
 Or else, to meet man's subtle foe,
 God—and oh! infamy of terror!
 Be like him—like him! And for ever!
 At least I make not such an error:
 My soul must utterly dis sever 635
 Its very silliest thought, belief,
 From such a God as possible,
 Its vilest from his worship. Never!
 Avaunt, abominable chief
 Of Hate's grim legions; let me well 640
 Gird up my loins and make endeavour,
 And seek a refuge from my grief,
 O never in Heaven—but in Hell!

Death-bed of
 poet. Effect
 of body on
 mind.

“Oh, very well!” I think you say,
 “Wait only till your dying day!” 645
 See whether then you kiss the rod,
 And bow that proud soul down to God!
 I perfectly admit the fact;
 Quite likely that I so shall act!
 Here's why Creation jumps at prayer. 650
 You Christians quote me in a breath
 This, that, the other atheist's death;⁷³
 How they sought God! Of course! Impair
 By just a touch of fever, chill,
 My health—where flies my vivid will? 655
 My carcase with quinine is crammed;
 I wish South India were damned;
 I wish I had my mother's nursing,
 Find precious little use in cursing,

660 And slide to leaning on another,
 God, or the doctor, or my mother.
 But dare you quote my fevered word
 For better than my health averred?
 The brainish fancies of a man
 Hovering on delirium's brink:
 666 *Shall these be classed his utmost span?*
 All that he can or ought to think?
 No! the strong man and self-reliant
 Is the true spiritual giant.
 670 I blame no weaklings, but decline
 To take their maunderings for mine.

You see I do not base my thesis
 On your Book's being torn in pieces
 By knowledge; nor invoke the shade
 675 Of my own boyhood's agony.
 Soul, shudder not! Advance the blade
 Of fearless fact and probe the scar!
 You know my first-class memory?
 Well, in my life two years there are
 680 Twelve years back—not so very far!
 Two years whereof no memory stays.
 One ageless anguish filled my days
 So that no item, like a star
 Sole in the supreme night, above
 685 Stands up for hope, or joy, or love.
 Nay, not one ignis fatuus glides
 Sole in that marsh, one agony
 To make the rest look light. Abides
 The thick sepulchral changeless shape
 690 Shapeless, continuous misery
 Whereof no smoke-wreaths might escape
 To show me whither lay the end,
 Whence the beginning. All is black,
 Void of all cause, all aim; unkennd,
 695 As if I had been dead indeed—
 All in Christ's name! And I look back,
 And then and long time after lack
 Courage or strength to hurl the creed
 Down to the heaven it sprang from! No!
 700 Not this inspires the indignant blow

Poem does not
 treat of Palæ-
 ontology: nor
 of poet's youth:
 nor of Christian
 infamies. Poet
 forced to mystic
 position.

At the whole fabric—nor the seas
 Filled with those innocent agonies
 Of Pagan Martyrs that once bled,
 Of Christian Martyrs damned and dead
 In inter-Christian bickerings, 705
 Where hate exults and torture springs,
 A lion on anguished flesh and blood,
 A vulture on ill-omen wings,
 A cannibal⁷⁴ on human food.
 Nor do I cry the scoffer's cry, 710
 That Christians live and look the lie
 Their faith has taught them : none of these
 Inspire my life, disturb my peace.
 I go beneath the outward faith
 Find it a devil or a wraith, 715
 Just as my mood or temper tends !

Mystical mean-
 ing of "Ascen-
 sion Day."
 Futility of
 whole discus-
 sion, in view of
 facts.

And thus to-day that "Christ ascends,"
 I take the symbol, leave the fact,
 Decline to make the smallest pact
 With your creative Deity, 720
 And say : The Christhood-soul in me,
 Risen of late, is now quite clear
 Even of the smallest taint of Earth.
 Supplanting God, the Man has birth
 ("New Birth" you'll call the same, I fear,) 725
 Transcends the ordinary sphere
 And flies in the direction 'x.'
 (There lies the fourth dimension.) Vex
 My soul no more with mistranslations
 From Genesis to Revelations, 730
 But leave me with the Flaming Star,⁷⁵
 Jeheshua (See thou Zohar !) ⁷⁶
 And thus our formidable Pigeon-⁷⁷
 Lamb-and-Old-Gentleman religion
 Fizzles in smoke, and I am found 735
 Attacking nothing. Here's the ground,
 Pistols, and coffee—three in one,
 (Alas, O Rabbi Schimeon !)
 But never a duellist—no Son,
 No Father, and (to please us most) 740
 Decency pleads—no Holy Ghost !
 All vanish at the touch of truth,
 A cobweb trio—like, in sooth,

- 745 That worthy Yankee millionaire,
And wealthy nephews, young and fair,
The pleasing Crawfords ! Lost ! Lost ! Lost ! ⁷⁸
"The Holy Spirit, friend ! beware !"
- Ah ! ten days yet to Pentecost !
Come that, I promise you—but stay !
750 At present 'tis Ascension Day !
- At least your faith should be content.
I quarrel not with this event.
The supernatural element ?
I deny nothing—at the term
755 It is just Nothing I affirm.
The fool (with whom is wisdom, deem
The Scriptures—rightly !) in his heart
Saith (silent, to himself, apart)
This secret : "אין אלהים" ⁷⁹
760 See the good Psalm ! And thus, my friend !
My diatribes approach the end
And find us hardly quarrelling.
And yet—you seem not satisfied ?
The literal mistranslated thing
765 Must not by sinners be denied.
Go to your Chapel then to pray !
(I promise Mr. Chesterton ⁸⁰
Before the Muse and I have done
A grand ap-pre-ci-a-ti-on
770 Of Brixton on Ascension Day.)
- He's gone—his belly filled enough !
This Robert-Browning-manqué stuff !
'Twill serve—Mercutio's scratch !—to show
Where God and I are disagreed.
775 There ! I have let my feelings go
This once. Again ? I deem not so.
Once for my fellow-creature's need !
The rest of life, for self-control, ⁸¹
For liberation of the soul ! ⁸²
780 This once, the truth ! In future, best
Dismissing Jesus with a jest.
- Ah ! Christ ascends ? ⁸³ Ascension day ?
Old wonders bear the bell ⁸⁴ away ?
Santos-Dumont, though ! Who can say ?

The reader
may hope.

Summary.
Reader dis-
missed to
chapel.

Future plans of
poet. Jesus
dismissed with
a jest.

The Jest.

P E N T E C O S T

Poem dissimilar to its predecessor. Will it lead somewhere this time? Reflections on the weather, proper to beginning a conversation in English.

Autobiography of bard.
Lehrjahre.
Wanderjahre.
"Themagician of Paris."

How clever I am!

TO-DAY thrice halves the lunar week
Since you, indignant, heard me speak
Indignant. Then I seemed to be
So far from Christianity!
Now, other celebrations fit
The time, another song shall flit
Reponsive to another tune.
September's shadow falls on June,
But dull November's darkest day
Is lighted by the sun of May.

5

10

Here's how I got a better learning.
It's a long lane that has no turning!
Mad as a woman-hunted Urning,
The lie-chased aletheophilist: *
Sorcery's maw gulps the beginner:
In Pain's mill neophytes are grist:
Disciples ache upon the rack.
Five years I sought: I miss and lack;
Agony hounds lagoon twist;
I peak and struggle and grow thinner,
And get to hate the sight of dinner.
With sacred thirst, I, soul-hydroptic,¹
Read Levi² and the cryptic Coptic;³
With ANET' HER-K UAA EN RA,⁴
And מִפְּרָא דִּנְעוּתָא
While good MacGregor⁵ (who taught freely us)
Bade us investigate Cornelius
Agrippa and the sorceries black
Of grim Honorius and Abramelin;⁶
While, fertile as the teeming spawn
Of pickled lax or stickleback,
Came ancient rituals,⁷ whack! whack!
Of Rosy Cross and Golden Dawn.⁸

15

20

25

30

* Truth-lover.

35 I lived, Elijah-like, Mt. Carmel in :
All gave me nothing. I slid back
To common sense, as reason bids,
And "hence," my friend, "the Pyramids."

At last I met a maniac
With mild eyes full of love, and tresses
40 Blanched in those lonely wildernesses
Where he found wisdom, and long hands
Gentle, pale olive 'gainst the sand's
Amber and gold. At sight, I knew him ;
Swifter than light I flashed, ran to him,
45 And at his holy feet prostrated
My head ; then, all my being sated
With love, cried "Master ! I must know.
Already I can love." E'en so.
The sage saluted me राम । राम ।⁹

My Mahatma.
What price
Kut Humi?

50 लमबा पड़ाव की बड़ी दाम ।
जानो यह सब से मुश्किल काम
है । वाह शाबाश । तुमहार नाम
सितारों में सीने से लिखा है ।
हमारे पास आव चले । हम दवाई

?????? Oh,
how wise
Grampa must
have been,
Bobbie !

55 चिन्ता के वास्ते देंगे ॥ हाँ । said I :
"I'm game to work through all eternity,
Your holiness the Guru Swami !" * Thus
I studied with him till he told me बस ॥¹⁰
He taught the A B C of Yoga :

60 I asked किस वास्ते ।¹¹ क्या होगा ॥¹²
In strange and painful attitude,¹³
I sat, while he was very rude.¹⁴
With eyes well fixed on my proboscis,¹⁵
I soon absorbed the Yogi Gnosis.
65 He taught me to steer clear of vices,
The giddy waltz, the tuneful aria,
Those fatal foes of Brahma-charya ;¹⁶
And said, "How very mild and nice is
One's luck to lop out truth in slices,
70 And chance to chop up cosmic crises !"

* The correct form of address from a pupil to his teacher. See Sabhapaty Swami's pamphlet on Yoga.

The philo-
sophical im-
passe. Practi-
cal advice.
Advice to poet's
fat friend.

He taught me A, he taught me B,
He stopped my baccy¹⁷ and my tea.
He taught me Y, he taught me Z,
He made strange noises in my head.
He taught me that, he taught me this, 75
He spoke of knowledge, life, and bliss.
He taught me this, he taught me that,
He grew me mangoes in his hat.¹⁸
I brought him corn : he made good grist of it :—
And here, my Christian friend, 's the gist of it ! 80

First, here's philosophy's despair,
The cynic scorn of self. I think
At times the search is worth no worry,
And hasten earthward in a hurry,
Close spirit's eyes, or bid them blink, 85
Go back to Swinburne's¹⁹ counsel rare,
Kissing the universe its rod,
As thus he sings "For this is God ;
Be man with might, at any rate,
In strength of spirit growing straight 90
And life as light a-living out !"
So Swinburne doth sublimely state,
And he is right beyond a doubt.
So, I'm a poet or a rhymers ;
A mountaineer or mountain climber. 95
So much for Crowley's vital primer.
The inward life of soul and heart,
That is a thing occult, apart :
But yet his metier or his kismet
As much as these you have of his met. 100
So—you be butcher ; you be baker ;
You, Plymouth Brother, and you, Quaker ;
You, Mountebank, you, corset-maker :—
While for you, my big beauty,²⁰ (Chicago packs pork)
I'll teach you the trick to be hen-of-the-walk. 105
Shriek a music-hall song with a double ong-tong !
Dance a sprightly can-can at Paree or Bolong !
Or the dance of Algiers—try your stomach at that !
It's quite in your line, and would bring down your fat.
You've a very fine voice—could you only control it ! 110
And an emerald ring—and I know where you stole it !
But for goodness sake give up attempting Brünnhilde ;
Try a boarding-house cook, or a coster's Matilda !

Still you're young yet, scarce forty—we'll hope at three
score

115 You'll be more of a singer, and less of a whore.

Each to his trade ! live out your life !

Fondle your child, and buss your wife !

Trust not, fear not, steer straight and strong !

Don't worry, but just get along.

120 I used to envy all my Balti coolies ²¹

In an inverse kind of religious hysteria,

Though every one a perfect fool is,

To judge by philosophic criteria,

My Lord Archbishop. The name of Winchester,

125 Harrow, or Eton ²² makes them not two inches stir.

They know not Trinity, Merton, or Christchurch ;

They worship, but not at your back-pews-high-priced
Church.

I've seen them at twenty thousand feet

On the ice, in a snow-storm, at night fall, repeat

130 Their prayers ²³—will your Grace do as much for your Three

As they do for their One ? I have seen—may you see !

They sleep and know not what a mat is ;

Seem to enjoy their cold chapaties ; *

Are healthy, strong—and some are old.

135 They do not care a damn ²⁴ for cold,

Behave like children, trust in Allah ;

(Flies in Mohammed's spider-parlour !)

They may not think : at least they dare

Live out their lives, and little care

140 Worries their souls—worse fools they seem

Than even Christians. Do I dream ?

Probing philosophy to marrow,

What thought darts in its poisoned arrow

But this ? (my wisdom, even to me,

145 Seems folly) may their folly be

True Wisdom ? O esteemed Tahuti ! ²⁵

You are, you are, you are a beauty !

If after all these years of worship

You hail Ra ²⁶ his bark or Nuit ²⁷ her ship

Live out thy
life ! Character
of Balti.
His religious
sincerity. Re-
lations of poet
and the Egyp-
tian God of
Wisdom.
Crowley dis-
missed with a
jest.

* A flat cake of unleavened bread. As a matter of fact they do not enjoy and indeed will not eat them, preferring "dok," a paste of coarse flour and water, wrapped round a hot stone. It cooks gradually, and remains warm all day.

- And sail—"the waters wild a-wenting
Over your child! The left lamenting"
(Campbell).²⁸ The Ibis head,²⁹ unsuited
To grin, perhaps, yet does its best
To show its strong appreciation
Of the humour of the situation—
In short, dismiss me, jeered and hooted,
Who thought I sported Roland's crest,³⁰
With wisdom saddled, spurred, and booted,
(As I my Jesus) with a jest.³¹ 150
- Slowness of
Divine Justice,
Poet pockets
Piety Stakes.
National An-
them of Natal.
- So here is my tribute—a jolly good strong 'un—
To the eunuch, the faddist, the fool, and the wrong 'un!
It's fun when you say "A mysterious way"³²
God moves in to fix up his Maskelyne tricks.
He trots on the tides, on the tempest he rides
(Like Cosmo); and as for his pace, we bethought us
Achilles could never catch up with that tortoise!
No flyer, but very "Who's Griffiths?"* No jackpot!
I straddle the blind, age! At hymns I'm a moral;
In Sankey, your kettle may call me a black pot.
Here's diamond for coke, and pink pearl for pale coral. 160
Though his mills may grind slowly—what says the old hymn?³³
Tune, Limerick! Author? My memory's dim.
The corn said "You sluggard!"
The mill "You may tug hard," (or lug hard, or plug hard;
I forget the exact Rhyme; that's a fact) 165
"If I want to grind slowly I shall,"
A quainter old fable one rarely is able
To drag from its haunt in the—smoke room or stable!
You see (vide supra) I've brought to the test a ton
Of tolerance, broadness. Approve me, friend Chesterton! 170
- But this talk is
all indigestion.
Now for
health.
- So much when philosophy's lacteal river
Turns sour through a trifle of bile on the liver. s
But now for the sane and the succulent milk
Of truth—may it slip down as smoothly as silk!
- Reasons for
undertaking
the task.
- "How very hard it is to be"³⁴ 185
A Yogi! Let our spirits see
At least what primal need of thought
This end to its career has brought:
* "Who's Griffiths? The safe man." A well-known advertisement,
hence "Who's Griffiths"=safe.

190 Why, in a word, I seek to gain
 A different knowledge. Why retain
 The husk of flesh, yet seek to merit
 The influx of the Holy Spirit?
 And, swift as caddies pat and cap a tee,
 Gain the great prize all mortals snap at, he-
 195 Roic guerdon of Srotapatti? ³⁵

200 With calm and philosophic mind,
 No fears, no hopes, devotions blind
 To hamper, soberly we'll state
 The problem, and investigate
 In purely scientific mood
 The sheer Ananke of the mind,
 A temper for our steel to find
 Whereby those brazen nails subdued
 Against our door-posts may in vain
 205 Ring. We'll examine, to be plain,
 By logic's intellectual prism
 The spiritual Syllogism.

Our logical
 method. Clas-
 sical allusion,
 demonstrating
 erudition of
 poet.

210 We know what fools (only) call
 Divine and Supernatural
 And what they name material
 Are really one, not two, the line
 By which divide they and define
 Being a shadowy sort of test ;
 A verbal lusus at the best,
 215 At worst a wicked lie devised
 To bind men's thoughts ; but we must work
 With our own instruments, nor shirk
 Discarding what we erstwhile prized ;
 Should we perceive it disagree
 220 With the first-born necessity.

Whether or
 not spirit and
 matter are dis-
 tinct, let us in-
 vestigate the
 fundamental
 necessities of
 thought.

225 I come to tell you why I shun
 The sight of men, the life and fun
 You know I can enjoy so well,
 The Nature that I love as none
 (I think) before me ever loved.
 You know I scorn the fear of Hell,
 By worship and all else unmoved.

Impermanence
 of the soul.

You know for me the soul is nought ³⁶
 Save a mere phantom in the thought,
 That thought itself impermanent, 230
 Save as a casual element
 With such another may combine
 To form now water and now wine ;
 The element itself may be
 Changeless to all eternity, 235
 But compounds ever fluctuate
 With time or space or various state.
 (Ask chemists else !) So I must claim
 Spirit and matter are the same ³⁷
 Or else the prey of putrefaction. 240
 This matters to the present action
 Little or nothing. Here's your theories !
 Think if you like : I find it wearies !

Recapitulation
of principal cos-
mic theories.

It matters little whether we
 With Fichte and the Brahmins preach 245
 That Ego-Atman sole must be ;
 With Schelling and the Buddha own
 Non-Ego-Skandhas are alone ;
 With Hegel and—the Christian ? teach
 That which completes, includes, absorbs 250
 Both mighty unrevolving orbs
 In one informing masterless
 Master-idea of consciousness—
 All differences as these indeed
 Are chess play, conjuring. " Proceed ! " 255
 Nay ! I'll go back. The exposition
 Above, has points. But simple fission
 Has reproduced a different bliss,
 At last a heterogenesis !

Bard check-
 mates himself.
 Consciousness
 and Christi-
 anity.
 Dhyana and
 Hinduism.
 Sammasa-
 madhi and
 Buddhism.

The metaphysics of these verses 260
 Is perfectly absurd. My curse is
 No sooner in an iron word
 I formulate my thought than I
 Perceive the same to be absurd
 (Tannhäuser). So for this, Sir, why ! 265
 Your metaphysics in your teeth !
 Confer A. Crowley, " Berashith."
 But hear ! The Christian is a Dualist ;

Visible Image
of the Soul of
Nature, whose
Name is Fat-
ality.

That masks the primal cause of being.
With all respect to Buddha, fleeing
The dreadful problem with the word 310
"Who answers, as who asks, hath erred,"
I must decidedly insist
On asking why these things exist.
My mind refuses to admit
All-Power can be all-Wickedness. 315
—Nay ! but it may ! What shadows flit
Across the awful veil of mist ?
What thoughts invade, insult, impress ?
There comes a lightning of my wit
And sees—nor good nor ill address 320
Itself to task, creation's ill,
But a mere law without a will,⁴⁰
Nothing resolved in something, fit
Phantom of dull stupidity,
And evolution's endless stress 325
All the inanity to knit
Thence : such a dark device I see !
Nor lull my soul in the caress
Of Buddha's " Maya fashioned it." ⁴¹
My mind seems ready to agree ; 330
But still my senses worry me.

Futility of all
investigations
of the Mind
into the First
Cause.

Nor can I see what sort of gain
God finds in this creating pain ;
Nor do the Vedas help me here.
Why should the Paramatma cease ⁴² 335
From its eternity of peace,
Develop this disgusting drear
System of stars, to gather again
Involving, all the realm of pain,
Time, space, to that eternal calm ? 340
Blavatsky's Himalayan Balm ⁴³
Aids us no whit—if to improve
Thus the All-light, All-life, All-love,
By evolution's myrrh and gall,
It would not then have been the All. 345

Faith our only
alternative to
Despair ? So
says Mansel.

Thus all conceptions fail and fall.
But see the Cyclopædia-article
On " Metaphysics " ; miss no particle

350 Of thought ! How ends the brave B.D.,
 Summarising Ontology ?
 "This talk of 'Real' is a wraith.
 Our minds are lost in war of word ;
 The whole affair is quite absurd—
 Behold ! the righteous claims of Faith !" 355
 (He does not rhyme you quite so neatly ;
 But that's the sense of it, completely.)

I do not feel myself inclined,
 In spite of my irreverent mind,
 So lightly to pass by the schemes
 Of Fichte, Schelling, Hegel (one,
 Small though the apparent unison),
 As if they were mere drunken dreams ;
 For the first word in India here
 From Koromandl to Kashmir
 Says the same thing these Germans said : 365
 "Ekam Advaita !" ⁴⁴ one, not two !
 Thus East and West from A to Z
 Agree—Alas ! so do not you ?
 (It matters nothing—you, I find,
 Are but a mode of my own mind.) 370

The Advaitist
 position.

As far as normal reasoning goes,
 I must admit my concepts clse
 Exactly where my worthy friend,
 Great Mansel, says they ought to end.
 375 But here's the whole thing in a word :
 Olympus in a nutshell ! I
 Have a superior faculty
 To reasoning, which makes absurd,
 Unthinkable and wicked too,
 380 A great deal that I know is true !
 In short, the mind is capable,
 Besides mere ratiocination,
 Of twenty other things as well,
 The first of which is concentration !

Mind's superior
 functions.

385 Here most philosophers agree ;
 Claim that the truth must so intend,
 Explain at once all agony
 Of doubt, make people comprehend

Does truth
 make itself in-
 stantly appa-
 rent ? Not
 reason.

But the results
of concentra-
tion do so.

As by a lightning flash, solve doubt
And turn all Nature inside out : 390
And, if such potency of might
Hath Truth, once state the truth aright,
Whence came the use for all those pages
Millions together—mighty sages
Whom the least obstacle enrages ? 395
Condemn the mystic if he prove
Thinking less valuable than love ?
Well, let them try their various plans !
Do they resolve that doubt of man's ?
How many are Hegelians ? 400
This, though I hold him mostly true.
But, to teach others that same view ?
Surely long years develop reason.⁴⁵
After long years, too, in thy season
Bloom, Concentration's midnight flower ! 405
After much practice to this end
I gain at last the long sought power
(Which you believe you have this hour,
But certainly have not, my friend !)
Of keeping close the mind to one 410
Thing at a time — suppose, the Sun.
I gain this (Reverence to Ganesh' !)⁴⁶
And at that instant comprehend
(The past and future tenses vanish)
What Fichte comprehends. Division, 415
Thought, wisdom, drop away. I see
The absolute identity
Of the beholder and the vision.

Some poetry.

There is a lake * amid the snows
Wherein five glaciers merge and break. 420
Oh ! the deep brilliance of the lake !
The roar of ice that cracks and goes
Crashing within the water ! Glows
The pale pure water, shakes and slides
The glittering sun through emerald tides, 425
So that faint ripples of young light
Laugh on the green. Is there a night

* This simile for the mind and its impressions, which must be stilled before the sun of the soul can be reflected, is common in Hindu literature. The five glaciers are, of course, the senses.

So still and cold, a frost so chill,
That all the glaciers be still ?
Yet in its peace no frost.

430

Arise !

Over the mountains steady stand,
O sun of glory, in the skies
Alone, above, unmoving ! Brand
Thy sigil, thy resistless might,
The abundant imminence of light !
Ah !

435

O in the silence, in the dark,
In the intangible, unperfumed,
Ingust abyss, abide and mark
The mind's magnificence assumed
In the soul's splendour ! Here is peace ;
Here earnest of assured release.
Here is the formless all-pervading
Spirit of the World, rising, fading
Into a glory subtler still.
Here the intense abode of Will
Closes its gates, and in the hall
Is solemn sleep of festival.
Peace ! Peace ! Silence of peace !
O visionless abode ! Cease ! Cease !
Through the dark veil press on ! The veil
Is rent asunder, the stars pale,
The suns vanish, the moon drops,
The chorus of the spirit stops,
But one note swells. Mightiest souls
Of bard and music maker, rolls
Over your loftiest crowns the wheel
Of that abiding bliss. Life flees
Down corridors of centuries
Pillar by pillar, and is lost.
Life after life in wild appeal
Cries to the master ; he remains
And thinks not.

440

445

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465

The polluting tides
Of sense roll shoreward. Arid plains
Of wave-swept sea confront me. Nay !
Looms yet the glory through the grey,
And in the darkest hours of youth
I yet perceive the essential truth,

470

Known as I know my consciousness,
That all division's hosts confess
A master, for I know and see
The absolute identity
Of the beholder and the vision.

475

Fact replacing
folklore, the
Christian snig-
gers. Let him
beware,

How easy to excite derision
In the man's mind ! Why, fool, I think
I am as clever as yourself,
At least as skilled to wake the elf
Of jest and mockery in a wink.
I can dismiss with sneers as cheap
As yours this fabric of my own,
One banner of my mind o'erthrown
Just at my will. How true and deep
Is Carroll ⁴⁷ when his Alice cries :
" It's nothing but a pack of cards !"
There's the true refuge of the wise ;
To overthrow the temple guards,
Deny reality.

480

485

For I speak
subtly.

And now
(I'll quote you Scripture anyhow)
What did the Sage mean when he wrote
(I am the Devil when I quote)
" The mere terrestrial-minded man
Knows not the Things of God, nor can
Their subtle meaning understand ?"
A sage, I say, although he mentions
Perhaps the best of his inventions,
God.

490

495

Results of practice.
The poet
abandons all to
find Truth.

For, at first, this practice leads
To holy thoughts (the holy deeds
Precede success) and reverent gaze
Upon the Ancient One of Days,
Beyond which fancy lies the Truth.
To find which I have left my youth,
All I held dear, and sit alone
Still meditating, on my throne
Of Kusha-grass,⁴⁸ and count my beads,
Murmur my mantra,⁴⁹ till recedes
The world of sense and thought—I sink

500

505

510

To—what abyss's dizzy brink?
And fall! And I have ceased to think!
That is, have conquered and made still
Mind's lower powers by utter Will.

615 It may be that pure Nought will fail
Quite to assuage the needs of thought;
But—who can tell me whether Nought
Untried, will or will not avail?

Nothing. The
Apotheosis of
Realism and
Idealism alike.

620 Aum! Let us meditate aright⁶⁰
On that adorable One Light,
Divine Savitri! So may She
Illume our minds! So mote it be!

Gayatri.

I find some folks think me (for one)
So great a fool that I disclaim
625 Indeed Jehovah's hate for shame
That man to-day should not be weaned
Of worshipping so foul a fiend
In presence of the living Sun,
And yet replace him oiled and cleaned
630 By the Egyptian Pantheon,
The same thing by another name.
Thus when of late Egyptian Gods
Evoked ecstatic periods
In verse of mine, you thought I praised
635 Or worshipped them—I stand amazed.
I merely wished to chant in verse
Some aspects of the Universe,
Summed up these subtle forces finely,
And sang of them (I think divinely)
640 In name and form: a fault perhaps—
Reviewers are such funny chaps!
I think that ordinary folk,
Though, understood the things I spoke.
For Gods, and devils too, I find
645 Are merely modes of my own mind!
The poet needs enthusiasm!
Verse-making is a sort of spasm,
Degeneration of the mind,
And things of that unpleasant kind.

Is "The Soul
of Osiris" a
Hymn Book?
How verse is
written.
Prayer.

So to the laws all bards obey 550
 I bend, and seek in my own way
 By false things to expound the real.
 But never think I shall appeal
 To Gods. What folly can compare
 With such stupidity as prayer? 555

Marvellous answer to prayer.
 Prayer and averages.

Some years ago I thought to try
 Prayer ⁵¹—test its efficacy.
 I fished by a Norwegian lake.
 "O God," I prayed, "for Jesus' sake
 Grant thy poor servant all his wish ! 560
 For every prayer produce a fish !"
 Nine times the prayer went up the spout,
 And eight times—what a thumping trout !
 (This is the only true fish-story
 I ever heard—give God the glory !) 565
 The thing seems cruel now, of course.
 Still, it's a grand case of God's force !
 But, modern Christians, do you dare
 With common prudence to compare
 The efficacy of prayer? 570
 Who will affirm of Christian sages
 That prayer can alter averages ?
 The individual case allows
 Some chance to operate, and thus
 Destroys its value quite for us. 575
 So that is why I knit my brows
 And think—and find no thing to say
 Or do, so foolish as to pray.
 "So much for this absurd affair ⁵²
 About " validity of prayer. 580
 But back ! Let once again address
 Our minds to super-consciousness !

Are the results of meditation
 due to auto-hypnosis ?

You weary me with proof enough
 That all this meditation stuff
 Is self-hypnosis. Be it so ! 585
 Do you suppose I did not know ?
 Still, to be accurate, I fear
 The symptoms are entirely strange.
 If I were hard, I'd make it clear
 That criticism must arrange 590

An explanation different
 For this particular event.
 Though surely I may find it queer
 That you should talk of self-hypnosis,
 595 When your own faith so very close is
 To similar experience ;
 Lies, in a word, beneath suspicion
 To ordinary common sense
 And logic's emery attrition.
 600 I take, however, as before
 Your own opinions, and demand
 Some test by which to understand
 Huxley's piano-talk,* and find
 If my hypnosis may not score
 605 A point against the normal mind.
 (As you are pleased to term it, though !
 I gather that you do not know ;
 Merely infer it.)

Here's a test !
 610 What in your whole life is the best
 Of all your memories ? They say
 You paint—I think you should one day
 Take me to see your Studio—
 Tell me, when all your work goes right,
 615 Painted to match some inner light,
 What of the outer world you know !
 Surely, your best work always finds
 Itself sole object of the mind's.
 In vain you ply the brush, distracted
 620 By something you have heard or acted.
 Expect some tedious visitor—
 Your eye runs furtive to the door ;
 Your hand refuses to obey ;
 You throw the useless brush away.
 625 I think I hear the Word you say !

A test. The artist's concentration on his work.

I practice then, with conscious power
 Watching my mind, each thought controlling,
 Hurling to nothingness, while rolling
 The thunders after lightning's flower,

Yogi but a more vigorous artist. Indignation of poet suppressed by Yogi and philosopher alike.

* See his remarks upon the Rational piano, and the conclusions to which the evidence of its senses would lead it.

	Destroying passion, feeling, thought, The very practice you have sought Unconscious, when you work the best. I carry on one step firm-pressed Further than you the path, and you For all my trouble, comment : " True ! " Auto-hypnosis. Very quaint ! " ⁵³ No one supposes me a Saint— ⁵⁴ Some Saints to wrath would be inclined With such a provocation pecked ! But I remember and reflect That anger makes a person blind, And my own " Chittam " I'd neglect. Besides, it's you, and you, I find, Are but a mode of my own mind.	630 635 640
Objectivity of universe not discussed.	But then you argue, and with sense ; " I have this worthy evidence That things are real, since I cease The painter's ecstasy of peace, And find them all unchanged." To-day I cannot brush that doubt away ; It leads to tedious argument Uncertain, in the best event : Unless, indeed, I should invoke The fourth dimension, clear the smoke Psychology still leaves. This question Needs a more adequate digestion. Yet I may answer that the universe Of meditation suffers less From time's insufferable stress Than that of matter. On, thou puny verse ! Weak tide of rhyme ! Another argument Will block the railway train of blague you meant To run me over with. This world Or that ? We'll keep the question furled.	645 650 655 660
Preferability of concentration- state to the normal.	But, surely, (let me corner you !) <i>You wish the painter-mood were true !</i> To leave the hateful world, and see Perish the whole Academy ; So you remain for ever sated, On your own picture concentrated !	665 670

But as for me I have a test
 Of better than the very best.
Respice finem! Judge the end ;
 The man, and not the child, my friend !
 675 First ecstasy of Pentecost,
 (You now perceive my sermon's text.)
 First leap to Sunward flings you vexed
 By glory of its own riposte
 Back to your mind. But gathering strength
 680 And nerve, you come (ah light !) at length
 To dwell awhile in the caress
 Of that strange super-consciousness.
 After one memory—O abide !
 Vivid Savitri lightning-eyed !—
 685 Nothing is worth a thought beside.
 One hint of Amrita⁵⁵ to taste
 And all earth's wine may run to waste !
 For by this very means Christ gained⁵⁶
 His glimpse into that world above
 690 Which he denominated "Love."
 Indeed I think the man attained
 By some such means—I have not strained
 Out mind by chance of sense or sex
 To find a way less iron-brained
 695 Determining direction x .⁵⁷
 I know not if these Hindu methods
 Be best ('tis no such life and death odds,
 Since suffering souls to save or damn
 Never existed). So I fall
 700 Confessing : Well, perchance I am
 Myself a Christian after all !

 So far at least. I must concede
 Christ did attain in every deed ;
 Yet, being an illiterate man,
 705 Not his to balance or to scan,
 To call God stupid or unjust !
 He took the universe on trust ;
 He reconciled the world below
 With that above ; rolled eloquence
 710 Steel-tired⁵⁸ o'er reason's "why?" and "whence?"
 Discarded all proportion just,
 And thundered in our ears "I know,"
 And bellowed in our brains "ye must."

Fifty years of
 Europe worth
 a cycle of
 Cathay.
 Method of
 Christ. The
 poet a Chris-
 tian.

With reserva-
 tions. Deus in
 machinâ. Pon-
 tius Pilate as a
 Surrey Magis-
 trate.

Mystic meaning of Pentecost.	Such reservations—and I class Myself a Christian : let us pass Back to the text whose thread we lost, And see what means this "Pentecost."	715
Super-consciousness is the gift of the Holy Ghost.	This, then, is what I deem occurred (According to our Saviour's word) That all the Saints at Pentecost Received the gift—the Holy Ghost ; Such gift implying, as I guess, This very super-consciousness. ⁵⁹ Miracles follow as a dower ; But ah ! they used that fatal power And lost the Spirit in the act. This may be fancy or a fact ; At least it squares with super-sense Or "spiritual experience."	720 725
Poet not a materialist. Mohammed's ideas.	You do not well to swell the list Of horrid things to me imputed By calling me "materialist." At least this thought is better suited To Western minds than is embalmed Among the doctrines of Mohammed, The dogma parthenogenetic * As told me by a fat ascetic. He said : "Your worthy friends may lack you late, But learn how Mary was immaculate !" I sat in vague expectant bliss.	730 735 740
Verbatim report of Moslem account of the Annunciation.	The story as it runs is this : (I quote my Eastern friend ⁶⁰ verbatim !) <i>The Virgin, going to the bath, Found a young fellow in her path, And turned, prepared to scold and rate him ! "How dare you be on me encroaching ?" The beautiful young gentleman, With perfect courtesy approaching, Bowed deeply, and at once began : "Fear nothing, Mary ! All is well ! I am the angel Gabriel." She bared her right breast ; (query why ?) The angel Gabriel let fly</i>	 745 750

* Concerning conception of a virgin.

Out of a silver Tube a Dart
Shooting God's Spirit to her heart—⁶¹
 This beats the orthodox Dove-Suitor !
 What explanation could be cuter
 Than—Gabriel with a pea-shooter?

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In such a conflict I stand neuter.
 But oh ! mistake not gold for pewter !
 The plain fact is : materialise
 What spiritual fact you choose,
 And all such turn to folly—lose
 The subtle splendour, and the wise
 Love and dear bliss of truth. Beware
 Lest your lewd laughter set a snare
 For any ! Thus and only thus
 Will I admit a difference
 'Twixt spirit and the things of sense.
 What is the quarrel between us ?
 Why do our thoughts so idly clatter ?
 I do not care one jot for matter,
 One jot for spirit, while you say
 One is pure ether, one pure clay.

Degradation of
 symbols. Es-
 sential identity
 of all forms of
 existence.

I've talked too long : you're very good—
 I only hope you've understood !
 Remember that "conversion" lurks
 Nowhere behind my words and works.
 Go home and think ! my talk refined
 To the sheer needs of your own mind.
 You cannot bring God in the compass
 Of human thought ? Up stick and thump ass !
 Let human thought itself expand —
 Bright Sun of Knowledge, in me rise !
 Lead me to those exalted skies
 To live and love and understand !
 Paying no price, accepting nought—
 The Giver and the Gift are one
 With the Receiver—O thou Sun
 Of thought, of bliss transcending thought,
 Rise where division dies ! Absorb
 In glory of the glowing orb
 Self and its shadow !

Practical ad-
 vice.

Christian
mystics not
true Christians.
What think ye
of Crowley?
His interlo-
cutor dis-
missed, not
with a jest, but
with a warning.

Now who dares
Call me no Christian? And, who cares? 795
Read; you will find the Master of Balliol,
Discarding Berkeley, Locke, and Paley, 'll
Resume such thoughts and label clear
"My Christianity lies here!"
With such religion who finds fault? 800
Stay, it seems foolish to exalt
Religion to such heights as these;
Refine the actual agonies
To nothings, lest the mystic jeer
"So logic bends its line severe 805
Back to my involuted curve!"
These are my thoughts. I shall not swerve.
Take them, and see what dooms deserve
Their rugged grandeur—heaven or hell?
Mind the dark doorway there! ⁶² Farewell! 810

Poet yawns.

How tedious I always find
That special manner of my mind!

Aum!

Aum! let us meditate aright
On that adorable One Light,
Divine Savitri! So may She 815
Illume our minds! So mote it be!

NOTES TO ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST

"Blind Chesterton is sure to err,
And scan my work in vain;
I am my own interpreter,
And I will make it plain."

NOTE TO INTRODUCTION

¹ WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

AN APPRECIATION.

BY ALEISTER CROWLEY.*

It is a lamentable circumstance that so many colossal brains (W. H. Mallock, &c.) have been hitherto thrown away in attacking what is after all a problem of mere academic interest, the authorship of the plays our fathers accepted as those of Shakespeare. To me it seems of immediate and vital importance to do for Shakespeare what Verrall has done so ably for Euripides. The third tabernacle must be filled; Shaw and "the Human" must have their Superhuman companion. (This is not a scale: pithecanthropoid innuendo is to be deprecated.)

Till now—as I write the sun bursts forth suddenly from a cloud, as if heralding the literary somersault of the twentieth century—we have been content to accept Shakespeare as orthodox, with common sense; moral to a fault, with certain Rabelaisian leanings: a healthy tone (we say) pervades his work. Never believe it! The sex problem is his Speciality; a morbid decadence (so-called) is hidden in 'th' heart o' 'th' rose. In other words, the divine William is the morning star to Ibsen's dawn, and Bernard Shaw's effulgence.

The superficial, the cynical, the misanthropic will demand proof of such a statement. Let it be our contemptuous indulgence to afford them what they ask.

May I premise that, mentally obsessed, monomaniac indeed, as we must now consider Shakespeare to have been on these points, he was yet artful enough to have concealed his

* The lamented decease of the above gentleman forbids all hope (save through the courtesy of Sir Oliver Lodge) of the appearance of the companion article.—A. C.

advanced views—an imperative necessity, if we consider the political situation, and the virginal mask under which Queen Bess hid the grotesque and hideous features of a Messaline. Clearly so, since but for this concealment even our Shakespearian scholars would have discovered so patent a fact. In some plays, too, of course, the poet deals with less dangerous topics. These are truly conventional, no doubt; we may pass them by; they are foreign to our purpose; but we will take that stupendous example of literary subterfuge—*King Lear*.

Let me digress to the history of my own conversion.

Syllogistically,—All great men (*e.g.* Shaw) are agnostics and subverters of morals. Shakespeare was a great man. Therefore Shakespeare was an agnostic and a subverter of morals.

A priori this is then certain. But—

Who killed Rousseau?

I, said Huxley

(Like Robinson Crusoe),

With arguments true,—so

I killed Rousseau!

Beware of *à priori*! Let us find our facts, guided in the search by *à priori* methods, no doubt; but the result will this time justify us.

Where would a man naturally hide his greatest treasure? In his most perfect treasure-house.

Where shall we look for the truest thought of a great poet? In his greatest poem.

What is Shakespeare's greatest play? *King Lear*.

In *King Lear*, then, we may expect the final statement of the poet's mind. The passage that first put me on the track of the amazing discovery for which the world has to thank me is to be found in Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 132-149:—

"This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty

of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under *ursa major*; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. 'Sfoot! I should have been that I am had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing."

If there is one sound philosophical dictum in the play, it is this. (I am not going to argue with astrologers in the twentieth century.)

It is one we can test. On questions of morality and religion opinions veer; but if Shakespeare was a leader of thought, he saw through the humbug of the star-gazers; if not, he was a credulous fool; not the one man of his time, not a "debauched genius" (for Sir R. Burton in this phrase has in a sense anticipated my discovery) but a mere Elizabethan.

This the greatest poet of all time? Then we must believe that Gloucester was right, and that eclipses caused the fall of Lear! Observe that before this Shakespeare has had a sly dig or two at magic. In *King John*, "My lord, they say five moons were seen to-night"—but there is no eyewitness. So in *Macbeth*. In a host of spiritual suggestion there is always the rational sober explanation alongside to discredit the folly of the supernatural.

Shakespeare is like his own Touchstone; he uses his folly as a stalking-horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

Here, however, the mask is thrown off for any but the utterly besotted; Edmund's speech stands up in the face of all time as truth; it challenges the acclamation of the centuries.

Edmund is then the hero; more, he is Shakespeare's own portrait of himself; his ways are dark—and, alas! his tricks are vain!—for why? For the fear of the conventional world about him.

He is illegitimate: Shakespeare is no true child of that age, but born in defiance of it and its prejudices.

Having taken this important step, let us slew round the rest of the play to fit it. If it fits, the law of probability comes to our aid; every coincidence multiplies the chance of our correctness in ever increasing proportion. We shall see—and you may look up your Proctor—that if the stars are placed just so by chance not law, then also it may be possible that Shakespeare was the wool-combing, knock-kneed, camel-backed, church-going, plaster-

of-Paris, stick-in-the-mud our scholars have always made him.

Edmund being the hero, Regan and Goneril must be the heroines. So nearly equal are their virtues and beauties that our poet cannot make up his mind which shall possess him—besides which, he wishes to drive home his arguments in favour of polygamy.

But the great theme of the play is of course filial duty; on this everything will turn. Here is a test:

Whenever this question is discussed, let us see who speaks the language of sense, and who that of draggle-tailed emotionalism and tepid melodrama.

In the first scene the heroines, who do not care for the old fool their father—as how could any sane women? Remember Shakespeare is here about to show the folly of filial love as such—feel compelled, by an act of gracious generosity to a man they despise, yet pity, to say what they think will please the dotard's vanity. Also no doubt the sound commercial instinct was touched by Lear's promise to make acres vary as words, and they determined to make a final effort to get some pawns buttered after all.

Shakespeare (it is our English boast) was no long-haired squiggle self-yclept bard; but a business man—see Bishop Blougram's appreciation of him as such.

Shall we suppose him to have deliberately blackguarded in another his own best qualities?

Note, too, the simple honesty of the divine sisters! Others, more subtle, would have suspected a trap, arguing that such idiocy as Lear's could not be genuine—Cordelia, the Madame Humbert of the play, does so; her over-cleverness leaves her stranded: yet by a certain slimmness of dissimulation, the oiliness of frankness, the pride that apes humility, she does catch the best king going. Yet it avails her little. She is hanged like the foul Vivien she is.*

Cordelia's farewell to her sisters shows up the characters of the three in strong relief. Cordelia—without a scrap of evidence to go on—accuses her sisters of hypocrisy and cruelty. (This could not have previously existed, or Lear would not have been deceived.)

Regan gravely rebukes her; recommends, as it were, a course of Six Easy Lessons in Mind-

* I use the word Vivien provisionally, pending the appearance of an essay to prove that Lord Tennyson was in secret an ardent reformer of our lax modern morals. No doubt, there is room for this. Vivien was perfectly right about the "cycle of strumpets and scoundrels whom Mr. Tennyson has set revolving round the figure of his central wittol," and she was the only one with the courage to say so, and the brains to strip off the barbarous glitter from an idiotic and phantom chivalry.

ing Her Own Business; and surely it was unparalleled insolence on the part of a dismissed girl to lecture her more favoured sister on the very point for which she herself was at that moment being punished. It is the spite of baffled dissimulation against triumphant honesty. Goneril adds a word of positive advice. "You," she says in effect, "who prate of duty thus, see you show it to him unto whom you owe it."

That this advice is wasted is clear from Act V. Sc. iii., where the King of France takes the first trivial opportunity* to be free of the vile creature he had so foolishly married.

Cordelia goes, and the sisters talk together. Theirs is the language of quiet sorrow for an old man's failing mind; yet a most righteous determination not to allow the happiness of the English people to depend upon his whims. Bad women would have rejoiced in the banishment of Kent, whom they already knew to be their enemy; these truly good women regret it. "Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment" (Act I. Sc. i. ll. 304-5).

In Scene ii. Edmund is shown; he feels himself a man, more than Edgar: a clear-headed, brave, honourable man; but with no maggots. The injustice of his situation strikes him; he determines not to submit.†

This is the attitude of a strong man, and a righteous one. Primogeniture is wrong enough; the other shame, no fault of his, would make the blood of any free man boil.

Gloucester enters, and exhibits himself as a prize fool by shouting in disjointed phrases what everybody knew. Great news it is, of course, and on discovering Edmund, he can think of nothing more sensible than to ask for more! "Kent banished thus! And France in choler parted! And the king gone to-night! subscribed his power! Confin'd to exhibition! All this done upon the gad! Edmund, how now! what news?" (Act I. Sc. ii. ll. 23-26).

Edmund "forces a card" by the simple device of a prodigious hurry to hide it. Gloucester gives vent to his astrological futilities, and falls to anxiety in its crudest form,—"We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves" (Sc. ii. ll. 125-127).

Edmund, once rid of him, gives us the

plainest sense we are likely to hear for the rest of our lives; then, with the prettiest humour in the world takes the cue of his father's absurdity, and actually plays it on his enemy. Edgar's leg is not so easily pulled—"How long have you been a sectary astronomical?" ll. 169, 170)—and the bastard hero, taking alarm, gets right down to business.

In Scene iii. we find Lear's senile dementia taking the peculiarly loathsome forms familiar to alienists—this part of my subject is so unpleasant that I must skim over it; I only mention it to show how anxious Shakespeare is to show his hidden meaning, otherwise his naturally delicate mind would have avoided the depiction of such phenomena.

All this prepares us for Scene iv., in which we get a glimpse of the way Lear's attendants habitually behave. Oswald, who treats Lear throughout with perfect respect, and only shows honest independence in refusing to obey a man who is not his master, is insulted in language worthier of a bargee than a king; and when he remonstrates in dignified and temperate language is set upon by the ruffianly Kent.

Are decent English people to complain when Goneril insists that this sort of thing shall not occur in a royal house? She does so, in language nobly indignant, yet restrained: Lear, in the hideous, impotent rage of senility, calls her—his own daughter—a bastard (no insult to her, but to himself or his wife, mark ye well!). Albany enters—a simple, orderly-minded man; he must not be confused with Cornwall; he is at the last Lear's dog; yet even he in decent measured speech sides with his wife. Is Lear quieted? No! He utters the most horrible curse, not excepting that of Count Cenci, that a father ever pronounced. Incoherent threats succeed to the boilings-over of the hideous malice of a beastly mind; but a hundred knights are a hundred knights, and a threat is a threat. Goneril had not fulfilled her duty to herself, to her people, had she allowed this monster of mania to go on.

I appeal to the medical profession; if one doctor will answer me that a man using Lear's language should be allowed control of a hundred armed ruffians [in the face of Kent's behaviour we know what weight to attach to Lear's defence: "Detested kite! thou liest" (I. iv. l. 286)], should ever be allowed outside a regularly appointed madhouse, I will cede the point, and retire myself into an asylum.

In fact, Lear is going mad; the tottering intellect, at no time strong ("Tis the infirmity of age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself," I. i. ll. 296-7), is utterly cast down by drink and debauchery: he even sees it himself, and with a pointless bestiality from the Fool, fit companion for the—king—and in that word

* He leaves her in charge of Marshal Le Fer, whom alone he could trust to be impervious to her wiles, he being devoted to another: for, as an invaluable contemporary MS. has it "Seccotine colle même Le Fer."

† This may be, but I think should not be, used as an argument to prove the poet an illegitimate son of Queen Elizabeth.

we see all the concentrated loathing of the true Shakespeare for a despotism, massed in one lurid flame, phantasmagoric horror, the grim First Act rolls down.

II.

Act II. Sc. i. adds little new to our thesis, save that in line 80 we see Gloucester (ignorant of his own son's handwriting!) accept the forged letter as genuine, as final proof, with not even the intervention of a Bertillon to excuse so palpable a folly, so egregious a crime. What father of to-day would disinherit, would hunt down to death, a beloved son, on such evidence? Or are we to take it that the eclipse gave proof unshakable of a phenomenon so portentous?

In Scene ii. we have another taste of Kent's gentlemanly demeanour; let our conventionalist interpreters defend this unwarrantable bullying if they dare! Another might be so gross, so cowardly; but not our greatest poet! A good portion of this play, as will be shown later, is devoted to a bitter assault upon the essentially English notion that the pugilist is the supreme device of the Creator for furthering human happiness. (See "Cashel Byron's Profession" for a similar, though more logical and better-worded, attack.) Coarse and violent language continues to disgrace Lear's follower; only Gloucester, the unconscionable ass and villain of Scene i., has a word to say in his defence.

In Scene iii. we have a taste of Edgar's quality. Had this despicable youth the consciousness of innocence, or even common courage, he had surely stood to his trial. Not he! He plays the coward's part—and his disguise is not even decent.

In Scene iv. we are shown the heroic sisters in their painful task of restraining, always with the utmost gentleness of word and demeanour, the headstrong passions of the miserable king. Lear, at first quiet in stating his fancied wrongs "Reg. 'I am glad to see your highness.' Lear. 'Regan, I think you are; I know what reason I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad, I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb, Sepulchring an adulteress. (To Kent.) O! are you free? Some other time for that. Beloved Regan, Thy sister's taught: O Regan! she hath tied Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here: (Points to his heart.) I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe with how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!' Reg. 'I pray you, sir, take patience. I have hope'" (ll. 130-139), an excusable speech, at the first hint that he is not to have it all his own way, falls a-cursing again like the veriest drab or scullion Hamlet ever heard.

Here is a man, deprived on just cause of

half a useless company of retainers. Is this wrong (even were it a wrong) such as to justify the horrible curses of ll. 164-168, "All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall on her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones, You taking airs, with lameness! You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames Into her scornful eyes!" With this he makes his age contemptible by the drivell-paths of ll. 156-158, "Dear daughter, I confess that I am old; Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg (Kneeling) That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food," begging what none ever thought to deny him.

Yet such is the patience of Goneril that even when goaded by all this infamous Billingsgate into speech, her rebuke is the temperate and modest ll. 198-200. "Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended? All's not offence that indiscretion finds And dotage terms so." If we ask a parallel for such meekness under insult, calumny, and foul abuse, we must seek it not in a human story, but a divine.

The heroines see that no half measures will do, and Lear is stripped of all the murderous retinue—what scum they are is shown by the fact that not one of them draws sword for him, or even follows him into the storm—to which his bad heart clings; yet for him—for him in spite of all his loathsomeness, his hatred, his revengefulness—is Regan's gentle and loving,

"For his particular, I'll receive him gladly."

III.

In Act III. we have another illustration of the morality that passed current with the Tudors, and which only a Shakespeare had the courage to attack. Kent does not stick at treachery—he makes one gulp of treason—straining at the gnat of discipline, he swallows the camel of civil war.

It was then, and is even now, the practice of some—for example, the émigrés of the French Revolution—to invite foreign invasion as a means of securing domestic reaction. The blackguardism implied is beyond language: Shakespeare was perhaps thinking of the proposal, in Mary's reign, to react to Romanism by the aid of Spanish troops. But he will go further than this, will our greatest poet; it were ill that the life of even one child should atone for mere indignity or discomfort to another, were he the greatest in the realm. To-day we all agree; we smile or sneer if any one should differ.

"King Lear got caught in the rain—let us go and kill a million men!" is an argument not much understood of Radical Clubs, and even Jingos would pause, did they but take the precaution of indulging in a mild aperient before recording their opinions.

In Scenes iii., vi., and vii., Edmund, disgusted beyond all measure with Gloucester's infamies, honourably and patriotically denounces him.

The other scenes depict the miseries which follow the foolish and the unjust; and Nemesis falls upon the ill-minded Gloucester. Yet Shakespeare is so appreciative of the virtue of compassion (for Shakespeare was, as I shall hope to prove one day, a Buddhist) that Cornwall, the somewhat cruel instrument of eternal justice, is killed by his servant. Regan avenges her husband promptly, and I have little doubt that this act of excessive courtesy towards a man she did not love is the moral cause of her unhappy end.

I would note that we should not attempt to draw any opinions as to the author's design from the conversation of the vulgar; even had we not Coriolanus to show us what he thought.

IV.

Act IV. develops the plot and is little germane to our matter, save that we catch a glimpse of the unspeakably vile Cordelia, with no pity for her father's serious condition (though no doubt he deserved all he got, he was now harmless, and should have inspired compassion), hanging to him in the hope that he would now reverse his banishment and make her (after a bloody victory) sole heiress of great England.

And were any doubt left in our minds as to who really was the hero of the play, the partizanship of France should settle it. Shakespeare has never any word but ridicule for the French; never aught but praise of England and love for her: are we to suppose that in his best play he is to stultify all his other work and insult the English for the benefit of the ridiculed and hated Frenchman?

Moreover, Cordelia reckons without her host. The British bulldogs make short work of the invaders and rebels, doubtless with the connivance of the King of France, who, with great and praiseworthy acuteness, foresees that Cordelia will be hanged, thus liberating him from his "most filthy bargain": there is but one alarm, and the whole set of scoundrels surrender. Note this well; it is not by brute force that the battle is won; for even if we exonerate the King of France, we may easily believe that the moral strength of the sisters cowed the French.

This is the more evident, since in Act V. Shakespeare strikes his final blow at the absurdity of the duel, when Edmund is dishonestly slain by the beast Edgar. Yet the poet's faith is still strong: wound up as his muse is to tragedy, he retains in Edmund the sublime heroism, the simple honesty, of the

true Christian; at the death of his beloved mistresses he cries,

"I was contracted to them both: all three
Now marry in an instant—"

At the moment of death his great nature (self-accusatory, as the finest so often are) asserts itself, and he forgives even the vilest of the human race,—*"I pant for life: some good I mean to do Despite of mine own nature."* Quickly send, Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia. Nay, send in time" (ll. 245-249).

And in that last supreme hour of agony he claims Regan as his wife, as if by accident; it is not the passionate assertion of a thing doubtful, but the natural reference to a thing well known and indisputable.

And in the moment of his despair; confronted with the dead bodies of the splendid sisters, the catafalque of all his hopes, he can exclaim in spiritual triumph over material disaster—the victory of a true man's spirit over Fate—

"Yet Edmund was beloved."

Edgar is left alive with Albany, alone of all that crew; and if remorse could touch their brutal and callous souls (for the degeneration of the weakling, well-meaning Albany, is a minor tragedy), what hell could be more horrible than the dragging out of a cancerous existence in the bestial world of hate their hideous hearts had made, now, even for better men, for ever dark and gloomy, robbed of the glory of the glowing Goneril, the royal Regan, and only partially redeemed by the absence of the harlot Cordelia and the monster Lear.

V.

It may possibly be objected by the censorious, by the effete parasites of a grim conventionalism, that I have proved too much. Even by conventional standards Edmund, Goneril, and Regan appear angels. Even on the moral point, the sisters, instead of settling down to an enlightened and by no means overcrowded polygamy, prefer to employ poison. This is perhaps true, of Goneril at least; Regan is, if one may distinguish between star and star, somewhat the finer character.

This criticism is perhaps true in part; but I will not insult the intelligence of my readers. I will leave it to them to take the obvious step and work backwards to the re-exaltation of Lear, Cordelia, Edgar and company, to the heroic fields of their putty Elysium (putty, not

¹ This may merely mean "despite the fact that I am dying—though I am almost too weak to speak." If so, the one phrase in the play which seems to refute our theory is disposed of. Execution of such criminals would be a matter of routine at the period of the play.

Putney) in their newly-demonstrated capacity as "unnatural" sons, daughters, fathers, and so on.

But I leave it. I am content—my work will have been well done—if this trifling essay be accepted as a just instalment towards a saner criticism of our holiest writers, a juster appreciation of the glories of our greatest poet, a

possibly jejune yet assuredly historic attempt to place for the first time William Shakespeare on his proper pedestal as an early disciple of Mr. George Bernard Shaw; and by consequence to carve myself a little niche in the same temple: the smallest contributions will be thankfully received.

NOTES TO ASCENSION DAY

1. *I flung out of chapel*.¹—Browning, *Xmas Eve*, III. last line.

2. *Venus' Bower and Osiris' Tomb*.²—Crowley, *Tannhauser*.

3. *God*.³—Hebrew אלהים, Gen. iii. 5.

4. *gods*.⁴—Hebrew אלהים, Gen. iii. 5.

The Revisers, seeing this most awkward juxtaposition, have gone yet one step lower and translated both words by "God." In other passages, however, they have been compelled to disclose their own dishonesty and translate אלהים by "gods."

For evidence of this the reader may look up such passages as Ex. xviii. 11; Deut. xxxii. 17; Ps. lxxxii. [in particular, where the word occurs twice, as also the word אלהים]. But the revisers twice employ the word "God" and once the word "gods." The A.V. has "mighty" in one case; Gen. xx. 13, where again the verb is plural; Sam. xxviii. 13, and so on.

See the Hebrew Dictionary of Gesenius (trans. Tregelles), Bagster, 1859, s.v., for proof that the Author is on the way to the true interpretation of these conflicting facts, as now established—see Huxley, H. Spencer, Kuenen, Reuss, Lippert, and others—and his orthodox translator's infuriated snarls (in brackets) when he suspects this tendency to accept facts as facts.

6. *Soul went down*.⁵—*The Questions of King Milinda*, 40–45, 48, 67, 86–89, III, 132.

7. *The metaphysical lotus-eyed*.⁶—Gautama Buddha.

10. *Childe Roland*.⁷—Browning, *Dramatic Romances*.

11. *Two hundred thousand Trees*.⁸—Browning wrote about 200,000 lines.

13. *Your Reverence*.⁹—The imaginary Aunt Sally for the poetic cocoon.^{*}

16. "God's right use of it."¹⁰—"And many an eel, though no adept in God's right reason for it, kept gnawing his kidneys half a year."—Shelley, *Peter Bell the Third*.

17. *One tree*.¹¹—Note the altered value of

the metaphor, such elasticity having led Prof. Blümengarten to surmise them to be india-rubber trees.

27. "Truth, that's the gold."¹²—*Two Poets of Croisic*, clii. 1, and elsewhere.

28. "I, you, or Simpkin."¹³—*Inn Album*, 1. 143. "Simpkin" has nothing to do with the foaming grape of Eastern France.

36. *Aischulos*.¹⁴—See Agamemnon (Browning's translation), Preface.

40. *Aristobulus*.¹⁵—May be scanned elsewhere by pedants. Cf. Swinburne's curious scansion: *Arístophānēs*. But the scansion adopted here gives a more creditable rhyme.

42. *Βατραχονομαχία*.¹⁶—Aristophanes *Batrachoi*.

46. *Mine of so many pounds—pouch even pence of it*?¹⁷—This line was suggested to me by a large holder of Westralians.

47. *Something easier*.¹⁸—*Christmas Eve and Easter Day*.

51. *Newton*.¹⁹—Mathematician and physicist of repute.

51. *Faraday*.²⁰—See Dictionary of National Biography.

64. *I, of the Moderns, have alone Greek*.²¹—As far as they would let me. I know some.

74. *Beard*.²²—"150. A Barba Senioris Sanctissimi pendet omnis ornatus omnium: & influenza; nam omnia appellantur ab illa barba, Influentia.

"151. Hic est ornatus omnium ornatuum: Influentie superiores & inferiores omnes respiciunt istam Influentiam.

"152. Ab ista influenza dependet vita omnium.

"153. Ab hac influenza dependent coeli & terra; pluviae beneplaciti; & alimenta omnium.

"154. Ab hac influenza venit providentia omnium. Ab hac influenza dependent omnes exercitus superiores & inferiores.

"155. Tredecim fontes olei magnificentiae boni, dependent a barba hujus influentiae gloriose; & omnes emanant in Microprosopum.

"156. Ne dicas omnes; sed novem ex iis inveniuntur ad infectenda judicia.

"157. Et quando hæc influenza æqualiter pendet usque ad præcordia omnes Sanctitates Sanctitatum Sanctitatis ab illa dependent.

* Crowley confuses two common pastoral amusements—throwing wooden balls at cocoanuts and sticks at Aunt Sally.

"158. In istam influentiam extenditur expansio aporrhoeæ supernæ, quæ est caput omnium capitum : quod non cognoscitur nec perficitur, quodque non norunt nec superi, nec inferi : propterea omnia ab ista influentia dependent.

"159. In hanc barbam tria capita de quibus diximus, expandantur, & omnia consociantur in hac influentia, & inveniuntur in ea.

"160. Et propterea omnis ornatus ornatuum ab ista influentia dependent.

"161. Istæ literæ, quæ dependent ab hoc Seniore, omnes pendent in ista barba, & consociantur in ista influentia.

"162. Et pendent in ea ad stabiliendas literas alteras.

"163. Nisi enim illæ literæ ascenderent in Seniore, reliquæ istæ literæ non stabilirentur.

"164. Et propterea dicit Moses cum opus esset : Tetragrammaton, Tetragrammaton bis : & ita ut accentus distinguat utrumque.

"165. Certe enim ab influentia omnia dependent.

"166. Ab ista influentia ad reverentiam adiunguntur superna & inferna, & flectuntur coram ea.

"167. Beatus ille, qui ad hanc usque per tingit.

Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor. Sectio VI.

"496. *Forehead.*²³—Frons Cranii est frons ad visitandum : (Al. ad eradicandum) peccatoras.

"497. Et cum ista frons detegitur tunc excitantur Domini Iudiciorum, contra illos qui non erubescunt in operibus suis.

"498. Hæc frons ruborem habet roseum. Sed illo tempore, cum frons Senioris erga hanc frontem detegitur, hæc apparet alba ut nix.

"499. Et illa hora vocatur Tempus beneplaciti pro omnibus.

"500. In libro Dissertationis Scholæ Raf Jebha Senis dicitur : Frons est receptaculum frontis Senioris. Sin minus, litera Cheth inter duas reliquas interponitur, juxta illud : (Num. xxiv. 17) וְיִכְרֹם וְיִכְרֹם et confringet angulos Moab.

"501. Et alibi diximus, quod etiam vocetur נִצָּן, literis vicinis permutatis : id est, superatio.

"502. Multæ autem sunt Superationes : ita ut Superatio alia elevata sit in locum alium : & aliæ dentur Superationes quæ extenduntur in totum corpus.

"503. Die Sabbathi autem tempore precum pomeridianarum, ne excitentur judicia, detegitur frons Senioris Sanctissimi.

"504. Et omnia judicia subiguntur ; & quamvis extent, tamen non exercentur. (Al. et sedantur.)

"505. Ab hac fronte dependent viginti quatuor tribunalia, pro omnibus illis, qui servi sunt in operibus.

"506. Sicut scriptum est : (Ps. lxxiii. 11.) Et dixerunt : quomodo sit Deus ? Et estne scientia in excelso ?

"507. At vero viginti saltem sunt. cur adduntur quatuor ? nimirum respectu suppliciorum, tribunalium inferiorum, quæ a supernis dependent.

"508. Remanent ergo viginti. Et propterea neminem supplicio capitali afficiunt, donec compleverit & ascenderit ad viginti annos ; respectu viginti horum tribunalium.

"509. Sed in thesi nostra arcana docuimus, per ista respici viginti quatuor libros qui continentur in Lege.

Idra Suta, seu Synodus minor. Sectio XIII
77. *Chains.*²⁴—Sakkâha-ditthi, Vīṭikikkhā, silabbata-parāmāsa, kâma, patigha, rūparāga, arūparāga, māno, uddhakkā, avigga.

81. "Who asks doth err."²⁵—Arnold, *Light of Asia*.

83. *You.*²⁶—You !

86. "O'erleaps itself and falls on the other."²⁷—*Macbeth*, I. vii. 27.

92. *English.*²⁸—This poem is written in English.

94. *I cannot write.*²⁹—This is not quite true. For instance :

༩། ལམ་སོང་རིང་མོ་དང་ལྷང་པོ་

ལྷང་མོ་སོང་

ལྷ་མ་སོང་ལྷོང་པོ་དང་ལྷང་

པོ་དང་སོང་

ཡི་མ་ནི་ལག་སྒྲིང་ཅིག་ཅིག་

ཐང་དེ་ཅིས་

ཐེང་པ་ཡིན་པོ་ཐུག་པ་དྲ་

ཅ་ཀྱལ་||

This, the opening stanza of my masterly poem on Ladak, reads :—"The way was long, and the wind was cold : the Lama was infirm and advanced in years ; his prayer-wheel, to revolve which was his only pleasure, was carried by a disciple, an orphan."

There is a reminiscence of some previous incarnation about this : European critics may possibly even identify the passage. But at least the Tibetans should be pleased.*

* They were ; thence the pacific character of the British expedition of 1904.—A. C.

97. *While their Buddha I attack.*—Many Buddhists think I fill the bill with the following remarks on—

PANSIL.³⁰

Unwilling as I am to sap the foundations of the Buddhist religion by the introduction of Porphyry's terrible catapult, Allegory, I am yet compelled by the more fearful ballista of Aristotle, Dilemma. This is the two-handed engine spoken of by the prophet Milton!*

This is the horn of the prophet Zeruiah, and with this am I, though no Syrian, utterly pushed, till I find myself back against the dead wall of Dogma. Only now realising how dead a wall that is, do I turn and try the effect of a hair of the dog that bit me, till the orthodox "literary"† school of Buddhists, as grown at Rangoon, exclaim with Lear: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is To have an intellect!" How is this? Listen, and hear!

I find myself confronted with the crux: that, a Buddhist, convinced intellectually and philosophically of the truth of the teaching of Gotama; a man to whom Buddhism is the equivalent of scientific methods of Thought; an expert in dialectic, whose logical faculty is bewildered, whose critical admiration is extorted by the subtle vigour of Buddhist reasoning; I am yet forced to admit that, this being so, the Five Precepts‡ are mere nonsense. If the Buddha spoke scientifically, not popularly, not rhetorically, then his precepts are not his. We must reject them or we must interpret them. We must inquire: Are they meant to be obeyed? Or—and this is my theory—are they sarcastic and biting criticisms on existence, illustrations of the First Noble Truth; *reasons*, as it were, for the apotheosis of annihilation? I shall show that this is so. Let me consider them "precept upon precept," if the introduction of the Hebrew visionary is not too strong meat for the Little Mary§ of a Buddhist audience.

* *Lycidas*, line 130.

† The school whose Buddhism is derived from the Canon, and who ignore the degradation of the professors of the religion, as seen in practice.

‡ The obvious caveat which logicians will enter against these remarks is that Pansil is the Five Virtues rather than Precepts. Etymologically this is so. However, we may regard this as a clause on my side of the argument, and against it; for in my view these are virtues, and the impossibility of attaining them is the cancer of existence. Indeed, I support the etymology as against the futile bigotry of certain smile Buddhists of to-day. And, since it is the current interpretation of Buddhist thought that I attack, I but show myself the better Buddhist in the act.—A. C.

§ A catch word for the stomach, from J. M. Barrie's play "Little Mary."

THE FIRST PRECEPT.

This forbids the taking of life in any form.* What we have to note is the impossibility of performing this; if we can prove it to be so, either Buddha was a fool, or his command was rhetorical, like those of Yahweh to Job, or of Tannhäuser to himself—

"Go! seek the stars and count them and explore!
Go! sift the sands beyond a starless sea!"

Let us consider what the words can mean. The "Taking of Life" can only mean the reduction of living protoplasm to dead matter: or, in a truer and more psychological sense, the destruction of personality.

Now, in the chemical changes involved in Buddha's speaking this command, living protoplasm was changed into dead matter. Or, on the other horn, the fact (insisted upon most strongly by the Buddha himself, the central and cardinal point of his doctrine, the shrine of that Metaphysic which isolates it absolutely from all other religious metaphysic, which allies it with Agnostic Metaphysic) that the Buddha who had spoken this command was not the same as the Buddha before he had spoken it, lies the proof that the Buddha, by speaking this command, violated it. More, not only did he slay himself; he breathed in millions of living organisms and slew them. He could not eat nor drink nor breathe without murder implicit in each act. Huxley cites the "pitiless microscopist" who showed a drop of water to the Brahmin who boasted himself "Ahimsa"—harmless. So among the "rights" of a Bhikkhu is medicine. He who takes quinine does so with the deliberate intention of destroying innumerable living beings; whether this is done by stimulating the phagocytes, or directly, is morally indifferent.

How such a fiend incarnate, my dear brother Ananda Maitriya, can call him "cruel and cowardly" who only kills a tiger, is a study in the philosophy of the mote and the beam!

Far be it from me to suggest that this is a defence of breathing, eating, and drinking. By no means; in all these ways we bring suffering and death to others, as to ourselves. But since these are inevitable acts, since suicide would be a still more cruel alternative (especially in case something should subsist below mere Rupa), the command is not to achieve

* Fielding, in "The Soul of a People," has reluctantly to confess that he can find no trace of this idea in Buddha's own work, and calls the superstition the "echo of an older Faith."—A. C.

† The argument that the "animals are our brothers" is merely intended to mislead one who has never been in a Buddhist country. The average Buddhist would, of course, kill his brother for five rupees, or less.—A. C.

the impossible, the already violated in the act of commanding, but a bitter commentary on the foul evil of this aimless, hopeless universe, this compact of misery, meanness, and cruelty. Let us pass on.

THE SECOND PRECEPT.

The Second Precept is directed against theft. Theft is the appropriation to one's own use of that to which another has a right. Let us see therefore whether, or no the Buddha was a thief. The answer of course is in the affirmative. For to issue a command is to attempt to deprive another of his most precious possession—the right to do as he will; that is, unless, with the predestinarians, we hold that action is determined absolutely, in which case, of course, a command is as absurd as it is unavoidable. Excluding this folly, therefore, we may conclude that if the command be obeyed—and those of Buddha have gained a far larger share of obedience than those of any other teacher—the Enlightened One was not only a potential but an actual thief. Further, all voluntary action limits in some degree, however minute, the volition of others. If I breathe, I diminish the stock of oxygen available on the planet. In those far distant ages when Earth shall be as dead as the moon is to-day, my breathing now will have robbed some being then living of the dearest necessity of life.

That the theft is minute, incalculably trifling, is no answer to the moralist, to whom degree is not known; nor to the scientist, who sees the chain of nature miss no link.

If, on the other hand, the store of energy in the universe be indeed constant (whether infinite or no), if personality be indeed delusion, then theft becomes impossible, and to forbid it is absurd. We may argue that even so temporary theft may exist; and that this is so is to my mind no doubt the case. All theft is temporary, since even a millionaire must die; also it is universal, since even a Buddha must breathe.

THE THIRD PRECEPT.

This precept, against adultery, I shall touch but lightly. Not that I consider the subject unpleasant—far from it!—but since the English section of my readers, having unclean minds, will otherwise find a fulcrum therein for their favourite game of slander. Let it suffice if I say that the Buddha—in spite of the ridiculous membrane legend,* one of those foul follies which idiot devotees invent only too freely—was a confirmed and habitual adulterer. It

* *Membrum virile illius in membrana inclusum esse aiunt, ne copulare posset.*

would be easy to argue with Hegel-Huxley that he who thinks of an act commits it (cf. Jesus also in this connection, though he only knows the creative value of desire), and that since A and not-A are mutually limiting, therefore interdependent, therefore identical, he who forbids an act commits it; but I feel that this is no place for metaphysical hair-splitting; let us prove what we have to prove in the plainest way.

I would premise in the first place that to commit adultery in the Divorce Court sense is not here in question.

It assumes too much proprietary right of a man over a woman, that root of all abomination!—the whole machinery of inheritance, property, and all the labyrinth of law.

We may more readily suppose that the Buddha was (apparently at least) condemning incontinence.

We know that Buddha had abandoned his home; true, but Nature has to be reckoned with. Volition is no necessary condition of offence. "I didn't mean to" is a poor excuse for an officer failing to obey an order.

Enough of this—in any case a minor question; since even on the lowest moral grounds—and we, I trust, soar higher!—the error in question may be resolved into a mixture of murder, theft, and intoxication. (We consider the last under the Fifth Precept.)

THE FOURTH PRECEPT.

Here we come to what in a way is the fundamental joke of these precepts. A command is not a lie, of course; possibly cannot be; yet surely an allegorical order is one in essence, and I have no longer a shadow of a doubt that these so-called "precepts" are a species of savage practical joke.

Apart from this there can hardly be much doubt, when critical exegesis has done its damndest on the Logia of our Lord, that Buddha did at some time commit himself to some statement. "(Something called) Consciousness exists" is, said Huxley, the irreducible minimum of the pseudo-syllogism, false even for an enthymeme, "Cogito, ergo sum!" This proposition he bolsters up by stating that whoso should pretend to doubt it, would thereby but confirm it. Yet might it not be said "(Something called) Consciousness appears to itself to exist," since Consciousness is itself the only witness to that confirmation? Not that even now we can deny some kind of existence to consciousness, but that it should be a more real existence than that of a reflection is doubtful, incredible, even inconceivable. If by consciousness we mean the normal consciousness, it is definitely untrue, since the

Dhyanic consciousness includes it and denies it. No doubt "something called" acts as a kind of caveat to the would-be sceptic, though the phrase is bad, implying a "calling." But we can guess what Huxley means.

No doubt Buddha's scepticism does not openly go quite as far as mine—it must be remembered that "scepticism" is merely the indication of a possible attitude, not a belief, as so many good folk think; but Buddha not only denies "Cogito, ergo sum"; but "Cogito, ergo non sum." See *Sabbasava Sutta*, par. 10.*

At any rate Sakkyaditthi, the delusion of personality, is in the very forefront of his doctrines; and it is this delusion that is constantly and inevitably affirmed in all normal consciousness. That Dhyanic thought avoids it is doubtful; even so, Buddha is here represented as giving precepts to ordinary people. And if personality be delusion, a lie is involved in the command of one to another. In short, we all lie all the time; we are compelled to it by the nature of things themselves—paradoxical as that seems—and the Buddha knew it!

THE FIFTH PRECEPT.

At last we arrive at the end of our weary journey—surely in this weather we may have a drink! East of Suez,† Trombone-Macaulay (as I may surely say, when Browning writes Banjo-Byron‡) tells us, a man may raise a Thirst. No, shrieks the Blessed One, the Perfected One, the Enlightened One, do not drink! It is like the streets of Paris when they were placarded with rival posters—

Ne buvez pas de l'Alcool !
L'Alcool est un poison !

and

Buvez de l'Alcool !
L'Alcool est un aliment !

We know now that alcohol is a food up to a certain amount; the precept, good enough for a rough rule as it stands, will not bear close inspection. What Buddha really commands, with that grim humour of his, is: Avoid Intoxication.

But what is intoxication? unless it be the loss of power to use perfectly a truth-telling set of faculties. If I walk unsteadily it is owing to nervous lies—and so for all the phenomena of drunkenness. But a lie involves the assumption

* Quoted below, "Science and Buddhism," note.

† "Ship me somewhere East of Suez, where a man can raise a thirst."—R. KIPLING.

‡ "While as for Quilp Hop o' my Thumb there, Banjo-Byron that twangs the strum-strum there."

—BROWNING, *Pachiarotto* (said of A. Austin).

tion of some true standard, and this can nowhere be found. A doctor would tell you, moreover, that all food intoxicates: all, here as in all the universe, of every subject and in every predicate, is a matter of degree.

Our faculties never tell us true; our eyes say flat when our fingers say round; our tongue sends a set of impressions to our brain which our hearing declares non-existent—and so on.

What is this delusion of personality but a profound and centrally-seated intoxication of the consciousness? I am intoxicated as I address these words; you are drunk—beastly drunk!—as you read them; Buddha was as drunk as a British officer when he uttered his besotted command. There, my dear children, is the conclusion to which we are brought if you insist that he was serious!

I answer No! Alone among men then living, the Buddha was sober, and saw Truth. He, who was freed from the coils of the great serpent Theli coiled round the universe, he knew how deep the slaver of that snake had entered into us, infecting us, rotting our very bones with poisonous drunkenness. And so his cutting irony—drink no intoxicating drinks!

When I go to take Pansil,* it is in no spirit of servile morality; it is with keen sorrow gnawing at my heart. These five causes of sorrow are indeed the heads of the serpent of Desire. Four at least of them snap their fangs on me in and by virtue of my very act of receiving the commands, and of promising to obey them; if there is a little difficulty about the fifth, it is an omission easily rectified—and I think we should all make a point about that; there is great virtue in completeness.

Yes! Do not believe that the Buddha was a fool; that he asked men to perform the impossible or the unwise.† Do not believe that the sorrow of existence is so trivial that easy rules

* To "take Pansil" is to vow obedience to these Precepts.

† I do not propose to dilate on the moral truth which Ibsen has so long laboured to make clear: that no hard and fast rule of life can be universally applicable. Also, as in the famous case of the lady who saved (successfully) the lives of her husband, her father, and her brother, the precepts clash. To allow to die is to kill—all this is obvious to the most ordinary thinkers. These precepts are of course excellent general guides for the vulgar and ignorant, but you and I, dear reader, are wise and clever, and know better. *Nichtwar?*

Excuse my being so buried in "dear Immanuel Kant" (as my friend Miss Br. c. 1 would say) that this biting and pregnant phrase slipped out unaware. As a rule, of course, I hate the introduction of foreign tongues into an English essay.—A. C.

1 A fast woman who posed as a bluestocking.

easily interpreted (as all Buddhists do interpret the Precepts) can avail against them; do not mop up the Ganges with a duster; nor stop the revolution of the stars with a lever of lath.

Awake, awake only! let there be ever remembrance that Existence is sorrow, sorrow by the inherent necessity of the way it is made; sorrow not by volition, not by malice, not by carelessness, but by nature, by ineradicable tendency, by the incurable disease of Desire, its Creator, is it so, and the way to destroy it is by the uprooting of Desire; nor is a task so formidable accomplished by any three-penny-bit-in-the-plate-on-Sunday morality, the "deceive others and self-deception will take care of itself" uprightness, but by the severe roads of austere self-mastery, of arduous scientific research, which constitute the Noble Eightfold Path.

101-105. *There's one. . . Six Six Six.*³¹—This opinion has been recently (and most opportunely) confirmed by the Rev. Father Simons, Roman Catholic Missionary (and head of the Corner in Kashmir Stamps), Baramulla, Kashmir.

106. *Gallup.*³²—For information apply to Mr. Sidney Lee.

111. "*It is the number of a Man.*"³³—Rev. xiii. 18.

117. *Fives.*³⁴—Dukes.

122. (*Elsewhere.*)³⁵—See "Songs of the Spirit" and other works.

128. *The Qabalistic Balm.*³⁶—May be studied in "The Kabbalah (*sic*) Unveiled" (Redway). It is much to be wished that some one would undertake the preparation of an English translation of Rabbi Jischak Ben Loria's "De Revolutionibus Animarum," and of the book "Beth Elohim."

139. *Cain.*³⁷—Gen. iv. 8.

152. *Hunyadi.*³⁸—Hunyadi Janos, a Hungarian table water.

161. *Nadi.*³⁹—For this difficult subject refer to the late Swami Vivekananda's "Raja Yoga."

167. *Tom Bond Bishop.*⁴⁰—Founder of the "Children's Scripture Union" (an Association for the Dissemination of Lies among Young People) and otherwise known as a philanthropist. His relationship to the author (that of uncle) has procured him this rather disagreeable immortality.

He was, let us hope, no relation to George Archibald Bishop, the remarkable preface to whose dreadfully conventionally psychopathic works is this.

PREFACE.*

In the fevered days and nights under the Empire that perished in the struggle of 1870,

* To a collection of MSS. illustrating the "Psychopathia Sexualis" of von Kraft-Ebing. The names of the parties have been changed.

that whirling tumult of pleasure, scheming, success, and despair, the minds of men had a trying ordeal to pass through. In Zola's "La Curée" we see how such ordinary and natural characters as those of Saccard, Maxime, and the incestuous heroine, were twisted and distorted from their normal sanity, and sent whirling into the jaws of a hell far more affraying than the mere cheap and nasty brimstone Sheol which is a Shibboleth for the dissenter, and with which all classes of religious humbug, from the Pope to the Salvation ranter, from the Mormon and the Jesuit to that mongrel mixture of the worst features of both, the Plymouth Brother, have scared their illiterate, since hypocrisy was born, with Abel, and spiritual tyranny, with Jehovah! Society, in the long run, is eminently sane and practical; under the Second Empire it ran mad. If these things are done in the green tree of Society, what shall be done in the dry tree of Bohemianism? Art always has a suspicion to fight against; always some poor mad Max Nordau is handy to call everything outside the kitchen the asylum. Here, however, there is a substratum of truth. Consider the intolerable long roll of names, all tainted with glorious madness. Baudelaire the diabolist, debauchee of sadism, whose dreams are nightmares, and whose waking hours delirium; Rollinat the necrophile, the poet of phthisis, the anxiomaniac; Péladan, the high priest—of nonsense; Mendès, frivolous and scoffing sensualist; besides a host of others, most alike in this, that, below the cloak of madness and depravity, the true heart of genius burns. No more terrible period than this is to be found in literature; so many great minds, of which hardly one comes to fruition; such seeds of genius, such a harvest of—whirlwind! Even a barren waste of sea is less saddening than one strewn with wreckage.

In England such wild song found few followers of any worth or melody. Swinburne stands on his solitary pedestal above the vulgar crowds of priapistic plagiarists; he alone caught the fierce frenzy of Baudelaire's brandied shrieks, and his First Series of Poems and Ballads was the legitimate echo of that not fiercer note. But English Art as a whole was unmoved, at any rate not stirred to any depth, by this wave of debauchery. The great thinkers maintained the even keel, and the windy waters lay not for their frailer barks to cross. There is one exception of note, till this day unsuspected, in the person of George Archibald Bishop. In a corner of Paris this young poet (for in his nature the flower of poesy did spring, did even take root and give some promise of a brighter bloom, till stricken and blasted in latter years by the lightning of his own sins) was steadily writing day after day, night after

night, often working forty hours at a time, work which he destined to entrance the world. All England should ring with his praises; by-and-by the whole world should know his name. Of these works none of the longer and more ambitious remains. How they were lost, and how those fragments we possess were saved, is best told by relating the romantic and almost incredible story of his life.

The known facts of this life are few, vague, and unsatisfactory; the more definite statements lack corroboration, and almost the only source at the disposal of the biographer is the letters of Mathilde Doriac to M^{me}. J. S., who has kindly placed her portfolio at my service. A letter dated October 15, 1866, indicates that our author was born on the 23rd of that month. The father and mother of George were, at least on the surface, of an extraordinary religious turn of mind. Mathilde's version of the story, which has its source in our friend himself, agrees almost word for word with a letter of the Rev. Edw. Turlé to Mrs. Cope, recommending the child to her care. The substance of the story is as follows.

The parents of George carried their religious ideas to the point of never consummating their marriage! * This arrangement does not seem to have been greatly appreciated by the wife; at least one fine morning she was found to be enceinte. The foolish father never thought of the hypothesis which commends itself most readily to a man of the world, not to say a man of science, and adopted that of a second Messiah! He took the utmost pains to conceal the birth of the child, treated everybody who came to the house as an emissary of Herod, and finally made up his mind to flee into Egypt! Like most religious maniacs, he never had an idea of his own, but distorted the beautiful and edifying events of the Bible into insane and ridiculous ones, which he proceeded to plagiarise.

On the voyage out the virgin mother became enamoured, as was her wont, of the nearest male, in this case a fellow-traveller. He, being well able to support her in the luxury which she desired, easily persuaded her to leave the boat with him by stealth. A small sailing vessel conveyed them to Malta, where they disappeared. The only trace left in the books of earth records that this fascinating character was accused, four years later, in Vienna, of poisoning her paramour, but thanks to the wealth and influence of her newer lover, she escaped.

The legal father, left by himself with a squalling child to amuse, to appease in his tantrums,

* Will it be believed that a clergyman (turned Plymouth Brother and schoolmaster) actually made an identical confession to a boy of ten years old?

and to bring up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, was not a little perplexed by the sudden disappearance of his wife. At first he supposed that she had been translated, but, finding that she had not left the traditional mantle behind her, he abandoned this supposition in favour of quite a different, and indeed a more plausible one. He now believed her to be the scarlet woman in the Apocalypse, with variations. On arrival in Egypt he hired an old native nurse, and sailed for Odessa. Once in Russia he could find Gog and Magog, and present to them the child as Antichrist. For he was now persuaded that he himself was the First Beast, and would ask the sceptic to count his seven heads and ten horns. The heads, however, rarely totted up accurately!

At this point the accounts of Mr. Turlé and Mathilde diverge slightly. The cleric affirms that he was induced by a Tartar lady, of an honourable and ancient profession, to accompany her to Tibet "to be initiated into the mysteries." He was, of course, robbed and murdered with due punctuality, in the town of Kiev. Mathilde's story is that he travelled to Kiev on the original quest, and died of typhoid or cholera. In any case, he died at Kiev in 1839. This fixes the date of the child's birth at 1837. His faithful nurse conveyed him safely to England, where his relatives provided for his maintenance and education.

With the close of this romantic chapter in his early history we lose all reliable traces for some years. One flash alone illumines the darkness of his boyhood; in 1853, after being prepared for confirmation, he cried out in full assembly, instead of kneeling to receive the blessing of the officiating bishop, "I renounce for ever this idolatrous church;" and was quietly removed.

He told Mathilde Doriac that he had been to Eton and Cambridge—neither institution, however, preserves any record of such admission. The imagination of George, indeed, is tremendously fertile with regard to events in his own life. His own story is that he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1856, and was sent down two years later for an article which he had contributed to some University or College Magazine. No confirmation of any sort is to be found anywhere with regard to these or any other statements of our author. There is, however, no doubt that in 1861 he quarrelled with his family; went over to Paris, where he settled down, at first, like every tufthead, somewhere in the Quartier Latin; later, with Mathilde Doriac, the noble woman who became his mistress and held to him through all the terrible tragedy of his moral, mental, and physical life, in the Rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière. At his house there the frightful scene

of '68 took place, and it was there too that he was apprehended after the murders which he describes so faithfully in "Abysmos." He had just finished this poem with a shriek of triumph, and had read it through to the appalled Mathilde "avec des yeux de flamme et de gestes incohérents," when, foaming at the mouth, and "hurlant de blasphèmes indicibles," he fell upon her with extraordinary violence of passion; the door opened, officers appeared, the arrest was effected. He was committed to an asylum, for there could be no longer any doubt of his complete insanity; for three weeks he had been raving with absinthe and satyriasis. He survived his confinement no long time; the burning of the asylum with its inmates was one of the most terrible events of the war of 1870. So died one of the most talented Englishmen of his century, a man who for wide knowledge of men and things was truly to be envied, yet one who sold his birthright for a mess of beastlier pottage than ever Esau guzzled, who sold soul and body to Satan for sheer love of sin, whose mere lust of perversion is so intense that it seems to absorb every other emotion and interest. Never since God woke light from chaos has such a tragedy been unrolled before men, step after step toward the lake of Fire!

At his house all his writings were seized, and, it is believed, destroyed. The single most fortunate exception is that of a superbly jewelled writing-case, now in the possession of the present editor, in which were found the MSS. which are here published. Mathilde, who knew how he treasured its contents, preserved it by saying to the officer, "But, sir, that is mine." On opening this it was found to contain, besides these MSS., his literary will. All MSS. were to be published thirty years after his death, not before. He would gain no spurious popularity as a reflection of the age he lived in. "Tennyson," he says, "will die before sixty years are gone by: if I am to be beloved of men, it shall be because my work is for all times and all men, because it is greater than all the gods of chance and change, because it has the heart of the human race beating in every line." This is a patch of magenta to mauve, undoubtedly; but —! The present collection of verses will hardly be popular; if the lost works turn up, of course it may be that there may be found "shelter for songs that recede." Still, even here, one is, on the whole, more attracted than repelled; the author has enormous power, and he never scruples to use it, to drive us half mad with horror, or, as in his earlier most exquisite works, to move us to the noblest thoughts and deeds. True, his debt to contemporary writers is a little obvious here and there; but these

are small blemishes on a series of poems whose originality is always striking, and often dreadful, in its broader features.

We cannot leave George Bishop without a word of inquiry as to what became of the heroic figure of Mathilde Doriac. It is a bitter task to have to write in cold blood the dreadful truth about her death. She had the misfortune to contract, in the last few days of her life with him, the same terrible disease which he describes in the last poem of his collection. This shock, coming so soon after, and, as it were, as an unholy perpetual reminder of the madness and sequestration of her lover, no less than of his infidelity, unbinged her mind, and she shot herself on July 5, 1869. Her last letter to Madame J—— S—— is one of the tenderest and most pathetic ever written. She seems to have been really loved by George, in his wild, infidel fashion: "All Night" and "Victory," among others, are obviously inspired by her beauty; and her devotion to him, the abasement of soul, the prostitution of body, she underwent for and with him, is one of the noblest stories life has known. She seems to have dived with him, yet ever trying to raise his soul from the quagmire; if God is just at all, she shall stand more near to His right hand than the vaunted virgins who would soil no hem of vesture to save their brother from the worm that dieth not!

The Works of George Archibald Bishop will speak for themselves; it would be both impertinent and superfluous in me to point out in detail their many and varied excellences, or their obvious faults. The *raison d'être*, though, of their publication, is worthy of especial notice. I refer to their psychological sequence, which agrees with their chronological order. His life-history, as well as his literary remains, gives us an idea of the progression of diabolism as it really is; not as it is painted. Note also, (1) the increase of selfishness in pleasure, (2) the diminution of his sensibility to physical charms. Pure and sane is his early work; then he is carried into the outer current of the great vortex of Sin, and whirls lazily through the sleepy waters of mere sensualism; the pace quickens, he grows fierce in the mysteries of Sapphism and the cult of Venus Aversa with women; later of the same forms of vice with men, all mingled with wild talk of religious dogma and a general exaltation of Priapism at the expense, in particular, of Christianity, in which religion, however, he is undoubtedly a believer till the last (the pious will quote James ii. 19, and the infidel will observe that he died in an asylum); then the full swing of the tide catches him, the mysteries of death become more and more an obsession, and he is flung headlong into Sadism, Necrophilia,

all the maddest, fiercest vices that the mind of fiends ever brought up from the pit. But always to the very end his power is unexhausted, immense, terrible. His delirium does not amuse; it appals! A man who could conceive as he did must himself have had some glorious chord in his heart vibrating to the eternal principle of Boundless Love. That this love was wrecked is for me, in some sort a relative of his, a real and bitter sorrow. He might have been so great! He missed Heaven! Think kindly of him!

169. *Correctly rhymes.*⁴¹—Such lines, however noble in sentiment, as: "A bas les Anglais! The Irish up!" will not be admitted to the competition. Irish is accented on the penultimate—bad cess to the bloody Saxons that made it so!

The same with Tarshish (see Browning, *Pippa Passes*, II., in the long speech of Bluphocks) and many others.

173. *The liar Copleston.*⁴²—Bishop of Cal-

* Copies were sent to any living persons mentioned in the "Sword of Song," accompanied by the following letter:

Letters and Telegrams: BOLESKINE FOYERS is sufficient address.

Bills, Writs, Summonses, etc.: CAMP XI., THE BALTORO GLACIER, BALTISTAN.

O Millionaire!	My lord Marquis,
Mr. Editor!	My lord Viscount,
Dear Mrs. Eddy,	My lord Earl,
Your Holiness the Pope!	My lord,
Your Imperial Majesty!	My lord Bishop,
Your Majesty!	Reverend sir,
Your Royal Highness!	Sir,
Dear Miss Corelli,	Fellow,
Your Serene Highness!	Dog!
My lord Cardinal,	Mr. Congressman,
My lord Archbishop,	Mr. Senator,
My lord Duke,	Mr. President,

(or the feminine of any of these), as shown by underlining it,

Courtesy demands, in view of the

(a) tribute to your genius

(b) attack on your (1) political

(2) moral

(3) social

(4) mental

(5) physical character

(c) homage to your grandeur

(d) reference to your conduct

(e) appeal to your better feelings

on page—of my masterpiece, "The Sword of Song," that I should send you a copy, as I do herewith, to give you an opportunity of defending yourself against my monstrous assertions, thanking me for the advertisement, or—in short, replying as may best seem to you to suit the case.

Your humble, obedient servant,

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

cutta. While holding the see of Ceylon he wrote a book in which "Buddhism" is described as consisting of "devil-dances." Now, when a man, in a position to know the facts, writes a book of the subscription-cadging type, whose value for this purpose depends on the suppression of these facts, I think I am to be commended for my moderation in using the term "liar."

212.—*Ibsen.*⁴³—Norwegian dramatist. This and the next sentence have nineteen distinct meanings. As, however, all (with one doubtful exception) are true, and taken together synthetically connote my concept, I have let the passage stand.

219. *I was Lord Roberts, he De Wet.*⁴⁴—*Vide* Sir A. Conan Doyle's masterly fiction, "The Great Boer War."

222. *Hill.*⁴⁵—An archaic phrase signifying kopje.

223. *Ditch.*⁴⁶—Probably an obsolete slang term for spruit.

273. *Some.*⁴⁷—The reader may search modern periodicals for this theory.

282. *The Tmolian.*⁴⁸—Tmolus, who decided the musical contest between Pan and Apollo in favour of the latter.

321. *As masters teach.*⁴⁹—Consult Vivekananda, *op. cit.*, or the *Hathayoga Pradipika*. Unfortunately, I am unable to say where (or even whether) a copy of this latter work exists.

331, 332. *Stand.*—(*Stephen*) or *sit* (*Paul*).⁵⁰ Acts vii. 36; Heb. xii. 2.

337. *Samadhi-Dak.*⁵¹—"Ecstasy-of-meditation mail."

338. *Maha-Meru.*⁵²—The "mystic mountain" of the Hindus. See Southey's *Curse of Kehama*.

339. *Gaurisankar.*⁵³—Called also Chomokankar, Devadhunga, and Everest.

341. *Chogo.*⁵⁴—The Giant. This is the native name of "K2"; or Mount Godwin-Austen, as Col. Godwin-Austen would call it. It is the second highest known mountain in the world, as Devadhunga is the first.

356. *The history of the West.*⁵⁵—

De Acosta (José) Natural and Moral History of the Indies.

Alison, Sir A. . . History of Scotland.

Benzoni . . . History of the New World.

Buckle . . . History of Civilisation.

Burton, J. H. . . History of Scotland.

Carlyle . . . History of Frederick the Great.

Carlyle . . . Oliver Cromwell.

Carlyle . . . Past and Present.

Cheruel, A. . . Dictionnaire historique de la France.

Christian, P. . . Histoire de la Magie

- Clarendon, Ld. History of the Great Re-
bellion.
- De Comines, P. Chronicle.
- Edwards, Bryan. History of the British Colo-
nies in the W. Indies.
- Elton, C. . . . Origins of English History.
- Erdmann. . . . History of Philosophy. Vol.
II.
- Froude. . . . History of England.
- Fyffe, C. A. . . History of Modern Europe.
- Gardiner, S. R. . History of the Civil War in
England.
- Gibbon. . . . Decline and Fall of the
Roman Empire.
- Green, J. R. . . . A History of the English
People.
- Guizot. . . . Histoire de la Civilisation.
- Hallam, H. . . . State of Europe in the
Middle Ages.
- Hugo, V. . . . Napoléon le Petit.
- Innes, Prof. C. . Scotland in the Middle Ages.
- Kingscote. . . History of the War in the
Crimea.
- Levi, E. . . . Histoire de la Magie.
- Macaulay, Ld. History of England.
- McCarthy, J. . A History of our Own Times.
- Maistre, Jos. . Œuvres.
- Michalet. . . Histoire des Templiers.
- Migne, Abbé . Œuvres.
- Montalembert . The Monks of the West.
- Morley, J. . . Life of Mr. Gladstone.
- Motley. . . . History of the Dutch Re-
public.
- Napier. . . . History of the Peninsular
War.
- Prescott. . . . History of the Conquest of
Mexico.
- Prescott. . . . History of the Conquest of
Peru.
- Renan. . . . Vie de Jésus.
- Robertson, E. W. Historical Essays.
- Rosebery, Ld. Napoleon.
- Shakespeare. . Histories.
- Society for the
Propagation
of Religious
Truth. . . . Transactions, Vols. I.-
DCLXVI.
- Stevenson, R. L. A Footnote to History.
- Thornton, Ethel-
red, Rev. . . . History of the Jesuits.
- Waite, A. E. . . The Real History of the
Rosicrucians.
- Wolseley, Ld. . Marlborough.
366. *Shot his Chandra*.⁵⁶—Anglicé, shot the
moon.
380. *The subtle devilish omission*.⁵⁷—But what
are we to say of Christian dialecticians who
quote "All things work together for good"
out of its context, and call this verse "Chris-
tian optimism?" See Caird's "Hegel."
Hegel knew how to defend himself, though.
As Goethe wrote of him:
"They thought the master too
Inclined to fuss and finick.
The students' anger grew
To frenzy Paganinic.*
They vowed to make him rue
His work in Jena's clinic.
They came, the unholy crew,
The mystic and the cynic:
He had scoffed at God's battue,
The flood for mortal's sin—Ic-
thyosaurian Waterloo!
They eyed the sage askew;
They searched him through and through
With violet rays actinic.
They asked him 'Wer bist du?'
He answered slowly 'Bin ich?'"
387. *The Fish*.⁵⁸—Because of *ixθyus*, which
means Fish, And very aptly symbolises Christ.
—*Ring and Book* (The Pope), ll. 89, 90.
395. *Dharma*.⁵⁹—Consult the Tripitaka.
409. *I cannot trace the chain*.⁶⁰—"How vain,
indeed, are human calculations!"—*The Auto-
biography of a Flea*, p. 136.
112. *Table-thing*.⁶¹—"Ere the stuff grow a
ring-thing right to wear."—*The King and the
Book*, i. 17.
- "This pbbble-thing, o' the boy-thing."
—CALVERLEY, *The Cock and the Bull*.
442. *Caird*.⁶²—See his "Hegel."
446. *Says Huxley*.⁶³—See "Ethics and Evolu-
tion."
459. *Igdrasil*.⁶⁴—The Otz Chiim of the
Scandinavians.
467. *Ladies' League*.⁶⁵—Mrs. J. S. Crowley
says: "The Ladies' League Was Formed For
The Promotion And Defence Of The Reformed
Faith Of The Church Of England." (The
capitals are hers.) I think we may accept this
statement. She probably knows, and has no
obvious reasons for misleading.
487. *Sattva*.⁶⁶—The Buddhists, denying an
Atman or Soul (an idea of changeless, eternal,
knowledge, being, and bliss) represent the
fictitious Ego of a man (or a dog) as a tem-
porary agglomeration of particles. Reincar-
nation only knocks off, as it were, some of the
corners of the mass, so that for several births
the Ego is constant within limits; hence the
possibility of the "magical memory." The
"Sattva" is this agglomeration. See my

The above works and many others of less
importance were carefully consulted by the
Author before passing these lines for the press.
Their substantial accuracy is further guaran-
teed by the Professors of History at Cambridge,
Oxford, Berlin, Harvard, Paris, Moscow, and
London.

* Paganini, a famous violinist.

"Science and Buddhism," *infra*, for a full discussion of this point.

518. *And*.⁶⁷—Note the correct stress upon this word. Previously, Mr. W. S. Gilbert has done this in his superb lines:

"Except the plot of freehold land
That held the cot, and Mary, and—"

But his demonstration is vitiated by the bad iambic "and Ma-"; unless indeed the juxtaposition is intentional, as exposing the sophistries of our official prosodists.

548. *The heathen*.⁶⁸—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

580. *Satan and Judas*.⁶⁹—At the moment of passing the final proofs I am informed that the character of Judas has been rehabilitated by Mr. Stead (and rightly: is Mr. Abington * paid with a rope?) and the defence of Satan undertaken by a young society lady authoress—a Miss Corelli—who represents him as an Angel of Light, *i.e.*, one who has been introduced to the Prince of Wales.

But surely there is some one who is the object of universal reprobation amongst Christians! Permit me to offer myself as a candidate. Sink, I beseech you, these sectarian differences, and combine to declare me at least Anathema Maranatha.

602. *Pangs of Death*.⁷⁰—Dr. Maudsley demands a panegyric upon death. It is true that evolution may bring us a moral sense of astonishing delicacy and beauty. But we are not there yet. A talented but debauched Irishman has composed the following, which I can deplore, but not refute, for this type of man is probably more prone to reproduce his species than any other. He called it "Summa Spes."

I.

Existence being sorrow,
The cause of it desire,
A merry tune I borrow
To light upon the lyre;
If death destroy me quite,
Then, I cannot lament it;
I've lived, kept life alight,
And—damned if I repent it!

Let me die in a ditch,
Damnably drunk,
Or lipping a punk,
Or in bed with a bitch!
I was ever a hog;
Muck? I am one with it!
Let me die like a dog;
Die, and be done with it!

* Famous Adelphi villain.

II.

As far as reason goes,
There's hope for mortals yet:
When nothing is that knows,
What is there to regret?
Our consciousness depends
On matter in the brain;
When that rots out, and ends,
There ends the hour of pain.

III.

If we can trust to this,
Why, dance and drink and revel!
Great scarlet mouths to kiss,
And sorrow to the devil!
If pangs ataxic creep,
Or gout, or stone, annoy us,
Queen Morphia, grant thy sleep!
Let worms, the dears, enjoy us!

IV.

But since a chance remains
That "I" survives the body
(So talk the men whose brains
Are made of smut and shoddy),
I'll stop it if I can.
(Ah Jesus, if Thou couldest!)
I'll go to Martaban
To make myself a Buddhist.

V.

And yet: the bigger chance
Lies with annihilation.
Follow the lead of France,
Freedom's enlightened nation!
Off! sacerdotal stealth
Of faith and fraud and gnosis!
Come, drink me: Here's thy health,
Arterio-sclerosis!*

Let me die in a ditch,
Damnably drunk,
Or lipping a punk,
Or in bed with a bitch!
I was ever a hog;
Muck? I am one with it!
Let me die like a dog;
Die, and be done with it!

616. *A lizard*.⁷¹—A short account of the genesis of these poems seems not out of place here. The design of an elaborate parody on

* The hardening of the arteries, which is the predisposing cause of senile decay; thus taken as the one positive assurance of death.

Browning to be called "Ascension Day and Pentecost" was conceived (and resolved upon) on Friday, November 15, 1901. On that day I left Ceylon, where I had been for several months, practising Hindu meditations, and exposing the dishonesty of the Missionaries, in the intervals of big game shooting. The following day I wrote "Ascension Day," and "Pentecost" on the Sunday, sitting outside the dak-bangla at Madura. These original drafts were small as compared to the present poems.

Ascension Day consisted of:—

- p. 144, I flung . . .
- p. 146, Pray do . . .
- p. 147, "But why . . .
- p. 149, Here's just . . .
- p. 151, I will . . .
- to p. 160, . . . but in Hell! . . .
- p. 161, You see . . .
- to end.

Pentecost consisted of:—

- p. 164, To-day . . .
- p. 168, How very hard . . .
- to p. 170, "Proceed!" . . .
- p. 171, My wandering thoughts . . .
- to p. 172, All-wickedness . . .
- p. 172, Nor lull my soul . . .
- to p. 174, . . . and the vision.
- p. 176, How easy . . .
- to end.

"Berashith" was written at Delhi, March 20 and 21, 1902. Its original title was "Crowley-mas Day." It was issued privately in Paris in January 1903. It and "Science and Buddhism" are added to complete the logical sequence from 1898 till now. All, however, has been repeatedly revised. Wherever there seemed a lacuna in the argument an insertion was made, till all appeared a perfect chrysolite. Most of this was done, while the weary hours of the summer (save the mark!) of 1902 rolled over Camp Misery and Camp Despair on the Chogo Ri Glacier, in those rare intervals when one's preoccupation with lice, tinned food, malaria, insatiable water, general soreness, mental misery, and the everlasting snowstorm gave place to a momentary glimmer of any higher form of intelligence than that ever necessarily concentrated on the actual business of camp life. The rest, and the final revision, occupied a good deal of my time during the winter of 1902-1903. The MS. was accepted by the S. P. R. T. in May of this year, and after a post-final revision, rendered necessary by my Irish descent, went to press.

618. *Each life bound ever to the wheel.*⁷²—Cf. Whately, "Revelation of a Future State."

652. *This, that, the other atheist's death.*⁷³—Their stories are usually untrue; but let us follow our plan, and grant them all they ask.

709. *A cannibal.*⁷⁴—This word is inept, as it predicates humanity of Christian-hate-Christian.

J'accuse the English language: *anthropophagous* must always remain a comic word.

731. *The Flaming Star.*⁷⁵—Or Pentagram, mystically referred to Jeheshua.

732. *Zohar.*⁷⁶—"Splendour," the three Central Books of the Dogmatic Qabalah.

733. *Pigeon.*⁷⁷—Says an old writer, whom I translate roughly:

"Thou to thy Lamb and Dove devoutly bow,
But leave me, prithee, yet my Hawk and Cow:
And I approve thy Greybeard dotard's smile,
If thou wilt that of Egypt's crocodile."

746. *Lost! Lost! Lost!*⁷⁸—See *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

759. *Ain Elohim.*⁷⁹—"There is no God!" so our Bible. But this is really the most sublime affirmation of the Qabalist. "Ain is God."

For the meaning of Ain, and of this idea, see "Berashith," *infra*. The "fool" is He of the Tarot, to whom the number 0 is attached, to make the meaning patent to a child.

"I insult your idol," quoth the good missionary; "he is but of dead stone. He does not avenge himself. He does not punish me." "I insult your god," replied the Hindu; "he is invisible. He does not avenge himself, nor punish me."

"My God will punish you when you die!"

"So, when you die, will my idol punish you!"

No earnest student of religion or draw poker should fail to commit this anecdote to memory.

767. *Mr. Chesterton.*⁸⁰—I must take this opportunity to protest against the charge brought by Mr. Chesterton against the Englishmen "who write philosophical essays on the splendour of Eastern thought."

If he confines his strictures to the translators of that well-known Eastern work the "Old Testament" I am with him; any modern Biblical critic will tell him what I mean. It took a long time, too, for the missionaries (and Tommy Atkins) to discover that "Budd" was not a "great Gawd." But then they did not want to, and in any case sympathy and intelligence are not precisely the most salient qualities in either soldiers or missionaries. But nothing is more absurd than to compare men like Sir W. Jones, Sir R. Burton, Von Hammer-Purgstall, Sir E. Arnold, Prof. Max Müller, Me, Prof. Rhys Davids, Lane, and the rest of our illustrious Orientalists to the poor

and ignorant Hindus whose letters occasionally delight the readers of the *Sporting Times*, such letters being usually written by public scribes for a few pice in the native bazaar. As to "Babus" (Babu, I may mention, is the equivalent to our "Mister," and not the name of a savage tribe), Mr. Chesterton, from his Brixton Brahmalaoka, may look forth and see that the "Babu" cannot understand Western ideas; but a distinguished civil servant in the Madras Presidency, second wrangler in a very good year, assured me that he had met a native whose mathematical knowledge was superior to that of the average senior wrangler, and that he had met several others who approached that standard. His specific attack on Madame Blavatsky is equally unjust, as many natives, not theosophists, have spoken to me of her in the highest terms. "Honest Hindus" cannot be expected to think as Mr. Chesterton deems likely, as he is unfortunately himself a Western, and in the same quagmire of misapprehension as Prof. Max. Müller and the rest. Madame Blavatsky's work was to remind the Hindus of the excellence of their own shastras,* to show that some Westerns held identical ideas, and thus to countermine the dishonest representations of the missionaries. I am sufficiently well known as a bitter opponent of "Theosophy" to risk nothing in making these remarks.

I trust that the sense of public duty which inspires these strictures will not be taken as incompatible with the gratitude I owe to him for his exceedingly sympathetic and dispassionate review of my "Soul of Osiris."

I would counsel him, however, to leave alone the Brixton Chapel, and to "work up from his appreciation of the 'Soul of Osiris' to that loftier and wider work of the human imagination, the appreciation of the *Sporting Times*!"

Mr. Chesterton thinks it funny that I should call upon "Shu." Has he forgotten that the Christian God may be most suitably invoked by the name "Yah"? I should be sorry if God were to mistake his religious enthusiasms for the derisive ribaldry of the London "gamin." Similar remarks apply to "El" and other Hebrai-Christian deities.

This note is hardly intelligible without the review referred to. I therefore reprint the

portion thereof which is germane to my matter from the *Daily News*, June 18, 1901:—

To the side of a mind concerned with idle merriment (*sic*) there is certainly something a little funny in Mr. Crowley's passionate devotion to deities who bear such names as Mout and Nuit, and Ra and Shu, and Hormakhou. They do not seem to the English mind to lend themselves to pious exhilaration. Mr. Crowley says in the same poem:

The burden is too hard to bear,
I took too adamant a cross;
This sackcloth rends my soul to wear,
My self-denial is as dress.
O, Shu, that holdest up the sky,
Hold up thy servant, lest he die!

We have all possible respect for Mr. Crowley's religious symbols, and we do not object to his calling upon Shu at any hour of the night. Only it would be unreasonable of him to complain if his religious exercises were generally mistaken for an effort to drive away cats.

Moreover, the poets of Mr. Crowley's school have, among all their merits, some genuine intellectual dangers from this tendency to import religions, this free trade in gods. That all creeds are significant and all gods divine we willingly agree. But this is rather a reason for being content with our own than for attempting to steal other people's. The affectation in many modern mystics of adopting an Oriental civilisation and mode of thought must cause much harmless merriment among the actual Orientals. The notion that a turban and a few vows will make an Englishman a Hindu is quite on a par with the idea that a black hat and an Oxford degree will make a Hindu an Englishman. We wonder whether our Buddhistic philosophers have ever read a florid letter in Baboo English. We suspect that the said type of document is in reality exceedingly like the philosophic essays written by Englishmen about the splendour of Eastern thought. Sometimes European mystics deserve something worse than mere laughter at the hands (*sic*) of Orientals. If ever was one person whom honest Hindus would have been justified in tearing to pieces it was Madame Blavatsky.

That our world-worn men of art should believe for a moment that moral salvation is possible and supremely important is an unmixt benefit. But to believe for a moment that it is to be found by going to particular places or reading particular books or joining particular societies is to make for the thousandth time the mistake that is at once materialism and superstition. If Mr. Crowley and the new mystics think for one moment that an Egyptian desert is more mystic than an English meadow, that a palm tree is more peetic than a Sussex beech, that a broken temple of Osiris is more supernatural than a Baptist chapel in Brixton, then they

* Sacred Books.

are sectarians, and only sectarians of no more value to humanity than those who think that the English soil is the only soil worth defending, and the Baptist chapel the only chapel worthy of worship (*sic*). But Mr. Crowley is a strong and genuine poet, and we have little doubt that he will work up from his appreciation of the Temple of Osiris to that loftier and wider work of the human imagination, the appreciation of the Brixton chapel.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

778, 797. *The rest of life, for self-control,
For liberation of the soul.*⁸¹

Who said Rats? Thanks for your advice, Tony Veller, but it came in vain. As the ex-monk* (that shook the bookstall) wrote in confidence to the publisher:

"Existence is mis'ry.
I th' month Tisri

* Joseph McCabe, who became a Rationalist writer. The allusion is to Crowley's marriage and subsequent return to the East.

At th' fu' o' th' moon
I were shot wi' a goon.
[Goon is no Scots,
But Greek, Meester Watts.]
We're awa' tae Burma,
Whaur th' goond be firmer
Tae speer th' Mekong.
Chin Chin! Sae long.
[Long said be lang.]
She'll no care a whang.
Ye're Rautional babe,
Aundra M^eAbe."

Note the curious confusion of personality. This shows Absence of Ego, in Pali Anatta, and will seem to my poor spiritually-minded friends an excuse for a course of action they do not understand, and whose nature is beyond them.

782. *Christ ascends.*⁸²—And I tell you frankly that if he does not come back by the time I have finished reading these proofs, I shall give him up.

783. *Bell.*⁸³—The folios have "bun."

NOTES TO PENTECOST

22. *With sacred thirst.*¹—"He, soul-hydropic with a sacred thirst." A Grammarian's Funeral.

23. *Levi.*²—Ceremonial magic is not quite so silly as it sounds. Witness the following masterly elucidation of its inner quintessence:—

THE INITIATED INTERPRETATION OF CEREMONIAL MAGIC.*

It is loftily amusing to the student of magical literature who is not quite a fool—and rare is such a combination!—to note the criticism directed by the Philistine against the citadel of his science. Truly, since our childhood has ingrained into us not only literal belief in the Bible, but also substantial belief in Alf Laylah wa Laylah,[†] and only adolescence can cure us, we are only too liable, in the rush and energy of dawning manhood, to overturn roughly and rashly both these classics, to regard them both on the same level, as interesting documents from the standpoint of folk-lore and anthropology, and as nothing more.

Even when we learn that the Bible, by a

profound and minute study of the text, may be forced to yield up Qabalistic arcana of cosmic scope and importance, we are too often slow to apply a similar restorative to the companion volume, even if we are the lucky holders of Burton's veritable edition.

To me, then, it remains to raise the Alf Laylah wa Laylah into its proper place once more.

I am not concerned to deny the objective reality of all "magical" phenomena; if they are illusions, they are at least as real as many unquestioned facts of daily life; and, if we follow Herbert Spencer, they are at least evidence of some cause.*

Now, this fact is our base. What is the cause of my illusion of seeing a spirit in the triangle of Art?

Every smatterer, every expert in psychology, will answer: "That cause lies in your brain."

English children are taught (*pace* the Education Act) that the Universe lies in infinite Space; Hindu children, in the Akaśa, which is the same thing.

Those Europeans who go a little deeper learn from Fichte, that the phenomenal Universe is the creation of the Ego; Hindus, or Europeans studying under Hindu Gurus, are

* This essay forms the introduction to an edition of the "Goetia" of King Solomon.

† "A Thousand and One Nights," commonly called "Arabian Nights."

This, incidentally, is perhaps the greatest argument we possess, pushed to its extreme, against the Advaitist theories.—A. C.

told, that by Akaśa is meant the Chitakaśa. The Chitakaśa is situated in the "Third Eye," i.e., in the brain. By assuming higher dimensions of space, we can assimilate this fact to Realism; but we have no need to take so much trouble.

This being true for the ordinary Universe, that all sense-impressions are dependent on changes in the brain,* we must include illusions, which are after all sense-impressions as much as "realities" are, in the class of "phenomena dependent on brain-changes."

Magical phenomena, however, come under a special sub-class, since they are willed, and their cause is the series of "real" phenomena called the operations of ceremonial Magic.

These consist of

- (1) Sight.
The circle, square, triangle, vessels, lamps, robes, implements, etc.
- (2) Sound.
The invocations.
- (3) Smell.
The perfumes.
- (4) Taste.
The Sacraments.
- (5) Touch.
As under (1).
- (6) Mind.
The combination of all these and reflection on their significance.

These unusual impressions (1-5) produce unusual brain-changes; hence their summary (6) is of unusual kind. Its projection back into the apparently phenomenal world is therefore unusual.

Herein then consists the reality of the operations and effects of ceremonial magic,† and I conceive that the apology is ample, so far as the "effects" refer only to those phenomena which appear to the magician himself, the appearance of the spirit, his conversation, possible shocks from imprudence, and so on, even to ecstasy on the one hand, and death or madness on the other.

But can any of the effects described in this our book Goetia be obtained, and if so, can you give a rational explanation of the circumstances? Say you so?

I can, and will.

The spirits of the Goetia are portions of the human brain.

Their seals therefore represent (Mr. Spencer's

* Thought is a secretion of the brain (Weissmann). Consciousness is a function of the brain (Huxley).—A. C.

† Apart from its value in obtaining one-pointedness. On this subject consult *בְּרֵאשִׁית*, *infra*.—A. C.

projected cube) methods of stimulating or regulating those particular spots (through the eye).

The names of God are vibrations calculated to establish:

(a) General control of the brain. (Establishment of functions relative to the subtle world.)

(b) Control over the brain in detail. (Rank or type of the Spirit.)

(c) Control of one special portion. (Name of the Spirit.)

The perfumes aid this through smell. Usually the perfume will only tend to control a large area; but there is an attribution of perfumes to letters of the alphabet enabling one, by a Qabalistic formula, to spell out the Spirit's name.

I need not enter into more particular discussion of these points; the intelligent reader can easily fill in what is lacking.

If, then, I say, with Solomon:

"The Spirit Cimieries teaches logic," what I mean is:

"Those portions of my brain which subserve the logical faculty may be stimulated and developed by following out the processes called 'The Invocation of Cimieries.'"

And this is a purely materialistic rational statement; it is independent of any objective hierarchy at all. Philosophy has nothing to say; and Science can only suspend judgment, pending a proper and methodical investigation of the facts alleged.

Unfortunately, we cannot stop there. Solomon promises us that we can (1) obtain information; (2) destroy our enemies; (3) understand the voices of nature; (4) obtain treasure; (5) heal diseases, etc. I have taken these five powers at random; considerations of space forbid me to explain all.

(1) Brings up facts from sub-consciousness.

(2) Here we come to an interesting fact. It is curious to note the contrast between the noble means and the apparently vile ends of magical rituals. The latter are disguises for sublime truths. "To destroy our enemies" is to realise the illusion of duality, to excite compassion.

(Ah! Mr. Waite,* the world of Magic is a mirror, wherein who sees muck is muck.)

(3) A careful naturalist will understand much from the voices of the animals he has studied long. Even a child knows the difference of a cat's miauling and purring. The faculty may be greatly developed.

(4) Business capacity may be stimulated.

(5) Abnormal states of the body may be

* A poet of great ability. He edited a book called "Of Black Magic and of Pacts," in which he vilifies the same.

corrected, and the involved tissues brought back to tone, in obedience to currents started from the brain.

So for all other phenomena. There is no effect which is truly and necessarily miraculous.

Our Ceremonial Magic fines down, then, to a series of minute, though of course empirical, physiological experiments, and whoso will carry them through intelligently need not fear the result.

I have all the health, and treasure, and logic I need; I have no time to waste. "There is a lion in the way." For me these practices are useless; but for the benefit of others less fortunate I give them to the world, together with this explanation of, and apology for, them.

I trust that the explanation will enable many students who have hitherto, by a puerile objectivity in their view of the question, obtained no results, to succeed; that the apology may impress upon our scornful men of science that the study of the bacillus should give place to that of the baculum, the little to the great—how great one only realises when one identifies the wand with the Mahalingam,* up which Brahma flew at the rate of 84,000 yojanas a second for 84,000 mahakalpas, down which Vishnu flew at the rate of 84,000 crores of yojanas a second for 84,000 crores of mahakalpas—yet neither reached an end.

But I reach an end.

23. *The cryptic Coptic*.³—Vide the Papyrus of Bruce.

24. *ANET' AER-K*, etc.⁴—Invocation of Ra. From the Papyrus of Harris.

25. *MacGregor*.⁵—The Mage.

26. *Abramelin*.⁶—The Mage.

27. *Ancient rituals*.⁷—From the Papyrus of MRS. Harris.†

28. *Golden Dawn*.⁸—These rituals were later annexed by Madame Horos,‡ that superior Swami. The earnest seeker is liable to some pretty severe shocks. To see one's "Obligation" printed in the *Daily Mail*!!! Luckily, I have no nerves.

29. *राम राम* II etc.⁹—"Thou, as I, art God (for this is the esoteric meaning of the common Hindu salutation). A long road and a heavy price! To know is always a difficult work . . . Hullo! Bravo! Thy name (I have seen) is written in the stars. Come with me, pupil! I will give thee medicine for the mind."

* The Phallus of Shiva the Destroyer. It is really identical with the Qabalistic "Middle Pillar" of the "Tree of Life."

† An imaginary lady to whom Saïrey Gamp in Dickens' "Martin Chuzzlewit" used to appeal.

‡ Vide the daily papers of June-July 1901.

Cf. Macbeth: "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

58. बस II.¹⁰—Enough.

60. किसवासते II.¹¹—Why?

60. कय होग.¹—What will be?

61. *Strange and painful attitude*.¹³—Siddhasana.

62. *He was very rude*.¹⁴—The following is a sample:—

"O Devatas! behold this yogi! O Chela! Accursed abode of Tamas art thou! Eater of Beef, guzzling as an Herd of Swine! Sleeper of a thousand sleeps, as an Harlot heavy with Wine! Void of Will! Sensualist! Enraged Sheep! Blasphemer of the Names of Shiva and of Devi! Christian in disguise! Thou shalt be reborn in the lowest Avitchi! Fast! Walk! Wake! these are the keys of the Kingdom! Peace be with thy Beard! Aum!"

This sort of talk did me good: I hope it may do as much for you.

63. *With eyes well fixed on my proboscis*.¹⁵—See Bhagavad-Gita, Atmasamyam yog.

67. *Brahma-charya*.¹⁶—Right conduct, and in particular, chastity in the highest sense.

72. *Baccy*.¹⁷—A poisonous plant used by nicotomaniacs in their orgies and debauches. "The filthy tobacco habit," says "Elijah the Restorer" of Zion, late of Sydney and Chicago. That colossal genius-donkey, Shaw, is another of them. But see Calverley.

78. *His hat*.¹⁸—It may be objected that Western, but never Eastern, magicians turn their headgear into a cornucopia or Pandora's box. But I must submit that the Hat Question is still *sub judice*. Here's a health to Lord Ronald Gower!

86. *Swinburne*.¹⁹—

"But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit,
and live out thy life as the light,"—*Hertha*.

104. *My big beauty*.²⁰—Pink on Spot; Player, Green, in Hand. But I have "starred" since I went down in that pocket.

120. *My Balti coolies*.²¹—See my "The Higher the Fewer." *

125. *Eton*.²²—A school, noted for its breed of cads. The battle of Waterloo (1815) was won on its playing-fields.

128-30. *I've seen them*.²³—Sir J. Maundevill, "Voïage and Travill," ch. xvi., recounts a similar incident, and, Christian as he is, puts a similar poser.

135. *A—What?*²⁴—I beg your pardon. It was a slip.

146. *Tahuti*.²⁵—In Coptic, Thoth.

* Title of a (forthcoming) collection of papers on mountain exploration, etc.

even what we mean when we say so; but the limits of knowledge, slowly receding, yet never so far as to permit us to unveil the awful and impenetrable adytum of consciousness, or that of matter, must one day be suddenly widened by the forging of a new weapon.

Huxley and Tyndall have prophesied this before I was born; sometimes in vague language, once or twice clearly enough; to me it is a source of the utmost concern that their successors should not always see eye to eye with them in this respect.

Professor Ray Lankester, in crushing the unhappy theists of the recent *Times* controversy, does not hesitate to say that Science can never throw any light on certain mysteries.

Even the theist is justified in retorting that Science, if this be so, may as well be discarded; for these are problems which must ever intrude upon the human mind—upon the mind of the scientist most of all.

To dismiss them by an act of will is at once heroic and puerile: courage is as necessary to progress as any quality that we possess; and as courage is in either case required, the courage of ignorance (necessarily sterile, though wanted badly enough while our garden was choked by theological weeds) is less desirable than the courage which embarks on the always desperate philosophical problem.

Time and again, in the history of Science, a period has arrived when, gorged with facts, she has sunk into a lethargy of reflection accompanied by appalling nightmares in the shape of impossible theories. Such a nightmare now rides us; once again philosophy has said its last word, and arrived at a deadlock. Aristotle, in reducing to the fundamental contradictions-in-terms which they involve the figments of the Pythagoreans, the Eleatics, the Platonists, the Pyrrhonists; Kant, in his *reductio ad absurdum* of the Thomists, the Scotists, the Wolffians,—all the warring brood, alike only in the inability to reconcile the ultimate antinomies of a cosmogony only grosser for its pinchbeck spirituality; have, I take it, found their modern parallel in the ghastly laughter of Herbert Spencer, as fleshed upon the corpses of Berkeley and the Idealists from Fichte and Hartmann to Lotze and Trendelenburg he drives the reeking fangs of his imagination into the palpitating vitals of his own grim masterpiece of reconciliation, self-deluded and yet self-conscious of its own delusion.

History affirms that such a deadlock is invariably the prelude to a new enlightenment: by such steps we have advanced, by such we shall advance. The "horror of great darkness" which is scepticism must ever be broken by some heroic master-soul, intolerant of the cosmic agony.

We then await his dawn.

May I go one step further, and lift up my voice and prophesy? I would indicate the direction in which this darkness must break. Evolutionists will remember that nature cannot rest. Nor can society. Still less the brain of man.

"Audax omnia peripet"

Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas." *

We have destroyed the meaning of vetitum nefas and are in no fear of an imaginary cohort of ills and terrors. Having perfected one weapon, reason, and found it destructive to all falsehood, we have been (some of us) a little apt to go out to fight with no other weapon. "FitzJames's blade was sword and shield," † and that served him against the murderous bludgeon-sword of the ruffianly Highlander he happened to meet; but he would have fared ill had he called a Western Sheriff a liar, or gone off Boer-sticking on Spion Kop.

Reason has done its utmost; theory has glugged us, and the motion of the ship is a little trying; mixed metaphor—excellent in a short essay like this—is no panacea for all mental infirmities; we must seek another guide. All the facts science has so busily collected, varied as they seem to be, are in reality all of the same kind. If we are to have one salient fact, a fact for a real advance, it must be a fact of a different order.

Have we such a fact to hand? We have.

First, what do we mean by a fact of a different order? Let me take an example; the most impossible being the best for our purpose. The Spiritualists, let us suppose, go mad and begin to talk sense. (I can only imagine that such would be the result.) All their "facts" are proved. We prove a world of spirits, the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, etc. But, with all that, we are not really one step advanced into the heart of the inquiry which lies at the heart of philosophy, "What is anything?"

I see a cat.

Dr. Johnson says it is a cat.

Berkeley says it is a group of sensations.

Cankaracharya says it is an illusion, an incarnation, or God, according to the hat he has got on, and is talking through.

Spencer says it is a mode of the Unknowable.

But none of them seriously doubt the fact that I exist; that a cat exists; that one sees the other. All—bar Johnson—hint—but oh! how dimly!—at what I now know to be—*true?*—no, not necessarily true, but *nearer the truth*. Huxley goes deeper in his demolition of Descartes. With him, "I see a cat," proves "some-

* Horace, *Odes*, I. 3.

† Scott, *The Lady of the Lake*.

thing called consciousness exists." He denies the assertion of duality; he has no datum to assert the denial of duality. I have.

Consciousness, as we know it, has one essential quality: the opposition of subject and object. Reason has attacked this and secured that complete and barren victory of convincing without producing conviction.* It has one quality apparently not essential, that of exceeding impermanence. If we examine what we call steady thought, we shall find that its rate of change is in reality inconceivably swift. To consider it, to watch it, is bewildering, and to some people becomes intensely terrifying. It is as if the solid earth were suddenly swept away from under one, and there were some dread awakening in outer space amid the rush of incessant meteors—lost in the void.

All this is old knowledge; but who has taken steps to alter it? The answer is forbidding: truth compels me to say, the mystics of all lands.

Their endeavour has been to slow the rate of change; their methods perfect quietude of body and mind, produced in varied and too often vicious ways. Regularisation of the breathing is the best known formula. Their results are contemptible, we must admit; but only so because empirical. An unwarranted reverence has overlaid the watchfulness which science would have enjoined, and the result is muck and misery, the wreck of a noble study.

But what is the one fact on which all agree? The one fact whose knowledge has been since religion began the all-sufficient passport to their doubtfully-desirable company?

This: that "I see a cat" is not only an unwarrantable assumption but a lie; that the duality of consciousness ceases suddenly, once the rate of change has been sufficiently slowed down, so that, even for a few seconds, the relation of subject and object remains impregnable.

It is a circumstance of little interest to the present essayist that this annihilation of duality is associated with intense and passionless peace and delight; the fact has been a bribe to the unwary, a bait for the charlatan, a hindrance to the philosopher; let us discard it.†

* Hume, and Kant in the "Prolegomena," discuss this phenomenon unsatisfactorily.—A. C.

† It is this rapture which has ever been the bond between mystics of all shades; and the obstacle to any accurate observation of the phenomenon, its true causes, and so on. This must always be a stumbling-block to more impressionable minds; but there is no doubt as to the fact—it is a fact—and its present isolation is to be utterly deplored. May I entreat men of Science to conquer the prejudices natural to them when the justly despised ideas of mysticism are mentioned, and to attack the problem *ab initio* on the severely critical and austere arduous lines which have distinguished their labours in other fields?—A. C.

More, though the establishment of this new estate of consciousness seems to open the door to a new world, a world where the axioms of Euclid may be absurd, and the propositions of Keynes* untenable, let us not fall into the error of the mystics, by supposing that in this world is necessarily a final truth, or even a certain and definite gain of knowledge.

But that a field for research is opened up no sane man may doubt. Nor may one question that the very first fact is of a nature disruptive of difficulty philosophical and reasonable; since the phenomenon does not invoke the assent of the reasoning faculty. The arguments which reason may bring to bear against it are self-destructive; reason has given consciousness the lie, but consciousness survives and smiles. Reason is a part of consciousness and can never be greater than its whole; this Spencer sees; but reason is not even any part of this new consciousness (which I, and many others, have too rarely achieved) and therefore can never touch it: this I see, and this will I hope be patent to those ardent and spiritually-minded agnostics of whom Huxley and Tyndall are for all history-time the prototypes. Know or doubt! is the alternative of highwayman Huxley; "Believe" is not to be admitted; this is fundamental; in this agnosticism can never change; this must ever command our moral as our intellectual assent.

But I assert my strong conviction that ere long we shall have done enough of what is after all the schoolmaster work of correcting the inky and ill-spelt exercises of the theological dunces in that great class-room, the world; and found a little peace—while they play—in the intimate solitude of the laboratory and the passionless rapture of research—research into those very mysteries which our dunces have solved by rule of thumb; determining the nature of a bee by stamping on it, and shouting "bee"; while we patiently set to work with microscopes, and say nothing till we know, nor more than need be when we do.

But I am myself found guilty of this rôle of schoolmaster: I will now therefore shut the doors and retire again into the laboratory where my true life lies.

403, 405. *Reason and concentration*.⁴⁵—The results of reasoning are always assailable: those of concentration are vivid and certain, since they are directly presented to consciousness. And they are more certain than consciousness itself, since one who has experienced them may, with consciousness, doubt consciousness, but can in no state doubt them.

412. *Ganesh*.⁴⁶—The elephant-headed God, son of Shiva and Bhavani. He presides over obstacles.

* Author of a text-book on "Formal Logic."

The prosodist will note the "false quantity" of this word. But this is as it should be, for Ganesha pertains to Shiva, and with Shiva all quantity is false, since, as Parameshvara, he is without quantity or quality.

485. *Carroll*.⁴⁷—See "Alice in Wonderland," Cap. Ut.

508. *Kusha-grass*.⁴⁸—The sacred grass of the Hindus.

509. *Mantra*.⁴⁹—A sacred verse, suitable for constant repetition, with a view to quieting the thought. Any one can see how simple and effective a means this is.

519. *Gayatri*.⁵⁰—This is the translation of the most holy verse of the Hindus. The gender of Savitri has been the subject of much discussion, and I believe grammatically it is masculine. But for mystical reasons I have made it otherwise. Fool!

557. *Prayer*.⁵¹—This fish-story is literally true. The condition was that the Almighty should have the odds of an unusually long line,—the place was really a swift stream, just debouching into a lake—and of an unusual slowness of drawing in the cast.

But what does any miracle prove? If the Affaire Cana were proved to me, I should merely record the facts: Water may under certain unknown conditions become wine. It is a pity that the owner of the secret remains silent, and entirely lamentable that he should attempt to deduce from his scientific knowledge cosmic theories which have nothing whatever to do with it.

Suppose Edison, having perfected the phonograph, had said, "I alone can make dumb things speak; argal, I am God." What would the world have said if telegraphy had been exploited for miracle-mongering purposes? Are these miracles less or greater than those of the Gospels?

Before we accept Mrs. Piper,* we want to know most exactly the conditions of the experiment, and to have some guarantee of the reliability of the witnesses.

At Cana of Galilee the conditions of the transformation are not stated—save that they give loopholes innumerable for chicanery—and the witnesses are all drunk! (thou hast kept the good wine *till now*: i.e. till men have well drunk—Greek, *μεθυσθῶσι*, are well drunk).

And I am to believe this, and a glaring *non sequitur* as to Christ's deity, on the evidence, not even of the inebriated eye-witnesses, but of MSS. of doubtful authorship and date, bearing all the ear-marks of dishonesty. For we must not forget that the absurdities of to-day were most cunning proofs for the poor folk of seventeen centuries ago.

Talking of fish-stories, read John xxi. 1-6,

or Luke V. 1-7 (comparisons are odious). But once I met a man by a lake and told him that I had toiled all the morning and had caught nothing, and he advised me to try the other side of the lake; and I caught many fish. But I knew not that it was the Lord.

In Australia they were praying for rain in the churches. The *Sydney Bulletin* very sensibly pointed out how much more reverent and practical it would be, if, instead of constantly worrying the Almighty about trifles, they would pray once and for all for a big range of mountains in Central Australia, which would of course supply rain automatically. No new act of creation would be necessary; faith, we are expressly told, can remove mountains, and there is ice and snow and especially moraine on and about the Baltoio Glacier to build a very fine range; we could well have spared it this last summer.

579. *So much for this absurd affair*.⁵²—*About Lieutenant-Colonel Flare*.—Gilbert, *Bab Ballads*.

636. *Auto-hypnosis*.⁵³—The scientific adversary has more sense than to talk of auto-hypnosis. He bases his objection upon the general danger of the practice, considered as a habit of long standing. In fact,

Lyre and Lancel.

Recipe for Curried Eggs.

The physiologist reproaches
Poor Mr. Crowley. "This encroaches
Upon your frail cerebral cortex,
And turns its fairway to a vortex.
Your cerebellum with cockroaches
Is crammed; your lobes that thought they
caught "x"

Are like mere eggs a person poaches.
But soon from yoga, business worries,
And (frankly I suspect the rubble
Is riddled by specific trouble!"
Will grow like eggs a person curries."
This line, no doubt, requires an answer.

The Last Ditch.

First. "Here's a johnny with a cancer;
An operation may be useless,
May even harm his constitution,
Or cause his instant dissolution:
Let the worm die, 'tis but a goose less!"
Not you! You up and take by storm him.
You tie him down and chloroform him.
You do not pray to Thoth or Horus,
But make one dash for his pylorus:—
And if ten years elapse, and he
Complains, "O doctor, pity me!
Your cruel 'ands, for goodness sakes
Gave me such 'orrid stomach-aches.

* A twentieth century medium.

You write him, with a face of flint,
An order for some soda-mint.
So Yoga. Life's a carcinoma,
Its cause uncertain, not to check.
In vain you cry to Isis: "O ma!
I've got it fairly in the neck."
The surgeon Crowley, with his trocar,
Says you a poor but silly bloke are,
Advices concentration's knife
Quick to the horny growth called life.
"Yoga? There's danger in the biz!
But, it's the only chance there is!"
(For life, if left alone, is sorrow,
And only fools hope God's to-morrow.)

Up, Guards, and at 'em!

Second, your facts are neatly put;
—Stay! In that mouth there lurks a foot!
One surgeon saw so many claps
He thought: "One-third per cent., perhaps,
Of mortals 'scape its woes that knock us,
And bilk the wily gonococcus."
So he is but a simple cynic
Who takes the world to match his clinic;
And he assuredly may err
Who, keeping cats, thinks birds have fur.
You say: "There's Berridge, Felkin,
Mathers,
Hysterics, epileptoids, blathers,
Guttersnipe, psychopath, and maitoid,
With ceremonial magic that toyed."
Granted. Astronomy's no myth,
But it produced Piazzi Smyth.
What crazes actors? Why do surgeons
Go mad and cut up men like sturgeons?
(These questions are the late Chas. Surgeon's.)
Of yogi I could quote you hundreds
In science, law, art, commerce noted.
They fear no lunacy: their one dread's
Not for their noddles doom-devoted.
They are not like black bulls (that shunned
reds

In vain) that madly charge the goathead
Of rural Pan, because some gay puss
Had smeared with blood his stone Priapus.
They are as sane as politicians
And people who subscribe to missions.
This says but little; a long way are
Yogi more sane than such as they are.
You have conceived your dreadful bogey,
From seeing many a raving Yogi.
These haunt your clinic; but the sound
Lurk in an unsuspected ground,
Dine with you, lecture in your schools,
Share your intolerance of fools,
And, while the Yogi you condemn,
Listen, say nothing, barely smile.
O if you but suspected them
Your silence would match theirs awhile!

*A Classical Research. [Protectionists may serve
if the supply of Hottentots gives out.]*

I took three Hottentots alive.
Their scale was one, two, three, four, five,
Infinity. To think of men so
I could not bear: a new Colenso
I bought them to assuage their plight,
Also a book by Hall and Knight
On Algebra. I hired wise men
To teach them six, seven, eight, nine, ten.
One of the Hottentots succeeded.
Few schoolboys know as much as he did!
The others sank beneath the strain:
It broke, not fortified, the brain.

The Bard a Brainy Beggar.

Now (higher on the Human Ladder)
Lodge is called mad, and Crowley madder.
(The shafts of Science who may dodge?
I've not a word to say for Lodge.)
Yet may not Crowley be the one
Who safely does what most should shun?

Alpine Analogy.

Take Oscar Eckenstein—he climbs
Alone, unroped, a thousand times.
He scales his peak, he makes his pass;
He does not fall in a crevasse!
But if the Alpine Club should seek
To follow him on pass or peak—
(Their cowardice, their mental rot,
Are balanced nicely—they will not.)
—I see the Alpine Journal's border
Of black grow broader, broader, broader,
Until the Editor himself
Falls from some broad and easy shelf,
And in his death the Journal dies.
Ah! bombast, footle, simple lies!
Where would you then appear in type?

*The Poet "retires up." His attitude undig-
nified, his pleasure momentary, the after
results quite disproportionate. He contem-
plates his end.*

Therefore poor Crowley lights his pipe,
Maintains: "The small-shot kills the snipe,
But spares the tiger;" goes on joking,
And goes on smirking, on invoking,
On climbing, meditating,—failing to think
of a suitable rhyme at a critical juncture,
Ah!—goes on working, goes on smoking,
Until he goes right on to Woking.

637. *No one supposes me a Saint.*⁵⁴—On in-
quiry, however, I find that some do.

686. *Anrita.*⁵⁵—The Elixir of Life: the Dew
of Immortality.

688. *Christ*.⁵⁶—See Shri Parananda, "Commentaries on Matthew and John."

695. *Direction x*.⁵⁷—*Vide supra*, "Ascension Day."

710. *Steel-tired*.⁵⁸—

For Dunlop people did not know

Those nineteen hundred years ago.

723. *Super-consciousness*.⁵⁹—The Christians also claim an ecstasy. But they all admit, and indeed boast, that it is the result of long periods of worry and anxiety about the safety of their precious souls: therefore their ecstasy is clearly a diseased process. The Yogic ecstasy requires absolute calm and health of mind and body. It is useless and dangerous under other conditions even to begin the most elementary practices.

742. *My Eastern friend*.⁶⁰—Abdul Hamid, of the Fort, Colombo, on whom be peace.

755. *Heart*.⁶¹—

Heart is a trifling misquotation:

This poem is for publication.

810. *Mind the dark doorway there*!⁶²—This, like so many other (perhaps all) lines in these poems, is pregnant with a host of hidden meanings. Not only is it physical, of saying good-bye to a friend; but mental, of the darkness of metaphysics; occult, of the mystical darkness of the Threshold of Initiation; and physiological, containing allusions to a whole group of phenomena, which those who have begun meditation will recognise.

Similarly, a single word may be a mnemonic key to an entire line of philosophical argument.

If the reader chooses, in short, he will find the entire mass of Initiated Wisdom between the covers of this unpretending volume.

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