

APPRENTICED TO MAGIC

PREFACE

LITTLE need be written as a preface to this book. Following my usual custom, I have written to illumine as well as to instruct, and my writing is aimed at the deeper levels of the minds of my readers. How far I may succeed in this depends upon many factors, some of which are outside my conscious control. I can only send the book forth upon its mission and trust that it may help some of its readers to understand a little more of the wonderful philosophy of the Qabalah.

Again I have to thank my patient amanuensis, Mrs Hilda Eastburn, for her help in the preparation and typing of the manuscript of the book. Under somewhat difficult conditions she has been of the greatest help to me in its initial production.

I have also to acknowledge with gratitude advice and help given to me by the Warden of the Society of the Inner Light.

Finally, I would thank all those readers of my earlier books who have written to me. May this book prove worthy of its dedication to those who were true exponents of the philosophy outlined therein, and to whom I owe far more than I can ever say.

W. E. Butler
Southampton, 1963

INTRODUCTION

WHEN the time comes to look back upon the twentieth century it will be known for many things, not the least of which will be the widespread resurgence of occult theory and practice. In the last 25 years it has grown into a multimillion-pound industry that is still growing, despite all the efforts of fundamentalist Christianity to undermine it. There have been certain men and women who have been in the forefront of the long battle to gain acceptance and recognition for their beliefs and the way has not been an easy one. A. E. Waite, Florence Farr, W. B. Yeats, Aleister Crowley (who, though many despise the man and his actions, it must be admitted has his place in this roll call), McGregor Mathers, Brodie Innes, Dion Fortune, C. R. S. Seymour, Christine Hartley, Paul Case, Israel Regardie, and a man whose work spanned 60 years of his life, W. E. Butler.

In a crowd you would not have noticed him unless possessed of trained psychic abilities, then you would have noted the extended aura and the sigil of the Teacher. He was neither tall nor distinguished in looks, but once in his company you became aware of the innate greatness of the man. There was a warmth and a genuine desire to reach out and touch the heart of those he taught. He was in all things thorough and dedicated, not least in the way he prepared those who were to follow him.

Those of us who were privileged to learn from this man will never forget him; our lives were changed at the first meeting, and when we meet we exchange stories and anecdotes about our times with him. He still affects our lives and through us the lives of those who come after and who will never know the man, only his teachings.

The book you hold in your hand contains his own view of magic and its implication to everyday life. He believed, fervently, that it should permeate one's whole life, not shut away to be brought out on special days only and seen as something darkly mysterious and intended only for "initiates". For Ernest Butler magic was a way of life and of living; his writings reflect that belief and, although his prose may seem old-fashioned to those of you used to a more modern style, understand that he wrote from the viewpoint of another, older, and less frenetic generation. It is 11 years since his death, but what he has to say, his methods of teaching and his wisdom still have a place in the lives of those who step onto the Path of the Mysteries.

Apprenticed to Magic is rather different to most books on the subject

in that it is written in the first person singular. It takes the form of a teacher's letters and instructions to his student and as such it is quite unique. Ernest Butler's personal teaching style comes through very strongly and anyone who has had the opportunity to listen to the few taped lectures that he made will recognize the delivery and the phraseology. Step-by-step the apprentice is taken through a series of lessons, with mistakes noticed and commented upon and due praise given. The book is ideal for those who as yet have not made a commitment but which to understand more magical training before doing so.

Magic and the Qabalah was Ernest's last major book, and though he wrote articles for many years after this all his time was given to directing the correspondence course that still exists today. It is a compact text book that set forth the basics of the Qabalah and matches it with the practice of the Western Mystery Tradition. It is not as well known as his other books and that is a pity since it deserves more than a cursory glance. Since it was written in 1964 there have been many other books written on the same subject, but *Magic and the Qabalah* offers Ernest Butler's own unique way of looking at — and what is more to the point — teaching it.

Ernest spent a long time in India during his younger days and he made full use of what he learned there, something that makes this edition close to being a bridge between Eastern and Western philosophy. This was a man who never decried other people's religions but simply saw them as fellow travellers on the Path. For myself, I am happy to see his books reprinted again and to know that another generation of seekers will be able to read and assimilate his gentle wisdom. Cheiron we called him, a name in which he delighted, a name he richly deserved.

Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki
Jersey, November 1989

CHAPTER I

"WELL MET"

YOU wish to tread High Magic's Way.

There are many questions which arise in my mind as I read your letter. You seem to be sincere in your desire, but before I can accept you for training, I want to clear up some of the points which are raised by your application. First of all, I think it will be helpful to us both if we find out how far we are speaking the same language.

Of course, we are both using our English tongue, but I wonder whether you realize how easy it is for one person to fail entirely when seeking to impart the significance of his or her ideas to another? The *methods* of communication now in use are exceedingly efficient, but, and here is the real point at issue, are the ideas communicated in their fullness, and is the communication free from distortion? This is quite another question, and it is of the utmost importance that we should so use our methods of communication that the ideas which we wish to convey may be received without distortion by those whom we are addressing.

I have certain teaching, certain ideas and instructions, which I must convey to you should you become my "apprentice". But what preconceived ideas have you on these matters?

The other day a friend of long standing accused me of putting together a lot of occult odds and ends and of calling the resultant mixture "magic". All my efforts to alter this misconception have failed, and for a very sufficient reason. *His* conception of "magic" is one which does not cover the vast system of graded instruction and practice which is the heritage of the initiates of the Western Mysteries. In these Mysteries I was trained, and it is with them alone that I am concerned.

If you desire to learn of wonderful oriental magic, of systems of yoga which will enable you to perform the wonders which the popular mind associates with yoga, then I am afraid you must look elsewhere. There is a great deal of nonsense abroad in the west regarding the marvels of the east. Some forms of Hatha Yoga have been popularized and adapted as physical training methods, and almost every week we read in the popular press of some actress, or "deb", or business man having restored health by standing on her (or his) head, or by practising *pranayama*.

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Many years ago I studied these things in India with a small group of Hindus who were experts in various forms of yoga, and I know what a wonderful thing yoga is. However, that which the west is pleased to term yoga, is but a small part of the real thing. But, and this is the point I want to impress upon you, eastern yoga is designed for eastern bodies and conditions, and except in its most elementary forms it is unsuitable for western bodies. In addition to this the racial psychology of the east differs from that of the west, and instructions which can be readily accepted by eastern pupils would arouse intense psychological resistances in the minds of those western students who tried to carry them out. I am not trying to belittle the eastern systems, I know their value, but I am convinced that the methods which have been evolved by the Western Tradition for use by western people, are the best *for us*. "To every man his own Master, and who art thou to judge another's servant? To his own Master he stands or falls."

What is your reaction to this point of view? If you become my apprentice you will have to follow the western methods; also, and this is where trouble usually arises, you will have to give your word of honour that you will not mix the techniques; that is, you will not introduce snippets of other methods into the exercises which will be given to you.

Perhaps you have had the idea, common to many people, that magic is something of eastern origin, and you may wish to ask me what I consider it to be? This is a legitimate question, and I will try to answer it. You say you have read my books. In both of these I have defined "magic", in the words of one of my own teachers, as, "The art of effecting changes in consciousness at will". I wonder if I was sufficiently clear in my explanation of this definition? It seems that I was not, for I have had letters from several people who seemed to feel that it was rather vague. Why should a change of consciousness, whether willed or unwilled, have such power that its manifestations are known by the ancient and venerable name of "magic"? As you will learn (if I accept you for training) all the operations of magic are based upon an essential unity which exists between man, who is known as the "microcosmos", the little universe, and the external universe, the "macrocosmos". This unity has always existed since manifestation first began, but the normal waking consciousness possesses not the keys to its own inner kingdom. Only in times of overwhelming stress, or in certain abnormal conditions of the mind or body, do the latent powers of the magical man within manifest themselves. Deep within that inner kingdom is the "ground" where the powers of the outer universe make contact with the inner universe of

man. Shift the focus of consciousness and these powers and energies manifest themselves through the channel of the human personality.

So all magic starts from within, and all the paraphernalia of ceremonial and ritual are aids whereby the inner powers may be summoned forth. In our Western Tradition these things will be taught to you in a special way, and by an age-old technique. If you follow this technique in its entirety, then at a certain stage the key to your own inner kingdom will be placed in your hand, and you will be able to change the gears of consciousness at will. How you use this power will depend entirely upon yourself, but believe me, if you abuse the power you gain, then you will indeed live to rue it. This is not a matter of theory on my part. I am not retailing secondhand stories to you. I have myself seen, in actual operation, the consequences of such abuse of power, and the spectacle was not one to encourage me to make that mistake.

Of course, it is possible that you may make mistakes; all apprentices in every field of activity do make mistakes. It is by these mistakes that they learn their craft, since the discipline involved in rectifying them perfects the craftsmen. But such mistakes are understood, and the worst consequences are neutralized by those under whom they are being trained.

This brings me to the next point which I want to discuss with you. You have asked me to train you in High Magic's Way. Why do you wish to be trained? What is your real motive. Do not make the mistake of thinking that this can be answered without a good deal of careful thought. You see, there are often motives which arise from the depths of our consciousness and which have not been decided upon by the normal waking mind. Some of these are very real and very good reasons; others are unreal and irrational, and are the products of some buried mental-emotional "complex", as the psychologists call it.

There is a word which is used in this connection, it is "vocation"; a real and definite "call" or urge which wells up from within, and which will, against seemingly tremendous odds, force the personality to follow a certain line of work. This then, is an urge of the inner self, and of it we may say, in the words of the Grail poem, "If thou hast by Him been bidden, from thee the truth will not stay hidden."

The test of these inner impulses is whether they persist through all kinds of outer difficulty, and also whether they influence us towards a balanced state of mind. The irrational impulses towards the study of magic are usually compensations, i.e., the subconscious self feels that the powers gained by magical art will compensate for certain

inferiorities which are deeply resented by a level of the mind which does no *reason*, but simply *feels*.

There are, of course, quite good motives for the study and practice of magic, quite apart from the question of vocation. It is a worthy motive to search for truth, *if the results of that search are going to be used in service*. "I desire to know in order to serve," is the motive which admits to the Mysteries. As you will see, we are touching upon the moral order of things, and, this I must impress upon you: in the mysteries this moral standard is enforced most rigidly, for the power which is gained by this training can be used for good or evil purposes. It is for this reason that this pledge is asked of you at the beginning of your training. Remember, however, that at every stage of your magical career the temptation to misuse these powers for your own personal ends will recur. Never think that you will be free from such temptation. You can and will be aided to fight against it, but the temptation itself will come. This may sound rather grim, but it must be made clear, even though it may scare you away.

There is yet another thing that I must point out. We have been thinking of you as being accepted or rejected as my apprentice. This is true, but only in so far as I am allowed to use my own discretion as to whom I may accept for training. But I, too, am "a man under authority", and the senior craftsman under whom I work has the deciding voice in this matter. The brotherhood is affected by the entrance of all admitted, and the brethren have a right to be considered. So, even if I do accept you for training, that acceptance must be ratified by my own chief before we can begin your apprenticeship.

Now think carefully over all that I have written. Give it your concentrated attention, and look yourself squarely in the face. Do not try to deceive yourself, but answer the questions I have suggested. If your self-examination leads you to believe that you both wish and are able to take part in the Great Work and to tread High Magic's Way, then let me know. With the approval of my chief we will then begin our work which is nothing less than the breaking down and rebuilding of your own soul. I hope you will pass the test and that we shall work together.

CHAPTER II

"APPLICATION ACCEPTED"

I HAVE received your letter and have submitted it to my chief who has agreed, that if it is my wish, I may accept you as my apprentice in Art Magic. May our joint efforts be to the greater glory of God, and to the service of man. You will note that I was told I might take you as my apprentice *if I so wished*. Herein lies an important point, for from this time onwards, until our association ceases, I am responsible for you in a very real sense. Should you break the rules, then I, because I am your teacher, must share the responsibility. It is the knowledge of this binding liability and obligation which makes us so very careful before accepting anyone for training.

Let me mention something else. It is the general idea that, in the relationship between the teacher and pupil, the main thing is that the pupil receives certain *teaching*. This, however, is only a part of the truth so far as magical instruction is concerned. Instruction is given in such a way that it will really *educate*. This process of drawing out the ideas of the pupil (for that is what education really is) means that a very strong link is built up between teacher and pupil. This is the second factor. But there is another relationship which builds up. This is due to a change in the teacher's personality because of the interaction of the pupil's personality with his own. There is a steady exchange, a kind of psychic osmosis which affects both. This is true of ordinary psycho-analytical treatment, but it is much more definite in occult and magical training.

It may be that you will object to this idea and tell me that as we are not meeting physically, such a rapport cannot be established. If you make this objection you will be wrong, for such a link can be set up over any distance, since in its essence it is telepathic. Get out of your head the idea that telepathy has anything to do with distance. All our knowledge of it (and the recorded experience which is stored in the esoteric archives, is far more extensive than the average member of the Society for Psychical Research ever realizes) goes to prove that bodily absence is no bar to its operation between two or more people.

There *are* certain forces which do depend upon the physical contact, or at least proximity, of those concerned; but this peculiar rapport between pupil and teacher is not limited by any such spatial circumstance. Remember, then, that in this magical apprenticeship

there will be built up between us a very real link. Moreover this link can operate for our mutual benefit or for our mutual discomfort and loss.

We may use a metaphor and say that between us is established a line of light. Indeed, to the average psychic, this is what the link may seem to be, and as we always tend to think in space-time images, there is no reason why you should not visualize in this manner the psychic tie which will hold us together during your apprenticeship. At a certain stage towards the end of your training this link will be deliberately modified, in order that you may be able to stand on your own feet and in no way be dependent upon me. The whole aim of magical training is to integrate the personality, so that in all your mundane and supermundane affairs you will display a balanced and controlled mind. In the meantime, as I have said, this psychic thread will link us together, and, as I shall show you at a later stage of your training, it can be of great assistance to us both.

Now let us start to clear the ground in order that we may commence our work in the correct way. This means that we must first study the conditions under which you must train. I am sure you have either heard of, or met, budding authors who are of the hot-house type. They must have their own particular room, their own chair, their special pen, and so on. Without these they simply cannot do any work. It is very helpful, if at the outset of your magical training you can provide yourself with congenial surroundings, but they are not necessary. They can, in fact, become virtual fetters, since it is possible to form a mental habit of relying upon them to such a degree, that as in the cases to which I have referred, it is found impossible to work without them.

The whole aim of this training is to give you an integrated personality; a personality no longer at the mercy of its surroundings. It is important therefore, that independence of environment is acquired as soon as possible. In my own case, when I first began my magical training at the beginning of the First World War, I was in lodgings. I had precious little time, or opportunity, to establish the conditions I considered desirable. The result was that my progress was much slower than it might have been, but I learnt to meditate and to do other mental work under very difficult conditions. My own teacher used to say that proficiency was not to be hoped for until it was possible to meditate successfully while seated in the middle of Waterloo Station. This may sound difficult, but he was right. So the fact that you are not able to establish your own special conditions, need not deter you from making a start on your training.

I think I ought to make one more point quite clear before we pass on to other matters. Although meditating in the atmosphere of Waterloo Railway Station is possible, this does not imply that I am suggesting that you should attempt any purely *psychic* work under such conditions. "Opening-up" to psychic influences in the early days of training is inadvisable. When you are stabilized and integrated, you will be able to "open up" and "close down" at will, but in the beginning you must comply with the instructions you are given, and indiscriminate psychic "sensing" will not be one of them.

We will assume that you have to use your bedroom as your meditation centre. Should you be more fortunate, I will give you the instructions for building up your own special conditions, but these must be temporary aids, not permanent crutches. All you need is the room and a reasonable amount of privacy. But you must exercise a certain amount of discrimination. If you are stridently insistent upon everyone being quiet during your meditation period, you may very possibly evoke from those around you that perverse little mental imp which is to be found in the best of us, and quite a lot of unnecessary noise will, quite unconsciously, be produced. In any case, the neighbour's dog will not be amenable to your requests or commands!

In the beginning, therefore, you will have to struggle to keep going on your meditations and progress will not seem very good. All the time, however, you will be building up an interior mental state which will make you independent of outer conditions. As a matter of fact, this principle is involved in the whole of your training, for, as you become proficient in the magical work, you learn to dispense with the outer rites and ceremonies, and to work entirely within your own integrated personality, using the inner powers which your magical training has developed. So, also, in the difficulties which may come your way, see always the instruments which, if you use them aright, will prove to be helps, not hindrances, on your path.

The next point with which I want to deal is the question of "postures". You have probably read about the wonderful attitudes in which some eastern yogis meditate. The most usual of these is known as *padmasana*, or "The Lotus Posture", but this is not usually possible for Europeans, unless they have either trained consistently from childhood, or have naturally loose ligaments. It is helpful if you can use such a posture, but it is not essential. There are many of these bodily positions, but we in the western schools use only those which are adapted for use with the western body. There is no sense in meditating successfully in the lotus position if you break the small bones of the foot in the process.

For the purposes of your meditation exercise you will need for the present at least, only a fairly comfortable chair. If you are trying to control and direct the mind into new channels, it is somewhat foolish, to give it unnecessary distractions due to bodily discomfort. At the same time remember that in these exercises the mind must be alert, and this is not always possible if you have too comfortable a chair. The ideal chair to use is, as a matter of fact, a somewhat hard, wooden one, an armchair for preference. An "easy chair" is the last kind you should use.

The only other thing you now need for your work is a good exercise book in which to record the results of your meditations. It may be helpful, but it is not essential, for you to have some particular symbolic picture or image which can be placed before you as a reminder of your work. When using these pictures or figures as focusing points, you should err on the side of austerity. Have only one or two; the multiplication of such aids to meditation is more likely to hinder than to help. I remember preaching in a church where the pulpit was adorned with six crosses of varying material, ranging from perspex to brass. Greatly though I revere this symbol, I found its unnecessary multiplication distracting rather than helpful.

If you are so situated that you cannot put aside a room for your meditation work here is a very helpful procedure you can adopt. Put your symbolic picture in a small frame that will stand on the table, and have made for it a cover which can be slipped over it when you have finished your meditations. Keep your picture or symbolic image locked away with your magical diary; never leave them lying about.

Here you must use your discretion. Your wife may feel that she should know what you are doing, and if you are too secretive she may take steps to register her disapproval. It is far better, then, for you to let her see these things if she wishes, especially at the beginning of your training. If she is interested and desires to help you in the work, she will not take undue advantage of the privilege. If, on the other hand, she disapproves of the whole business, the permission to see the "tools" of your work may help to allay any doubts she may have. (The same thing applies, of course, to women students whose husbands may, or may not, approve of their interest in these matters, though in these days men do not, as a rule, actively interfere with the occupations of their womenfolk.) In any case, this is a matter with which you must deal as soon as possible. Discuss it with your wife, and see how far she is prepared to help you along this line.

Another point: so many people feel that the "atmosphere" they desire for their meditation can be established by the use of incense.

This is true, but there are many different kinds of incense, and not all are suitable for your work. In fact, there are some varieties which are very definitely taboo as far as this work is concerned. The main effect of the usual kinds of incense employed is to associate the meditation with the scent of the incense smoke in such a way that whenever the incense is burning, it will recall the meditation to mind. It has also a certain "psychic" effect with which I will deal at a later date.

Unfortunately, incense has a habit of advertising its presence, and a very little can go a very long way. If you have a room set apart for your work, then this will enable you to use incense without any trouble, but if you must use a room which is also used by others, then I would advise you to do without incense. It is not vitally necessary, and it is better for you to do without it, rather than to cause needless antagonism by insisting upon permeating the whole house with its fragrance. Apart from this, the mingled aroma of incense and breakfast bacon is not particularly helpful to either student or cook. Although you are entitled to your own point of view, you are *not* entitled to carry it out in such a way as to cause discomfort to others with whom you are linked. Any such occult selfishness would hinder rather than help you.

Now for a most important instruction. It is essential that you should separate your meditation from your ordinary mundane work. I know this will raise some queries in your mind. Surely you will say, it is good to go out to the workaday world with the mental stimulus of the work done in meditation? Yes, I agree it is very helpful to do this, and if you have performed your meditation correctly, then you will have that keynote vibrating in the depths of your mind. It will not be necessary for you consciously to keep trying to put on the mask of the particular virtue you may have used as the subject of your meditation.

However, you, in your mental work, will have been directing your thoughts and personal energies along what we term "inner lines", and it is very necessary that when the work on these lines is done, you should revert to the outer world and its concerns. "We cannot at the shrine remain," says a line of a hymn, and indeed, it would not be good for the majority of us to do so. There are those who are called to a purely contemplative life, but they are few. So, when you finish your meditation, you must "close down", that is you must bring back your attention to the material world. If you go out from your mental work in a confused condition, then you will have trouble sooner or later. In any case your discipline is clear: *you must not do this*, but I want you to understand why we are so insistent on this particular

point. When you begin to meditate you dissociate yourself from outer things in order that you may deal with the inner, subjective world. It is imperative that when the inner work is done you should re-associate yourself with that outer world in which you have to work. If you neglect this, then there will come about a gradual dis-co-ordination in your mind, and it will become more and more difficult for you to take up the heat and burden of the day. You will tend to drift into an escapism which, instead of improving your personality, will cause you to become increasingly inefficient in both worlds. You may have thought that this insistence upon the return to normal was exaggerated, but I trust you will now see our reasons for it.

For the moment I will not give you any more detailed instructions, as I want you to study carefully what has already been given. You are beginning a piece of work which will have far-reaching effects, and I want you to feel sure that it is a task which you are determined to follow through to the end. You will find that the routine becomes tedious, and you may feel inclined to cavil at what appears, in the early stages at least, to be without any apparent result. I say "in the early stages", but this is not really correct. At the start of your work you will most probably have some very definite results, but as you go on you will find that these initial experiences seem to fade away, and you have to follow a dull routine which seems neither exciting nor helpful. It is then that you will find that the scripture is very true: "It is the little foxes that spoil the vines"; they can squeeze through the hedge where the bigger ones would fail. So, as you set off on your magical career, you must fence against the foxes, and feel that the vineyard of your personality is secure. But with the discipline and the exercises being carried out day by day, you may insensibly begin to allow the little foxes of boredom and impatience, to mention only two, to get through the fence. We who have essayed this path have all gone through this phase. With some it is more apparent than with others, but in one way or another it affects us all.

There is a certain rhythm in this work. A time of success and illumination is followed by a period of "dryness" and a descent into the Valley of Humiliation. Then we have to plod along until we begin to see once more the light ahead. All who venture out into these hidden ways of the mind have experienced this swing of the mental pendulum and this applies in the same way to those who follow the path of the mystic. They, like those of us who tread the magical way, find that this comes to them too. Indeed, the term "dryness" which I have just used, comes from the terminology of the mystics.

Think over what I have told you. Re-read it and try to fix it firmly in your mind. Although these first instructions may seem commonplace, they contain basic truths, and are an essential part of the foundation which you must build in yourself, my apprentice.

Let me know whether you need any more initial instruction on these points before we go any further. Do not be afraid to ask any questions which arise from what I have told you. In our school of training we value the questioning mind, providing it carries out the instructions given.

Let me know also whether it *is* possible for you to have a separate room for your work. In the next instructions I shall give you the basic exercises in magical meditation, and you will then be able to make a definite start.

CHAPTER III

FIRST EXERCISES

IGATHER from your letter that you have discussed with your wife the question of a place for meditation, and have reached a satisfactory arrangement. You tell me that you will be able to have a small room reserved for your work. This is good news, although, as I told you, such good conditions should never be allowed to cause you to rely too much upon them.

Furnish your meditation room simply. Have in it only the necessary chair and table. On the table you may place a vase of fresh flowers, together with whatever picture or image you may wish to use as a focusing point. If you decide to use incense, then employ a good type of incense stick; there are many kinds of incense as I told you, but this is probably the best for general work. You will need some form of holder in which to burn the incense stick, but I ask you not to use one of these made in the form of the Lord Buddha. So many people do use them, but it is due, in the main, to lack of imagination. Would you, as a Christian, feel entirely comfortable if you found an Oriental friend using a crucifix as an incense burner? For many millions of people the Lord Gautama Buddha is their great teacher and for that reason, if for no other, you should refrain from using such a thing. Sometimes one finds such a brass figure which, although it is often taken for an image of the Buddha, is really one of the god of luck, Chenresi. But even this should not be used. You are following the *Western* path.

I daresay you will be wondering what exercises you will receive, and what disciplines you must accept. For the present I am going to give you the basic exercises, and, as I warned you before, they may become very dull and boring. However, they are fundamental, and must be carried out. Without the proficiency you will gain in them, your further meditation would be erratic, so persevere with them and you will begin to appreciate their value. However, before I enter a description of the first exercise, I want to raise certain points with regard to your training.

First of all, I want you to be perfectly sure in your mind of the obligations which you have undertaken by entering our school. The most important thing to remember in this connection is that you are not under any vow of personal obedience to anyone in the school,

whether it be to myself or to my superiors. At the same time you *are* under obedience to the "Rule" of the Fraternity, as are we all. It is a *system of training* with which we are dealing, not with any obedience to personalities as such. Here, of course, commonsense is needed. We who have been trained in this school very naturally think our system is a good one; but you, without such experience may feel somewhat apprehensive. So let me assure you that in this school of esoteric training you will never be asked to do anything which conflicts with your ethical code. By this I do not mean that you will be at liberty to modify the instructions and disciplines which you will receive, in order to fit them into some narrower denominational scheme. But Christian and non-Christian alike can subscribe to the summary of religious duty which is contained in the quotation which Jesus made from the Hebrew teachings: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy soul and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." It is in the light of this summary of the divine law that you are to judge the teachings you will receive.

You may, of course, feel that if you raise any objections, even though they are perfectly sincere, you will be regarded as a nuisance and thereby be prevented from going forward. You may rest assured that there is no question of being penalized for objecting to certain points in the teaching. But since in the very nature of the training you are not yet in a position to judge with knowledge, it seems to me that you will do well to study carefully the instructions *before* raising objections. In any case, it will save me quite an amount of unnecessary work!

Following on this, I want to deal with another point which is really important. It is the question of your relationship with others and the effect which your new work will have upon them. For you must always remember that you have no right to attempt to evade your responsibilities in order to undergo this training. You have taken certain tasks upon yourself, you have linked yourself with others, and all these things are conditioning factors which you must take into account.

At the same time, however, you must remember that though you have a duty to your neighbour, to love him as yourself, you also have a duty to love yourself as you love your neighbour. If your neighbour has a right to mental freedom and "elbow room", so have you. Perhaps the majority, or a good proportion at any rate, of those who come to us for training forget this, and the first trials of the path are of their own making. You must, therefore, come to a definite understanding

with those who are near to you. It must be made clear that you intend to follow this discipline, and that this will call for some co-operation from them. At the same time, you must scrupulously consider *your* duty in the matter. If in any way whatsoever you make of these disciplines an excuse to neglect your home, your wife, or your children, then, although technically you may be following the discipline as far as the letter of it goes, you will in effect be breaking it in the spirit, which is a much more serious matter.

At the same time, it is possible to overload your home duties with such a thick top-dressing of sentimentality that you allow yourself to be deflected from your purpose, and your power to follow out the disciplines to be hindered very considerably. This does not make for good relations; it leads to resentfulness on the one hand and self-righteousness on the other, reactions which are neither constructive nor helpful.

If you insist on a period of privacy for the performance of your meditation, then you must see to it that no one suffers because of it. Also, and this is important, those around you must be able to see that as far as your manifest character is concerned, the result of such training is good. It is a very difficult point, but unless it is tackled right at the start, it will continue to give you trouble.

Now for the first exercise, which is known as the "Reverse Meditation". It seems so simple that many apprentices tend to neglect it, but in this they make a great mistake. Eventually they have to come back to it. I want you to write down the instruction for yourself as I give it here, then every night without fail, you must carry out the exercise and note the results as you get them.

Each night, when you are in bed, go over the events of the day *in reverse*; that is, start with the last thing you did or said, then go back to the last but one, and so on until you arrive at the first thoughts and actions of the day. As you recall each event, consider it impartially, and regard it as if it were an entirely impersonal record. Consider separately the results of each action, thought, or word, and then try to see why these thoughts and emotions were the cause of particular effects. When you feel that you have done this successfully, pass on to the event before this and evaluate it in the same way. Continue in this manner to go backwards as far as you can to the beginning of the day.

This reverse meditation is very important. First of all, it helps to modify the usual habit of the mind to think in a time-sequence of past, present, and future. This normal thinking works very well in this three-dimensional physical world, but when you begin to open up the higher consciousness you will perceive that it has its limita-

tions. It is then that you will appreciate this exercise. The second point is- that, by first observing the end-result and then working backwards, you will find it much harder to make the usual excuses for your conduct. This tends to check some of the activity of what is known in psychology, as the "false ego". As the destruction of this false ego is part of the process of magical training, you will see why this exercise is so valuable. Incidentally, do not be discouraged if you fall asleep long before you have reached the first event of the day. The false ego will do all it can to prevent you following out the exercise.

For the present, it is not necessary for you to go into detail in your record. But it is very necessary that you should keep such a record. As you progress in your training, you will find that the habit of recording *all* results obtained will be of the greatest help to you, and you will then appreciate its value more fully.

Unlike most diaries, this one is not to be used to bolster up your own false ego. It is, instead, a very efficient method of building up an automatic habit of careful and logical thought and action. Linked with the reverse meditation are the "Salutes". These are given at certain times of the day, and they serve two purposes. First of all, they train the "time-sense", that subconscious clock which enables us to gauge the passage of time. It is very necessary that we should keep our feet on the earth even though we are dealing with metaphysical things. In fact, it is just because we *are* dealing with these things, that we, more than most people, should have our material affairs under control. I know that it is customary in certain "occult" movements to be "unworldly"; to affect to despise the "material", and to exalt the "spiritual". Perhaps you have also thought in this way? If so, you will find, as you proceed in your training, that we in this school regard such opinions entirely erroneous.

I have said that the Salutes serve yet another purpose. This is to bring about a state of "Recollection". By this we mean that it is essential to turn our minds at stated times towards that greater Life which pervades the whole universe, and in which we live and move and have our being. Never mind about any theological ideas you may have about that Life. Just regard It as the power which sustains and orders all manifestation.

Now here are the three daily Salutes:

Morning. Hail to Thee, the Eternal Spiritual Sun,
 whose visible Symbol now rises in the Heavens.
 Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of Morning.

- Noon.** Hail to Thee, the Eternal Spiritual Sun,
whose visible Symbol stands now in High Heaven.
Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of the Noonday.
- Evening.** Hail to Thee, the Eternal Spiritual Sun,
whose visible Symbol sets now in the Heavens.
Hail unto Thee from the Abodes of the Evening.

I enclose a specimen page of a magical Diary, so that you may see how it is to be used. At the end of each month it should be returned to me and I will check it before sending it back to you. In the diary, record the results you obtain with the Reverse Meditation, with the Salutes and with the meditation subject which I shall set you each month. Do not try to "explain" why you failed on any particular day; just record the fact that you *did* fail. You may insert such an observation as "prevented by illness" or "disturbed by dog barking" or "unexpected visitors". But do not let these entries degenerate into *excuses*. I am sure you will see what I mean.

There will be one meditation subject for the month, and you must deal with that only during that particular period. I expect you will think that long before the end of a week you will have exhausted the subject given you for a month's meditation.

Let me tell you a story which I believe is literally true. It may help you in this matter. It is recorded of a famous naturalist that a certain young man became his pupil, as you have become mine. On his first day with the great man, he was given a very simple job. "I want you to study this fish, and write down all you can about it." The naturalist then left him to his own devices for some hours, but when he returned the pupil was only able to show him a very meagre result, some three or four sentences. Again the task was given, and this time the master stayed away a much longer time. Annoyed by the imposition of what he regarded as a silly exercise, the student sat down determined to write *all* about the fish. The state of annoyance served to put him on his mettle, and he was still writing busily when his teacher returned after some hours.

I want you to tackle your meditation in somewhat the same way; not with annoyance, but with a determination and pertinacity equal to that shown by the naturalist's pupil. You will find that, once you have mastered the techniques involved in meditation, you will not complain, as a rule, of lack of ideas.

You may be surprised by the nature of the meditation subjects which are given you. To many people meditation is a quiet reverie on emotionally tinged "spiritual" subjects. Such ideas are, of course,

used, but it is necessary for us to have a well-balanced mental diet. For this reason the subjects are carefully chosen. During our correspondence you have revealed the general make-up of your character, and made known to me your natural line of approach. It is for this reason that the meditation subjects which you will receive may puzzle you, for you will find them to be the exact opposites of those which you would have chosen for yourself. It would be easy for you to meditate along the line of your natural inclination and neglect that which did not appeal to you. In this case, however, such progress as you might make would be very lop-sided, and I do not propose to train you in unbalance.

You will therefore learn to meditate on ideas which do not possess the interest which would make them attractive to you, and I expect you will not care for the effort involved. Believe me, however, it is absolutely essential that you receive a balanced training, and I should not be doing my duty if I permitted you to escape this necessary mental discipline.

You will find that these basic exercises in meditation are of two kinds. One in which you are asked to build up certain mental pictures is known as "image formation", and the other, in which images already in the mind are allowed to rise into consciousness, is known as "image recollection".

The first class of exercise is a very important method of training the visualizing power. Here we are using the term "visualizing" in a somewhat different way. We usually think of visualization in its literal sense, as the building up of pictures derived from the sense of sight, but occult visualization is the building of a composite mental image made up of impressions which have been received through all the five senses. Let me give you an example. You may be asked to build up the mental picture of a waterfall, say, the Niagara Falls. In this case you will have to make, not merely a picture of what the Falls look like, but also what they sound like, what the waters taste like, the scents which arise, and the feel of the rushing waters on the body.

The very fact of having to build this composite image in its fullness helps in the meditation, since the mind desires change, and, if jammed on just one point in the mental picture, will pass into a condition of auto-hypnosis. Useful though such a state can be, as you will discover at a later stage, it is not a desirable condition when one is beginning training in meditation. There is a very interesting simile used by Professor Ernest Woods in his book on concentration. He likens the mind to a fish swimming in a lake. In the centre of the lake is an island, and the fish is required to observe the general scenery on

it. There are two ways in which he can do this. One is by sticking his nose in the muddy island bank, and trying to keep his attention fixed on what he sees. The other, and far more effective way, is for him to swim slowly round the island, and record all he sees in his circular journey. It is this second method which you have to follow in this initial training.

By varying the mental point of view by altering the emphasis on one set of pictures in favour of another, you should succeed in building a clear and comprehensive picture. This picture will be in three dimensions, will be "in the round", not merely a flat image. As you will see at a later date, when you are building the mental forms which are used as the channels of elemental energy of various grades, this visualization in the round enables you to build up really effective thought-forms.

Let us now consider the second type of meditation, "allowing the images to rise". Here the conscious mind is confined to clearing a space in which the latent images of the depths are allowed to rise to the surface. I am reminded here of the technique of certain Oriental magicians who train their seers first to see, in the magic mirror or ink-pool, the appearance of a man sweeping the area of vision therein. Then into this cleared space the visions are evoked. You will find that this "Preparation of the Place of Working" is a very important part of practical magical ceremonial, but just at present we are considering it only in what may be termed its minor manifestations.

There are certain technical devices by means of which this clearing of the mind can be done, and the one which I am about to describe is the one which I think is perhaps the best.

You have begun the work of building up definite thought-images, and this next part of your meditation discipline will develop your power in this respect. Here the "Composition of the Place" is begun by building up around you a mental picture of a wall of light separating you from the outer world. This circular wall of light you should visualize as silver in colour, and see it moving around you in a clockwise direction. It will help you to do this if you draw the line of this protecting barrier around you with your right hand in the air, at the same time turning slowly from left to right as you do so, and keeping clearly in your mind the "intention" to shut out all external conditions for the period of the exercise. The mental screen is now protected from the greater part of the drifting thought atmosphere in which we are immersed all our lives, and you are ready to observe the images which your own mind can produce.

As you sit with the mind thus withdrawn from outer things, you

will find that certain mental images keep rising in consciousness. At first these may be very mixed and chaotic, but with practice you will find that certain groups of thoughts keep on coming up into the mental field. Whatever they may be, whether they are pleasant or otherwise, do not allow them to move you emotionally. Merely observe them as they arise, and then quietly, without any strained effort, visualize yourself as pushing them through the protecting wall and out of the mental field. They will possibly come up again and again, but as you calmly, and without emotional strain, dispose of them in this way, they will eventually lose their power to rise, and will no longer trouble you.

This preliminary work is not quite so easy as it sounds, but when once you have established it as an automatic habit, you will have acquired a most valuable power.

It is of no use, however, to clear the mental field unless we are going to do some work in it, so the next part of the exercise is to build up pictures of a particular type. We have two kinds of work to do: the building-up of images, and the recalling of images already made. It is best, therefore, to start our work by deliberately building up images, and so to train the visualizing faculty.

In my next letter I will give you the basic instructions on posture and breathing. You may think that the way in which I am teaching you is somewhat disjointed—in this instance I have broken off the instructions for the mental exercises, and returned to quite another subject. Do not let this worry you; there is a very definite reason for it. Again and again you will find me breaking the sequence of orderly instruction in this way, and at a later date you will more fully appreciate my reasons for doing so.

SPECIMEN PAGE OF A MAGICAL DIARY.

GRADE: E. A.

- Morning Salute** Given at correct time.
- Noon Salute.** Missed. Forgot.
- Evening Salute.** Given, but later than usual. (Visitors arrived suddenly.)
- Exercise in
Meditation** Was able to visualize the street well, but I noticed that I could only visualize part of it at a time—as though I was using a mental flash-light. Only those things in the beam were clear—the rest was blurred and indistinct.
- Special Notes.** I find considerable difficulty in *starting* the meditation, despite my "clearing" efforts.

CHAPTER IV

POSTURE AND BREATHING

AS I promised, I am sending you the instructions as to posture and breathing. You assure me that you have studied the previous instructions very carefully, and feel that you are ready to start definite meditation. This is good, but you will realize, of course, that these first exercises are very elementary, so far as subject matter is concerned. At the same time they are very essential, since they will give you proficiency in this art of meditation. Think of them as dull but necessary tasks which fall to the lot of the apprentice. I well remember how very dull and tedious was the work I had to do when I first began my apprenticeship as an engineer. But I began to see later on how it had helped me to become proficient. In this sphere of magical work the principle is implicit: "Learn by doing" is the motto for the apprentice.

Now let us deal with the postures, or, as they are called in the east, the *asanas*. It is obvious that the way in which we sit determines to some extent the blood flow in the body. It also affects the flow of the fine etheric currents which circulate through the "etheric double" of the body. For the control of these finer force-currents many forms of exercise have been elaborated, but for the purposes of your training we shall only deal with those which are the basic groundwork. As I have told you before, it is just because they *are* basic that they are of the utmost importance. Should you neglect them, your later work will be faulty. A young friend of mine was "evacuated" to the country during the last war. He was unfortunately unable to carry on his education in a normal manner and with customary regularity. At a later date, when he began to study for his profession, he found that the gaps in his early education were such hindrances to further work, that he was compelled to start again and fill them in systematically. In the same way the mind, being habit-forming will establish bad habits of meditation if it is not trained in the right ones. These bad habits are most difficult to correct. To take an example: any self-taught typist who has become used to bad habits of typing—the hunt-and-peck methods—and has had to break away from them will find it far more difficult to master the new and correct ones than it would have been if she had started with them in the first place.

The old habit has first to be broken down before the new one can

be established. You may think I am labouring this point, but my reasons are simple. I do not wish you to waste your time and energy, and equally, I do not wish to waste my own by having to assist you in the overcoming of wrong habits of meditation.

The most commonly used posture in the east is the one which I have referred to as the *padmasana* or "Lotus" position. As I have told you it is a difficult one for most Europeans. At the same time it is a very efficient method of re-directing certain etheric currents in the "double", and at a later stage I will give you a modification of it. In our western schools we usually employ what is known as the "god-form" posture. It is achieved in this manner: sit straight upright in your chair with the spine as erect as possible; avoid being too "poker-backed". Remember that the spine has a slight natural curve of its own. Therefore sit straight up but be careful not to strain the back. The feet should be placed squarely on the floor, the knees kept close together and the hands should be resting on the knees. Do not cross the feet or clasp the hands together in this exercise. The posture is that of some of the Egyptian statues of Pharaohs. As I have told you, the best seat is a fairly hard chair, and if you *must* have a cushion, then it should be a fairly firm one. If such a cushion makes it difficult for you to place your feet firmly on the floor, then I am afraid you must either discard the cushion, find a lower chair, or obtain a foot-rest.

Now you must begin to relax. There is much misunderstanding about this idea of relaxation, and, as it is fundamental to all occult work, I want to deal with it as fully as I can. First you cannot relax correctly until you have discovered for yourself what tensions you habitually maintain. For this reason, therefore, the first part of relaxation is the deliberate attempt to locate the various points of tension in your body. Then you will have to practise both the induction of tension in any part at will and also the exact opposite—the reduction of tension in any part at will. You will be doing the equivalent of the experiments in gear changing which must be made by the "learner-driver". In the mental field your work will be of equal importance.

Start then, with the top of the head. As you sit in your "god-form" position, direct your attention to the top of your head and observe what tensions you are maintaining there. You will probably be as surprised as I was to find that you habitually tense your scalp muscles. Owing to the fact that normally, we do not employ these muscles consciously, we are liable to forget that they can be tensed, and so a habit of involuntary tension is built up. For the time being, merely

observe whether this tension does, or does not, exist. Then shift your attention to the forehead and the face generally. You will most certainly find many tensions here. Then pass down to the throat, the chest, the abdomen, and finally to the ankles and feet. Now record carefully, on the first page of your diary, the various tension points you have found, and so conclude the first part of this examination. Now you must consider with care why these tensions are being maintained. It may be that owing to defective vision or unsuitable glasses, you are straining the muscles of the eyes and face, or perhaps you are undergoing some kind of mental strain? Whatever the cause, the muscular tensions must be eliminated. The purely physical causes such as unsuitable glasses, can be fairly easily dealt with but the mental causes are more difficult. However the important thing is to realize that they exist and then half the battle is won.

The regular practice of relaxation will usually put things straight. Having noted all the tensions of the body you are now ready for the next stage of the exercise. The foregoing tensions are involuntary, so the next step is to initiate voluntary tensions. That is to say, go over your body in the same way as before, but this time you will deliberately tense the muscles, observing, at the same time, the sensations which arise. When you have done this, sweep your attention again over the body, but this time deliberately relax each set of muscles. This is more difficult, since after you have gone on to a new area, you will find that you have involuntarily tensed up some of the preceding muscles, and you will have to start again. As a matter of fact, it is much the best thing to practise with only a part of the body in the early stages of training, and to become proficient in relaxing that part. Having achieved this, your relaxation may be extended to the next area until you have gone over the whole body.

Now we come to the most difficult part of this exercise. You have learnt to relax, and you have also practised deliberate tensioning of the muscles. The next stage is to arrive at a balance point between these two. Having arrived at a point of real relaxation, you must not allow yourself to drift into a lazy, hazy mental state, but must preserve a poised condition in which, although relaxation is good you are ready for immediate action should occasion demand. You will find that this poised condition is most difficult to attain, and only after repeated efforts will the mental "trick" be gained. Just as in learning to ride a cycle, the trick of balance is quite suddenly acquired, so it is with this particular subconscious mental habit. Once you have gained it, however, it will become automatic.

So we have three stages in this part of the exercise. First, the

location of tensions. Then the relaxing of tensions, and finally the establishing of a poised muscular condition. The first part will not need to be repeated once you have located, and dealt with, the causes of these involuntary tensions, but the other two are essential parts of the exercise and must always be carried out.

After steady practice, you will be able to obtain complete relaxation and correct poise, and some part of this must have been acquired before you proceed to the next part of the work. As I warned you, this preliminary work can become monotonous, but it is vital.

Now we come to the matter of breathing exercises. At a later point in your training you will be taught certain special breathing exercises, but the one I am giving you now will be quite sufficient for you for the time being. It has been observed that there is a very real connection between the rate of breathing and the emotional activity of the mind. You must have noticed, of course, that when you are in a highly emotional state of consciousness your breathing rate is considerably increased. If, on the other hand, your emotions are not aroused, your breathing tends to become much slower. This correlation between the emotional states and the act of breathing was noted long ago and advantage was taken of it, the reason being that it is a reversible thing. Slow down the emotional surges of the mind, and the breathing slows down too; the reverse is equally true, slow down the breathing and the emotions calm at once. Upon this simple fact the basic breathing exercise has been constructed. It will be helpful if you try it out for yourself, and find out how this linking action works. Breathe rapidly and observe the results which you obtain. Quite apart from the emotional effects, you will find there are certain bodily reactions, which are due to the excessive oxygen intake. Incidentally, if you are engaged all day in a sedentary occupation, this rapid breathing helps to oxygenate the blood stream, and is beneficial in a purely physical sense. But if you use such a rapid breathing exercise, do not overdo it. It forms no part of the exercise itself.

Having observed the effects of such rapid breathing, try slowing down the breathing rate. Again you will find that there are certain physical effects, and again there is a point at which you must stop, for the present at least. As you have read in my former book, there is a real danger in misunderstanding or misapplying some of the instruction. Particularly is this the case when you are told to "hold the breath". As I pointed out, there is a tendency to inflate the lungs and then to close the mouth and hold the breath in by muscular tension. This can place a severe strain on the lungs, and however necessary it

may be under certain physical conditions it must not be used in the breathing exercises.

We will now consider the first breathing exercise. Having assumed the meditation posture which has already been described, and having relaxed, breathe in through the nose and fill the lungs as far as you can. I say, as far as you can, for as a rule we are seldom using the full capacity of the lung system. What is known as "shallow" breathing is the general method of breathing, and it is possibly responsible for much of the ill-health we see around us. More particularly is this the case where people are pursuing sedentary occupations. From the purely physical viewpoint, therefore, these breathing exercises are of value. From the magical standpoint they are still more valuable, as I shall again point out at a later stage.

In the beginning of your training, however, you should aim at gradually increasing the volume of air you can draw in without strain. Remember, the lungs must be allowed to stretch in order to take in this extra supply, and if you have been using only shallow breathing all your life, it is somewhat difficult for the lungs suddenly to accommodate the new rhythm. I am stressing this point because, although it seems very simple, it is most important.

Now you have inhaled what is, for the present at least, a full charge of air. Use a rhythm in this. Count mentally, one, two, three, four, for your inbreathing, and then try to base your speed upon some natural rhythm around you, or upon the ease with which your lungs work. Perhaps at the beginning, you will find it a considerable effort to take these deep breaths, and this will impose a natural check upon your speed. However, if you count mentally and acquire the habit of correctly timing your counting, you will find that there is a definite duration of time which you will establish for this inbreathing.

It is now necessary to hold the breath, and if you have used this count of four, then the breath should be held for as long as it takes you to count two in the same rhythm. Hold the breath by keeping the ribs in the position they are in at the end of the inspiration, and keep the throat relaxed. It should now be possible for you, by tapping sharply on your chest, to expel the air, or some of it, simply by this action. When you have gained proficiency in this you have taken the first step towards real breath control. Now you must exhale. Again use the fourfold count: one, two, three, four, as you release the chest muscles. You must now use these muscles to squeeze out, as it were, the remaining air. As a general rule we only use a small part of the lungs, and when we exhale, there are considerable areas of lung which are not used in their entirety. In these areas, carbon dioxide gas,

which should normally be exhaled, is liable to accumulate, and this prevents full use of the lung machinery. So squeeze out, without strain, as much of the used air as possible, and again hold the lungs, this time in an empty state, while you count, one, two. Then begin again as you have been taught.

Do not overdo the number of deep controlled breaths at this stage of your training. At a later date, when you will be using more advanced forms of breathing, you will be able to increase them, but for the present restrict yourself to six complete inhalations and exhalations. When I want you to go further in this I will let you know.

This breathing exercise is the only one which you will be given which is merely a breathing exercise. At a later stage you will receive more elaborate exercises involving the breath; but they are based upon a different principle. I think it may be helpful if I briefly outline it here.

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I have referred to the "etheric double" or "vital body" as it is also termed, and it is with this double that further exercises will deal. In the vital body, as the name implies, the life forces circulate in their appropriate channels. But the vital body is not built of ordinary physical matter as is the grosser vehicle we use during our earthly life. The vital body is composed of a finer type of substance, and is the dividing line between dense matter and the subtle matter of the Inner Planes. It is, in fact, sometimes known as the "linking-body", since it forms a link between the physical and the more subtle types of matter. Upon it, as upon a mould, the physical body is built and all the processes of life in the material body depend upon the vital forces which are channelled by it. In the vital body are the connecting points which link the two levels of the physical and the so-called "astral". It will therefore be clear that the vital body carries not only the life-currents of the physical body, but also that it forms the bridge between the physical brain-consciousness and the types of consciousness of the inner planes. It is well to remember that this normal waking consciousness is only part of our full consciousness. In psychological work we speak of the subconscious, conscious, and super-conscious levels of the mind, and of these three, the physical brain consciousness is very much the junior partner. At the same time, although in many ways it is inferior to the other two, it is the growing point of our mental evolution, and as such it is of the very greatest importance.

I do want to emphasize this point, for so many of the books you will read which deal with these subjects, give the impression that the physical body and the physical plane consciousness are in some way

evil, and must be abandoned for what is referred to as the "higher" consciousness. This is a very old teaching. It is found in the Neo-Platonic philosophy, and in the form of the Manichean heresy it found its way into the teachings of the early Christian Church. Although repudiated by the Church it has reappeared throughout the centuries. One of its forms is what is known as "Puritanism", and when the eastern teachings were first introduced to the west the old error found new ground.

In this school, of which you are now an apprentice member, we entirely repudiate it. The Qabalistic philosophy, which is at the core of all our teaching, views the physical world and the physical body in quite a different way. So far from regarding matter as evil, it is thought of as the "luminous garment of the Eternal", and as being in itself the manifestation of the Eternal Being. There is then, from this viewpoint, no *intrinsic* evil in matter, and the physical plane is just as "spiritual" as any of the so-called "higher planes". But it is quite definitely a limiting plane. It compels consciousness to concentrate itself within certain fairly narrow limits, and to those who have had any contact with the abounding life of the inner planes, it does seem definitely inferior to them. Since, however, our personal consciousness is the growing point of our mental evolution, it is essential for us to be able to use the physical consciousness efficiently. It is of very little use to develop the "higher consciousness" if it is not possible, at the same time, to correlate it with the waking brain-consciousness. The descent of the god-like consciousness into the physical can only result, in such a case, in a blinding inrush of light which, so far from being "illumination" will blind the normal awareness, just as a sudden beam of intense light will temporarily blind the physical eyes. So what we aim at in the training of students is the gradual development of the normal consciousness until it is capable of being taken up into the inner forms of awareness.

So in all your training bear this cardinal teaching in mind: "That which God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." Never despise or denigrate either the physical plane or the body which is built of the substance of that plane. I shall constantly remind you of these things in the course of our work together, and I do want you to write this fundamental law upon your mental tablets, so that in all your magical work it remains as a conditioning factor therein.

I want here to give you a very serious warning about the use of the psycho-physical exercises, one based upon my own experience. It is very necessary, of course, to take into account the physical body and its etheric counterpart, and there exists in the east a considerable

amount of teaching and practice which is concerned with this aspect of training. This is commonly termed "Hatha Yoga", and many people who are working, or attempting to work, along Eastern lines are wont to give us portentous warnings of the dangers of Hatha Yoga. There is truth in what they say, but the abuse of a thing should not prevent us making a wise use of it. In our school there are the same teachings and practices as those of the Hatha Yogis, but they are adapted to the physical and psychic make-up of western pupils.

However, we are all somewhat apt to make mistakes, especially in the period of our training when we begin to think that, as, so far, we have satisfactorily done the work set us, we can add something from another source, a book we have read, or the teachings we have heard from other organizations. I was no exception to this, and although I was warned against mixing the exercises, I thought I knew best, so I tacked on to my routine meditation work one of the yoga breathing exercises. It certainly produced results, but these were of two kinds. I developed an increased psychic awareness, but at the same time I most thoroughly disorganized part of my psychological machinery. It took me a long time, even with the help of my own teacher, before I was able to clear the effects of my ill-advised action. I am anxious that you should not fall into the same trap; it is far too costly a method of acquiring experience.

CHAPTER V

MEDITATION

THE first mental exercises you have been given are, as you will remember, the "Preparation of the Place" and the "Calling back". Of these, the latter seems more appropriate for meditation during the evening, rather than in the early morning. It is not advisable, however, to meditate *late* in the evening when the body is tired and the fine etheric double is strained. Any meditation done late at night should be of a quiet non-strenuous nature. I will tell you more about this later.

So you will start with the calling-back exercise, and then proceed to the preparation of the place. When you have done this, you can approach the definite subject which has been set for you. I expect you will be rather disappointed when you find what it is, therefore, before I describe it, I will give you some idea of the principle involved. You are familiar, of course, with the statement that all knowledge is ultimately based on the impressions received through the senses. By many physiologists this is limited to impressions derived through the physical senses alone, but we have found by experience that there are very many impressions which come into the mind through the *non-physical* senses. In this first series of exercises, however, we shall be dealing with the knowledge gained through the material senses.

I have told you of two types of exercises: one in which images are allowed to rise in the mental field, and the other where the mental images are deliberately formed. It is therefore necessary that the student should cultivate the power of observation which results in the building up of a stock of clearly cut mental images which can be recalled at will into the consciousness. People vary tremendously in this respect. Some possess what is termed an "eidetic" memory and are able to recall at will very clear-cut images, while others can only summon up vague and misty forms, though these are usually charged with a considerable amount of emotional feeling. But vague drifting ideas are not what is desired. It is very necessary, therefore, that you begin to form definite pictures in your mind. Incidentally, this term "pictures" includes not only the *visual* images, but the olfactory, tactile, gustatory, and sound impressions as well. Proficiency in this all-round image building is gained only by the development of a greatly neglected faculty, that of *observation*.

It is therefore very necessary for you to cultivate this power. This may best be done by using the events of the day as your field of work. For instance, you are on your way to work and are travelling in a bus or train. There will be many others around you, all intent on their own affairs. There will be a strong temptation to withdraw into yourself, to vaguely "day-dream" or perhaps immerse yourself in the contents of the morning paper. Instead, having begun your magical training, you will avail yourself of this opportunity to develop your powers of observation. I am not asking you to emulate the feats of Sherlock Holmes, as recorded by the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, but I am suggesting that you turn your attention outwards to what is going on around you, and observe deliberately, without impertinent staring, what those around you are doing, and what is happening in the streets through which you are passing. This sounds very dull and humdrum, but it is really a very important part of your training.

Apart from anything else, you will remember that one of the objects of life on this physical world is to develop the power of control over matter, or so we believe. This covers far more than the mere conquest of physical happenings, for the moral and ethical aspects of life must also be brought into line with the eternal spiritual principles which lie behind all manifestation. But first things first, and so we must first begin to conquer in the purely material levels. All subjective emotional "spirituality" which endeavours to escape from the toil and toil of everyday life on the physical plane is an "escapism", and although we may occasionally allow ourselves the luxury of a rest "behind the lines", we must always remember that we have to return to the battle. This battle of life is one in which we must all take our part, and to endeavour to escape from it entirely is "cowardice in the face of the enemy"; it is also of no real avail, since, at one point or other in the future, we *must* face up to those disagreeable things which we have tried to avoid.

I know this sounds rather hard and somewhat removed from the soothing teachings which are so often put forward as spiritual and mystical instruction, and I daresay you may be thinking as you read this, of those men and women who are members of the contemplative Orders of the Christian Church, as well as those in other religions who follow a similar path. I can only say that on the path of High Magic spiritual soothing syrup is not dispensed, any more than it is on the Mystic Way. Spiritual consolation is available, one is not left indefinitely in the Slough of Despond or the Giant's Castle. There are ministrations which are given us, and there are, increasingly, periods

of refreshment. But "*after* labour, refreshment". There is a rhythm in these things. As for the contemplatives, if you were to have the vocation for their path, you would find that it is not mere escapism, nor retreat from life, but a most strenuous endeavour to share in the life of the world *after another fashion*. But, to every man his own master, and as far as you are concerned, your vocation is to the Magical Path, and you come, therefore, under its particular training and discipline. So it is that instead of advising our apprentices to meditate on lofty things, we start them off on very mundane exercises. To use a phrase which is often misused by occult students, we start from below and work upwards. At the same time, of course, you are instructed to look upwards and to strive without ceasing to lift up your consciousness to higher levels.

I have used the word "higher", but, as I have told you, there is no such thing as an absolute differentiation between higher and lower. These terms are relative, and so many occult students have made the great mistake of despising what they termed the "lower planes" in their desire to reach the "higher planes". This, according to our teaching, is a fundamental error, and we are instructed to give our apprentices an entirely different point of view. As you are aware, our school is based on the Qabalistic philosophy which is the Hebrew esoteric tradition, and one of its basic teachings is that not only did the Eternal Being whom we call God "create" this universe, but also that He is present throughout all its manifestations, and all grades of matter are, in fact, actual expressions of His essential nature. So the physical plane is just as "spiritual" as any of the finer grades of matter which are usually referred to as the "higher planes". In our tradition we refer to these as the "inner planes". This avoids the false idea that spirit and matter are eternally opposed to each other. This erroneous idea has plagued the esoteric schools throughout their history, and in the guise of what is termed the "Manichean heresy" it entered the Christian Church in its early days, and here it has shown its face from time to time throughout the centuries. The Catholic Church repudiated it, but the strain persisted, and after the Reformation, when the protestant churches broke away from Rome, it reappeared in some of the new religious organizations.

We, however, regard matter, of whatever grade it may be, as the "luminous garment of the Eternal", a living garment, part of the Eternal, or to be more precise, a direct expression of the infinite life. It follows therefore, that our material bodies and material nature around us are equally "holy", and neither of them should be despised. I have stressed this idea in order that you may start free from

the mental blinkers of the dichotomy of "high" and "low". Strive always to realize that the Eternal is manifesting in all things, yes, all things both in heaven and earth and in the waters under the earth, and that in very truth, as St Paul said, quoting a Greek poet, "in Him we live and move and have our being."

Having considered this important point, let us return to our meditation training. The habit of observation must be cultivated if you would build up and use the mental images, and the best way is as I have indicated. Care must be taken however, not to use this training in observation as a means of "listening-in" to other people's private conversation. I have known this to happen, and the apprentice concerned, when accused of it, blandly replied that he was training his power of attending to sound! It may seem a small point, but it is a very vital one that under *no circumstances* whatsoever, whether by psychic or physical means, must we pry into the private lives of others. This prohibition is based upon a certain principle which is to be found in the Bible. There it is said, "Cursed is the man that removeth his neighbour's landmark." In the purely material and agricultural conditions of primitive life this was a very real danger, and in more sophisticated ways it is still present to-day. In another great Order, this prohibition is phrased thus: "Cursed is he who breaks a superfcies."

"What is this boundary, this landmark?" you may ask. To answer that we must consider certain details of the structure of man. We are far too prone to think of our mind as being in some way boxed up in our skull, though just whereabouts therein we are uncertain. But the truth is that the mind is in all parts of the body. It would be more correct to say, not that the mind is in the body, but rather that the body is in the mind. The mind field extends around the body, just as the magnetic field extends around the actual steel magnet. This field of force around each one of us is termed the "aura", and it is within our own particular surround, our own aura, that we have to work. Its limits form what is sometimes called the "Ring-Pass-Not". This term is applied in the esoteric schools, also to signify the boundary of the universe, for we teach that the whole universe is held in the consciousness of the Eternal, just as the little universe of ourselves is held within the consciousness of that spirit which is our real Self.

So the Ring-Pass-Not must be respected, and we must never trespass in another's field of working. As you will see, on reflection, this fundamental law covers a very wide field, and it is important that you should build it most thoroughly into your philosophy, for, as you begin to bring into action some of the latent powers within you the

temptation will be strong to use them to "influence people", and to cause them to work for your advantage. There are very many books published at the present time which purport to teach you to influence others *in your own interest*. This practice is forbidden in the esoteric schools of both the east and west. Should you infringe this rule, you will soon find that you have ceased to be my apprentice. Always remember that the motive of your work is summed up in the words "I desire to know in order to serve." If it is necessary for you to use your powers for the good of any other person, then you will be given the opportunity, but any attempt to apply such powers without the consent of the person concerned is fraught with danger. At a later stage in your training you will again come up against this law, for it is a fundamental teaching, not an arbitrary rule.

Well now, you are about to begin your training in observation. Here are a few points to observe. Do not concentrate your attention on one particular person or thing; allow your observation to range over as wide a field as possible, and let that field include the peculiar activities of buses and car drivers, to say nothing of the vagaries of dogs and children. It is no part of your training to be so intent on one particular object that you are knocked down by a bus or car; nor to disorganize all the traffic by "jay walking" blithely across a busy street. In either case you might end up by becoming a resident of the inner planes before the time was ripe.

(I have known an instance of this in the case of a psychic who was in the habit of "opening-up" her psychic perception without any regard to what was happening around her on the physical plane).

Here is a good exercise in observation, an exercise which will develop that power of allowing the images to rise.

Ask yourself what you know of the scenery of the road in which you live; what types of houses are to be found in it; how many windows has the biggest house; what is the difference between the two sides of the street. Formulate these questions, and try to answer them. You will probably find, as I did when I first started doing this exercise, that although you may have gone down that street some hundreds of times, you cannot with any certainty give a detailed description of it. It is therefore good practice to give it a closer scrutiny as you pass down it, then you will be able at a later stage to use both the images you have "built" up and those you can summon by the developed power of observation. Do not try to do this in one fell swoop, as it were, or you will end by observing too much at once; before you have trained your mind to record the sense-images in an orderly fashion. I have spoken of visual imagery alone, but it is

obvious that you should observe also the impressions received from the other senses.

A variant of this exercise is the so-called "Kim's game". As you will remember Kim undergoes a test for this very power of observation. He is shown a tray of jewels, and after a minute's steady observation of them the tray is covered and he has to say what is on it. Actually this is a rather difficult exercise for the beginner, though it does give some idea of the extent of his powers of observation. I would suggest to you that you occasionally use Kim's game as a check on your progress in observation.

As with all these exercises, there is a definite principle involved, and it is left to your own ingenuity to devise other exercises based upon this basic idea. In this way you begin to work intelligently, and you are not so likely to be too dependent on me. In all these things always strive to find the underlying principle involved, never simply follow the letter of the instructions. This is a most important point. It is true that you may not always be able to grasp all the significance of any particular exercise, but you should be able to get a general idea of the point behind it. If you cannot do this then in all probability the fault lies in myself. So whenever, after careful study of any exercise, you cannot grasp the principle involved please tell me, and I will do my best to make it clearer. Never think that to query instructions in this way will show you to be backward in your work. We are all rather chary of displaying our ignorance, more particularly when we are under training; but, as I have already told you, the basic foundations must be laid without any gaps due to inability to learn certain essentials. There is another point involved here. The mind being a creature of habit and inclined to laziness, will sometimes try to dodge the performance of some exercise by a curious blurring of perception. It would almost appear that there is a sort of mental blind which descends when an effort is made to get at the root idea of any particular teaching, and it is necessary, when this occurs, to repeat your efforts. If you persevere in this, the mind gives in, and the mental "block" disappears. It will probably recur over and over again, but if you persevere it will finally die away, and the new habit will have been established. I cannot stress too strongly the importance of this endeavour to escape from the tyranny of following the letter of the law without any understanding of the principles upon which the instruction is based. Of course, there may be exercises given whose *full* significance cannot be grasped until further teaching gives you the relevant clue, but it should always be possible for you to get a good general comprehension of the basic ideas concerned. If

this should not happen to be the case, then, as I have said, the fault must lie with me.

You will often find when you receive my instructions, that it will help you to absorb them if you first of all read them through very carefully and then leave them to "incubate" for a time. You can then return to them and you will find them to be more easily understood. This is because your subconscious mind has been doing some preliminary spade-work on them. This particular activity of the subconscious should be used to the full, it saves a lot of conscious mental struggle.

Here I want to give you some instruction with visual pictures. There are two ways of visualizing any particular object or diagram. One is by a wholesale effort in which the entire picture or diagram is visualized. The drawback to this method is that should one line or detail be forgotten, the whole picture is falsified. This is particularly the case when visualizing a diagram such as that very important *mandala*, the "Tree of Life". The other method of visualizing is first to get an idea of the underlying principle of whatever picture you are using. By establishing the idea in your mind, you will be able to clothe it with the correct images. Give your picture a name, and use this name to evoke from your memory the correct images, but be precise in your naming. Thus "men at work" is too vague, but "men digging up roadway" will enable the correct memory images to arise, and will facilitate their full emergence. In the next instructions, I shall begin to give you the general idea of the great glyph, "The Tree of Life", and you will then be asked to attempt to draw it and let me have the results.

I remember another pupil of mine who resented this routine work. He considered that as he knew all about it, there was no need for repeated drawings of the diagram. But it is a very necessary discipline, more particularly if the student's drawing technique is weak. At a later date you will be asked to draw this glyph from memory, and if you have not trained yourself to understand the underlying principles on the Tree, your drawing will show this lack of comprehension. So do not be annoyed if you have to make these drawings, and if I severely criticize them.

When you begin to work with the Tree, you will find that all this preliminary work in observation will stand you in good stead, for the work you will have to do with that great glyph falls into the two divisions we have already noted; the building of images and the recalling of them at will.

Do not forget to record your results in your magical diary. I know,

from practical experience, how mortifying it is to have to send in the diary with about half the entries marked "Forgot to do meditation", or "Forgot to give Salutes", or "Just could not meditate to-day"! Until the mind has been trained entries such as these are bound to recur with monotonous persistence in the diary! But they must be recorded, even though you feel ashamed of them.

Often I wished the earth would swallow me up when I received back my diary, with the addition of scribbled comments, of a more or less sarcastic nature, against the entries. But just as an apprentice in any trade must be prepared to undergo the criticism of the craftsman under whom he is training, so also must you. There is, of course, constructive as well as destructive criticism; as a general rule I shall criticize your efforts from the constructive angle. There may, however, be occasions, as there were in my own training, when only a definitely destructive criticism can be given. When this is the case, I hope that neither of us will be found wanting: I to make it and you to take it!

CHAPTER VI

THE TREE OF LIFE

YOU will have observed, when you read my book *The Magician*, that we of the Western Tradition use as our *mandala*, or meditation Glyph, a most wonderful composite symbol which comes to us from the esoteric school of the Hebrews.

It is called *Otz Chiim* or "The Tree of Life", and is defined among us as "the mighty, all-embracing glyph of the universe and the soul of man". I do not propose to describe it in detail, since a far better exposition of it has already been given to the public by one of the greatest of our western teachers, the late Dion Fortune, in a book entitled *The Mystical Qabalah*. This book will give you the best outline of the Tree of Life, and it is imperative that you obtain and use it, both as a textbook and a source of reference.

If you cannot obtain it through the publisher, I advise searching in the second-hand shops or writing to one of the many second-hand booksellers who advertise in the various occult and psychic publications. It may seem that you are being set a somewhat difficult task, but this is in line with the general practice of the magical schools. As Eliphas Levi, who wrote extensively on these subjects, has pointed out, the man who rises at dawn and goes out to cut the branch which he then proceeds to form into his magical wand, will develop his will in so doing, and this principle is implicit in all magical training. Even as the apprentice in a trade is left to struggle to some extent with his new work, so also is the magical apprentice. Therefore put energy into the task of obtaining this book. When you have it, remember that it is not a book which can be read through at one sitting, nor is it in any way "light" reading. Far more teaching is to be found in it than appears from the first, or even twenty-first, reading. After many years of work in this field, I still find new avenues of thought opening up as I re-read it.

However, before you start to study the lore of the Tree as given in Dion Fortune's work, I want to give you a simple idea of what it is all about. Remember that behind the Tree is a great body of philosophic and theosophic doctrine which is known as the *Qabalah*.

The name signifies "from mouth to ear", i.e., it was a teaching which was transmitted orally from teacher to pupil. It was only in about the twelfth century that any of it was written down, and even

then it was not very clearly defined. The Western Tradition is like a river which receives the tributaries from many sources, and is enriched thereby. In this it resembles the Christian Church, and the same simile was applied to that church by St Augustine.

However, though the Tradition has received waters from many strange fountains, the core of its teaching is organized around this mighty glyph of the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, microcosmically and macrocosmically.

The Tree is in reality a very wonderful card-index system, and I want you, in the first place, to use it as such. Later on you will find we have many other uses for it, but in your first exercises it must be used in its most elementary form. It is to be built into your mental content in such a way that it becomes what is sometimes referred to as a "reference-frame". All the multiplicity of detail which is to be found in life can be found a place on the Tree, and as the definition I have given you indicates, the circumstances of your own inner life, as well as those of the outer world, can be dealt with by the use of this symbol. You will learn, in this training, to "place on the Tree" all the factors which you will be asked to observe in life. It is a process of sorting out and classifying all the happenings of life in order to arrive at a definite pattern.

The subconscious mind is a great pattern former, but its own private mythology often bears very little relationship to the actual facts of life. It is therefore necessary to give it some foundation upon which it can build, in the same way that we give the bees in a beehive sheets of "foundation" wax, upon which they can build the honeycomb in an organized way. Left to themselves they do not work so neatly. Thus it is with your mind. If we want to build it up on the best lines, then we must have some pattern upon which to work.

You will see, as you study the Tree diagram, that there are ten circles joined together by twenty-two lines in a certain pattern, and the circles and lines together form the thirty-two Paths of the Ageless Wisdom. The circles or *Sephiroth**, as they are termed, represent the powers and forces of the universe, and also the points where your own individual consciousness comes into contact with those forces. The lines between them, usually known as the "Paths", represent the subjective inner world of consciousness which is common to both yourself and the planet on which you live. This idea of the earth as a living thing may amaze you, for we are so accustomed to thinking of it as a dead mineral ball whirling around the sun, that any idea of planetary spirits has been relegated to the superstitious past of the

*The ten circles are known in the plural as *Sephiroth*; the singular is *Sephirah*.

race. But esoteric science teaches that nothing in the whole universe is "dead", everywhere there is life, from the smallest atom to the greatest star. Neither does life cease to be anywhere; it fills the voids between the atoms. Indeed, according to our teaching, all manifestation is nothing more than the activity of the One Life. Herein we differ in some part from those who think of "creation" as the making of something which is apart from that which caused it to be. We think of created things as being the actual manifestations, under the veils of time and space, of the life of the Eternal.

If we should use a prayer, derived from the east, in which we implore God to lead us "from the unreal to the Real", we do not think that the life of the universe is less present in one plane than in another; *it is only our perception* with its limited range which prevents us from seeing that all is indeed a "theophany", a manifestation of the Pleroma, the Fullness of the Eternal. It is one of the aims of esoteric training to bring us to the point where we know this by experience, and have thereby developed or unfolded from within us that type of consciousness which is known as "cosmic consciousness". Remember, however, that other schools are also endeavouring to develop this form of consciousness in their pupils; avoid, therefore, attempting to pass superior judgement on them. Your task is to get on with the business of applying these teachings to yourself.

Now, I want you first of all, to get or make up a card-index system, with ten heading cards. Each of these cards is to be given the title of one of the *Sephiroth* on the Tree, and under the title the general idea of the significance of this particular station is to be written. Then, and this is most important, the rest of the card is to be filled in with a coloured circle; the symbolic representation of the sephira concerned. When you have made up your ten heading cards in this way, you are ready to begin your work with them, and you may do this as follows. Obtain other sub-cards, and then take your chosen *sephirah*, trying at the same time to discern in the world around you and in the circumstances of your own life, the working-out of the principle expressed by this *sephirah*.

Let me give you an example. We will take the *sephirah Geburah*; it is one of the stations on the Tree which lends itself to illustration. As you will see, if you consult the table, *Geburah* is usually termed "Fear", and its particular quality is held to be destruction. Now there are many occult students who attempt to by-pass this principle of destruction. They regard all destruction as evil. Indeed I have heard it put forth as an axiom that all that destroys is evil, and all that constructs is good. But this is an infantile view of life, and does not

correspond to the facts. Here you must remember that the *sephiroth* on the side-pillars of the Tree are arranged in balancing pairs, and the opposite station to *Geburah* is *Gedulah* whose quality is constructive. You should here bear in mind that one of the magical statements is, "Equilibrium is the basis of the Great Work." This is beautifully expressed by Tennyson in the words which he puts into the mouth of the dying Arthur:

**The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.**

Too great concentration of any one quality, or its persistence for too long a time *is* evil, for it is an unbalanced force: one of the "Kings of Edom", to use the *Qabalistic* term. When a power is working in this unbalanced way, we refer to it as being in the kingdom of the *Qlippoth*. Every station on the Tree, therefore has its obverse counterpart, and your work is to balance the forces in your own little microcosm, your own subjective world within. When you achieve this, in any degree whatsoever, then the corresponding forces in the universe will become responsive to your will.

Now let us study the action of our chosen *sephirah*. As we walk down the street, we see that demolition has started on some old and dilapidated houses which have been an eyesore for a long time. The workmen are busy with pick and shovel and bull-dozer, and soon there will be nothing there but a bare patch of ground. However we have been told by our local council that this plot is to be used for the building of a new school which will give to the neighbourhood a vastly improved education service. This is a good example of the activity of *Geburah*. But as we continue our walk down the street, we also see that an unoccupied house which was in quite good condition has been attacked by some irresponsible people, either children or adults, and the windows have been smashed, doors forced, and some of the woodwork stripped away. This is an example of purposeless destruction and comes under the heading of *Qlippothic* activity, unbalanced force, and is, therefore, evil. Not only can you see the activity of this *sephirah* and its unbalanced presentation in such obvious examples; it is also to be seen in all aspects of life. In your own body it is at work, for in the formative period of your growth, the building-up process goes on more actively than the breaking-down process, but gradually the breaking-down forces assume a greater power, and the body begins to break down. Now the balanced action of the complementary forces is "health", and as you will observe this condition of health is not confined to the purely physical

plane. All the levels of your being must be balanced in this way if you would enjoy perfect health. The modern understanding of what the medical profession terms "psycho-somatic" treatment is based on the fact that all the levels of your being are affecting, and being affected by, each other.

Your task, therefore, in your work on the *sephirah* is to look out for its action in daily life, and to observe also what happens when its particular quality is either less or more manifest than is required for balance. You will have noticed that the question of "intention" comes into the picture, since it is the motive causing any particular action which determines whether it is "good" or "bad". There is also the larger picture of the community into which all such action is to be fitted. Here conflicting loyalties make decision difficult, and it is very necessary to exercise what has been called the first virtue on the Path, namely that of "Discrimination".

When, in your meditation work on the Tree, you are dealing with any one of the paired *sephiroth*, you will be required to observe the action of both, in order that you may appreciate this question of balance; but with those stations on the Tree which occupy what is known as the "Middle Pillar", a somewhat different method is used. It is still true that unbalance is possible on these *sephiroth*, just as with the others, but they have no complementary stations to balance them. They are in some measure, however, the balancing points between the paired *sephiroth*, and are the spheres wherein your consciousness works, as you will see from the Tree diagram.

There is a fourfold method of using the Tree of Life, and this is of the greatest importance in your training. The Tree, with all its stations and symbolism, can be, indeed it must be, considered from four different levels. Now here it is necessary for me to caution you against picturing these "levels", or "worlds" as they are termed in *Qabalistic* training, as being one above the other in space. Perhaps a radio analogy will help. Long waves, medium waves, and short waves can be received by us if we have a radio set which responds to them, but none of these three waves is above the other, and although we may speak of high waves or low waves, they all interpenetrate each other and are equally important. So it is with the Tree in the Four Worlds. Always remember this, because it is a cardinal point in our system of training.

This fourfold division is usually described under the following heads:

Atziluth. The world of Archetypes.

Briah. The world of Creation.

Yetzirah. The world of Formation.

Assiah. The world of Matter.

In practical meditation, this classification is used in this way. The particular quality of the *sephirah* which has been chosen as the subject for our attention is regarded from each one of these four aspects. Thus, if we take the *sephirah Geburah* again as our example, we shall study its action on each of these levels of manifestation. (You will remember that I told you that you would find that the monthly subject for your meditation exercise would give you more scope than at first seemed likely.)

In the *Qabalistic* system, we find that one of the root-ideas is that of "Adam Kadmon", the Heavenly Man, which is understood as the sum total of all manifesting forces in the universe. Pictured under this symbolic form, the various stations of the Tree are identified with definite areas of the body of the Heavenly Man. During the Middle Ages, this identification became somewhat naive, but the basic ideas were retained. Curiously enough, when the great Swedish seer, Swedenborg, experienced the "illuminations" which enabled him to put out the great body of doctrine which forms the base of the Swedenborgian, or "New Church", he put forward this age-old concept of the Heavenly Man. But other systems of philosophy in the east have also had this same teaching, and in modern psychology we are finding that the symbol of the Heavenly Man is to be found in the depths of our mental being.

There is an occult maxim which is attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, though it is fairly evident that in its present form, it is of a much later period than the times of that somewhat shadowy figure. It declares, "As above, so below", and this doctrine of the correspondence which exists between the Macrocosm, the great universe, and the Microcosm, which is man, underlies all the occult philosophies of both east and west.

So, just as you must train yourself to see the operations of the various forces in the objective world around you, you must also study the action of those same energies in yourself, in your own subjective world.

In the outer world of manifestation, there are certain points which are taken as being the particular channels through which the living energies of the eternal are expressed, and in the *Qabalistic* philosophy these are equated with the sun and its planets. As you will see, as you continue your study of the Tree, there is implicit in it a very real astrological scheme; as, of course, there is in the eastern philosophical scheme. Astrology has fallen into disrepute, owing to the misuse of the teaching in both ancient and modern times, but in reality it is a lofty philosophy, *and as such has nothing whatever to do*

with the "sun-sign" astrological prophecies given out by the national press!

But in our teaching, we refer not only to the stars outside ourselves, but to what are often called the "interior stars" which exist within us. This teaching, based upon the seership of generations of workers in this field, states that just as there are centres of the cosmic energy located in definite places in the outer universe, so there are similar centres of the same living power which are located in certain definite parts of our own inner universe. In the east these centres are commonly referred to as the *chakras* or "wheels", and to clairvoyant vision they do appear as small whirling vortices similar to fiery wheels. These *chakras* are described in many books, and are said to be seven in number. Different authorities give different centres as belonging to these seven, but in the main they agree on five or six of them. As I was taught in India, and have since verified for myself, there are many more such psychic centres, and although as a general rule the seven usually described will be active to some extent, it can and does happen that some peculiarity of temperament or training will cause another of these *chakras* to become active, while one of the usual seven will not be working so well.

In our system we give to these points of psychic activity the names of the planetary bodies, hence the term I have used: "interior stars". As you will see on your Tree diagram, these heavenly bodies are attributed to the *sephiroth*, and when you use the Tree as a subjective method, then you will find that the various planetary symbols are related to different areas of your body and to different psychic centres.

The *chakras* are the points where your subjective universe makes contact with the greater universe around you, and through them you not only receive sense impressions from the Inner Planes, but they also act as channels through which the energies of those levels make contact with you and arouse within you their own peculiar powers. Here is a very important point which I want to impress upon you. The powers and energies with which you work are cosmic forces which are ever working in all aspects of the created universe. These same forces are also at work in your own subjective universe, and the processes of esoteric training are designed to allow the microcosm to be the channel of the same cosmic energies, which will then well up within you. Do not be always looking outwards for these potencies. The outer energies are used to stimulate and induce the inner powers to manifest. As the title of one of the New Thought books puts it very aptly, "Within you is the Power".

Remember, however, that the principal *chakras* are very closely connected with what are known as the endocrine glands, those marvellous chemists of the body, and unwise concentration upon the psychic centres in the body can result in glandular unbalance. So beware of trying *unregulated* experiments, but stick to the meditations you are given. At a later date you will be encouraged to devise experiments, but by then you will have learnt to work with the underlying laws which govern them.

There is a very important principle which I want to explain to you, at this stage of your training, and it is one which you must always keep in mind. It is, that the energies and forces with which you will be working, although welling up from within the depths of your own subjective self, *are not your own powers*, but aspects of the universal cosmic Life finding expression through you. To use a rough analogy; you press down an electric light switch and the electric current causes your lamp to light up. Now you did not make the electric current, neither is it your personal property, except so far as you have prepared a channel for it in your house and have paid for using it. In the same way the cosmic energies are at your personal disposal, but if you attempt to "make a corner" in them, or to draw upon them without due payment, or to misdirect them when you have got them, then you will find yourself in trouble.

You may ask, "what then, have I to pay for the use of these universal forces?" The answer is simple: you must offer sacrifice, and that sacrifice must be the offering-up of all the personal self to the service of God and man. Only thus can you hope to use the cosmic power with safety. Now many people, perhaps most people, equate "sacrifice" with "sorrow", and when they are asked to sacrifice, they feel that thereby they are losing something. But in all forms of training, and not in occult training alone, this principle of sacrifice is implicit. The trouble is that most of us, indeed the greater majority of us, regulate our lives on the "pleasure-pain" principle. This means that, like children, we attempt to hold on to that which is personally pleasant to us, and try to dodge that which is unpleasant, even though the unpleasant may be for our real benefit.

But in magical training, we have to try to adopt a more adult attitude, and to realize that it is only by losing this attachment to the pleasant, and by accepting the discipline of sacrifice, that we really progress. It is true, of course, that by sheer force of personal will, we can train ourselves to draw through the cosmic energies; they are pressures which will flow through every channel which is opened for them. However, the result of the passage of these energies through

the undisciplined and unregenerate personality is to exaggerate whatever unbalance exists therein, and just as a faulty wire in an electrical circuit may set a house on fire, so the effect of the forces upon the personality can be similarly disastrous. Those who pursue this path of unbalanced development will, if they do not realize their danger in time, join the ranks of those who are termed "Sons of perdition, wandering stars, waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame, fleeing where no man pursueth, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for the ages of the ages." However, if you sincerely and constantly reaffirm your desire to serve God and humanity, and carry out the instructions you are given, you have nothing to fear. But you *will* be tested, and the tests will be given you by life itself. You may have read highly romantic accounts of the tests which the neophytes of the Mysteries underwent, but in the actual work, the tests are not so dramatic, though they are none the less quite as effective.

I remember the case of one magical school where the students had to live together in a community and where each student had a small patch of garden which had to be cultivated by him in the periods when the rhythm of training swung from the mental to the physical. It would happen, on occasion, that as the students sat together at lunch and looked out of the window at their gardening efforts, they would see, to their dismay, that one of several animal inhabitants of the school was engaged in wrecking, in a few minutes, the result of weeks of work.

The "test" was to be able to observe this without any resentment or sorrow, since it was taught that non-attachment to results was a sovereign virtue. So it is, but not exactly in that way, and the test became one not of attachment, or non-attachment, but, as Dion Fortune told me when recounting her experiences in this school, as to whether you could acquire a good "poker face". It was, of course, held that the principal could observe clairvoyantly the inner feelings of the students, but the commendations or otherwise which were given, did not appear to substantiate this. All this is not necessary; life itself will apply the tests, and your own inner self will pass judgment upon your reactions to them.

CHAPTER VII

THE TREE AS AN INDICATOR

FROM your diary I see that you have been doing quite well in your meditations and in your use of the Tree as a "filing system". You will find that as you use the Tree in this way, that certain *Sephiroth* are easily used while others again do not seem so congenial. You are hereby instructed to pay especial attention to these particular stations, since the fact that they are so difficult or uninteresting is a sure sign that the qualities associated with them are out of balance in your own inner make-up. Possibly they are uncovering old mental repressions and inhibitions, to the dismay of your subconscious mental levels.

Apart from this, however, you are doing quite well, and are ready for the next part of the exercise. But a certain amount of careful study is necessary before this can be used by you; it is in this connection that I want to give you the principles upon which further development is based. Your work with the symbols of the Tree has begun to associate certain happenings in the outer world with the attributes of these various symbols, and they are now becoming, "charged" with mental and emotional meaning. It is only when this has been done, to some extent at least, that the next part of the work can begin, so I want you to regard your work at the present time as falling into two distinct categories. First of all, you are building foundations, and upon the strength and accuracy of these depends the safety of the superstructure you may erect. It is necessary, therefore, that these foundations should be "well and truly laid".

Now your work upon the Tree is a very important part of this foundation work, and only when you have gained the habit of seeing automatically every happening in terms of the Tree, can you be said to have truly laid the foundations of your projected work. You must therefore persevere with the basic work on the Tree of Life, before you can proceed with the second part of the task, namely the practical application of both your inner faculties and your inner powers. As an apprentice you must learn that, however clear your vision of deeper things may be, it is very necessary that you should "gain your skills" by the ancient and honourable process of hard work!

At the same time, hard work does not mean drudgery, and it is no part of the training for me to insist upon you doing monotonous

exercises simply for the sake of doing them. So although you must redouble your efforts to link the Tree with life as you experience it, I want to give you some idea of the next step in your training.

First of all, I want you to imagine that you are standing in front of the main switchboard of a great electricity station. Before you are scores of meters, coloured lights, and massive switches. As a stranger to electrical practice, what do all these things mean to you? Here and there you may see a word on a dial or on an instrument which conveys some meaning to you, such a word as "volts", or "overload", or "feeder", but whether these words bear the same meanings that are normally associated with them, you, as a stranger to electrical practice, are unable to judge.

If, therefore, you wish to understand the workings of the switchboard, you must learn something of the underlying theory of electricity, and the same thing holds good in the magical field of operations. Just as, seeing a certain meter needle move down its scale, the switchboard attendant will open this switch or close that, so in the magical work you will direct the power here and there in accordance with the indications which you receive from the mental and psychic switchboard which you have built up. But, and this is the point, you will readily perceive that you are "seeing as in a mirror, imperfectly" and in all psychism this is the case. In both the electrical and psychic switchboards however, the meters do not control the power, they simply indicate its presence and volume. The switches regulate and control it. In the case of the psychic switchboard the same principle applies.

Now the process of magical training is designed to teach you first how to receive the impressions which are coming in constantly from the inner planes, and then how to direct the forces which are being indicated by these impressions into the correct channels. Just as the meters on the board symbolize the energies which are passing through them, so their equivalents, the symbols of the Tree, show forth the cosmic energies which are coming to you.

Or, to change the metaphor, in these symbols which you are being trained to use, you are learning the Alphabet of the Mysteries. When this has been learnt, you will be able to begin to speak in the language of the Mysteries, and in this way to make your own personal contact with the Tradition and with those who stand behind it.

The human mind is not, with certain exceptions, adapted to deal with abstract things, and much of the failure of certain occult schools comes from their endeavours to train their pupils along purely abstract lines. This is as though one attempted to build a lofty structure

without the aid of scaffolding. The scaffolding is no part of the permanent building, but without its use, the actual process of construction would be much slower and more difficult. There will come a time when, if you have "made the grade", you will learn to "meditate in the empty shrine", to work without the images, but that time is in the future, and therefore you are given this training in symbolism which will enable you to prepare for that imageless working.

But do not make the mistake which many have made in the past, and which many are still making, of taking the image for the reality which it symbolizes. This is always the trouble in esoteric training, and it is against this that I especially wish to warn you. All the symbolic images, with their wealth of detail and colour, are but the indicators of the invisible forces; they are but the letters of an alphabet and in themselves have no meaning apart from that which they symbolize.

One of the most helpful facts about the system of symbolism which we use, is that it has its roots in the dim and distant past, and that it has been used in this kind of work from time immemorial. This means that, in what C. G. Jung terms the "collective unconscious" the images have been well established by the meditations of the followers of this Tradition throughout the centuries. It follows, therefore, that by meditating on these symbols you will come more easily into psychic contact with the inner forces, than if you were working with an entirely new system. The path has been well trodden and you do not need to make such an effort to establish it yourself.

So for all these reasons, you are trained on the symbol system of the *Qabalistic* Tree of Life. But, as I have told you, do not make the mistake of taking the symbol for that which it represents.

I expect you will be asking me why it is not possible to develop the psychic powers and to see the inner planes, just as, say, the spiritualist develops clairvoyance and is able to see the people and conditions of the other worlds. Here again, the same rule applies. The psychic, looking into the astral world perceives that world under the forms of earthly landscape, and usually asserts that this *is* the nature of that plane. But, as I wrote in my book, the appearances of those levels of the inner planes with which we usually come in contact are the "creations of the created"; they are due to the form building powers of the human mind working upon the plastic matter of the astral light. The real appearances of that world are quite different, and cannot be perceived under earth imagery. In very truth, we see as in a mirror, imperfectly, when we look into those worlds. But this applies equally to the ordinary things here on earth; they also are seen by us

in a mirror. If you look at your table what do you see? Not the real table; that which the scientist will tell you is an infinitely complex arrangement of forces, electrons, protons, neutrons, etc., all in rapid motion and whirling in certain predetermined paths, but only that *appearance* which is presented to physical sight.

You will see that the same principle runs through all the planes, and this is a very important point, one indeed, which it is imperative that you should keep in mind throughout all your practical work. Otherwise you will become a slave of the images, instead of their master.

It is a very good exercise in concentration to write down two or three of the Tree symbols and then construct a short story around them, a story in which the characters act in accordance with the symbol which they bear. Thus the symbol for the *Sephirah Geburah* is a red disc, and the "magical image" which is associated with it is the figure of a warrior. In the same way, the *Sephirah Netzach* is indicated by a green disc and its magical image is a beautiful woman.

Don't have too many characters in your little mental play, but keep them moving all the time. The mental images must each have the coloured disc of their appropriate *Sephirah* somewhere on their person. You should make this little play as vivid as you can, and give the emotional tone, the feeling which each figure should carry. This is a very good exercise, for it trains you in the association of the different symbols with the forces which they represent. At a later date, when you do some very important visualizing work, this preliminary exercise will be found to have laid good foundations.

When you have gained some proficiency with this exercise, you will find that it tends to overflow, as it were, into your outer life. You will find yourself automatically associating the people and the conditions around you with the appropriate station and its emotional significance. At first this will be somewhat limited; you will deal with primary colours, as it were, and neglect the various shades in between, but with practice you will find that a more flexible use of the symbols is possible.

All this, of course is, to use our switchboard analogy, learning to read the meters and to understand what their indications mean. Or, if you find our other analogy more to your taste, you are learning to put together the letters of the Alphabet of the Mysteries, and to form simple words. I am giving you these two analogies for a definite reason. First of all, it may be that one or the other is more congenial to your mental type, and this will make it easier for you to understand. The switchboard analogy uses the terms of "form", while the

alphabet analogy applies to "life" or "consciousness". You will realize, of course, that I am also indicating to you that it will be as well if you attempt to use, at least occasionally, the analogy which is not so congenial. You will have to balance up at some point in your training, so why not do it in the early stages ?

It is necessary to learn to think in a foreign language in order to speak it with any degree of fluency. In other words, the process must become automatic. In the beginning you will laboriously and consciously associate a foreign word with its English equivalent, but with practice there will come a time when the idea which is being expressed, say in French or German, is directly understood without this conscious process of translation. The translation will have become automatic and you will have begun to think in the language concerned.

So in just the same way, your mind works when you are learning the language of the Mysteries. At first you will laboriously associate each symbol with its corresponding happening around you, but with constant practice the association will become automatic, and the symbol will rise in the mind without any conscious effort on your part. But do remember, that this must only happen *when you will it to happen*; the rising up of the symbols must always be kept under the control of the will. It is most important that you should realize and act upon this here, at the beginning of your training. Unless you gain this control over the images, you will have much trouble later on.

Well now, I think I have given you sufficient for the time being. Keep on with these exercises and use your own ingenuity to make them as interesting as possible. Make a game of them, or as I have said, construct small plays around the magical images. If you have any talent for drawing use it in this way, but always remember to associate the figures in the picture with their corresponding emotion.

As I have referred to the artistic element, I am reminded of a little trick which may help you in your visualization work, and which will be most useful to you when you attempt certain telepathic experiments at a later date. If you get a short cardboard or metal tube (about two or three inches in diameter) you can use it in this way. Having drawn your picture or having chosen the station on the Tree which you will use for your exercise, place the picture or drawing on the table and look at it through the tube. You will find that the drawing or picture stands out much more clearly than before, due, of course, to the fact that you have excluded the surrounding images from claiming your attention. You must not, however, get into the habit of relying upon this aid, so in addition to those exercises in

which you use this screening tube, you must also perform a similar set without its help.

I think you now have sufficient work to do for quite a long time. As I have told you, this is foundation work, and must not be done in a "slapdash" way. So carry on with the work you have been given, and let me have your diary report in the usual way, together with any queries or comments you may wish to make. By the way, keep a close look-out on the reactions of your wife and your friends to your work in this field. Though they may not be able to see what you are *doing*, they cannot help noting what you are *becoming*, and it is by this that you will be judged. Keep an eye also upon your own reactions to them. It may be that you will find yourself becoming irritable or otherwise emotionally disturbed. If so, remember that the fault will, in the majority of cases, lie with yourself. In some ways you have not been working as you should. Before attempting to blame those around you for these upsets, take a very careful look at your work as recorded in your diary. As the entries will be read by you in cold blood, as it were, you should be able to see where you have gone wrong, and you can then take steps to put things right.

You know Nature always attempts to eject from a living organism anything that is a foreign body within it, and the group mind to which you belong will try to do the same with you as soon as you begin to become different from the mass of those around you. But we are training you to become an integral part of the group mind of your race while at the same time you develop new ways of looking at things, and become capable of transmitting your new point of view by your attitude to life. So do not in any way draw attention to your esoteric studies; such a desire for attention is one of the things you will learn to eliminate from your character. Any indication of the nature of your studies apart, of course from intelligent discussion on the subject generally should be given to those around you through your reactions to life. It has been said that actions speak louder than words, and although this may be a trite Victorian axiom, it is a very true one.

Keep in your racial group mind; don't openly defy it! Leave that to the host of would-be reformers who have not yet learnt to reform themselves, but who claim to have an infallible remedy for all the sin and suffering in the world.

CHAPTER VIII

"FANTASY IS THE ASS WHICH CARRIES THE ARK"

I SEE from your diary that you have been having a fair amount of success in your work on the Tree, so I can go a little further with your instruction. I want to teach you the art of projecting the thought images which you have learnt to construct. However, before I go on to this, I have to repeat the warning which I have given you so many times in my instructions. *Never fall into the habit of allowing these thought-images to rise into consciousness unless you have definitely willed them to appear.* You must control the images, not be controlled by them.

Particularly is this the case when you begin this work of image-projection. This process must not be confused with the one which psychologists term "projection" which is an involuntary act of attributing certain values to other people and to things. Thus, the apprentice in magical work may give to the craftsman who is training him a curious authority; he may find himself automatically regarding the craftsman as a very Wise Old Man, and may lean upon his authority as a child upon its father. But this is not healthy, though in the beginning of magical training it is more or less inevitable. After all, the craftsman *does* know, or *should* know, more about magic than the newly joined apprentice. However, the craftsman must always work in such a way that this psychological projection is drawn away from him, and the apprentice must train himself to be independent of the craftsman, for at a later date he will have to do his magical work without his continual help, so why not start to do this at an early stage? You must not think that this gives permission for you to try all kinds of magical experiments on your own. You might find yourself in the position of the sorcerer's apprentice in the old story, and be unable to control the forces you have evoked.

At the beginning of my magical career I projected such values upon my own teacher; he would have had to have been a god in order to measure up to it. Gradually I learnt that, like all teachers, he had feet of clay, and over the years I began to withdraw this projection of values, this identification of him with the archetypal Wise Old One. If, at a later date, you are accepted and become a member of our Frater-

nity, you will find the same rule being applied. Although you will find the power and help of the brethren behind you when you really need help, you will also find that in the application of that power you must work out your own salvation. Now just as you can project such *values* in an entirely involuntary fashion, so you can project definite *images* by the same method.

Perhaps the most common way in which this happens is in your dream-life. Here images are being projected into consciousness in an involuntary way. You have no control over the dream incidents unless, like Peter Ibbetson, in du Maurier's book, you can "dream true". This particular power of dreaming true is one which you will learn to use, but I am dealing just at present with the normal dream images.

Such images arise in response to underlying energies which are attempting to come into expression in life and they are both an ejection of repressed mental material and an indication of the way which must be trod. The sources of many such dreams can be traced to factors in the mind which are more or less accessible, but there is evidence that there is a deeper level of the mind which is using these dream images in order to bring about true mental growth. This guiding power within can be imaged as the Ancient Wise One, and the authority which you may have projected involuntarily upon your external teacher can be withdrawn and directed to this inner authority.

But I must warn you that even to this inner authority you should not give absolute obedience. Whatever monitions you receive from this inner teacher must be weighed in accordance with your outer conditions, and this judgement must be made by you in *full consciousness*. For, although wisdom may, and does, reside within you, the "baffling and perverting carnal mesh" as Browning describes it, will colour that which passes through it from the deeper levels of the mind.

Now just as you project the mental images in an involuntary manner in the dreams of the night, so there is a positive method whereby you can project them into apparent objective reality, and this power can be used in a variety of ways. I will do my best to describe the way in which you must set to work; like learning to ride a cycle, the essential part must be learnt by attempting to do it and persevering until the power is gained. This means, of course, that I cannot tell you how long it will be before you are able to project the images in this way; it all depends on you.

This power of seeing visions is one which we in these modern days seem to have lost; at least in the positive aspect of the faculty. There is a good deal of involuntary mental projection of both images and

values in many of the "occult" and psychic groups, but it is rarely that the positive projection is taught. In former times such a voluntary use of the visualizing faculty was a normal thing.

It exists to-day chiefly among artists, though it often seems to me that some modern art reveals more about the inner mental state of the artist than about whatever subject he may have chosen to use in his painting. However, I may be prejudiced in this matter.

I remember being introduced, many years ago, to a small child who could draw remarkable silhouette pictures. They were wonderfully precise and clear in outline and for a child of six or seven it was a very unusual performance. When I asked her how she could draw such accurate outlines, she said, "It's easy. I think, and then I draw a line round my think." She evidently had this power of visual projection as a natural talent, and did not realize that it was not possessed by everyone.

Well, all being equal, if you follow the instruction I am giving you now, you should be able to develop this same power. As to how long it will take to succeed in this exercise I can only repeat what I have said many times before: it all depends on yourself.

The exercise falls into two parts. The first is the definite building up of the mental image you intend to project. This is the hardest part to do, just as the knack of getting the image "out of your head" as it were, is the most difficult thing to *acquire*. However, until you have trained yourself to build up definite mental images, it is wasted effort to attempt to acquire the power of projecting them. This is a two-way exercise, you have to learn to "bring the images" as well as to exteriorize them, and this means that some really hard work will be required from you before you have mastered it. It is, however, the foundation of a very great deal of what is to follow, and the more proficient you become in this exercise, the more easily will you manage the more advanced work. I know there are people who apparently develop some of the inner powers without any such training, but unless they do train in this way, their power is not consistently available, neither can they direct it as they should.

And now I want to teach you the first part of the exercise: the bringing in of the image. For this you will need some picture or symbol (any picture will do, your common sense will guide you, and obviously you would not use a picture which tended to lead your thoughts away from the main object of the work).

For preference choose a picture with a good deal of detail. The simple geometric forms should be reserved for later work. This is because the mind tends to jib when forced to attend to only one or

two points and this makes the work more difficult. The more detailed picture gives it scope to wander, within limits.

Place your chosen picture on the table in such a way that you can sit and look at it without any strain. Keep the rest of the table clear, except for your symbolic picture or image. If you wish, you can use the cardboard tube I told you about, to screen any other visual impressions. Now look quietly at the picture. Do not strain in any way, but look at it as you would look at any object in the normal way. When you have contemplated it in this way for a minute, begin to analyse it; to see its component parts, and to isolate one from the other, to some extent at least.

It is a good plan to give yourself a running description of the picture, and in the beginning of your work on it, you should make this running commentary in an audible voice, though of course you can keep it low!

Perhaps if I give you an example of how you should go to work it will help you. So we will assume that you have chosen for your picture a simple landscape; say a cottage at the side of a wood, with a man sitting with his dog at the open door. Having quietly looked at it for a minute or so, begin, as I have said, to analyse it like this:

"The background of this picture is a small wood, made up chiefly of beech trees, though here and there the artist has painted in some small oaks. It would seem that the season of the year is autumn, as the leaves of the beech are turning a very lovely brown . . . the whole scene is bathed in mellow sunshine. The beechwood seems to be on the side of a hill, and the cottage nestles in to it at its foot, separated from it, however, by a level stretch of garden, part of which I can see because of the slant of the picture.

"The cottage is white-walled, thatched, with small windows, all of which, in the picture, are open. The man is shown as elderly, bearded, with an appearance of 'heavy relaxation'; he seems to slump in the chair, which is the old-fashioned wheelback type, once very common in such cottages.

"The dog which sits by his side is a black and white collie, and the man sits with his hand on the dog's neck. Dimly seen through the open door are some articles of furniture and from the cottage chimney a curl of smoke ascends lazily into the clear sky."

You will see that not only have I described the picture, but I have also indicated the "atmosphere" which the artist was trying to express in it. The more you can do this, the more you will be able to get "out" of the exercise itself. Also, this practice will help you to develop your powers of observation.

Now we come to the next part. Having analysed the picture you must now "bring in the images", and here you are up against the fact that this is an acquired skill which has to be *caught* by you, not *taught* by me.

Normally one does not analyse one's vision; sufficient it is for us that we see. But the actual process of vision is a very interesting thing and it will repay study. First of all, the rays of light reflected from the object we are looking at are received by the eyes, and focused by the lenses in the eye and thus reach the sensitive screen at the back of the eye which is known as the "retina". Here the visual picture is transformed into nerve impulses which travel along the optic nerves until they reach the vision centre in the back of the brain. Here they are received, and in some way of which we know very little they are interpreted by the mind. This is an entirely subconscious process.

What you have to do is first to accompany, as it were consciously, the incoming images to this receiving centre. This is the first half of the work; in the second half the reverse process must be attempted; that is, you must try to accompany the images back to the eye. This may sound silly, but as an actual technique it works.

So, as you look at your chosen picture dwell on it first of all quietly and without strain, having previously analysed it as I have shown; then turn your attention inwards, closing your eyes but keeping the mental image of it, travelling back into the inner darkness of your head, carrying with you this image, until, in your imagination, it has reached the receiving centre. As I have said this sounds silly, but it is a way of training the visual faculty, and it works. It will help you if you time this withdrawal into the depths with one complete inhalation of breath.

Now as you exhale, travel forward again to the front of the head and, opening the eyes, look again at the picture. Repeat this process about half a dozen times, and at each attempt take a different part of the picture with you. That is, as you look at it, select some one part, say the open door and the man seated by it, for one attempt, and for the next take the cottage in its setting in front of the wood. Then, perhaps, the woods themselves, and so on. You will remember that in my book *The Magician*, I said "Let one form of apprehension *glide on* into the other*." It is this change-over from optical image to mental perception which you must practise, until it becomes familiar.

I dealt fairly fully with this in the chapter on "Visualisation and Audition" in my book, so you should have some idea of this already.

The second part of the exercise is more interesting but until you

* *The Magician*, page 15 et seq.

have mastered (to some extent at least) the first part, your results in projecting the images will be rather poor and sketchy. Of course, you may have the innate faculty which was possessed by the little girl to whom I referred earlier on in this instruction, but as a general rule, such spontaneous power is unusual. Now comes the second part of the exercise. You have to formulate the mental images in the back of the head as it were, then bring them forward to the eyes, and finally throw them outside the head and see them no longer as subjective images, but as definite objective pictures. To do this you must have prepared some surface upon which the images are projected. Any monochrome surface will do for this. I have used a saucer containing fine sand which had been smoothed to a level surface; a crystal ball, and a black mirror. I find the confused reflections in a crystal rather distracting and the same is true, to some extent, of the black concave mirror. However, in this matter there is a good deal of variation; some people find one method better than another, much depends upon personal factors. Try the various methods, and use that which you find gives you the best results.

As the magical tradition teaches that you should make your own magical instruments, here is an opportunity to do this. Crystals can be bought, and it is obviously beyond the power of the average person to make one, but the mirror can easily be manufactured, and the saucer of sand or its equivalents can also be easily procured. In this latter method there is considerable scope for the use of the colour symbolism of the Tree by using coloured powders.

To make the concave mirror, first of all obtain one of the concave "watch-glasses" which are used in chemistry and in the manufacture of clocks. The size is immaterial, but in order to avoid any auto-hypnosis at this stage, I would suggest one about three or four inches in diameter. Now paint the *convex* surface with black paint or enamel, and you have your "magic mirror". You may elaborate this, if you wish, and set it in a frame. I have seen one set in a frame with all the signs of the Zodiac upon it, but, this is, to my mind, an unnecessary piece of ornamentation; moreover, it tends to distract your attention. However, if you feel you want it "tuppence coloured", try it, but I would strongly advise you to keep it as plain as possible.

Now let me make one thing quite clear. I am not suggesting for one moment that you should use this mirror for any attempt at "crystal-gazing", by which term I mean a passive gazing at the mirror in the hope of seeing clairvoyant images within it. This is a positive training in visualization, not involuntary psychism. I want to make this perfectly clear, because it may be that you have some latent psychic

faculty which could be exteriorized in this way, but I do not want to lead you down a path which, at a later date, you will have to retrace. In the carefully controlled psychism of the magical lodges, you will be able to use whatever psychic faculty you have, but in a positive manner. So do not succumb to the lure of quick results, they are seldom satisfactory.

Having procured, or made, your "speculum" as it is termed, you are ready to begin the second part of the exercise, the projection of the images. Sit with the mirror placed in such a position that you are perfectly comfortable as you gaze at it. There must be no strain and particularly there must be no eye-strain. This is very important, since such a strain could lead to the production of the auto-hypnotic state, a state which we do not wish to produce at this point. I have found that if I place the mirror in the same position as I place a book I am reading this gives satisfactory results. Some people place it in their laps, but again the movement of the body in breathing tends to distract the attention.

Having placed the mirror to your satisfaction you must now look at your picture; bring in the image as you have trained yourself to do, and then reverse the process. The image should be brought forward mentally to the eyes, and then projected on to the surface of the mirror. It is difficult to describe this "projection", it is a mental trick which comes quite suddenly after perhaps dozens of attempts. The best way in which I can put it is that you should bring forward the image as I have told you, and then gaze with quiet expectancy at the surface of the mirror. Do not strain the eyes in any way. If you wish to blink the eyelids, do so; there must be no strain.

As I have said, it may be that for a long time you will practise this without success in projection, and then, quite suddenly, you will see in the dim surface of the mirror some part of the picture. I say some part, because we always tend to use our mental power in a focused manner, as a kind of mental electric torch with which we examine something by moving the focused beam across the object we wish to see. But the broader our mental beam, the more of the picture we shall be able to project on the mirror.

When you find you have begun to have some success in this projection exercise, you can begin to use various objects as starting points, and these projections in three dimensions will train you in the art of visualization "in the round". This, you will remember from my previous instruction, is a splendid practice for the building of thought-forms at a later stage.

I think I have given you enough to do for quite a time. Carry on

with this, and record it in your diary. It is a good idea to record first the general results in it, and then to write out a detailed description in an exercise book kept for the purpose. In this you can put down the conditions under which the experiment was carried out: the atmospheric conditions, the absence, or otherwise, of noise and other distractions, and the way in which the picture appeared in the speculum. All this will be of great help to me, and also will give you some idea of the best way to go to work with the exercise.

CHAPTER IX

"THE MULTITUDE OF COUNSELLORS"

YOU tell me that you have managed to settle down to your meditation routine, and are beginning to be able to build up fairly good mental pictures. Also, you have obtained a copy of *The Mystical Qabalah*,

Now, however, although you have started your training and are making some progress, you have run into trouble from other quarters, with the result that there is a certain amount of confusion in your mind. You tell me that a friend of yours, deeply interested in esoteric subjects, has warned you against becoming involved in any practical work, save that of meditation; he has also made your flesh creep with stories of the dangers of what he terms "the lower psychism". On the other hand, another friend, this time an ardent spiritualist, has extolled the virtues of the "developing circle" where, he says, without any arduous meditation or other mental work, you would be able to develop your innate psychic powers which would bring you into contact with "true spiritual guides". Yet again, a medical acquaintance has warned of the dangers of "trance" and "split personality". Finally, your parish priest, who has been told of your interests, has given you stern warning against "dabbling with these unholy things".

You certainly seem to have a multitude of counsellors, but whether in this there is safety, remains to be seen. You may remember the story of the man who tried to follow out all the advice given by those whom he met while riding his donkey. He ended, you will remember, by *carrying the donkey* into town, to the great amusement of the townspeople!

Seriously though, I have been expecting this situation to develop. It usually comes along when the training has definitely started, and before any striking success has been achieved. This again is a test of your ability to go ahead on your chosen path without being swayed by the opinions of others. The outcome rests with yourself, but as you have referred the situation to me, as your teacher, I will try to give you some guidance.

First of all, let me suggest that all this advice which has been so kindly proffered has some value, even though some parts may seem to cancel out others. There is always something to be gained from the

ideas of others, even though it may be thought that such ideas are ill-informed or even due to bigotry. We are all liable to this latter fault, it is not peculiar to parsons, doctors and teachers can be just as fixed in their ideas as any religious leader.

I will take each of these warnings separately, and in the same order as you give them in your letter. First of all let us consider the question of what your friend calls the "lower psychism". As you will be aware, you have two great systems of nerves in your body: the voluntary and the involuntary systems. The involuntary system is the older of the two, and it governs the whole of what may be termed the automatic processes of the body, such as breathing, digestion, and all the multitude of activities which go on within you.

The other, the voluntary or cerebro-spinal system, is of a more recent evolution, and is the medium of expression of your conscious waking self. But, it is also dependent upon the older system of nerves, and the type of consciousness which goes with it, for its successful operation. Thus, you lift your arm by an act of will. But the whole complex activity of nerve and muscle, of variation in blood flow, of the discharge of energy along the nerve paths, and the intricate mechanism by which that energy makes the muscles move in the way you wish; all this is effected by the involuntary system, *working under the direction of the voluntary consciousness.*

But just as there is a form of consciousness (the waking consciousness) which is expressed through the cerebro-spinal system, so there is also a form of consciousness which works through the involuntary nerves, and this is usually referred to as the "sub-conscious" or "subliminal" mind. As this subliminal part of the mind is the product of ages of evolution from the very remote past, it has, of necessity, very primitive aspects which reflect the primitive consciousness of those early days. It is, however, also linked with that part of our whole consciousness which lives on the inner planes, and *all* psychic experiences, whether "high" or "low", are transmitted to the waking self *through* the subliminal levels of the mind. You will remember that we discussed, in a previous instruction, the *chakras* or psychic centres. Well, these psychic centres are linked with certain points in the involuntary nervous system, and can transmit their impressions by way of the corresponding aspect of the subconscious which is expressed in those parts of that system. But, just as you can cause your arm to move at your will and perform some particular operation, so the subconscious levels of the mind can move your arm *without* your willed intention. So, for instance, you may write something which has been carefully composed by you in your everyday waking state, and

all the subconscious mechanisms move your muscles to make letters and words of the necessary size and form, and arrange the resultant words in their correct grammatical order; all these activities have become what we call a "habit", which is the result of our mental training. However, this mental machinery can run itself without your conscious will, and then we get the phenomenon of what is usually called "automatic writing". The dreams of the night are examples of what might be termed "automatic seeing", and all the sense activities of the body can work in reverse, as it were, in this way.

Usually, the results of such reverse working are not very helpful. They consist, for the greater part, of material which is the accumulation of many years of mental activity, both good and not so good, and although such material may be of interest to the psychiatrist, it is not in itself of any value, except as an indication of the mental processes that are going on down below in the depths of the mind.

But, mixed with this subconscious outpouring, we find evidences of psychic activity, though they are like the grains of gold in the gold-bearing quartz rock, few and far between. This welling up of the psychic perception and action through the activity of the subliminal levels of the mind is termed, in your friend's philosophy, the "lower psychism". His objection to it, and it is an objection which is made by all the occult and esoteric schools, is that it is a reversion to the past of evolutionary time. It is the revival of the primitive mirror psychism which is still to be found in the higher animals, such as cats, dogs, and horses, and because it is not under the control of the conscious mind, it can lead to the dissociation and personality splitting against which your medical friend warns you.

However, though I do not wish to develop you as an involuntary psychic, there are some criticisms which I can make with regard to this objection. First of all, with very few exceptions, the "positive" voluntary psychism is rare, and even when it has been developed, the psychic has his "off-days", and ill-health or mental and emotional stress will distort his perceptions.

Most psychics occupy positions along the scale from pure "positive" to pure "negative", and move one way or the other according to the prevailing conditions. In addition to this, the negative psychism can, under certain conditions, be changed over to the positive variety, though in the majority of cases, psychics of the involuntary type find their powers vanish when they begin to do the meditation work required of them by the magical and esoteric schools. This is because of the increased activity of the cerebro-spinal system along new and unfamiliar lines, and it usually discourages such people as they feel

that they are losing something of value. However, if they persevere with their training, they find that the faculty returns and is capable of being used in a more effective way.

But I do want to remind you that the magical schools are not for psychic development. It is true that psychic faculties are exercised in the lodges, and their use does play a part in the work on which they are engaged. But the primary purpose of the magical training is the mental and spiritual unfoldment of the members, and psychism is regarded as a means to an end, and not in any sense as an end in itself.

Now let me comment on the objections of your medical friend. It is quite true that *certain forms of psychic* activity can lead to the mental troubles to which he refers, but as a general rule, this danger is not so great as it might seem. If we are dealing with any subject we tend to see it all around us, we are mentally looking for its appearance, and are often rather disappointed if we fail to find it. So the specialist is on the look-out for the manifestations of his particular speciality, the religious zealot has conditioned himself to see the weaknesses and transgressions of his fellow men, and politicians are always putting the world to rights according to their own infallible prescriptions.

However, when we try to find out what effect the psychic faculties may have upon their possessors, we must find out what was the state of their general mental health before they started development. As you will have read in my books there are people who are suffering from slight mental dissociation, who "see" imaginary things, or "hear" imaginary voices, and this of course is a sign of definite mental illness. Should such people be allowed to enter the ordinary "developing circle", or be encouraged in some magical school to induce certain mental states, then the illness of the mind from which they are already suffering will develop until finally a complete mental breakdown ensues. Here of course, the issue is simple. In many cases, however, the breakdown is not complete, the visions and voices do not take the sufferer right out of everyday reality, though they do very considerably affect his life and conduct. It is these "half-way" people, who are the curse of the psychic movements, and who bring upon them the strictures of the medical psychologists.

But, as you will see, everything depends upon those who are leading the movements or schools concerned, and it is for this reason that I have asked you to observe the character and general mental outlook of any school you were thinking of entering. For the lives and characters of those who have been trained in any school give you a good indication of its value.

I should like to give you my own ideas on this question of the mental unbalance in the psychic and esoteric schools. During a period of some forty-five years of actual contact with both occult and psychic movements, I have met men and women of all mental levels, and have observed that mental unbalance is by no means confined to psychics. There are, as I have said, some who do display such unbalance, but on investigation it is usually found that the signs of such mental trouble were there some time before they started their "development". Blame, of course is to be attached to the so-called leaders of such circles, but it is evident that the fault as a general rule lies with the person, not the system.

Exactly the same criticism applies to those who are members of the esoteric schools. Though many of them loftily regard their psychic brethren as victims of the lower psychism, the fact remains that some of them display just the same symptoms of mental unbalance. I may say in passing, that I have on many occasions heard "spiritualistic seances" heartily condemned by people whom I have later been amused to see furtively paying for a "sitting" with some noted psychic!

Let us be fair. We all fall short of the ideal, and none of us can afford to make stern judgement, even upon ourselves. As Bishop Butler said, as he watched a condemned man being taken to execution, "There but for the grace of God go I." The aim of the magical schools is to integrate more fully the personalities of their apprentices, but one hundred per cent success cannot be guaranteed.

Now I want to deal with the claim of your spiritualist friend.

Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the modern spiritualist movement, one thing is very certain, and that is that the methods and contacts of the usual "developing circle" are not suitable for those who wish to tread High Magic's Way. This is not to condemn spiritualism, which has its part to play in the religious evolution of man, and which, for those who are working in it with serious intent, is as true a path to the light as any other. But "no man can serve two masters", and the methods of spiritualism and those of the magical training schools are not compatible. Until you are able to judge with knowledge, you should follow the methods of training which I am outlining to you, and leave other lines of work to other people.

You must make up your mind on this matter, and let me know your decision. Here, in the very beginning of your magical apprenticeship, comes a test of your possession of that most essential mental virtue, discrimination.

I will finish this part of your instruction with a word or two about

the attitude of your parish priest. There are many like him, unfortunately, but their main trouble is that they have not the slightest idea of the true nature of magic. They may have the usual concept of mediaeval magical work, and may even be authorities on the subject of the various magical rites practised in those times. But their reaction to the whole subject is to regard it as unwholesome, and one which must be condemned. But the idiocies of the black mass, and the popularity of the various erotic magical recipes were not part of the true magic in those days, any more than they are to-day.

On behalf of the priests, however, you must remember that one of their duties as ordained priests of the Church is, as the Ordinal puts it, ". . . with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word, and to use both publick and private monitions . . . as need shall require and occasion shall be given." This is part of a question put to the ordinand, to which he replies, "I will, the Lord being my helper."

If a priest who knows only of the parodies which go by the name of magic is confronted with someone like yourself, then he can do only one of two things. Either he condemns the whole thing, and remembering his vow does his best to "banish and drive away this erroneous and strange doctrine", or else he refrains from such condemnation until he has thoroughly studied the subject. But this second line of action takes quite an effort. He is usually fully occupied with his work as a parish priest (the fable of the idleness of the parson, though it still persists among the less informed, *is* in the great majority of cases just a fable), and it may not be possible for him to make a deep study of the subject.

Or perhaps there is a definite reason for his opposition which arises from some experience of his own, or of others whom he has known, and this may well cause him to regard the whole subject as Satanic. If you have ever seen the phenomenon of "possession", as many missionaries have done, then you could understand this wholesale condemnation.

But more usually, he shrinks from the study of these things because of theological training and also because he fears the possible reactions of his own flock, and this latter is a very real consideration.

There are many priests and ministers who do not condemn these things, but who try to understand them in the light of Christian experience. After all the Bible abounds with examples of psychic and magical happenings and the ceremonies of the Church are a very potent form of magic, as Evelyn Underhill pointed out in her book on mysticism.

So do not be unduly annoyed at the attitude of your vicar, thank him for his advice, but assure him the matter is not as he thinks. Then get on with your training; and keep your mouth shut about these things.

You know the magical axiom: "Know, Will, Dare, and *Keep Silent.*" Then follow it out. One of the main reasons why this secrecy is asked of you is that you will later be working with thought-forces, and you will not wish antagonistic thoughts of others to break down what you are building up. Also, although it may be that in the multitude of counsellors there may be safety, there is liable also to be much confusion. The "back-seat driver" is just as much a menace in magic as in motoring!

CHAPTER X

"GOING OUT AND COMING IN"

AS you now seem able to project mental images at will, I want to give you the basic instruction for accomplishing what is commonly called "astral projection". This means that you actually project a carefully built thought-form and then by a certain mental "trick", locate your consciousness in the projected form.

The form which you build up in this way is known among us as the "Body of Light". In certain eastern books it is termed the *Manu-mayakosha*, a name which may be literally translated as "the thought-created sheath or body of illusion". I have met many people who either by training or natural aptitude, have possessed this power to project consciousness in an external form. Those who are trained, do it in a somewhat different manner, by a positive "splitting of the Moon", from those who possess that peculiar make-up of the etheric or vital body, which is the basis of the physical manifestations produced through those people who are known in spiritualism as materializing mediums.

The peculiarity of the etheric double of the materialization medium is that the connection with its material counterpart is a loose one, and under certain conditions it may be extruded therefrom. Actually, as it is the mould upon which the physical body is built, total projection of the vital body would mean death. However, this is what is called a "fluidic" body, and can be caused to divide, as it were, a certain minimum amount always remaining with the physical body. By a very wonderful process the vital body when exteriorized in this way, can draw actual material matter from the body and build itself up in a form which is quite perceptible to ordinary sight.

In the materialization seances of the spiritualists the process is done without the medium understanding or in any way directing the process. It is then understood that the projection is due to the activity of discarnate people who mould the projected matter into the appearance of their own former material body. That this may be so in some cases I am firmly convinced from my own experiences in this field, but in many cases it is not necessary to suppose that the spirits of the dead have anything to do with it. In any case, whether we are wearing the earthly overcoat, or have thrown it off (either temporarily or permanently) we are, as we have ever been, spiritual beings. Tennyson

in one of his poems refers to the "Ghost in Man" which is meeting with "the Ghost which once was Man". Always remember that you are just as much a spiritual being now as ever you will be through all the ages of eternity.

But to return to our astral projection. It is one of the greatest experiences which come to you when you begin to work on this magical path. To stand in the room, and look at your own physical body lying deep in sleep, is something which gives to you an absolute conviction that, in spite of all the materialistic philosophers may say, you are something more than that body; that you are a being which is independent of that body and capable of existing apart from it.

I well remember, after forty years and more, the wonder and exhilaration I experienced when first I stood forth in the Body of Light.

At the same time, there are certain drawbacks and dangers which I want to explain to you before I give you the instruction which will help you to achieve this wonderful feat. I am telling you of these dangers in order that you may have a clear mental picture of the process right from the beginning of your work along this particular line. It is in ignorance that fear is conceived and fear is the greatest hindrance to success in magical work. If you know the pitfalls, then you can proceed with confidence, but if you walk in ignorance, then will your uninformed imagination people the unseen world with fantastic figures of dread. Again using the idea of balanced activity which is implicit in the *Qabalistic* philosophy, *caution* on the Pillar of Force, and *confidence* on the Pillar of Form provide the balancing opposites which enable you to "travel in the Light".

There are two forms of astral projection, and I want to point out to you the essential difference between them. One is entirely involuntary and not in any way under the control of the person concerned. Here again, much depends upon whether the "projector" slips out of his own accord, or whether he is sent out by the power of another. In my own first successful astral flight, I was assisted by the power of my own teacher, and this is so in very many cases where random experiments are being carried out by those who have gained their instruction from one or other of the many books which touch upon these subjects.

Where the teacher knows what he is about this help can be very effective, but the experiments must not stop at this purely passive projection, lest an unhealthy dependence upon him be built up. In any case, when once you enter the lodge, you will be required to pledge yourself not to allow any control of your will by another person.

The second type of projection is where the person concerned voluntarily steps out from the physical body. This is a more difficult feat, but it has the advantage that the operation is under his own control. There is an intermediate class of projection where the power to step out of the physical body suddenly appears, usually to the dismay and fear of the projector. In these cases the sudden appearance of this power may be due to the welling up from the deeper mind of memories of occult training in previous lives, but in many cases it is due to ill-health, or certain psychic conditions surrounding and affecting the person to whom the experience comes. Which cause is operating in any given case is a matter for experts, *who in these cases are men and women to whom this experience is a commonplace occurrence*. So much nonsense has been foisted upon the public by so-called "experts", doctors, psychiatrists, and orthodox parsons, that those of us who have been working in these fields for many years, have ceased to worry about the opinion of those who attempt to lay down the law on subjects of which they have had no actual experience. So do not worry about the opinions of Dr "X" or Bishop "Y", or for the matter of that, the opinions of the chap on the next bench who jeers at the whole subject. "The laughter of fools is as the crackling of the thorns beneath a pot," says the Bible. If you have ever tried to use the desert thorns as fuel for cooking you will realize the point of this. There is a lot of flame and noise, but very little effective heat.

There are really only two dangers in the practise of "astral projection" in full consciousness. One, which is purely physical, is the possibility of strain upon the heart. The heart is a very tough organ and can stand far more strain than many people realize, but it *can* be tried beyond its limits and will suffer accordingly. Now generalizations are dangerous, but broadly speaking, if you have any kind of heart weakness or abnormality, then the usual methods of projection are not for you, and you will be wise to realize the fact. There are other ways of achieving the same end, but they are slower in their action. Nevertheless, they are just as effective. As a matter of fact, I shall be giving you some preliminary instruction along these other lines very shortly.

The second danger is that the wonder of these experiences may lead you to attempt to escape the woes and worries of this mundane plane by retreating to the Inner Planes whenever the storms of life become a bit boisterous, and this may lead to a pathological mental condition which will bring you into the legitimate sphere of the "expert" psychiatrist. This, however, can only happen if your basic philosophy has been built up on the wrong premises.

You have been taught the *Qabalistic* philosophy, and you know

that this philosophy teaches the necessity of leading a full life on this physical plane and of evading none of the duties that are part of it. Brief refreshment after labour is permissible, but extended holidays on the inner levels are not in the plan.

Now in your case, the two main dangers do not seem to me to be liable to cause trouble. Your physical health is good, your heart is sound, and you are sufficiently "down to earth" to be immune from any threat of psychological escapism. We can therefore go ahead with the instructions which will enable you to step forth from this apparently solid flesh in full consciousness.

Again, I want to warn you that success in this branch of magical work depends upon steady and sustained practice. Any desultory work along these lines is doomed to failure. You must persevere with the exercises without setting a time limit to your perseverance. It may be that almost immediately you will be able to step forth in full consciousness, or it may take weeks, months, or even years, before success is yours. But whatever time you take, remember that the actual exercises are also valuable aids to visualization and concentration, apart from their actual objective.

It has suddenly occurred to me that you will have begun to wonder whether there is time in the working day for you to carry out all the instructions I have given you. I remember thinking something like this myself, when I first started my magical apprenticeship. But in point of fact "things are not always what they seem", and it is not as bad as this. As you begin to master the early exercises, you will find that the time necessary for success becomes less and less, until what formerly involved ten minutes or so, now only takes half a minute, since the subconscious mind has begun to form an automatic habit, and the exercises themselves are beginning to produce the necessary developments in the inner body. But in these matters time, as we experience it down here, matters less than we think. You are not being "crammed" for an examination which will take place on a certain fixed date, but are being given an apprenticeship which will merge into craftsmanship when you have gained the necessary proficiency, and not before.

Since it is an apprenticeship it follows that long before you reach the end of it, you will be doing quite a lot of practical work, and what is more, your work will be taken up into the great plan and be used by those master craftsmen with whom and under whom we all serve.

Now let us return to the actual instructions for the projection of the "body of light" as it is called in our school. The best time for this projection, as far as you are concerned, is before you go to sleep. But

it will be well to attempt it also at certain other times of the day; this, of course, will be conditioned by your daily routine of work. It is well to remember, however, when you start your attempts at projection, to tell your wife what you are going to do, and impress upon her that it would not be helpful if she were suddenly to disturb you!

Your training in the building up of "thought forms" now comes into practice. You have to build up in your mental vision a thought-form which will act as the mould upon which the fluidic "etheric" substance will flow, and so provide the link between the physical and super-physical levels of consciousness. What shape this form should take is very largely a matter for your own choice. I started my projection experiments by building a thought-form of a figure in a deep blue robe with a cowl over the head, a silver girdle round the waist, and, supported by a fine chain, a rather ornate Rosicrucian Cross. However, I was at that time a great admirer of the books of the late Marie Corelli, hence the form I built was directly inspired by a passage in one of them. I remember that my teacher was mildly amused by my choice, but he did not raise any objection. As a matter of fact, you can make this thought-form as you wish, avoiding of course, any grotesque or unsuitable form.

I would suggest that you formulate such a figure as I have described, though you need not follow my pattern exactly. As you will find later on in your magical work, you are already a member of a group composed of both incarnate and discarnate people, and this group is working always on the inner planes. As it is a group using ceremonial, it has its own particular "uniform", and when once you have linked up with this group in full consciousness, whether through your own personal powers or through the psychic faculties of another, then you will know what is the correct form to build in your own particular case.

The appearance of your thought-form having been fixed, you can now proceed to build and project it in the same way as you have trained yourself, to project such forms. I found it very helpful, in the early stages of my training, to project the form in this way. I would first visualize and project a form which was a sphere of deep blue light about the size of an orange. When I had done this successfully I made it expand rapidly and take shape and size. At the conclusion of the exercise I would then reverse this process, and finally draw this ball of light back into myself.

Remember, *this is not* the actual Body of Light which you are attempting to project. It is only the form, the mould, into which that fluidic body will flow. You will remember that I have told you of the

work which goes on in the "materialization seances", where the etheric substance flowing from the medium, is organized into recognizable forms by the thoughts of both incarnate and discarnate people. Here you are doing the work of both parties. You are supplying the material, and are also building the form into which that material may be built. At the same time you must remember that you are not attempting to project a form which will be visible to ordinary physical eyesight; this is a further development which can be left until you have received further training. As a matter of fact, it is not often attempted since it can only be done by those who have the particular etheric make-up to which I have previously referred. In any case, although it is a very wonderful feat it is not necessary for you to project such a visible form. The finer grade of etheric substance which you will use, is quite sufficient for the work you will be doing.

Now you are ready for the actual attempt at projection. The method I am going to describe is that which I used when I was being trained, and I can vouch for its effectiveness. What I cannot vouch for is the time you will need before you are successful. So much depends upon other factors; it may be only a few weeks or it may be a matter of months or even years. One man whom I knew took seven years to achieve success in this operation. He was exceptional, however. At the same time he displayed an amount of perseverance which was an object lesson to all of us.

The first part of this method of projection has been the building up of the form, and you now have this form standing before you. Your job is to transfer what is sometimes known as the "star of consciousness"; that point within you where you feel yourself to be "I". With most people this point of self-consciousness is located in a vague fashion somewhere behind the root of the nose, but with certain other types it is located in the solar plexus. This latter position is not so common among those who come for training in the western schools, though it does occur in some who are of Celtic blood. But wherever the star of consciousness is located, it has to be transferred to the form you have built. You have also to transfer to the form some of the finer etheric substance of your own vital body; you have to breathe into the form the "breath of life".

As you sit quietly contemplating the form you have built, breathe in a full breath, at the same time direct your attention to the ground beneath your feet, or, if you are lying upon your back, direct it to a point just beyond the soles of your feet. This is actually the earth-contact of your aura, the point where certain etheric energies flow into you from the planetary etheric levels.

So, as you breathe a full charge of air into your lungs, mentally draw up at the same time a full charge of energy from the earth centre, and bring this energy up to wherever you locate your star of consciousness. Then, as you exhale the breath, project the etheric energy out to the form you have built, at the same time endeavouring to go with the stream of force, riding upon it as it were, into the projected form. It will help if you picture a kind of psychic cord linking you with it, and project both the etheric energy and your consciousness along this cord. In this way you are conforming to the etheric "anatomy", since there is such a link between the vital body and its dense counterpart.

You may have to repeat this part of the exercise many times before you have any success, or it may be that almost at once you will find yourself in full consciousness in the Body of Light. But whether it takes a long time or otherwise, it is well worth working for. What usually happens when success has been achieved, is that you are so surprised that you "panic" and bolt back into the safety of the physical body like a young rabbit into its burrow. You are, however, in no danger and if you can only hold on for a moment you will suddenly experience something which will, as it were, anchor you on the etheric levels. With some it is a curious kind of "click", something like the sound of an electric light switch being turned off. With others it may take the form of a musical note which suddenly sounds in the head and this indicates that you are now out of the body in full consciousness.

You will now begin to perceive the actuality of the psychic umbilical cord which links you with the physical form which you have left for a time. You will find that it tends to draw you back into the body and it is best to get a good distance away. You will notice, too, that the nearer to the body you are the thicker the "silver cord" becomes, and the stronger the attraction of the physical. You will find too, that you are, as it were, swimming in some subtle etheric "sea", amid swirling currents of energy, but you will find that you have the power to resist such forces and to maintain your balance.

Experiences vary with the individual, but in my own projections I have always found myself in a realm where the ordinary physical objects were distinctly visible in a bluish light. One peculiarity of this illumination is that it casts no shadows and the effect is rather strange until one becomes used to it.

There will be, you will find, a strong inclination on your part forthwith to visit some friend on the earth, or else to meet someone who has passed from physical life, but for the time being I would counsel

you to confine yourself to the task of getting out of the body in full consciousness. Later on you can try to travel in this etheric world, but what you are now doing is simply the preliminary work and it is this which is so important.

If now, having successfully projected in the Body of Light, you wish to return into the physical (and in your early experiments you should make only brief projections), all that is necessary, is for you to approach the physical body. Immediately the silver chord will begin to exert an increasingly powerful pull and you will be drawn rapidly back into physical plane consciousness.

When you are back in the body it is advisable to write down *at once* your recollections of the experience. If you wait for any length of time, you will find the memory has become dimmed.

Now for two warnings and one bit of encouragement. Never try these projection experiments during the period of the waning moon, the etheric currents are not favourable, and although at a later stage you will be able to master them, they can hinder your first attempts. My second warning is keep strict silence during these experiments. You will have quite enough to do in getting out of the physical without being impeded by the antagonistic thought influences of others who know nothing of the subject, but who, nevertheless, either deny it or strongly disapprove of it. Remember the last part of the Rosicrucian motto ". . . keep silent".

Now the encouragement. Although you may feel alone and rather forlorn as you first stand in the Body of Light, believe me when I tell you that you will not be alone. There will be others who are very near to you and ready to help you. Indeed, this is always the case, whatever plane of life we are inhabiting. As Marcus Aurelius wrote so long ago, "We are never less alone than when we think we are alone."

On this note I will end this very important part of these instructions.

I want you to let me have the record of your experiments along this line in the usual way. Please note the following points:

- (1) Date and time of experiment.
- (2) Your own physical and mental conditions.
- (3) The weather conditions.
- (4) Any other points which seem to you to be relevant to the experiment.

CHAPTER XI

THE CONTACT OF POWER

IN this instruction I want to show you how to make contact with, and draw into yourself, the energies with which you will later be working in the lodge. It is important that you should not only have a clear idea of these energies and their origin, but also that you should be able, in some measure at least, to make contact with them.

As a general rule, the lodge does not like to deal with neophytes who have contacted the energies in a haphazard fashion, since it then falls to the lot of the teacher to break down the faulty habits which have been built up, and to train the apprentice in the methods used in actual magical work.

In your own case, I am trying to establish these good habits *before* you enter the door of the Mysteries, and that which I am now going to give you is a safe, practical, and, given perseverance and aptitude on your part, effective method of making contact with the energies which you will learn to use in the lodge.

The first thing which I must impress upon you is that as far as you are concerned, these energies are entirely "neutral". They can be used for good or evil purposes, and this, of course, applies to *all* natural forces. So do not think in terms of "spiritual forces". They *are* truly spiritual forces, but so are all natural energies whether they operate on the physical or the superphysical planes. All depends upon the use which is made of them, and here we come to the root of the moral teaching of this school.

So much is regarded as moral and spiritual teaching which in reality is nothing of the sort, and it is here that the "first virtue of the Path", as it has been termed, is so very important. This virtue of "discrimination" is your protection against the wrong application of these powers by yourself or by others.

What do we mean by the term "moral" ? What do you understand by the word ? I am not a betting man, but I would be willing to make a wager that the first idea that arises in your mind when you hear the word is something to do with sex. Am I not right ? This is because the true meaning of the word has been limited in common use to this narrow definition. But it is not because the general use of the term is an incorrect one that you should accept its application, indeed, it is imperative that you should learn to use the word in a much larger context.

The general meaning of the word is something to do with the tribal customs. Certain things were good for the tribe as a whole, and were enforced by chief and priest for the common good. The trouble was that as the community grew both in numbers and intelligence, the "mores", the tribal customs, began to be more difficult to apply, and in every age there was some form of revolt against the rigidity of the "moral" code.

Now, although we like to think that we are in every way superior to our forefathers, the sad truth is that we are in many ways just as limited as they were. Although great efforts have been made, and with some success, to bring a really enlightened attitude of mind to bear upon such age-old problems as juvenile delinquency, prostitution, and homosexuality, we are still bogged down by the intricate legal system which has been evolved down the ages, and which both church and state have enforced upon us.

There are signs that the discontent which seeths underneath present-day society will find vent in aggressive action, and this means that every step, however justified, towards a more enlightened application of the Law, will be fiercely resisted by those in Church and State who feel that only in the preservation of the *status quo* is there any security. This fear of new things is characteristic of many of us, but in magic we are taught that in very truth, "The old order changeth, yielding place to new, and God fulfils himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

This is not to say that we advocate any wholesale breaking down of the moral and legal codes which, on the whole, have served very well, for there is a great deal of sanctified commonsense in the English Common Law. But it does mean that we must use a different measure to that used by our fellow citizens.

If you will look at the Ten Commandments which are regarded as standards in this matter, you will notice that they are all *negative* statements. "Thou shalt not" is their keynote. In the Hebrew nation before the time of our Lord, there had been many attempts to put out a more positive teaching, and He, as a master psychologist, took some of these earlier ideas and summed them up in the two *positive* commandments which both begin with "Thou shalt". He added also another positive commandment, "That ye love one another".

Study these true expressions of the moral law and you will see that they are real spiritual dynamite, calculated to bring down the walls of many legal and ecclesiastical Jerichos. But be careful not to twist the commandment to suit the case. It is the case which must be altered, and here is one in point! A famous (or to many people an infamous)

occultist and magician used as his slogan this statement, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will."

It is the same idea as that expressed by St Augustine: "Love, and do as thou wilt." But, as the late Mr Joad would have said, "What do you mean by *love*?"

In actual practice it resulted in forms of conduct which undoubtedly resulted in misery and suffering for many of those who tried to put this maxim into practice.

The Greeks had a saying which gives one aspect of our magical attitude in these matters. It is *medan edan*, which means "Nothing too much". In our understanding it signifies "balance", and in the magical schools it is said that "equilibrium is the basis of the Great Work". In fact, we refer to the "evil" forces as the "Kings of Edom, the Lords of Unbalanced Force".

But I want you to note that this condition of balance is not a purely static attitude of the mind, something like the "balance" which the artist sometimes strives after: the balance of "still life", the grouping into a pattern. Rather is it the balance of the trapeze artist which is a kinetic balance, due to the employment of complementary forces. So your attitude towards life must be one of flexibility, but a flexibility which is based upon the rock of true morality as opposed to established custom.

But beware of making of your attempts to follow this path an exhibition which will bring you into headlong collision with established custom. In any case this will be a waste of energy which, although it may gratify a masochistic strain in yourself, will not help you in your chosen work.

I am stressing this now, because as soon as you begin to get results from the exercises I am about to describe, you will find that the energies which begin to flow into your being will need careful handling, and it is here that you will find the foregoing moral instruction of value.

These forces which will find their channel through your mind must always be regarded as divine in their origin and nature. The exercises which will bring through these energies are known as the exercises of the Middle Pillar. If you will look at the diagram of the Tree of Life, you will see that there are three vertical lines of the *Sephiroth*: the stations on the tree. The middle vertical line which passes through *Malkuth*, *Yesod*, *Tiphareth*, *Daath*, and *Kether*, is the Middle Pillar, and you will notice that all the stations on this line are connected with the consciousness aspect of your own self. *Malkuth* deals with

the physical sensory consciousness; *Yesod* with what is termed the "subconsciousness", or "personal unconscious"; *Tiphareth* is the sphere of superconsciousness; and *Daath* is the point where another order of awareness operates. Finally in *Kether* we have the unconditioned consciousness of the divine spark which is the centre and source of our existence.

Hence I warn you against a very common error. Many apprentices, having followed the instructions and awakened the energies, talk very boastfully of their contact with "*nirvanic* levels". According to the eastern teachings, from which this term is derived, *nirvana* is the state of consciousness where we pass from this planetary and conditioned state of being into one of unconditioned being.

A very necessary corrective to the tendency of overrating personal achievements along this line, is to remember that, according to the *Qabalistic* teaching, there is "a Tree in every *sephira*". Thus, in *Malkuth* all the other *Sephiroth* are experienced, but "through%nd under the veil of earthly things". The experience of the form of consciousness of *Kether*, through this earthly veil, is a very wonderful experience, but it is *not* the full undistorted consciousness, which belongs only to those who may legitimately be termed masters of life.

This is by way of discouraging any tendency on your part to what the Greeks called *hubris*, the strange spiritual pride and arrogance which so easily arises when the mighty forces of the unseen universe begin to find their channels through our personality.

I have given the exercises in my book *The Magician*, so you will already be familiar with them, but I want to go over them again so that you may understand them more fully.

First of all, remember that you are, as it were, a conducting channel for the forces which flow from two sources, and you have within your psycho-physical make-up the necessary contact points or terminals where these energies may be picked up. There is, in point of fact, an anatomy of the inner bodies (they have their organs, even as the physical body) and in this anatomy there are two terminal centres or *chakras* with which you are primarily concerned in these exercises. They are the centre in the aura just above the head, and the corresponding centre in the aura just below the feet. On the Tree, these two centres are referred to as *Kether* and *Malkuth* respectively.

It is through these two terminals, or centres, that we draw in the energies which we are going to use in our work, and this is how it is done. First of all you must visualize a sphere of pure white radiance about three or four inches above your head. Your training in visualizing and projecting images will have enabled you to do this fairly

easily. This radiant sphere of light should be seen as clearly as you can possibly build it up, and at the same time you should "feel" it as a *warm* vibrant globe, charged with power which is steadily being radiated into your aura, travelling down to the earth centre below the feet.

When you have successfully built up this contact point above the head, you must now build up the corresponding terminal below the feet. Again visualize a globe of light, and project and "locate" it about three or four inches below the feet. But instead of the pure white brilliance of the head centre, you must picture the in-coming energy in this earth terminal to be a seething, surging energy of citrine, russet olive, and indigo colours all mixed together in a swirl of colour. As you will see, the visualization of the centre in *Malkuth* is a good deal more difficult than the building up of the *Kether* centre above the head, but it is most important that it should be done.

There has been a good deal of misunderstanding about this basic centre. Many people have said that if you wear rubber shoes you will cut yourself off from the "earth magnetism", as it is called. This is not the case unless you make it so by definitely forming the idea that you will insulate yourself in this way. We are all living in the etheric counterpart of this planet. We are, in fact, immersed in it as a fish in the ocean. So, to imagine that the barrier of half an inch of rubber will prevent the etheric energies reaching us, is foolish. At the same time, there *are* certain forces which radiate from the ground on which we walk, and which are prevented from entering our etheric aura by insulating substances, such as rubber and silk, to mention only two. But in the work we are going to do this does not concern us and you should dismiss the matter from your mind during the present exercises.

Picture this earth contact as a swirling sphere of multicoloured light, and "feel" it as a radiant centre of heat. Practise until you can feel this "heat" very clearly. Persevere with the formulation of this centre until it is as well established as the corresponding one above the head. When this has been done, you are ready for the next part of the work.

Although you are now engaged in building up certain mental images and linking them up with the existing centres in the etheric body, you must realize that these centres are already working and that what you are doing is to establish certain mental "control machinery" in the aura in such a way that you may be able to vary the activity of these terminal points in any way you wish. Here I must warn you not to attempt any other regulation of the psychic energies involved; keep to the one I am now describing to you.

The action of the etheric energies in the physical body is known in esoteric teaching as the "burning of the fires of the body". Each particular part of the body has its own type of "fire", and there is an automatic regulation of these fires which is constantly at work. These energies, co-ordinated and working through the etheric or vital body, constitute part of what medical science terms the *vis medicatrix natura*, and their balanced action results in true physical health. Later in your instruction you will be taught more about this angle of your work; you will bear in mind that it is just as important to establish a sound inner organism, for though, as the poet says quite truly, "For of the soul the body form doth take, for soul is form, and doth the body make" it is equally true that unless the instrument (the form) which the soul is using on the physical plane is healthy, there will be distortion and misdirection of the inner forces, and this accounts for much of the vague and indeterminate illness which is found among the members of some esoteric schools. In our school we are inclined to the Roman maxim: a sound mind in a sound body, as being an ideal towards which we must work. There are exceptions, but they usually prove the general rule to be correct. There is an interaction between the two aspects of man's nature and this has been recognized in the increasing stress laid by the medical profession on what they call psycho-somatic treatment.

Any tampering with the normal action of the body fires is both foolish and dangerous, and this for two reasons. The centres of psychic energy in the inner body are located *over* certain nerve centres and glands in the physical body, and any undue concentration on, or disturbance of, these nerves and glands can badly upset the balance of the body and result in definite physical disease. Secondly, the intensification of the "fires" can result in the breaking down of a certain protective surface of the vital body, and this can cause a very great deal of trouble, both physical and super-physical.

In the lodge you will be taught how to deal with these things, and the basic laws which govern this safe approach I shall give you in the next set of instructions. For the moment I want to deal with the establishment of the two terminal points of contact, the one which brings down the solar energies, and the one which draws up the earth forces. I have used the terms "bring down" and "draw up" but actually these forces are always pressing in upon you. *What you have to do is to reduce the resistance of your personality to them.* We are usually so cluttered up with repressions and rigid thought complexes that the energies are choked back and cannot flow freely through our nature. In this exercise you are using your own conscious will to open the

way for these forces to flow through you, and by this very action they will tend to restore the true balance of the bodily forces and so bring about a healthy condition both of body and mind. When someone who claims to know and practise these things is always ailing in some way or other, then you may be sure that, as *a general rule*, it is due to the wrong application of these exercises. There are certain exceptions, but these simply prove the rule. As far as you are concerned, you will find that the methods I give you will produce the desired results with the least possible trouble. I have said this last very deliberately, for at the beginning of your work on this exercise you will probably find that the effect of the conscious attempt to bring through these dynamic energies will be to cause some manifestation of bodily discomfort, even apparent disease. This, however is due to the stir-up of the various "locked-up" energies in the mind and the body. Once the circuit of force has been established, these vague but annoying symptoms will disappear and you will find that you have gained a wonderful vitality which will begin to affect the whole personality.

Sometimes this new energy, which tends to follow whatever mental path has been strongly established in the mind, can cause some annoyance, as it may well affect and stimulate certain bodily activities which we may be trying to curb. This, of course, applies most strongly to those activities which express the primal urges of self-preservation: sex and herd. The remedy is to build up new channels and the incoming forces will just as readily flow in the new river bed as in the old one. What you must not do is to worry at this stage if you find that the increased vitality is affecting you in this way.

It is because of this tendency that some teachers warn you off these exercises, but we in this school are of the opinion that with due care these things can be adjusted and controlled and need not cause undue trouble.

In the next instructions I shall send you, I will show you how to open up these energies and draw them into yourself, and at the same time I will give you the necessary safeguards against their possible misdirection.

CHAPTER XII

BRINGING THROUGH THE POWER

IN the last set of instructions, I gave you the method of building up the two great terminal points through which you are to draw the energies which are required for the work. Now I want to go a stage further and show you how to bring through these forces into your etheric or vital body, from which they will work upon all levels of your personality. It is important that you should remember that these forces are to be brought into the etheric, not the physical body. Since each cell in your physical body is a living thing, it possesses consciousness, of an exceedingly rudimentary type, but nevertheless consciousness, and the consciousness aspect of these millions of living cells is located in the etheric body. Thus, by charging the etheric with the energies you draw through, you affect these cells directly.

The actual psychic centres are located in the region of the spinal column, but they extend out to the surface of the etheric body; about three inches beyond the physical body itself. For the work you have to do in this preparatory training, it is important that you obey this instruction most carefully. *Never try to concentrate on the centres in the spinal column.* There are powers and forces which lie dormant therein and these, if aroused prematurely, can produce very undesirable results. This, as far as I am concerned, is not a matter of theory. So always remember this, in all your work with these powers.

There are certain perfectly safe methods of operating upon the centres. These methods use certain symbolic images as points of contact, and these symbols are taught to you at a later stage of your work. But for the present, do just as you are told, as far as the centres are concerned.

You will remember that I told you of other contact points through which the living energies must be directed, *Daath*, *Tiphareth*, and *Yesod*. Again, remember that it is to the surface points in the aura that your attention should be directed, and not to the actual centres within. On the Tree of Life, the *Sephiroth* corresponding to the psychic centres are shown in colour, but for the first steps in this exercise, it may be easier for you simply to visualize plain circles of white light on the surface of the etheric body. The *Sephirah Daath* is located over the throat, *Tiphareth* is over the general area of the solar and cardiac plexi, and *Yesod* over the region of the generative organs.

I want you to study these instructions very carefully, since every part of them has its reason for being there, and its omission would cause the exercise to lose much of its value.

First of all, let us consider the posture you should adopt. It is immaterial whether you lie flat upon the back, sit on your chair in the way you have already been shown, or stand erect. For preference, I would choose sitting in the god-form position, but you must find which of the three positions seems best for you. Actually, I have known people who found that the kneeling position was best for them. In these matters there is often a good deal of latitude; if the principle underlying the exercise is being properly carried out, then the position is a secondary thing. It is well to remember, however, when at a later date you perform some of the advanced exercises, you will have to adopt the postures which go with them, and not vary therefrom. For the present, however, find which position suits you best, and having done this, keep to it throughout your training.

You must now begin to use a simple breathing exercise. For the time being, forget anything which you may have read about *prana* and its connection with breathing. It is quite true that by using the breathing in a certain way, you can greatly increase your intake of this form of vital energy, but that is not the purpose of this present instruction.

You have, by visualization, built up your two terminal points, the one above your head and the other beneath your feet. The more clearly they have been built, the more effective will be your exercise. This is where so many apprentices are found out! The Magical Diary may be "faked", and for quite a time they can get by with it, but when the later exercises are attempted, they find they are unable to carry them out successfully. However, as I know from other sources that you have worked hard on these elementary exercises, I am sure that you will be able to carry out this one with complete success.

Sitting, standing, lying, or kneeling in your chosen posture, visualize the terminal centre above your head as a glowing globe or sphere of pure white brilliance. Visualize this brilliance as being so intense that its radiance streams out around it, interpenetrating your entire body. For a short time rest, as it were, in the white light, bathe in it and allow it to enter your entirely relaxed body. Then concentrate your attention upon the centre of this radiant sphere and mentally draw from it a stream of concentrated white light, at the same time taking a deep breath. Although you are breathing through the nose and inhaling the physical air, you must also see and feel yourself to be drawing in this stream of radiant energy from the very centre of

the sphere of light above your head. This stream of white light should be seen mentally as being, for the moment, stored around the solar plexus centre (*Tiphareth* on the Tree of Life). You are now left with two things: a charge of air in the lungs and a charge of energy around the solar plexus. As you exhale the air from your lungs you must, at the same time, visually project the indrawn energy in the form of a shaft of light, downwards through the *Yesod* centre to merge finally into the swirling sphere of colour beneath the feet. You may notice at this point that I have made no mention of the centre above the throat, which we attribute to the *Sephirah Daath*. This for a very good reason. *Daath* is a terminal point for a very different set of energies which are coming in from another dimension, and, for the time being we are not concerned with them. Later we shall bring *Daath* into the picture.

Now comes the second part of this exercise. The charge of power which you have stored and have projected downwards to the earth centre, must now be replaced by a corresponding charge which is drawn from the earth contact beneath the feet. So, as you visualize the multi-coloured earth centre below the feet, breathe in again and visualize the energy as a shaft of orange-coloured light being drawn up through the *Yesod* and *Tiphareth* centres, into the centre above the head. Now exhale the breath, and on the next inhalation again draw upon the white brilliance. This completes the first exercise, and at the start of your practice you should complete the sequence not more than six times. It may be that you will find six times to be too many. If so reduce to half that number until you feel able to increase to the maximum. Here, as in all these things, individuals vary, and it is difficult to lay down any fixed rule. You must find out for yourself the best procedure to adopt in your own particular case. One thing, however, is definite and final; you *must not* supplement these exercises with snippets taken from Arthur Avalon's *Serpent Power* or similar works. If you break this rule then all further instruction from me will cease, and you will be held to have failed in your apprenticeship. The matter is as serious as that. I know the fascination of "Bluebeard's Chamber" can be very great (I went through this myself) but it is not simply a matter of doing something which is not in the book of rules. These energies are powerful for good or ill, and if you attempt to mix the exercises given you, with others belonging to a different system of training, then you will disorganize the finer forces in your own self, and the results of this disorganization are not good, either physically or psychically. Again, this is not a pious repetition of what someone else has written, it is something which I know from my own observation to be true. So I hope you will see the reason for

this strict adherence to instructions, for therein lies safety. In any case, you will find that these exercises provide you with quite enough to do, without any additions.

When you have thoroughly established this first exercise, you will be ready to begin the second one, and this again starts from the radiant centre above the head.

When you have assumed your usual position for these exercises you can begin to visualize the radiant centre above the head, but this time you must see it as radiating a sheet of light which is the full width of your body. I have found that the best way to do this is to visualize the centre of radiance as a point in a "waterfall of light", as though you looked up at the top of a waterfall and saw the sun cutting the line at the top of the fall at its middle.

Now picture the falling sheet of light as coming down in front of you, and see it pouring around your feet. Then, quickly turn it below them *through* the earth centre and bring it back behind your body, up over your shoulders and neck, back to the centre above the head. As you do this visualization, you should breathe as follows: breathe in as you first visualize the Crown Centre, then, as you exhale, visualize the sheet of light falling in front of you. As you again inhale, see the light rising behind you as I have explained. When it has been drawn back to the Crown Centre breathe out, and then, with the new inhalation, steady your attention again on that centre. This completes the cycle of operations. The complete exercise should be repeated several times, but in the beginning I would advise you to make the number the same as in the first exercise. The next exercise is similar to the first one, but the sheet of light is sent over the left shoulder, down the left side, under the feet and through the earth centre, thence back up the right side to the Crown Centre. Breathe in as you contact the Crown Centre, exhale as the light is projected down the left side; again inhale as it is brought up the right side, and, as it is poured back into the Crown Centre, you should breathe out. The number of times this should be done is the same as for the first exercise.

You are now ready for the final exercise. The consists of drawing the white radiance from the Crown Centre and mentally winding it round your body in broad wrappings of light, as though you were wrapping an Egyptian mummy in its linen bandages. Wind from the right hand side round your body to the left, and then across from the left hand side to the right. Repeat this until you have reached the feet, then continue in the same direction, but let your wrapping of light rise up the body until it is ended above the head. Inhale as you make the initial contact with the Crown Centre, exhale as you go down

the body; inhale as you come back upwards and when once more you reach the Crown Centre, exhale. Again do not repeat this sequence beyond the limits of the other exercises.

So far, you have, as it were, been pulling out the energy of the radiant centre above the head. But this is only a beginning, a laying of a rough channel through which that energy may pour. Now you have to open the sluice-gates and allow the energy to pour out through you at a much higher pressure. Here you will need to use your discretion. Always remember that these forces, though divine in their origin and nature, like every other force in this manifested universe, are capable of being misused. To return to our engineering analogy, do not open the sluice-gates to more power than you can safely control.

The amount of energy which you can draw from the radiant centre is measured by your realization of it. If you think of that centre as a positive pole of the cosmic battery then you will see that it is necessary for you to have some means of checking its tremendous energy. This is equally true of the fiery centre below the feet. Here is the key to the control of the incoming energy. You have been studying and meditating on the glyph of the Tree of Life, and you will have noticed that it is said that there is a Tree in every *Sephirah*.

Our waking consciousness is centred down here in the *Kingdom*—Malkuth, and in most cases in *Malkuth* in *Assiah*. That is to say, we normally identify ourselves with the kingdom of earth in its densest and most restrictive aspect.

You must learn to centre your consciousness, for the duration of the exercise, in *Yesod* of *Malkuth*; that is, you must use the invoking formula in a carefully restricted manner. There are several forms of the invoking words, and you can choose which you will employ. I use the following: "The Fullness of Power, of Love and Wisdom pour down through me." This is the basic form. Now, according to the level of that energy which you desire to contact will be the controlling idea which you must use.

In your case you desire to work in *Yesod* of *Malkuth*, so your invocation should be somewhat as follows: "Infinite Power, Love, and Wisdom, present in all things, descend now through the most holy Gabriel and dispose and correct the designing of the representations which I have made."

Now, as you visualize the radiant centre, picture it as not only a sphere of radiance, but as a source of intense energy, powerful, pressing down into the channels you have built; a *positive*, not a negative thing.

Similarly, allow yourself to picture the earth centre in the same

way, as a dynamic source of energy. If you have performed the invocation correctly, i.e., sincerely, then you will not be in danger of allowing too much of the cosmic energy to sweep through the channels you have made; you will find there is an automatic regulation in action.

I know there are those who would say, "You cannot have too much of the Divine Power; it is all good." To this the answer is that it is quite easy to have too much of a good thing, as the dying King Arthur tells Sir Bedivere in Tennyson's "Idylls of the King". By the way, this is a poem which is worth reading if you are fond of poetry. In spite of its very Victorian style, it manages to convey much of the *Morte d' Arthur* of Malory. The whole Arthurian story is the cover for a very wonderful teaching concealed within its allegory and symbolism. Try reading the Idylls or the *Morte* microcosmically, i.e., let the principal characters represent the principal parts of your own self, your ego, your psychological "shadow", etc. You may find it very interesting and helpful.

But to return to the invocation of energy. If you control the input of the cosmic life into the channels you have built, then it will work gently, but powerfully upon the various aspects of your being; and if, as is usually the case, it dissolves some of the mental complexes in your personal unconscious, the liberated energy will not surge up into consciousness in an uncontrollable flood, but it will be assimilated into your psychic economy in such a way as to strengthen rather than to overwhelm.

During many years of work and study along these lines, I have seen many who, either through ignorance or presumption, attempted to call down the cosmic life in an uncontrolled manner, and I have seen something of the trouble, and in some cases the disaster, which followed upon such ill-advised efforts.

I want you to study very carefully the whole of this instruction on the control and circulation of the cosmic energy. *Remember always, that you are working at this stage in Yesod of Malkuth, in the World of Assiah.* You are drawing in that primal power through the rainbow aura of the etheric aspect of this physical world. This should prevent you from assuming that you are far advanced. The sensations of power and the clarity of perception which result from contact with the inflowing life-power tend to make you feel that you are greater than you really are, and this can breed that pride of the false ego which leads to trouble.

CHAPTER XIII

"WOVEN PACES AND WAVING HANDS"

THE instructions I am sending to-day contain some of the elementary teachings about ritual and ceremonial. All being well you will become a member of a lodge engaged in ritual work; it is well, therefore, that you acquire a clear idea of its nature and use. The general distinction between ritual and ceremonial is that a "rite" is something done, while a "ceremony" is the *way in which that something is done*, but in general usage, the two terms are usually employed together.

As I daresay you know, there is considerable prejudice against ritual and ceremonial among spiritualists and the outer fringe of the psychic movement generally, and one of the favourite gambits of the average speaker on the spiritualist platforms is to refer contemptuously to the use of "dogmas, creeds, and rituals of the Christian Church" which are singled out for this attack, while strange customs from eastern sources are often taken as "the ways in which our Oriental brothers work", as I heard a speaker remark on one occasion.

' There is a very definite reason for this aversion to ceremonial, on the part of the protagonists of spiritualism, and it is very largely a psychological one based upon certain subjective factors. Broadly speaking there are those who have an inherent temperamental liking for colourful ceremonial, and they will naturally gravitate to movements where such ceremonial is employed. There are also others to whom ceremonial, in its more ornate forms, is repellent. We can therefore say that there are two extreme types, ceremonialists and non-ceremonialists, with varying degrees between them. This is the basic idea which you must keep in mind.

Now, most of those who enter the psychic movements, either know nothing about ceremonial, or are in revolt against the formal orthodox Christian use of such ceremonial. Usually, the revolt against certain Christian teachings extends to the methods of worship used by them, and the catalogue of rites and ceremonies is widened to include "creeds and dogmas". As this kind of thinking is illogical, I want to write about it for a while, since I want you to be able to approach this very important part of your work without any subconscious prejudices against it, or any illogical preferences for it.

First of all, let us have a look at the word "creed". It comes, as you will know, from the Latin *credo*: "I believe", and a creed is therefore a statement of the beliefs held by a person or group of persons. Every movement, religious or secular, rests upon definite beliefs which are held by its members, and these constitute its "creed".

Now for "dogmas". If you state your belief in certain things in a definite and positive manner, then you are enunciating a dogma, for this is a term which simply means that, on the basis of what you believe, you put forward certain positive statements.

"Ritual and ceremonial" are, as I have already said, things done in a certain way. Divorced from the purely religious setting, the whole of our lives provide a perfect example of ritual work. We do things in a particular way, and we use other things to achieve this "ritual". The dining-table is laid in a familiar ritual manner, knives, forks, and spoons in customary order; an order which enables the ritual of the meal to be carried out in the best possible way. At the office, or in the workshop, we tend to evolve a certain routine which enables us to do our work with the minimum of effort and the maximum of efficiency. In the case of the workshop, we often find a ritual of work imposed upon us by the "time and motion" men. So it goes on; our whole lives are a constant rite and ceremony.

Even those who are most opposed to ritual observance in religion, the Quakers, have a ritual of "centeringdown" in the silent meeting, and by their avoidance of ritual, establish a "ritual of not being ritual".

In the case of the psychic movements and especially in the spiritualist churches, they habitually use a rather truncated version of the mass of the catechumens. This is the first part of the Christian Eucharist, and in the early days, was the only part of the service which the unbaptized and the catechumens (those under instruction) were allowed to attend. With its prayers converted into extemporary utterances by the minister, it became the form of worship of the non-conformist churches, and the early spiritualists, who were mostly rebels from the non-conformists, adapted it for their own use.

Curiously enough, the real power and function of ritual has very rarely been realized by the members of the psychic movements. I say "curiously enough" because they are the very people who should have been able to see the underlying reasons for its use, since they claim to develop and use the psychic faculties. It is in the psychological and psychic realms that the power and appeal of ritual and ceremonial is to be found.

The usual objections to the use of ritual and ceremonial are very

largely based on prejudice, and are one of the legacies of the Reformation. They are identified with the practices of the Roman Catholic church, and are therefore condemned out of hand. You would find, if you question members of the various protestant bodies, that very few of the laity have anything but the vaguest idea of what the Roman church actually does, or why she does it. This is unfortunate for many reasons, one of them being the difficulty of having any rational discussion on the subject. The Orthodox eastern church is seldom considered, being vaguely thought of as some kind of variant of the Roman church.

Incense and vestments are two other things which arouse this irrational reaction. The same people, however, who object to the use of incense in the Christian church will cheerfully burn an "Oriental" joss-stick, of doubtful origin, in their seance room or private sanctuary.

As for vestments they are worth a little careful consideration since, if you enter the lodge, you will yourself be wearing the ceremonial robes of your grade. In the early days of the Christian church the ministers used to wear the "Sunday-go-to-meeting" dress of the time; this for safety reasons also, in the days of persecution. As time went on fashions changed, but the church kept the now old-fashioned dress for its ministers, and the inevitable tendency towards symbolic ornamentation began to make itself felt. So, through the centuries, the Eucharistic vestments were evolved.

If you have had any contact with the psychic healing work carried on in the spiritualistic churches, you may have noted the white coats worn by the healers. This, of course, began as an imitation of the coats worn by the medical profession in hospitals. Such coats, properly sterilized, are an aid to the general antiseptic precautions taken in these places, and to that extent would also be useful to the psychic healer. Many such white coats, however, are used which are distinctly neither sterilized nor white, and in practice they are used by the healers as a uniform of office. Given time, it is quite possible that we shall see the emergence of "healing vestments" in the same way as the churches' vestments developed.

Finally, I would draw your attention to one of the most anti-Roman and non-sacramental of Christian bodies—the Salvation Army. That they do great work among many thousands of people, work which the average churchman never even thinks of, is not to be denied. I do not wish you to think for a moment that I am, in any way, trying to disparage the work they are doing. At the same time, it is interesting to note that these people who disapprove whole-

heartedly of the Catholic vestments, dress not only their ministers, but all their members in a special uniform, in fact a vestment!

You may think I am unduly critical in what I say about these various people, but it is sometimes useful to present the other side of the picture in order to correct the general ideas concerning the use or disuse of these things.

In themselves, they are of secondary importance, for the Eucharist can be celebrated, worship offered, and esoteric training done, without the use of any special dress.

But as very valuable helps in all these things, rites and ceremonies, vestments and incense, have their uses as you will find when you enter the lodge for training.

Now let me try to explain something of the underlying power and significance of ritual and ceremonial, as it is used in the lodges. First of all, there is the purely psychological value. Things are *done* in a certain way, and this way, is in itself, a teaching by "eye-gate". It is a well-known psychological teaching that the subconscious mind works very largely by picture images, and the various ritual processions and actions appeal to this by presenting vivid images to the mind.

The various actions of the rite which is being performed, tell a story, and tell it in the best possible way as far as the subconscious minds of those taking part are concerned. The rite is so constructed that the images which are built in the minds of the participants correspond to ancient and archetypal images in the depths of the mind, and these images, charged with power, are brought nearer to the surface of the personality and powerfully affect it. This is the main function of the ritual and the ceremonial of the magical lodges. The power is brought through into the conscious personality and works on all its levels, so that immediately or gradually, a definite change of consciousness is brought about.

In many of the lodges the robes used in the various rites are made with a cowl which can be drawn over the head, in order that the wearer may be completely hidden. This is very helpful; it prevents distraction and makes for impersonality. After all, the separate personalities are making up the whole of the magical rite, and in this team we do not try to spot the brilliant players; rather we look at the rite as a unity. In much the same way the vestments of the Catholic priest also emphasize his impersonality, for he is the officiant in a truly magical rite, and his personality, as such, should not come into the picture at all.

There is yet another reason for wearing robes when taking part in a magical rite. The very fact of assuming another dress tends to

attune your mind to the spirit of the ceremony. This is by reason of the association of ideas, and as you begin to array yourself in the ceremonial dress, so your mind is drawn away from the outer mundane world and becomes sensitive to the subjective world in which you are going to work. Perhaps I can emphasize this by suggesting that you turn your mind back to your childhood days and recall when, with the aid of one or two articles of clothing you created for yourself a world of "cops and robbers" or "cowboys and Indians". The dress does help in the establishment of a certain frame of mind, and its presence, during the ceremony, acts as a persistent reminder of the task you are undertaking.

A word here about your robes. For the ordinary work of meditation, etc., and for the exercises which I have given you, it is not *necessary* to wear any particular dress, but nevertheless such a "meditation robe" is helpful. A simple, loose-fitting robe which can be easily slipped over the head is the kind of thing which is worn in the lodge. You can increase its efficiency by having a hood attached, and this can be drawn over the head when you are using the robe. It is very interesting to note how much this simple device tends to isolate you from outside things.

Now you will have to apply in your own way what I have told you here. In all these things, although there is a very definite occult discipline, much is left to what is known as the "ingenium" of the worker. Gain a good grasp of the principles involved, and then work them out in your own way. In my published books I have given you some of the principles, and, *within the limits of your discipline*, you are free to do a little experimenting. Do not be afraid to experiment; on the other hand do not take this for permission to "monkey with the buzz-saw", by altering any one of the exercises you have been given.

Quite apart from the psychological aspect of rites and ceremonies, there is a very real psychic aspect also, and I want, briefly, to explain something of this to you. You are already aware that in a magical rite we claim to build up an inner, psychic structure which will enable us to concentrate and direct the energies which we are about to draw through into the personal levels, and this is done by the "spell of woven paces and waving hands". But do not make the mistake of thinking that the performance of a rite without a definite mental "intention" will produce much in the way of results, though it may perhaps arouse an association of ideas, and bring through a trickle of power. The ritual work must always be the outer expression of a real inner purpose.

Now when you perform a ritual "with intention", as we say, you

will be building up a definite set of thought images, and those of us who possess the clairvoyant faculty can see that these thought images are formed in the plastic substance of the astral light. It is these images which form the conducting channels for the inner energies which we call down into our personal sphere.

We are *building* a composite thought-form, and for this reason the terminology of the building trade is very applicable, and most of the ritual orders make use of it. You will, of course, be familiar with its use in connection with the very wonderful masonic order.

(It is true that for the greater number of its members such a thing as thought-form building is quite non-existent, but that does not alter the fact that, if they sincerely take part in the Craft ritual, they do actually build such forms.)

Here I want to give you a word of warning. That which you can build by intention and rite, can equally be broken down by a suitable use of intention and rite. It follows, then, that on all matters connected with such thought-building, it is necessary to preserve secrecy. This is the real reason for the secrecy of the lodge working. It is not that no one knows the general rituals, for they have been published openly, or semi-openly, many times. What is important is that the workings of the lodge concerned should be kept secret. Each lodge is on its own "contact" as we say, and it is the form of its ritual work which must be kept secret.

The great psychologist Jung has some rather disparaging remarks to make about occult secrecy: He points out, quite rightly, that it is possible to acquire a kind of "guilt-complex" with regard to the secret work, and to develop, in addition, a "cut-off" attitude towards those who "are not of us". This, of course, is a possibility, but if the lodge is giving true teaching, all its activities will be correlated with the everyday activities of the brethren, and then this occult secrecy is seen to be simply the equivalent of the notice on the workshop door: "Keep out, men at work."

It is, of course, well known that many secret societies have been used for political purposes, and in many cases for politically subversive purposes. In the true lodges, however, party politics of any kind have no place. All meet in equality on the floor of the lodge, and the workings of the lodge are directed towards the building and transformation of character. No attempt is made to interfere, either overtly or covertly in the political sphere. All history has shown the folly of attempting such political work. An outstanding example is the endeavour made by the Polish Chasidim to influence the Napoleonic wars in Europe.

In the group-thought-form which is built up by the use of ritual, there are certain focal points where the influences which well up from the deeper strata of the collective unconscious of the race, are brought into contact with the group, and charge the form with their own particular energy. The officers of the lodge are, to use a technical term, "contacted" on these focal points. They thus become channels through which the energies concerned enter into, and charge up, the composite thought-form.

So, behind each officer there is built up a certain figure which represents the power of his or her office. These telematic images are strongly visualized by the officers concerned and also by the higher-grade brethren who are present. They are part of the mechanism whereby the deeper forces of the collective unconscious are channelled into the group. You will hear them referred to as the "god-forms", and you will have to learn how to build up such forms, and, though this comes at a later stage, you will learn how to link up the forms with the forces they symbolize, and of which they will be the channels.

I only touched upon this part of the subject because I want you to see how important are your "five-finger exercises" in visualization. This may help you in those "dry" periods when the heavens are as brass, and it seems as if any proficiency you may have gained in the past has been lost.

Now I think I have given you as much as you need at this stage of your training, and I want you to meditate upon what you have been told and I *do* mean *meditate*. The implications of what I have told you are really far-reaching and steady meditation should help you to comprehend them.

In your next instructions, I will try to answer your queries in connection with some difficulties you seem to be having in your training, and we will see if any light can be thrown upon them. However, whether things go smoothly or otherwise, *persevere with the exercises*. Do not make the mistake of stopping until you hear from me. This can be a subtle way of dodging the work involved, for the subconscious levels can, and do, make use of such things.

At the same time, of course, since you are under the training of the lodge, you are also under its protection, and should things become too much for you, do not hesitate to shout for help; it will be forthcoming.

CHAPTER XIV

"THERE ARE LIONS IN THE WAY"

IGATHER from your report this month that you are having some difficulty in carrying out your exercises, and that this difficulty arises from within yourself and not from outer conditions. From the tone of your letter you seem to be thoroughly depressed and inclined to throw up the whole thing.

I have been expecting something like this to happen; it is one of the signs that you really have been trying to put into practice all that you have been given. Now let me explain why I have been expecting these "lions in the way", as they are sometimes described. When you first undertook training along these lines, you were full of enthusiasm and determined to do everything in your power to follow all the instructions you were given. Perhaps, like myself, in the early days of my own training, you regarded it as an exciting quest; something after the style of the adventures of King Arthur's knights of the Round Table? Actually, it is such a high adventure, but it needs to be considered in its correct perspective.

Taking the Arthurian stories at their face value (actually they are romance presentations of a much more ancient and wonderful teaching), have you ever thought of the real work involved in the making of a knight? His long apprenticeship as page and squire, his strenuous exercises in the tilt-yard with sword and lance, with spear and shield? The inevitable envy and jealousy, as well as the comradely rivalry between himself and his companions? The long, dull, and arduous chores which must be done if he was one day to ride and fight behind his own banneret? All these things, as well as the rough treatment and the many temptations to which he was subjected, must have caused much distress to the would-be knight, particularly if he was of a sensitive type. He must have gone through many periods of depression and doubt before the final vigil in the dark and empty church before the dawn of the day of his accolade.

I would counsel you to meditate on these things. Use the visualizing power which you have developed, and make these scenes live. It may seem that they are simply the representations of purely mundane conditions in a rough social environment, but they are also true parables of the conditions which your own self has to encounter. You will remember that, at the very beginning of your training, I warned

you that this apprenticeship was not entirely a "bed of roses"; that you would find yourself beset by difficulties. I was obliged to give you this warning, and I was fully aware that, although in the first flush of enthusiasm, you would probably minimize them, at a later date they would cause you dismay and some distress of mind. In this I appear to have been correct, so we must now consider carefully just what are the reasons for these difficulties, how they may be surmounted, and how they may even be turned into aids and opportunities for advancement.

In what I have written about the knightly preparation I have tried to get you to see these things as part of the training; as the parallel bars, the box, the ropes, and all the other paraphernalia of the gymnasium; for this is what they really are, the tools whereby you may reshape your personality in accordance with the teaching you are receiving.

This personality is to become a well-tempered and efficient tool in the hands of your own true Self, and you have the task of shaping and tempering it accordingly. You will notice that I have written "Self" with the capital letter. This is because I want you to realize that the "self" with which you usually identify yourself, is not the real centre of your being; though you may centre all your personal desires and thoughts around it, making yourself "self-centred". The true centre of your being is that higher aspect of your nature about which you have learnt, and around which it will become necessary at a certain stage for you to re-centre the whole of your personality in order that you may become "SELF-centred".

All the training which you will receive in the lodge will be directed towards this achievement, for it is very true that only by the entire surrender of the personal will to that higher Self, can you become an efficient knight in the spiritual legions.

"The King will follow Christ, and we the King", say the knights in Tennyson's poem, and this is also the sequence in the inner kingdoms. For the higher Self always follows the indwelling Christ, and the personal self must learn to follow its inner King.

I daresay you will be thinking that this is a lot of pious and mystical advice which does not seem to you to be very helpful. This was my own reaction in the early days of my apprenticeship, but nevertheless what I have said is the necessary groundwork for that with which I desire to impress you now. You are under training for the lodge, and the most important part of that training consists of being taught how to serve others. For in the lodges we work as a team, and the team spirit must be cultivated by all who take part in the rites. Everything

depends upon the development of this team spirit, for it builds up what is known as a "group-mind" and it is by the use of this group-mind that the inner forces are directed and controlled. You will see, therefore, how essential it is for you to learn in a team. In a team there is little use for selfish individual brilliance; the talents of all the participants must be subordinated to the work as a whole, and it is this subordination of the personal self which many aspirants find so very difficult. However, if you are to do any real work in the lodge, it is absolutely essential that you develop this power of sinking yourself into the team. Just as the team spirit in a football team does not mean that the individuals who make up the team play less well when playing together than they do when practising their own particular methods by themselves, so it is in magical work. You will find as you proceed with your training, that there are certain aspects in which you feel more at home than in others, and there is no reason why you should not specialize along these lines at a later stage. However, just as the squire had to learn not only the use of the sword, but also of the spear, lance, and shield, so it is also necessary that you should learn to do these things efficiently; these things which you now find difficult and less congenial.

All this, of course, means that your own little personal self is going to suffer a good many shocks and will naturally try to assert its own point of view. It does this as a rule, by generating emotions which indicate to the seeing eye exactly where the shoe pinches! The most usual of these emotional outbursts is jealousy, an emotion which you can very usefully dispense with at any stage of your life, quite apart from matters esoteric.

If you should find yourself becoming jealous of anyone, then be sure that this is a silly and irrational impulse from your own personal self, the "false ego" as it is termed by the psychologists. It often happens that such a reaction to the work *in the lodge* is transferred to *people outside its doors* and many beginners go on proudly thinking that they have obeyed instructions and have overcome the fault. This of course, is only one of the ways in which the false ego attempts to get away with it. This is very much of a lion in the way and has to be watched for and overcome. If you find that you are being jealous of someone at your work or in your home, or circle of acquaintances, then take steps at once to eliminate it.

I say "eliminate" it, but just as there is always a characteristic vice to every virtue, so there is a virtue to every vice. If you tackle this jealousy in the correct way, you will not try to eliminate it by a direct frontal attack, but will follow the occult method of balancing up the

unbalanced force, which this vice of jealousy really is, and so turning it into a positive virtue.

The very fact that you are jealous of someone, means that you are at least aware of certain standards which are desirable. Of course, you will have identified these standards with *your* ideas and actions, but at least you have realized that it is possible for people to have certain standards and individual skills. Now you have to redirect your ideas into more positive and impersonal channels. By "impersonal" I do not mean a cold appraisal of the work, but rather an attitude of keen enthusiasm for it in itself, irrespective of your own part therein. Also, though fully and happily conscious of the way your own contribution fits into the overall picture, you will be looking all the time for opportunities to help your brethren in their part of the work, even as they will also be keen to assist you in yours. If you will maintain this attitude of mind consistently over a period of time, you will find it to be an excellent corrective to any jealousy you may have developed. The same technique will work in all similar cases.

The troubles you mention are not very serious, and since you have been carrying out faithfully the instructions I have given you, there is no particular danger. The difficulties you mention are well-known and are incidental to the stage of training through which you are now passing. There are, however, two other lions which you may meet in the way. The first is "time and tide". You will remember that in the Bible it is said that there is a time for all things: "a time for marriage, and a time for giving in marriage; a time for sowing and a time for reaping; a time for speech and a time for silence." This is very true, but when we first start on this training we are sometimes forgetful of this law of rhythmic return, and it often happens that the apprentice tries vigorously to work against the prevailing tide rather than with it.

Here you see the need for the exercise of the virtue of discrimination: you must follow the tides of your own inner being, but at the same time watch that you are not allowing this to become an excuse for laziness!

There are four great tides which will affect you, even as they affect all life on this planet. In your case, however, since you are beginning to tread the path, the effects of these tides will be more apparent than in the case of an ordinary person. I mentioned the tides in one of my books, but I will just go over them again in order to refresh your memory.

The first tide is that which commences with the Winter Solstice, around December 21st, and continues until the Vernal Equinox in

March. This is known as the "Tide of Destruction" and its characteristic *is* destruction. Not destruction in the total sense of the word, but the destruction of anything which is effete or ill-balanced in life. So during this period, expect that all those plans for the future, which you have formulated, will be thoroughly tested and tried by the winds of adversity. Anything which is not built upon the rock will be overthrown. This, of course, is a very helpful thing, for it enables us to clear away much of the flotsam and jetsam which we have accumulated, and much of which we have built into the very fabric of our being. The next tide begins at the Vernal Equinox and continues until the Summer Solstice in June. This is the "Tide of Planting and Sowing": the time when you should plant and sow those ideas and ideals which have survived the Tides of Destruction. Then comes the "Tide of Reaping" from the Summer Solstice until the Autumnal Equinox in September: during the flow of which the harvest of these ideas and ideals will be reaped. This harvest is of many kinds; it is gathered on many planes of life and consciousness, and in order that it may be truly gathered in, *it is essential that it be reaped here in the physical world also*. Anyone who attempts to go forward, without taking this into account, will rue it.

The last tide is the "Tide of Formulation", which continues until the Winter Solstice. This tide is the one in which you may form your plans for the future, examine your past successes and failures, and evaluate your general progress. It is well for you to remember that in the true sense, progress can be made through what may seem to you to be utter failure. As a matter of fact, the only real failure is to stop trying. As long as you get up again after each fall, you are doing well.

All four tides, of course, merge one into the other, and there is no sharp dividing line between them, so you can expect their mixed influences to affect you at the end of one tide and the beginning of the next. I will leave you to work out for yourself what times and seasons are best for any particular type of esoteric work. Remember, however, that ultimately you must be able to swim against the tides, and even to use their energy in the same way that a boat "tacks into the wind", and so sails against it.

There remains the second lion, which we term "The Dark Night of the Soul". It is more commonly found in those who follow the mystic path, but it also affects those who follow the occult line of work. It is an intense depression of spirits, a feeling of utter failure and unworthiness. Part of this effect is due to the inescapable contrast between the ecstasies and delights of contact with the inner worlds, and the darkness of this mundane plane. The other part is due to nervous

overstrain. Again, the remedy is to cut down immediately on the formative side of your work and lengthen your periods of relaxation. Hold on, and the natural tides will swing you clear of the "Slough of Despond".

You will remember that Pilgrim in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, fell into this slough of despond *after* he had set out on the heavenly journey. Do not expect to be shielded from these things just because you have started out on the esoteric path.

As I have already said, meditate on these things, and particularly try to cultivate that first virtue of the path. You can get through; others have.

CHAPTER XV

"THE GATES ARE OPEN"

IT is now some time since you wrote to me complaining of the spiritual "dryness" you were experiencing, and I have noted with pleasure that you appear to have passed the test quite well. As your records show, there has been real progress. It often happens that this Dark Night of the Soul comes just before a very critical point in the training of the apprentice. This was so in your own case, for I am happy to tell you now that the artificer under whom we work has intimated that you have now reached the point in your training when you are eligible for admission to the lodge, should this be your wish. I must not attempt to influence you in any way in the making of your decision, though I am in duty bound to give you a brief idea of all that lies before you should you take this step.

In the training which you have received from me, you have not only been given a philosophy of life, but you have been taught some of the practical work which you will have to do when you enter the Mysteries. Besides this you have been "contacted", or linked with, certain inner forces, and these forces have been moulding you along certain very definite lines, so that real growth has taken place in your psychic and spiritual make-up.

You have now to adapt and adjust the unfolding life-pattern which is yours so that it fits not only into the plan of your own deeper self, but also into the pattern of the lodge wherein you will work. For, never forget, the basis of the lodge work is *group* working, not solitary endeavour, though this latter is, of course, a very necessary addition to the teamwork of the group. In any case, membership of a group does help you to "see yourself" as you are, enabling you at the same time to see where you are going wrong by comparing your results with those obtained by your brethren in the lodge, enabling, also, those who rule therein to correct any errors in your work.

In the lodge you will be working as a member of a closely knit team, and the rituals in which you will take part will integrate you into the "group mind" of the fraternity. This group work is very important, though, in addition, much personal work will be required of you. The momentum of the group-mind will often swing you over the periods of "dryness" and enable you to maintain your contact with the inner forces. At the same time, however, you must learn to stand

alone without that support. It is this very combination of teamwork and individual effort which is such an important part of esoteric training.

You will find that there is a very real discipline in the lodge, and under that discipline you must work. There is no question here of attempting to vary that discipline by popular vote. But always remember that you must be obedient to the discipline of your order, and that it is to the rule of the order, and not to its officers, that you are asked to give allegiance.

In chapter, in your lodge, you will have the opportunity of putting forward any query or complaint you may have; without inviting any future reprisals. But at the same time, if you harbour any suppressed thoughts of envy or distrust, you will find yourself being slowly, but very effectively, extruded from the group-mind, and you will eventually leave. But just as such a thought, strongly held in the mind, can extrude you from the brotherhood, so a thought of aspiration can be supported by the group mind, and that support will enable you to contact levels of consciousness which you, at your present stage, would not be able to reach.

Now I want to give you some idea of what you will be doing in your lodge, should you decide to enter it. To do this, I must give you the general picture of the work of the esoteric orders. First of all, I must warn you against supposing that the lodges indulge in the somewhat lurid antics which many writers of occult fiction portray in their books. Of course there *are* many small groups which do specialize in the more spectacular side of the esoteric work, but as a general rule the lodge work is rather hum-drum until you begin to get below the surface appearances and see the real work which is being performed, and also realize something of the mighty power of the unseen forces with which the lodge is dealing.

Now, as briefly as I can, I want to give you a picture of the work of the fraternities. What I am going to tell you, cannot be proven by you at present, and it might be that you could work in the lodge for many years before any such proof was available, and for the present, at least, you will have to take what I am going to say on trust.

There exists a mighty Spiritual Council which, beyond the veils of earthly time and space, is the real government of this planet. Its members are those "spirits made perfect" who are hinted at in all the world-scriptures, and who are incorporated in a great hierarchy ranging from mighty flaming intelligences: "Spirits before the Throne", "Watchers and Holy Ones", down through many grades of being, to the ordinary men and women who work in their service. Indeed the

chain extends even further, into that realm where the elemental spirits are struggling into material manifestation.

In the properly constituted lodge of the Mysteries, all these grades are represented, even the Mighty Ones who are invoked and who respond to the invocation, and are manifest in the "presence-form" on the inner planes.

It is into this living chain of light that you are introduced when you are initiated into the lodge, and you will see why those of us, who have been so privileged, are so insistent upon the worthiness of those whom we attempt to recruit into the service of the light. What then, is required of you, when you stand blind-fold before the portals of the Mysteries? Prompted by your guide, you will knock thrice upon that door, and one who is within will ask you "Who knocks?" You will reply: "One who desires to enter your lodge and learn from your teachers." Then the voice will ask the crucial question, "Why do you desire to enter our lodge and to learn from our teachers?" To this question there is only one answer, an answer which your guide will prompt you to give, "I desire to know in order to serve." This, which you will say with your mouth, you must also affirm with your heart, and there must be no duplicity, else will the initiation fail, and although you may enter the lodge, yet will you be cut off from your brethren, and in due course will find yourself being extruded from the brotherhood, even as Nature works to eliminate a foreign body from any living organism. Think carefully over this, for it is better to turn away from the temple door than to enter with a falsehood on your lips.

If you decide to go forward into the lodge you must be prepared to accept its discipline. You may feel that, since you have already received a good deal of teaching and have also developed some proficiency in the basic magical work, you are entitled to skip the elementary training in the lodge. If you think this, then you will be mistaken. The object of the elementary training in the lodge is not only to give the brethren certain factual teaching, but also, and this is most important, to integrate the neophyte into the group mind of the fraternity.

For this reason, in all reputable lodges of the Mysteries, this basic work is insisted on, no matter what knowledge or previous experience the newcomer may have. In fact, if he does possess such knowledge, he is subjected to the discipline with especial thoroughness. This was certainly so in my case, and I realized at a later date, that this had been for my own good, as well as for the general welfare of the lodge.

I would counsel you, therefore, not to be discouraged if you find

the early training somewhat irksome. Remember, you are not only being instructed and integrated into the group-mind of your fraternity; you are also being trained in character, in order that you may take your place in the ranks of the servers of light; you must "serve your time" as a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for your brethren, as well as taking your turn as doorkeeper in the temple, before you can hope to sit between the pillars on the Throne of the East.

In your lodge you will find that there are certain grades through which you must pass, and each grade has its own discipline and methods. But all lead to an active participation in the work of the fraternity. The fraternity works as the pendant of an invisible Order, and all its work is designed so to assist you in the great work of the regeneration of your own self, that you may be a craftsman and take your place in the ranks of light. If all the resources of the lodge are available to you in accordance with your grade, so all the powers and skills which you may develop must be freely offered by you for service.

Remember this in the heat and burden of the day, and remember it too when the way seems dull and uninteresting.

When you enter your lodge as a neophyte, you will be asked to take a certain oath, and in some lodges the neophyte is shown this oath before he enters, in order that he may see that he will be called upon to do only those things which are in line with the true moral law. He will not be required to go beyond this at any point in his esoteric work, nor will he be required to give unqualified obedience to any person in the lodge, for obedience is to the rule of the fraternity; and all, from "those who rule in the lodge" down to the latest joined apprentice, are bound by the rule. Always remember this.

Above all, as I have already said, do not expect to find yourself in the spectacular glamorous lodge so vividly portrayed by many writers of occult fiction. Indeed, should you ever find yourself in such surroundings, it would be a signal for you to get out as quickly as you could.

What you will find, in the lodge into which you are being admitted, is a well-ordered ritual, simple yet dignified, and a teaching which will answer many questions, together with a training which will yield results. Those results are, of course, contingent upon the perseverance and energy which you bring to the task, but I can assure you from personal experience that this is a path which, if you follow it with perseverance, discrimination, and energy, will bring you, as it has brought many others, into the light.

Beyond lie many grades and levels of achievement in what are termed the Greater Mysteries, but these heights will only be trodden by you when you have, to some extent at least, slain the kings of unbalanced force in your own nature. The rough ashlar, the crude and unshapen mass of your present personality must be shaped into the polished cubic stone, square and true, of a truly regenerate personality.

Our next meeting will be in the lodge, where, beneath the soft radiance of the everburning flame above you, and with the light upon the altar casting its wavering radiance upon the symbols thereon, you will take the Oath of the Mysteries, and I, ruling in the East, will accept that oath, and, by virtue of my office, bring you into our brotherhood.

The gates stand open; enter into light.