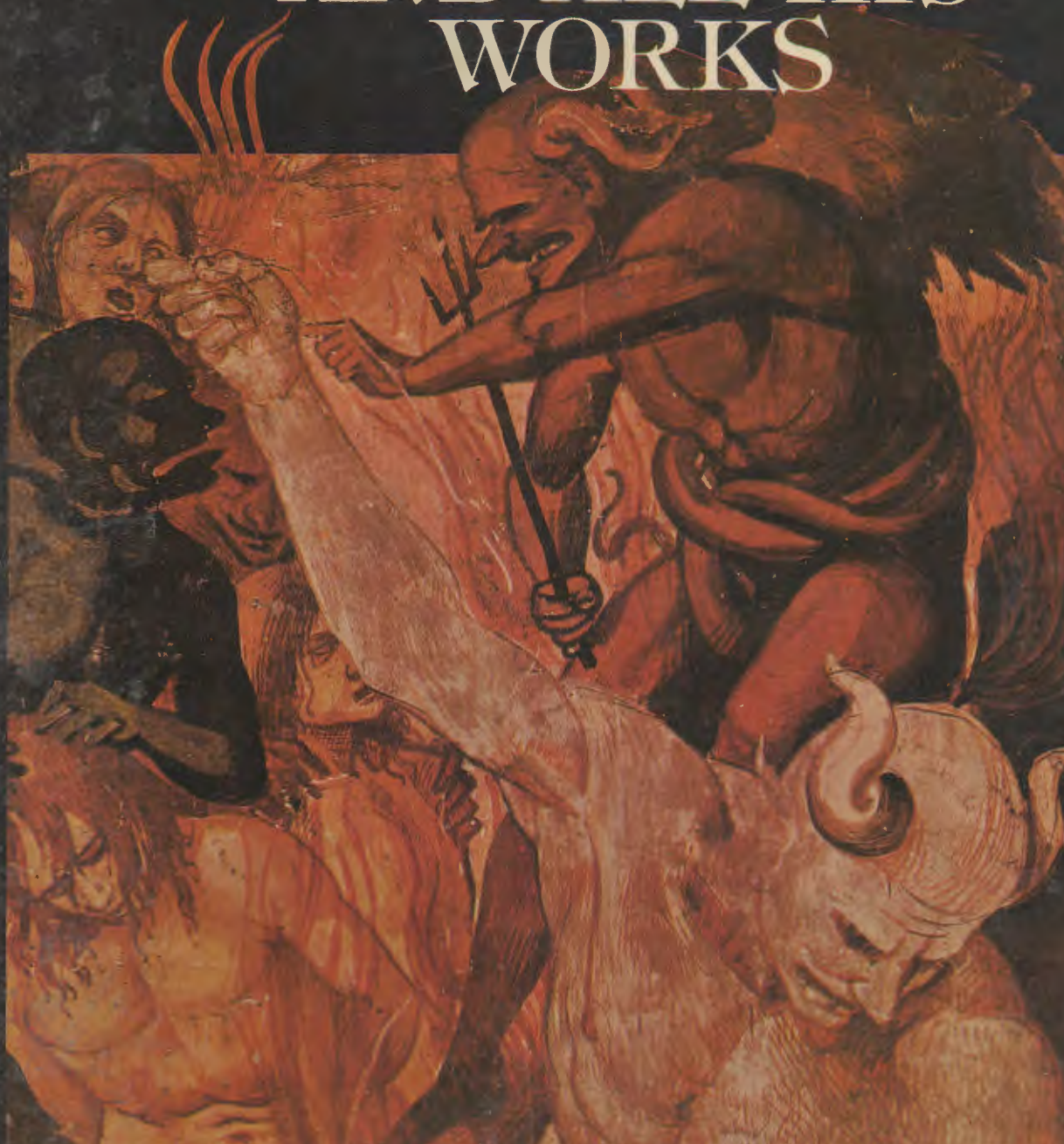


DENNIS WHEATLEY

THE DEVIL
AND ALL HIS
WORKS



No fewer than eight of Dennis Wheatley's world-famous novels are concerned with Satanism and the occult, which as subjects of study have deeply interested him for many years.

In this absorbing and lavishly illustrated book Mr Wheatley sums up a lifetime's reading and advances his own trenchant views on the conflict of Good and Evil, or Light and Darkness. These elemental forces he presents as perpetually in conflict, first one predominating and then the other.

In tracing the interaction of the two through history, the author documents the existence of 'invisible influences' from mesmerism and hypnosis, faith healing and telepathy, he goes on to astrology, numerology, palmistry, alchemy and the Cabala. Brief accounts are given of religion and magic among the nations, from the Sumerians and Egyptians, the Greeks and the Incas, down to the present day. Restrained but telling descriptions portray such subjects as human sacrifices to the gods of Evil, the mysteries of the pyramids, Druidic rituals, witches' sabbaths, the perverted frenzies of the Black Mass, and the concoction of unholy brews to conjure up the spirits of the dead.

In short this is perhaps the most complete and most absorbing survey of the forces of Darkness ever published.

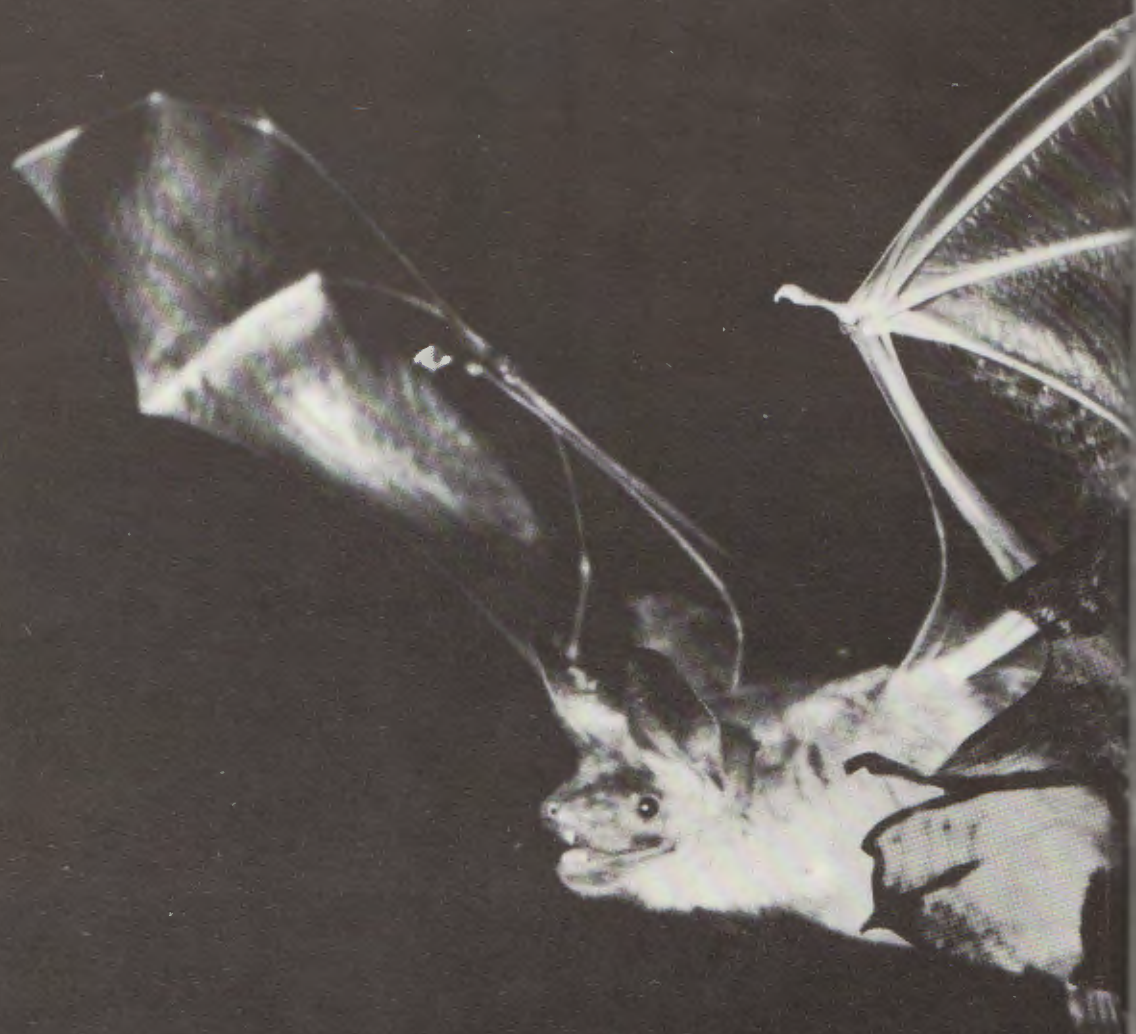
Jacket picture: Detail from *The Last Judgment* by Luca Signorelli: *Duomo, Orvieto*. Photo: Scala, Florence.

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THE DEAN
AND HIS
WORKS

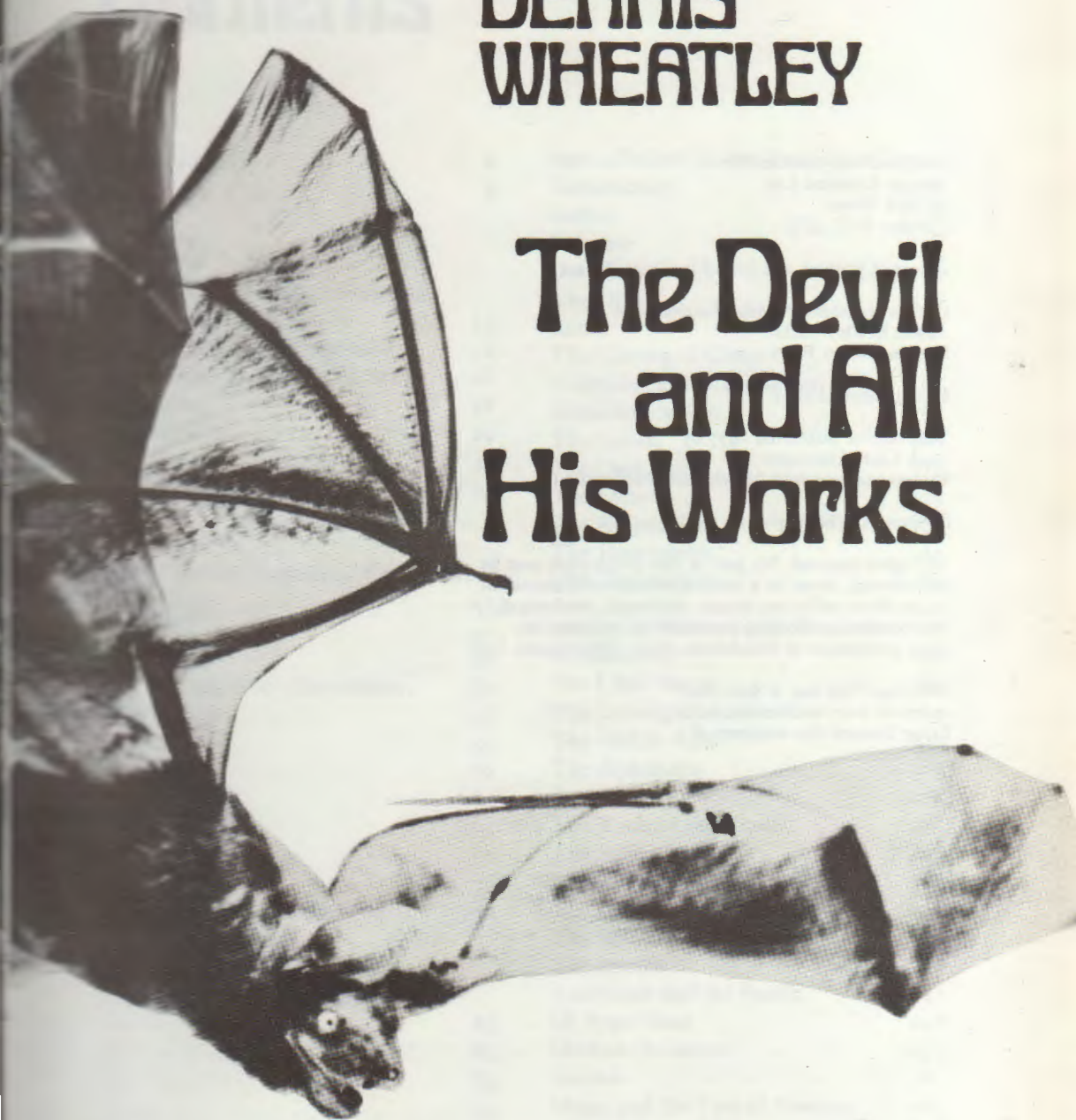


**The Devil
and All
His Works**



**DENNIS
WHEATLEY**

The Devil and All His Works



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Title-page The bat: a form that
vampires were said to assume for
flying through the windows of
their victims

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Author's Note

To write a book with so great a range of subjects as this one attempts to cover, I have by necessity used a great many literary sources. Their very bulk prevents me from making detailed acknowledgment of them all, and if, in mentioning those to which I owe most, I omit any that should have been included, let me assure my benefactor, with apologies, that the omission is inadvertent and will be remedied in future editions of the book.

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Finally, I should like to offer my grateful thanks to the staff of George Rainbird Ltd for the assistance given to me in the preparation of this book for the press.

D.W.

For my dear wife Joan

When Mr George Rainbird first invited me to write a book of this kind, I felt that I **lacked** the academic knowledge for such an undertaking, and I declined.

But a few months later Mr Rainbird approached me again, and my wife then **persuaded** me that from the four thousand books in my library and nearly sixty **years** of serious reading, I had acquired more knowledge than I could have by a **few years** spent at any University. It is therefore to her that my readers owe this **book**, and I the great enjoyment I derived once I set about writing it.

Statement

Existence as we know it is dominated by two Powers – Light and Darkness.

With Light is coupled warmth; with Darkness, cold.

All forms of life are dependent on Light for their growth and well-being.

All progress is checked during Darkness; and when, as in winter, its hours exceed those of Light, it brings about decay and death.

Therefore, from time immemorial, Light has been associated with good, and Darkness with evil.

During the course of a year, in any part of the world the total hours of Light and Darkness are the same. Hence the influence wielded by the two Powers on mankind is equal.

There are certain things that it is not given to man to know. For example: how the Universe was created, what lies beyond the remotest star, how to grasp the meaning of eternity.

The reason for the existence of good and evil is also beyond our comprehension. We know only that our lives are subject to these forces; and that, from earliest times, for lack of any other explanation, the greater part of mankind has attributed good to some form of God, and evil to some form of Devil.

The beliefs subscribed to by mankind can be divided into three categories:

1. The belief that natural phenomena and visible objects have supernatural powers.
2. The belief that everything is ordered by invisible beings having human form.
3. The belief that every individual has within him a spark of the Divine Spirit and, after a succession of lives during which he has purged the dross from his nature, will attain a state of beatitude in which his spirit becomes one with Light.

The first of these forms of belief, entailing the propitiation of the elements or the worship of graven images, is now held by a relatively small minority of the world's population, living for the most part almost isolated in a state of savagery.

The second is, nominally, held by some 1,200,000,000 people, mainly Christians, Mohammedans and Jews. However, in the past few hundred years Christian beliefs, particularly, have been greatly watered down.

In the Middle Ages it was commonly accepted that the Devil quite frequently appeared to tempt the devout as an actual person, complete with horns, hooves and a spiked tail; while, even in the last century, the majority of the masses envisaged God the Father as an old gentleman with a long grey beard, who invariably spoke English – or French or German according to their own nationality.

At the present day a high proportion of Christians seem to regard it as unlikely that the Devil exists at all, and a belief in Hell has become *démodé*. To many Christians, too, the doctrine of the Trinity is no longer fully acceptable. God the Father has faded into the background, and most people find the role of the Holy

Ghost somewhat difficult to understand. It is for this reason that in Africa a far higher proportion of Negroes has become converted to Mohammedanism than to Christianity. Allah, as the one, indivisible God, with Mahomet featuring only as his Prophet, seems a much more logical conception to people just moving out of the age of sacrificing to tribal deities. As far as most Protestants at least are concerned, Jesus Christ alone retains his former status as the Protector, to whom in times of trouble appeals for help may be made with the hope of his divine intervention. But it must be accepted that a very high proportion of Western 'Christians' are now either agnostics or pay only lip-service to their religion.

The third, subscribed to by some 800,000,000 people – Buddhists, Confucians, Hindus and Taoists – is an obvious advance on the belief in a god in the image of man, because it places responsibility upon the individual himself. But this applies only in cases where the followers of a way of life accept such philosophies in their original purity. As is the case with the religions, the teachings of their originators have become bedevilled through the centuries by ignorant or ambitious priest-hoods and claimants to supernatural powers, who have made a living by battenning on the superstitions of the credulous.

So, both in the West and East, the masses have been led to believe in the powers of saints and demons.

We must also consider this new Age of Unbelief. Atheism goes hand in hand with Communism. During the past few decades, particularly in Russia and China, as the older generations die off there are ever fewer people who accept the beliefs of their forefathers. This applies also to millions in the Western world and among the better-educated peoples in the Near East.

An eminent Victorian once remarked, 'A little religion is good for the masses.' Cynical as that statement may appear, it seems to contain an element of truth. Either a belief in a personal God, or the following of a righteous way of life, provided disciplines and rules which could not be broken without incurring possible social ostracism and either penalties imposed by a priest or a debit entry on one's life record that would count against one after death. People were also inspired to do good deeds by the belief that they would be rewarded in the hereafter. Moreover, the taboos held families together, and a faith was a crutch on which to lean in time of trouble.

The decline in the faiths has led to major changes in outlook and conduct by many million people – to a repudiation by the young of the authority and (possible) wisdom of their elders, a seeking for some mental stimulant that will replace accepted religions, and a breaking down of prohibitions that, through the ages, have protected society for its own good. Whether unorthodox occult aid is deliberately sought, or atheism accepted, the removal of the old barriers against self-gratification has rendered a great part of the new generation vulnerable to temptations which, out of fear or with a hope of reward, they would otherwise resist.

And nothing can change the laws which, at the time of the Creation, it was decreed should dominate the lives of human beings. So we all remain, and must continue to remain, subject to the Powers of Light and Darkness.



PART 1

The Invisible Influences

Introductory

It has long been maintained by many thinkers of many nations that *Homo sapiens* is endowed with a sixth sense. That is to say that impulses may reach the brain in a way that is due neither to sight, hearing, touch, taste nor smell. The modern term for this is extra-sensory perception or E.S.P.

That everyone has this sense, to a greater or lesser degree, seems a reasonable assumption. In primitive peoples it appears to be much more highly developed than in the advanced races; possibly because the many preoccupations caused by enormously varied social activities overlay our inherent spiritual resources.

An example of this may be seen even in contrasting the mentalities of Europeans in the Middle Ages with those of modern city dwellers. The majority of the former were present at family prayers daily, morning and evening, attended church at least twice every Sunday and regularly went to confession, where penalties for their sins were imposed upon them. Therefore, it is not to be wondered at that they were obsessed with the state of their souls and, at times, saw visions of the saints and demons who were never far from their thoughts. Whereas modern man, caught up in the rat-race for money or pleasure, has little time left to devote to spiritual speculations, and so is not attuned to becoming conscious of such manifestations.

Assuming that the sixth sense can be cultivated, I use the expression 'attuned' because it must consist of something like a radio set situated in the human brain, so that, if tuned in to the right wavelength, it can both receive messages and send them out.

The messages received can be assumed to be due to magnetic waves, currents or vibrations emanating from any of several sources.

The sun, as is well known, has many vital influences on the earth. So has the moon, which accounts for the rise and fall of the tides and is believed by some gardeners to increase the speed of germination of seeds if planted when the moon is waxing. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the rays from other heavenly bodies, in particular the planets, may also exert an influence on matters terrestrial. This is the basis for the belief in astrology, with which I shall deal later.

The earth, too, has invisible forces. Many people believe that it sends out invisible rays, which can be tapped by rhabdomancy. This form of divination

Opposite A dowser exploring for metals with his rod

has been used in efforts to locate objects concealed by the surface of the earth. The method employed is to take a forked branch of hazel, elder, oak or applewood, and hold it by the two upper ends of the Y, with the third end pointing forward. The diviner walks about the area selected. When he comes above the place under which lies the material he is seeking, the rod twitches and vibrates in his hands. This method of finding coal seams was frequently used in Germany during the Middle Ages. It is said also to have been successfully used in searches for gold and buried treasure. One thing is positive. For many centuries it was employed to find water, and is still resorted to all over the world today for locating underground springs.

In addition to such 'rays', there may be others which pass unseen from one human brain to another. One type of mental influence that has been accepted by the medical profession is hypnotism, as developed from the practice that, in the eighteenth century, had been named mesmerism.

Mesmerism: in the Old World

The ability of some people to impose their will upon others, without violence or coercion, has existed for very early times.

That a caste of Egyptian priests, who acted as doctors, possessed this ability can hardly be doubted. They performed the operation of trepanning, and one cannot believe that the pieces of a smashed skull could be removed and replaced over the naked brain by a metal plate while the patient was rendered unconscious by an anaesthetic no more effective than alcohol or opium.

With regard to the use of magnetism in healing, the Greeks were aware of the lodestone and believed that it could be used as a curative agent.

In the sixteenth century the famous physician-magician Paracelsus asserted that every human body was charged with magnetism, which led to experiments in sympathetic medicine.

Sir Kenelm Digby, the son of the Sir Everard who was executed for participation in the Gunpowder Plot, was an extraordinarily brilliant scholar, as well as a very able diplomat and naval commander under Charles I; he produced a 'powder of sympathy' and a 'weapon ointment' which he claimed, if mixed with the blood on the weapon that had caused a wound, would help to heal it.

In the same period J. E. Burggrav produced a book supporting the theory that shed blood still had a mystic relationship with the person who had shed it; and this we know to be one of the basic principles of magic. Robert Fludd, J. B. van Helmont and William Maxwell were all deeply interested in this subject. But magnetism, hypnotism and their associated phenomena, such as faith healing and telepathy, did not become generally known about in Europe until late in the eighteenth century.

Eric J. Dingwall and his collaborators have published a four-volume work *Abnormal Hypnotic Phenomena*, which, after noting some of the earlier mesmerists and hypnotists, gives an extremely full account of the leading ones and their activities in Europe and the Americas during the whole of the past century. From



Sir Kenelm Digby, the diplomat and scholar who invented 'weapon ointment'



The occultist Paracelsus, who applied cosmology to medicine

these volumes I shall quote a limited number of examples.

In 1778 an Austrian physician named Friedrich (or Franz) Anton Mesmer arrived in Paris. Having studied the works of Paracelsus, he came to believe, like him, that the stars influence the health of human beings by giving out an invisible fluid. Experiments led Mesmer to conclude that he had a healing power in his own hands, and he called this force 'animal magnetism'. He was particularly successful with hysterical patients, and he insisted that his cures were due to natural phenomena; but the conventional medical body in Vienna accused him of magic, and he was exiled from Austria. In Paris he opened an elaborate and luxurious clinic, and soon the fashionable pre-revolution world of Versailles was flocking to him.

In his *De Medicina Magnetica*, published a hundred years earlier, William Maxwell had written: 'Material rays flow from all bodies in which the soul operates by its presence. By these rays energy and the power of working are diffused. The vital spirit which descends from the sky, pure, unchanged and whole, is the parent of the vital spirit which exists in all things. If you make use of the universal spirit by means of instruments impregnated with this spirit you will thereby call to your aid the great secret of the Mages. The universal medicine is nothing but the vital spirit repeated in the proper subject.'

The instrument Mesmer used was a large tub. In it were laid a number of bottles filled with magnetized water, with their necks towards a larger, central bottle. The tub was partly filled with water, to which were added iron filings and powdered glass. Attached to the tub were cords, which the patients, sitting round the tub, tied round themselves. There were also cords with iron bars, and these either the patients or one of Mesmer's assistants, of whom there were over a hundred, held to their stomachs, livers, spleens or other afflicted parts. To hasten the effect of the cords and irons, from time to time an attendant would rub the patients in the

place where the pain was seated, or Mesmer himself point to it with a wand he carried.

In an antechamber, a band played gay music, and every other day a tub was provided free of charge for the poor. Many of the patients became hysterical, but great numbers were said to be cured of a variety of ailments.

The Marquis de Puységur took up mesmerism and became a gifted amateur. He had a peasant named Victor, who would carry out his every silent wish, and



Friedrich Anton Mesmer, the originator of 'mesmerism'

sing songs that the Marquis sang silently in his head. Another subject of his, Madeleine, was taken by him one day to the house of a friend named Mitonard. Having been put *en rapport* with him, she went up to him and took three screws from his pocket, just as he had willed her to do.

J. P. F. Deleuze was a follower of de Puységur. He carried out many experiments and wrote lavishly on the subject. He was inclined to attribute the success of somnambules largely to their own imagination; but here he came up against the metallic tractors invented by the American physician Dr Elisha Perkins. These



Mesmer's 'magnetic tub'

'tractors' were two pieces of different metals, each three inches long. Perkins's son was selling them in London for five guineas the pair. Many eminent people testified to the effectiveness of drawing them over afflicted parts of the body. They were much used on infants, but were far more successful on horses, and cured many animals of lameness, saddle boils and even blindness. And how could imagination enter into the cure of animals?

Dr J. H. D. Petetin termed magnetism 'animal electricity'. He specialized in experiments with cataleptics, who are particularly good subjects, and also practised 'eyeless vision'. He could, we are told, transfer a patient's senses to other parts of his body. On one occasion he held a packet containing milk bread to a patient's stomach. She at once began to munch, and said how good the bread tasted. He then changed the packet for one containing raw beef. In disgust the patient declared that she was going to vomit. He could, apparently, also make the patient 'see'

through her stomach, and, on his holding a box to it containing a letter, she correctly described its contents.

The great *Dictionnaire de Médecine* was published in the 1820s, and Dr L. Rostan was chosen to contribute the article on Mesmerism that appeared in the thirteenth volume. He believed that the magnetic fluid was similar to electricity, and that passing through the nerves it formed an aura that could be directed by the will of the operator. Further, he thought that this *agent nerveux* was able to penetrate solid bodies, and could influence the subject through closed doors, except possibly in cases where the phenomenon was due to thought-transference.

Here it will be observed we are already approaching the situation where it is recognized that magnetism, faith healing, hypnotism, telepathy and clairvoyance are all inextricably linked.

Alexandre Bertrand, a disciple of Deleuze, relates a curious case. In a dimly-lit room, where a number of people were present, he hypnotized a subject, then took a ring from her hand. Unseen by her, he slipped the ring to one of the ladies

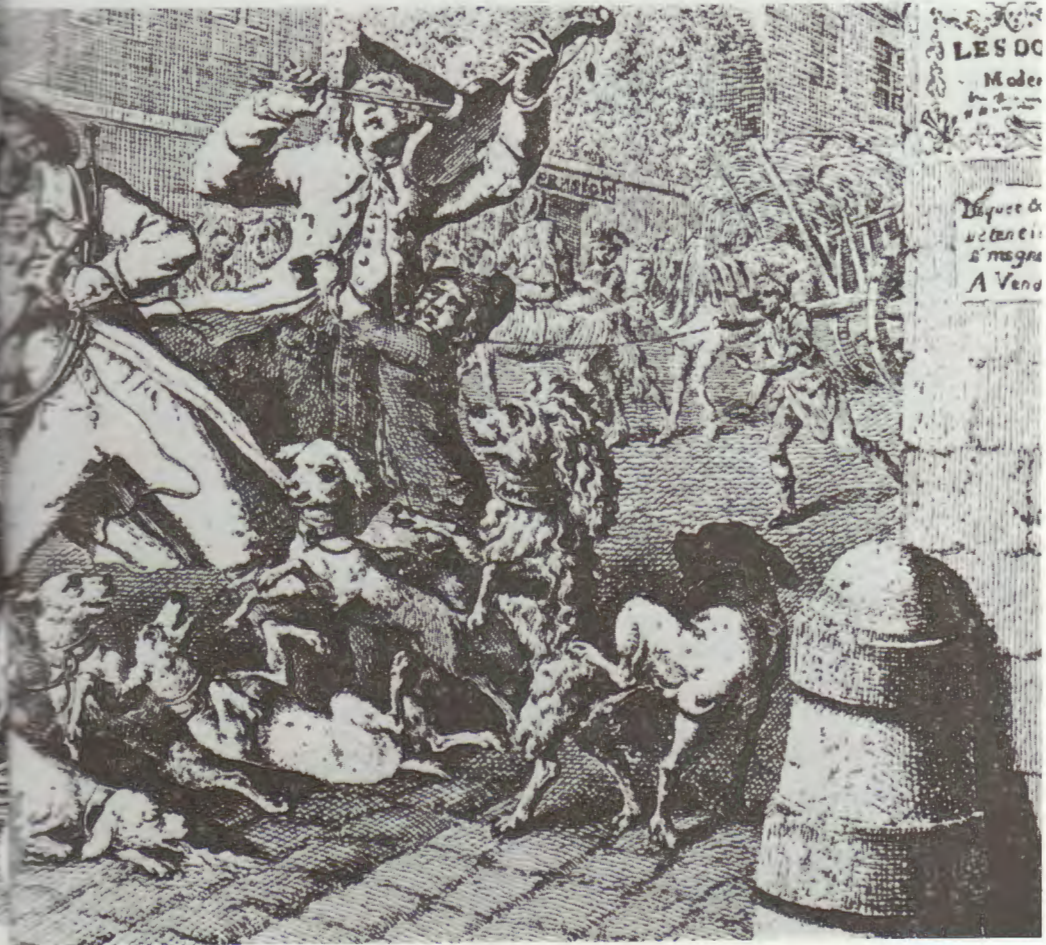
A drawing of Mesmer's time to ridicule the effect of his methods upon animals



present. When he asked the somnambule where her ring was, she replied, 'Monsieur R. has it.' She insisted on this and, touching her hip, said, 'He has it here.' Monsieur R. produced it from his side pocket. The lady had passed it on to him, unknown to Bertrand.

Bertrand likened the brain to a stretched cord which, in cases of thought-transference, vibrated in sympathy with those of others. He was one of the earliest investigators to write of the hallucinations that can be induced in somnambules, such as preventing their being aware that a person is in a room with them, or making them see someone who is not there.

Many experiments were carried out at the Salpêtrière by the Baron du Potet du Sennevoy and other eminent physicians. These were later examined by Dr Amédée Dupau, who carried out a very wide survey of the whole subject. He pointed out that magnetism was not without its dangers. There had been cases where the medical treatment had proved utterly wrong, and even resulted in death. He also observed that somnambules, the great majority of whom were



young women, tended to fall so completely under the influence of their magnetizers, almost always men, that advantage might be taken of them; and he questioned the origin of this 'universal fluid'.

About the last the Roman Catholic priesthood had no doubts, declaring roundly that mesmerism was the work of the Devil, and preaching trenchantly against its use.

In the 1840s, Dr Alphonse Teste became very prominent as an investigator into abnormal phenomena. He wrote numerous books and started a magazine on the subject. His experiments with water are of particular interest. It was found that, if a somnambule's sensitivity was transferred to a glass of magnetized water and the water was pricked with a pin, the lady felt the pain; whereas if the pin was stuck into her she did not feel it. Teste also describes cases in which somnambules said that water which had been magnetized tasted, at the silent will of the operator, like lemonade, chocolate or wine.

By the middle of the century, in Paris and most other large cities, magnetism – by then more frequently termed hypnotism – had become the major interest of the upper classes. A furious war on paper raged between doctors of the old school who would not for one moment concede that cures could be effected by abnormal means, and equally eminent physicians who were either more open-minded or convinced believers in the new treatment.

Many of the latter appear to have been over-credulous and to have accepted conditions for experiments which were open to cheating. And many of the magnetizers and their somnambules undoubtedly did cheat. The former frequently refused to allow watertight precautions to be taken, on the excuse that these could upset their somnambules; while the latter often wriggled the bandages from over their eyes, so that they could glimpse articles held out to them, or kept on asking questions of their audience until they picked up a hint as to what was expected of them. Nevertheless, many cases are so well attested that it is reasonable to conclude that an invisible influence was responsible for them.

Naturally, the cures achieved by the magnetizers and the predictions made by their somnambules excited the greatest interest in the public. It is, therefore, not in the least surprising that great numbers of unscrupulous people seized upon this way of making quick money. Magnetic 'consultants', with all sorts of pretensions, set up all over the place, and dozens of public exhibitions in variety halls and cabarets took place nightly. At one time there were no fewer than three hundred magnetizers practising in Paris. A number of them appear to have possessed genuine powers; the great majority were frauds.

Mesmerism: in the United States

It is by no means surprising that, in this young and virile nation, not only doctors but many clergymen should have displayed an eagerness to investigate the powers attributed to mesmerism – an attribute which was lacking in most of their more hidebound opposite numbers in the old countries of Europe.

I know of no record of George Washington's ever having attended an experiment

in mesmerism, but on May 14th 1794 his old friend the Marquis de Lafayette wrote to him from Paris, telling him about Mesmer, and adding, ' . . . he has instructed scholars, among whom your humble servant is called one of the most enthusiastic . . . and before I go, I will get leave to let you into the secret of Mesmer, which you may depend upon, is a grand philosophical discovery'.

Self-hypnosis: a Chinese medium entranced in a temple in Singapore



Two countrymen of Lafayette's, Joseph Du Commun and Charles Poyen, were among the first exponents of the art in the United States. The celebrated Daniel Webster and Henry Clay both spoke highly of it. The great physician Dr Charles Caldwell of Louisville, Kentucky, returned from Europe an enthusiastic champion and said of it, 'Never has there been before a discovery so easily and so clearly demonstrable as mesmerism is, so unreasonably and stubbornly doubted, and so contumaciously discredited and opposed . . . Yet never before has there been made in anthropology a discovery so interesting and sublime – so calculated to exhibit the power and dominion of the human will – its boundless sway over space and spirit . . .'

In one of the lectures given by Du Commun in New York, he described magnetism as follows: 'This fluid is seen by some somnambulists as bright atmosphere around our bodies and emanating from our fingers in the act of magnetisation, as rays of light. It may be, according to some, concentrated in water, reflected by mirrors; it may impregnate many objects; it is not interrupted by opaque bodies, and penetrates towards whom it is directed. This last circumstance determines that sympathy or antipathy, which we often feel at first sight for a person, according to the similarity or dissimilarity of our fluid with his.'

Du Commun declared the three important qualifications for a good magnetizer to be belief, will and benevolence. He regarded women as generally better than men as subjects, and was of the opinion that a magnetized tree gave much better results than Mesmer's tub.

One widely read book by J. P. F. Deleuze was translated from the French by Thomas C. Hartshorn, of Providence, Rhode Island. A Dr Brownwell related the following to Hartshorn. He was greatly worried about one of his patients, who had been ill for a long time. The trouble lay in the intestines, but he could not diagnose it, so he called in a somnambule. He questioned her in his own house, which was a mile and a half away from that of the patient. She described the patient's house and his room, but hesitated to go further, because she said he looked so terribly ill. Brownwell persuaded her to do so, and asked if the trouble lay in the kidneys, liver or intestinal canal. She replied that they were all normal, but his spleen was greatly enlarged. He asked her how she knew. For answer, although she was not supposed to have any knowledge of anatomy, she placed her hand over the doctor's spleen and said, 'It is a great deal larger and thicker than yours.' Ten days later the patient died. An autopsy was held, at which sixteen physicians were present. Brownwell told them about the somnambule's diagnosis. The body was opened, and the spleen found to weigh fifty-seven ounces, as opposed to the normal five.

C. F. Durant was the author of an important work on animal magnetism, published in New York in 1837. He cited Professor Francis Wayland of Brown University as a believer in the new science. The book gave accounts of the lectures of Professor Charles Poyen de St Sauveur, another Frenchman and a disciple of Deleuze, and of the work of the former's converts – a jeweller named Americus Potter and a Mr and Mrs William Andros of Providence. Mrs Andros was proved capable of what has become known as 'travelling clairvoyance' and, on one occasion,

although she had never been to India, she gave a Mr Henry Erving of Boston correct answers to his questions about Calcutta.

It was Durant's contention that witchcraft, water dowsing with a stick, the sorcery of India, and the charm used by the rat-catcher, are all modified branches of a 'hitherto intricate science'. He adds that the gypsies succeed in fortune-telling because they 'receive the aid of the magnetic fluid [and] far surpass the best magnetic somnambulists in the country'.

By the 1840s mesmerism was being widely used for medical diagnosis. An example of this is a testimonial signed by a Mr H. A. Davis of Natick, Massachusetts, on July 12th 1843, certifying that a somnambule magnetized by Mr G. Gregory had examined his mother, who lived in Alexandria, New Hampshire, 125 miles distant. The invalid was stated to have a tumour on the right side of the abdomen, pains and violent cramps in the stomach; her right foot, the somnambule went on, was swollen and purple. All this was perfectly correct.

By then a number of magazines in America were devoting much of their space to magnetism, and the following account appeared in *The Magnet*, a periodical founded by the Reverend La Roy Sunderland. It came from a Mr R. Carter of Boston, who reports that French teacher at Harvard had mesmerized a boy of fourteen whom he had known for only a few days, with the following results. The youth not only described accurately sights in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Quebec, Le Havre and Brest, but also the home of the French teacher's mother in the last city. He identified objects in the rooms, stated that she had three daughters and two sons, and that one of the latter was in an English ship named *The Empire* – all correctly.

Among the famous magnetizers of the day were the Reverend John Pierpont, Dr D. Gilbert, the Reverend John Bovee Dods and Dr Shattuck. Under the influence of magnetism, the latter removed a large tumour from the shoulder of a lady who lived in Lowell, Massachusetts, without her feeling any pain at all. But perhaps the most famous of all magnetizers at this time was Dr Robert Collyer, whose lectures were attended by many thousands of people. Of him a Mr John Parshall of Canandaigua, New York, stated, 'I do solemnly declare that Dr Collyer can act on any part of my body. Though I am aware of his intention, I cannot resist the action of his will. He can cause me to feel hot or cold, wet or dry, tall or short, stout or spare, and in fact he can change my condition at any time.'

Dr Lyman B. Larkin of Wrentham, Massachusetts, attempted to cure his servant, Mary Jane, of fits by mesmerizing her. She proved able not only to describe her own state, but also to diagnose a number of the doctor's patients, of who she had never heard, and often to prescribe for them. However, Dr Larkin reports that, while under mesmerism, Mary Jane frequently spoke of a beautiful fairy who was with her, whom she called Katy. At other times she used most vile language, which she said she was compelled to do by a 'sailor boy'. Still worse, a time came when her sailor boy took to putting Mary Jane's limbs out of joint, and Dr Larkin had to call in a surgeon to reset them. One day both her knees and her wrists were twice thrown out of joint, while she bellowed with laughter and made

Hypnotism

profane jokes. There could hardly be a clearer case of possession.

In his *Mesmerism and Christian Science*, published in London in 1909, Frank Podmore states that, from the 1850s onward, the healing powers of mesmerism attracted far less attention in the United States than its 'spiritual revelations'. Table-turning became the rage, and everyone was eager to witness experiments at which they hoped to behold wonders. The belief in a magnetic fluid waned, and the clairvoyants were left in possession of the field.

Hypnotism

As we have seen, by the middle of the nineteenth century, powers previously credited to mesmerism were transferred to hypnosis, and subjects previously termed somnambules were now called mediums. The number of these grew to many thousands, the majority being professionals who gave nightly exhibitions in Paris, New York, London, St Petersburg, Berlin and many other great cities.

One of the most famous mediums in France was Calixte Renaux, who gave

A subject lapsing, stage by stage, into a hypnotic trance



exhibitions under the control of J. J. A. Ricard. While under hypnosis he would obey silently-given orders, play games of cards while blindfolded, and exercise the faculty of travelling clairvoyance. On one occasion he described the room of a lawyer and its furnishings with absolute accuracy. He then added that there was a box on the table in the centre of the room. The lawyer said there could not be. Renaux insisted that there was. Several people accompanied the lawyer home. And there was the box on the table. He had taken it that morning from its usual place in another room, and had forgotten to return it.

Still more famous than Renaux were the Didier brothers. Alexis and Adolph. The former was managed by J. B. Marcillet, a one-time cavalry officer. Marcillet could hypnotize Alexis into such a state of rigidity that, while he was sitting in a chair with his legs stretched out horizontally, a man could stand on his unsupported thighs without their giving way. He frequently gave demonstrations of 'eyeless sight' by reading the contents of letters inside boxes, paragraphs from closed books, and so on; but the following is of special interest. The sitting was held at Lord



Adare's house in London. A Colonel Llewellyn, who had been wounded at Waterloo, was present only by chance, and the Reverend G. Sandby took down these particulars of what occurred.

Colonel Llewellyn produced a flat morocco box that looked like a small jewel-case. It was handed to Alexis, who said, 'The object within this case is a hard substance. It is contained in an envelope. The envelope is whiter than the thing itself. It is a kind of ivory. It is a bone, taken from a body – from a human body. From your body. The bone has been cut so as to leave a flat side.'

This was true. It was a piece of the Colonel's leg bone, sawn off after the wound, flat towards the part that enclosed the marrow.

Taking the bone from the case, Alexis pointed to a part of it, and went on, 'The ball struck here, with extraordinary effect. You received three separate injuries at the same moment. You were wounded in the early part of the day, whilst charging the enemy.' All this was correct.

There are recorded many other remarkable feats performed by Alexis while under hypnosis. He could travel mentally wherever directed, all over the world, and bring back accurate descriptions of people and places. He could talk with Africans and Chinese; he clairvoyantly descended a mine in Australia and entered into the harem of a sultan.

But at times he had his failures. Like most other mediums, he believed these to be due to some person in the audience who entirely disbelieved in his powers. Upon this question W. H. Parsons wrote to his fellow-investigator Dr J. Elliotson, 'I am more than ever convinced of the extraordinary and, as yet, unaccountable power which scepticism has in obstructing the faculty. I believe that if a determined

Testing susceptibility to hypnosis; and the induction of hypnosis by Braid's method of holding an object above the patient's eyes



sceptic has only held in his hand an object intended for a test of lucidity, it will, in some instances, be sufficient to nullify the efforts of a clairvoyante.'

The above was, of course, the get-out used by the innumerable crooks who were trading on the gullibility of the public, whenever conditions were made too rigorous for them to get away with their trickery.

Toward the end of Alexis's season in London his failures became more frequent. This he blamed on exhaustion and, as Marcillet made him perform four times a day, we may well agree that his excuse was valid. But the successes in his long career far outnumbered his failures, and many of his feats are difficult to attribute to fraud.

His brother Adolph appears to have been equally gifted, and had the same success in demonstrating 'eyeless vision', diagnosis of illness, travelling clairvoyance, finding lost money, recovering stolen articles, and so on.

A. S. Morin in his book *Du magnétisme et des sciences occultes*, published in 1860, was one of the first investigators to suggest that the theory of the magnetic fluid must be abandoned, that the miracles of magnetism could be described in terms of magic, and that the effects said to be produced by magnetism were very similar to those recorded among the magicians and sorcerers of early times.

While 'somnambule' and 'medium' continued for a while to mean much the same thing to most people, among the learned a somnambule was a person who remained under the influence of his own spirit while in a trance, and a medium was possessed by the discarnate spirits of others.

During the latter part of the century, the interest of the public became greatly aroused by spiritualism; and it was, no doubt, reluctance to appear to be associated with such practices – a very high proportion of which were fraudulent – that caused the great majority of doctors in all European countries to refuse to have anything to do with hypnotism.

Nevertheless, the more enterprising members of the profession continued to investigate the phenomena and employ them for healing. Among such doctors was J. M. Charcot. With regard to him, I recall being told in the 1930s by my friend the late Sir Lionel Earle, for many years Permanent Secretary of State for the Office of Works, that, as a young medical student at the Salpêtrière in Paris, he had seen Charcot charm away a cancer in a woman's breast.

In Britain, apart from a handful of bold spirits, the reluctance of Victorian doctors to become involved in any form of mysticism was still greater than that of their colleagues on the Continent; but such investigators as James Braid, Dr John Elliotson, W. H. Parsons, F. W. H. Myers, Dr W. Newnham, Professor William Gregory, Sir William Barrett, George Wyld, Edmund Gurney, Professor and Mrs Sidgwick, Dr J. M. Bramwell, Frank Podmore and others laboured heroically.

However, as was the case in other countries, a gullible public flocked to see exhibitions of hypnotism, many of which were fraudulent. Thackeray and Dickens both showed their interest, and numerous novels based upon the wielding of occult power appeared, among them George Du Maurier's classic *Trilby*, in which the villain is the mesmerist musician Svengali.



“‘ET MAINTENANT DORS, MA MIGNONNE!’”

‘And now sleep, my pet.’ Du Maurier’s Svengali hypnotizing Trilby, the girl with the marvellous voice who, awake, could not sing

In 1882 the Society for Psychical Research was founded, and its committee held many long sessions of inquiry. Unfortunately, for a number of years they placed great reliance on a Mr George Albert Smith, who, with a partner named Douglas Blackburn, had been making his living by giving public exhibitions of hypnotism at Brighton. Another associate of theirs was a baker’s son, Fred Wells. During the Society’s investigations, Smith was given a free hand to choose his mediums and always used Wells or some other young Brighton acquaintance of his. Then his late partner, Blackburn, publicly disclosed that their act had been a fraud. Incredible as it sounds, the committee of the S.P.R. continued to show complete faith in Smith and retained him as their major operator, thereby opening to question the validity of its entire body of findings.

In the United States, psychical activities developed along different lines. Frank Podmore pointed out that mediums in Europe accepted the power of forces above them as ‘higher intelligences’ and believed themselves to be dependent on the will of another; whereas ‘in the land of democracy we are confronted with a singular

development unknown to the older monarchies. The transatlantic seers constantly tend to be independent; they assume the authority of the prophet; they grasp at spiritual autocracy . . .'

Among the champions of this new revelation were Andrew Jackson Davis, Thomas Lake Harris, James Stanley Grimes and John Bovee Dods.

Davis was the son of a drunken, uneducated shoemaker and was born in 1826 in Blooming Grove, Orange County, New York. As a youth he was a sleepwalker and, at times, claimed to be directed by mysterious voices. A local tailor named William Levingston put him into a trance, and he apparently became capable of 'eyeless sight', could diagnose illnesses and actually see through the skin of the human body.

Harris was unusual in that he was never put into trances, but entered them spontaneously. During them he went into ecstasies and gave expression to such works as *The Hymn of Life's Completeness* and *A Lyric of the Golden Age*. He helped to found the Brotherhood of the New Life and organized the Independent Christian Church in New York.

Grimes held the belief that the planets influenced each other and the earth, because all were connected by a substance he termed 'etherium', which communicated light, heat, electricity, gravitation and 'mental emotion' from one body to another, and one mind to another.

Dod's 'vital electricity' appears to have been a similar conception. With it he is reported to have cured one Hiram Bostwick, who had an affliction that had rendered him almost incapable of walking, and a Lucy Ann Allen of Lynchburg, Virginia, who had been unable to walk at all for eighteen years. It is said that he could make people believe they were generals or statesmen, and that he could make them drunk on plain water.

Far more important than any of the foregoing was a New England clockmaker named Phineas P. Quimby. He received only six weeks of schooling, but became very proficient at his trade, and had a most inquiring mind. Married, and with a family, he was a very gentle man, and of all the American healers he had the highest reputation for 'beauty of character and honesty of purpose'.

His greatest contribution to spiritual healing was his belief that the process was essentially an act of the patient's will, imagination or faith. Although his interest was first aroused by magnetism, he later abandoned all conceptions of a fluid which passed from the healer to the patient, and insisted that the cure lay solely in the healer's having the strength of will to convince the patient that he could cure him.

Abandoning clockmaking, Quimby toured New England with a young man of nineteen, Lucius Burkmarr. Lucius was docile and unimaginative, but when hypnotized by Quimby had an extraordinary flair for diagnosis. They are said to have made innumerable cures. In the meantime, Quimby was sorting out in his mind the ideas that were to lead him to the conclusion that it was not the medicine but faith in the person who practised it that really brought about the cure. In due course he gave up as redundant the use of a medium.



Toward the end of the century the Reverend Warren Felt Evans of Vermont, and a blind doctor, James R. Cocke of Boston, both became famed for the cures they performed through hypnosis.

No doubt a great many more doctors, both in Europe and America, would have taken up the study in view of its great value for producing anaesthesia in people under surgery; but by this time chloroform and ether, the forerunners of today's anaesthetics, had been discovered.

We come now to the new era. One of the names that Quimby had given to his theory of healing was the 'science of Christ', and one of the patients whom he treated was a Miss Mary Patterson, who later became Mrs Mary Baker Eddy and Quimby's devoted disciple. It was, therefore, this humble clockmaker who, through the efforts of Mrs Eddy, brought to many millions of people a faith in their ability to conquer ill health and render themselves free from pain.

Faith Healing

Recovery from illness has long been thought to depend largely on the patient's belief in the wisdom of his doctor, and faith in the treatment prescribed. This is equally an ingredient, although often an unacknowledged one, in cures by mesmerism and hypnotism. It was not, however, until Quimby published his final conclusions, and they were widely disseminated by the Church of Christ, Scientist, that people were presented with the formal belief that a doctor or hypnotist was not always required, because in many instances they might cure themselves by having faith in their own will power.

Some people are so fully convinced of this that they refuse to see a doctor, or allow their children to be examined by one. This is very wrong, and contrary to the teachings of Mrs Eddy herself. There are types of damage to the body that no amount of will power can repair; moreover it is, surely, childish folly to endure a long fight against pain when it can easily be alleviated by modern drugs.

On the other hand, people are at times afflicted with ills that defeat all remedies advised by the very best medical opinion. In such cases it is not unreasonable to consult a faith healer – provided his honesty and success in other cases is vouched for by a reliable acquaintance of one's own.

Many people speak of cases in which treatment by a faith healer has proved successful. Only a week or so ago a friend of mine, Mr Charles Willes, the head of the Anchor Press, was telling me that for eleven years he could neither bend down nor reach up to a high shelf without pain in his back, and no doctor could do anything for him. He then went to a lady in Colchester who, during three visits, placed her hands on his back. That was two years ago, and when stooping or stretching he has had no pain in his back since then.

In the above case hands were laid on the afflicted area, but this need not be part of the procedure; cases have been reported of cures effected at a distance, without the healer's having ever seen his patient, contact being established simply by the

healer through holding something that the patient had worn.

Among the more advanced races, as with the practitioners of Christian Science, the afflicted frequently attempt to overcome their ailments mainly or wholly by the exertion of their own will. In the less advanced races, the cure depends entirely on the faith of the patient in the occult power of the healer. A case of this kind came within my personal knowledge while I was staying with relatives in Johannesburg, South Africa.

One day my sister-in-law's Negro cook, Maria, complained of severe pains in her breast. Her mistress took her to the hospital. The doctor diagnosed advanced cancer, said she must be operated on without delay and told her to remain in the waiting room until a nurse came for her.

Half an hour after my sister-in-law got home, the doctor telephoned her: 'Was Maria there?' 'No, she was not.' She had slipped out of the hospital and disappeared without trace.

For a week we had no cook. She then returned, full of good cheer and declaring herself to be perfectly well. Asked where she had been, she replied that she had been to see the 'black doctor', who had 'thrown the bones' for her and cured her of her pains. And, when she was examined at the hospital, it was found that the cancer (if cancer it had been) had vanished.

Telepathy

As we have seen, ideas passing from the mind of a conscious person to a person less palpably aware play a great part in hypnotism. We now have to deal with ideas that pass silently from one conscious mind to another.

Thought-transference is as old as history. St Augustine relates that one of his pupils asked the Carthaginian diviner, Albicerius, to say what he, the pupil, was thinking about. Albicerius answered correctly that the pupil was thinking about a line of Virgil, and recited the passage, though a man of little education.

But scientific investigation into telepathy began only in comparatively recent times. The word was coined by F. W. H. Myers in 1882, the year in which the Society for Psychical Research was founded. Myers defined it as the 'apparent transference of ideas, sensations, images and feelings from one mind to another without the aid of the five senses'.

Modern Experiments in Telepathy by S. G. Soal and F. Bateman gives an exhaustive survey of the subject. A great part of its 400 pages records experiments conducted by Mr Soal personally. It is clear that he must have devoted the greater part of his life to supervising the guessing and checking of thousands upon thousands of cards used in these investigations, and in devising ever more rigorous precautions against fraud.

Professor L. T. Troland of Harvard University was the first to invent a machine for testing telepathy. He used a darkened box in which a spotlight could be made to flash either to the right or the left; the subject predicted which way the light would flash.

However, in the early days, the general practice was to use packs of playing

cards. Owing to the similarity between the red or black kings and knaves, it was soon decided to dispense with all court cards. Dr J. B. Rhine later decided to simplify matters by having cards made in sets of five, with the following symbols on them: the plus sign, a circle, a rectangle, a five-pointed star and a set of wavy lines. These were known as Zener cards. Later still, Mr Soal substituted sets of five cards having on them an elephant, a giraffe, a lion, a pelican and a zebra.

Two Americans who, like Mr Soal, decided to devote their lives to investigating telepathy were Dr Joseph Banks Rhine and his wife, Dr Louisa E. Rhine. After spending a year at Harvard they transferred to Duke University, and it was there that most of their experiments were carried out.

In an early experiment Hubert Pearce, one of Dr Rhine's subjects, scored 279 hits out of 650 guesses, which is an average of 10.7 out of every 25. Later experiments were made with Pearce in a room 250 yards distant from that in which the cards were shown. Among 1,075 trials there were 5 runs of 25 cards each with 12 hits, and 1 with 13, making odds in favour of telepathy astronomical.

In 1933, Dr Rhine carried out an experiment with another subject, Miss May Turner, who was at Lake Janaluska, while her sender, Miss Ownbey, was 250 miles away in Durham, North Carolina. Some of Miss Turner's scores were as high as 16 and even 19 in series of 25, against odds that are positively fantastic.

Whately Carington, an airman in the First World War, and a researcher for the Air Ministry, later carried out a number of tests in connection with extra-sensory perception at Cambridge. One of them was a novel means of testing telepathy. Instead of cards he used ten drawings, exposing a different one in a locked room each night for ten consecutive nights. With the assistance of Professor C. D. Broad, R. H. Thouless, Dr Irving and other friends, he secured no fewer than 741 persons, in Great Britain, the United States and Holland, to endeavour to guess each picture, make a similar one, and send it in.

An experiment in telepathy: Dr Soal (centre) and Harry Price (right) testing Fred Marion with a reversed card



The experiment did not prove particularly successful; but later it had most interesting repercussions. He noticed that an unusual number of guessers drew on Tuesday the type of picture he had put up on Monday or would put up on Wednesday. His people were picking up impressions from the immediate past or future.

Soal incorporated this principle in his system of marking, and he found that the average derived from the series of card experiments conducted in 1934-9 (which consisted of 128,350 trials), when applied to 2,000 trials he made with a Mrs G. Stewart, gave odds of more than 1,000,000 to 1 in favour of telepathy.

The Americans have far exceeded this, as is shown by the following extract from the front page of the *London Times*, where a review appeared of an article published in *The New Scientist* on October 16th 1969:





Opposite and above A test for extra-sensory perception: a machine in use to eliminate telepathy between the conductor of the experiment and the subject

FORESEEING THE FUTURE

By our Scientific Correspondent

Dr Helmuth Schmidt has devised a strange machine consisting of push buttons and coloured lamps for his subjects. The purpose is to guess which of the lamps will be switched on by a special electric control which is itself controlled by a pulse of radiation coming from a piece of radioactive strontium.

Unlike card guessing games used to test psychic phenomena, the machine generates *random events without human intervention*. [My italics.]

Dr Schmidt, who did this work at the Boeing Scientific Research Laboratories in Seattle, tested 100 subjects, but found only a small number with abnormal scores. He says exploratory tests suggest that performance depends on the mood of the individuals.

His three best subjects obtained a performance of predicting which bulbs would light that could be obtained by chance with a probability of 1 in five hundred million.

These experiments are believed to represent as conclusive a proof of the reality of extra sensory perception as the phenomena would seem to admit.

Yet even that is not the highest point. At the rooms of the Society for Psychical Research in New York, in one run of twenty-five cards, a Miss Lillian Levine guessed the first fifteen cards correctly. The odds against this as having been due to chance work out at about 30,000,000,000 to 1.

It is of interest that so many eminent philosophers – among them Professor C. D. Broad of Cambridge and H. H. Price of Oxford; Mr C. W. K. Mundle, Head of the Department of Philosophy at University College, Dundee; and Anthony G. N. Flew, Professor of Philosophy at Keele University – have all repeatedly expressed their conviction of the soundness of the evidence for extra-sensory perception. And Professor A. M. Turing, writing in *Mind* (October 1950) on 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', said, 'These disturbing phenomena seem to deny all our usual scientific ideas; how we should like to discredit them! Unfortunately, the evidence, at least for telepathy, is overwhelming.'

As we have seen, mesmerism, hypnotism, faith healing and telepathy are all inextricably interwoven, and during the investigation of them there have been endless wrangles among their practitioners about the source and type of power which makes them effective. That does not form part of our inquiry. All we are concerned with is to show that diagnoses can be made, illnesses cured, passages from closed books read through their covers, stolen articles located, the contents described of rooms that have never been visited, distance annihilated by mental travel, and other apparent miracles performed without any normal means of communication. In short, by an invisible influence.

Premonitions

So far we have dealt only with the possibility that rays from the heavenly bodies may affect human conduct, and that impulses may be sent deliberately from one human brain to another.

But there are other phenomena which remain unaccounted for. It is not uncommon for a person suddenly to become convinced that a close friend or relation, of whom he has heard nothing for a considerable time, has just died; or for a person to become subject to an overwhelming feeling that, although he has already paid for a ticket, he should not set out on a journey to which he has much looked forward – to learn later that, had he ignored this psychic warning, he would probably have died in a plane or train crash.

Closely allied to the latter type of premonition is the experience recounted by Mr J. W. Dunne, the author of *An Experiment with Time*, which caused such a sensation when it first appeared.

One night in the autumn of 1913, he tells us, he dreamt that he was looking from a high railway embankment at a scene which he recognized as being situated

a little to the north of the Forth Bridge. Below him was the open grassland, with groups of people walking about. The dream came and went several times, and finally, in one dream, he noticed that a train going north had fallen over the embankment. Thinking that this was perhaps one of a type of prophetic dreams which he occasionally had, he attempted to focus his mind on the date of the accident, but was able only to form the impression that it would happen some time in the following spring.

Next morning he told his sister about his dream and they spoke of warning their friends who might come north the next spring not to come by that route. On April 14th 1914 the *Flying Scotsman* jumped the parapet near Burntisland Station, about fifteen miles north of the Forth Bridge, and fell on to the golf links twenty feet below.

One of the many scientists who, in the past century, proclaimed their belief in extra-sensory perception was the distinguished French astronomer, Professor Camille Flammarion. He collected a great number of examples of happenings that could not be accounted for by normal means, mostly vouched for by responsible people, and published them in a three-volume work *Death and Its Mystery*: Vol. 1, 'Before Death'; Vol. 2, 'At the Moment of Death'; and Vol. 3, 'After Death'. I give below a number of examples from Vol. 1.

Thomas Garrison lived twenty miles from his mother's house near Ozark, Missouri. One night he was attending a religious service. He had not seen his mother for two months, and at about ten o'clock felt a sudden need to do so. It became so overwhelming that he left the church before the service was over, and ran to the railway station; but he missed the last train. Obsessed by the thought that he must reach his mother without delay, he set off to walk a large part of the distance along the railway track, and reached her house at three in the morning. There he roused his sister and asked where their mother was. She replied that their mother, who was perfectly well, had gone to bed at about ten o'clock, as they planned to get up early and go into town in the morning. Garrison then asserted that their mother was dead. On going upstairs they found that was so.

Dr L. Mougeri, Alienist at the Royal Italian Hospital, Constantinople, reported that one day a relative of his said to him at about half-past eleven in the morning, 'I can't think why, but since this morning I cannot rid myself of the thought that my aunt has died in Geneva.' The man had quarrelled with his family ten years before, and had had no news of them since; but, while he was still at Dr Mougeri's house, his servant arrived bringing a telegram from Geneva, announcing that his aunt had died suddenly that morning.

A lady living in Limerick had a treasured servant named Nelly Hanlon, who one day asked for the day off to attend a fair a few miles away. The request was readily granted, but when told of the matter the lady's husband objected because they had guests coming to dinner; he would be late returning from his office, and he had been counting on Nelly to get the wine up. Nevertheless, Nelly was allowed to go off on her jaunt. That evening, followed by another servant carrying a basket to hold the bottles, the lady herself went down to get the wine. As she descended

the cellar steps she gave a loud cry and fainted. When she had been carried up to her bed, the girl who been with her told the other servants that she and her mistress had both seen Nelly at the foot of the stairs, dripping from head to foot with water. Nelly did not return that night or on the following day. She had been seen at the fair, but afterwards had completely disappeared. No one ever discovered how tragedy had overtaken her. Later, her drowned body was found in the river.

A lawyer wrote that, in January 1909, he was living at St Martin-des-Noyers, while negotiating for a practice at Moutiers-les-Mauxfaits, where his parents lived. On the 9th of that month he went there, as he did every month, and spent a few hours with them. Both were in excellent health, and some days later he had word from his mother that they were both very well. On the night of the 30th to 31st he dreamt that he was at their house. In the drawing-room there was a crowd of people round an improvised bed of boards and a mattress, on which his father was lying. He began to weep. This awoke his wife, who asked what was the matter with him. He replied, 'It is nothing. I have just had a senseless dream. I dreamt that Papa was dead.' Having noticed that it was half-past five, they both again fell asleep without anxiety. The next day he learnt that his father had suddenly been taken ill at eleven o'clock the previous evening, had been laid on an improvised bed in the drawing-room and died at precisely half-past five in the morning.

In the correspondence of a Duchesse d'Orléans who lived early in the eighteenth century, a letter records the following. The husband of one of her ladies-in-waiting, a Monsieur de Longueil, brought back from Canada with him an Indian. One day when they were at table the Indian's face suddenly became convulsed, and he burst into tears. Asked what ailed him, he replied to de Longueil, 'Through the window I have just seen your brother murdered at a certain spot in Canada.' They declared that the Indian was mad, but he insisted that they should write an account of his vision. Six months later a ship arrived with the news that de Longueil's brother had been murdered at the exact time and place given by the Indian.

Going back to the first century A.D., a vision seen by Apollonius of Tyana was vouched for by the population of a whole city. The philosopher was lecturing to a crowd of several hundred people in a park outside Ephesus. Suddenly he faltered in his discourse, became at a loss for words, then recovered and cried joyfully, Ephesians! The tyrant has been killed today. [He was referring to the Emperor Domitian.] What am I saying? He was killed at the very instant I stopped speaking. Rome herself is only just learning of it, and the people are running through the streets, wild with joy.' The Ephesians refused to believe him, but shortly afterwards messengers arrived in Asia Minor, and they confirmed that Domitian had been assassinated at noon, the very moment Apollonius had announced the fact.

Pope Pius V was also sent a vision. While looking out of a window in the Vatican, he exclaimed to his companions, 'Let us go to the altar to give thanks to God; our army has just won a great victory.' He had witnessed the closing phase of the defeat of the Turkish armada by the Christian forces under Don Juan of Austria, at the Battle of Lepanto, 600 miles away, which proved to be a turning-point in the history of the world.

It may be argued that all the above, and innumerable similar examples that could be quoted, are due to thought-transference – messages sent out by the person dying (even the aunt in Geneva, although she had not seen her nephew for ten years) or others witnessing the event. But those that follow, also from Camille Flammarion, cannot be explained as having emanated from any human brain.

Lady Eardley related that, as a young girl, she had a slight attack of measles. After three or four days in her room, her grandmother told her she might have a bath. As she was about to get into it, she heard a voice say clearly, 'Open the door.' She was naturally astounded, as there was no one with her in the bathroom. The voice repeated, 'Open the door.' She was a little frightened, but decided that she must be light-headed and had imagined it; so she got into the bath. For a third time the command was given to her, and so impressively that she got out and unlocked the door. As she stepped into her bath again she fainted and fell flat in the water. Fortunately she was just able to snatch at and pull the bell-rope. A servant ran in and found her with her head under water. If the door had been locked, she would have been drowned before she could have been rescued.

Professor Boehm, a teacher of mathematics at Marburg, was spending an evening with friends, when he was seized with the conviction that he ought to return home. This feeling was so strong that he gave way to it and left his friends early. When he reached his house he found everything in order, but felt a compulsive urge to change the position of his bed. With his servants' help he moved it to the other end of the room. In the middle of the night part of the ceiling collapsed, and a heavy beam, which might well have killed him, came down where his bed had previously been.

A Monsieur A. Saurel relates that in 1911, while a civilian, he had a dream in which he saw very clearly an old, fortified farm that had a brook near it, and the surrounding landscape, all of which was completely strange to him. More surprising, he was dressed as an officer and nearby there were a number of soldiers in horizon-blue uniforms who wore helmets of a strange shape. The following day he told his friends of his dream, then thought no more about it. With 1914 came the war, and he became a lieutenant. A time arrived when his regiment was sent to a place behind the line in the Aube. In every particular it was the same as he had seen in his dream, except that there was no brook. An adjutant came up and asked him if he had any idea where they could get water for their tired, dusty men. He replied at once, 'There is a brook nearby. As it's not here, it must be on the other side of the house.' And so it was.

On June 27th 1894 Dr Gallet, then a student of medicine at Lyons, was working in his room with a fellow student named Varay. Both were concentrating entirely on preparing for an examination that was shortly to take place, and neither was interested in politics. That day the electoral congress was to meet at noon at Versailles to elect a new President of the Republic, and of the various candidates a Monsieur Casimir-Perier was expected to get only third place. Well before noon, Gallet suddenly felt impelled to write under the notes he was making, 'Monsieur Casimir-Perier is elected President of the Republic by 451 votes.' Utterly amazed,

Gallet showed Varay what he had written, but Varay brusquely told him to stop fooling and leave him to get on with his work. After lunch they went to attend a lecture at the Faculty. On the way they met two other students and Gallet told them of this extraordinary premonition; then, in spite of their laughter he repeated it. When they came out of class the four friends went to a café. There the papers had arrived, announcing that Casimir-Perier had been elected (with a majority of 28) by receiving 451 votes.

Early in 1865 a Signor Vincent Sassaroli went to live at Sarteano and became the director of a band of thirty-four musicians. The band practised in a room on the third floor of a house belonging to Canon Dom Bacherini. When they met for their first rehearsal, Sassaroli declared the house to be unsafe, and he predicted a day and hour when it would crumble from the roof to the first floor. The house was examined by an architect, who declared it to be perfectly sound, but only with great difficulty was Sassaroli persuaded to continue the rehearsals there. His colleagues made a joke of the whole matter and thought him slightly mad. However, on the day predicted he pleaded so fervently that they should leave the house with him that they agreed. As they trooped downstairs he begged them to tread softly, for fear that the weight of them all might hasten the fall of the building. They reached the street only just in time. At exactly the hour predicted the building collapsed. Everyone in the town had known of this prediction.

Baron Joseph Kronhelm reported the following account of the death of an official in the Russian Marine, named Lukawski. Madame Lukawski was awakened one night by her husband's groaning, then shouting, 'Help! Save me!' When he was fully awake he told her that he had dreamt that he was on board a big ship which had a collision with another. He had been flung out into the sea and had struggled with another man for a lifebuoy. Although he got it, he went under and drowned. Lukawski was so fully convinced that he was destined to die in this way fairly soon that he at once started to arrange his affairs. Two months later he received an order to sail in the ship *Wladimir* to a port on the Black Sea. Before leaving he recalled his dream to his wife, and told her sadly that he would never see her again. The *Wladimir* collided with another ship, the *Sineus*. Lukawski was flung into the sea. Nearby another passenger, named Henicke, was holding on to a lifebuoy. Lukawski made a grab for it. Henicke shouted, 'Don't do that! it will not support two people. We shall both be drowned.' In spite of this, and yelling that he could not swim, Lukawski seized the buoy; upon which Henicke let go and cried, 'Then take it. I'm a good swimmer.' At that moment they were separated by a big wave. Lukawski was drowned, but Henicke was saved, and he recounted how he had let Lukawski have the lifebuoy.

Another report in the Journal of the Society for Psychical Research was given by a Captain MacGowan. While in Brooklyn with his two young sons, who were on holiday, he promised to take them to the theatre, booked seats and paid for them. On the morning of the day they were going, an inner voice repeated insistently to him, 'Don't go to the theatre. Take your sons back to school.' Reluctantly he told his sister and some friends who were also going that he had decided not to

take the boys. They were so reproachful at his denying his sons this treat that he said they would go after all. But the voice continued to nag him the whole afternoon. Eventually he gave in to it, changed his mind again and told the boys that he was taking them back to New York. That evening the theatre was entirely destroyed by fire. His sister, who was sitting in a different part of the house from where he would have sat, escaped; but 305 people either perished in the flames or were crushed to death.

Prince Radziwill adopted one of his nieces, named Agnes, because she was an orphan. They lived in a castle in Galicia. In it there was a very large salon, situated between the apartments of the Prince and those of the children, so they frequently had to pass through it. During her childhood, whenever the Countess Agnes entered the salon she uttered screams of terror and pointed at a huge picture of the Cumaean Sibyl that hung over the double doors. In due course the Countess became engaged to be married, and a great reception was given to celebrate the event. That evening it was intended that the company should play games in the big salon. Agnes was persuaded by her guests to go into it first; then she was suddenly again seized with terror. She attempted to draw back, but her laughing friends shut the door behind her. In vain she shook at it. The movement brought down the weighty picture; it broke her skull and she died instantly.

Flammarion recorded over 4,000 cases in support of a belief in extra-sensory perception, but I feel it would be redundant to draw upon him, or other sources, for further examples.

As the reader will have observed, many of these silent, mental communications could not reasonably have had their origin either through the effect of cosmic rays or through transmission from one human brain to another.

Therefore such foreknowledge of coming events can perhaps best be explained by the action on us of invisible forces. Indeed, one might well conclude that impulses to sacrifice our own interests for the good of others, or to succumb to the temptation to do evil, are inspired by those ubiquitous Powers that we loosely term God or the Devil.



PART 2

Predestination or Free Will?

Introductory

Impulses to do good or ill occur continually in our daily lives. Mostly they concern only small matters, but occasionally they involve one of such great importance that the decision taken may affect the whole course of our futures. This raises the question: when, apparently, making these decisions, do we really have any choice? Are the Arab philosophers right in their contention that 'the fate of every man is bound about his brow'? Or do we have free will, and if so to what extent?

The methods used by various peoples for foretelling events are innumerable. Let us examine those most widely known.

Astrology

The ancients, particularly those of Chaldea, Egypt and Mexico, were most knowledgeable in astronomy, and they regarded astrology as an equally exact science. They firmly believed that the future of both nations and individuals could be read in the stars, and a considerable section of their priesthoods was engaged solely in drawing up horoscopes.

The procedure consisted in plotting the positions of the Sun, Moon and planets in the twelve houses of the zodiac, as near as possible to the points at which those bodies were situated at the moment of a person's birth, and interpreting their relationships according to rules whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity.

Each heavenly body was credited with certain qualities and believed to exert its influence for good or ill. Their principal qualities, and their symbols, are:

The Sun	☉	Vitality, will power, activity, ambition.
The Moon	☾	Fluctuation, melancholy, receptivity.
Mercury	☿	Commerce, intelligence, eloquence.
Venus	♀	Love, harmony, peace, beauty.
Mars	♂	Energy, determination, aggressiveness.
Jupiter	♃	Domination, fatherliness, joviality.
Saturn	♄	Frustration, gloom, catastrophe.
Uranus	♅	Impatience, wilfulness, originality.
Neptune	♆	Fluidity, spiritual and psychic power.
Pluto	♇	Influence not yet agreed upon.

Opposite Early French signs of the zodiac: Leo the Lion and Aries the Ram



Figures personifying the heavenly bodies that were believed to rule the days of the week; and a mystical diagram

From the above it will be seen that basically the Sun, Mercury, Venus and Jupiter are beneficent, and that the Moon, Mars and Saturn are associated with certain malevolent qualities. Mars squared by Saturn is a most sinister sign, as it indicates a tendency to manic-depression. Hitler had it in his horoscope. Uranus, Neptune and Pluto were discovered only in comparatively recent times. The possible influences of the two former have been assessed by modern astrologers, who have compared the known characteristics of a great number of persons with the positions of those planets in their horoscopes. Pluto, however, is so small and so distant from the Earth that such influence as it may exert is regarded as of little importance.

In the East, horoscopes are still cast for male children of upper-class parents, and such was the case in Europe during the classical era. Neatanebus, King of Egypt, was both a great sorcerer and a great astrologer. It is said that he stood beside his daughter Olympias when she was about to give birth to Alexander the Great. Having cast a horoscope for the day and hour, he persuaded her to withhold the birth until he gave the word. At the most propitious moment he gave it, then told her that her child would become the master of the world.

No doubt the practice of casting horoscopes continued here and there in Europe during the Middle Ages. But, to form an opinion of the degree of success that can be achieved by these means, we must move on to more recent centuries.

With the revival of interest in astrology through Latin translations of Arabic texts left by the Greeks, from the Renaissance onward horoscopes were cast of royal and noble children. Many have been recorded. Here are a few events predicted in them, which came to pass:

That King Henry II of France would receive a fatal injury in a joust.
That his son, King Henry III, would be assassinated.

That the Marquis de Cinque Mars would become King Louis XIII's closest friend, but, by his order, be executed for conspiracy.

That Louis XIV (the Sun King) would reign in a splendour surpassing that of all his predecessors; that throughout his life he would be constantly afflicted with deaths and disappointments in his family, but that he would be most fortunate in the ministers he chose to advise him.

It was predicted to both Giovanni de' Medici and Marcel Cervin that they would be popes – to the first by the astrologer Louis Gaurie and to the second by his astrologer father; Giovanni became Leo X and Marcel became Marcellus II.

According to astrologers, everybody's character partakes to some extent of the qualities of the sign of the zodiac paramount at his birth. But each sign is ruled by one of the heavenly bodies; and it is this which, all else being equal, determines the type of personality.

The twelve signs of the zodiac with the periods during which the Sun passes through them, are:

Aquarius (the Water Carrier)	January 20th to February 18th
Pisces (the Fishes)	February 19th to March 20th
Aries (the Ram)	March 21st to April 19th
Taurus (the Bull)	April 20th to May 20th
Gemini (the Twins)	May 21st to June 21st
Cancer (the Crab)	June 22nd to July 22nd
Leo (the Lion)	July 23rd to August 22nd
Virgo (the Virgin)	August 23rd to September 22nd
Libra (the Balance)	September 23rd to October 23rd
Scorpio (the Scorpion)	October 24th to November 21st
Sagittarius (the Archer)	November 22nd to December 21st
Capricorn (the Goat)	December 22nd to January 19th

The horoscope illustrated is that of the author, as cast by Miss J. M. Revill in October 1965. It is an interesting example of how the position of the heavenly bodies at the hour of birth may overcome otherwise unfavourable omens.

The date of my birth is January 8th. That is within three days of the centre of the Sun's period in Capricorn, and that sign is ruled by Saturn. Moreover, each heavenly body is associated with a number, and Saturn's number is 8. As Saturn is the most malevolent of all the planets, normally there could be no more unfortunate date on which to be born. I should have been a morbid introvert, prone to accidents, made miserable by one disappointment after another, and an utter failure in everything I undertook.

Yet the fact is that I am a cheerful, sociable person. I have derived great happiness from my family, my many friends, my work, and the wide appreciation it has received.

All this is due to the position of the heavenly bodies in my horoscope. It will



The Horoscope of the author

be seen that the sign Leo is on the ascendant. The Moon is in close trine (the most favourable aspect) both to Uranus and to Saturn, the dispositor of the Sun in Capricorn. Beyond all, the Sun itself is in trine to Jupiter. That is the most fortunate of positions, promising protection, wealth and fame.

I had never met Miss Revill; but, having delineated my character with great accuracy, she gave the years in my life that had proved the most important, and why – none of which could she have learnt through ordinary channels. Regarding my future, she predicted that, although I was then sixty-nine, I was entering on the best years of my life, and that when I was seventy-two or seventy-three (I am now seventy-three) I should be writing an unusual book. It had not then even occurred to me to undertake a work of this kind.

I should stress that horoscopes lightly undertaken are of very little value. Exactitude in both the time of birth and in plotting the position of the heavenly bodies is essential; one must also interpret correctly the effect of each upon the other. The houses of the zodiac are divided into quadruplicities – cardinal, fixed and mutable; also into triplicities – fire, earth, air, water. These, with the aspects, all have to be considered.

For those who are interested, there are available many books dealing with astrology. Among them I particularly recommend *The Black Arts* by Richard Cavendish, who devotes over fifty pages to this subject, and many more to giving

in greater detail than is possible here, owing to the ground I have to cover, other methods of foretelling the future.

Numerology

This is closely allied to astrology and is said to have its origins in the learning of the ancient Hindus. Their priesthood was sufficiently far advanced in the science of astronomy to be aware of the precession of the equinoxes, which is completed once every 25,827 years; so one cannot lightly dismiss their belief in astrology and the potency of numbers. The belief they held was that each heavenly body is associated with a number, which partakes of its qualities. According to *Cheiro's Book of Numbers*, these associations are as follows:

The Sun	= 1	The Moon	= 2	Jupiter	= 3
Uranus	= 4	Mercury	= 5	Venus	= 6
Neptune	= 7	Saturn	= 8	Mars	= 9

Further, each letter of the alphabet is associated with a number, as follows:

A = 1	G = 3	M = 4	S = 3	Y = 1
B = 2	H = 5	N = 5	T = 4	Z = 7
C = 3	I = 1	O = 7	U = 6	
D = 4	J = 1	P = 8	V = 6	
E = 5	K = 2	Q = 1	W = 6	
F = 8	L = 3	R = 2	X = 5	

The date of a person's birth automatically associates him with one number, but that produced by substituting the above numbers for the letters of his name is considered even more important. Should the two be the same, that obviously greatly increases the influence of the planet associated with that number and adds to the potency gained when a person uses that number to further his projects.

Compound numbers have special meanings, but for general purposes all should be reduced to a single digit. As, for example: 28 (2 + 8) reduces to 1, 65 (6 + 5 = 11) to 2, and so on.

Number Ones, being Sun people, are positive: creative, determined, ambitious. They dislike restraint, make themselves respected and generally rise to positions of authority. Number Ones 'look after Number One'. They get on best with people who are Twos, Fours or Sevens, and their most fortunate days are Sundays and Mondays, particularly if these fall on the 1st, 10th, 19th or 28th of the month. Their lucky colours are gold, yellow and brown; their lucky stones topaz and amber.

Number Twos, being Moon people, are imaginative, artistic, romantic, but they are not forceful and are seldom strong physically. Habitually they take second place. They get on best with people who are Ones, and to a lesser degree with Sevens. Their most fortunate days are Sundays, Mondays and Fridays. Their

lucky colours are white, cream and green; their lucky stones pearls, moonstones and jade.

Number Threes, being Jupiter people, love authority, order and discipline. They are trustworthy, conscientious and proud, but inclined to be dictatorial. They get on best with people who are Sixes and Nines. Their most fortunate days are Thursdays, Fridays and Tuesdays. Their lucky colours are mauve, purple, crimson and rose; their lucky stone is amethyst.

Number Fours, being Uranus people, are born rebels often opposed to generally accepted customs. They are sensitive, lonely and rarely successful in worldly matters. People having this unfortunate number do not easily acquire friends, but their best chance is with Number Ones, because Uranians are also influenced by the Sun. Their best days are Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Their lucky colours are grey, electric blue and half shades; their lucky stone is the sapphire.

Number Fives, being Mercury people, are prompt in thought and decision, highly strung and quick to recover from misfortune. They crave every kind of excitement and are great gamblers; commerce brings them good money. They make friends easily and are liked by people having any of the other numbers. Their lucky days are Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. They can wear any colour, but should choose light ones; their lucky stone is the diamond.

Number Sixes, being Venus people, are artistic, generous and lovers of the beautiful. They are determined, at times to the point of obstinacy, but very considerate of others, who become devoted to them. Their character attracts many friends to them, particularly Threes and Nines. Their best days are Tuesdays and Fridays. Their lucky colours are all shades of blue and pink; their lucky stone is the turquoise.

Number Sevens, being Neptune people, are restless and independent and produce original ideas. They are great travellers, and good writers and painters, but not very fortunate over money matters. The number 7 is associated in many ways with mysticism, so its people are much more psychic than others. They often have the gift of intuition and clairvoyance. Their best chance of making friends is with Number Twos, because Neptunians are also influenced by the Moon. Their best days are Sundays and Mondays. Their lucky colours are green, white and yellow; their lucky stones cats'-eyes, pearls and moonstones.

Number Eights, being Saturn people, have intense natures and great strength of individuality, but they are frequently misunderstood and lead very lonely lives. They are playthings of fate, and, although they occasionally rise to high positions, they are more frequently subjected to losses, sorrows and humiliations. As Number Eights appear cold and undemonstrative, they do not attract friends easily, and they should always avoid associating with Number Fours, as the bringing together of these two numbers almost invariably results in misfortune or tragedy. Their best days are Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Their lucky colours are dark grey, dark blue and black; their lucky stones the dark sapphire and black pearl.

Number Nines, being Mars people, are born fighters, impulsive, courageous and hasty-tempered. They make good leaders, but resent criticism. Their home

life is rarely peaceful, and they are peculiarly prone to accidents from fire and explosions. They get on best with people who are Threes or Sixes. Their lucky days are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, their lucky colours are red, crimson and pink; their lucky stones ruby, garnet and bloodstone.

To illustrate the way in which to arrive at the numerical equivalent of one's name, I give my own.

D = 4	Y = 1	W = 6
E = 5	E = 5	H = 5
N = 5	A = 1	E = 5
N = 5	T = 4	A = 1
I = 1	S = 3	T = 4
S = 3	$\frac{14}{14} = 5$	L = 3
$\frac{23}{23} = 5$		E = 5
		Y = 1
		$\frac{30}{30} = 3$

$$5 + 5 + 3 = 13 = 4$$

$$5 + 3 = 8$$

It will be seen that, if I were generally known by the whole of my name, I should be saddled with the unfortunate 4. This, in conjunction with my birth number 8, could prove positively catastrophic.

Fortunately I never use my middle name, and it is the name by which you are known – even if it be an adopted one or a nickname – that counts. So my name, as well as my birth number, is 8.

The lives of comparatively few people have, I imagine, been so dominated by one number as mine has. From this point of view, the following list of events may be of interest. It should be remarked that when relating one's number to years the century is ignored and only the last two numerals are added together.

First big change in life. Sent to boarding school at the age of 8.

Second big change in life. Received first commission, in 1914, at the age of 17, which equals 8.

Sent to the Western Front on 8.8.1917. A triple 8.

Third big change in life. January 1919, went into the family wine business at 26 South Audley Street: 8.

Fourth big change in life. Married June 1924 at the age of 26: 8.

My father died and I inherited the business in 1926: 8.

Fifth big change in life. Second marriage, 8.8.1931. A double 8.

Sixth big change in life. In 1932 started to write at the age of 35: 8.

In 1934 went to live at No. 8 St John's Wood Park: 8.

Seventh big change in life. Commissioned in R.A.F.V.R. in 1941 at the age of 44: 8.

Eighth big change in life. Returned to civilian life and bought new home at Lymington in December 1944: 8.

From the above it would appear that, the Saturnian 8 being so paramount in my life, it should have been one of gloom, isolation and failure. Moreover, it does portend that it may yet be my fate to be ruined through becoming involved in some terrible tragedy. But, so far, the malefic influence of Saturn has been nullified by other influences.

Hundreds of people think of me simply as Dennis, which brings the resilient qualities of Number 5 into play. This is doubly reinforced by the fact that there are no fewer than six 5s in the fourteen letters of my name and that Mercury, the associate of 5, is well aspected in my horoscope. But I have no doubt that I owe my immunity to my Sun in Capricorn trine to Jupiter, and my great good fortune to my double numbers. Wheatley equals 30, giving mental qualities, and Dennis equals 23, the luckiest of all numbers to have. It is called the Royal Star of the Lion. It promises help and protection from those in high places, and great success.

I have dwelt at some length upon my own numbers for a definite reason. I feel sure that many readers, having reached this point in the book, will proceed to work out their own numbers. I wished to show that, should they prove to be 4 or 8, their owners should not be unduly cast down, because, as in my case, the ill fortune foreboded by these unlucky numbers may well be diverted from them by other, more fortunate, influences.

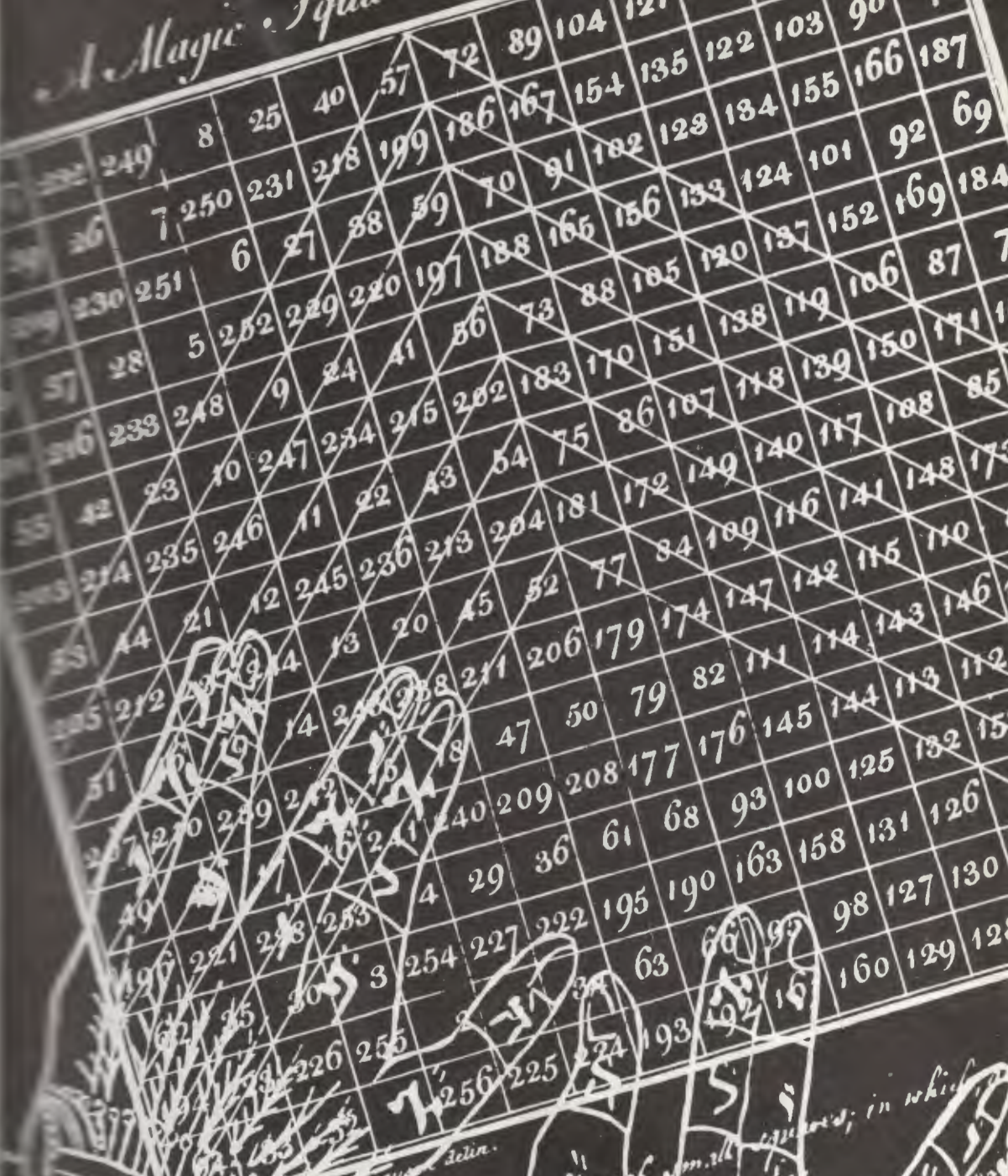
Before leaving this subject, I will add a few further points of interest.

While to make oneself a slave to numbers would lead to a stupid restriction of one's activities, believers in numerology select, as far as is practicable, dates in the month that tally with one's number for entering on matters of special significance, such as signing important documents, setting out on a long journey, moving to a new home and so on. And if the date also falls on one of the lucky days associated with your number, so much the better.

Single women usually derive their numbers from the Christian names they use, coupled with their surnames. All women are subject to the Moon and so, to some extent, have its fluid quality. They are more adaptable to change than men, and when they marry, particularly for love, take pleasure in sharing their husband's tastes and pursuits, even if they have had no previous interest in them. Therefore, if their numbers are changed by their married names, these new numbers will tend to supplant their unmarried ones.

Opposite The 'magic square of squares', considered to have occult properties; and correspondences held by the Cabalists to exist between parts of the hand and astrological principles, denoted by letters and numbers

A Magic Square



The great & small squares; in which
 256 are so placed, that the sum of
 1. The sum of all the numbers in any row, is 256.
 2. The sum of all the numbers in any column, is 256.
 3. The sum of all the numbers in any diagonal, is 256.
 4. The sum of all the numbers in any part of the square, is 256.

It is believed by numerologists that, by a change of name, a person can bring more fortunate influences to bear upon himself. For example, Pat adds to 13, and so has the unfortunate number 4. By making her friends call her Patricia, she could become a 3. Edward adds to 22, which is also a 4. To change to Ted would be useless, as that makes 13, but as Eddie he would become a 1. Will is another 13, but as William he could be a 1, or as Bill a 9. Violet adds to 26, and so is an 8. By becoming known as Vi, she would be a 7.

Where modifications of a name are not possible, the adoption of a nickname having a fortunate number would serve the same purpose.

This changing of numbers, it is said, also affects homes. A person living at No. 4 or 8 could possibly change the influences by ceasing to use the number and giving the house a name, the letters of which made a favourable number.

The number given by occultists to Jesus Christ is 888. This reduced to a single digit is 6, the number of Venus, the symbol of Love.

The number of the Beast (Man) is given in the Book of Revelation as 666. Reduced to a single digit it is 9, the number of Mars, the symbol of war and destruction.

Cheirognomy and Cheiromancy

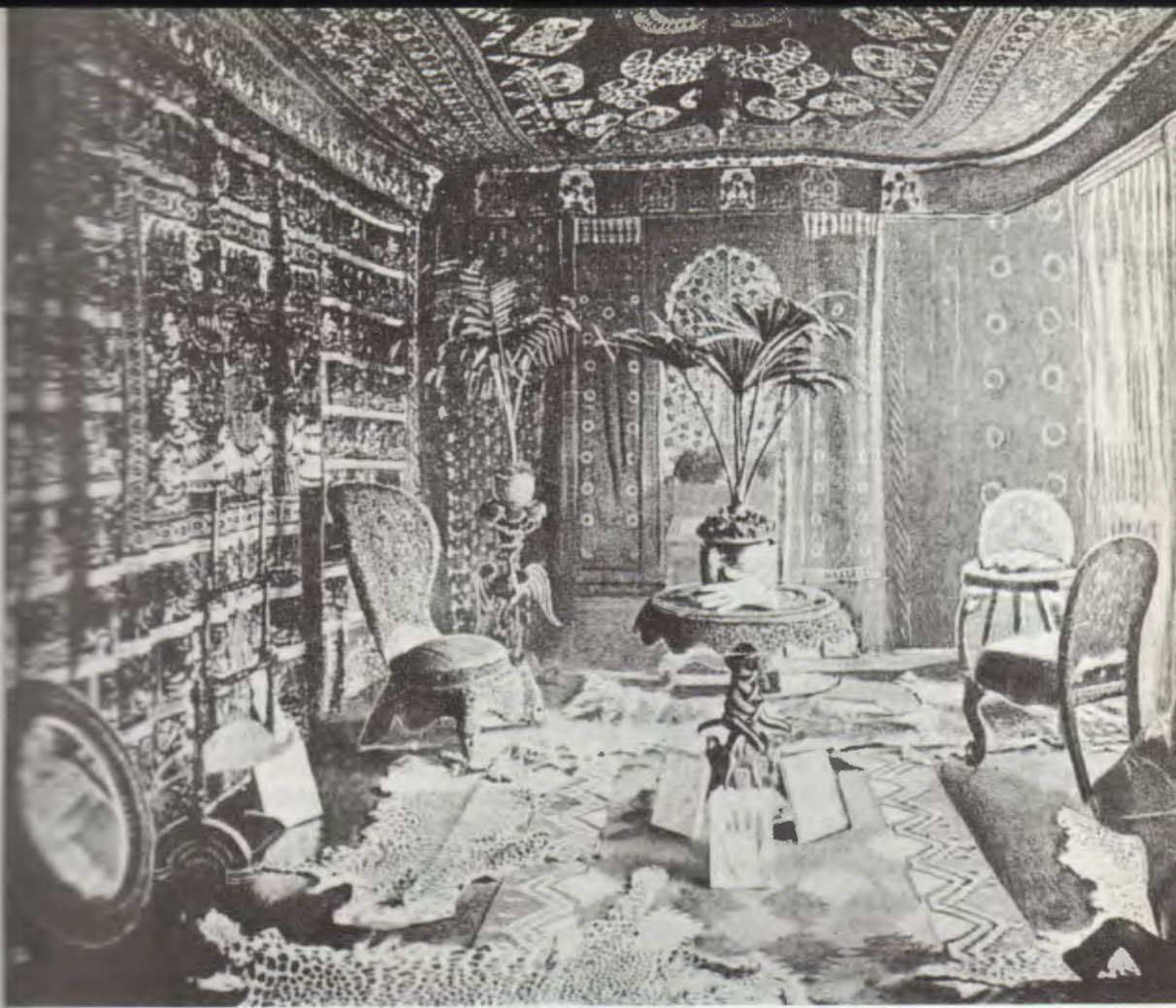
Prediction by examining the shape of the hands and the lines on them – commonly known as palmistry – is said to have originated in the earliest Aryan civilization, and has continued to be very popular ever since.

An officer in Marlborough's army defined war as 'long periods of acute boredom interspersed by short intervals of intense fear'. That, I think, is a very apt description of war in any age. During my time on the Western Front I was indeed alternately bored to tears and frightened out of my wits. To relieve the many days of tedium, I sent for what I still believe to be the best book on palmistry, *Cheiro's Language of the Hand*, and set about teaching myself to tell fortunes by this means.

I soon found the formation of the hand, as an indication to a person's character, to be remarkably accurate.

There are seven types of hand:

1. The Elementary: coarse, clumsy and thick, with a heavy palm and short fingers, indicating the lowest type of mentality.
2. The Square, which is also known as the useful. It indicates orderliness, punctuality, conformity to habit and respect for authority.
3. The Spatulate. This has thick finger-tips. It indicates energy and enthusiasm, but also a restless disposition.
4. The Philosophic: long, angular and bony. Those who have it are nearly always keen students. They gain wisdom but not money.
5. The Conic, with the palm and fingers slightly tapering. This indicates a love of beauty and luxury, an artistic but not very business-like personality.
6. The Psychic, an exaggerated version of the Conic, with very slim, smooth fingers. It is an unworldly hand, and therefore unfortunate, but also an indication of psychic gifts.



The consulting room of the palmist Cheiro

7. The Mixed, so described only because it cannot be classed as one of the others.

Generally speaking, nearly all hands are to some extent mixed. Many have square palms with conic fingers, which is an excellent combination, as it gives practical ability to employ an artistic talent, and there are many other varieties in which one bad feature is offset by a good one. People with small hands have large ideas, often in excess of their capabilities; people with large ones do nearly all delicate work – jewel-setters and engravers usually have large hands. The texture of the hand is of great importance. Flabbiness shows an irresolute, lazy nature; firmness and resilience indicate self-reliance and determination. Hair on the back of the hand is said to indicate vanity.

The thumb differentiates man from animals, and so is the dominant feature of the hand. It should be long and stand well away from the first finger, but not at an exaggerated angle. The first or nail phalanx denotes will, the second one logic and the basal part love. A supple-jointed thumb indicates extravagance; a firm-jointed thumb a much stronger will. If the nail phalanx is club-like, it proclaims

a violent temper. If the lower phalanx is waisted, this shows tact. If the basal part of the thumb is excessively plump and the phalanges comparatively short, the person is likely to be ruled by strong sexual urges.

Both the shape and length of the fingers have their meanings. Long fingers show love of detail in work, surroundings and dress. Short fingers show impulsiveness and impatience about all minor matters. Crooked fingers on a bad hand are signs of a distorted, evil nature. Knobbly knuckles indicate a gift for mathematics; and spatulate finger-tips, mechanical ability. The nails can reveal inherited physical weaknesses: filbert-shaped, liability to lung trouble; squarish, bad circulation and possibly heart trouble; shell-shaped, paralysis. The comparative length of the fingers can be a key to the character. A first finger which is unusually long indicates lust for power; the second, morbid introspection; the third, artistic genius; the fourth, a gift for oratory, languages and success in commerce.

These qualities are also indicated if there are small fleshy pads, called mounts, on the palm at the base of the fingers. That under the first finger is known as the Mount of Jupiter; under the second, Saturn; the third, Apollo; and the fourth, Mercury. If one finger is exceptionally long and there is a mount beneath it, this naturally intensifies the quality. In addition to the above there is the Mount of Venus. This is the one at the base of the thumb. If almost flat, it shows lack of virility; if full, a healthy capacity for passion; if excessive, an obsession with sex. The Mount of the Moon is on the opposite side of the hand. Its development indicates imagination, idealism, a romantic nature and a love of travel.

There are two Mounts of Mars. The first, Positive, below the Line of Life and between the Mounts of Jupiter and Venus, indicates the degree of courage of the subject; if excessive, a quarrelsome disposition. The second, Negative, lying between the Mounts of Mercury and the Moon, denotes self-control and fortitude.

Given this knowledge, and the ability to assess how the quality indicated by each physical portion of the hand is increased or modified by the others, the palmist may predict with reasonable certainty what a person will do in any given circumstances.

The lines also reveal certain aspects of character and inform the palmist concerning the subject's past and his prospects. To be at their best, with one exception all the principal lines, those of Life, Head, Heart, Fate and Fortune (also called the Sun) should be clearly marked and unbroken. The exception is the Line of Health; the less it shows the better. It is by the position of the lines on the hand, their relation to one another and the breaks or islands on them that the subject's past and future can be told.

But this is a much more difficult undertaking than that of delineating character. As in the case with the position of the planets in a horoscope, great experience is needed to assess how a bad patch on one line may be modified by the condition of others and particularly the effect that the many minor lines can have on the principal ones.

Incidentally, it might be expected that a seamstress or packer, who is constantly using the hands, would develop many more lines on the palms than a person who

uses his hands very little. This is far from being the case. Working-class people normally have few but the principal lines to show, whereas the palms of those who live by their intellect, or have many interests, are criss-crossed by a network. For the lines are not the product of physical exertion but of activity in the brain.

It is generally accepted that the left hand discloses the attributes and inclinations we have inherited, and the right what we have made of them.

The Line of Life rises under the Mount of Jupiter, and runs down the hand encircling the Mount of Venus. The longer and clearer it is, the longer the expectation of life. A definite break in it indicates a premature death, unless, alongside the break and inside it, there is another, usually fainter line. This is the Line of Mars, which would reduce the probability of death to a very serious illness or accident. When the Line of Life forks at the lower end, it indicates that the subject will probably spend the latter part of his life and die in a country other than that in which he was born.

The Line of Head begins on the Mount of Jupiter, tied to the Line of Life, or from the Mount of Mars Positive, and runs across the hand. When clear and unbroken it shows intellectual strength; if irregular, the reverse. A good Line of Head, rising on Jupiter and just touching the Line of Life, indicates an exceptionally powerful intellect. When the Line of Head rises from the Line of Life, but is tied to it, this shows a nervous disposition, an excess of caution and domination by parents or others early in life. A Line of Head rising from the Mount of Mars is bad, showing a nervous and irritable disposition. When running straight across the palm it shows practical common sense. When sloping slightly downward, imaginative qualities. When it runs slightly upward, it indicates a harsh taskmaster, but one successful in commerce. If it sends an offshoot up to the Mount of Jupiter, this is a good sign for achieving ambition. Another fortunate sign is if it forks at the end, sending a branch down to the Mount of the Moon. This foretells success through imagination and psychic awareness.

The Line of Heart runs across the palm below the Mounts of Jupiter, Saturn, Apollo and Mercury. A long, unbroken line means happiness in the affections. If it rises from Jupiter it indicates the highest type of love. If it rises from Saturn, the subject will be more passionate and more selfish in satisfying his desires. If it rises between the two Mounts it shows a capability for both idealistic and passionate love. When the line starts in a fork, with one branch rising between the fingers and the other from Jupiter, that is a sign of a tranquil nature and much happiness in love.

The Line of Fate, rising from the wrist and running straight up to the Mount of Saturn, is a sign of extreme good fortune. When it is stopped by the Line of Heart, success will be ruined through the affections. If stopped by the Line of Head, success will be ruined through a miscalculation. If it does not rise until the middle of the palm, it shows a very difficult early life; but, if it is well-marked after that, success will be won through the subject's own efforts. When it is forked, with a branch running up from the Mount of the Moon, it denotes success won through the imagination.

The Line of Fortune (or of the Sun), if good, indicates that the subject's career will be brilliant. It may rise from any part of the hand, but must run up to the Mount of Apollo (or of the Sun). It is rarely seen deep and long, and means more if well marked on a square or spatulate hand than on one that is conic or philosophic. If unbroken and well marked right across the Mount of Apollo, it is a sure sign of good fortune and contentment in the latter part of life.

The Line of Health, if present, runs down the palm from the Mount of Mercury. Its absence is a sign of excellent health. If it runs straight down, the subject has good resistance to illness, but if it cuts the Life Line he or she will die prematurely from some illness.

The Line of Marriage (or of a prolonged liaison) runs across the Mount of Mercury from the side of the hand. If there are two or more, the lowest is earliest. Their length shows their duration. When a line turns up at the end it indicates an improved social status through marriage; if a line turns down, the reverse. If it forks at the end, a divorce or separation is to be feared. Little vertical lines above the Line of Marriage indicate children or, if they are to play a large part in the subject's life, step-children.

There are several other minor lines – the Line of Intuition, the Girdle of Venus, the Via Lasciva, the Ring of Saturn and the Bracelets. When present they reinforce tendencies shown by the major lines; but it is rare to find them all in any one hand, and any of them that are to be seen are usually rudimentary.

Breaks, islands, spots or a chain formation in any line show weakness and misfortunes connected with it. Crosses indicate disappointments and dangers; squares, protection from disaster or loss; stars, good fortune.

I have dealt at some length with this subject for two reasons:

Firstly, so that the reader may examine his own hands and realize that, in the main, the qualities that I have indicated for each formation tally with his own character. And that, since the shape of our hands and the main lines upon them are formed before birth, although they may later become a little longer and slightly alter direction, it follows that our lives are largely circumscribed by the qualities we have been given.

Secondly, because some readers may be sufficiently intrigued to take up the study of palmistry. It is an amusing pastime, and no harm can possibly come of it, provided only that one never predicts a death or great misfortune that one *thinks* he sees in a subject's hand. To do so could cause acute worry. Moreover, unless you are a real expert, you may have interpreted the lines wrongly.

Reverting to my own experiences, it was not until after the war, when I once read hands at a charity fête, for which my mother was on the committee, that I realized an interesting but no really surprising thing. If one reads the hands of friends and acquaintances, he is bound to be influenced by what he believes he knows about them; so the reading may be a long way from the truth. I was far more successful at the fête where, in most cases, I was dealing with people whom I had never previously met. Nearly all of them admitted that what I told them about their character and past was correct.



The author's right hand; with a detail enlarged from a print of it, and reversed so that the marks appear in their normally seen positions, to show the two stars found by a palmist on the Mount of Apollo

Before leaving this subject I will record one extraordinary prediction about myself. When I was first married, my mother-in-law used regularly to give bridge afternoons. To help an old friend of hers who was a widow and had very little money, she paid her a couple of guineas to come and read the hands of the other ladies while they were 'dummy'. On one of these afternoons I called to collect my wife. The lady suggested that she should read my hand, and I readily agreed. After one glance at my right hand, she looked up, stared at me and exclaimed, 'But this is extraordinary! I have never seen such markings in a hand before. You see those two stars on your Mount of Apollo. They show that one day you will be rich and famous; really famous. I'm absolutely certain of it.'

I was then still a Mayfair wine merchant, and, as I owned my own business, I had no reason to suppose that I would ever be anything else. That was four years before I wrote my first book.

Cartomancy

Telling fortunes by cards is at the present day probably the most popular method of predicting a person's future.

There are two distinct types of pack: the Tarot, or Major Arcana, which consists of twenty-two pictorial cards, none of which has any obvious relation to the others; and the Minor Arcana, which originally had fifty-six cards (in modern times reduced to fifty-two) divided into four suits. The suits, now diamonds, hearts, spades and clubs, were originally coins, cups, swords and staffs, which represented respectively commerce, spirituality, war and agriculture. In the old packs the fourteenth card in each suit was the Knight, who has since been dropped or, if one prefers, merged with the Knave, who represents the squire of the Lord (King) and Lady (Queen).

The origin of both packs is lost in mystery. Some writers have stated that the Tarot is the Book of Thoth, the God of Wisdom of the Egyptians; others connect it with the twenty-two paths of the Hebrew Cabala, and still others assert that cards were introduced into western Europe by the Bohemians, as the gypsies were called. The suggested link with the Cabala does not bear investigation; and, tempting as it may be to attribute them to that mysterious and highly psychic race, the gypsies, that does not hold water either, because they did not enter Europe until early in the fifteenth century, and Tarot cards are known to have existed in France at least a century earlier. The earliest recorded is a pack painted in 1392 by the Parisian artist Gringonneur for King Charles VI.

In the centuries that followed, the practice of telling fortunes by both the Major and Minor Arcana became widespread. During the frighteningly uncertain times of the French Revolution and early Napoleonic wars, people flocked to have their destiny foretold for them by a Mademoiselle Lenormand, who showed a great gift for cartomancy. She read the cards for the Princesse de Lamballe, Robespierre, Danton, Barras, Talleyrand and many other famous people, was frequently in attendance on the Empress Josephine for that purpose, and twice imprisoned by Napoleon for predicting events that would interfere with his plans. It is said that during a session with the great cavalry leader Marshal Murat, King of Naples, he cut the unlucky King of Diamonds four times in succession, but refused to accept Lenormand's interpretation of this evil card; whereupon she flung the pack at him and insisted that he would be either hanged or shot while a prisoner. In 1815 he was executed by a firing squad.

In the Minor Arcana, the red cards, particularly hearts, are lucky, and the black, particularly the spades, unlucky. But, as with astrology and palmistry, the effect of each has to be considered in relation to the others, and much experience is required to interpret a lay-out correctly.

The Tarot cards, which are all pictorial and symbolize every phase of both



Mademoiselle Lenormand telling the future of the Empress Josephine

ordinary and spiritual life, run as follows:

- I. The Juggler, representing the will of God, the Creation and the quickening of life.
- II. The High Priestess (*La Papessa*, in the Italian pack illustrated on pp. 48-9), representing duality and virginity.
- III. The Empress, representing beauty and pregnancy.

- III. The Emperor, representing material things and worldly authority.
 - V. The Pope, representing sacred things and spiritual power.
 - VI. The Lovers, representing innocence, love and the union of opposites.
 - VII. The Chariot, representing exaltation and the passage of the spirit toward beatitude.
 - VIII. Justice, representing the achievement of equilibrium.
 - IX. The Hermit, representing puberty and hidden light.
 - X. The Wheel of Fortune, representing *karma* and a building up toward one's destiny.
 - XI. Strength (*La Forza*), representing the discipline that leads to ecstasy.
 - XII. The Hanged Man, representing the release of the waters of life.
 - XIII. Death, representing resurrection.
 - XIV. Temperance, representing change and transformation.
 - XV. The Devil, representing the dominance of pride, ambition and lust.
 - XVI. The Tower Struck by Lightning, representing bitterness, collapse, violence and destruction, imprisonment or death.
 - XVII. The Star, representing intuition, hope and bliss.
 - XVIII. The Moon, representing the breaking of the hymen and also the darkness of the womb.
 - XIX. The Sun, representing the light of true intelligence.
 - XX. The Day of Judgment, representing aspiration from base to higher things.
 - XXI. The World (*Il Mondo*), representing joy, and release from earthly existence.
- The last card, the Fool (*Il Matto*), corresponds to O, which contains all qualities yet has none; and it represents divine madness.

I have given only the dominant attributes of the cards. The significance of each may be modified by the fall of other cards near it.

Many years ago I bought a Tarot pack. My present wife, to whom I was then engaged, had a gift for telling fortunes from ordinary cards; and I asked her to tell mine by the Tarot. Owing to their extremely involved meanings, she could read little from the lay-out; but twice, when I cut the pack, I turned up the Tower Struck by Lightning. At worst, this card means violent death; at best, when it is upside down, as was the case with both my cuts, it means heavy financial loss and possible imprisonment. I should have been greatly worried but, having no reason to anticipate such misfortune, laughed the matter off.

However, a year later I had ample cause to recall this sinister indication of misfortune. For then, not only was I reduced to the verge of bankruptcy by the slump of 1929, but I was accused of fraud and faced with the threat of criminal proceedings. I might well have been sent to gaol if an accountant had not, almost at the last minute, unearthed a document that exonerated me completely.

It is by no means unusual for the Powers that Be to decree that we must suffer ill-fortune in order that our way of life be ultimately changed for the better. During

the agonizing months that I could not go to my own office, and was debarred from taking a job with any other firm, I resolved to do my utmost to divert my mind from worry, so wrote an adventure story, *The Forbidden Territory*, and *A Private Life of King Charles II*. Both were published in 1933. They are both still widely bought and read.

Clairvoyance

This is the art of predicting the future, in the old days by looking into a magic mirror, in more recent times usually by gazing into a crystal ball. It is by no means as satisfactory as astrology or palmistry, because by them a person's whole life from the cradle to the grave can be studied, whereas the clairvoyant can describe only a series of isolated episodes bearing on the subject's future, and it has no fixed rules that can be mastered. However, while many clairvoyants have been revealed as frauds, there is ample proof that a very considerable number have made accurate predictions.

Among those who have is the American seer, Daniel Logan, whose biography was published in 1968, with the title *The Reluctant Prophet*.

This young man's ambition was to become an actor, but he could only infrequently obtain even small parts, which got him nowhere; so, to keep himself, he had at times to take jobs as a dancing instructor or store salesman. During one of these periods, in June 1957, he was in Hartford, Connecticut. Near-penniless and bored, he let a friend take him to a seance. The medium there singled him out, asserted that he had great psychic gifts, and that he would become known to millions of people through prophecies made by him over television.

He did not take the medium seriously, but his belief was confirmed by other mediums, so at length he was persuaded to experiment and went into a self-induced trance with surprising results.

Logan believes, as indeed the evidence seems to show, that only the less potent mediums need crystals or other aids in order to practise clairvoyance, and that such phenomena as floating trumpets, the production of ectoplasm, and so on, at seances are only clever conjuring tricks used to fool a credulous audience.

Having made a number of correct predictions in private, in December 1966 Logan was engaged to appear in the David Susskind television programme. Among other things, he accurately predicted the following:

That the greatest outbreak of racial violence in the history of the United States would take place during the summer of 1967.

That there would be a second major electrical power failure (similar to the one in 1965) in the eastern part of the United States which would plunge a huge area into darkness. (This occurred in June 1967.)

That the winner of that year's Academy Award would be Miss Elizabeth Taylor. That, although people were predicting an early end to the war in Vietnam, it would increase in intensity and ultimately spread to affect many areas in South-East Asia.



Logan maintains that the public has not been given the truth about the assassination of President Kennedy. That three men were involved, together with a Government official. And that the full truth will eventually be made public.

In connection with the above, another American psychic, Jean Dixon, predicted Kennedy's assassination and sent a warning to the F.B.I., but it was ignored.

In spite of Shirley Temple Black's immense popularity, Logan predicted that she would fail in her attempt to secure election to Congress; and, early in 1968, he correctly named six winners of the forthcoming Academy Awards for the year just concluded.

Concerning future world events, as far back as 1960 he forecast that by 1975 the United States and the Soviet Union would have entered into a formal alliance, and that a major confrontation and possibly a major war between the U.S.A. and China would occur in the 1980s.

The accurate prediction of events by innumerable other mediums could be cited, but I feel that these of Daniel Logan are enough to prove the validity of clairvoyance.

However, clairvoyants having such powers as to be nearly 100 per cent reliable are, I believe, very rare. But I had the good fortune to consult one of extremely high reputation, named Henry Dewhirst, in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties.

Dewhirst was a small, frail-looking Swede, with a big head and a fine, calm face that radiated gentleness and intelligence. He lived very modestly in a small flat high up in a block in Bayswater, and conserved his powers by seeing only a few people every day. It was his custom to tell clients that, if their friends wished to consult him, they should ring up and make an appointment but not give their names or say by whom they had been recommended; then he would fit them in if possible.

In consequence, on my first visit to him he could not have known who I was or anything about me.

As he let me into his flat, he looked hard at me with his pale blue eyes and said, 'Your initials are D.I.W.' As they are D.Y.W., he was not far off the mark.

We sat in easy chairs on opposite sides of the fire in his sitting-room, and Dewhirst said, 'I am going to ask you a number of questions, but you are not to answer any of them.' He then entered on a monologue, obviously for the purpose of tuning his mind in to my circumstances and personality. 'Have you been abroad lately? Yes, but not far. Perhaps only to the seaside. But you have crossed water, haven't you? What do you do for a living? I think you are in some profession connected with art. But perhaps it is only a flair for using your imagination.' And so on.

Gradually he became more specific. Before we parted he told me that my first marriage had been happy but that it would soon break up. That it had been ordained as a suitable path to bring my small son into the world. That I should marry again. That my second wife would be the sister of a close friend, but he

would not introduce her to me. We should meet in a mahogany-panelled room, and she would come to see me on a matter of business.

All this came true. The mahogany-panelled room was my office in South Audley Street. My wife-to-be had been sent to me by my friend to place an order for champagne for a ball that she was arranging.

Three years later, toward the end of the trying time that I had gone through in my business, I visited Dewhirst again.

Immediately I entered his room, he extended both his hands to me and cried, 'You've written a book! Now you are on the right path. You were never meant to be a business man. As an author you cannot fail. Never write under any name but your own, and you will have a tremendous success.'

I then admitted that I had written a book, but it was still in manuscript and had only recently been offered to a publisher, so it might not be taken.

'Don't worry,' he replied. 'It will be, and you will hear that it has on the 22nd of this month. It was then early August, and my wife and I were shortly going abroad to stay with friends in Normandy. The 22nd came and went, to my disappointment, without my receiving any news about my book. But on the morning of the 23rd I received a letter from my agent, telling me that Hutchinson and Company had taken my book for publication. Had the letter not had to be forwarded on from London, I should have received it on the 22nd.'

Psychometry

In this form of clairvoyance the medium holds a piece of clothing, or other possession, of the person about whom information is required.

There have been many occasions when it has been used successfully to trace suspected criminals, so that – delightful euphemism – the police 'invited someone to assist them with their inquiries'.

The Dutch clairvoyant, Gerard Croiset, is said to have aided the police in their search, in various parts of the world, for many missing persons.

Of this occult faculty I happen to have incontestable proof. Not long ago Mr John Irwin decided to test the powers of certain occultists on television. I agreed to be the subject, was smuggled into the studio and wore a mask with a fringe that came down over my chin. An astrologer Mr John Naylor, a palmist Miss Jo Sheridan, a clairvoyant Mr Tom Corbett, and a psychometrist Mr Douglas Johnson were in turn asked to tell the audience all they could about me. The only aids they received were the date, hour and place of my birth, for Mr Naylor, and an ink print of my hand for Miss Sheridan.

All of them got the fact that I was a well-known author and numerous particulars about my circumstances correctly. At one point Miss Sheridan even declared, 'In his early life he had some connections with a liquid; yes, it must have been wine.'

I was in excellent health, but for about two months previously I had noticed a momentary giving in my left knee when I crossed a room. This had occurred so infrequently – not more than once a week at the most – and been so barely perceptible that I had not even told my wife about it.



A psychometrist sensing the owner's characteristics from a glove

Mr Johnson was the last of the four seers to exercise his gift on me. I handed him a pair of my braces. He stroked them for a minute or so, then said, 'There is something wrong with your left leg. You ought to consult your doctor.'

Clairaudience

This is frequently associated with clairvoyance. It is listening to the voices of invisible presences, and so can hardly be classed as fortune-telling in the ordinary sense. Yet, if those presences are called upon, for advice about the future, it certainly borders on the subject we are now examining.

Joan of Arc and her 'voices' are a good example of this type of communication with the unseen powers. And they were not, as the Christian Church would now have us believe, the voices of saints or angels. They emanated from the Old God; for Joan was, in fact, a witch.

Although she was a prisoner of the English, it was not they who condemned her to be burnt at the stake. It was a tribunal of the Holy Inquisition presided over by the Bishop of Beauvais. From the account of her trial, it emerges quite clearly

that she was not a Christian. She received her religious instruction from her god-mother, who was known to consort with the Little People. They were the descendants of a race that was far older than the Franks; they had never wavered in their attachment to the pagan faith and were steeped in the lore of magic. Joan's god-mother, the wife of the Sieur de Bourlemont, was one of them. In due course I shall be giving further particulars about this malicious race of European pygmies.

Further evidence of Joan's association with the Dark Power is that, on her arrival at the French Court, she chose as her personal champion and protector the able general, Gilles de Rais, who later was proved to be one of the most blood-lusting sadists and Satanists who have ever lived. It was upon him that the tale of 'Bluebeard' was founded, and of him, too, we shall have more to say later.

In Joan's day, the early fifteenth century, though Christianity had secured a firm hold on the upper strata of society, the great majority of the common people still worshipped in secret the pagan god of their forefathers. That is why the French soldiers were willing, and even eager, to give their lives for Joan in battle. They

Joan of Arc, a historic hearer of voices inaudible to others



looked on her as a minor deity. She herself declared that she could not be killed in combat and also that she could be of use to the Dauphin only for a single year. That is very strong evidence that she had made a pact with the Old God to be given twelve months of power.

Even in prison, when there was no longer any point to her doing so, she insisted on continuing to wear men's clothes; so there could hardly be a less suitable title to give her than the Maid, unless a special reason lay behind it. And there did. All the Grand Covens have their Queen Witch, who is known as the Maiden, and she ranks in power next to the Grand Master. When Joan was first put forward by her sponsors and accepted by the Dauphin, she ranked only as the Maid of Orleans. But later she was elevated to the highest title that could be bestowed in her country on a witch, *la Pucelle de France*. And she never attempted to repudiate either title.

I do not suggest that Joan of Arc was necessarily an evil woman. There were white witches as well as black. But there can be very little doubt that she was a follower of the Old Religion and had knowledge of its mysteries. In the eyes of her troops she was a heroine and, after her death, tales of her spread that caused her memory to be held dear by the great majority of the French people. The Christian Church must not appear to be at fault; so its priests declared the voices she had heard were those of angels and, later, decided to make her a saint. But that was very far from being the view of the Church when she was alive. It was still fighting desperately to eradicate the belief in the pagan god whose ceremonies offered feasting and gaiety, instead of hair shirts and misery, as the price of salvation.

Joan had trafficked with the Little People, who were hated and feared for the strange powers they wielded; so the voices she heard were probably those of spirits. That was why she was sent to the stake.

Oracles

These were a common feature of ancient civilizations, and anyone could consult one for a fee. That of Jupiter Ammon, situated in the great oasis of that name in the Libyan desert, was, for many centuries, the most famous among the Egyptians. The oracle at Delphi was the most renowned of all in the classical world, and its site is still one of the greatest tourist attractions of modern Greece.

According to Greek mythology, Delphi was the centre of the earth. The foundations of the temple there date back to the fourteenth century B.C., and the shrine, said originally to have been guarded by a huge python, was dedicated to the Earth goddess. Later, Apollo slew the python and became the reigning deity. Nevertheless, the priestess-medium continued to be known as the pythoness, and sat on a tripod formed by three carved snakes.

The temple was built over a volcanic chasm, and from a crack in the floor under the tripod vapours arose that were inhaled by the priestess, causing her to fall into a trance agitated by fits of frenzy. Her eyes became glazed and staring, foam bubbled from her mouth and she spoke in jerky, often meaningless, phrases. But they were rendered intelligible by the priests who stood near her, although the



answers given to those consulting the oracle were so obscure that they frequently interpreted them in accordance with their own wishes, so that when acted upon they proved disastrous.

Necromancy

This is foretelling the future with, supposedly, the aid of the dead.

The usual form it takes in these days is spiritualistic seances. A number of people gather in a room with a 'sensitive', as a medium is called. The medium may be a man or a woman, but, as there are more women mediums than men, I will refer to the medium as 'her'.

The lights in the room are dimmed, the medium goes into a trance and becomes possessed. That is to say, her spirit leaves her body, which is taken over by another. Usually the possessing spirit is a regular visitor, known as the medium's 'guide'; but it may be some other who, at the request of a member of the audience, has been called up or, for all we know, some entity that poses as the personality sent for.

No grounds can possibly be advanced to justify sending one's spirit out of one's body, and allowing it to be occupied by another. The practice is condoned by the argument that, by so doing, the medium brings comfort to many bereaved people who are anxious to renew contact with loved ones who have died. But what proof is there that the spirit possessing the medium is that of the dead person called back from beyond?

The above passage will, I know, result in virulent abuse from the psychic press, as such periodicals are a means of making a living for a considerable number of people, and they have on previous occasions taken great exception to similar statements made in articles by me. But I firmly maintain my opinion, and restate it here, because I consider it no less than a duty, in a book of this kind, to warn people of the danger and futility of taking up any form of spiritualism.

With possession the personality of the medium changes. Her voice is no longer recognizable as the one she speaks with normally. If she is a cultured woman it may become coarse and uneducated, or vice-versa; or, quite possibly, have a foreign accent, or sound like a man's voice.

Sometimes the medium is tied to her chair, with the object of convincing the audience that she is incapable of moving. Then trumpets or tambourines are seen to float about above her head in the semi-darkness. At other times she exudes from the mouth a matter that is dough-like in appearance, and is called ectoplasm.

But the main object of the operation is for members of the audience either to ask the spirit, who is presumed to be possessing her, about the future, or to secure news, either directly or through the possessing spirit, of people dear to them who are dead.

The response to the latter type of question usually leaves much to be desired, and is limited to such statements as 'It is very nice up here.' But occasionally something does come through that really rings a bell, such as 'George is glad that

you found the money that he hid under the floor in the bedroom.'

The recipient of such a message is generally fully convinced that he or she has been in communication with a father, mother, husband, wife or other relative. At times a communication may be even more impressive. For example, 'Look under the floorboard by the window in my bedroom and you will find some money that I hid there.' And later the message proves to be correct. But in neither case is there any proof whatever that it came from a departed relative or friend.

It may quite well be that some alien entity has contacted the spirit of the dead person, and so obtained knowledge of the inquirer's family and affairs, and is using the medium as a mouthpiece. Obviously no good spirit would deliberately impersonate another spirit, so it is reasonable to assume that, if it is an impersonating spirit, it is evil. And, as has been rightly pointed out, a modern medium's 'guide' plays exactly the same role as a medieval witch's 'familiar'.

Why, one may ask, should evil spirits perform such impersonations? The answer most probably is: to open a way into the mind of the inquirer, and make it more susceptible to invisible influences through the vibrations sent out.

It cannot, of course, be said that genuine communications are never made through mediums. But, in view of the fact that, in numerous cases every day, couples who mean everything to each other are separated by death, yet only on extremely rare occasions does the departed give any sign of attempting to communicate through an intermediary to comfort the still living, it seems abundantly clear that the dead do not wish to be called back.

There are, however, many cases on record of the spirits of the departed appearing independently of mediums either as an apparition or in a dream, either to benefit the living by some information or to right some wrong. It can, therefore, be assumed that if they have some reason to return they are quite capable of doing so voluntarily, and have no need of a vacant body through which to make their communications.

It must not be thought that I am accusing mediums generally of being wicked people who deliberately offer themselves as channels through which evil entities can make contact with members of seance audiences. I have no doubt that the great majority honestly believe that their 'guides' are good spirits, and that through them they bring comfort to many bereaved people. But the fact remains that there is no proof of this, and that they are placing their own spirits in grave jeopardy by allowing themselves to be possessed.

The type of medium referred to above must not be confused with the seer. The first, if not a fraud (and innumerable cases of this type of fraud have been exposed by the Society for Psychical Research and similar associations), makes herself a vacant vehicle and invites another spirit to take possession of her; the spirit of the second does not leave the body, and by means of her own psychic gifts she predicts the future. The latter has no connection with necromancy.

We come now to a more advanced form of necromancy. That is the actual

Opposite Éliphas Lévi, the French occultist



calling up of the dead as an apparition. This can be achieved only by black magic.

A classic case is that of the Witch of Endor calling up the ghost of Samuel at the behest of Saul.

Another is well known owing to an engraving that has been reproduced many times. It depicts Queen Elizabeth I's astrologer, Dr John Dee, and his assistant, Edward Kelley, calling up the spirit of a woman in a churchyard on a night of full moon.

A much more recent example of this odious practice concerns the notorious magician Éliphas Lévi, who lived in the last century. On July 24th 1854, he claimed, after twenty-one days of scrupulous preparation in accordance with the rules for such operations, he called up the spirit of Apollonius of Tyana. Here is the account of it as given in his book *Transcendental Magic, Its Doctrine and Ritual*:

The cabinet prepared for the evocation was situated in a turret; it contained four concave mirrors, and a species of altar having a white marble top, encircled by a chain of magnetized iron. The sign of the pentagram . . . was carved and gilded on the white marble surface; it was drawn also in various colours upon a new, white lambskin stretched beneath the altar. In the middle of the marble table there was a small copper chafing-dish, containing charcoal of alder and laurel wood; another chafing-dish was set before me on a tripod. I was clothed in a white garment, very similar to the vestments of our catholic priests, but longer and wider, and I wore upon my head a crown of vervain leaves, intertwined with a gold chain. I held a new sword in one hand, and in the other the Ritual. I kindled two fires with the required and prepared substances, and I began reading the evocations of the Ritual in a voice at first low, but rising by degrees. The smoke spread, the flame caused the objects upon which it fell to waver, then it went out, the smoke still floating white and slow about the marble altar; I seemed to feel a kind of quaking of the earth, my ears tingled, my heart beat quickly, I heaped more twigs and perfumes on the chafing-dishes, and as the flame again burst up, I beheld distinctly, before the altar, the figure of a man of more than normal size, which dissolved and vanished away. I recommenced the evocations, and placed myself within a circle which I had drawn previously between the tripod and the altar. Thereupon the mirror which was behind the altar seemed to brighten in its depth, a wan form was outlined therein, which increased, and seemed to approach by degrees. Three times, and with closed eyes, I invoked Apollonius. When I again looked forth there was a man in front of me, wrapped from head to foot in a species of shroud, which seemed more grey than white; he was lean, melancholy and beardless, and did not altogether correspond to my preconceived notion of Apollonius. I experienced an abnormally cold sensation, and when I endeavoured to question the phantom I could not articulate a syllable. I therefore placed my hand on the sign of the pentagram, and pointed the sword at the figure, commanding it mentally to obey and not alarm me, in virtue of the said sign. The form thereupon became vague, and suddenly disappeared. I directed it to return, and presently felt, as it were, a breath close by me, something touched my hand which was holding the sword, and the arm became immediately benumbed as far as the elbow. I divined that the sword displeased the spirit, and I therefore placed it point downwards, close by me, within the circle. The

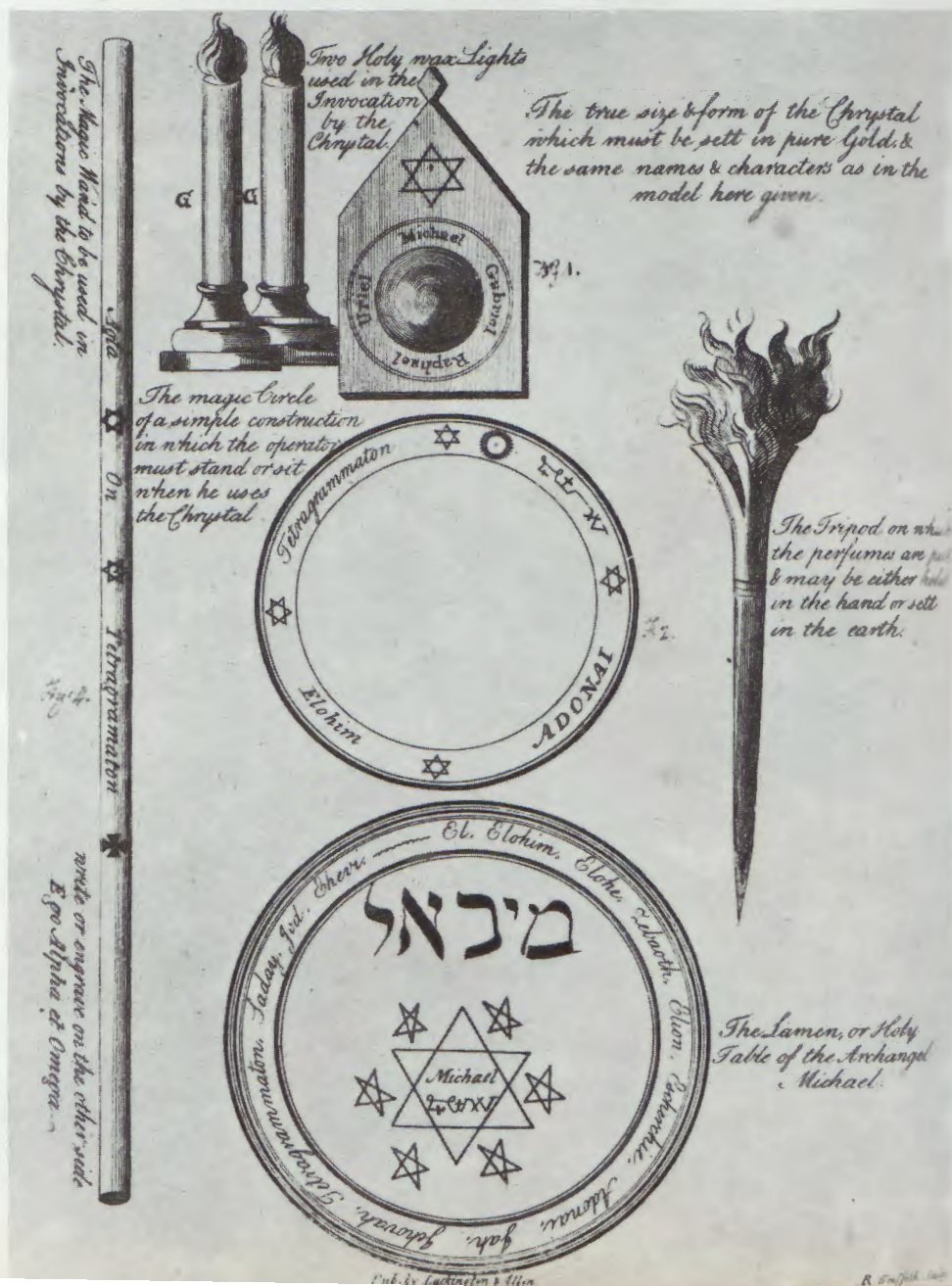
Opposite The witch of Endor evoking the prophet Samuel



human figure reappeared immediately, but I experienced such an intense weakness in all my limbs, and a swooning sensation came so quickly over me, that I made two steps to sit down, whereupon I fell into a profound lethargy, accompanied by dreams, of which I had only a confused recollection when I came again to myself. For several subsequent days my arm remained benumbed and painful. The apparition did not speak to me, but it seemed that the questions I had designed to ask answered themselves in my mind . . .

Am I to conclude from all this that I really evoked, saw and touched the great Apollonius of Tyana? I am not so hallucinated as to affirm or so unserious as to believe it. The effect of the probations, the perfumes, the mirrors, the pentacles, is an actual drunkenness of the imagination, which must act powerfully on a person otherwise nervous and impressionable. I do not explain the physical laws by which I saw and

A magic circle, with accessories, for raising the spirits of the dead



touched; I affirm solely that I did see and that I did touch, that I saw clearly and distinctly, apart from dreaming, and this is sufficient to establish the real efficacy of magical ceremonies. For the rest, I regard the practice as destructive and dangerous . . .

Few, I feel, would question the honesty of this account. The abnormal cold that Lévi mentions is an indication that he had called up something pretty nasty, as Satanic manifestations are often said to be accompanied by an icy chill. One recalls that the seventh and lowest hell of Dante's *Inferno* was no roaring furnace being stoked by demons, but a place of deathly cold. And Lévi's warning is certainly not one to be ignored.

We now come to the most terrible form of necromancy. This consists in the desecration of graveyards and the performance of ceremonies with corpses; murder, in order that the blood and bodies of the newly slain may be put to infernal uses; and copulation with the bodies of women who have recently died.

This last revolting practice probably originated in Egypt. The process of embalming a body took seventy days, during the greater part of which it was dehydrated with natron (a native sodium carbonate). The embalmers were a class apart, somewhat similar to the Hindu Untouchables, and they were not permitted to mix freely with the rest of the population. In consequence, the only women available to them were the destitute and the lowest class of harlot. When, therefore, the body of a young or beautiful woman was handed over to them, it is said that they kept the corpse warm on hot bricks for several days and satisfied their lust upon it.

It is also said that, owing to their having kept specially beautiful bodies for too long, internal decay became so far advanced that those who used them contracted a disease; and that this was the origin of syphilis. However that may be, there is some evidence to show that Egyptian sorcerers bought dead bodies from the embalmers and also kept mummies in their houses for necromantic purposes.

The medicine men of certain North American Indians were said to be skilful sorcerers who openly practiced necromancy. Whenever one of their chiefs died, they put on him his great feathered head-dress and his war paint, dressed him in all his regalia and set the body up in the centre of a circle, then consulted it about the buffalo-hunting prospects and the future of the tribe.

According to practitioners, the preparations for performing a necromantic operation successfully are arduous. The sorcerer and his assistants must procure shrouds stolen from corpses. As they put them on they recite the funeral service, then wear them for many days, until the operation is completed. During that time they live on dog's flesh, black unleavened bread and unfermented grape juice. They must abstain from salt and women. Dog-meat puts them in rapport with Hecate, because the dog is her creature, and she is the goddess of death. Unleavened bread and unfermented wine represent the reverse of the sacrament, and salt is taboo because it is associated with preservation.

The desecration of the grave should take place preferably on a night of full moon and on the 13th of the month; but, failing that, under the auspices of

Saturn and the number 4. The time should be between midnight and one o'clock, as that is the first hour of the new day. The sorcerer-assistants carry torches and burn noisome herbs, including hemlock, mandrake and henbane. A magic circle is drawn round the grave. It is opened; then the coffin. The sorcerer touches the corpse three times with his wand, pronounces a conjuration over it and commands it to arise. The assistants help it out of the coffin and arrange it as though crucified, with its head to the east. A vessel containing wine, mastic and sweet oil is placed at its right hand and the mixture set alight. The sorcerer then repeats an incantation three times, ordering the spirit to re-enter its body and answer his questions. The body, we are told, comes to its feet and in a hollow voice replies to the questions asked. The operation completed, the sorcerer rewards the spirit by destroying the body with quicklime, so that it can never again be used for the same purpose.

Until comparatively recent times it was easy to obtain young children, as many poor families who already had several to support were quite willing to sell another unwelcome infant. Sorcerers were eager buyers, as these babies were valuable adjuncts to black magic ceremonies. Their sacrifice as a tribute to the Power of Darkness brought welcome rewards, and their warm blood was very potent for casting spells.

Finally their heads were cut off and mounted on a brass plate engraved with magical symbols and permanently retained by the necromancers, who from time to time would pronounce a conjuration and compel it to answer his questions.

In black magic ceremonies, only one thing is more potent than blood: namely, human semen. Hence the practice of a necromancer's copulating with the body of a dead woman. His semen revitalized her and strengthened his incantation in restoring life to the corpse.

In Roman times the use of a special bell, known as the Bell of Girardius, was regarded as a powerful aid to a necromancer's operations. The bell had to be cast from a mixture of lead, tin, iron, gold, copper, fixed mercury and silver. The necromancer wrapped it in a piece of green taffeta and buried it for seven days in a grave with the corpse that he desired to raise. He then went to the grave, dug up the bell, recited his conjuration and rang the bell, upon which the corpse was compelled to answer the summons.

In fifteenth-century Spain, necromancy was taught as an art in Toledo, Seville and Salamanca and practised in caves specially reserved for the purpose. Isabella the Catholic was a most remarkable woman. She proved herself to be one of the greatest quartermaster generals of all time in supplying the armies with which her husband, King Ferdinand, drove the Moors out of Spain. She was also responsible for inflicting more torture and burnings at the stake of (mostly) innocent people than any other monarch; for it was under her that the Inquisition was established and carried out its terrible work with her fervid blessing. But at least she can be credited with ordering the bricking up of the caves used by the necromancers.

Quite recently there have been several cases of the desecration of graveyards. In one, in Bedfordshire, the graves of six women had been opened and the skeleton of one had been carried into the church and left there. Seeking to learn the future

by calling up the dead, in one way or another, has been practised from the earliest times.

The most horrifying description of necromancy is probably that given by Lucan, in his *Pharsalia*, of the witch Erichtho raising the dead for Sextus Pompey.

Sextus was the son of Pompey the Great, and he was eager to know if his father would prove victorious in the war he was waging to become master of the Roman world. Impatient with the obscure, unsatisfactory answers given him by oracles, Sextus screwed up his courage to demand a clear answer from the dead, and sought out Erichtho.

To render her terrible profession more easy and successful, this witch lived in the aura of death. She made her home among the tombs, slept in one as though she were a corpse and surrounded herself with such gruesome relics of the dead as charred bones taken from funeral pyres, shrouds, eyeballs, tongues and testicles, that she had cut from corpses in neighbouring graves.

When Sextus asked her to read the future for him, she said that they must go to a nearby battlefield and collect the newly dead body of a soldier who had been killed while fighting; because, she affirmed, the energy retained in a body after death gradually seeps away, and decayed corpses are not very articulate. It should also be one that had not been wounded in the mouth, throat or lungs; otherwise, when resurrected, it might not be able to speak at all.

After groping about for some time among the slain, they found a corpse with lungs, larynx and tongue intact and carried it to a cave, hidden among yews, that had been dedicated to the dark gods. There the body, with its gaping wounds and coagulated blood, was laid out while Erichtho made a ghastly brew from the spittle of mad dogs, the flesh of a hyena that had fed on corpses, the skin of a snake, various noisome herbs and menstrual blood. Having warmed up the mixture, she told Sextus to cut a hole in the corpse above its heart, then she poured the foul mess into it as a form of new blood, in preparation for the return of the spirit.

She then began her incantation, calling upon Hermes, the guide of the dead; Charon, who ferries them over the dark waters of the River Styx; Hecate, their goddess; Proserpine, queen of the underworld; and Chaos, the real lord of the earth, who waits impatiently to sow dissension and death among mankind. While she was reminding these Dark Powers that she frequently poured to them libations of human blood, and had sacrificed to them many unborn infants snatched from their mother's wombs, there came peals of thunder, the roar of wild beasts, the hooting of owls, the howl of wolves and the hiss of snakes.

Suddenly the spirit of the soldier, which was still close to earth, appeared above its corpse. Erichtho commanded it to enter its body, but the spirit shrank from entering the bloody, mangled flesh. The witch threatened to send it down to hell. Still it refused. Then she persuaded it to obey by promising that she would afterwards destroy the corpse, so that it could never again be recalled to earth by a magician.

Reluctantly the spirit entered the body, causing the blood to become warm and flow through its veins; then the muscles moved and the dead man stood up.

Through cracked and purple lips, the resurrected soldier foretold the fate of Pompey's armies. When he had done, fallen branches were collected for a funeral pyre. The soldier lay down upon it. Erichtho recited a spell that released the spirit from earth, and the body was consumed in the flames.

Haruspicy

This was a means of divination greatly favoured by the ancients, particularly the Romans, who established a special priesthood for this purpose, known as augers – hence our own 'augury'. The method consisted of sacrificing a bird, then predicting future events from the state of its entrails.

Allied to this was prediction based on marks of the liver. Animals were also sacrificed for this purpose and – among peoples with particularly sadistic natures, such as the Babylonians and the Aztecs – humans, generally while still infants. The Romans also read omens in the flight of birds.

Other Methods of Divination

Less frequently practised methods of foretelling the future were the following:

Stichomancy. This was to open a book at random and seek to apply to one's problem the first sentence that one's glance fell upon. For this the Romans mostly used the works of Homer and Virgil. The Christians substituted the Bible, and, although the practice was forbidden by the Church, in the Dark and Middle Ages it was often performed by priests standing in front of the altars of their churches.

Coscinomancy. This is done with a sieve, by holding it in a pair of pincers supported by the pressure of the index fingers of two persons. It was used to indicate a thief. Several names were spoken, and when that of the thief was pronounced the sieve began to gyrate.

Pyromancy. This is drawing deductions from the way a fire burns, after certain herbs have been thrown on it. Allied to it is *lampadomancy*, which consists of watching the flame of a lamp and predicting from the way that it wavers in a draught.

Hydromancy. This is predicting by the movement of water, and several methods can be used. One is to dangle a ring on the end of a string into the water. Another is to let fall into it drops of oil or molten lead, and make predictions according to their consequent formations. To this is closely allied the much more widely used method of scattering tea-leaves or coffee grounds in a saucer.

Ouija Boards. There has recently been a craze for this method. The board is a heart-shaped piece of wood, with small wheels under the broader end and a pencil fitted into the point. The hands of the inquirer are placed lightly above the wheels; he asks his question and the board answers it in automatic writing. In the same category is setting out the letters of the alphabet in a circle on a table. A glass tumbler is placed upside down in the centre, the inquirers each put a finger on the bottom of the glass, the question is asked and, sliding from letter to letter, the glass spells out the answer.

Alectoromancy. Used by the Japanese, it is somewhat similar to the above. The



A ouija board, whose letters are intended to spell out messages from spirits

characters of the alphabet are set out in a circle on the ground, and rice is scattered in it. A cock is then put in the circle and the characters nearest to which it picks up the grains are supposed to give the answer to the question.

Geomancy. This is simply scattering earth, sand, peas or wheat on the ground and foretelling the future by the patterns formed.

Astragalomancy. This, greatly favoured by Negro races, is throwing down small bones out of a bag and making predictions from the way they fall.

Oneiromancy. This is by interpreting dreams, a practice of the greatest antiquity and still world-wide today. One recalls Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat kine and the seven lean kine, which was interpreted by Joseph. In Victorian times, books on the subject were extremely popular.

Still further methods. By planting a stick at a crossroads and observing the reactions of passers-by to it. By throwing sticks in the air and predicting from the way they fall. The Chinese make predictions from the carapaces of tortoises, the Japanese by drawing at random small bamboo sticks from a box. In fact, the ways in which man has endeavoured to learn the future are innumerable.

It will be observed that only by a few of the above methods can it be hoped to predict the whole course of a life. The majority lend themselves only to answering a series of questions. But all of them entail communication with invisible forces.

Before leaving this subject I will give two outstanding examples of predicting the future correctly.

The first concerns Nostradamus, a French astrologer of Jewish descent, who read philosophy and graduated in medicine at the Universities of Avignon and Montpellier respectively, and became honoured throughout all France for his learning.

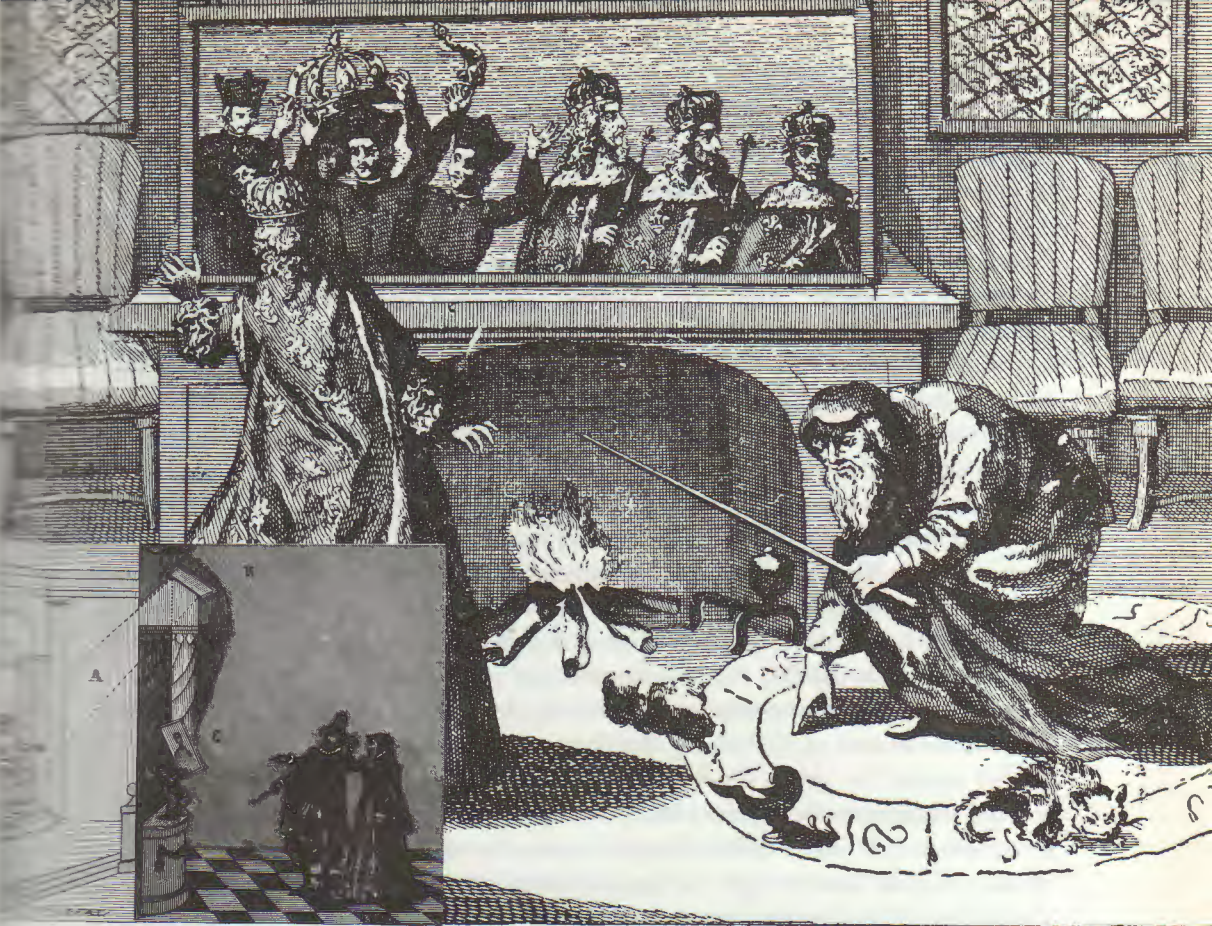
In 1555 he published a book of rhymed prophecies entitled *Centuries*. In 1558

he produced a second, enlarged edition. King Charles IX appointed him his physician-in-ordinary.

Nostradamus's prophecies were read long after his death, and many of them came

Nostradamus (Michel de Notredame), the French astrologer





Catherine de' Medici with the 'magic mirror' of Nostradamus, in which she is supposed to have seen the future of France; and (diagram) a possible explanation of the mirror

true. Among them he predicted the wholesale drownings carried out nearly 250 years later, during the French Revolution, at Nantes, by the terrorist Jean Baptiste Carrier, and that the King of the Isles (Britain) would become the most powerful monarch with dominion over a great part of the world. This was in the year that Queen Elizabeth I ascended the throne, and the British Empire was still undreamt of.

The most disturbing prophecy made by him was that, in the year 2000, Paris would be destroyed by a flight of man-made birds coming from the east. In view of China's progress in producing nuclear missiles, perhaps we had better make the best of the thirty-odd years we have to go.

The second concerns a woman whose name we do not know, and the means she used to produce her prophecy have not come down to us. She was an old negress, said to be partly of Irish descent, who lived on the island of Martinique in a tumble-down hut. Two young girls, aged about twelve, went to her one day to have their fortunes told. One was Josephine Tascher de la Pagerie, the other Aimée Dubucq de Rivery. The old woman predicted that both of them would marry great kings who ruled over vast peoples and that Aimée would bear a son who, after her, would reign gloriously.

Josephine duly sailed for France, and in due course married the Viscomte de Beauharnais; then, after Beauharnais had been sent to the guillotine, Napoleon Bonaparte. A few years later she was crowned in Notre Dame as Empress of the French, when the French Empire dominated Europe from the shores of the Baltic to the toe of Italy.

Aimée also sailed for France, and she spent eight years being educated at a convent in Nantes. In her early twenties she set out to return to Martinique. A tempest in the Bay of Biscay severely damaged the ship, and she was transferred to a Spanish vessel that was sailing to the Balearic Isles. This vessel was captured by corsairs and Aimée was taken as a prisoner to Algiers. The Bey of Algiers decided that this blue-eyed, golden-haired French girl was so superbly lovely that he would send her to Constantinople as a present for his master, the Sultan. There, in due course, Aimée became the Sultan's favourite wife and bore him a son. But the Janissaries revolted, placed a Prince Mustapha on the throne and imprisoned Aimée's husband's successor, Selim, as well as her own son and herself. This made it seem extremely unlikely that the whole of the prediction would be fulfilled. But a year later there was a counter-revolution. Mustapha was dethroned, and Aimée's son became Sultan as Mahmoud II. No man can have two mothers, so a Sultan's mother ranked far above his wives. Aimée was known as the Veiled Crown, and was the supreme authority over all the women in the vast Turkish Empire, which then included all North Africa, Egypt, Arabia, Palestine and the greater part of the Balkans. Aimée had brought her son up with western ideas, and to believe that Turkey should no longer remain isolated. Mahmoud was a highly intelligent man. He accepted her guidance; he became known as the Reformer and for thirty-one years ruled gloriously.

What, then, are we to decide about predestination and free will? From the evidence before us of the success achieved by innumerable predictors of the future, it is difficult not to believe that our every act is preordained.

The type of parents to whom we were born, their degree of wealth or poverty, our nurse (if our parents were well enough off to provide one), our brothers and sisters or other childhood companions, the food that formed our staple diet, even the climate in which we lived – all these inescapable circumstances during our formative years have a lasting influence on our mentality. There follow the kind of education we were given, teachers who were admired or detested, young friends who introduced us to new interests, the liking or disliking that we developed for sport, cooking, music, housework, gardening, animals, publicity and many other factors, the characters of members of the opposite sex with whom we had our first and subsequent love-affairs. The first affair particularly may induce either shyness or boldness. Our looks and personality also play a part, causing us to become either reticent and awkward, with a dread of having to go to parties, or imbued with a happy confidence that we shall be welcome everywhere in all types of company.

There may then come marriage, bringing an altered outlook on life; children,

possibly necessitating new habits of economy. Meanwhile there has been the type of occupation by which we earn our living; workmates or business associates; the books we have read; the places to which we have been on holiday or have travelled by necessity; possibly one or more accidents that have instilled in us a dread of certain circumstances; most probably a period of war during which we have been subject to discipline, either in one of the fighting services or as a nurse in a hospital. Good or bad future prospects beget impulses to generous cooperation or, owing to caution, the rejection of appeals. Our health, at any given moment, plays a great part in influencing our state of mind.

So there we have it. Throughout the years each personality is built up by tens of thousands of physical and mental experiences. Undeniably, the countless habits of mind engendered by our past and present environments must automatically dictate the great majority of our decisions.

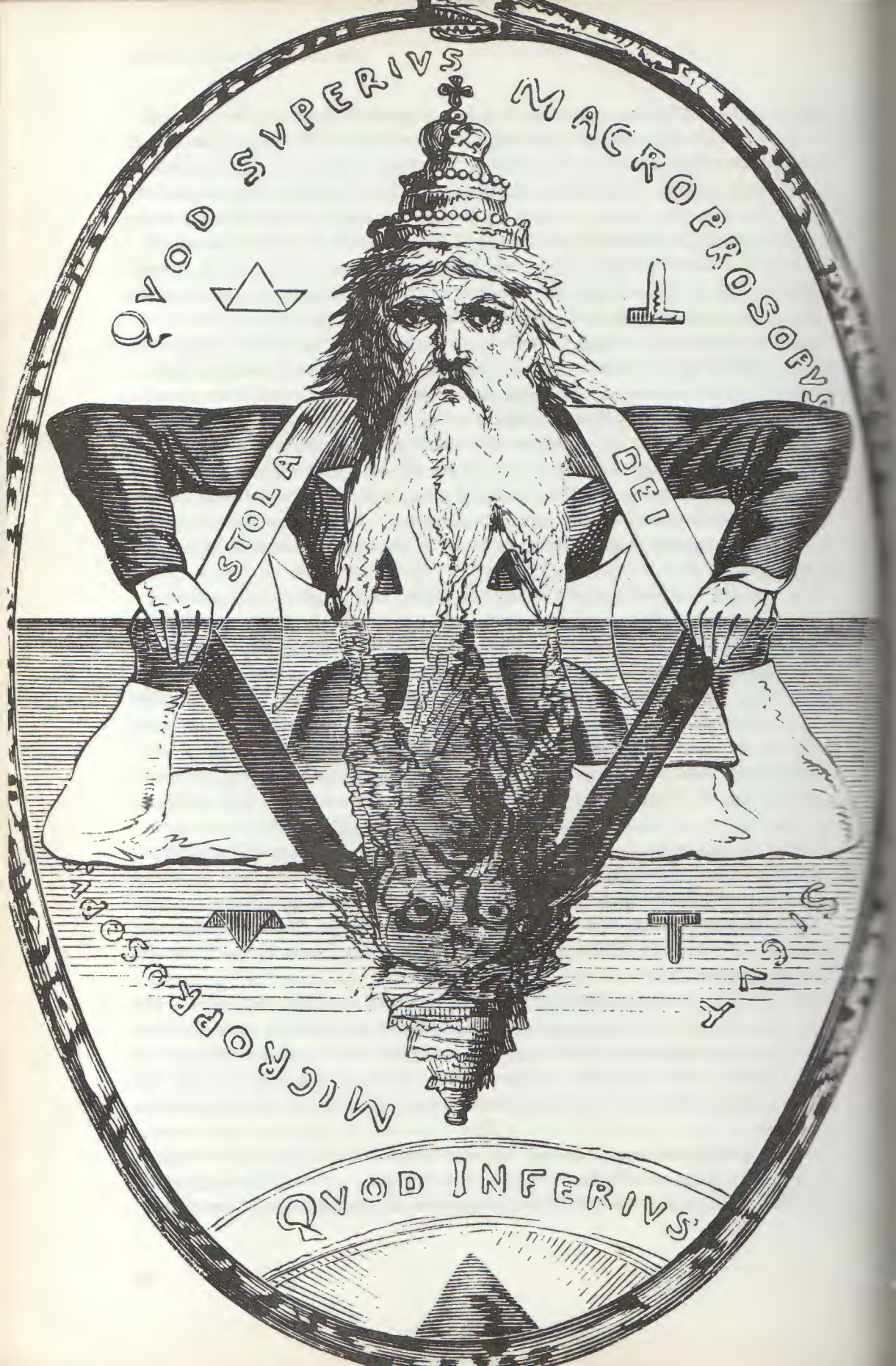
But it may be that, at times, we are confronted with a situation in which we are being tested. About which decision it is proper for us to take there can never be any doubt. Our conscience tells us loud and clear; and, should we decide for the one which appears to be against our own interests, it does not necessarily follow that we shall deprive ourselves of some piece of good fortune that has been predicted for us.

For example, it is predicted to a young man that he will fall in love with and marry a very charming girl. She is so accurately described that when he meets her he has no doubt at all that she is the girl about whom he has been told; but she is already engaged to someone else. It chances that he comes into possession of certain information by which he could discredit her fiancé in her eyes. He is naturally greatly tempted to use it; but he refrains, because it is a matter of the past and he feels that it would be unfair to rake it up. Apparently he has scotched his own chances. But if the seer was gifted with true vision, the girl's fiancé may, for some reason of his own, break off the engagement, or he may meet with a fatal accident, and thus our young man will marry her after all.

Here I should issue a warning. People who earn their living from telling fortunes have, like others, their off days. Also, forcing their gift hour after hour to satisfy a succession of clients tends to cause their psychic powers to deteriorate. In any case, clairvoyants having true vision are few and far between. Moreover, even the fulfilment of a true prediction may not prove the piece of good fortune that one expected it to be.

For example, it is predicted that a rich relation will leave you his fortune. He does, but charges you with taking care of his wife for life. She is a bedridden invalid, and (apart from the bother entailed), after you have paid death duties on your relative's estate and taxes on the income of the residue, you find that the widow's keep and nurses to look after her cost you more than you are getting from the legacy.

Therefore we should never change the pattern of our lives in the hope of making conditions more favourable for a prediction that promises great happiness to come true. Consulting a fortune-teller should always be regarded as for amusement only.



PART 3

Beliefs in Early Ages

Introductory

By this time the reader may well be asking, 'But what has all this to do with the Devil and all his works?'

Ostensibly nothing. Actually, a very great deal. I have set forth the case for the belief that human beings have a sixth sense, that their minds are capable of both transmitting and receiving impulses for which there is no normal explanation, and that some of the impulses received emanate from the disembodied powers of good and evil. Since every process in the Universe of which we are aware is governed by immutable laws, it follows that occult phenomena must also be subject to laws, and that anyone who knows these should be able to make use of them. That this has been done in the past is claimed by many occultists in their writings, and that it is still being done is claimed by modern magicians.

In fact, the borderline between magic and science often appears very thin, and it is constantly decreasing.

When a slave-raiding party landed on the coast of Africa in the sixteenth century and a white man struck a Negro warrior dead by firing a musket at him from fifty paces, the natives naturally must have supposed that the white man was a witch doctor with a magic stick.

If, in the days of King James I, I had shown his courtiers a screen on which they could see the King's son, Prince Charles – whom they knew to have gone on a visit to Madrid – gallivanting there with his friend the Duke of Buckingham, the viewers would undoubtedly have decided that the screen was a magic mirror and might well have had me burnt at the stake for having sold my soul to the Devil.

Such examples of how the apparently magical later becomes accepted as due to scientific discoveries, and is put to everyday use, are legion. We may, therefore, define magic as *the application of scientific laws which are still unknown to our recognized scientists*. The putting into force of these occult laws may be likened to a man's having a means by which he can tap in on invisible electric cables and, by them, transmit his will to achieve a desired end.

It may be to effect a local change in the weather and bring the benefit of rain or the dangers of a tempest; to cause crops to rot or thrive and cattle to multiply or die; to cause other human beings to become subject to strong impulses; to cure the sick and crippled or to inflict disease and death.

Opposite The Sacred hexagram of Solomon, formed by the White and Black Ancients of the Cabala

These electric cables are, of course, those currents emanating from the Power of Light and the Power of Darkness.

They are operated by, on the one hand, such means as religious ceremonies held by the pure in heart, prayers for the ability to help those in trouble, the sacrifice of opportunities and pleasures for the benefit of others, fasts and disciplines carried out to subdue impulses to commit any of the seven deadly sins, and all magical operations undertaken with the object of calling down supernatural aid for a good purpose. On the other hand they are operated by animal and human sacrifices, licentiousness without affection, the unnatural use of semen, blood, excrement, hair, nails and other products of the human body, wishing ill to any other person, employing violence to achieve one's ends, leading the young into sin, working for the overthrow of law and order, inflicting mental or physical cruelty, and all magical operations undertaken with the object of calling down supernatural power for an evil or selfish purpose.

Magical operations undertaken for an unselfish purpose belong to white magic, and those who perform them are followers of the Right-hand Path. Operations undertaken for personal ends belong to black magic, and those who perform them are followers of the Left-hand Path.

A considerable number of people are born with psychic gifts. In most cases, when they become aware of this, they use them in minor ways, generally for good, sometimes for taking pain from others, more usually for the harmless amusement of fortune-telling. As they have not made a deliberate study of magic, their powers are very limited and, not having 'crossed the abyss', they are not fully committed either to the Right-hand or the Left-hand Path.

To achieve real power is quite a different matter, and a most arduous undertaking. It entails many years of preparation and an almost exclusive preoccupation with the supernatural.

The Christian saints, as also the holy men of other civilizations, were capable of performing their miracles because they denied themselves the pleasures of this world, undertook prolonged fasts, worked themselves up into an ecstatic state by inflicting pain on their bodies – as, for example, the fakirs of India do when they lie on beds of nails or have themselves buried alive for periods that would normally bring about their deaths from thirst – and constantly communed with their own version of the Godhead.

Likewise the magician must purge himself of all impurities, learn by heart highly complicated rituals, and go to immense labour to gather together the ingredients required to perform his enchantments. If he is a black magician he must proceed with extreme caution, for he knows only too well that, in calling on the Powers of Darkness he is exposing himself to a terrifying force; and that, should he fail to control it, he could be utterly destroyed.

Any attempt to reach a conclusion about the Devil and all his works by basing it on the practices of one people, or the tenets of a single religion, would be futile because we are examining the two invisible Powers that dominate the Universe and affect the whole of mankind equally.

But some insight may be gained by a survey of the principal forms of belief from the earliest times.

Prehistoric Man

Our knowledge of races who lived in the distant past is mainly due to the weapons and belongings that have been recovered from their graves by archaeologists. But, fortunately, some of them were artists and have left paintings of themselves and the animals of their period in the caves they inhabited.

One of the earliest of these dates from Palaeolithic times, and is in the Caverne des Trois Frères at Ariège. It is, as can clearly be seen from the feet and hands, a painting of a man, but he is dressed and masked in the skin of an animal, poses in a prancing attitude, and is wearing on his head a pair of antlers. From our knowledge of a cult that survived right into the Middle Ages, we may assume that the figure represents the oldest known deity – the Horned God. And it was from him that our Devil of late Christian times inherited his horns, hooves and tail.

However, it must not be thought that there was anything Satanic about the Horned God. Primitive people attributed to him everything good or bad for which there was no explanation. Dualism arose at a much later stage, when nations had emerged and went to war with one another. Then each side maintained that its god was good and the god of its enemies evil. The loser's god was taken into the fold of the winner, as a minor deity. This, of course, was a form of insurance, for if you were rude to the other fellow's god, there was always a chance that he might do you a mischief while your own god was looking the other way.

After many wars this custom resulted in polytheism, which reached its apex in the Roman Empire. Not, in that case, because the highly sophisticated Romans feared the gods of the savage tribes they conquered; they had the sense to realize that, if you acknowledged the god of a people you had defeated, that made for future peace and goodwill. The British, because of their belief in Christianity, could not, while making their Empire, follow quite the same policy, by acknowledging the divinity of Shiva or Tawhaki. But they did the next best thing by decreeing religious toleration for all their peoples.

The one exception to the policy of toleration in ancient times was the Hebrews. Yahva or Jehovah, as he later came to be called, was, as we know, a jealous god and would not tolerate any other deity's getting a sniff at the burnt offerings.

The making of burnt offerings was common to most primitive peoples, and continued well into the Christian era. The theory was that the god needed sustaining; but, in early times, meat was much too precious to be set aside to rot for a deity. The smoke from the meat was looked on as its spirit and, therefore, as capable of nourishing him. That was the god's share, and the sacrificial animal could be eaten cheerfully afterwards.

According to primitive belief, everything had its spirit double, and, blood being the essential of life in man and animal, its spilling on the ground, as the sacrificial animal was slaughtered, would also be most welcome to the god. As time went on and the tribes merged into nations ruled by powerful priest-kings, the favour of



the god was courted by human sacrifice. With many peoples it became customary to make human sacrifices not only at certain seasons of the year and when going to war, but also on the death of a ruler. But when men dwelt in caves there were no slaves that could be sent to serve their master in another world, and every hand was needed; so, when they buried their dead, they spread red earth over the corpse to signify spilt blood. And to this day blood has, with the exception of semen, continued to be the most potent aid to any magical operation.

Of all the arts, dancing is the most primitive, and it was by dancing that early man worshipped the Great Spirit. At Cogul, in north-eastern Spain, there is a crude cave painting depicting such a dance. It is of very special interest, because the naked man round whom the nine women are dancing wears a garter. This, from time immemorial, has been the distinguishing mark worn by a person having occult powers.

The garter may be very elaborate, or simply a piece of string; but it occurs again and again throughout the history of magic and witchcraft. During the great witch-hunts of the seventeenth century, when any witch was under accusation,

Opposite A prehistoric sorcerer dressed and masked in the skin of an animal

Below Before the dawn of history: clothed women dancing with a satyr in their midst



great pressure was brought to bear on him or her to disclose the names of the other members of the coven, who, realizing their danger, not infrequently contrived that one or more of them should get into the prison and ensure silence by killing the prisoner. The victim might be stabbed to death, strangled or made to take poison. No matter how the deed was done, a bootlace or some similar object was always left tied loosely round the victim's neck. As far as I know, no reason for this has ever been suggested. But in no case were the murderers ever caught, so the inference was that they had made themselves invisible to enter the cell. By leaving there a symbol of magic power, it may be that they sought to intimidate their persecutors and judges.

Palaeolithic man was succeeded by Neolithic man, cave dwellings became a thing of the past, hunting began to give place to agriculture, villages were built, strong personalities became chiefs who fulfilled a dual role – leader in war and priest in sacrificial ceremonies.

But for such headship in early times it seems there was a price to pay. In this the antlers worn by the primitive magician are not without their significance. There comes a time when every king of a herd is challenged by a younger stag and killed. No doubt that happened on many occasions in man's dim past; but there is much evidence to show that a time came when matters were regularized by an agreement that, rather than wait for the chief to become decrepit before he was killed, he should retain power for only seven years. Well or ill, when his time was up he had to die and pass on his spiritual, as well as his temporal, power to a new leader.

Extraordinary to relate, this practice still continues in Central Nigeria. The Chief of the Junkus tribe is expected, after ruling for seven years, to go to a cave known as Kunguni and there surrender his life. It was reported in the London *Sunday Express* of January 4th 1970 that the present Chief, Malam Adi Bwaye, has already ruled for ten years and still refuses to die, greatly to the annoyance of his more backward subjects.

A time then came when strong-willed priest-kings like Malam Adi Bwaye who were only middle-aged and still hale and hearty refused to submit to the ritual death that was expected of them. This led to the custom of appointing a scapegoat. Temporarily, sometimes for a year, sometimes for only a few days, the scapegoat was allowed all the privileges of a king, and led a life of indolence and luxury, then his life became forfeit. Sir J. G. Frazer, in his monumental work on folklore, *The Golden Bough*, devotes a whole volume to this subject.

Since the dawn of historical times, some seven thousand years ago, in the Mediterranean countries and those of Western Europe, many religions have waxed and waned, and countless gods and goddesses have been worshipped for a while, then fallen victims to the passage of time. But the Horned God – the Old God – survived them all.

He spoke with the voice of thunder and, when angry, struck with his lightning; but he also fostered reproduction in men and animals, caused the crops to grow, endowed his votaries with magic powers and decreed that when he was worshipped

it should be an occasion for feasting, merriment and indulgence in the joys of life. It was not until the thirteenth century, at the earliest, when the Christian priesthood felt strong enough to oppose him, that he became known as the Devil.

The Sumerians

In recent times the theory has been advanced that civilization first arose in Central Asia. This is largely based on the fact that there are many similarities between the beliefs and magic of peoples far removed from one another. This could be accounted for if various tribes of this Central Asian stock had migrated to Scandinavia, China, across the Bering Straits, down through the Americas and also to Mesopotamia.

On the other hand the life of primitive man – an unceasing fight against nature for food and survival – must have been very similar in whatever part of the world he inhabited; so I see nothing strange in the fact that widely separated peoples developed similar practices.

However that may be, to the best of our certain knowledge the earliest races to pass out of the Neolithic stage lived in the fertile lands between the Tigris and the Euphrates, and in the valley of the Nile; and this dawn of the two great civilizations occurred about 4000 B.C.

The archaeologists now tell us that the foundations of Jericho are older than any city in either area, and that its site has been continuously occupied for over 7,000 years; but of the customs of the people who lived there at that remote time we have little or no information.

Personally I should have thought that, in view of Egypt's extraordinarily advanced civilization (and it was never higher) during the Fourth Dynasty, about 2680 B.C., the people of the Nile must have emerged from a state of semi-barbarism long before the building of such cities as Ur of the Chaldees. However, we will take the Sumerian civilization first, because between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates is the traditional site of the Garden of Eden.

It is upon the beliefs absorbed by the Hebrews, while living in Babylon, that the account of the Creation, and the first chapters of Genesis, are based. But the story as given in our Bible is a sadly muddled one.

By it we are led to believe (Genesis ii. 16–17) that there was in the Garden of Eden only one tree whose fruit Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat – the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But Genesis iii. 22–4 reads: 'And the Lord said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and *take also of the tree of Life*, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of Life.'

These passages clearly suggest that there were in the garden two special trees whose fruit Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat. The original Babylonian account of what is supposed to have taken place is as follows.

Having created man in his own image, the Lord God was so pleased with his



The serpent before being cursed by God



One admires EVE, for having tasted of the FORBIDDEN TREE OF KNOWLEDGE — But what a WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE she missed when she overlooked the TREE OF LIFE. I should have eaten of not ONE, but ALL the trees in the garden — and THAT, dear boy — is what I hope for YOU.
Gordon Eric Gordon-Tombe

The author's bookplate, showing him at the feet of a fellow Army officer, who has the guise of a satyr

handiwork that he decided to make man immortal. So he sent one of his angels to tell Adam to eat of the tree of Life. The angel's name was Serpent, and his appearance was then similar to that of the other angels; but he was a cunning and ambitious personality and delivered what is known as the 'perverted message'. This induced Eve and Adam to eat the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, while he ate of the tree of Life.

The sequel is duly recorded in Genesis iii. 10-19, in which, having learnt what had happened, an intensely angry Jehovah decreed that the unfortunate Adam and Eve, and their children, should suffer every unpleasantness he could think of. And he did not let off Serpent, as we read in Genesis iii. 14: 'And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.'

So Serpent lost his golden halo and lovely wings; but according to the Babylonians, as he had eaten of the tree of life, he had become immortal, and that is why he never dies but simply sheds his skin each year.

I was so intrigued by this delightful legend of the two trees, that I asked that very talented artist, Frank C. Papé, who did the beautiful illustrations for editions of Anatole France and James Branch Cabell, to design for me a bookplate on this theme. The face of the satyr at whose feet I am sitting, absorbing knowledge, is that of one Gordon Eric Gordon-Tombe, a brother officer of mine in the First World War. It was he who weaned me away, at the age of twenty, from reading nothing but light fiction, to enjoy fine English prose, translations of the most

famous foreign authors, accounts of the great civilizations of the past and Eastern teachings. A debt that it was impossible to repay; but, at least, I have been able to acknowledge it by pasting his portrait into my collection of 4,000 books. I had him drawn as a satyr because he often declared himself to be a 'conscious hedonist'.

Reverting to more serious matters, the Hebrews also collected the legend of the Flood from Babylon, and it is quite possible that the story of Moses as an abandoned baby found among the bullrushes by Pharaoh's daughter is derived from a similar story about Sargon, who became King of Akkad. Probably the Hebrews also learnt their advanced magic there.

The Cabala, upon the understanding of which the alchemists later based the 'Great Work', is usually attributed to the Jews; but according to one tradition the Cabala was first taught by God to certain chosen angels, two of whom, Uzza and Azel, after being driven out of heaven with the rebellious Lucifer, taught it to Adam, and to Eve the art of witchcraft. The Cabala was handed down by way of Noah and Abraham to Moses, who became proficient in it during his wanderings in the wilderness, and initiated seventy elders into its mysteries. In due course Solomon exceeded all previous initiates in his profound knowledge of its workings, and thereby became the most powerful magician who ever lived, so that his reputation for wisdom spread through every country in the world, causing him to be venerated for many centuries after his death.

No one had dared to write the Cabala down until, at the time of the destruction of the Temple, Schimeon Ben Jochai did so. After his death his sons, the Rabbi Eleazar and the Rabbi Abba, collated his treatises and produced the *Sepher ha-*

Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden of Eden



Zohar, the Book of Splendour, from which, centuries later, the European alchemists learnt the secrets of the Cabala. But while knowledge of the Cabala was confined for a long period to the Jews, there can be little doubt that it had its origin either in Babylonia or Egypt, and more probably the latter. A fuller account of this ancient teaching will be given in Part 4.

Among the many thousand cuneiform tablets that formed the library of Assurbanipal a great number deal with magic, and give spells that had been handed down for many generations. As is universally the case, such enchantments were based on the belief that a mystic sympathy existed between the person to be bewitched and any part of him, such as hair, nail parings, something he had worn or else a wax puppet upon which his name had been written.

To cast a spell three things were necessary: (1) to know the 'word of power' by which a demon could be summoned; (2) to know how to compel him to carry out an order; (3) to burn or destroy some property of the person to be afflicted, or an image of him.

Knotted cords have played a great part in magical ceremonies in every country from China to Peru, the belief being that one could imprison certain ills in the knots. The Babylonian priests used the mystic number seven, or multiples of seven, when

The Assyrian King Assurbanipal



tying such knots. After suitable offerings had been made, they untied them to relieve the patient of his pain. Then, facing towards the east, which is also universal in such practices, they lifted one hand to heaven and pronounced the conjuration.

The ancient city state of Sumer and its adjacent territories, Ur, Kish, Eridu, Uruk, Akkad and the rest, all show a very advanced development, particularly in building and astronomy. Their huge square ziggurats, which were mounted by ramps up the sides, were temple observatories. From them the priests not only cast horoscopes, but worked out many tables concerning the movements of the heavenly bodies, according to calculations that are acknowledged as correct by scientists today. Their artists were most talented, as can be seen from their representation of men and animals on innumerable seal-rings and cylinders, and engravings on ivory and on spearheads, that have been dug up; and, perhaps the best example of all, the magnificent portrait statue of the King of Lagash, dated to 2200 B.C. Their painted pottery was most decorative; they had splendid chariots, golden helmets and fine jewellery.

The Babylonians and Assyrians inherited the knowledge of these scientists and skilled craftsmen. The great terraced palace on which were the Hanging Gardens of Babylon was accounted one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Huge gateways, flanked by man-headed, winged bulls, still testify to the ability of the sculptors. From Nineveh great armies went out to conquer distant lands. Their cuneiform script was one of the earliest forms of non-pictorial writing, and in it, laboriously chipped from slabs of stone, they kept most meticulous records of taxation, stores of food put aside against famine and so on.

As early as 2500 B.C., the Sumerians were known to have been trading, by way of Baluchistan, with India; so it is not to be wondered at that by that time they had already acquired a large pantheon of gods – inherited, obtained by local conquest or adopted from other peoples.

In the Sumerian theocracy, Marduk the son of Ea, a water god, was the Creator, and he moulded the body of the first man from blood. Later, the principal divinities were a trilogy consisting of Shamash the Sun, Sin the Moon and Ishtar the planet Venus. The last later became known as Semiramis, then Astarte, and extended her sway far and wide over the Phoenician and Carthaginian peoples. Meanwhile Shamash and Sin had given place to the evil god Bel.

During the early Sumerian period Marduk, like the Horned God, had been regarded as neither good nor evil; but in later times he became incorporated with Bel as Bel-Marduk (the Moloch of the Bible), one of the most terrible gods under whom it has been the misfortune of man to suffer. He was not content with burnt offerings of animals, but had to be propitiated by the smell of roast human flesh. Great brass images of him reared up in his temples; their bellies opened down the centre like a pair of gates and inside there was a roaring furnace. Into these terrible idols, during several centuries, the priests of Bel-Marduk threw countless men, women and children, to be consumed by the flames.

All this time Marduk's father, Ea, had continued in the background among a score of minor deities. But he held a very special place, because he was the god

of wisdom, and even the other gods went to consult him when in difficulties. It was Ea who stopped the rain, and so saved mankind when Bel had sent the Deluge with the intention of destroying humanity.

Ea was also the master magician. It was from him that the priests learnt to cast their horoscopes and spells, as also did the Jews who brought his mysteries into Europe. In Babylonia and Assyria the cult of the Horned God was temporarily overlaid by evil, but he still had his worshippers.

Egypt

Above all peoples in the ancient world, the Egyptians were civilized in the true sense of the word. Owing to the climate of the Nile valley, and their custom of furnishing their tombs with articles whose spirit forms would be available to them in the long journey through the underworld, we are still able to enjoy innumerable beautiful things with which they surrounded themselves: their lovely temples, with carved and painted pillars and graceful lotus-flower capitals; the picturesque square-sailed barques from which they fished and shot duck; their war chariots with prancing, plume-crested horses; representations of the people themselves in their immaculate pleated white linen garments; their beautifully designed furniture, painted pottery, glass and jewels.

In their many papyri they have left us accounts of the type of life they led, the able administration of the two kingdoms and the just laws given to them by the Pharaohs, whom they looked on as divine. For those readers who desire a detailed picture, I would recommend *Winged Pharaoh* and other books by Joan Grant. They purport to be records of her own lives lived in ancient Egypt, and they have such an extraordinary ring of seeming veracity that I personally have no doubt at all that when she wrote them she was a true seer. The expression 'write' is not strictly correct; for, as my wife and I saw her do on many occasions, she used to lie on a sofa with closed eyes, in a self-induced semi-trance, and slowly describe what she saw while her husband took it down.

But happy, compared with other races, as the people of the Nile appear to have been, their thoughts were never far from death, and the still happier existence in the life to come that could be achieved by righteous conduct. So much so was this the case that, at their dinner parties, when they reached what would be our coffee stage, the butler carried round a miniature coffin containing a mummy, to remind them that all of them must one day put off their envelopes of clay.

The Book of the Dead gives a most detailed account of the terrifying journey the personality that survived death would have to make. Led through the underworld by the jackal-headed god Anubis, it was eventually brought to the Hall of Judgment. There, before Osiris, seated on his throne, it would be examined by the Assessors of the Dead, and have to vouch for having kept, not twelve, but forty-two commandments. Then its heart was weighed in a pair of scales against the feather of

Opposite An Egyptian tomb-model of the boat designed to take the released spirit through the world of shades





The heart of the dead weighed before Osiris against the feather of truth

Truth, the result being recorded by the ibis-headed god of wisdom, Thoth; and only then, if the verdict was favourable, did it attain eternal bliss.

The Egyptians had gone very deeply into the question of what it was that left the body and survived after death. Even that great Egyptologist, the late Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, found it by no means easy to differentiate between the parts of this entity, but the following is a brief summary of his findings.

The *ka*. This was the etheric double of the body. At death it had to leave the corpse; so the relatives of the deceased made a small statue, called a *ka* figure, for it to occupy, and put this with the mummy in the tomb. The *ka* could leave the tomb if it wished, but usually remained there. It was sustained by the spirit doubles of food placed in the tomb, and as these were consumed it gradually faded away.

The *sahu*. This was the soul, a replica of the human body which, provided the right ceremonies had been performed, set out through the underworld to the Hall of Judgment.

The *khaibit*. This was the shadow. While alive, an Egyptian believed his shadow to be a vulnerable part of himself, and that to walk on a person's shadow was a very wicked thing to do. As an integral but immaterial part of them, it accompanied them after death and became the shadow of the *sahu*. Special rites were performed to protect it from being stolen.



The *ba*. This apparently was a second soul which had the power to enter into other people, such as mediums when in a trance, and possess them.

The *khu*. This was the spirit, the ego, the essence of the person and, alone, was indestructible and immortal.

The modern occultist believes the *ka* to be a person's etheric double, which acts as a form of battery recharged with electricity during sleep. If that is so, it seems quite logical that it should linger on for a while in the neighbourhood of the corpse. An apparition seen fairly soon after death would be the *ka*; but a prolonged haunting would presumably be the *ba* or, possibly, the *khaibit*, as in our own literature ghosts are often referred to as 'shades'.

The Egyptian trinity consisted of Osiris, his wife Isis and their son, the hawk-headed Horus. There was also a forerunner of the Christian Devil, Osiris's younger brother, Set. He was jealous of Osiris's power and wished to supplant him on the throne. With seventy-two evil companions he arranged a banquet and invited Osiris. Toward the end of the feast a beautiful, bejewelled coffer was carried in, and Set said he would make a present of it to anyone who fitted comfortably into it. Osiris was persuaded to lie down in the coffer; as soon as he had done so the conspirators rushed forward, closed the lid and nailed it down. They then threw it into the Nile, and the sea carried it to Byblos. The lamenting Isis found it and brought it back to Egypt; but, one night when Set was hunting by moonlight in the Delta, he came upon it again, cut his brother's corpse into fourteen pieces and

Egypt

Below right King Tutankhamen as the jackal-headed god Anubis

Below Osiris in his closed shrine, with Isis and his four grandsons



scattered them far and wide. Isis searched the land, and, wherever she came upon a piece of her dead husband's body, she erected a temple to him, while her son Horus, the symbol of Light, fought and triumphed over Set, the embodiment of Darkness.

Concurrently with their trinity, the Egyptians worshipped the giver of life, Ammon-Ra or the Sun, who rode in his heavenly chariot through the sky by day, died every night and was resurrected next morning.

In addition to these major gods, there were innumerable minor ones, mostly local deities who had either the heads or bodies of animals. Each had its own priesthood. Separate schools of priests and priestesses fulfilled the many needs of this people that was so concerned about things of the spirit and life after death. These schools foretold the future by looking into mirrors; made talismans and amulets; practised telepathy, sending and receiving news from other parts of the country; and fulfilled the role of doctors and highly-skilled surgeons, sending the spirits out of their patients while they operated upon them or performed the ceremonies.

The uncouth gods of other contemporary peoples all lusted after burnt offerings, and many of them demanded human sacrifices; but the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians were on an altogether higher plane. There can be little doubt that among their priesthood were adepts, both male and female, who practised magic. And

there is good reason to suppose that it was mainly white magic.

However, black magic was also practised by sorcerers, and they used puppets to bring about death in the following manner. Having written the name of their intended victim on the image, they collected seven stalks from seven date-palms, made a bow with horse hair and shot the stalks like arrows at the image, saying as they let fly each one, 'Destroyed be A. the son of B.'

It is said that Egyptian magicians could imbue clay figures with life. The following, related in the Westcar papyrus, gives an account of such a happening.

The Pharaoh Neb-Ka, who reigned about 3830 B.C., went on a visit to one of his high officials named Aba-aner. The wife of the official fell in love with one of the Pharaoh's bodyguards and allowed him to seduce her. Learning of this, Aba-aner made a wax model of a crocodile seven spans long. Having recited an incantation over it, ending with the order 'When the man cometh down to bathe in my waters thou shalt seize him', he gave the model to his servant with orders that when the soldier went for his morning swim it should be thrown into the water after him.

This was done. The model immediately turned into a living crocodile twelve feet long, seized the man and dragged him under water, where they both remained for a week. On the seventh day Aba-aner, while out walking with the Pharaoh, invited him to come and see a wonderful thing. When they reached the bank of the Nile, Aba-aner commanded the crocodile to bring the soldier up from the river bed. The magical animal obeyed, upon which Aba-aner told the Pharaoh how the man had seduced his wife. The Pharaoh then said to the crocodile, 'Take that which is thine and be gone.' Snapping up the soldier again in its terrible jaws, the beast plunged back into the river with him.

As I have remarked earlier, magic is the application of scientific laws that are still unknown to our recognized scientists; and one cannot help wondering how much of the scientific knowledge possessed by the Egyptians was due to their study of magic.

We need go no further than the Great Pyramid to establish the fact that the Egyptians possessed scientific data that did not become known to the modern world until the nineteenth century. It is said to have been built between 2645 and 2622 B.C. by Khufu or, as the Greeks called him, Cheops, the second king of the Fourth Dynasty.

After 4,500 years it remains the most massive building ever erected by man. Its base covers 13 acres; even after various deprivations it is still 474 feet high – which is 100 feet higher than St Paul's – and it contains some 2,300,000 blocks of stone, weighing an estimated 5,923,400 tons.

In the opinion of the author, a great deal of nonsense has been written about this pyramid by people who have sought to prove that it is a mystic creation by which the prophecies of the Bible were translated into stone. They aver that it foretells 6,000 years of history.

Where the descending passage meets the ascending passage is taken as the Biblical date for the Exodus, 1486 B.C. The end of the ascending passage, where it

reaches the 'Grand Gallery', is said to indicate the birth in 4 B.C., and the death in A.D. 30, of Jesus Christ; the low passage leading to the antechamber of the so-called King's Chamber is believed to give the dates of the beginning and end of the First World War. But after that the system breaks down, for, on the key dates said to indicate world-shattering events in 1928 to 1953, nothing of any special importance occurred. Moreover, as one of the basic dates, they take the Biblical Flood to have occurred in 2345-2344 B.C., and, while it is now generally acknowledged that a great flood did take place, such evidence as we have for it puts it at approximately 9000 B.C. Finally, the Pyramidists assert that the secrets of the Pyramid were not meant to be discovered until comparatively recent times, and that this remarkable revelation was designed entirely for the benefit of the British. Let us return to brass tacks.

The unit of measurement used for building the Pyramid was the inch - 1,000 Pyramid inches equal 1,001 British inches - and the Egyptian 'sacred' cubit, which measured 25 inches. At the base each side of the Pyramid measures 9,068 inches. Nowhere is there more than a very slight error, and the huge blocks are set so perfectly together that one cannot get a penknife between them. Some of the blocks weigh up to seventy tons. The Pyramid, by the ratio of its original or intended height to the perimeter of the base, as nearly as possible squares the circle. Moreover the sum of the two diagonals of its base is 25,826.54 inches, which is very close to the number of years in the precession of the equinoxes. The measurements also embody the days of the year to a fraction, the number of days in a century, and the distance of the sun from the earth. The builders of the Great Pyramid based their inch on the earth's polar diameter, and their calculation was not very far from the present accepted standard of 500,544,000 British inches.

How was all this achieved? The Pyramidists would have us believe that a small body of people of another race, and far higher intellect, arrived in Egypt from Central Asia, and that they designed this amazing structure for Cheops. But had that been so, where is the land from which these people came? It is surely inconceivable that they or their forebears would not have built pyramids for themselves in it. But in the past half-century the aeroplane has enabled man to survey the earth in a new way. The most desolate wastes of Central Asia, Arabia and Africa can hold few secrets from us now; and such mighty, indestructible buildings as pyramids would certainly not have gone unspotted.

Other speculators in the mystic put forward Atlantis as the place from which the pyramid designers came. The problem of Atlantis is extraordinarily fascinating, and many similarities in the early cultures of the Mediterranean and Mexico make it impossible not to believe that there was considerable communication between the two continents long before Columbus crossed the Atlantic. But the snag about supposing a lost continent to have once occupied the middle of that ocean is that geological evidence is so very strongly against it.

There is yet another possible explanation. Now that men have landed on the moon - given that world-wide anarchy, nuclear war or a cosmic calamity do not destroy our present civilization - there can be little doubt that within the next

hundred years man will land on Mars and other more distant heavenly bodies.

It is now recognized that the stars can be numbered in trillions and that a high proportion of these 'suns' have planets circling round them. A conference of eminent scientists produced what is known as the Green Bank Formula – a conclusion that at least 50,000,000 other planets have life on them. The distance to them can be overcome by freezing astronauts for a suitable period (recently the Russians froze several dogs for four days in solid ice, then revived them to a perfectly normal state of animation).

Let us suppose that in the year 2000 and x a rocket from the earth, belching fire from its tail, descended with a thunderous roar on a planet whose inhabitants were still living in its Stone Age. What would be the reaction of those people?

They could only assume that our Earth-men were gods who had arrived in a fiery chariot.

Is it possible that in the dawn of history astronauts from another planet arrived here in a space vehicle, and that it was they who were responsible for the building of the Great Pyramid – and many other unexplained marvels of antiquity?

That is the theory recently put forward by Erich von Daniken in his book *Chariots of the Gods?*

Not only in the Bible but also in the folklore of nearly every people there are accounts of these visitors from outer space, believed to be gods – of the new knowledge that they brought, of the great works they performed, and of their promise to return.

If von Daniken is right, this would explain the (otherwise inexplicable) unheralded emergence almost overnight from semi-barbarism to high civilization of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Mayas, Incas and other peoples.

For the fact that the 'gods' did not return, I offer a possible explanation of my own. Conceivably they came from Ceres, at one time a planet in our solar system, now a mass of asteroids the largest of which is only twenty-seven miles in diameter. What caused Ceres to be blown to pieces? Were its inhabitants the victims of nuclear power, and was their planet destroyed by some ghastly misuse of that power?

Although I cannot subscribe to all von Daniken's suggestions, I consider that his general theory opens up an entirely new field of speculation. I regard *Chariots of the Gods?* as an epoch-making book that should be read by everyone interested in the history of mankind.

Before we leave this subject, there are two further points of interest I would like to mention. The Great Pyramid is said never to have been completed. The Pyramidists claim that it lacks an apex because, according to the prophet Zechariah (iv. 7), the 'headstone' represents the second coming of Christ, and not until that occurs will the apex be placed in position.

The Pyramidists also believe that the prophecy embodied in the vast building ends at the year 2001. Let us hope that this cannot be taken as a sinister corroboration of Nostradamus's prophecy that Paris will be destroyed by a flight of man-made birds coming from the east in the year 2000!

Taoism

It is a far cry from Egypt to China, but it comes next on our list because civilization there evolved not very long after it did in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates. The Emperor Yao is said to have ruled from 2356 to 2255 B.C., and starting with his time there are historical records of the dynasties.

By the time the numerous tribes of the prehistoric period had coalesced, China had acquired a large pantheon. The supreme head of these, who was credited with the Creation, was known as the August Personage of Jade. His wife was the mother-queen Wang, and they dwelt with the other immortals on the K'un-lun mountains. Among them were representatives of the Sun, Moon, rain, thunder, wind, learning and happiness; also four dragon kings who were the immediate henchmen of the August Personage of Jade.

The Chinese pantheon, unlike all others, was run as a bureaucracy. The gods were ministers and, from time to time, had to report on their work to the August Personage. If he was not satisfied, he sacked them and appointed others in their places. This attitude has always been taken by the Chinese towards the idols representing the immortals. Even today Chinese living outside China who still keep statues of the Buddha, Confucius or Kuan-yin in their houses, when favoured by fortune will burn joss-sticks to them but, when afflicted by trouble, will give the figure a sharp slap over the face with a fan.

Kuan-yin succeeded Mother Wang as Queen of Heaven. I am the fortunate possessor of one of the most beautiful carvings of her that I have ever seen. As the giver of children she is usually carrying an infant; here, her upheld hand indicates that she is listening to prayer. I need hardly add that I have never slapped her face.

Also in my collection are the fat and cheerful god of happiness, Ho-toi; and Chao-lao, the god of longevity. The latter is said to have been carried in his unfortunate mother's womb for eighty years. The height of his forehead indicates the vast knowledge he acquired during this long pregnancy, and the peach he is carrying is the symbol of longevity.

The Chinese gods and goddesses, like those of other pantheons, were subject to human frailties, as is indicated by the following legend. The August Personage of Jade had a daughter named Chih-nii, who was known as the Heavenly Spinster. She spent the whole of her time spinning for her papa beautiful robes and clouds which had no seams. One day he took pity on her loneliness and gave her the Heavenly Cowherd as a husband. She then became so obsessed with the delights of love that she neglected her work. Thereupon the August Personage lost his temper and separated them, putting the poor girl on one side of the Heavenly River (the Milky Way), and the Cowherd on the other, with permission to see each other only once a year.

But the Chinese people were not destined to depend indefinitely on the freakish

Opposite China's god of longevity, Chao-lao, and Kuan-yin, the Chinese Queen of Heaven



will of their, at times, terrifying gods and goddesses. In the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., there appeared a cluster of sages – Zoroaster, Lao-tze, Gautama the Buddha and Confucius – whose teachings were destined to alter the spiritual thinking of great parts of the world's population.

In China the second of these, Lao-tze, was born, probably in 604 B.C. His teaching was that people should follow the way of Nature; her processes, methods and laws, the power that works in all created things, producing, preserving and life-giving. It can best be described as a doctrine of acceptance, passivity and humility. It would, I think, be fair to say that, in the last two senses, Mahatma Gandhi had the outlook of a Taoist.

It is, no doubt, this insistence on humility which accounts for the Chinese habit of belittling oneself, so that a highly intelligent and influential man will say, 'This person who is of no importance, and whose opinion is of little value, asks pardon for suggesting . . . ' and so on.

Lao-tze declared all weapons to be evil, and that there is no greater calamity than entering on war. He held that the precious things were gentleness, economy and shrinking; that in the age of perfect virtue men lived in common with birds and beasts and were on terms of equality with all creatures; that we should discard our wisdom and become quietly acquiescent like still water; that the body of man enshrines an immaterial spirit; that this returns to the Tao who gave it; that, having operated in the body during the time of life, in due course it receives a new embodiment. This last, of course, establishes the fact that he believed in reincarnation.

Lao-tze on his green ox, starting the long journey from which he never returned





A Chinese hell-guardian

After having spread his teaching and bestowed on his disciple, Yin Hse, the Tao-te Ching, *The Book of the First Principle and its Virtue*, he is said to have mounted on a green ox and disappeared toward the west. He was never seen again. But many people had accepted his doctrines and passed them down until, 700 years later, one Chang Tao-ling wrote many works on him and his teaching, thus giving Taoism a new impetus and causing it to become one of the great religions of the world.

Actually Taoism is not a religion but a philosophy. I use the word religion here because, although Lao-tze never claimed to be divinely inspired, after his death he was deified. A considerable mythology grew up round him, and he was credited

with power over many fearsome demons. For some unaccountable reason he came to be regarded as the father of Chinese magic, and the witches and warlocks of China (known as 'Wu'), of which there have always been great numbers, associated themselves with his cult.

Nevertheless, although Confucianism was the pre-Communist official religion of China, Taoism continued to be honoured; and, before the revolution, its titular head, known as the Celestial Master, was ceremoniously received annually by the Emperor in the Temple of Heaven.

India

The earliest tribes that lived in the Indus Valley were probably indigenous, and, as with the Indians of North America, the Eskimos and other primitive races, their society may well have been based on totemism.

This is the practice by which groups of people associate themselves with some other living thing, usually an animal. The totem is identified with the life of the group; to harm the species is therefore taboo. Totemism was doubtless the origin of sympathetic magic, which on the darker side plays such a large part in the operations of witches and sorcerers. Its peak is reached when a black magician makes a wax image of the person he wishes to harm, writes the victim's name on it, and then sticks thorns in it or melts it in front of a fire while reciting an appropriate curse.

The discoveries made at the buried cities of Mohenjo-Daro in Sind and Harappa in the Punjab show that as long ago as 2500 B.C. the country beside the River Indus already had an advanced civilization, with a literate populace, wheeled vehicles, high brick buildings and an effective drainage system.

About 1500 B.C. the Indus Valley was overrun by Aryan tribes from the north-west. For a considerable time, until they had blended with the earlier inhabitants, the position of the invaders was rather like that of the Normans after they had conquered England.

During the intermixture of races the unique social structure developed that we call caste. Its origins were complex, but that they must have been largely racial is suggested by the fact that the Indian name for caste was (as it remains) *varna*, meaning colour or complexion. Of the four castes, the highest comprised the Brahmans or priests. Their duty was to teach the scriptures and direct religious ceremonies; they also had charge of scholarship and science, observed the heavens and made the calendar. The second caste was that of Kshatriyas, the warrior nobility, who governed the country and defended it by force of arms. Next came the Vaishyas, the traders, farmers and artisans. The lowest caste was composed of Shudras, who performed for each of the three higher castes the menial tasks that it disdained.

The Aryans brought many cults, including animal sacrifice and worship round a sacred fire. They had a plurality of gods, which gradually coalesced with those of the existing population to grow into a vast and intricate mythology. Indra was god of the firmament; Mitra ruled the day, Varuna the night. Surya, the spirit of the

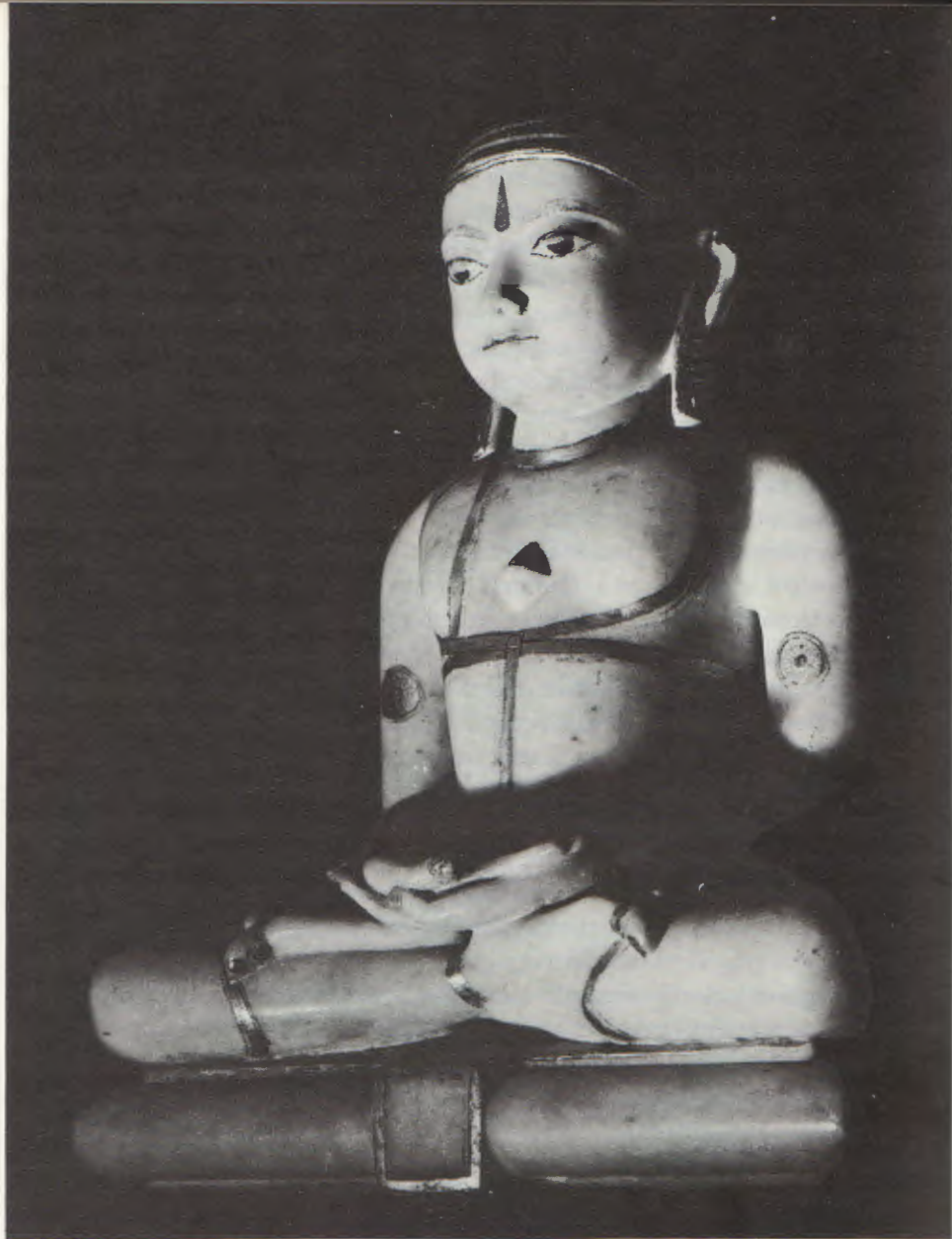
sun, gave light and warmth; the smiling goddess Ushas brought the dawn. Agni was fire; Soma, the source of inspiration, lived incarnate in the juice extracted from the plant *Asclepias acida* and then fermented, to be drunk by the Brahmans and offered as a libation; worldly wisdom was symbolized by the elephant-headed god Ganesha; Lakshmi the bountiful gave prosperity. Brahma as creator, Vishnu as preserver and Shiva as destroyer became the Hindu trinity. Saraswati, originally a river goddess, was transformed into the daughter-wife of Brahma and – seated on a lotus, her brow bejewelled with a slender crescent – presided over learning and the arts. An entrancing form of Vishnu was Krishna, the incarnation of all that is loving and beloved. Shiva, when not performing his destructive function, ruled the dance, because the Indians, supreme in their mastery of gesture, believed that the Universe moved through rhythmic patterns under his direction.

From ancient times Indian tradition affirmed reverence for woman as the foundation-stone of all religion. The wife, and especially the mother, had literally to be worshipped. Thus ultimate Being was conceived not merely as the Father but even more as the Mother of the World. Under her beatific aspect she became Devi or Parvati, the *shakti* (female power) of Shiva. In her more terrifying forms she could be Durga, a golden-skinned woman, fiercely beautiful, riding a tiger; or Kali, 'the Black', hung with human skulls, dripping blood and flourishing weapons in her numerous hands. At the festival of Durga-puja, which runs from September into October, animals are still sacrificed in some parts of India. The chief worshippers of Kali are the Shaktas; their beliefs draw authority from the Tantras, scriptures famous for the central place they give to sex. By contrast with the abstentions typical of Indian religion in general, Tantric rituals are carnal. They involve five factors: wine, red meat, fish, symbolic gestures and coitus. The highest Indian teachings treat sex as a means of spiritual development, transmuting basic forces through the beauty of mutual feeling, but Tantrism on its sinister side is orgiastic and can rapidly become black magic.

Among the more infamous of Kali's devotees were the thugs or *phansigars* (noose-users), who took travellers unawares and strangled them from behind. Although robbery often occurred, the assassination was essentially a perverted form of ceremonial, and the victim's death was an offering to the goddess. During the last century the British eradicated thuggee. But, as I shall point out at the conclusion of this book, in the West recently, though so far on a small scale, ritual murder has once more raised its cobra head.

Besides a cohort of gods, the early Indians believed in many intermediate and lower beings. The Nasatyas helped the unfortunate, cured the sick and protected the young. The Nagas were a race of man-headed serpents. Demons multiplied; among them were the wonder-working Asuras and the Rakshasas, who delighted in violence, gluttony and lust.

To this diversity of beings innumerable shrines were raised. Indian religious architecture, even though it may encase no more than a simple chamber with one image, springs outwardly into a staggering elaboration. Carvings of exquisite detail show gods and goddesses, snakes and devils, writhing in erotic embrace



The serene meditation of a Jain expressed in marble

or relentless combat. Sometimes uncanny in their effect on the beholder, **they** express the whole range of possible emotion from the transcendent to the depraved.

By nature Indians, perhaps more than any other racial group, tend to regard the unseen as more real than the seen. This readiness of belief renders **their** country a fertile soil for every kind of superstition and perversion, sorcery, **dia-**bolism, polytheistic cruelty and self-immolation. India is the home of magic **in** all its shades from ivory to ebony. At the same time we must remember **that**, through her sages' constant exercise of faculties beyond the mundane, she **has** preserved a matchless tradition in religious philosophy that at its highest subsumes the abstract ultimate. Nor does the multiplicity of the Hindu gods mean that **they**

are always viewed as separate persons. In every age the thoughtful Hindu has venerated them as aspects of one Being, whose qualities are manifested in omnifarious forms. Did not the Lord Krishna say, 'Whatever god a man worships, it is I who answer the prayer'?

Originally the word Hindu had no religious meaning. The Persians called the River Indus the Hindu, and so the people who lived near it came to be known as Hindus. What we now call Hinduism, which had no founder and no single scripture, is not really a religion at all but a whole family of religions, philosophies, practices and types of life. This multiformity has arisen largely through the tolerance that is characteristic of the Indian outlook, enabling it to absorb elements readily from other cultures, such as the Greek, the Christian and the Islamic. Unexclusive, it does not repudiate alien views as fit only for pagans and infidels, to whom salvation is denied.

A basic feature of Hinduism is the belief in reincarnation, the doctrine that the higher part of man does not die with one body but may become clothed in other bodies to work out the results of the actions that he has already performed. Such outworking is thought to proceed under the law of *karma*, by which a man through successive rebirths may learn from his mistakes, repair the evil that he may have done and, by acquiring greater powers and opportunities, reap the benefit of the efforts he has made. Beyond this, in many Indian teachings we find a preoccupation with ways to escape altogether from the wheel of rebirth. At a primitive stage *karma* was often conceived as involving transmigration, by which someone who had behaved in a way unbecoming to the human level would be transformed into a lower animal, so that a cruel man would become a tiger, a greedy one a pig, a furtive one a rat, and so on. This in part caused the feeling for the inviolability of all life that is another general feature of Hinduism. It is carried to an extreme by some sects, such as the Jains, who take extraordinary precautions to avoid harming even a slug, ant or flea.

The development of Indian religious vision may be divided roughly into three periods: the Vedic, the epic and the scholastic.

During the first, which goes back to an oral tradition before the middle of the second millennium B.C., arose the four Vedas, the most ancient Hindu scriptures. Of these earliest was the Rig Veda, a collection of mystical chants and invocations that were afterwards rearranged for ceremonial use in the Yajur and Sama Vedas. The fourth work, the Atharva Veda, is the one most closely related to the subject of this book, because it contains spells for obtaining purely material benefits. It was one of the world's first compendiums of white magic. The final part of the Vedas included the Aranyakas, or Forest Books, and the Upanishads. These last are the philosophical commentaries that form the basis of all later Hindu thought.

From about the seventh century B.C. traditional stories were gathered into the two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The first, the 'Way of Rama', recounts how Sita, the wife of the Indian King Rama, was carried off by Ravana, the fiendish King of Lanka, now called Ceylon; and how Rama, with the help of

Hanuman, regained her. Rama is worshipped by many Hindus as a divine incarnation; at the very least he is regarded as the ideal Hindu ruler, with Sita as his faultless consort, the embodiment of all the virtues that an Indian woman should possess. The Mahabharata, the 'Great War of the Bharats', which contains something like three million words, is the longest poem known. On the surface it records the conflict between the Pandavas and the Kauravas, two branches of the same family; but the whole is a profound allegory on the meaning of life. It uses every literary device ever invented and embraces every type of personage and situation possible in story-telling. The essence of the work can be found in the eighteen chapters collectively known as the Bhagavad Gita, the 'Sacred Song', which is revered as a scripture in itself. There the Pandavas' champion Arjuna is found declaring himself unable to shed the blood of the Kauravas, his kinsmen, preferring indeed to give up his own life for their sake. The Lord Krishna, who has assumed the role of Arjuna's charioteer, teaches him that, though he may apparently destroy the bodies of those opposing him, he cannot touch the spirit, which is without beginning or end. The Gita is a heroic dialogue on the saving power of love and, with a special detachment, the need for participation in outward events.

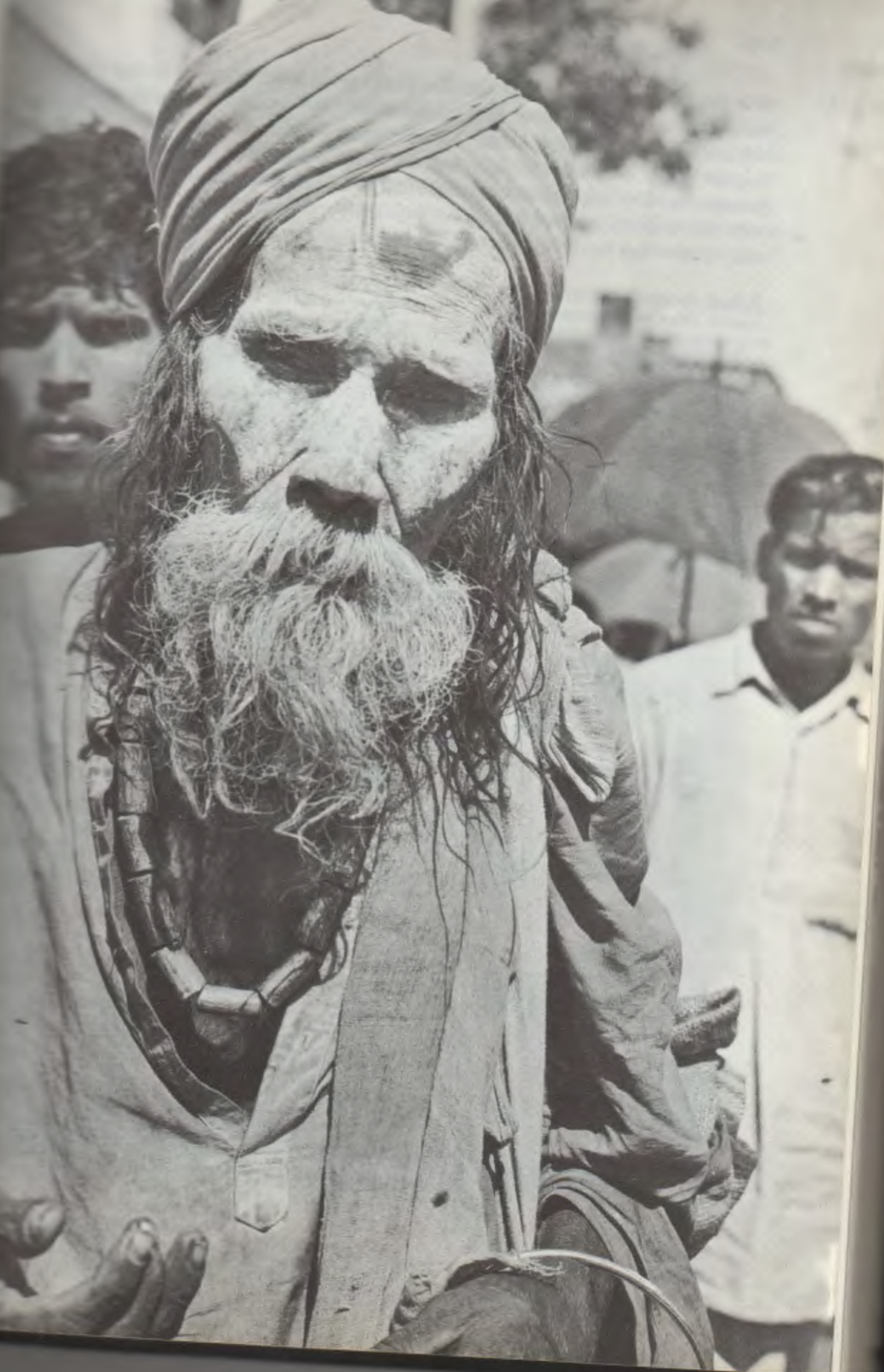
Into this epic period was born Gautama the Buddha, who set himself to purify Hinduism from the accretions with which its truths had become obscured; he taught that, without dependence on priesthoods, rituals or the privilege of caste, each man must strive for enlightenment through his own efforts. An outline of the Buddha's life and message is given later in this book.

Towards the second century A.D. the scholastic period followed when Indian concepts began to be enunciated through highly defined thought-structures called the six systems of philosophy. The most important is the Vedanta, as the consummate unfoldment of the principle expounded by the Upanishads: that the *atman* or spirit is identical with Brahman, the Absolute. All true development in man is, according to the highest Hindu teachings, the process of realizing this identity.

Among the six systems, one has achieved in the West an extensive though a rather dubious fame. This is Yoga. Derived from the Sanskrit *yug*, 'to unite', the word means the science of attaining oneness with the Absolute. Its practices take various forms, adapted to different types of people. Thus Bhakti Yoga concerns devotion; Jnana Yoga, the acquisition of knowledge; Mantra Yoga, the intonation of sacred sounds; Karma Yoga, active life; Raja Yoga, the understanding of oneself from every aspect.

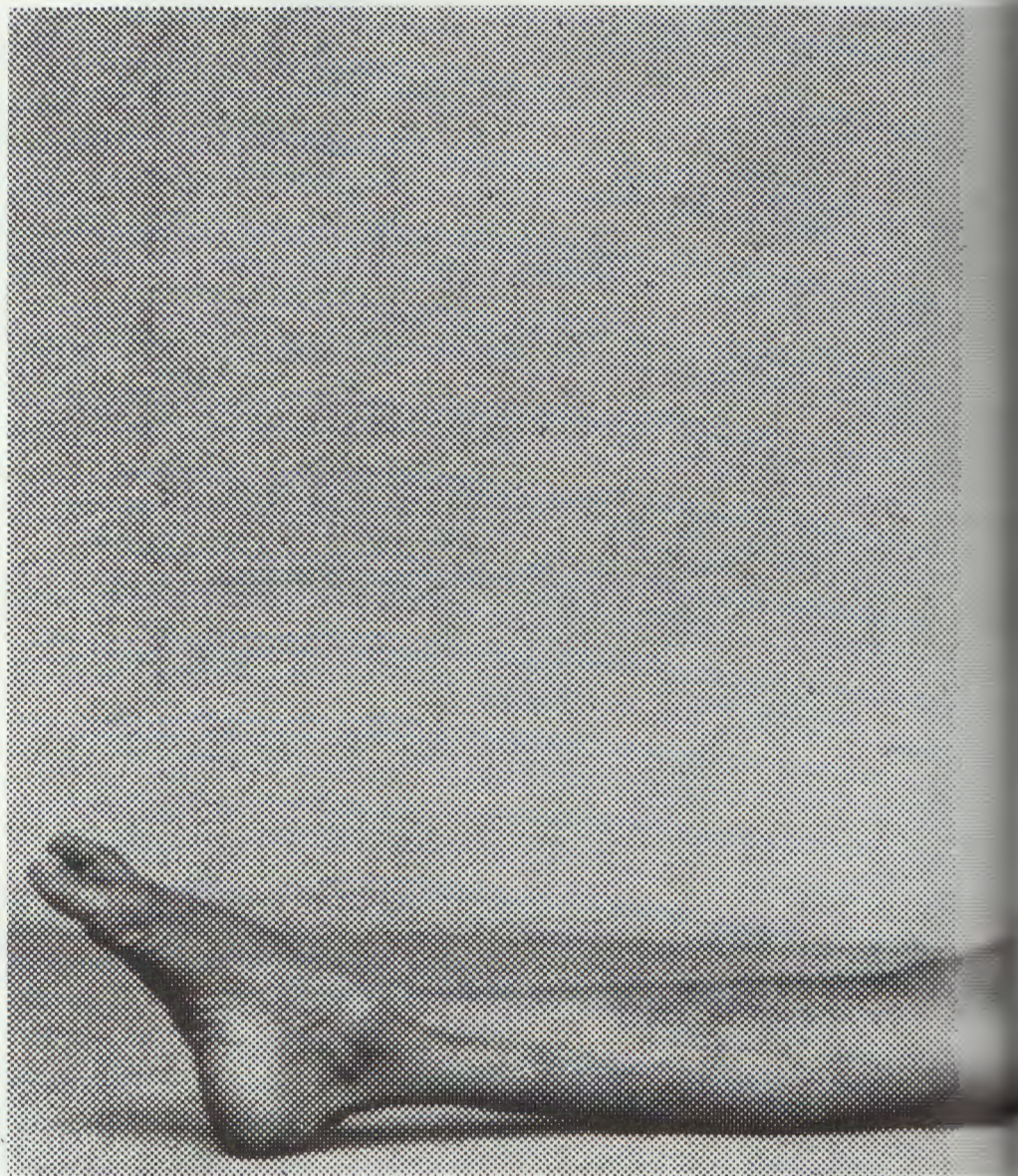
To the Western hearer the word Yoga usually suggests the form called Hatha Yoga, the way of bodily control, which he associates with contortions and mysterious powers. This Yoga, however, has precisely the same object as the other forms. It includes eight steps. Avoiding Sanskrit words, we may say that the first two, which ensure the ethical preparation essential to all typical Indian teachings, are to refrain from wrong kinds of behaviour and to pursue right kinds. The third step is physical: the mastery of postures. Hundreds are known, each more complex

Opposite A *sadhu* or holy man, whose smeared face reminds him that his body must return to ashes



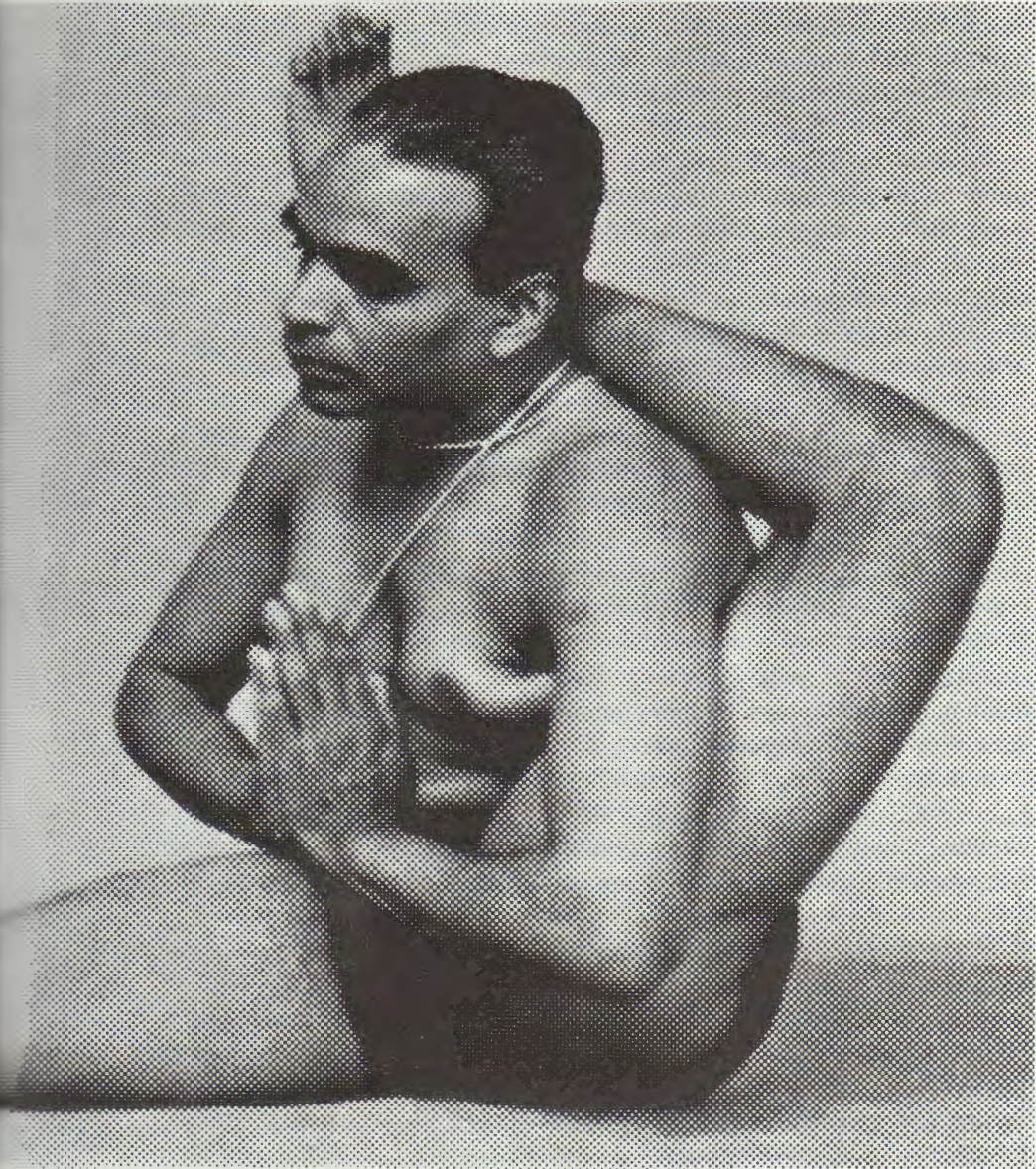
than the last, but the two most vital are the lotus position, a way of sitting erect with the legs folded, and standing upside down. The fourth step is also mainly physical: the control of breathing. All the further steps are inward, and in broad English terms they may be described as withdrawing attention from external perceptions; directing it upon its internal object, namely that Self which is identical with the Absolute; becoming absorbed into that; and finally achieving with it the unity that brings total illumination.

B. K. S. Iyengar, a genuine Hatha yogi, in the *eka pada shirshasana* or one-foot-behind-head posture. Peace of expression and freedom from strain are essential to such exercises



I have dwelt upon these steps because I wish to record the true practice from whose misuse derives one evil engendered by that spirit of negation against which, throughout this book, I speak as clearly as I can: in this case it is fakirism. This occurs when the object of Hatha Yoga has been forgotten and contortions are performed for their own sake. A fakir may, for instance, keep his limbs outstretched until they wither, and he has to be carried about like a rotting log. Occult powers stimulated by perversities of this kind have no value for the real development of man.

A relatively harmless, though spiritually pointless, form of fakirism is conjuring.



The best-known example is the rope trick, in which a rope is said to be thrown up into the air by the fakir and climbed by a boy who disappears at the top and then suddenly reappears upon the ground. Strangely enough, although almost everybody has heard of this, one never seems to meet any reputable person who has actually seen it done. When the present Duke of Windsor was about to tour India as Prince of Wales, the country was scoured for anyone who would perform it, but not one could be discovered. The *Asiatic Review*, Vol. XXXII, No. 110, for April 1936, contains an interesting report of a paper read by Major G. H. Rooke, embodying various accounts of the rope trick, which were later discussed by the audience. That was the period when it was popularly attributed to 'mass hypnosis', but doubt has since been cast upon the possibility of producing an identical hallucination simultaneously in the minds of a crowd. The least unsatisfactory explanation I know was supplied by a barrister, himself a hypnotist, conjuror and member of the Magic Circle, from the report of a witness whom he had every reason to consider truthful. This observer added one notable factor to the usual account: the fakir had in front of him a basket of snakes. Apparently he did not throw the rope in the air but hauled it up from under his legs in a series of jerks, the rope being fairly thick and containing short rigid sections of bamboo or metal, which he could fix together with a deft movement, until at last the boy climbed to the top and, while the attention of the onlookers was concentrated on the snakes, jumped down behind. In *Harry Price: The Biography of a Ghost-Hunter*, Paul Tabori succinctly retells the story of how Price persuaded the conjuror 'Karachi' to demonstrate the trick in the English countryside. This was done during a snowstorm and was not a great success. 'Karachi' offered the secret of the trick to Price for £50, which Price declined to pay. Instead, he made a rope himself that, held up one way, could be coiled but, held the other way up, became as stiff as a rod. This clearly supports the explanation quoted from the barrister above.

I feel I must not conclude this section without mentioning the cult among young Western people today for adopting the externals of Indian religious life without always knowing what they mean.

Every day in London now you may see some young man swathed in a saintly robe, held at the waist by a pyjama-string and partly covered with the jacket of a British naval uniform surmounted by epaulettes; his head displays a redskin hair-band, and his feet are shuffled into Persian slippers manufactured in Northampton; round his neck hang ropes of 'love beads', Maltese crosses and oddments from the Portobello Road. Not long ago a large group of young people gathered publicly to intone the Hindu sacred syllable AUM, though with little notion how it should be pronounced. The sincerity that inspired many of them was no doubt commendable, but the objective result of their effort to produce a word of power, such as might dematerialize an elephant at twenty paces, must surely have been nil.

Activities like these give point to the affirmation I shall make at the end of this book, that the young, having lost faith in Western forms of religion, are allowing the vacuum to be filled by forces that they do not understand, occasionally perhaps benign but often dangerous and sometimes destructive in the last degree.

Central America

At about the same time as a civilization was developing in the Indus Valley, one was taking shape in southern Mexico and the countries adjacent to it. There were a number of races in these territories: Huastecs, Olmecs, Zapotecs, Mixtecs, Toltecs, Chichimecs and others, whose cultures differed widely, but they traded together and, from totemism, gradually built up a pantheon which merged into or included one another's gods.

Of all these races that of the Mayas was the most advanced, and it survived longer than any of the others; for it was not finally subdued by the Spaniards until 1660, 140 years after the fall of the Aztec capital, which was later to become Mexico City.

As with the Egyptians, the life of the nation centred round its religious establishments. Some of these were vast and, again in the manner of the Egyptians, their biggest buildings were pyramids, of which there were a great number and one, at least, that rivals in size the Great Pyramid of Cheops.

The earliest places at which they erected these great monuments were Copán in Honduras and Tikal in Guatemala. For a reason unknown, but probably because the poor soil had been worked out, every few hundred years the whole nation migrated, and in the tenth century A.D. they settled in Yucatán, where – at Uxmal and Chichén Itzá – as builders they accomplished their supreme achievements. At the latter place the temples, pyramids, palaces, ball-courts and observatory cover an area of over eight square miles.

Very early in their civilization their priests became accomplished astrologers. For a reason still undiscovered, they dated their calendar from the year we call 3113 B.C. In the matter of Creation they were more fortunate than ourselves, who have inherited the week established by Jehovah, for their god did the job in four days; so, until the arrival of the Spaniards, for them every fifth day was a Sunday.

Twenty days made up the Maya month, and eighteen months, plus the odd five days – when everyone stayed at home because this period was considered unlucky – the year. It should be remarkable that, even in their early days at Copán, stone calendars show that their astronomer priests measured the length of the solar year with a degree of accuracy slightly greater than that of the Gregorian calendar we now use.

They also used a 260-day ceremonial cycle of twenty numbered days combined with the numbers 1 to 13. The two cycles ran in harmony and a day named in both did not repeat itself until fifty-two years later. The coming of this event always carried great perturbation, as they feared it portended the end of the world. As soon as it was safely past, they set swiftly about increasing the height of their pyramids by several further layers, until they migrated once again.

As time went on, four gods appear to have become paramount throughout Mexico and the countries adjacent to it.

Huitzilopochtli, who lived in the south, was the son of a goddess named Coatlicue, who wore snakes for a skirt. She already had a daughter and 400 sons. When she

again became pregnant, her daughter believed she had been dishonoured, so urged her brothers to murder their mother; but, speaking from the womb, Huitzilopochtli calmed her down. When he was born, he arrived already wearing armour and armed. A vicious personality, he promptly slew his sister and his 400 brothers. He was the god of war and storms, and so, on the arrival of the ferocious Aztecs, he was enthusiastically adopted by them, and on the flat top of the great pyramid in Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital, innumerable human sacrifices were offered up to him.

Tezcatlipoca was the Sun god and lived in the north. He was feared greatly because he brought drought, which was a perpetual curse to the Mexicans, since their soil was shallow and water could not lie on the limestone beneath it. He, too, was a most unpleasant person, as he was also associated with the Moon and used to wander about at night, appearing as a giant and carrying his head in his hand. He took delight in frightening people to death. It was to appease him that every year a scapegoat for the Emperor was chosen: a handsome, well-born young man who lived for a year in the luxury befitting a king, and was then slaughtered. He was the lord of the great complex of temples known as Teotihuacán, thirty-two miles from Mexico City, that had been taken by the Aztecs from the Toltecs. There are pyramids there to both the Moon and the Sun. The latter is the mightiest

The extended design of a Maya vase, showing warriors, or soot-covered priests before a ceremonial bath



of all the pyramids in the New World, and it is said that on one occasion 20,000 men and women were slaughtered on it in one day.

I am very rarely subject to psychic impressions, but when I was taken down to see the so-called treasure chambers under the Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacán, although I was with a number of people and these dungeons were lit by electricity, I was suddenly seized with such a sense of evil that I could not get out of the place quickly enough.

On the other hand, while I was staying in Luxor, I went down into the tomb of Thotmes III, the Napoleon of Egypt. It is the deepest of all the tombs in the Valley of the Kings. The sarcophagus chamber is 300 feet underground, and very few people other than professional archaeologists ever descend to it, as it is unlit, the ceiling split and the staircases broken. Yet down there I felt no trace of evil; only anger and some perturbation when my filthy Arab guide threatened to make off with the only candle unless I handed him, there and then, a handsome tip.

Every Mexican pyramid was truncated, with a small, flat-roofed temple on top.

The Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacán



In front of this lay a smaller than life-sized stone figure of a man wearing a flat round hat, with his knees raised up, and leaning backwards on his elbows. In his lap reposed a small, square platter. The figure was known as Chac-Mool, and the method of sacrifice was to throw the victim down on this figure, after which the priest slit the live chest open with an obsidian knife, plunged his hand in, dragged out the steaming heart dripping with blood, and held it on high.

Tlaloc, who lived in the east, was the god of the mountains, rain and springs. He controlled four types of water; only one of them helped growth, the others caused blight among cereals, turned to frost or destroyed fruit. His cult was the most terrible of all. He demanded that children, and particularly babies that were being fed at the breast, should be sacrificed to him, and afterwards his priests ate their flesh.

Even the Mexican Venus was a revolting personality. She was the patroness of adultery and filth.

Quetzalcoatl, who lived in the west, was, alone of all the Mexican deities, worthy of veneration. He was the master of life, the civilizer, the patron of all arts; and he is of very special interest because he is said to have been a golden-haired white man.

The legend was that he came up out of the sea on the Atlantic coast, bringing knowledge to the Indians of many things about which they had not previously known. The Toltecs made him their king. For many years he ruled them wisely and justly, but his nation was then defeated by the Chichimecs. He led the remnants of his people away to Yucatan. There he bade them farewell and sailed away to the east on a raft of snakes; but he had promised to return and bring them lasting happiness.

This is supposed to have occurred late in the tenth century A.D., and so strongly did this belief take root among the people that when Cortés arrived, 450 years later, the Indians believed his golden-bearded lieutenant, Pedro de Alvarado, to be Quetzalcoatl come again.

The belief in the god's return having been so strong, he may well, in fact, have been a real historical personage. It was towards the end of the tenth century that the Vikings discovered North America and temporarily established a settlement in what they named the Vineland. Is it not possible that one of their long ships was caught in a tempest, swept south and wrecked in the Caribbean, and that the Norseman, christened Quetzalcoatl by the Toltecs, was the only survivor to get ashore? A golden-haired white man, probably over six feet tall, against the Indians' average height of only five feet one inch, would certainly have been taken for a god. And later, old and weary, he might well have had a ship built, manned it with a crew of slaves and made the attempt to return to his own country, but had again been wrecked, and this time drowned.

By the time Cortés arrived the Aztecs had conquered the whole country. They were a barbarous nation of warriors who had come down from the north only toward the end of the twelfth century. In 1325 they founded their capital, Tenochtitlán, on a big island in Lake Texcoco. From there they sallied forth, subdued all

the other races and exacted tribute from them, in both goods and many thousands of captives to feed their terrible gods with blood.

The popular belief that Cortés conquered Mexico with a few score Spanish foot soldiers and a handful of horsemen is, of course, far from the truth. The Aztecs were so loathed and dreaded by the other races that they welcomed the Spaniards as deliverers from the terrible tyranny by which they were being bled white. They furnished him with supplies, thousands of porters to carry them and a great army of warriors that he led into battle.

Yet this does not detract from Cortés's well-deserved glory. He was not only a fine soldier and an able administrator, but a truly great man. Today, his memory is execrated by the Mexicans; yet they owe him an immeasurable debt. Before his arrival they had to live almost entirely on maize, fish and fruit, and these could only be baked or boiled. There was no grease for frying, no milk, no cheese; there were no cattle, goats, pigs, horses, until Cortés imported herds from Europe. To him they owe the plough and the wheeled vehicle, and even potatoes, which he brought for them from Peru. He was, moreover, in some ways a very humane man, and protected the Indians from his brutal soldiery.

When the Spaniards entered Tenochtitlán, they could hardly believe their eyes. The Aztecs had made it the most splendid city in Mexico, with broad streets, fine squares, and palaces that had balconies ablaze with flowers. The richer inhabitants wore gorgeous garments and great feathered headdresses. There were beautiful carvings in jade, wonderful jewels, gold-plated weapons with intricate engravings. Bernal Diaz wrote of the city, 'There is so much to think of that I do not know how to describe it, things that have never been heard or seen before or even dreamt about.'

In addition to the pyramids and the pre-dawn ceremonies every morning to ensure that the sun would rise again, there is much that makes it difficult to believe that the Mexican civilization owed nothing to those of the Mediterranean. A similarity can even be found in the Mexican hieroglyphics to the symbols for the Phoenician alphabet, and they are the only two alphabets in the world based on vocal sounds instead of picture writing. Unfortunately, much of the history of this remarkable people was lost, because the fanatical Catholic priests burnt nearly all their beautifully illustrated books, so only their scripture, the Popol Vuh, and a few codices have survived. But one thing seems clear. While the pyramids of Egypt were raised by priests of the Light, the blood-soaked ones of Mexico were altars to the Power of Darkness.

Near Oaxaca there rises a height, surrounded by deep valleys, called Monte Alban. The whole of its top is a great plateau with, sunken in it, a vast oblong arena along whose sides could be seated 100,000 people. In it there are temples, and in some places, at ground level, the sides are shored up by what might be taken for rows of tombstones. There were some in one corner that I noticed with particular interest. The figures carved on them represented many races. In addition to several hook-nosed, long-headed Indians, there were others unmistakably of Aryans, Chinese and Negroes. Monte Alban dates from 500 B.C. Could there be

clearer proof that the race who made it were in communication with Europe, Asia and Africa?

With such oceans of blood being split by powerful priest sorcerers to feed the dark gods, it may be wondered how Cortés and his little band of Spaniards escaped the death spells cast against them. That they did so was probably due to their complete conviction that pagans could not harm them. They were armoured by their unshakeable belief in the goodness of Jesus Christ and in his protection.

Zoroastrianism

This is one of the great religions of the world; for, although through the centuries the number of its followers has shrunk, its teachings had a very considerable influence on others, on Greek philosophy and in the ritual and practice of magic. It has gone through many vicissitudes, but in its most recent form it is still followed today by the Parsees of India and by a limited number of rural communities in Iran.

Although Persia lay on the trade route between Chaldea and India, there is no record of a civilization developing there until the ninth century B.C. The early Persians then lived on the mountains of Kurdistan; and the Medes, who in course of time coalesced with them to form one nation, occupied the plain.

Late as the Persian civilization was in its arising compared with others, it was destined not only to animate a mighty empire that fought and defeated Rome, but to last right up to modern times, and to produce a literature and an art almost unrivalled in Asia. This civilization blossomed very swiftly. To appreciate the vastness of the Palace of the King of Kings at Persopolis, its ruins must be seen, and in excellence the bas-reliefs are surpassed only by those of the Greeks.

Twice in her history Persia has been conquered and for a period occupied by a semi-barbarous race; but – unlike Egypt, Assyria, Crete, Rome and Byzantium – she never lost her identity. She absorbed her conquerors and went on to new triumphs, producing the most beautiful rugs in the world, magnificent mosques and palaces, exquisite paintings and gardens in which a great number of the flowers we now enjoy were first cultivated. Her armies invaded India and despoiled her of her finest jewels, but in the squares of Teheran, Isfahan and Shiraz the statues are not of her soldiers; they are of her poets.

Turning now to the early times of this remarkable people, the god of their kings was Ahura Mazda, the 'War Lord'. He had six attendant beneficent immortals, representing order, good mind, desirable dominion, devotion, wholesomeness and immortality. He also had two sons: Spenta Mainyu, the spirit of truth and life, and Angra Mainyu, the spirit of destruction and death. The former was called Atar by the people. He rode in the chariot of the Sun, and they worshipped him in the form of fire. To him they looked for comfort, guidance, virility and a paradise where he would receive the virtuous. In addition to these there was a pantheon of minor gods derived from Babylonia and the valley of the Indus, while the Medes had priests who were known as the Magi and performed special fire rituals. Oxen were sacrificed to the gods, and during the ceremonies priests and

congregation all drank a potent liquor fermented from the juice of the *haoma* plant. The shed blood was, as usual, believed to strengthen the life force of the celebrants, and their intoxication to be a foretaste of the joys of immortality.

Zoroaster lived, it is said, for seventy-seven years, somewhere between 630 and 540 B.C., and so he was the earliest of the four great sages of pre-Christian times. He was born in north-eastern Persia, a territory then known as Khorezm, a part of Baluchistan, inhabited by nomadic tribes.

According to the legend which grew up after his death, at the age of twenty he left the paternal roof in search of the man who was 'most in love with rectitude and most given to feeding the poor'. He fed animals and the wretched, tended fires and lived in silence in a cave for seven years. When he was thirty, each of the archangels made a revelation to him that gave him power over various elements of the cosmos. He then set out to preach, and to destroy demons. Upon this the evil god Angra Mainyu arrived and offered him a kingdom if he would stop his activities, but Zoroaster resisted this temptation and declared that, with the help of Mazda, he would vanquish the Prince of Darkness.

A much more probable account is that he was a man of some wealth, with herds, and well-educated; that his mission was not only an ethical but also a practical one, in that he urged his countrymen to give up their uncertain nomadic ways and, instead, settle down as farmers. His denunciation of their polytheism and worship of demons at first met strong opposition, but he succeeded in converting King Hystaspes, at whose Court he spent many years, and his daughter, Pouruchista, married Jamasp, one of Hystaspes's ministers.

Zoroaster rejected all the gods except Ahura Mazda and his two sons. He abolished blood sacrifices and the drinking of the fermented *haoma* and made fire the sole object of worship. His teachings are enshrined in the Zend Avesta, which was compiled several centuries after his death; although one part of it, the *Gathas*, is directly ascribed to him.

As a result of Zoroaster's teaching, Ahura Mazda became merged with his good son, now called Ormazd, who dwelt in Light, while the evil son, called Ahriman, dwelt in Darkness. These two principals waged eternal war, and it was taught that a spark of each spirit was embodied in every man. After death the soul was weighed in a balance and judged accordingly. If Light had triumphed, the soul would go to Heaven; if Darkness, to Hell. But, in due course, the world would be consumed in a mighty fire, and the souls of the damned would be purged in it, so they would share in the universal resurrection.

This weighing of the soul of the dead suggests an Egyptian origin, as does the symbol for Ahura Mazda, which was a winged disc or head, reminiscent of Horus.

As fire was the symbol of Light, there were no devils with pitchforks in the Zoroastrian Hell. It more closely resembled purgatory, and was simply the 'outer darkness' mentioned by St Matthew. Moreover, according to the *Avesta*, a mortal sinner condemned to death by the high priest escaped punishment in the hereafter. It will be recalled that the pitiless St Paul (in I Corinthians v. 5) demanded that sinners should be delivered to Satan – that is, be put to death – in order that



A Persian pectoral: the twins Ormazd, Lord of Light, and Ahriman, Lord of Darkness, emerging from the shoulders of Infinity

their souls might be saved at the Last Judgment. It was upon this doctrine that, many centuries later, the Holy Inquisition sent thousands of men and women to be burnt at the stake.

As Zoroastrianism spread south and west in Persia, it was adopted by the Magi. They were regarded as wise men, because they had inherited much of the knowledge of the Babylonians and, possibly, the Egyptians. They were highly skilled in the interpretation of dreams, in astrology and magic; hence our word 'magician'.

Zoroaster was never deified, but the beliefs that he initiated have survived through the ages. They are found in the Dead Sea scrolls of the Essenes, a passage from one of which reads: 'He created man to have dominion over the earth and made for him two spirits, that he might walk with them until the time of his visitation; these are the spirits of truth and error. In the abode of light are the origins of truth and from the source of darkness are the origins of error.'

Those beliefs were inherited by the Gnostics and later by the alchemists. They played a major part in formulating the conception that every happening in the Universe, and act of every individual, can be attributed to either the Power of Light or the Power of Darkness.

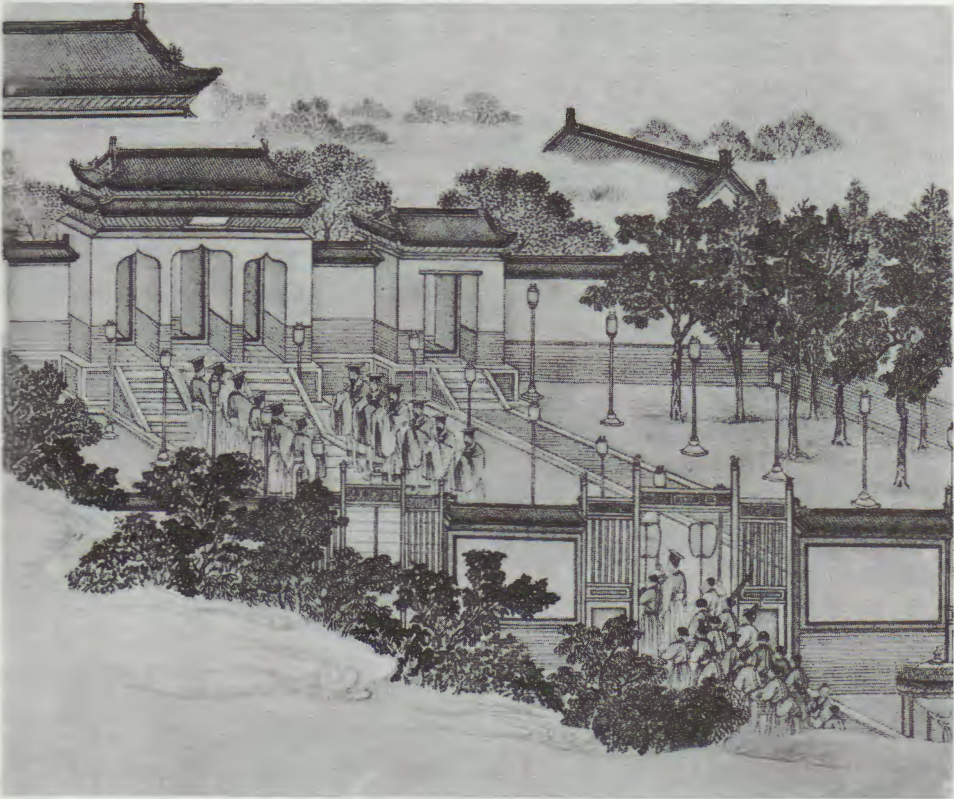
Confucianism

While Lao-tze was still living, another of the four great sages of the pre-Christian era, K'ung Fu-tzu or Confucius, was born in China. It is said that the two met and talked together; but this is most unlikely because, in 551 B.C., when Confucius was a newborn babe, Lao-tze was already over fifty years old.

As a young man Confucius was poor, but so eager for learning that, we are told, being unable to afford candles, he sat out on winter nights, huddled in his padded coat, and studied by the reflected light of the snow.

At that time China was united under the Emperor only theoretically. The powerful barons frequently made war on one another and taxed their people cruelly to support their armies, so poverty and starvation were rife in the land. Confucius dedicated his life to relieving the sufferings of the people.

Although a religious man, he made no attempt to found a religion, but contented himself with condemning superstitious practices and, until comparatively late in life, simply talking to the more intelligent students about how the state of things



A Confucian temple

might be bettered. In fact he conducted himself in very much the same way as, at that very time, the philosophers of Athens were doing on the other side of the world.

The State was then administered by aristocrats who were often ignorant and cared little for the welfare of the masses. Confucius held that *the right to govern depended on the ability to make the governed happy*. (I print this in italics because it has a context in the conclusions reached at the end of this book.) And that depended on virtue and ability.



The great sacred books of China were the Shu King, the Shih King, the Yi King and the Li Ki. Confucius set a high value on these and, in the *Analects* attributed to him, commented upon them at length. His own writings consist of the *Khun-Khiu*, which is a history of his own State for 242 years, and the *Hsiao King*, or *Classic of Filial Piety*, which in the course of time was to have an immense influence on the Chinese people.

Confucius died in 479 B.C. In 213 B.C., the Emperor Khin had all the sacred books that could be found seized and burnt, but fortunately enough portions of them were hidden by scholars for them later to be reconstructed for posterity.

'Virtue,' Confucius maintained, 'is to love men. And wisdom is to understand men. The truly virtuous man, desiring to establish himself, seeks to establish others; desiring success for himself, he helps others to succeed. To find in the wishes of one's own heart the principle of his conduct towards others is the method of true virtue.'

The sage did not himself succeed in worldly life, for he never received the high government appointment that was his ambition. But he was instrumental in securing posts of importance for many of his young followers and, in due course, his ideas were responsible for changing the whole system of selecting ministers. Previously the governing class had consisted entirely of the nobility, appointed by the favour of the Emperor, without regard for qualifications. Afterwards, for over 2,000 years, China was run by able men mostly, who owed nothing to birth or wealth. Many of them had been born in poverty. No one could become a Mandarin who had not passed out high in the examinations.

Confucius laid down Eight Steps for 'maintaining one's clear character, loving the people and abiding in the highest good': (1) investigating the nature of things; (2) extending knowledge; (3) maintaining sincerity of the will; (4) rectifying the mind; (5) cultivating the personal life; (6) regulating the family; (7) ordering the state; and (8) bringing peace to the world.

The basis of his doctrine was that one should practise absolute sincerity in all things; that one's conduct towards others must be irreproachable; that to achieve happiness one must begin by respecting and loving one's parents, and out of this would grow love of all mankind.

The 'Way' or 'Great Learning' did not become nation-wide until the eleventh century A.D.; but, from the beginning, it had great influence on the emperors and their courts, and as early as 136 B.C. it was proclaimed the State doctrine. In the latter part of his life, Confucius spent ten years travelling through the country, at times in considerable danger, spreading his beliefs. They were further spread by the writings of his grandson, Tzu Szu, and Mencius, his greatest disciple.

His urging men to acquire knowledge and use it to combat abuses and evil was the antithesis of Lao-tze's teaching that happiness can be achieved by emptying the mind and striving for complete passivity. Both doctrines had a strong appeal for opposite mentalities among the literate classes of China. The ignorant masses

continued to be obsessed by superstition and put their faith in the magic of the priest-sorcerers and witches. That naturally coloured, to a considerable extent, the life of the whole nation. Hence the many precautions against demons, such as the turned-up corners of the roofs of Chinese buildings, the zigzag doorways designed to prevent evil spirits from entering, and the idols in every Chinese home, to which rich and poor alike ceremoniously made their daily bow. But, in this last, we have at least some of the most beautiful works of art that have ever been created.

Had the teachings of Confucius spread among all peoples and been accepted by them, it would have led to an end of evil in this world.

Buddhism

In 563 B.C., twelve years before the birth of Confucius in China, Gautama Buddha – perhaps the profoundest of the four great pre-Christian sages – was born in the part of northern India that is now Nepal. His given name was Siddhartha; Gautama he derived from his father, who was King of the Gautama people.

As a prince he was of the Kshatriya or warrior caste, but while still a young man he was attracted to a non-worldly life. He married a beautiful girl, who gave him a son; he lived in great luxury and his every whim was gratified. Yet these things could not hold him. In his twenty-ninth year he renounced home and comforts to seek the 'supreme peace of *nirvana*'.

He first sought instruction from two religious teachers, then he tried extreme ascetic practices for a period of six years. Both proved unsatisfactory, so he returned to a natural regime and sat down under a huge Bo tree in profound meditation. The conclusion he reached was that suffering is caused by ignorance, and it can be removed by right living and enlightenment. Thus he became the Buddha, or 'Enlightened One'; and, starting in Benares, he spent the remaining forty-five years of his life as a wandering teacher.

At that time the dominant elements in Hindu religion taught that the most effective way of terminating the perpetual cycle of birth, death and rebirth created by the law of *karma* was through the performance of expensive and complicated rituals by the Brahman priests. The philosophical development of Vedic literature, through the Upanishads, had already brought about a reaction against this, so Gautama was listened to with respect and eagerness.

He repudiated the gods and declared every individual to be responsible for his own salvation, without any priestly assistance. He condemned the two extremes: a profitless life of indulgence and sensual pleasure, and an equally profitless one of self-mortification. He urged people to take the 'Middle Path', by which they might gain insight, knowledge, tranquility and enlightenment; and stated that enlightenment consisted in realization of the Four Noble Truths. These were:

1. The truth of pain: birth is pain, old age is pain, death is pain, union with the unpleasant is pain, separation from the pleasant is pain, not obtaining what one wishes is pain.
2. The truth of the cause of pain: the craving that leads to rebirth, accompanied

by delight and passion, rejoicing at finding the delight here and there; namely, the craving of lust, for existence, for non-existence.

3. The truth of the cessation of pain; the complete cessation of that craving – its forsaking, relinquishment, release and detachment from it.
4. The truth of the way that leads to the cessation of pain: the Noble Eightfold Path – right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

The object of this, of course, was to recognize the suffering inherent in existence and to provide a way of deliverance from it by rightness of conduct and inner discipline; the good being *nirvana*, a transcendent state free from craving, suffering and sorrow.

Gautama formed an order of monks. It removed all restrictions of caste, placed upon all members the same requirements, denounced extreme ascetic practices and emphasized moral principles. His monks wore yellow robes and their equipment consisted of an alms bowl, a toothpick, and a razor with which they kept their heads shaven. They listened to the religious discourse of their seniors and fasted after the noonday meal. Their preaching to laymen enjoined abstention from taking life, drinking intoxicants, lying, stealing and unchastity. It emphasized the virtues of good relations between parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants.

In the third century B.C. the great Indian ruler Ashoka became converted to Buddhism, and spread it far and wide; but after some 800 years it began to decline. The Brahmins again got the upper hand. Hinduism, with its worship of many gods, again dominated the great majority of the people.

But Buddhism was very far from being a dying faith. Ashoka had sent a *bhikkhu* named Mahendra as a missionary to Ceylon, and he was made welcome there by the Sinhalese King Tissa, who became a convert. Mahendra's sister followed him, bringing with her a branch of the Bo tree under which Gautama had received enlightenment. This was ceremoniously planted, and still flourishes today, probably the oldest tree in the world.

The Sinhalese, a pale race that had come down from India in the second half of the eleventh century B.C., developed into a remarkable people. Their system of irrigation rivalled that of Egypt, and one of their artificial tanks, 4,500 square feet, is still working. It was a land of jewels, which they traded with the Romans. Their palaces and art were of the highest standard, and the monuments they raised to the Lord Buddha are worthy of the epithet 'mighty'. Some of them, called *dagobas*, are huge domes rising from the ground with, inside, a small chamber containing sacred relics. The rest of them are solid brick, and it has been calculated that in the largest there are as many bricks as would be needed to build a European city to house 80,000 people.

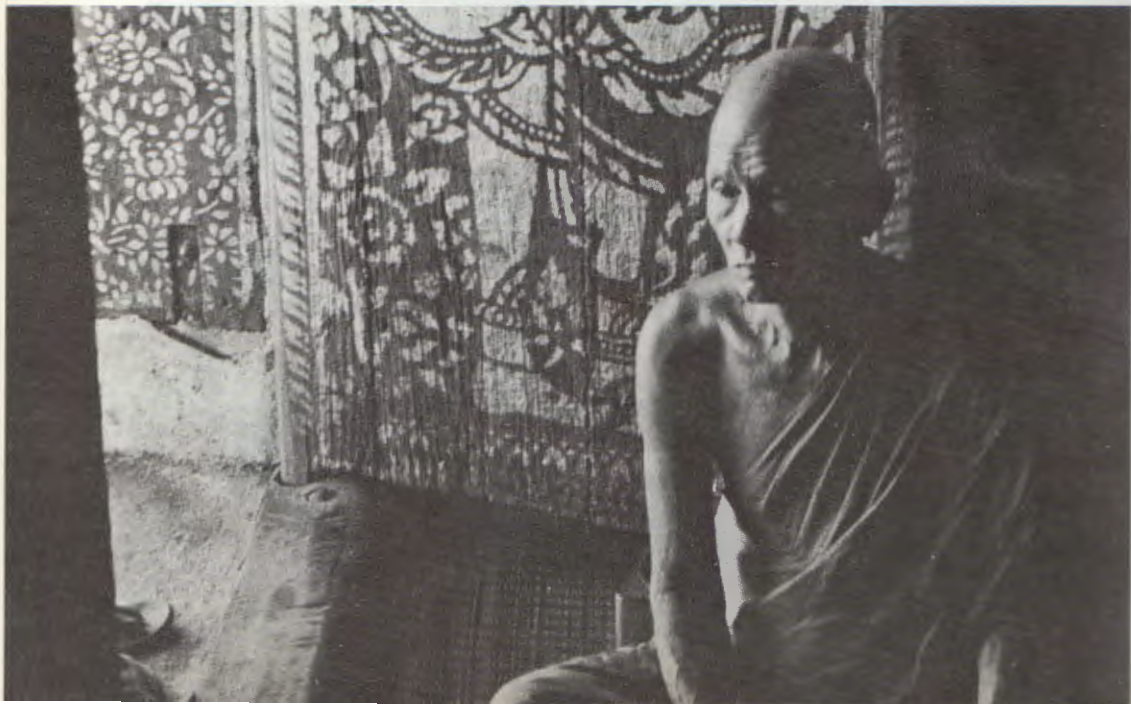
Ceylon continues to be one of the great strongholds of Buddhism, and the beautiful Temple of the Tooth, at Kandy, is one of the most famous shrines in the Buddhist world.

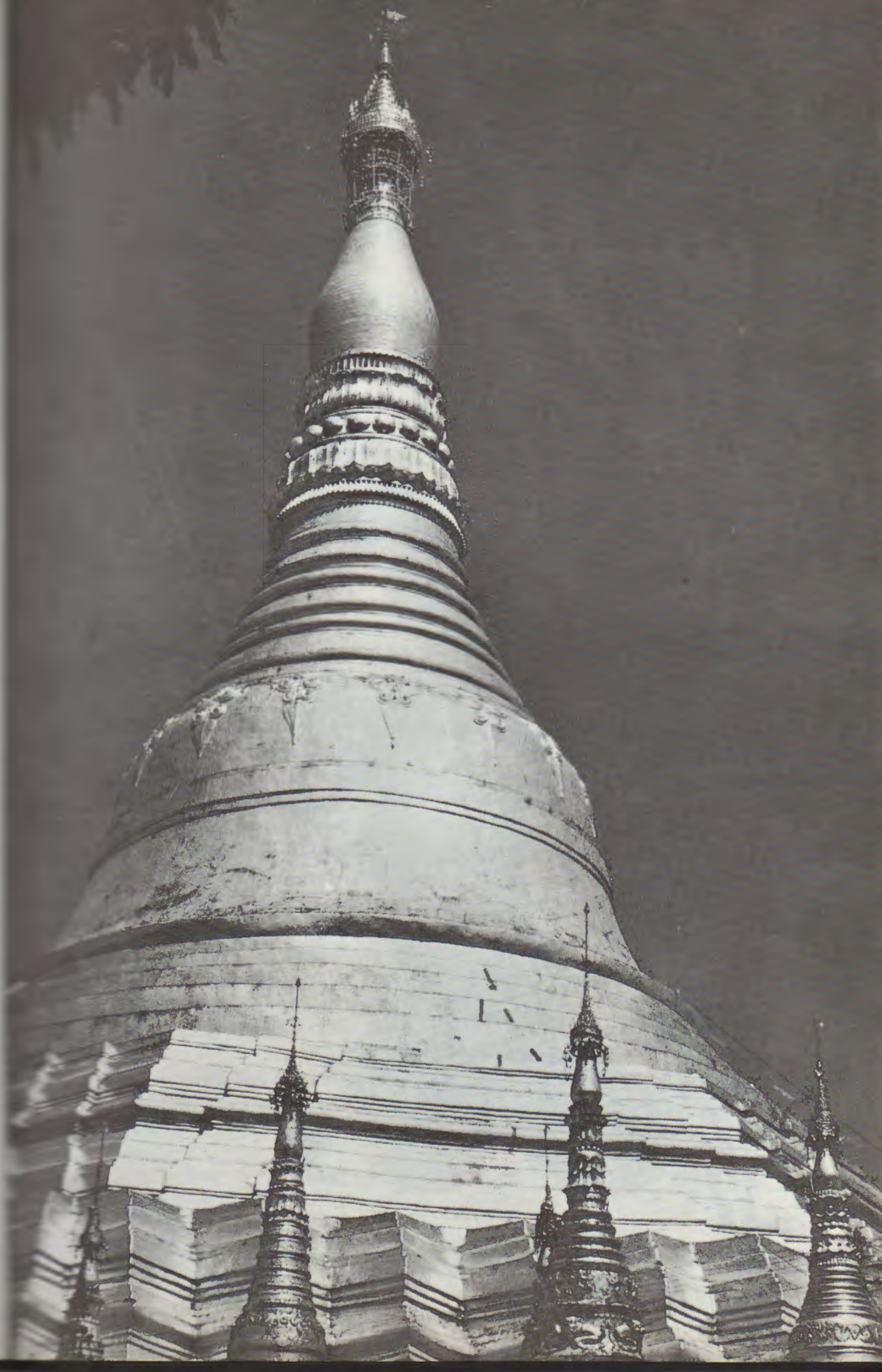
Cambodia is another great Buddhist stronghold. The marvel of Angkor Wat needs no description. In Bangkok, the capital of neighbouring Thailand, Buddha's temples are no ruins. There are scores of them, and their newly gilded pinnacles glitter in the sun. Across the great peninsula, in Rangoon, the immense Shawa Dagon rears its central spire to the sky. Far away to the south, in Java, Borneo and Sumatra, hundreds of thousands of men have laboured to do the Lord Buddha honour. Equally far away to the north, Buddhism has long shared with their native Shintoism the devotion of the Japanese. I recall seeing one seated statue of the sage at Nara that was eighty feet in height. It had been cast in one piece of bronze in the year that William the Conqueror invaded England, and worshippers were still kneeling in prayer before it.

The whole of East Asia, and far into the interior of the great continent, became the Buddha's province. The Chinese were ever a most courteous people. They listened with respect to the missionaries from every Christian denomination, as well as to Zoroastrians, Hindus, Jains, Mithraists and Mohammedans; but the Buddhists alone succeeded in making converts in any number. By the second century B.C., Confucius had to share roughly equally with Gautama the devotion of Chinese millions. Tibet became another of his strongholds, and the Dalai Lama a 'living god' who spoke for him on earth. The latest figures tell us that there are over 168,000,000 living followers of the Buddha, and more than 300,000 of them live in the Americas.

Lao-tze, Zoroaster, Confucius and Gautama Buddha brought new light to mankind. They taught that one must not rely on a self-created Big Brother vaguely resident above the clouds. That it was futile to rely on the promises of priests that, if a man said on his death-bed that he was sorry for his sins, all would be well with him in the hereafter. That he must nurture the spark of spirit that was in himself until it became a pure flame. That only so could he become one with God.

Opposite The Shawa Dagon pagoda, Rangoon *Below* A Thai Buddhist monk







PART 4

Beliefs in the Past 2,500 Years

Introductory

In considering this period, the most suitable people to start with are the Greeks, because not only did their gods, or others copied from them, dominate the Mediterranean and the Near East for a thousand years, but the Greeks themselves contributed more to the thinking of the modern world than any other people.

But the saga of civilization in Greece is divided into two entirely separate stages, so that the Greeks of the classical period, who made Athens forever famous, did not believe that the great buildings of the past had been erected by their ancestors, but thought them to be the work of a race of mythical giants.

Greece

It was in Crete that the pre-Hellenic civilization arose, well before 2000 B.C., and it reached its zenith about 400 years later. The Cretans were the first great maritime people. They traded with Egypt and Syria and as far west as the Pillars of Hercules; perhaps even further. They may well have been the first people to cross the Atlantic to America. After all, the Pharaoh Necho sent an expedition that sailed out of the Mediterranean down the west coast of Africa, wintered somewhere south of the equator, sowed corn, garnered it in the spring and, after two years, arrived home by way of the Red Sea. Compared with such a voyage, one to Mexico or Brazil would have been a much lesser undertaking. And the great galleys of the ancients were bigger and better ships than those of Columbus.

Be that as it may, the Cretans dominated the Aegean and had numerous colonies on the mainland. The greatest of these was Mycenae, in southern Greece. It was there that Agamemnon and others of the heroes lived, and from nearby Tiryns that they sailed to besiege Troy.

It is in the ruins of these citadels on the mainland that Cretan architecture is seen at its most impressive. Walls and gateways are formed from huge slabs of stone, some of which weigh up to seventy tons. It cannot be wondered at that 800 years later the descendants of the builders believed that 'there were giants in those days'.

In Crete itself these monolithic edifices are less in evidence, but the palaces at Knossos, Phaestos and Hagia Triada must have rivalled those of Babylon. They

Opposite A drinking-vessel of black soapstone, with rock-crystal eyes and gilded wooden horns, from the Little Palace, Knossos

are many storeys high, the rooms are small but their courts spacious, and in their subterranean treasuries can still be seen the huge jars – reminiscent of those in which Ali Baba's forty thieves concealed themselves – for the storage of grain, oil and gold. In their palaces, too, there were pipes running under the floors of every room, providing an excellent central heating system against the cold of winter; and the Queen had her private bathroom.

The great goddess of the early Cretans was the Universal Mother. Later they adopted the cult of the sacred bull, which they probably first acquired from the Assyrians, as that of Apis, in Egypt, did not arise until Ptolemaic times.

The Minotaur was said to have owed its existence to the sea god Poseidon's having put an enchantment on King Minos's Queen, so that she fell in love with a bull and became pregnant by it. The beast lived at the centre of the Labyrinth, and every year handsome youths and beautiful maidens were brought from the mainland and offered up to it. Whether they were actually sacrificed remains debatable, but they were certainly brought face to face with the Minotaur; and this is believed to be the origin of the bullfight. The story of how the Greek hero Theseus, with the aid of the Minoan King's daughter Ariadne, who had fallen in love with him, slew the Minotaur is too well known for repetition.



Dionysus and Ariadne escorted by Eros, on an Attic cup



A gambling match between Aphrodite and Pan, incised on a bronze mirror-case

Recently an American archaeologist, James W. Mavor Jnr, has produced a new theory about Atlantis, which postulates that this fabled land was really an Aegean island at the southern end of the Cyclades group, and that it was either a Cretan colony or that Cretan civilization had its origin there. His book *Visit to Atlantis* makes fascinating reading. There is no doubt that this island was largely destroyed by a great eruption, and recent excavations have revealed many evidences of an advanced civilization. But it is difficult to believe that Solon, who learnt about Atlantis from the priests at Sais in Egypt, could have previously known nothing

Opposite The Priest-king fresco from Knossos



about it if the terrible upheavals during its destruction had occurred so much nearer his own home.

That the Flood, during which Atlantis is said to have been overwhelmed, actually occurred seems certain; although, of course, it was not world-wide. Sir J. G. Frazer, in his study *Folklore in the Old Testament*, points out that, although varying in particulars, legends of the Flood have been handed down on both sides of the Atlantic; but the further one goes from that ocean the less frequently they are found, so that, for example, in China they are non-existent. That probability is that widespread volcanic eruptions and mountainous tidal waves were caused by a small comet, or huge meteorite, that came down in the Atlantic. But the site of Atlantis remains a mystery. One thing appears certain: the devastating occurrence must have happened thousands of years before any civilization existed in the Aegean, otherwise there would be much information about it in the papyri of the Egyptians.

About 1400 B.C. the Mycenaean civilization disappeared. It was wiped out by the barbarous Dorians, who swept down from the north, and, for the better part of 700 years the peoples in that part of the Mediterranean sank back into semi-primitive communities.

By 850 B.C. the inhabitants of Greece believed the Minoans to have been a legendary race. It is thought to have been about that time that the wonderful stories of the heroes, attributed to Homer, were written, and the equally colourful account of the doings of the gods, attributed to Hesiod.

In the Homeric tales magical happenings were of everyday occurrence. Terrible monsters menaced the adventurers, friendly powers appeared and saved them, everyone was liable to enchantment. Circe became the prototype of the beautiful witch-seductress, and turned men into swine, while Medea could render a hero invisible to his foes.

The pantheon immortalized by these writers is one of the most vivid and lifelike ever created. Instead of half-animal gods or ferocious brutes constantly demanding blood and the smells of the kitchen, we have a family representing all the virtues and vices arising from human emotions.

Zeus, king of gods and men, is a typical headman of a tribe that has acquired some culture. At times he loses his temper and starts throwing thunderbolts, but he is no bully and has a strong sense of justice. He is sadly henpecked by Hera, his shrewish queen, but he just cannot resist any chance that comes along to enjoy a tumble with a pretty girl.

Aphrodite, the starry-eyed, born of the foam, had no inhibitions. But what a horrid mother-in-law she proved when her son, Eros, brought home little Psyche! Aphrodite gave the poor girl all sorts of horrid chores to do and, as the palaces of Olympus would not have been more than pleasant bungalows, probably made her sleep under the kitchen sink.

How like life, too, that this most beautiful of women should have had for her husband the ugly, crippled Vulcan!

Apollo, the great musician, could be cruel on occasion. Did he not flay the

wretched Marsyas, the tune from whose pipes had jarred his sensitive ear? But as the Sun god he loved all forms of beauty. So much so that, Zeus having taken the sky and earth, and his brothers Poseidon and Pluto having taken the sea and the underworld, Apollo declared none of them good enough to live in, so created the island of Rhodes for himself. And those who have been there will have delighted in his island of butterflies and roses.

There had, of course, to be a representative of war – the uncouth, brutal Mars; of hunting – the chaste Diana; and other personalities who portrayed the various strengths and weaknesses of mankind.

Homer's view of the after life was a very depressing one. Apart from a few notable exceptions, who were either awarded perpetual bliss or unending torment, the great majority of souls, having given Charon the piece of money placed in their dead hands before burial, were ferried across the Styx to a gloomy Hades in which they drifted about indefinitely as only semi-conscious shades. This cheerless conception long coloured much of Greek thought. But the doctrine of Orphism held out a far brighter prospect; namely that, having drunk of the waters of Lethe which caused souls to forget their past life, they were born again.

The beginnings of classical Greece took place in the seventh century B.C., and in a remarkably short time it blossomed into the greatest advance in knowledge and creation of beauty that the world has ever known.

By the sixth century, Persia under Cambyses and Darius had become a great power, overrunning Babylonia, Palestine and Egypt right down to Luxor. She then attempted to subdue the Greeks, but in 480 B.C. was defeated by them at Thermopylae and in the epoch-making battle of Salamis at which they destroyed Xerxes's fleet, thus putting an end to the Persian threat to Europe.

From this period we have the writings of two of the greatest Greek dramatist-philosophers: Aeschylus and Sophocles. The first studied the relations between God and man in human history; the second the relations between man and the city state, as revealing the purpose of the gods. And it was from the generally warring city states, of which Greece was then made up, that there emerged a new form of government, destined later to become accepted by the greater part of the nations of the world.

This was democracy, but not as we now know it. Previously all states had been ruled by priest-kings, or a later development of monarchy in which the ruler was termed a tyrant. The Athenians initiated the Assembly at which, from time to time, all citizens met and decided by majority vote whether there should be peace or war, such taxes as were to be imposed and other important matters.

But it should be noted that only a few thousand citizens – those, in fact, who were property owners and so would bear the burden of taxation – were eligible to vote. This system, the soundest possible form of government, has developed into one in which the great present-day democracies allow equal voting power to all members of their populations who are of legal age – which is a very different matter.

In Greece, the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. proved to be the grand era. During that time a score of men emerged with minds of the highest order. Under the



Gods of Olympus: (from left) Hermes, Aphrodite, Ares, Demeter, Hephaestus, Hera, Poseidon, Athena, Zeus, Artemis

hands of Myron, Phideas, Polyclitus, Praxiteles and Lysippus, the sculpture of the human body reached a beauty that has never been surpassed. Encouraged by the great Pericles, architecture took new and lovely forms. Even today the ruins of the Acropolis, when floodlit at night, appear a dwelling-place fit for the gods. Later the gracious Greek temples, and theatres with remarkably fine acoustics, rose in Asia Minor, Italy, Sicily and many other lands.

It was during these centuries that the great philosophers flourished. Socrates wrote nothing, but he fostered schools of debate on the same lines as Confucius had done in China. Plato, who followed him, portrayed his age and speculated in undying prose on man's destiny. He was a convinced believer in reincarnation, and his doctrines lived long after him, being widely propounded by the Neo-Platonists of the early Christian world. Pythagoras appears to have even accepted the Hindu belief that souls could be retarded and reincarnated in animals and insects. Plato's pupil, Aristotle, gave deep thought to esoteric doctrines but, like Socrates, seems to have reached no definite conclusion. Later there came Euclid and Archimedes, with their immense contributions to mathematics, and Strabo with his contribution to the geography of the ancient world.

Poets and playwrights whose work has survived 2,000 years delighted the Greek people: Meleager, Euripides, Theocritus, and Aristophanes. The comedies of the last are more closely *en rapport* with the modern mind than any Restoration play.



About the middle of the fourth century B.C., Philip of Macedon emerged from northern Greece and swiftly became master of the whole peninsula. His son, Alexander the Great, made himself sovereign of the greatest empire the world had ever known up to that date. In 334 B.C. he conquered Asia Minor, in 332 Egypt, in 331 Babylonia, in 330 Persia and in 327 north-western India. In 323 he died at the age of thirty-three. His vast realm was partitioned by his captains. Through Alexander's conquests Greek philosophy, learning and culture were carried to the ends of the then known earth.

So also was the Greek pantheon. But, because the gods were later worshipped under many names, and in distant countries literate people could read translations of works embodying the Greeks' higher thought, it must not be supposed that the practice of magic had ceased. While Sappho sang and, later, Socrates talked, witches and sorcerers plied their trade as profitably as ever. Greek literature abounded in accounts of spells cast with dire results, and love potions resorted to by the infatuated.

The most famous charm for unrequited love was 'drawing down the moon'. It is mentioned by Aristophanes and several other writers, including Lucian in his story of Glaukias and Chrysis. The youth, it tells us, became so lovesick for the maiden that it was feared he would die, so a powerful magician was consulted. He prescribed 'drawing down the moon' and performed the operation, which included invoking Hecate, the goddess of the dead, and her fearsome escort of ghouls. A clay figure of Chrysis was then made and bronze needles stuck into

various parts of it by Glaukias with the words 'I pierce thee that thou should'st think of me.' Soon afterwards Chrysis came running to the house and threw her arms around the young man's neck.

The innumerable stories of a similar nature suggest that dependence upon invisible influences was common with the bulk of the population.

Palestine

Belgium has been termed the 'cockpit of Europe'. Palestine is the cockpit of the Near East. Canaan, as it was called in the old days, was from the earliest times the land of the Semites; but their many tribes never coalesced into a great nation.

To the north, in the mountainous country of eastern Asia Minor, lived the warlike Hittites; to the south lay the mighty kingdom of Egypt and to the east the equally mighty nations of Mesopotamia. When Palestine was not being invaded by one or another of these much stronger and more advanced peoples, the Semitic tribes, an incredibly quarrelsome lot, were fighting among themselves for territory on which to graze and water their herds.

The Old Testament tells us how the Hebrews were constantly at war with the Amalekites, the Jebusites, the Philistines, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Amorites and the Moabites; at times the people of Israel and of Judea were in opposite camps. Even in later times, when these originally nomad tribes had established themselves in considerable cities, they knew no peace. As the might of Egypt and Assyria waned, that of Persia rose. The Persian invasion was followed by that of Alexander with his Greeks. Finally the Roman legions arrived. Exasperated by revolts, they massacred a great part of the population, but at last restored order and imposed the *pax Romana*.

Of the Hittites, who must be included in this picture, we know little, although increasing evidence is now emerging that, by comparison with the nomad tribes to the south, they were a civilized and powerful people. They had the usual pantheon, and although the names of their gods differ from those of the gods in Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria, they are identifiable with them.

By far the most interesting people of the Palestinian lands were the Canaanites, later to become known as the Phoenicians. The birthplace of this great people was the Lebanon, and their capital the port of Byblos, not very far north of Beirut. It was a trading centre as early as 3000 B.C., and its ancient stronghold is one of the most fascinating places that a traveller can visit. In the one great ruin can still be seen the workmanship of Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, Rome, the Saracens and the Crusaders.

It was the famous cedars of Lebanon which first enabled the citizens of Byblos to prosper, and for century after century cargoes of the precious wood were dispatched to both Egypt and Babylonia, to be made into beams for the temples. They were blessed, too, in the lovely country that lies behind the city, for it is indeed a 'land of milk and honey', and a delight to motor through.

In the earliest times their gods were taken from Egypt. Their chief deities were Hathor, called by them the Lady of Byblos, and the Sun god Ra, called by them

Ruti. But later the evil gods of Babylon became paramount, the Lady's place was taken by Astarte and that of Ruti by Baal, who, in his aspect as Moloch, demanded the smell of burnt human flesh as the price of his patronage.

There was, of course, a swarm of other gods and goddesses, mostly of an equally cruel disposition. To give two examples.

Baal had a daughter named Anat. She quarrelled with the harvest god Mot. This, it is recorded, is how she dealt with him. 'She seizes Mot, the son divine. With her sickle she cleaves him. With her flail she beats him. With fire she grills him. With her mill she grinds him. In the fields she scatters him.'

The other concerns Atis, who was also known as Adonis or Tammuz. This handsome god was believed to die and be resurrected every year. Each year, at the time of his death, priests and worshippers assembled in the sacred groves to attend his funeral. While the women wailed and beat their breasts the men excited themselves into a frenzy. To bring the god back to life much blood had to be spilt,

The demon Baal



so they ran amok, gashing themselves and others with knives. But, as we know, in magical ceremonies blood is not always quite enough, so many of the men actually cut off their own penises and testicles.

In the course of time the Phoenicians moved south, and the centre of their activities became the great ports of Tyre and Sidon. With the disappearance of the Cretan civilization, they inherited the seaborne traffic of the Mediterranean and their upper class consisted of merchant princes. Their ships voyaged to Britain, and probably much further; to Cornwall they brought the precious purple dye, which they had discovered could be made from shellfish, and traded it for cargoes of tin.

By the ninth century B.C., they had established trading posts in Spain, the south of France, Italy, Sicily and North Africa. The last two developed into thriving colonies, particularly the one in North Africa, which became the great city of Carthage, exceeding its motherland in wealth and splendour. So powerful did she become that she challenged Rome for supremacy in the western Mediterranean. The Carthaginian general Hannibal marched an army from Spain into northern Italy and performed the amazing feat of getting his war elephants over the Alps. But in the third Punic war the Roman General Scipio Aemilianus utterly defeated the Carthaginians, destroyed the idols in which many thousands of captives and slaves had been roasted to death, and burnt the evil city to the ground. In due course, too, the Roman legions triumphed in Palestine. So ended the Phoenician civilization.

To mankind it brought one inestimable gift: the invention of a phonetic alphabet, by which signs for sounds replaced the infinitely more complicated hieroglyphics that had developed out of picture writing.

Wherever the Phoenicians went, they took their terrible gods with them, and the priests performed their magic by the spilling of blood and semen. Some years ago, when I was in Nice, a friend took me to see a Phoenician temple. It was deep underground, its only entrance being a well-like cavity on a hill-top some miles outside the city. One shudders to think of the revolting rites that had taken place in those subterranean chambers.

It was in Nice, too, that I witnessed an unusual cabaret turn at a night club. An emaciated, white-haired old man recited some bawdy poems, then ended his turn by saying the Lord's Prayer backwards. Most of the audience took it, no doubt, as a feat of memory; but I felt certain that it was a covert invitation. Had I put it to him afterwards that I could pay handsomely for a wax image to be made, and that to be done which had to be done so that I could inherit from a rich uncle, I do not doubt he would have obliged me.

The other race that, making Palestine its home, also made its mark on world history is, of course, the Jewish race.

It has now been established by cuneiform tablets found in Mesopotamia that they originated at Ur of the Chaldees, and that about the nineteenth century B.C. Abraham led his tribe up to northern Syria, where they settled for a time in the neighbourhood of Haran. He then led them south through Canaan into Egypt,

their part of which the Bible calls the Land of Goshen. Their arrival there is depicted in a mural at Beni Hasan.

It is more than probable that they were the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, who formed the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Dynasties. They are said to have been foreign barbarians who came from Phoenicia and, Egypt at that date having fallen into a state of decadence, conquered the country with little opposition. They destroyed many of the temples, murdered the priests and, between 1720 and 1507 B.C., under a succession of six kings, temporarily smothered Egyptian civilization. But it seems that the Egyptians then recovered and, after a time of strife, enslaved the Jews until, in the reign of Pharaoh Ahmosi I, Moses led them to freedom.

After wandering for, according to the Bible, forty years, they settled in the land of Canaan. From that time onwards, the history of the Jews is one long tale of wars. For a good part of the time, as vassals of Egypt, they were fighting the Assyrians; at other times they were engaged in local conflicts with various Semitic peoples similar to themselves.

Of ten of the twelve tribes history tells us little, except that we know that the Levites became a priestly caste, while Israel and Judah became separate nations, the former establishing its capital at Samaria, the latter a little further south at Jerusalem. In 745 B.C. the Assyrians, under their King Tiglath-Pileser III, launched a determined invasion of Palestine; after a long war, in 721 one of his successors, Sargon II, captured Samaria. He carried off 27,000 captives and, in 715, many thousands more from among the desert Israelites. This put an end to the Kingdom of Israel, and its people were turned loose in a place known as the land of Beth-Omri. Although they were the original 'chosen of the Lord', the scribes to whom we owe the Old Testament take no further interest in them and smoothly transfer the patronage of Jehovah to the people of Judah.

How little that patronage was worth soon became evident. Assyria's effort had cost her so dear that she rapidly went into decline. A new line of kings, founded by the Chaldean Nabopolassar, arose in Babylon. The Assyrians were overthrown, and Nineveh fell to the Chaldeans and Medes in 612 B.C. Nabopolassar's son who became Nebuchadrezzar II (the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible) defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish in northern Syria in 605. The battle was the turning-point of the age. Jerusalem was besieged and captured, and its royal family were made prisoners. A few years later, relying on Egyptian help, Jerusalem rebelled. It was besieged again. Help never came, and the city was stormed and sacked. This was in 587 B.C. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, slaughtered the leading citizens and carried the rest off into captivity.

The rise of Persia followed. Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon, and, fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, he gave permission for the return of the Jews to Palestine. It is said that in 516 B.C., under Darius I, the Temple was rebuilt; but this appears doubtful. Both Judah and Israel had been shattered and still lay under Persian domination. Many of the Jews who trickled back had deserted Jehovah and had taken wives of other races who worshipped 'false' gods. There occurred a great schism. The descendants of the original Samaritans asserted their

claim to be the 'chosen'. But the Judeans repudiated it and henceforth regarded themselves as the only people entitled to Jehovah's protection. It was probably not until the arrival of Alexander the Great that the Temple was actually restored, or until about 320 B.C., under his successor in those parts, Ptolemy I, that the sons of Judah became exclusively the Jewish people.

The Seleucids went to war with the Ptolemies, and by 198 B.C. Palestine was again under Asiatic rule. A hundred years later, Rome had risen to a power of the first magnitude, and in 63 B.C. Pompey the Great captured Jerusalem. The Parthians then invaded Syria. The Jewish leader, Antipater, stood by Rome, but 30,000 Jews sided with the invaders. The Parthians were defeated and the 30,000 Jews sold into slavery. Julius Caesar and Pompey fought for the dominion of the Roman world. Caesar triumphed, and in 48 B.C. Pompey was slain. Herod the Great emerged; he became King of the Jews and a strong adherent of Rome. He maintained a state of relative peace until his last years, which ended in 4 B.C.

But the Jews were not content under Roman rule. All the efforts of Herod Antipas and the Roman procurators failed to keep order. Between A.D. 48 and 52 there were constant riots, and a massacre took place in the Temple. The revolutionary movement grew; at length the Jews rose, and set up a government of their own. Vespasian was sent to crush the rebellion. In A.D. 70 Jerusalem fell; its inhabitants were slaughtered and the Temple was burnt down. As a last act of defiance, the surviving rebels occupied the great natural rock fortress of Masada. When they could hold out no longer, rather than surrender, ten men were selected to kill their companions, including women and children. Then they killed themselves. That was the end of the Jewish people as a nation. They did not regain the country they had come to regard as their own until 1,878 years later.

Briefly, that is the history of the Jews. They showed tremendous tenacity and courage, and an independence of spirit which must fill us with admiration. Since their dispersal, by their patronage of art, and in many other ways, the best among them have probably made a greater contribution to culture than any other race; but that cannot be said of them during the centuries they lived in Palestine.

They were intolerant, treacherous, even thieves and liars. At least, that is the impression of them given by their own writings in the Old Testament. For that, their god was largely responsible. He shed no ray of light. He had modelled himself, or perhaps one should say they had modelled him upon the dark gods of Babylon. His only distinction from those ferocious deities was that he did not demand human sacrifices. Yet his desires were solely concerned with the aggrandizement of the Jews, however unscrupulous the means employed, and the increase of their seed so that they might the better make war on other peoples and deprive them of their peace and prosperity. Doubtless the Jews were no worse than other peoples of their age, but in Palestine before the time of Christ they made no contribution whatever to the enlightenment of mankind.

In one way, until the coming of Mahomet, who proclaimed Allah as the one God, Jehovah was unusual. He was one of the few gods who refused to have a family and companions. He never tired of proclaiming, 'I the Lord thy God am



The rock of Masada, on which the Jews made their last stand against the Romans

a jealous God', and 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.' And, while jealousy is a very human failing, it is certainly not one to be admired.

However that may be, in the case of a god it was particularly hard on women, for whom Jehovah had no time at all. And, if one takes seriously the existence of a god made by man in his own image, one can imagine how annoyed Jehovah must have been when the Christians adopted him as their God the Father and attributed to him a Son.

That the Israelites sadly hankered after their old gods is clearly indicated when it looked as though Moses would not return from his trip up the mountain, and Aaron fashioned a golden calf for them. Dancing round it naked, as we are told, by the light of the moon must have aroused nostalgic memories of jolly parties, ending in an uninhibited romp, in which they had engaged before setting off into the wilderness.

The gold of which the calf was made was obviously that of the necklaces, ear-

rings and bangles belonging to the Egyptians in whose houses they had lodged, and which Moses had told them to steal ('borrow' is the shifty expression used in the Bible) from their hosts.

The Israelites then paid for their fun in no uncertain manner. Aaron, although responsible for making the calf, got off scot free, but 3,000 poor wretches were slain at Moses's order – a foretaste of the concentration camps. Hitler would have made him an honorary Aryan and an S. S. Gruppenführer for that. Then, having pounded the gold of the calf into powder mixed with water, Moses made the others drink it. Whether it acted like Mussolini's castor oil, or ruined their digestions, we are not informed.

Of magic practised by the Jews the Old Testament gives us ample evidence. From the Book of Tobit we learn how the angel Raphael sought, by means of fumigations, to counteract the work of the demon Asmodeus, who had fallen in love with Sarah. Then there is Balaam's ass and – an outstanding example – Moses's competition with Pharaoh's priests; a case of the pupil surpassing his masters. There is also the matter of his having led the Israelites dry-shod across the floor of the Red Sea.

For his having performed this feat there is a possible down-to-earth explanation. In the final phase of the Russian Revolutionary war, the Whites, under Baron Wrangel, had been driven right down to the Crimea, and were encamped on the isthmus of Perekop. The Bolshevik army under General V. K. Blücher was on the far side of the Sivash ('Putrid') Sea, which runs along the isthmus to the Sea of Azov. Having no boats or pontoons, it was unable to attack the Whites. The Sivash is shallow and, on very rare occasions, a wind coming from the west blows with such tremendous force that it piles up the water, leaving the bed of the river at its mouth almost dry. This phenomenon occurred on the night of November 8th 1920, and the Bolshevik General took advantage of it. Although his men had to wade chest-deep, he got his army across before dawn, took by surprise the Whites, who had supposed themselves completely safe from attack, and defeated them.

As the narrow upper end of the Red Sea is very shallow, there is a possibility that a similar phenomenon may have occurred there on the night of the Exodus. Even if that were the case, given a belief in the powers of an initiate to call invisible forces to his aid, magic is not necessarily ruled out. Moses could have raised a whirlwind and so caused the waters to pile up.

We must now pass on to other matters, soberly aware that from Palestine we received two legacies: our alphabet from the Phoenicians, and Jehovah as our God

Gnosticism

The original Gnostics were also inhabitants of Palestine, but they deserve a section to themselves.

The word 'Gnostic' is derived from the Greek. It means 'one who has knowledge', and the Gnostics contributed a very considerable part of the magic inherited by both the Near East and the Western world.

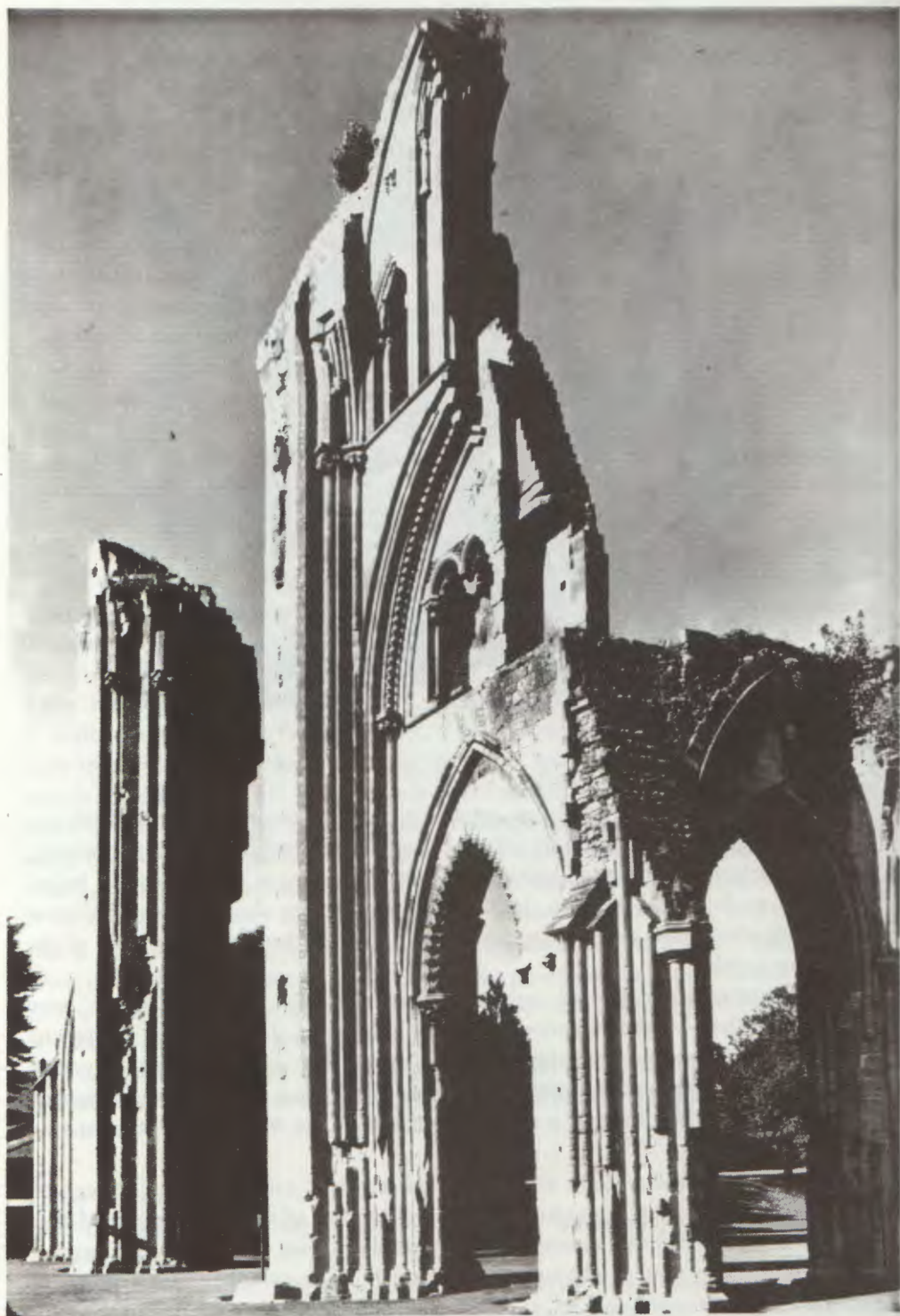


Asmodeus, the inciter of lechery

Gnosticism arose late in the first century A.D., a curious mixture of Jewish and Christian mysticism, coloured by Greek thought. As it had no individual founder, it cannot be termed a religion, and it is more in the nature of a philosophical belief. Its roots can be traced back to the Essenes, who earlier also inhabited Palestine and whose ideas have recently become available to us through the finding of the Dead Sea scrolls.

The Gnostics were divided into numerous sects, the beliefs of which were modified by those of the territories in which they lived. In the West, during the early years of the movement, when Christian beliefs were still very fluid, they were closely associated with the Christians; whereas further east they became influenced by Manichaeism; and there is a sect of them, called the Mandaeans, still existing in Iraq.

However, the general basis of their belief was that enlightenment cannot be achieved by reason, but is the intuition of the mystery of the self. They held that Jehovah is not God, but a demiurge who created an alien world from evil matter, and that the true God is the unconscious spirit of every man, which sleeps in him until he becomes aware of it. They regarded Christ as a great revealer, but denied the doctrine of original sin and the necessity for atonement.



Glastonbury, the secret burial place of King Arthur on the 'Isle of Avalon'

The magician Simon Magus, a Jewish heterodox teacher from Samaria, was the first person to become prominent in the movement. He believed that he had accomplished what later became known by the alchemists as the 'Great Work', namely achieving oneness with God.

Another, much later, Gnostic of importance was the Roman Valentinus. But by his time the Christians had coalesced into a more powerful unity, and had come to regard Gnosticism as the 'Gnostic heresy', so about A.D. 160 Valentinus was excommunicated from the Christian Church.

By the fourth century persecution by the Christians had practically destroyed Gnosticism in the West; but its doctrines were passed down in secret by the illuminati of the Near East and, in the sixteenth century, came to western Europe in Latin translations of the Arabian philosophers.

As at that time anyone suspected of heresy was liable to be burnt at the stake by the Inquisition, the owners of such manuscripts naturally never acknowledged their interest in Gnosticism and spoke of it only to their closest associates; but it undoubtedly had a very considerable influence in the formulation of the beliefs of the alchemists and continues to have its place in more enlightened spiritual thinking.

The Druids

While in Scandinavia the Norsemen continued to drink mead out of the skulls of their enemies and expected, if they died in battle, to be welcomed to Valhalla by Odin (Woden), Thor and Freya, and the barbarians in the German lands continued to worship similar primitive conceptions of the gods, several centuries of seaborne contact with the Mediterranean had brought to southern Britain and the western coast of France more esoteric cults.

The foremost of these was that of the Druids. Julius Caesar mentions them in his account of the conquest of Gaul as the priesthood of the Celts in Brittany and southern England. He states that they wielded great influence, accompanied their warriors into battle as doctors to succour the wounded, were powerful magicians and divined by means of human sacrifice. For the last reason the Emperor Claudius decreed that they should be disbanded; but, if folklore can in this instance be relied upon, they were still in existence at a much later date, for we are led to believe that King Arthur's great wizard, Merlin, was a Druid.

For over 1,000 years, it was believed that the legends about King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table were romantic myths, but that is not so today. Excavations at Glastonbury and other sites in Somerset have convinced archaeologists that they have found Camelot, where Arthur had his Court, and the 'Isle of Avalon', now a high ridged mound, but once probably surrounded by marshes.

In A.D. 407, the Roman legions left Britain. After four centuries of Roman protection, and never having been trained in the use of arms, the natives proved hopelessly incapable of defending themselves from invasion by the Saxons. Eastern and central England was overrun. The native chiefs, and their surviving henchmen, took refuge with Ambrosius, a young noble of Roman descent who

ruled over a large area in the west, and there continued their resistance.

Arthur, or Artorius as he was then known, is said to have been the younger brother of Ambrosius; terming himself Count of the Britains, he became the champion of the Celts. His cavalry was famous, hence the tales about his gallant knights; and, according to the legend, he won twelve major victories.

It was to Glastonbury that Joseph of Arimathea is reputed to have brought the Holy Grail, the bowl that Christ had used at the Last Supper. It was this which inspired the knights with visions and mystical ecstasies. And it was at Glastonbury that Arthur was buried in secrecy, so that knowledge of his death should not take the heart out of his people.

That in those days his chief priest – for that was obviously Merlin's position – should also have been a magician is not the least surprising. As we shall see, several of the popes do not appear to have considered that there was anything reprehensible about combining the practice of sorcery with the office of God's vicar on earth. Their knowledge of magic had been handed down through many centuries, but that cannot have been so with the beliefs of the Druids; they made use of pentacles, and their magic was far beyond the primitive magic they would have inherited from the ancient Britons. For that reason they are of particular interest.

The word *druuid* is found in old Irish. Its first syllable can be translated as 'oak', and the second as 'he who knows'. The Druids performed their rituals under oak trees, and the mistletoe that grew on the trees was sacred to them. That 'knowing' can be taken as something more than a mere casting of spells is implied in the writings of Poseidonius, who described the Druids as representatives of the Logos, the higher power of the soul that holds the instincts in check. Moreover, we learn that among their main tenets was the belief that the universe is indestructible and that the soul of man is immortal.

In due course the Anglo-Saxon royal family was converted to Christianity. Its priests were successful in securing the highest religious offices and, regarding the Druids as heretics, suppressed their cult. As is to be expected, later accounts stigmatize them as malignant magicians, just as still later writings by the monks portray all followers of the Old Faith as worshippers of the Devil.

The probability seems to be that their using human sacrifices as a means of divination continued as a hangover from the worship of barbarous gods by their ancestors, but that they had acquired some degree of enlightenment from, possibly, Gnostics arriving from Palestine in the ships of the Phoenicians and Romans, and that they practised white magic as well as black.

Rome

Traditionally the foundation of Rome was in 753 B.C., but the place can then have been little more than a cluster of villages situated about the famous seven hills.

To the north, a century or more earlier, the Etruscans had towns and the rudiments of civilization. Comparatively little is known about them, but the remains they have left are interesting and quite distinct from those of any other Mediterranean people. Rich jewels were found in their tombs, and the comfortably



An Etruscan man and woman, carved in the style of the Greeks

lounging figures on the tombs are grotesquely fascinating.

Early in their development the Etruscans came under the influence of the Greek colony of Syracuse in Sicily and, using the names of Tinia, Uni and Minerva, adopted three members of the Greek pantheon as their family of divinities. It was no doubt also from the Greeks that they learnt advanced magic.

They specialized in divining by the flight of birds and examining the entrails of birds and mammals; and their diviners were called augurs – hence our word ‘augury’. Cicero tells us that, in the early days of the republic, it was the practice to send six youths from the most noble families to Etruria to be educated as augurs, and that the Roman College of Augurs consisted of four patricians; the number was later increased to nine.

Augurs were appointed for life, and their office was one of great power and dignity. Their chief, the *Magister Collegii*, was responsible for interpreting the will of the gods, supervising such sacrifices as were necessary for the protection of the State, and keeping the Senate advised on the future prospects of all matters that concerned the nation.

They usually confirmed official appointments, but had the power to invalidate those of praetors and even consuls. They wore togas striped with purple, double cloaks, and conical hats. As a symbol of their office they carried staffs, whose heads resembled those of bishops’ croziers. They took particular notice of the activities of ravens; birds that have always been associated with good or ill fortune, for which reason the ravens that inhabit the Tower of London have always been well cared for.

It was probably from the Etruscans that the Romans also acquired the fear of



Left Tinia, the Etruscan spirit of fire *Centre* Janus, the only god invented by the Romans
Right An augur carrying his curved staff among the Etruscans

the evil eye, to which they considered themselves particularly subject. To avert it they wore on a bangle, or as a brooch, a small gold phallus, and such amulets of virility are still worn by many people in Italy at the present day.

As the Romans expanded southward, their interests came into conflict with those of the older and more powerful state of Carthage in Africa. There followed, between 264 and 146 B.C., the three Punic Wars which ended with the total destruction of Carthage, giving Rome complete dominance in the western Mediterranean. Meanwhile, in the east, between 214 and 194 B.C., Rome had freed Greece from occupation by Philip V of Macedonia, and became the protector of the Greek States.

From 150 B.C. onwards Roman legions marched from victory to victory until, under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius 325 years later, the boundaries of the Empire to the west and north were the Atlantic, the border of Scotland, the Rhine and the Danube; to the south and east the Sahara desert, Ethiopia, Arabia Felix and the

frontier of Persia. Within them lay every nation of the civilized world except those in middle and eastern Asia.

From her beginnings Rome had had Greek influences to north and south, and her nearest neighbour across the Adriatic was Greece. Wherever her legions marched to the eastward, they followed the footsteps of Alexander the Great. Greek had become the *lingua franca* of all educated people in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Palestine and Egypt. Greek ideas permeated all intellectual discussions. It was therefore natural that the Romans should take over the gods of Greece.

Zeus and Hera became Jupiter and Juno, and the royal couple were held in high regard; but, as might be expected of such a warlike people, Mars – whom they called Ares – took first place among the gods, and they chose to regard him as the father of the twins, Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of Rome, who had been suckled by a she-wolf. Athene, Artemis and Aphrodite became Minerva, Diana and Venus. Poseidon, Pluto and Eros became Neptune, Hades and Cupid. Apollo alone retained his original name.

Only one god was invented by the Romans themselves, and he assumed a position of great importance. This was the two-faced god Janus. Originally a sun god, he developed into the guardian of all doorways. He was given two faces, back to back, so that he could see both ways at once and no evil could slip past him. He was also the god of 'beginnings', the promoter of all initiative and every enterprise.

Another unusual factor of Roman religion was the promotion of the Greek goddess Hestia to receive special veneration as Vesta. She was the most beautiful of their divinities, and the most loved, for she was the goddess of the hearth and presided over the cooking of all meals. Her circular temple is still to be seen in the Forum, and in it lived the vestal virgins. They were chosen by lot from among the children of the noblest families, and were dedicated to the goddess before they reached puberty. For ten years they received instruction, for ten years they performed the rites and for ten years gave instruction. After the thirty years they were free to marry if they wished; but few of them ever did so, preferring to retain their high status. Whenever they appeared in public they were preceded by a lictor, and if a man on his way to execution had the good fortune to meet a vestal in the street he was immediately reprieved. They were sworn to absolute chastity. If they were found to have broken their vow, they were unmercifully whipped, then walled up alive. But, in eleven hundred years, only twenty vestals disgraced their office.

Religious ceremonies of great importance were presided over by the *Pontifex Maximus*, a position always held by the Emperor. In addition to public worship of the great gods, every Roman family had its private gods in its own home. From birth each person had his or her *genius*. This was a spirit who performed the functions of a guardian angel. There were also the *lar* and the two *penates*. These were protector spirits who guarded the house and prevented the food in the larder from going bad. The father of the family acted as its priest. On special occasions the small statuette of the *lar* was decorated with a garland, and offered fruit and a libation of wine.



But the members of the Greek pantheon and the family gods were by no means the only ones worshipped in imperial Rome. Cybele, the great goddess of Phrygia, was very popular; so, too, were Isis and the god Serapis from an Egypt that had become decadent. Many others were brought from Syria, North Africa and Mesopotamia, including Baal, but he had to make do on the burnt flesh of animals as the Romans forbade human sacrifice. There were also Christian and Mithraic chapels.

Provided that a religion did not menace the peace and security of the State, everyone was free to worship as he wished. The persecution of the Christians began only when the authorities realized that their doctrine incited slaves to believe that they were the equals of their masters, and so was a form of Communism calculated to undermine the social order, and not to be tolerated.

It cannot be contested that the intolerance of all other faiths displayed by the early Christians and their fanatical urge to destroy the capitalist system were the product of the same type of mentality that animated the followers of Marx and Lenin.

People who denounce the iniquities of the Romans often refer to the inhumanity of the slave system. But there is another side to the picture. It is true that the State slaves, particularly those who served in the galleys, were treated with great harshness, but a high percentage of them were condemned criminals; and press-ganged seamen, quite a number of whom were flogged to death, did not fare much better in Nelson's day.

Much, too, has been made of the orgies of Tiberius, Nero and Messalina. Over a thousand years later the Christian popes countenanced and attended the same type of parties. They are fully described in the annals of the Borgias. The gardens of Versailles could also tell a tale of midnight fêtes in the days of Louis XV, when lords and ladies, masked and dressed as satyrs and nymphs, disported themselves in shadowed grottoes. The licentiousness of the more depraved emperors cannot be taken as a portrait of the morals of the average Roman family. Had it been, the Empire could not have lasted even a hundred years. It was maintained by thousands of officials scattered over its vast territories. For the most part they led exemplary lives; kept order; dispensed justice; ensured that grain was stored against famine; built bridges and viaducts; constructed a road system unrivalled for centuries, from every remote frontier to Rome, with post-houses along them manned by garrisons that ensured the protection of travellers against robbers; introduced the latest methods of agriculture to the people they governed; and fostered art, literature, commerce and learning.

They resided in pleasant villas, and the lives they led were very similar to those of an English country gentleman or colonial official of the Georgian age. If a Roman lord could have resumed his body and gone to dine with any English nobleman of the eighteenth century, the interests of both of them would have been so alike that they would have talked the night through. And they could have





A Roman mosaic designed to avert the evil eye

done so, as they both spoke Latin, albeit with very different accents.

To literature the Romans made a considerable contribution, with Cicero's speeches, the works of Horace, Virgil, Petronius, Julius Caesar's histories and many other writings that have come down to us. But they were in the main content to take over the philosophies of the Greeks, and contributed little new thought to them. They were above all a practical race, concerned with the physical well-being of the peoples over whom they ruled. The temples they built were copies – and later as at Baalbek, decadent copies – of those of the Greeks. Like our 'eminent Victorian', they believed that 'a little religion is good for the masses'; but their higher classes paid only lip service to religion.

However, many of the Roman intelligentsia showed a profound interest in the possible conditions of an after life. Among them Virgil is the most interesting, and in his *Aeneid* he gives a vivid description of the Underworld. In the main he follows the tradition of the Greeks, that Hades is a gloomy realm; but he clearly states his belief that the dead who have not perfected their spirit are reborn again and again until each soul is cleansed of all material desire, after which it attains eternal bliss.

It is said that initiation into the Greek mysteries was actually the disclosure by

Opposite The Emperor Marcus Aurelius conducting a sacrifice

the high priest that the gods did not exist, that a man's destiny lay in his own hands and that nothing was known about the hereafter. This admission was made only to young men of the ruling class, and there is some reason to believe that Romans of noble birth were, on attaining manhood, similarly informed of the truth.

Yet, whether they believed in the gods or not, they certainly believed in occult influences. In Rome, Egyptian astrologers did a roaring trade; love philtres could be bought from scores of witches, and Roman literature abounds in accounts of spells that were cast. An excellent and amusing example is *The Golden Ass* of Lucius Apuleius – a tale of a witch who turned a young man into a donkey.

Such was the enormously active Roman world. It took from the East and gave to the West. Its civilizing influence was incalculable, and it may well be said that those peoples who lived in the dark forests beyond the Rhine and the Danube, and so never experienced those 400 years of Roman rule, never caught up mentally in the conception of firmness, tempered with tolerance and mercy, inherited by those peoples who enjoyed it.

As with other empires, there was always fighting on the frontiers; but, within the vast dominions ruled from the city of the seven hills, the *pax Romana* gave generation after generation the opportunity to better its way of life in security.

With the fall of Rome in A.D. 410, the Light in Europe went out and the Powers of Darkness ruled supreme for close on a thousand years.

The Coming of Christ

I approach this section with some diffidence, as the last thing I would wish is to offend the susceptibilities of earnest Christians; but in a work of this kind it would be illogical to examine the foundations of Christianity on a different basis from that on which we have examined other religions.

Unfortunately, the historical data for the life of Christ are extremely slender. They are based almost entirely on the four Gospels, which, scholars tell us, were not written in his lifetime, but mainly compiled from oral tradition many years after his death.

About his having been a historical character there seems no doubt whatever, but the question of his divinity is a very different matter. The accounts of the virgin birth, the rending of the veil of the Temple at the hour he died, and other wonders, are trimmings with which, in early times, it was customary to glamorize the lives of holy men after their deaths. However, the Gospels tell us that on many occasions he claimed to be divine. In that he differed from all the other great teachers, but he gave no proof of divinity. In fact his last words when in agony on the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?', indicate that he lacked the power of a god, as he was incapable of ascending to heaven through his own volition.

Many of his reported utterances are so difficult to understand that, again with diffidence, I put forward the suggestion that he was frequently referring to the spark of divine spirit which he had and all of us have in us. We know that he was baptized by John the Baptist, and many years of his life are unaccounted for, so

it is possible that he spent a considerable time in John's company. If so, he would have learnt from him the doctrine of the Essenes, who taught belief in that divine spark.

There is another possibility. If he was indeed a human being, like others he could have suffered from delusions, and honestly believed that he was divine.

His describing himself as the 'Son of Man' was one of the things about which the Pharisees took such umbrage; because, in the sense he used it, the inference was that there were two gods, and this was anathema to their monotheistic creed given them by the jealous Jehovah. Their other quarrel with him was that, like all reformers, he condemned the importance attached to ceremonies.

Yet that he came to the Jews, as the chosen people, there can be no doubt. In Matthew x. 5, 6, when sending forth his disciples, he says, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

Apart from his journey into Egypt as a child, we have no evidence that he travelled beyond a small area in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem and Galilee. When he took Peter, James and his brother John up a mountain, it was with Moses and Elias that he talked. It is, too, abundantly clear that he regarded the wrathful, intolerant Jehovah as his 'father in heaven', and fully accepted the ordinances handed down from Moses.

When the Roman centurion appealed to him to heal his servant, he appeared surprised that a man of an alien people should ask his help. Like the Jewish prophets before him, it was to the people of Israel alone that he had come to make his revelations; and it was only late in his ministry that he seems to have realized that other people were also worthy of salvation.

With regard to his many miracles, similar ones have been performed by other men possessing great magical powers. Many of them were rendered possible by the faith shown by the afflicted. We have seen, too, how Professor Charcot in Paris and old black Maria's witch doctor in South Africa both dispersed a cancer in the breast. Hypnotism in recent times has caused subjects to believe they were drinking wine when it was actually water, as no doubt happened at the marriage in Cana.

The secret of Jesus's power is not far to seek. He led a blameless life, had complete confidence in himself, and spent a very great deal of his time communing with God. The fact that his god was the patron of a primitive tribe of bedouins is immaterial. He was in fact communing with the Power of Light, and drawing it down into himself.

A very interesting passage in the Gospels is that regarding the temptation. Every religion had its evil gods and demons, but this appears to be the first reference to the Devil as a person. It is recorded that Satan took Christ up into a high place, showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and said, 'All this will I give unto thee if thou wilt bow down and worship me', and it was made plain that it was Satan's to give. This, of course, is based on the belief that when Lucifer, as an angel, succumbed to pride and rebelled against God, he was chased out of



Christ tempted: perhaps the first explicit appearance of the Devil

Heaven by the archangel Michael, and that God then decreed that the Earth should be his province. It is this that has led black magicians, all through the ages, to believe that, as 'Prince of this World', Satan is master here and can grant them anything they desire.

As far as we know, Christ never had a love affair. No doubt that accounts for his taking the traditional Jewish view of women and, unlike Mahomet, not decreeing for them a better lot. Moses had laid it down that if a man died his widow should be taken as wife by his brother; the idea being that she should bear more children for Israel. When the Pharisees asked Christ whose wife she would be at the resurrection if she had been the wife of seven brothers in succession, he simply replied

that, 'in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage'. It does not seem to have occurred to him to condemn a custom by which a woman might be forced to accept a man she hated, and become no better than a slave. Again, unlike other great reformers, he entirely failed to appreciate the fact that man is by nature polygamous, and that to condemn divorce, as he did so harshly, was a sure way to drive people into committing adultery.

At times he showed righteous anger, as when he overturned the tables of the money-changers in the Temple. One would like to see him return to Jerusalem today. By agreement, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Armenian Church priests serve the Holy Sepulchre, and also the Shrine of the Nativity at Bethlehem. They compete for the contributions of the visitor, simultaneously thrusting begging bowls at him with the cry 'Money for the Sepulchre! Money for the Holy Crib! Money for the Sepulchre!'

I was amazed to find that the spot where the crucifixion is supposed to have taken place and the tomb of Christ were both under the dome of one church; because, according to the Gospels, he was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, which had been hewn out of a rock in a nearby garden.

I was then told of another 'reputed' tomb that lay just outside the city wall, and went to it. There was no altar and there were no priests, as it was discovered and bought by Gordon of Khartoum. Now this 'Garden Tomb', as it is termed, is supported by a Church of England society in London. My wife and I were taken round it by the single custodian, a Swedish lady. On one side, beneath what was the city wall, a cliff rises up. In the layers of stone there is a formation like a big skull - Golgotha. At ground level is a clean, empty, unembellished tomb. The remainder of the site is an acre of beautifully-kept garden. There, surely, was the true tomb of the Master.

Christ's foreknowledge that he would be executed, and willingness to submit to death, suggest that he was aware of the ancient custom of sacrificing a scapegoat and that he regarded himself as one, the idea being that his death would result in the salvation of mankind from original sin. This Jewish conception is surely a most curious one, for a person has to commit a sin before it is necessary to redeem it, and how could anyone have committed a sin before being born?

There seems no doubt that Christ's popularity with the people was largely due to their mistaken impression that he had come to free them from their Roman overlords. He certainly became known as the King of the Jews. This makes it surprising that Pontius Pilate even hesitated to condemn him; or, at least, as a subversive influence, to have had him put in prison. The account of the trial as given in the Gospels is obviously designed to throw opprobrium on the Jewish priesthood, who were antagonistic to Christ's teaching. They were certainly the accusers; but the probability is that, being responsible for maintaining order, Pilate did not think twice, as life was cheap in those days, about getting rid of a potential trouble-maker, and so sent Christ to his death and thought no more about it.

The episode was regarded as of so little importance that it remained unknown



Votive offerings to Our Lady of the Pines, at Teror in the Canary Islands

outside the Jewish world. In Roman literature there are only three brief references to it, and these, written long afterwards, refer only to the origin of Christianity. On this subject Anatole France wrote what is probably the most cynical story of all time. Here is the gist of it.

In their old age, Pilate and a retired general were sitting sunning themselves near a lovely villa outside Rome. They recall old times. The talk turns to when they were in Palestine together. They speak of various mutual friends and the sort of life they led there. The general asks, 'Do you remember that little red-headed harlot who used to dance in one of the taverns?' Pilate laughs. 'Oh, yes. Of course I do. What a lovely little piece she was!' Presently the general asks, 'Do you remember that rabble-rouser that you had crucified? I forget his name but he called himself the King of the Jews.' Pilate shakes his head. 'No, I don't remember him.'

That probably sums up the lack of impact that Christ made on the Roman world.

It is even possible that Christianity might have died out soon after the death of its first followers, had it not been for St Paul.

Many people assume that he was a Roman; and it is true that he enjoyed Roman citizenship because Rome granted it to men of a certain standing in all subject nations. But the fact is that he was a Jew and, until he had what may have been an epileptic fit, during which he had a vision of Christ, he was a fanatical devotee of Jehovah. He then became Christ-intoxicated.

Owing to his strict Pharisee upbringing, in his teaching he naturally placed great stress upon the wrath and vengeful attributes of God the Father, thereby

smothering and perverting the true message of the gentle Jesus. He spent ten years in tireless travel, covering Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, the whole coast of the Aegean, Greece, Cyprus, Crete, Malta, Sicily, Naples and Rome. He was an intolerant religious bigot. But, wherever he went, he converted thousands of people to his version of Christianity.

It was his creed that destroyed the original one of gracious benignity and the achievement of spiritual exaltation through oneness with God. He demanded obedience with threats of Hellfire, required his converts to give up all the joys of life, to become masochists themselves and inflict sadism on those who would not accept his dogmas. The legacy he left has caused untold millions of people to lead lives of misery in the hope of better things in a life to come. He is responsible for the dirt and squalor that was imposed on the pious for nineteen hundred years. It was his teaching that brought about the age-long persecution of his own race, the Jews, and upon it was founded the Holy Inquisition, which tortured and burnt tens of thousands of peoples without mercy.

But the work of this fanatic detracts nothing from the beauty of Christ's original teaching. In believing in him a great part of mankind has known comfort and joy. Owing to the precept of charity which he left, inestimable good has been done for the poor and oppressed all over the world.

Mithraism and Manichaeism

Of these two the former was a debased form of Zoroastrianism and, during the early centuries of the Christian era, was very widespread throughout the Roman Empire.

Mithra was the ancient Indo-Iranian god of Light. He was not mentioned in the Zoroastrian Gathas, but appears from the time of the Persian conquests in the fourth century B.C., as a subordinate of Ormazd. His cult derived much from the Babylonian beliefs, and its principal breeding ground was Anatolia. Thence, in early Christian times, it spread south and west.

The mythical birth of Mithra took place from a rock. His legend recounts his adventures when hunting the sacred bull, a beautiful creature which at length he reluctantly slew as a sacrifice to the Sun god, who shared a feast of the bull's flesh with him, then carried him up to heaven in the chariot of the Sun. There the two deities more or less merged, as the protectors of men and the enemies of the dark destroyer, Ahriman. In due course the priests of Mithra caused Ormazd to become submerged in Mithra, then the purity of Zoroastrianism became lost in rituals and overlaid by beliefs adopted from other religions.

It will be particularly noted that blood sacrifices were restored and man was no longer held responsible for fostering the spark of divine Light within him. Instead, as with the Christians, he was given a personal god and promised salvation. As with Christianity, too, the Mithraists had a ritual of baptism and a sacrament. The latter consisted of bread and water, and was probably partaken of only by those who had passed several of the seven grades of initiation. Of these adepts a very high code of morality was expected and, again like the Christians, they were

expected to serve their god as spiritual crusaders.

The great strength of Mithraism lay in its rivalry with Christianity as a faith for the poor and humble. It acknowledged no class distinctions; the slave and the nobleman met in its temples as equals.

Compared with the splendid temples of the classic Greco-Roman gods, Mithraic temples were like the Nonconformist chapels of nineteenth-century England, as opposed to our great cathedrals. Known as 'grottoes', they were sometimes in caves but more usually long, narrow underground crypts. They rarely held more than fifty worshippers, who knelt against, or sat on, benches along either side. Their only decoration was a large carved plaque at one end, and these could be very beautiful. The carving represented Mithra wearing a Phrygian cap, with a torch-bearer on either side, slaying the bull while a scorpion stung its genitals and a dog and a serpent both lapped up blood from the wound. Behind the figures were the sacred symbols of the cult and the signs of the zodiac.

The great weakness of Mithraism was that it did not admit women; but it found many converts among bodies of men who were living together, and it was the Roman legions who carried it as far south as the Sudan and as far north as the borders of Scotland. An underground Mithraic temple was discovered in the City of London, when the site of a building in Cannon Street that had been destroyed by an air raid in the Second World War was being cleared.

Ostia, the port of Rome, was a great stronghold of Mithraism, and in the early centuries of the Christian era there were many thousands of Mithraists in Rome itself. In A.D. 274 the Emperor Aurelian associated himself with the 'unconquerable Sun', and so widespread was the cult at this time that some scholars aver that only by chance did Christianity become paramount in the Western world, instead of Mithraism.

That chance was the acceptance in A.D. 394 of Christianity by the Emperor Theodosius. The Christians had long been bitterly opposed to Mithraism and denounced it as a heresy. Imperial favour enabled them to crush the rival faith and, in an amazingly short time, persecution entirely destroyed Mithraism.

Mithraism contributed nothing to man's knowledge of the eternal verities; after its disappearance, the belief in the divine Power of Light was maintained only by the Parsees and, for many centuries, as a dim flicker in secret places.

Manichaeism was another offshoot of Zoroastrianism and also became a serious threat to Christianity; but it had a human founder. The prophet Mani was a native of Babylon, and he began to proclaim his faith in the year that Saphor I ascended the throne of Persia.

He asserted that he had received the revelations at the ages of twelve and twenty-four. The church he founded copied the Christian hierarchy, but had elements in it of the Zoroastrian dualism, the traditions of the Gnostics and the teachings of St Paul. His disciples were required to practice asceticism according to their degree of initiation.

Assisted by twelve apostles, Mani taught that the faith preached in India by Gautama the Buddha, in Persia by Zoroaster and in Palestine by Jesus Christ



The sacrifice of Mithra

were one and that he, Mani, was the ultimate spokesman on the way to achieve salvation.

One may feel that there is much to be said for his basic belief, and it spread rapidly in the Near East. But it was fanatically opposed by the Christians, who proclaimed it to be a dangerous heresy and, their powers by then having become considerable, they succeeded in stamping it out.

As will be seen, owing to Roman tolerance during the last century of the Western Empire, beliefs in the spiritual destiny of man were enormously varied. They ranged from those of intellectual agnostics who subscribed to the Stoic, Epicurean, Hedonistic or other philosophies of the Greeks, through the followers of doctrines

derived from Zoroaster and the worshippers of Jehovah and Christ, to innumerable wholly pagan cults whose votaries gashed themselves with knives and performed human sacrifices.

Mohammedanism

This faith is followed by nearly one-seventh of this world's population and is called by them Islam, which means 'peace through submission to the will of God'.

Its founder, Mahomet, was born in A.D. 570. He came from a good family, which had become poor, and it is believed that he spent his early years as a shepherd boy in the mountains outside Mecca. Later he accompanied some caravans on trading expeditions, and showed himself to be honest and competent. This led a rich widow named Khadija to entrust him with her business affairs. At the age of twenty-five he married her and, although she was much older than he was, he became so devoted to her that he took no other wife until after her death.

Mahomet was a very introspective man and, about the year 610, he formed the habit of going into the mountains to think and pray. One night on Mount Hira he had an overwhelming spiritual experience. According to the traditional account, a luminous being appeared, who declared himself to be the Archangel Gabriel, seized him by the throat and, in an imperious voice, revealed the word of God to him. As Mahomet is said to have been an epileptic, his vision may have had something in common with St Paul's vision of Jesus.

For a while he could not believe that he had really had this vision and, for fear of being laughed at, refrained from telling anyone about it except his wife. There followed a period of inner emptiness, during which he suffered great unhappiness. Then he was again seized with the conviction that he had a divine message to convey, and in 613, when he was over forty, he began to preach.

To begin with he told only a limited number of people about his mission; but, as his audiences grew, he met with considerable opposition. Mecca was not only a trading centre. Many pilgrims came there to worship at the temple which had been built round a black stone that was looked upon as sacred, and the priests who officiated there feared he would harm their lucrative livelihood.

In 619 he had the misfortune to lose both his wife and his uncle, Abu Talib, both of whom had given him their wholehearted support; and, as by then many Meccans had become openly hostile to him, he advised his most ardent followers to emigrate to Christian Ethiopia. But actually the move was made to the not very distant oasis of Yathrib.

Living in the oasis at that time there were two tribes of Arabs that were at loggerheads, and a community of Jews. Mahomet, who was a fluent speaker and an able diplomat, acted as arbitrator between the Arabs, and when he had brought them together it was agreed that he and all his followers who were still in Mecca should settle permanently in Yathrib. This move, known as the Hegira, occurred on July 16th A.D. 622. It is on that date that Mohammedans base their calendar, and in that year Islam was proclaimed not only as a religion, but also as a political body. Yathrib henceforth became known as Medina – the city of the Prophet.

Mahomet made it absolutely clear from the beginning that he made no claim to divinity, and he preached that there was only one God, Allah, 'the merciful, the compassionate'. He recognized Christ, but not as the Son of God, only as an inspired prophet like Abraham, Moses and himself. By this monotheism he hoped to win over the Jews, but in this he failed, as also with the Christians, who found too many divergences between their doctrine and his to accept it. But the greater part of the population in those parts was pagan, and from it he soon collected a numerous following.

His activities proving harmful to the Meccans, they went to war with him; or rather, for several years, there were, on and off, a series of raids and counter raids. These culminated in the defeat of the Meccans, and in 630 he captured Mecca.

There, in pursuance of his policy of outlawing paganism and destroying all idols, he turned the temple of the black stone into a Mohammedan sanctuary, since known as the Kaba, and gave new laws to the people. These, consisting of the formal pronouncements he had already made, with those he continued to make, form the Koran; which, with its commentaries, has become Islamic law.

Mahomet was an excellent administrator and had a strong sense of justice. He decreed that all men should be equal before the law, prohibited blood feuds and greatly improved the status of women. Though veiled and largely set apart, for the first time they were allowed to own property; men were henceforth limited to four legal wives, and husbands' obligations were defined. On the other hand, he accepted the principle of holy war and the forcible conversion of the unbeliever.

During these years his doctrine spread like wildfire, and when he died, on June 8th 632 at Medina, had been accepted by the greater part of the people of Arabia.

Mahomet left only daughters. One of them, Fatima, married his cousin, Ali, who had been one of his first converts, and their sons, being heirs by blood, could have claimed the succession to the caliphate, as the leadership of the Islamic world came to be called, but his followers decided on election. This later caused dissension and several times led to civil wars that temporarily weakened Arab expansion.

As a result of this schism, the majority of Muslims are Sunnis, who regard the Caliph as the executive chief of their community. The Shi'ites, on the other hand, look on him as an infallible Imam, divinely inspired by having inherited the blood of Ali. For reasons largely political, Persia became the stronghold of the latter sect.

However, between 632 and 661, under the first four Caliphs – Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman and Ali – Islam became a great power and drove the Byzantine Greeks out of Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Nubia and Cyrenaica. It also overran Persia and Morocco. This fantastic series of lightning conquests was continued by the penetration of India in the east and the subjugation of Spain in the west. Islam's advance in Europe was not checked until the Moors were defeated by Charles Martel, King of the Franks, at the battle of Tours in 732.

During the following centuries they several times besieged Byzantium, but without success, fought with and were defeated by the Seljuk Turks, one of whose leaders, Togrul Beg, made himself Caliph in 1040, and were temporarily driven



out of Persia by Genghis Khan in 1220. But they succeeded in holding on to most of their vast empire and, meanwhile, created a wonderful civilization.

Their mosques and palaces in Cairo, Kairouan, Cordoba and Granada testify to the genius of their architects; and, although their religion forbade embellishment by statues, their lace-like stonework is superb. Their gardens, in which fountains always played, were beautiful; their costumes and weapons magnificent. They inherited the knowledge of the Greeks, and not only kept its flame burning but also made many valuable additions to science and medicine. That the culture of the ancient world was not lost is due to them. It was the accounts of their civilization brought back to the west by the Crusaders, and later translations of the Arab scholars' works, which led at last to the Renaissance in Europe.

It is one of the tragedies of the world that the Arabs should have succumbed to the Turks, and had their empire pass into the hands of that barbarous people.

At the end of the third century A.D., the Roman Empire had been divided between Constantine I, who ruled the west from Rome, and Diocletian, who took the eastern territories and made his capital Byzantium. Although officially Roman, the latter took on much more the colour of a Greek civilization, as it inherited the major part of what had been Alexander the Great's dominions, and its armies consisted largely of Greeks. With only one brief reversion to paganism, under Julian the Apostate, it remained the stronghold of the Orthodox Christian Church for over eleven hundred years; then, at last, on May 30th 1453, it fell to the Ottoman Turks.

From Constantinople, as it was now called, the Sultans, who were also Caliphs, ruled theoretically through subject despots the whole of North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Asia Minor and the Balkans, until the states of the last achieved their independence early in the nineteenth century. These monarchs lived in splendour, but they gave positively nothing to mankind. Of all the great empires, it is the only one that neither produced splendid buildings nor advanced learning. The Turks left their subject peoples to rot in poverty and ignorance.

The Arabs eclipsed them in every way and were a truly great people. Suleiman the Magnificent displayed a chivalry equal to that of any Christian knight, and Haroun al-Rashid, with his splendid Court at Baghdad, has been rendered immortal in the *Thousand Nights and a Night*. From those delightful tales we get a splendid picture of how both his rich and poor subjects lived. Among them there is hardly one in which a djin, ifrit, demon, or some form of magic does not play a part.

The ambition to achieve sainthood is better provided for by Islam than by many other religions. A devout individual does not have to struggle alone to reach a state of sanctity; he or she – for women may also become initiates – requests admission to a circle that forms part of one of the several orders of Sufis. If accepted, he becomes a disciple and submits for a period to an extremely strict discipline, until he is considered worthy of advancement.



Dancing dervishes

These orders are said to have been formed by the companions of Mahomet, and their circles have long existed in every part of the Islamic world. Some fakirs in India are Sufis; so also are the dervishes of Turkey, Persia and the Sudan.

Certain sects of dervishes are far from saintly and batten as unscrupulously on the poorer classes as did the Christian wandering friars in Europe during the Middle Ages. Many dervishes are conjurers, hypnotists and small-time sorcerers who make a good living by selling amulets, love charms and even poisons. But the genuine Sufis of the highest grade are true holy men. Their way of life is to participate in the normal activities of the people yet remain spiritually apart. By the strictest possible observance of the Koran, and the highest degree of physical cleanliness and purity of mind, they seek communion with God.

It is recorded that the Sufi saints have performed many miracles, including raising the dead. So, as in the Christian world, concurrently with a belief in God, the Mohammedans continue to seek help in their daily lives from the invisible powers of the occult.

The Cabala

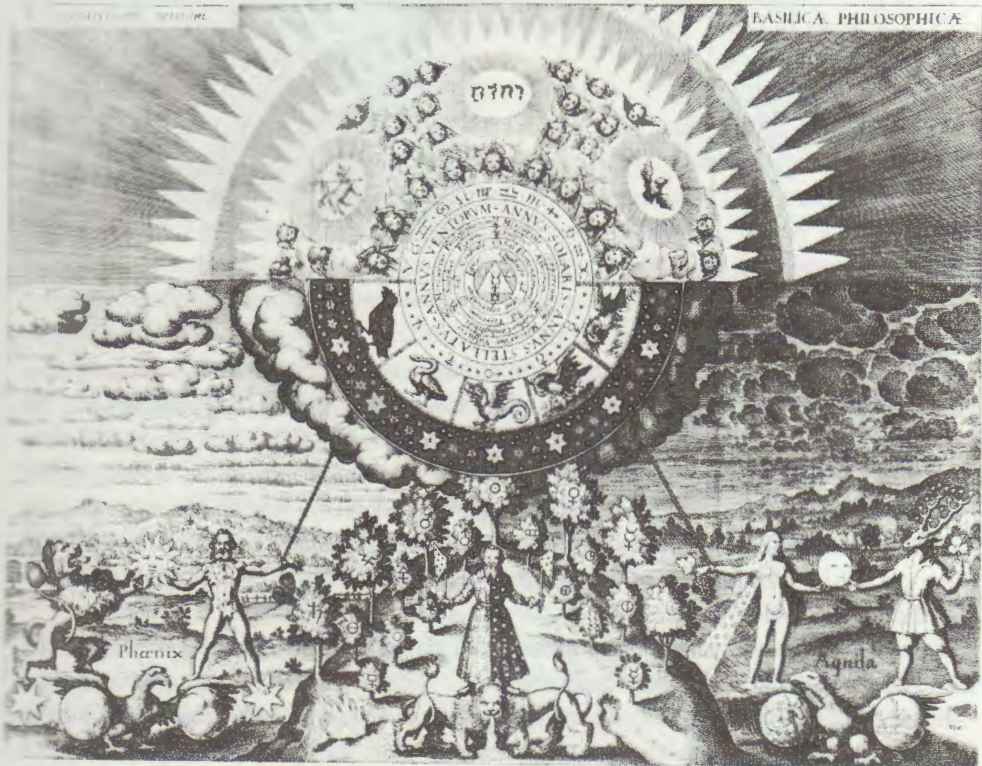
This is the keystone of all mysticism. It is said by some to have been divulged to Abraham by God, but the probability is that the Jews learnt of it from the Egyptian or Babylonian priests. In any case, for many centuries it remained the closely guarded secret of Jewish wise men. The word is derived from the Hebrew *quibbel*,

'to receive', and signifies 'knowledge handed down by tradition'. Its doctrines are contained mainly in the *Sepher ha-Zohar*, the Book of Splendour, and the *Sepher Yetzirah*, the Book of Formation. They furnish the thirty-two Ways of Wisdom, the fifty-two Doors of Knowledge and the seventy-two Names of the Deity.

It was believed by initiates that the Universe consisted of nine spheres, the outer one being that of God, the next that of the stars; then came those of the Sun, the five planets and the Moon. On being sent forth from God, the spirit penetrated all the other spheres, collecting a varying degree of their qualities from each: from Jupiter ambition, from Venus capacity to love, from Saturn melancholy and so on; then on reaching Earth it received its covering of flesh. At death the reverse happened.

According to the Cabalists, if one knew the way to go about it, one did not have to die in order to return to God. This could be achieved if one possessed the magic formulae for leaving one's body and penetrating the spheres. The difficulty was that, on leaving Earth, the spirit had to make its way through hordes of demons and demiurges, and that each sphere was guarded by a phalanx of angels that would do their utmost to turn it back. In consequence, it was impossible to complete this hazardous journey unless one went armed with a great number of words of power, the use of which would paralyse the evil spirits and compel each set of angels to open its gates. If the spirit did succeed in achieving this mystical ascent, it not

The alchemic correspondence of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm



only became one with God but, on its return to its body, possessed the powers of God.

In preparation for attempting to attain his objective, the Cabalist had to train himself to perfect physical fitness by exercises that have some resemblance to Yoga. Breathing in regular rhythm was very important; also to achieve complete immobility for long periods. For this he did not allow himself to assume a relaxed position. On the contrary, it had to be done while the body was contorted; for example, standing on one leg and claspng the ankle of the raised leg with one hand while holding the other straight up in the air.

The key to this mystery was embodied in the Sephirotic Tree. Its symbols represented the whole of creation and all the phenomena of the Universe, reconciling in unity every apparent diversity. On the right-hand side it is male, on the left side female, and in the middle bisexual. It is at once the Macrocosm, which is



A diagram believed to be extremely potent in raising spirits to find treasure



A Jewish cabalist holding the Sephirotic Tree

the Universe in the form of God, and the Microcosm, which is an infinitely tiny copy of the same in the form of Man. The lowest Sephiroth, Malkuth, stands for the kingdom; the one above, Yesod, for the foundation; the next two above, to the left Hod for honour and to the right Netsah for victory. The middle circle stands for Tiphereth, which is both comeliness and glory. Above again, to the left Geburah for power and on the right Hesed for both benignity and grace. The top pair, on the left Binah for understanding and on the right Hokmah for wisdom. On the apex Kether, the crown.

Sometimes the tree is shown as a man, the upper triangle representing his head, the middle branches his trunk and arms, the lower triangle his genitals and legs. The branches of the tree form three triangles, the lower two pointing downwards. The top triangle indicates the creative forces in God and the Universe; the second

the human trinity of father, mother and child; the third the forces that play on man – impulse, animality and thought. Each branch of the tree is a path to higher wisdom, and its esoteric ramifications are so many and so complicated that only a brain of the first order is capable of grasping them all.

It is believed that the initiates among the Gnostics had mastered these secrets; but they were unknown to Christians in the Middle Ages, and most jealously guarded by the Jews, being handed down by a very limited number of Rabbis from one to another.

After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the great dispersal followed. Communities of Jews migrated from Palestine to all parts of the Near East. In some places they were allowed to settle in peace; at others, as the Christians grew more powerful, the Jews were persecuted as the race that had caused Christ to be crucified, and were driven to move further afield in the hope of better fortune. Islam was more tolerant of them and, in the wake of the Moors, considerable numbers of them settled in Spain. From there they slowly penetrated every country in Europe.

Until the sixteenth century they succeeded in retaining the secrets of the Cabala; but after that, either from stolen manuscripts or by other means, Latin translations of the Cabalistic documents were made. The Church looked on the study of such a subject as heresy in the first degree, and those were the days when the dungeons of the Holy Inquisition were crammed with poor wretches awaiting trial only on the merest suspicion of having transgressed the ordinances of the Church. In consequence, the secrets of the Cabala continued to be guarded as closely as ever by Jews and Christians alike who had penetrated them.

The Dark Ages

In the first century after the death of Christ, the New Religion gained many converts. Its doctrines of equality before God, that Christ had died to save mankind, that repentance of sins assured their forgiveness and that a rich man could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven, naturally had a strong appeal to the slaves, the poor and the humble. Moreover, considerable numbers of humane intellectuals among the higher classes were won over by this new faith that promised salvation to those who regarded all men as brothers and led unselfish lives.

Antioch became the first stronghold of the Christians. The missions of St Paul and of the disciples secured many thousands of converts in Asia Minor, Greece and Egypt. In Rome, for a while, the Christians were driven underground and had to celebrate the new mystery of the sacrament down in the catacombs. But Constantine the Great made it the State religion, and from then on for several centuries, until the coming of Mahomet, the power of the Christian Church increased throughout all the Mediterranean lands.

Yet, in those early centuries after Christ, its bishops, with some exceptions, were very far from being ascetics. It has so rightly been said that power corrupts, and the majority of the chief priests of Christianity were no exceptions to that rule. They were more concerned with politics than saving souls, and at their conferences spent much of their time seeking praise for their eloquence and



Three medieval clerics: a carving in Winchester Cathedral

reasoning abilities in debating obscure points of doctrine, such as how many angels could stand on the point of a needle.

With the final partition of the Empire in A.D. 364, there came the great schism. In the West the successors of St Peter continued to hold sway from Rome over Christians in their half of the Empire. In the East the Bishops of Byzantium asserted their independence and, as patriarchs, became the chief priests of the Greek Orthodox Church.

In A.D. 410, Alaric the Goth sacked Rome. As a ransom for the defeated Emperor he demanded his weight in gold, then contemptuously threw his sword into the big scales for extra measure. So ended the Empire in the West. But, as had always proved the case except with the Jews, the victors feared the god of the vanquished, so the papacy was allowed to continue and, in course of time, ever greater numbers of the barbarians became Christians, owing spiritual allegiance to the Pope.

As the power of the papacy grew, the popes tended more and more only to pretend humility in public, and in private to surround themselves with luxury, until it became accepted that they were powerful potentates, the equals and, in their status as God's vicars on earth, the superiors of kings. They piled up treasure and recruited armies. In papal bulls they fulminated against anyone who attempted

to curb their power and, as a last resort, blackmailed them with threats of ex-communication.

In Byzantium there continued to be an Emperor, but the patriarchs wielded great power and also lived in luxury, holding court in their palaces. They were later in the happy position of being able to make great fortunes by negotiating the purchase of supplies for the armies of the Crusaders during their campaigns to capture Jerusalem. The degree of indifference to Christian morality in Byzantium can be judged by the fact that Theodosia, who had been a prostitute, became an Empress.

Between the higher priesthods of the two Churches there was little to choose, except that the Greeks were the more civilized. Clean-living, truly pious priests were a small minority. The great majority openly kept mistresses and indulged in every sort of vice. One calls to mind the entertainments given by the Borgia Pope, Alexander VI. On one occasion, for his guests' amusement, he engaged the hundred most beautiful courtesans in Rome, had them strip naked in his ballroom and there copulate with his men-at-arms, having offered valuable prizes for the couples who performed in the most lascivious positions; while his daughter, the beautiful Lucretia, and the other ladies of his Court, looked on and applauded. That similar exhibitions were given by earlier popes and the patriarchs in Byzantium there can be no doubt. Meanwhile genuinely holy lives were being led by exceptional characters like St Francis of Assisi.

In both empires, side by side with Christianity, the old pagan beliefs were still held by vast numbers of the people, and only the most truly pious clergy escaped contamination by them. The result was that many priests pandered to their congregations by introducing into their services parts of the old rituals only thinly disguised.

Superstition was as rife as ever and many of the clergy, high and low, practised sorcery. Pope Leo the Great, in the fifth century; Pope Honorius in the seventh century; and Pope Silvester II in the ninth century all practised black magic. One of the most famous books on magic is *The Grimoire of Pope Honorius*.

To end this section on a lighter note, perhaps I may be permitted to quote a passage from that delightfully amusing book, *The Twilight of the Gods* by the late Dr Richard Garnett, sometime Chief Librarian of the British Museum Library:

'It will be a tough business,' observed the sorcerer... 'It will require fumigations.'

'Yes,' said the bishop, 'and suffumigations.'

'Aloes and mastic,' advised the sorcerer.

'Aye,' assented the bishop, 'and red sanders.'

'We must call in Primeumaton,' said the warlock.

'Clearly,' said the bishop, 'and Amioram.'

'Triangles,' said the sorcerer.

'Pentacles,' said the bishop.

'In the hour of Methon,' said the sorcerer.



'I should have thought Tafrac,' suggested the bishop, 'but I defer to your better judgment.'

'I can have the blood of a goat?' queried the wizard.

'Yes,' said the bishop, 'and of a monkey also.'

'Does your Lordship think that one might venture to go so far as a little unweaned child?'

'If absolutely necessary,' said the bishop.

'I am delighted to find such liberality of sentiment on your Lordship's part,' said the sorcerer. 'Your Lordship is evidently of the profession.'

It is not difficult to suppose that many a conversation on more or less similar lines took place in the Dark Ages.

The Incas

While Europe continued to languish in the Dark Ages, one of the most remarkable civilizations of all time was developing in South America.

On the Pacific coast, the nomads who had migrated from Asia across the Bering Strait and gradually populated the American continent had, in the neighbourhood of Peru, emerged from barbarism about 2500 B.C.

Pottery and other objects recovered in recent times from graves by archaeologists show that they had achieved a fair degree of culture, but very little is known about them because the Incas' policy, like that of the Spaniards who conquered them, was as far as possible to eliminate all evidence of the culture of their predecessors. Their principal god is said to have taken the form of a cat, but I suggest that it is more likely to have been that of a puma.

So vague is our information about the early Andean peoples that the experts cannot date within 200 years the blossoming of the Mochicas, but it is thought that they flourished in Peru for some 700 years until they were overcome by the Tiahuanacos, round about A.D. 1000. However, the Mochicas were builders on no small scale, for there are still the remains of enormous pyramids raised by them to the Sun and Moon near Trujillo. The former is estimated to be formed of 130,000,000 sun-dried mud bricks.

The Tiahuanacos originated in the Bolivian Andes near Lake Titicaca. Swooping down from their mountains to the coast, they took over the Mochica Empire and became for some 300 years the most powerful nation in those parts. Toward the end of that period there were many wars between rival peoples, from which the Chimús emerged as the dominant race. Their capital, Chan Chan, was near Trujillo. Owing to lack of water, it is now derelict and deserted, but its ruins cover eight square miles, and consist of big rectangular blocks of houses, lofty walls, reservoirs and pyramid temples, all built out of adobe mud. It was from these people that the Incas inherited their highly developed system of government and social stratification from god-king down to peasant.

Opposite The temptation of St Anthony

Like the Aztecs in Mexico, the Incas came late on the scene. Their first emperor, Manco Capac, who may be only a legendary figure, is said to have lived about A.D. 1150, and it was not until some 200 years later that the expansion of the race began. But, under their ninth emperor, Pachacutec, it was incredibly rapid. Between about 1350 and 1500 they conquered practically the whole of the South American littoral between the Andes and the sea. From their capital, Cuzco, 11,000 feet up in the heart of the mountains, the Lord Incas ruled with absolute power from the borders of Ecuador down to Central Chile, a distance of over 3,000 miles. That is very nearly as far as from London to Khartoum.

Cuzco is perhaps the most remarkable city ever built. Its palaces, houses and towering walls all consist of huge blocks of stone, so skilfully dressed and fitted that it is impossible to get even a piece of paper between them. The only buildings comparable to them are those of the pre-Hellenes at Mycene and Tiryns; and, were the two civilizations not separated by 3,000 years, one would be tempted to believe that the Incas had learnt how to raise monoliths from the early Greeks. But the Greek cities were incomparably smaller than those of the Incas, and the latter were faced with the additional problem of having to man-handle blocks of stone weighing up to 200 tons up rugged, precipitous heights, before they could even begin to get them into position.

The streets of the city formed a gridiron, converging on two central plazas, the principal one of which was called Huaycapata, Joy Square. On it stood the great Temple of the Sun and others to the Moon, Stars, Lightning and Rainbow. The walls of the city and its largest buildings were not carved like those in Mexico, but they were covered with gold plates, each weighing up to ten pounds. What their appearance must have been in strong sunlight dazzles the imagination.

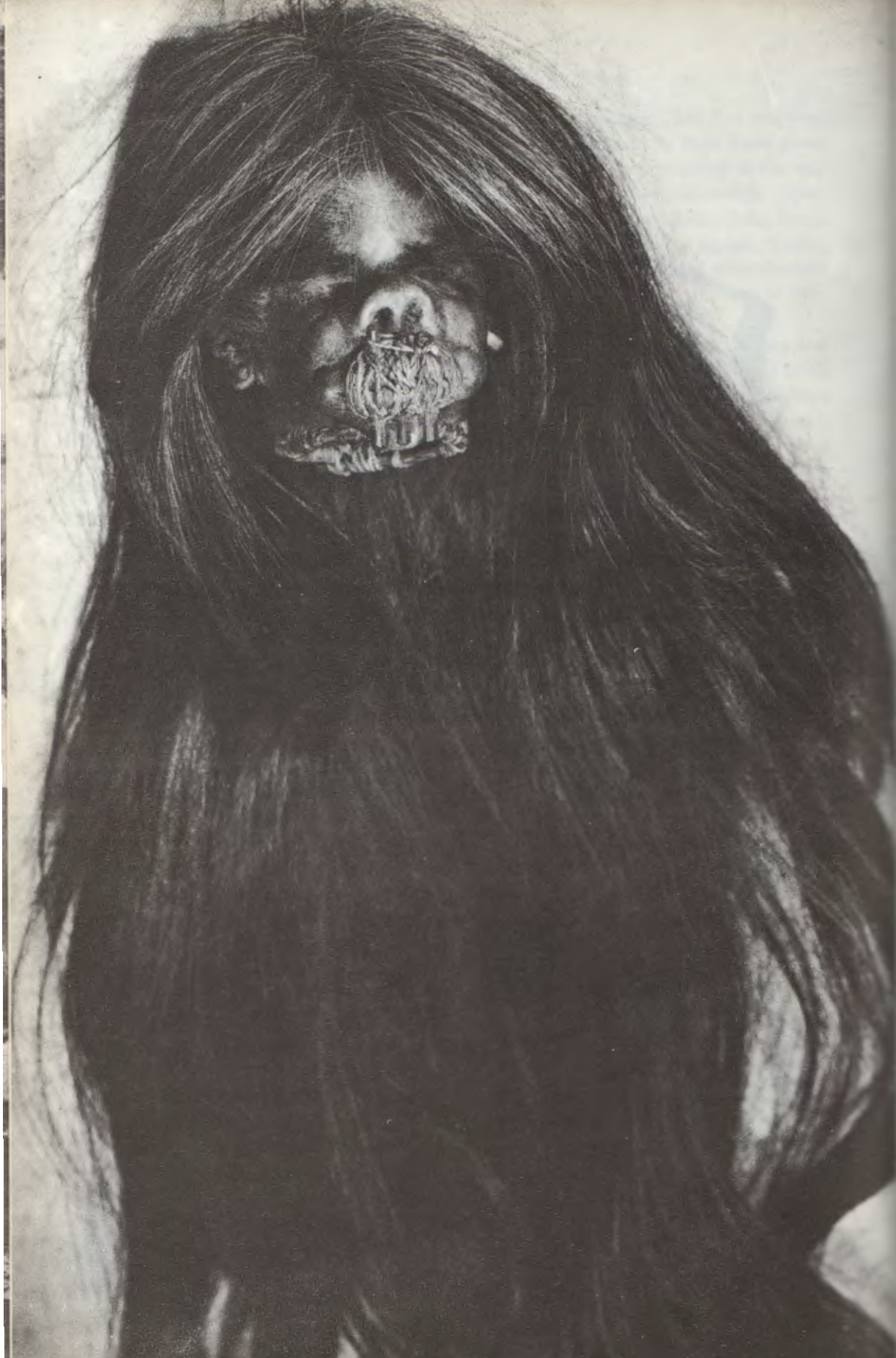
Yet there were still greater wonders. Adjoining the Temple of the Sun was the sanctuary of the priests, and in it there was a garden; but a garden of whose like no European had ever dreamt; paths, grass, clods of earth, life-size flowers and maize with corn cobs were all made of solid gold; so were twenty llamas with their young, and life-size shepherds with slings and crooks, to watch them.

Cuzco was only one of many fine Inca cities, each having a huge adjacent fort to guard it, and the roads that linked them were another marvel. They surpassed even the Roman roads, the longest of which was from the frontier of Scotland to Jerusalem. The Incas' coastal road was 2,520 miles long, and their inland road along the Andes, which in parts touched an altitude of 17,160 feet, was 3,250 miles long. Moreover, the standard width was twenty-four feet. There were many others running laterally down the valleys from the mountains to the coast, and scores of bridges of several different types.

The most famous of these was the bridge of San Luis Rey. It was a suspension bridge, some 300 feet above the bottom of the valley, made of grass ropes as thick as a man's body and 284 feet long. This bridge was constructed by the Incas in 1350 and continued in use until 1890 – 540 years. Had the ancients had such a

Opposite The mummy of a woman, from ancient Peru





bridge they would surely have acclaimed it as the eighth wonder of the world.

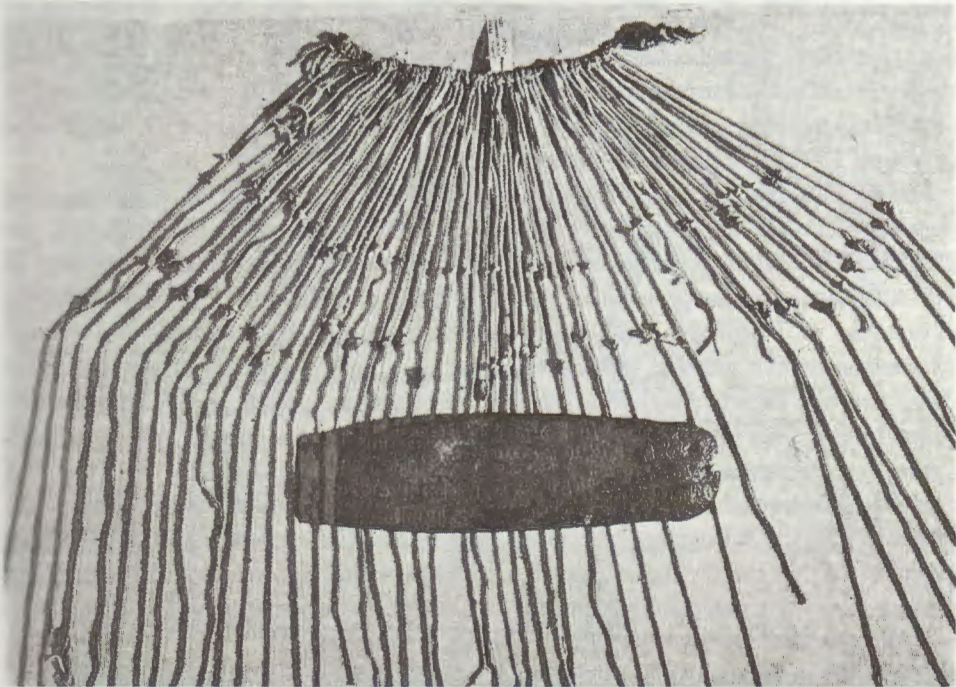
The main object of this wonderful system of communications was military. It enabled the Lord Inca to dispatch forces in an incredibly short time to any part of his vast dominions threatened by invasion or rebellion. And information of possible trouble reached him with amazing speed. Relays of runners were stationed along the roads. News could be brought by them from Quito in the far north to the capital, a distance of 1,250 miles, in five days and nights. This was faster than Roman couriers and equalled only by the pony gallopers of Genghis Khan.

It was not only in their road system that the Incas resembled the Romans. They also did so in their love of law and order, and the admirable administration of their empire. Each year a census was taken. From each territory a certain number of men were called up for the army, and others to maintain the roads. Each township held its agricultural land in common. Annually it was shared out in accordance with the number of available workers in each family. The town or village was then taxed in accordance with its output. At a certain age every man had to take a wife and each child of the marriage was duly registered.

All this is the more remarkable in that the Incas had no means of writing. They sent their messages and kept their records by a complicated system of differently coloured strings, in which they tied groups of knots at intervals.

The laws were strict and their form of justice is to be admired, for the punishments for crime or negligence were graded in accordance with the status of the

Opposite A shrunken head used by the Jivaro Indians of Ecuador as a powerful element in magic
Below The Incas' only form of 'writing' a group of knotted strings



offender. The higher in rank and the greater his responsibility, the heavier was the penalty.

The Lord Incas always took their sisters as wives, for no one dreamt of contesting that they were incarnations of God on earth, and the divine strain could not be polluted by common blood. But the prettiest girls from all the towns were sent to the Lord Inca and known as 'chosen women'. From them he selected his concubines; the others wove his garments, which were of the very finest vicuna wool. Although the girls numbered several score, they must have been kept busy, for the Lord Inca never wore any piece of clothing twice. Immediately he had taken it off, it was burnt.

By his 'chosen women' he had many children; his half-royal sons administered the empire and officered the army. The 'chosen women' were housed in almost inaccessible palaces high up on the mountain sides. But when the Spanish soldiers came, they managed to climb to one and raped all the girls in it.

After the Incas had defeated the Chimús, they never lost a battle against a people of their own continent. It was their custom to carry out a great slaughter of enemy troops after a victory, and later another ceremonial slaughter of enemy leaders at Cuzco, after which they amused themselves by making effigies out of the bodies, distending their stomachs and using them as drums.

But they were not by nature as cruel as the Aztecs, and, once a nation had been subdued, its people were treated with kindness. At times of drought, they sacrificed animals to bring rain, and if the rain did not come, a human; but otherwise their gods did not call for blood sacrifices. Their magicians were, of course, all priests, and they practised both black and white magic, summoning spirits either to kill or cure. We have pictures of them conjuring up demons, and it is interesting to note that all the demons are shown with horns. The fact that all the Lord Inca's clothes were burnt immediately after he had taken them off is a clear indication of the priests' being aware that anything he had worn was charged with his personality, and so could be used to put a spell on him.

Only the Lord Inca was allowed more than one wife, and from the royal sons they bore him he nominated his heir. It was the Incas' tragedy that, in 1525, the Emperor Huayna Capac died without having chosen a successor. It was just at that time that Francisco Pizarro learnt of the 'Land of Gold' and began to make plans to conquer it. Two royal sons, Huáscar and Atahualpa, both claimed the throne. There ensued five years of terrible civil war, in which thousands of warriors were slain, and the nation was left exhausted. Huáscar was killed and Atahualpa was about to make his entry as Lord Inca into Cuzco. At that precise moment, May 13th 1532, Pizarro arrived on the scene.

It is a strange thing, but there had never been any communication between the Mexican and the Peruvian civilizations, so the Incas knew nothing about Cortés's conquest of the Aztecs, and very little about the white men who had been arriving in America ever since the first landing of Columbus forty years earlier. They even believed that a mounted man and his horse were one animal.

Pizarro had the good luck to encounter Atahualpa on his way from the sulphur

CONQUISTA CORTALELACAVESA ATAGVALDAINGA VMATA CVCHIV



The murder of Atahualpa

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baths. The Conquistador had with him only 130 foot soldiers and forty cavalry; but one blast from the Spanish cannon was enough. The Lord Inca was captured, and after that none of his warriors dared lift a hand lest he be harmed.

Atahualpa agreed to ransom himself by filling with gold a room twenty-five feet long and fifteen feet wide, as high as a white line that a tall man could not reach. The priceless ornaments were all melted down; so, by order of the Spanish king, were all the other beautiful gold works of art that were sent to Spain.

Not long after this enormous ransom had been paid, Pizarro treacherously had Atahualpa tried for heresy, and strangled.

How great our debt is to the Incas few people realize. They were the greatest agriculturalists that the world has ever known. In the lowlands and on terraced mountain slopes, they were the first to cultivate pineapples, cacao, peanuts, avocados, cashews, tomatoes, peppers, papaya, mulberries, manioc, tapioca, many varieties of beans, twenty kinds of maize, 240 kinds of potatoes, and a great number of medical herbs. More than half the foods that the world eats today were developed by them.

In Peru there was no firm, restraining hand like that with which the humane Cortés protected the Indians in Mexico. Lusting for gold, the barbarians who called themselves Christians slaughtered the Incas by the tens of thousands and utterly destroyed their wonderful civilization.

The Rosicrucians

Up and down the world today there are many societies calling themselves Rosicrucians, but the majority of them are no more than associations, comparatively easy to join, that have been formed for studying the occult. Some have links with Freemasonry, and there are at least two rival orders in the United States.

The original order is said to have been founded as a result of the publication in 1614 of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. It recorded the travels, some 200 years earlier, of a German named Christian Rosenkreuz to Morocco, Egypt, Syria and Arabia, in which countries he came into possession of much secret wisdom, including a knowledge of alchemy and the Cabala.

On his return to Germany he imparted this knowledge to first three, then a total of eight companions. It was agreed that the existence of this fraternity was to be kept secret for 100 years. It is said that, after 120 years, a member discovered Rosenkreuz's secret burial-place, with his body perfectly preserved, and certain esoteric documents.

Rosenkreuz is reputed to have lived for 106 years, dying in 1484. If so, his tomb would have been opened in 1604, and the founding of the order preceded the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. As the travels described in the book are very similar to those of Paracelsus, the famous Swiss alchemist and physician who lived in the first half of the sixteenth century, many authorities believe that he was the actual founder of the order, and that Rosenkreuz was only a mythical figure.

However that may be, by the middle of the seventeenth century there were



Members of a French Lodge awaiting the arrival of the Master Masons

branches of the order in several European countries, the one in England being founded by the alchemist Robert Fludd.

Tradition asserts that the doctrine of the genuine Rosicrucians is a combination of the beliefs of Akhnaton the 'heretic' Pharaoh, the Christian Gnostics and Jewish Cabalists, and that in each country branches of the order are alternately active and dormant for periods of 108 years.

The Freemasons

Just as with the Rosicrucians, the term Masonry is applied to several societies that differ in their activities and objectives. Their creed and rituals are held to be strictly secret, but there is good reason to suppose that the basis of the Masonic belief is that the Universe is symbolized by a building, the apex of which is God.

Freemasonry has its origin in medieval times in England as a craft guild; but, owing to the lives led by the stonemasons of those days, it differed from all others. Goldsmiths, tailors, vintners and the rest were all more or less permanently resident in cities, and had their guildhouses in them. The masons, on the other

hand, were migrants, working perhaps for months or even years on a castle in one county, then moving to work, again for a long period, on a monastery in another county at the other end of the kingdom; or possibly in France, where English masons were very highly thought of.

On each building site they were provided with a 'lodge', in which they not only kept their tools and fed, but also discussed their conditions of employment. For this last reason, to ensure secrecy, no one other than themselves was allowed inside the lodge.

There came a time when, presumably to secure patronage, men who were not working masons, but gentry or nobility, were given the freedom of these lodges. The first on record is John Boswell, Laird of Auchinleck, who attended the Edinburgh Lodge in June 1600. During the seventeenth century this innovation spread rapidly; distinguished men of learning, such as Elias Ashmole, the founder of the Ashmolean Library, and many peers, among them a Duke of Richmond, became Freemasons.

The Grand Lodge of England was founded at the Apple Tree Tavern, near Covent Garden, in 1717; a Grand Lodge in Scotland, where Freemasonry was particularly strong, in 1736; and others in Ireland, the United States, India and the Caribbean. During the War of Independence, the Americans broke away; but, instead of having one Grand Lodge for the United States, a number were created, each remaining paramount in its own territory. There are now over 9,000 lodges in all parts of the world, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland.

Men of all Christian sects were admitted from the start, and Jews from soon after 1723. But the Roman Catholic Church regarded Freemasonry as a heresy, and Pope Clement XII issued a bull condemning it. For doing so he had ample reason; because Freemasonry had developed in a very different way in several Continental countries from that which it had in Britain and the United States.

It is beyond question that, in the English-speaking countries, the secret meetings of Freemasons have never been used for political ends. On the contrary, one of the main objectives is to foster goodwill between men of all creeds and races; and, as the world's greatest charitable organization, Freemasonry has done an inestimable amount of good. In British lodges loyalty to the Crown is universal and, from the end of the eighteenth century, many members of the Royal Family have been Grand Masters.

But in some places, France particularly, Freemasonry became a cover for atheists and anarchists. The Lodge of the Grand Orient, which became very powerful, rejected the fundamental requirement of Freemasonry – the belief that God is the Great Architect of the Universe. There is reason to believe that the Rosicrucians were associated with it, and that the policy of this secret society was then both anti-Church and anti-State.

The Lodge of the Grand Orient certainly played a considerable part in bringing about the French Revolution. Philippe d'Orléans was a member of it. To curry favour with the mob he gave up his title of Duke and took the name of Philippe

Égalité; then voted in the National Assembly for the death of his cousin, Louis XVI. It is satisfactory to record that his having called himself Equality Philippe did not save him from, a few months later, also being sent to the guillotine.

It is on account of the subversive activities of the Continental Freemasons, and the supposition that their rites incorporate malefic occult operations, that not only does the Catholic Church condemn Freemasonry, but it was also banned by Hitler and is forbidden in Communist countries.

The Theosophists

The basis of this movement is a combination of religion and philosophy, through which its leaders claimed a special insight into the divine nature and its processes. Their beliefs owe more to Indian modes of thought than to Greco-European ones, and their mysticism has strong associations with the ideas of Meister Eckhart, Jacob Böhme and Emanuel Swedenborg. They have also embodied in their doctrine reincarnation, certain of the theories put forward by Paracelsus and their own interpretation of the Cabala.

When we consider the characters of the two women mainly responsible for the creation and propagation of Theosophy, we shall no longer be surprised that it is such a strange mixture.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was born in Russia in 1831, but was of German blood. At the age of sixteen she married, but left her husband after a few months. She then spent many years travelling in Turkey, Egypt, Greece and Canada, crossed the United States in a covered wagon, went on to Central and South America, India, Java and Tibet. Having spent some time in the latter country, she returned to Russia in 1856. A few years later she set out again for the Near East and India, paid a second visit to Tibet in 1868 and to Egypt in 1872. In 1873 she went to New York; and there, with the assistance of Colonel H. S. Olcott and William Q. Judge, in 1875 she founded the Theosophical Society.

In 1879 she and Olcott went to India and established the headquarters of the Society at Adyar, near Madras. One of the Hidden Masters, named Koot Hoomi, became a frequent visitor to the establishment. Not only did he appear to Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, C. W. Leadbeater and others, but he showered them with letters that fell from ceilings and appeared on tables.

Unfortunately for the fraternity, a most unpleasant couple named Coulomb, who had been taken on to run the house, proved antagonistic. A room known as the Occult Room backed on to Madame Blavatsky's bedroom. In the Occult Room there was a shrine enclosed in a wall cupboard. At times, when the cupboard was opened, flowers or a letter from Koot Hoomi, that had not been there a few minutes earlier, mysteriously arrived.

The Coulombs accused Madame Blavatsky of being a fraud, and the Society for Psychical Research sent a Mr Hodgson out to investigate. It then emerged that behind a wardrobe in Madame Blavatsky's bedroom there was a hole in the wall, through which anyone could have put articles into the shrine, while the



cupboard containing it was shut, without the people in the Occult Room seeing them do so.

Madame Blavatsky's defence was that out of malice the Coulombs had made the hole during her absence. But the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research gave their verdict against her.

After leaving India for the last time she settled first in Germany, then moved to London, where she had established a European Headquarters. She died on May 8th 1891.

In addition to being an inexhaustible traveller, she was a most prolific writer. Her book *Isis Unveiled* attracted world-wide attention, and it was followed by many others. According to her there existed a 'secret doctrine' that had been transmitted through the ages by a series of Mahatmas, living in various parts of the world, but in touch with one another. She claimed that in Tibet a Master Morya had taken her as his disciple, and that she spoke with his authority. However that may be, she was a remarkable woman, and in her many years of travel must have acquired an immense knowledge of her subject; but one is inclined to think that it was somewhat ill-digested.

After her death, Colonel Olcott remained President of the Society, and on his death, in 1907, another remarkable woman succeeded him. This was Mrs Annie Besant.

Born in 1847, Annie Besant early became one of the best-known firebrands and trouble-makers of late Victorian times. She was a born revolutionary who wrote and lectured without pause, advocating socialism and atheism. She became a trade union organizer and strike leader, and was sent to prison for obscenity. Then, in 1889, she read Madame Blavatsky's book *The Secret Doctrine* and overnight abandoned atheism. Henceforth she devoted her boundless energy to spreading the doctrine of Theosophy.

In 1893 she went to India and there discovered that in most of her previous incarnations she had been an Indian; so she adopted Hinduism as her basic religion and combined it with Theosophy. Fierily espousing India's demand for home rule, she would not submit to Ghandi's policy of passive resistance and, as she refused to discontinue her subversive activities during the war, in 1917 the Government, very rightly, decided to put her in a concentration camp.

By 1909 she had 'discovered' young Krishnamurti and proclaimed him as the 'new Messiah'. But when he grew older he repudiated the divinity that had been thrust upon him, which was a sad blow to Mrs Besant. Her turbulent career came to an end in Madras at the age of nearly eighty-six.

One cannot help feeling that, with such an unbalanced lady for long its principal director, Theosophy became a forerunner of modern spiritual thinking, in which such Light as there is has been almost eclipsed under a welter of outworn religions, ignorance, superstitions and false doctrines, calculated to retard rather than advance man's oneness with God.

Opposite Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the creator of the Theosophical Society



PART 5

Of Witches and Warlocks

Introductory

Christianity was brought to Britain during the latter centuries of the Roman occupation; but, about 400 years after the Roman legions left in A.D. 407, the Vikings began their raids, and in due course the Danes became the masters of a great part of England. So far Christianity had been no more than just one of the many religions brought from the Mediterranean, and such Christians as escaped massacre took refuge in Wales. The great bulk of the population, recognizing the Norse gods as very similar to their own ancient deities, continued happily to celebrate their pagan rites.

Some 200 years after the departure of the Romans, St Augustine arrived, was well received by King Ethelbert and built, in its earliest form, Canterbury Cathedral. At school one was led to suppose that, from that point on, everything was plain sailing for the Christians, and that within a few score years the English people had been converted to Christianity. That, in fact, was very far from being the case. Queens, kings and the greater part of the nobility accepted the new religion; and, in most cases, blackmailed by a fanatical and militant priesthood with threats of Hellfire and damnation, handed over much of their treasure for building churches, abbeys and priories. But this probably had little effect on the common people.

By that time the original Celtic stock, whom we term ancient Britons, had become diluted through 400 years of Roman occupation and 300 years of invasions by Danes, Jutes, Angles and other Norsemen, so that, through intermarriage, by far the greater part of the population of England had coalesced into the Anglo-Saxon race.

The Little People

But there was also a very much smaller race, having entirely different characteristics, that lived apart, widely scattered in small groups. This race, according to that very high authority, Professor Margaret Murray, was descended from the Neolithic men who continued to populate Europe in the Bronze Age. These descendants were known as the Little People.

For a further 600 years after the arrival of St Augustine, although gradually increasing numbers of the Anglo-Saxon peasantry were baptized and paid lip-service to Christianity, the great majority continued to worship the Old God, and



A gleeful imp



A 'psychic photograph' of fairies

the Little People never acknowledged the Christian God at all. Until the last of them disappeared in the eighteenth century, they remained firmly pagan.

It will surprise many readers to learn that – in Professor Murray's view, which I find very convincing – these descendants of an ancient race were no other than the fairies, so often referred to in our early literature and accounts of witch trials.

Professor Murray asserts that fairies as envisaged by the modern mind were invented by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In it, for the first time, there appear these enchanting miniature folk of the imagination, flitting on their gossamer wings from flower to flower, drinking from acorn cups, dancing in rings that left dark circles on the grass, and amusing themselves by weaving enchantments.

Only in this last did they resemble their flesh-and-blood prototypes. But Shakespeare's delightful conception caught on and spread far and wide, producing in the following centuries the countless fairy tales for children, beneath which the true origin of the species was gradually forgotten, then became almost lost.

The skeletons found in Neolithic graves show that the average man was only five feet five inches in height, and the woman proportionately smaller; so, by the standards of later centuries, the fairies would have been a race of European pygmies. In the chronicles of the Middle Ages, fairy men were described as like boys of ten or twelve, but broader and more bulky. They were a dark-complexioned race, which accounts for their frequently being termed 'brownies'. Elves, goblins, sprites and leprechauns were other terms used when referring to them; and the chief lady of a fairy settlement was usually known as the 'Elfin Queen'.

In the Dark and Middle Ages England was very sparsely populated. The Domesday Book of 1086 estimates the number to have been 1,100,000 and, in Queen Elizabeth I's time, the population of the whole country amounted to under 6,000,000 – only about three-quarters of that of London alone today. So there

were great areas of desolate downland and heath, unfitted for agriculture and far removed from the towns. It was on these that the Little People had their settlements.

Like their Neolithic forbears, they lived in large round huts similar to the igloos of the Eskimos. The floors were made of stone, laid two or three feet below the surface of the ground, and a circular stone parapet rose two or three feet above it. Over that arched a dome, formed of branches and layers of leaves, with a hole in the centre to let out the smoke from the fire.

Again like their Neolithic ancestors, the Little People had no knowledge of agriculture, but kept small herds of cattle, living mainly off their milk and butter, and an occasional feast of meat. But their meagre diet was frequently eked out by such game as they could snare, and poultry or flour they either stole from outlying farms or blackmailed the inhabitants of the nearest villages into giving them.

They were extraordinarily secretive and cunning, very shy of strangers, and most proficient in hiding themselves, as an aid to which they always dressed in green garments woven for them by their women. They had small bows and arrows fitted with miniature flint heads, many of which have been found. These were so small that they could not have inflicted a serious wound on a man; but many herbs were available from which they distilled poison, and it is believed that they dipped the arrow heads in toxic brews. If so, even a scratch from one of these little arrowheads would have been sufficient to cause an inflamed wound. This, no doubt, was one of the reasons why the people of the villages went in such dread of the fairies.

During Roman times it seems that the principal habitat of these survivors of the Neolithic people was England, and later Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Rem-



Left Hobgoblins enjoying food

Below A knight visiting a fairy house



nants of them also survived in Germany, Belgium and France. But it is interesting to note that they continued to be written of in other countries as humans of small stature much longer than was the case in England. Fairy stories as we know them do not appear on the Continent until long after Shakespeare's death.

That he knew the truth about them is made plain in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. In it he makes Mistress Anne Page dress herself as a fairy and expect to be taken for one. Since she was a fully-grown young woman, that would have been out of the question had her contemporaries believed fairies to be diminutive creatures with wings.

That the Little People had inherited the secrets of occult power, or perhaps we should say in this case 'rudimentary magic', there can be no doubt at all. Had they not done so, the Anglo-Saxon peasantry and that of Brittany, where they had numerous settlements, could easily have wiped out their small communities. Instead, for many centuries, they paid tribute in farm produce to be spared having a murrain put on their cattle, a blight on the crops, or a spell that would cause their women to miscarry.

Occasionally, for a fee, the Little People could be persuaded to use their arts for the benefit of some villager who sought their aid. At times too, disguised as ordinary peasants, they would go into a village and borrow from an acquaintance some fruit or cereal; and it was remarked that they were always scrupulously honest in repaying such debts. But, in general, they were regarded with fear and hatred.

It is indicative that the traditional costume of the witch – steeple-crowned hat, cloak and crutch – is exactly the same as that of the fairy godmother. This may well be due to the fact that the nobility of the Dark and Middle Ages invited the local Elfin Queen to the christenings of their children, paying her handsomely to cast spells that would ensure the child a fortunate future. We all recall the unhappy results in fairy stories if the bad fairy failed to receive an invitation. The Little People had the reputation of being extremely malicious.

As acknowledged followers of the Old God, they were anathema to the Christian Church. Owing no doubt to their psychic ability to be aware when danger threatened them, and their extreme cunning, there does not appear to be any case on record of one of the Little People being brought to trial as a witch. But the mention of them in the witch trials of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are legion. Again and again old crones and young girls alike, the great majority of whom were entirely innocent, were sent to the ducking-stool or burnt at the stake, solely because malicious neighbours reported that they had been seen visiting a fairy settlement. It was upon the evidence that Joan of Arc's godmother had initiated her, at the age of twelve, into the Old Religion under the fairy tree at Bourlemont that Joan was burnt as a witch.

That the Little People eventually disappeared is probably due to the racial decline that affects races having a low standard of living, as has occurred with certain tribes of South American Indians, and has led to almost complete extinction of the Caribs, who once populated the whole of the West Indies. There are num-

erous accounts of fairy men marrying ordinary women, and vice versa; so, no doubt, the remnants of the race were absorbed into the general population, as is occurring with the gypsies at the present day.

The Coming of the Devil

The portrait that the Christian Church has given us of Satan as a horrifying demon with horns, hooves, wings and tail is a comparatively modern creation.

The original conception of him was built up by the early Christian Fathers from

Virtue abducted by a monster



statements attributed to Isaiah and other prophets in the Old Testament, which were derived from Babylonia. His name was Lucifer; he held the rank of seraph, and so was a prince among the angels. Tertullian tells us that he was the 'wisest of all the angels and perfect in beauty', while Eusebius follows Isaiah in calling him the 'Son of the Morning'.

In the fourth century A.D., influenced probably by Zoroastrian beliefs, Lactantius went so far as to declare that, before the creation of the world, God engendered two sons – the Word and the Devil. This appears to imply that Lucifer was actually the younger son of Jehovah, which would make plausible the statement of Gregory of Nyssa that 'God confided to him the Government of the Earth'.

However, the generally accepted legend is that Lucifer led a rebellion against Jehovah that resulted in civil war. Michael, as the general of the loyal angels, defeated the rebels and drove them out of Heaven. Then Jehovah gave Lucifer the earth to rule over as his principality.

Unless one accepts this, the account of the temptation as given in the Gospels does not make sense. It will be recalled that Satan took Christ up to a high place, showed him all the countries and cities of the world and said (Matthew iv. 9), 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.' The offer would have been pointless if this great dominion had not been Lucifer's to give, and clearly the authors of the Gospels believed that to be the case.

It is, of course, on this belief that Satanism is based. If Satan is the all-powerful master of this world, it is logical to believe that, if properly approached by his votaries, he can give them anything they wish.

In the Old Testament there are many references to evil spirits; but it was not until after the death of Christ that any attempt was made to determine the nature of the Devil and the part he plays in relation to mankind. In this the early Christian Fathers made up for lost time. They spent countless hours wrangling on the subject. St Cyprian maintained that it was seeing God create man in his own image that caused Lucifer to rebel. Tertullian, too, asserts that it was jealousy of Adam. The Mohammedans also believed that to be the case, as the version of the Fall given in the Koran is that Iblis – their name for Lucifer – refused to worship Adam at the Deity's command, protesting, 'I am more excellent than he; thou hast created me of fire, and thou has created him of clay.'

But St Hilary, St Ambrose and St Jerome all followed Origen and denied this. They maintained that it was not jealousy, but pride, that led to Lucifer's fall. For had he not said (Isaiah xiv. 13–14), 'I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High'? And the great St Augustine also took this view, so it triumphed and became a dogma of the Church.

Again there was much dispute about what type of being the Devil was. Some of the early Fathers maintained that he consisted of fire; but against this it was argued that if so, and he or his demons came near anybody, that person would be burnt up. Cassian says, 'When we proclaim that there are spiritual natures such as angels we must not think that they are incorporeal. They have a body which makes them subsist; but this body is much more subtle than ours.'

The above opinion was concurred in by Origen and for many centuries accepted by the Church. It was based on the account of how the sons of God (Genesis vi. 4) 'came in unto' the daughters of men. How, it was argued, could they have done that if they had not the male equipment for performing the act?

The literature about demons provides us with numerous accounts of how women were carnally possessed by incubi, and men by succubi, but it could not be argued that the sons of God belonged to this type of lecherous elemental, because the daughters of men were got with child. And, while many ladies have stoutly maintained that they have become pregnant without ever having submitted to the sexual embrace, there has never, until the introduction of artificial insemination, been an established case of this.

It was not until the twelfth century that the Church changed its opinion and agreed to the dictum of Honoré of Autun: 'The Angels have ethereal bodies,

An incubus draining a woman asleep



the demons have aerial bodies, men have terrestrial bodies.' And a compromise was reached by giving the demons spiritual bodies over which they could clothe themselves with material bodies.

Each seraph was said to have six wings, all of which were covered with eyes. According to Isaiah (vi. 2), 'with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain did he fly'. The two wings covering the face symbolized a counsellor of the Deity, the two covering the feet a divine messenger; of the two with which they flew, one represented intellect and the other love.

Basing his theory on the above belief, St Bernard of Clairvaux produced a practical explanation to account for the seraph's fall. His view was that, having quarrelled with God, Lucifer took off. As he now hated his master, his love wing gave way and he came crashing down to earth.

Another problem that exercised the wits of the Fathers was the present state of the Devil and his demons, who, for some unknown reason, were numbered as 666. The Devil, they said, in the form of the serpent in Eden, had brought original sin into the world. Christ, by disguising himself as a human being, had trapped the Devil into exceeding his authority by bringing about his death, and so redeemed mankind. The Devil having been defeated, he was, with his followers, condemned to eternal fire. But were they already suffering it, or only to do so after the Last Judgment? A knotty point.

One school of thought was of the opinion that the Devil, as one of God's principal lieutenants, had been dispatched to earth on a special mission. This was to act as an *agent provocateur* and go about tempting people to do evil. If so, it does not seem that one can attach much blame to him; and to send him on such a mission would certainly be in keeping with what we are told about the malevolent Jehovah – witness what he did to poor Job and other unfortunates.

In any case, it is clear that until the Middle Ages Christians thought of Lucifer in a very different fashion from that in which they did later. Although a wicked

Below right Baphomet, the composite idol said to have been worshipped by the Knights Templar

Below The Devil in command of trampling the Cross



fellow, he was not particularly to be feared, and, through excess of pride, he had got himself into the sort of trouble that might have befallen any over-ambitious human, while his companions were still beautiful people who had backed the wrong horse.

Up to that time, as we shall see, Christianity had no secure hold on the masses. They might pay lip-service to the Church, but at heart they were still pagan and worshipped the pleasure-loving Old God. The majority of the Christian priests also were anything but straight-laced, and condoned all sorts of licence in their congregations. But the power of the Church gradually increased until she found herself strong enough to declare war on paganism. It was from that time that Lucifer was amalgamated by the Church with the old Horned God, made a creature of bestial appearance, with horns, the cloven hooves of the lecherous goat, scaly wings and a spiked tail. Thus was the Devil born.

The Middle Ages

As we have seen, in Europe up to the later part of the fifteenth century, the Church had succeeded in imposing the Christian faith only upon the upper classes and a fair proportion of the people who came into close contact with them. By far the greater part of the population still consisted of peasantry, and the majority of the country folk attended church because the Lord of the Manor willed that they should do so; but they continued to rely on the Old God for rain when needed, good harvests, protection from misfortune, and other blessings.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Catholic Church had a serious rival also in an organized religion with bishops and deacons. This was the Cathari, which came to Western Europe from the Balkans, where its followers were particularly strong in Bulgaria and were known as the Bogomils. Groups of Cathars emerged in western Germany, Flanders, France and northern Italy. Their doctrine differed widely from that of the Roman Catholics, and for many years the bishops of the two churches disputed hotly.

The Cathars seem to have derived their basic belief from the Gnostics, for they were dualists and held that God and Satan were equally powerful deities who ruled over Heaven and Earth respectively. They regarded all matter as evil and preached that man's aim must be to free his spirit from the bonds of the flesh, so that it could return to God. To this end they even approved suicide, although this seems illogical, as they were reincarnationists; modern believers in reincarnation most strongly condemn taking one's own life.

Their asceticism has rarely been equalled. They kept strict fasts and totally prohibited the eating of meat, because, like the Hindus, they maintained that the souls of humans who had led bad lives could be degraded and return in animals; so to eat flesh was a type of cannibalism. Sexual intercourse was forbidden, because procreation resulted in the imprisonment of more spirit in the world of flesh. As copulation could not be entirely suppressed, they advocated that it should be indulged in as infrequently as possible, and promiscuously, since to marry was to surrender to a life of vice. They rejected the greater part of the Old Testament and

accepted the New Testament only according to their own lights. For example, as God could not be imprisoned in a human body, Christ was merely an angel sent to indicate the way to salvation, not himself to provide it.

Owing no doubt to its extreme asceticism, coupled with the opposition of the Catholic Church, in Northern Europe and Italy the Cathari religion gradually died out; but it took a strong hold in the south of France. There its centres were Albi, Carcassonne and Toulouse; and, after the first town, the Cathari in the south became known as the Albigenses. A wave of fanaticism swept that part of France; so many thousands of converts were made that the religion seriously menaced the Roman faith. The murder of one of the papal legates, Pierre de Castelnau, caused the Pope, Innocent III, to call for a crusade to stamp out this heresy. The barons of northern France, led by Simon IV de Montfort, marched on Languedoc.

Toulouse was besieged, captured and sacked with terrible ferocity. No man, woman or child was spared. When Béziers was taken it was set on fire; Catholic troops ringed the town and anyone who attempted to escape was driven back to perish in the flames. Scores of castles had to be taken, so fighting continued for many years. Even when there were no more towns or strongholds left to take, no mercy was shown to the wretched Albigenses. The survivors sought refuge in the deep forests and the mountains of the Pyrenees, but they were hunted to their deaths by packs of hounds. It was another triumph for the Christian Church.

Returning now to the general state of things in western Europe. The day had not yet come when the Devil achieved one of his greatest victories by persuading Rome to decree that its priests should remain celibate. When it expected the tens of thousands of priests who were then officiating throughout Europe – the majority of whom must have been healthy, virile men – all to lead a life of unbroken chastity, it was asking the impossible. Many of them doubtless succeeded in suppressing their natural urges by fasting, self-flagellation and other methods. But from the literature of the times it cannot be doubted that many gave way to the temptation to seduce their prettiest parishioners. In earlier times, most priests had led the normal lives of married men and had not unduly condemned their flocks for their junketings at the sabbaths; some of them had even joined in. They knew all about the Old Religion and, as it did not menace their own, condoned it.

The same state of affairs, I was surprised to find, still continues in Guatemala. Far up-country in Chimaltenango, a city of one-storey houses, live 30,000 Indians. In the centre is a great square where, every Saturday morning, a market is held. Everything can be bought there from hand-made pottery of ancient design to radio sets. The square is dominated by a fine church, built by the Spaniards 300 years ago. At seven o'clock in the morning Roman Catholic priests celebrate mass there. Then the building is handed over for pagan rites. Indian acolytes swing censers on the steps leading up to the church, summoning the devotees of the ancient gods. Our Indian guide took my wife and me in by a side door. He warned us to appear interested only in the carvings and architecture, because to look at the worshippers might give offence. As is frequently the case in churches in Latin America, there were no pews. On the stone floor of the body of the church

some twenty groups of people were kneeling round candles they had set up, bunches of herbs, the scattered petals of flowers and other oddments. At each group a witch-doctor was softly intoning an incantation; spells to bring about good or evil, in accordance with the wishes of the worshippers.

The policy of the Catholic Church in Latin America is to collect numbers of people who will accept baptism, attend Mass and make contributions to support the priesthood, as an insurance against the Christian God doing them harm. If they can also be persuaded to abandon their old gods and accept the faith, that is all to the good; if not, that is just too bad. That was also the attitude of the Church in Europe up to the end of the Middle Ages. It had not yet occurred to kings and bishops to persecute followers of the Old God in the name of the jealous Jehovah, coupled with that of Christ.

In *The God of the Witches* Professor Margaret Murray gives a fascinating account of the origin of the Order of the Garter. King Edward III ascended the throne in 1327. By then the Church was already beginning her long fight with the Old God. One night the King gave a ball at Windsor Castle. During it the garter of his mistress, the beautiful Countess of Salisbury, came off while she was dancing with him. She was overcome with confusion, which would not normally have been the case with a lady over such a trivial matter in those days when everyone thought nothing of freely bandying bawdy jests. Swiftly the King saved her face by snatching up the garter and crying '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*' ('Evil is he who evil thinks'), thus protecting her from the probable malice of his clergy.

But there was more to it than that. As we have seen, the garter was the distinguishing mark worn by the chief witch of a coven, and that of the Countess showed her to be the Queen Witch of England. Realizing this, the King took it from her and promptly formed an order of twenty-six knights – two covens of thirteen – with himself as the chief of one and the Prince of Wales as chief of the other. By so doing he made himself the incarnate God in the eyes of all of his still pagan subjects. In Froissart's *Chronicles*, it is recorded that the King then told his Court that this new order would prove an excellent expedient for the uniting not only of his own people but of all foreigners conjunctively with them in bonds of amity and peace – referring, of course, to the followers of the Old Religion on the Continent.

It is of further interest to record that to this day the mantle worn by the sovereigns of Britain, as chiefs of the order, is powdered over with 168 garters and that the garter worn on the leg makes 169. That is thirteen times thirteen, thus representing thirteen covens.

The increase in the power of the Church was largely due to the Crusaders. This romantic adventure of going to the Holy Land on an armed pilgrimage, to capture the sepulchre of Christ from the infidel, naturally affected thousands of ordinary men-at-arms, who had no option but to accompany their feudal lords. They were constantly harangued by the chaplains of the expeditions about Christ, his life, his goodness and his power, and assured that, if they put their faith in him, they would return home safely. Being subjected for many months to this indoctrination,

and having little opportunity to practise their pagan rites, they became genuine converts to Christianity, and those who did get back to their homelands converted their families.

During the age of the Crusades, it was not only large bodies of knights, squires, spearmen and archers who set out from western Europe for the Holy Land. Many thousands of people made the long journey as pilgrims. To protect them from capture by Arab corsairs, the Order of Knights Templar was formed. The Knights were drawn from several nations, each company being known as a 'tongue'. They were sworn to celibacy and poverty, but that did not prevent them from freely indulging in vice or their order from becoming immensely rich. Their headquarters was Malta, and for many generations they dominated a great part of the Mediterranean.

They were military engineers of the first rank and built several hundred castles. The best preserved of these is on Rhodes; for, regardless of expense, it was splendidly restored by Mussolini. The walls, which are eighty feet high and three miles long, enclose a town in which several thousand people are still living, and their huge ramparts are so wide at the top that three cars abreast could be driven along them.

The Order was founded in Jerusalem in 1119 by Hugues de Payns and his comrade Godeffroi de St Omer. The latter was an Albigense, so from the beginning the Order had anti-Christian leanings; and, as its knights spent most of their lives in the Near East, it was not altogether surprising that certain of them became involved in Eastern practices. Before many years had passed, the whole Order gave itself up to the worship of Baphomet, a pagan deity envisaged by Arab mystics.

The idol of Baphomet represented in magical form the Absolute. It had the head and hooves of a goat, with a black candle set between the horns; and human hands, upheld and pointing to two crescents, the upper white, the lower black; the belly was green and had scales like a fish; the female breasts were blue; the sexual organs consisted of a penis and a vulva, as in a hermaphrodite; on its forehead it had a pentagram. The image was seated cross-legged on a cube, the symbol of four, the square and foundation of all things; the feet rested on a sphere, representing the world.

When initiated, a Knight Templar had to spit upon, then trample underfoot, the Cross, crying three times as he did so, '*Je te renonce, Jésus*'. He was then stripped naked and led in to the idol, his companions crying, 'Yalla! Yalla!' There followed a male orgy, for the Templars, like other military castes such as the Spartans, were sodomites.

Early in the fourteenth century, Philippe le Bel was King of France. Becoming very short of money, he decided to replenish his treasury at the expense of the Templars. Having drawn the attention of Pope Clement V to the terrible blasphemies they were said to utter, he received permission to proceed against them.

The headquarters of the Templars in Paris was a big castle, called the Temple. The Grand Master of the Order, Jacques de Molay, was in residence there. In 1307 the King invited him and the other Knights Templar who were in Paris

les tost delivres de prison par payant vne grant
sōme d'argent. De la mort du maistre du temple



Ncest an aussi ou mois de mars
ou temps de l'airline. le general
maistre du temple et un autre
grant maistre apres lui en lordre si cōme len d

Jaques de Molay at the stake

to an entertainment at the Louvre, and there arrested them all. They were tried for heresy, terribly tortured and burnt at the stake.

It is of special interest to record that, before he gave up the ghost, from the heart of the flames Jacques de Molay, who was undoubtedly a high priest of Satan, pronounced a curse upon the Royal House of France. Nearly 500 years later, the monarchy ended when Louis XVI and his family were taken as prisoners to the Temple, and he left it only to be driven to the guillotine.

As the Middle Ages advanced, although more and more people began to put their faith in the Christian God, the Holy Virgin and the saints, the Church was still not powerful enough to suppress the pagan feasts. On the eve of May Day, the day of Beltane, young men still leapt over the bonfires, then carried the girls off into the darkness. Throughout May Day itself, the young folk joyfully kept up the old custom of dancing round the phallus – now thinly disguised under the new name of Maypole. Christmas was substituted for the old Roman Saturnalia and, although attendance at church was virtually compulsory on Christmas Day, the people had right up to January 6th, Twelfth Night, for merry-making. And during these feasts the Church tactfully observed an amnesty on at least two of the deadly sins – drunkenness and lechery.

But for the most part life continued to be grim and little better than in the Dark Ages. Kings and nobles lived in cold, draughty castles. They wore rich garments, but beneath they were never free from lice. Only the very rich could afford to have the floors of their banqueting halls swept daily and, in the summer months, fresh flowers scattered over them. Normally the hunting dogs gnawed bones beneath the tables, then fouled the floors. Drunkenness and gluttony were the besetting sins of the nobility. They added to the filth by vomiting when in their cups, and went no further than the nearest corridor to relieve themselves. The stench must have been appalling.

Except for the lord and lady, in her withdrawing room, there was no privacy, and bathrooms were unknown. It was a canon of the Christian Faith that dirtiness was next to godliness. In Roman times a visit to the magnificent public baths was a daily event. In their passion for cleanliness and to be sweet-smelling they even had all the hair removed from their armpits and abdomens. The baths, too, were not only places in which to bathe, swim, be massaged and keep fit by exercising in the gymnasiums; they were also like clubs in which, sitting about or strolling unashamedly naked in the warm perfumed air, people discussed the news, transacted business and made social engagements.

In the Near East, this concern for physical cleanliness continued. Mahomet decreed that all true believers must cleanse themselves daily, even to the point that, when journeying through a desert and water was not available, they must scrub themselves with sand; and in all Islamic cities there were public baths. In due course these were taken over and maintained by the semi-barbarous Turks. When I was taken round the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, I recall being told by my guide that, as late as the eighteenth century, the Turks found that the Europeans smelt so unpleasant that, whenever the Sultan was to grant an audience to a British

or French Ambassador, the emissary had first to submit to being taken to the *hamam*, stripped and given a bath.

In the Christian nations alone people worshipped a god whose priesthood insisted upon the deliberate cultivation of dirt and misery. For many centuries rich and poor alike dwelt in stench and squalor. They stayed in inns infested with bed-bugs; from accumulated sweat their bodies were coated with a layer of greasy filth that made a breeding place for every kind of germ, and so readily spread disease. Their God, so they were told, took pleasure in seeing them suffer, so they held parties in which they whipped one another. As penances for having given way to the temptation to enjoy themselves, they were made to fast, to crawl through the streets on their knees and to wear hair shirts. To perform the sexual act, except to beget children, was a sin. The female form divine was looked on as the embodiment of evil. Even up to eighty years ago many a woman had given birth to half a dozen children although her husband had never had the pleasure of seeing her naked.

As if this was not enough, generation after generation, multitudes of young women were either persuaded or forced to become 'brides of Christ' and, behind the walls of hundreds of convents, fated to live unnatural lives. In many of them the mother superiors were truly pious women; the strictest discipline was maintained and even the confession of impure thoughts was punished with severe penances. But the gardens of others, such as the convents of Loudun and Louviers, became graveyards for infants fathered on the nuns by visiting priests and strangled at birth.

Approximately an equal number of men went into monasteries. Many of them planted today's most celebrated vineyards, to the great benefit of future generations, while others did exquisite work illuminating manuscripts which we now treasure. But the many who joined the stricter orders led useless lives, imposing harsh penances on themselves, and getting up at midnight from hard beds in freezing cells, to kneel for hours on the stone floors of the chapels. Thousands of others roamed the countryside and cities as wandering friars, not only leading useless lives, but acting as a scourge on the people. It was a sin to deny them food or turn them away. A great many of them batted on the poor, blackmailed them for money and, whenever they had the chance, seduced their women.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the abuse by the Church of its privileged position brought about defiance of it. Many monarchs resented the great wealth accumulated by the prelates. They were denounced for the lives of luxury they led, and the people were driven to exasperation by the insolence and greed of the wandering friars. Martin Luther in Germany, Calvin in Switzerland, Savonarola in Italy and Henry VIII in England rebelled against Rome. Soon the Reformation swept Europe.

Germans fought Germans, Dutch and English the Spaniards and the French. Over points of dogma there were wars fought with the utmost ferocity. Many thousands died in them, many thousands were taken prisoner and brutally tortured. The greatest crime of which the Roman Emperors were accused is that they had

Christians thrown to the lions; but that does not exceed in horror what the Christians did to one another. Motley tells us in his *Rise of the Dutch Republic* that the Protestants in the Netherlands devised the following ingenious way of dealing with captured Catholics. They caught half a dozen rats, put them in a small iron cauldron and turned it upside down on the stomach of the prisoner, then heaped red-hot coals on the bottom of the pot. The heat caused the rats to gnaw their way out through the belly of the wretched victim. The tortures inflicted by the Catholics on the Protestants were no less horrifying.

Spain alone escaped these ghastly civil wars, owing to their great Cardinal Cisneros. He was a man of true piety. He refused to tolerate abuses and had

Man between Fortune and Death



purged his priesthood of greedy, evil men so thoroughly that it was respected by the people, with the result that they turned a deaf ear to the new heresies. Yet in Spain such recalcitrants as there were, together with Jews and Moors, suffered as much as their fellows in other countries, for those were the days of the Holy Inquisition.

Until the coming of the Renaissance, the Christian world remained one of stagnation. Only when the knowledge of Greek and Roman culture, which had been kept alive by the Arabs, trickled back to the West, did Light again begin to penetrate the dark, cruel, disease-ridden lives of the people. Education had been entirely in the hands of the Church, and it taught only its dogmas. Apart from religious treatises, literature was almost non-existent. The earth was flat and Jerusalem was the centre of it. To believe otherwise was heresy. The high degree of medicine and surgery achieved by the ancients had been lost and forgotten. The sick were dosed with revolting nostrums, leprosy was rife and no attempt was made to cure it. The Church forbade all forms of scientific experiment, and condemned rich and poor alike to lives of bigoted ignorance.

Among the few fine things left to us from this age of totalitarian rule by the papacy, that enforced the beliefs of St Paul, are the cathedrals. At Chartres, Cologne, Milan, Westminster, Bruges, Seville, and in scores of other cities, their spires and towers still rise in splendour to the sky. They rank among man's greatest achievements, and their beauty is a true expression of the faith of their builders. A similar spirit pervades some of the period's paintings and illuminated manuscripts.

But they also express another thing. On all of them, cheek by jowl with their statues of saints and angels, are carvings representing Satan and his demons. He is no longer the beautiful 'Son of the Morning' of ancient tradition, the laughing Pan playing on his pipes for his votaries to dance and revel in the joys of life. He and his host have become hideous gargoyles, threatening all those who question the teachings of the Church with fire, brimstone and eternal torment.

This discloses very plainly the mentality of those whom they were designed to terrify. By practising the most rigorous self-denial they might hope for salvation, but they lived in constant fear of the Power of Darkness, and there were many who were prepared to swear that such demons had actually appeared to them.

It would be interesting to know what proportion of the population hedged their bets and, on nights when the moon was full, went stealthily to make their obeisance to the old Horned God. That thousands of people must have done this we know from the countless witch trials that took place in the following centuries.

The Alchemists

The secret art of the alchemists has long been associated with turning base metal into gold; but that was only a by-product of their main objective.

From the earliest civilizations, including that of the Chinese, metallurgists have submitted various metals to treatments designed to refine away their dross and so make them more valuable. The ancient Egyptians are said to have discovered a dark powder that separated gold and silver from their native ores. In later times

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the production of precious metals by such means would have been classed as magic; but really it was a scientific process, the secret of which became lost. To describe these chemical operations the Arabs used the word *khemia*, which they had derived from the Egyptians, adding to it the article *al*. Thus it became *al-khemia* or alchemy. But those ancient metallurgists were in no sense alchemists.

The fundamental object of the alchemist was to accomplish the Great Work. This may perhaps be best described as the process by which a living man achieved oneness with God.

Alchemy as we know it probably originated in the twelfth or thirteenth century, in the Near East. We first hear of it in the year 1357, when in Paris a learned physician named Nicholas Flamel came into possession of a very old manuscript made from thin leaves of bark. Its author was one Abraham the Jew, and it is upon his work, illustrated with many strange symbolical figures, that alchemy is based.

Alchemists accept the version of the Creation as given in Genesis, although not, of course, Jehovah as described frequently conversing with Abraham about burnt offerings and having a vast tribe of descendants who would dominate all other peoples. They were concerned with the 'spirit that moved upon the face of the waters'.

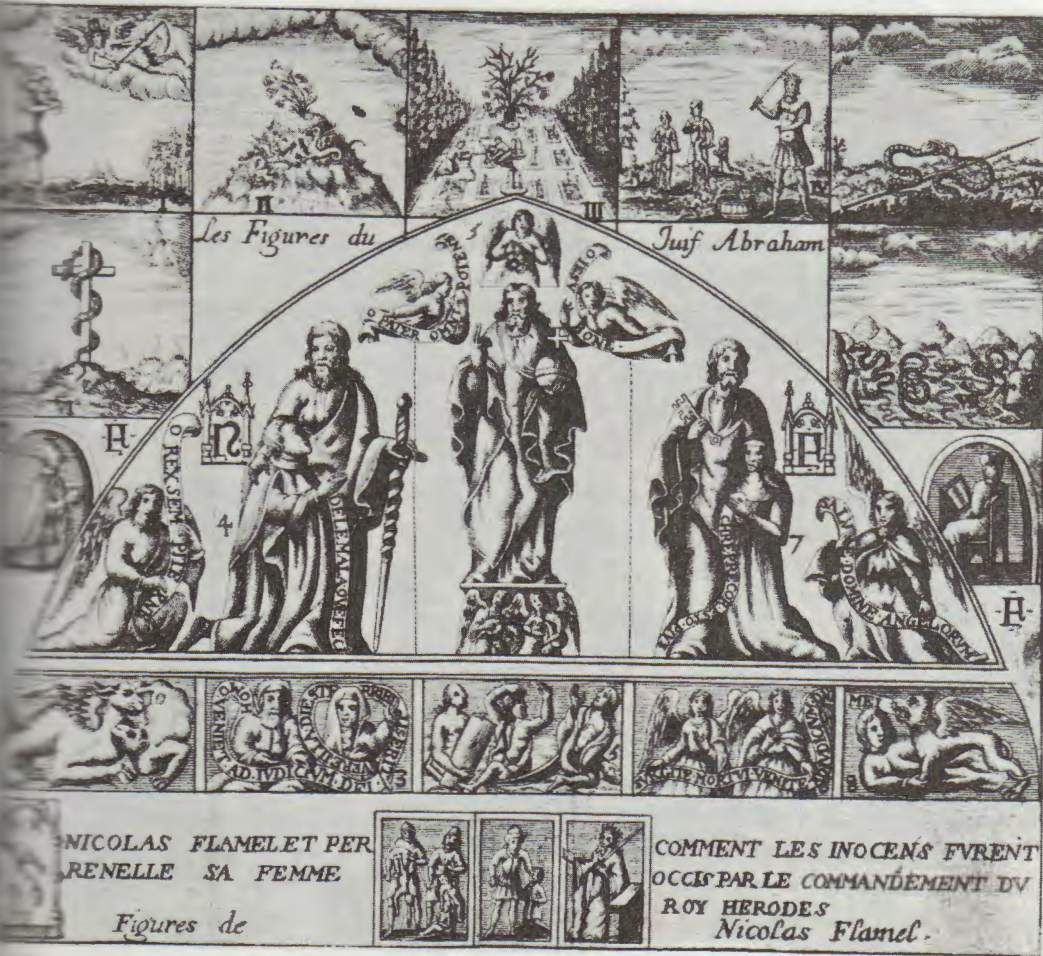
It was this, they contended, that not only created the earth but animated the whole Universe, every part of which has a replica in some part of Man. This vast spiritual entity they term the Macrocosm, and Man, its diminutive counterpart, the Microcosm. Upon this analogy, and the conception of the two as being imbued with the same spirit, they base their belief that Man as a part of God can, by knowledge of the secret doctrine, wield the power of God.

This secret knowledge consisted of the way in which, vitalized by the Power of Light (a spark of which the alchemists held existed in all things), Nature works. A full understanding of the mystery of the Creation gave the alchemist the mastery of the four elements: fire, air, water and earth.

The four elements embrace all matter, whether hot or cold, wet or dry. Everything that exists is composed of them in different proportions, and change can be wrought in them by various treatments. Fire, if allowed to go out, becomes ash – earth. Air, if sufficiently compressed, becomes water. Water, if brought to the boil, changes into vapour – air. Earth, if burnt, can be dissolved into fire.

The above are the simplest forms of transmutation. By infinitely more complicated ones, the alchemists claimed to be able to produce the philosopher's stone, which would not only turn lead into gold but formed the Elixir of Life.

The agents used for the transformation were mercury, sulphur and salt. These were put into a vessel known as the 'aludel', or philosophic egg. It represented the earth in which a new Creation was about to take place. The aludel was put in the 'athanor', as an alchemist's furnace is called, and its contents subjected to a series of complicated operations. Various accounts give them as maceration, sublimation, fermentation, calcination, projection, separation, revivication, putrefaction, coagulation, exaltation and multiplication. But it is safe to say that several of these



Nicholas Flamel's *The Alchemic Figures of Abraham the Jew*

processes are combined, as the total would certainly be seven, that being the mystic number.

The illustration of *The Alchemic Figures of Abraham the Jew* we owe to Nicholas Flamel, who reproduced it as a fresco. At the top of the painting there are pictures in seven squares. Their meaning is given as follows:

1. Mercury holding a caduceus; Saturn in a cloud, armed with a scythe. Interpretation: maceration of common mercury, mixed with common salt and vitriol, by the god Mercury, whose legs Saturn is about to cut off with his scythe.
2. A mountain with seven caverns and seven black-and-yellow serpents; one serpent devouring another has golden wings; at the foot is one griffin trying to eat another; on the summit of the mountain is a bough with golden branches bearing red and white flowers and tossed by the north wind. Interpretation: sublimation of the macerated mercury by a flower shaken by the wind and guarded by two winged dragons.

3. The Garden of Hesperides enclosed with hedges. In the middle an oak stock and a rose-bush with golden leaves. A rivulet springs from the foot of the oak, and blind men are seeking for the rivulet, but cannot find it. Interpretation: revivication of the sublimated mercury by a spring which issues from the foot of a rose-bush, planted in a beautiful garden.
4. King Herod, crowned, in a field orders the massacre of the innocents; soldiers are filling a vat with their blood. Seven children are dead. Interpretation: preparation of worked silver or gold by unprepared common mercury, represented by the sun and moon bathing in children's blood.
5. A caduceus formed by two serpents swallowing each other while twined round a golden rod. Interpretation: solution and volatilization; the two serpents are the two parts of the resolved metal, one earthy, the other watery, which have to be fixed by each other.
6. A dead serpent crucified. Interpretation: coagulation and fixation of the volatilize.
7. A desert with four springs from which rivers are flowing; four small serpents are creeping about the desert. Interpretation: multiplication, represented by the springs and the serpents.

This final stage bears out the statement of other alchemists that, once the Great Work is completed, the 'stone' can be increased indefinitely. It appears in fact to have been a powder, and a small pinch of it was said to be sufficient to turn a pound of lead into gold, to cure illness or, if taken twice yearly, to prolong life.

Below these pictures are those of Nicholas Flamel and his wife Perrenelle, St Peter, St Paul and God the Father; there are also given alchemic significations. In the lower compartments are two dragons, male and female, signifying the fixate and the volatilize; a man and a woman, signifying the two natures reconciled; three resurrected bodies, which are the 'body, the soul and the spirit of the white stone'; two angels and a man holding a lion's paw, which signifies the achievement of the Work.

Like the Cabalists, from whom they derived much of their doctrine, the alchemists spent long hours teaching themselves how to remain perfectly still, as this was essential if they were to compel the spirit to leave the body. Absolute concentration is of the first importance in performing a magical operation. It is achieved only gradually, by focusing the mind on one object. In due course, the magician must advance to a state in which he can empty his mind completely. Finally he conjures up an apparition of himself standing in front of himself. Actually this is what the Egyptians would have called his *ka*, his etheric double, which he has forced out of his body. His spirit then leaves his body and enters the *ka*, enabling it to ascend to the astral planes, but still attached to his physical body by what is called the 'silver cord', a transparent link which keeps it alive and enables him to return to it.

The above is sufficient to give the reader some idea of the great erudition in symbolism and knowledge of the properties ascribed to innumerable mythical beasts, not to mention the practical ability to manipulate substances and temper-



The practical and the symbolical combined in alchemy

atures, that was required to become a successful alchemist. And here I would like to make it clear that all this immense study, labour and expense went for nothing, was utterly wasted, unless the alchemist had an upright and honest soul.

In true alchemy there was no question at all of sorcery. Intense self-discipline was required; a passionate desire to achieve a higher state of being. The alchemist did not call upon the Powers of either Light or Darkness to aid him. His was a philosophy based on what he believed to be the eternal verities. By prayer and faith, he worked himself up into a state of exaltation which enabled him temporarily to destroy his personality and pass out of his body to become one with Light.

In his *Cinque Livres*, the fifteenth-century alchemist Nicholas Valois wrote, 'The good God granted me this divine secret through my prayers and the good intentions I had of using it well; the science is lost if purity of heart is lost.'

It will be appreciated that such men were rare and passed on their great secret only to those whom they believed worthy to share it. There is also the interesting fact that all treatises on alchemy vary only in detail. Abraham the Jew, or perhaps

some other earlier sage, had had revealed to him, or believed that he had fathomed, the explanation of Man's relation to the Universe. Those who came after him accepted that explanation as entirely satisfactory, so never sought to alter or improve upon it.

Among the most celebrated alchemists were Heinrich Khunrath, Basil Valentine, Mylius, Brackhausen, George Ripley, Noel du Fail, Nicholas Melchior, Petrus Bonus, Cyliani, Salomon Trismosin, Cambriel and Elias Ashmole, the founder of the Ashmolean Library at Oxford.

In view of the great rewards believed to be obtainable – boundless wealth and serene longevity – it is not surprising that for every genuine alchemist there were scores of men who spent much time and money endeavouring to produce the philosopher's stone.

Strange coloured lights in their laboratories were seen through chinks between drawn curtains at night, and horrid smells issued with the smoke from their chimneys. The noise of the bellows with which they blew up the fires of their furnaces led to their being derisively termed 'puffers'. No doubt many of these dabblers were sorcerers and practised witchcraft in the hope that it would help them to penetrate the great secret.

Nevertheless they bravely risked prosecution for heresy, and to some of them we owe a debt, for at times their experiments led to an advance in chemistry. For instance, one of them, Johann Kunckel von Lowenstjern, stumbled on the answer to the riddle of how Brand of Hamburg had isolated phosphorus; and another, Blaise de Vigenère, chanced to discover benzoic acid.

Sorcerers

These may perhaps be best defined as men who have mastered the secret of harnessing occult power. The accounts given in the Old Testament of the doings of Balaam, Tobias and Moses show them all to have been sorcerers, but they were not evil. It is only when a sorcerer uses his powers for his own ends that he becomes a black magician, and there were considerable numbers of these in Europe during the Middle Ages.

One reason why they became Satanists is not far to seek. In those days, unless one was well-born or went into the Church, there was very little opportunity of advancement. Many of the more intelligent of the yeoman class, who had received some education, doubtless felt that God, from whom they were told all blessings flowed, had provided them with fewer than the Devil might well give.

Such men probably received their first instruction from the Little People, or had it passed down to them by older practitioners of the black art. The odds are that comparatively few of them went to the sabbaths. They were usually solitaries who achieved the reputation of wise men, after which their customers came to them by stealth at night and paid them well to cast spells.

Occultism was clearly denounced by the Mosaic law – Leviticus xix. 31: 'Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them.' Several Roman emperors had also forbidden the practice of sorcery. Even

so, until the thirteenth century the penalties inflicted on sorcerers were comparatively mild. The ecclesiastical councils, such as that of Laodicea in 363 and of Berkhamstead in 697, did no more than decree that sorcerers should be excommunicated or fined; and the secular judges of the Middle Ages did not deal with them harshly. A witch or wizard who had eaten human flesh could get out of trouble by paying 200 gold sous; and sorcerers were even to some extent protected, because a person who accused another of being one and failed to prove it was severely punished.

It was not until the Church had become more powerful, and fanatical prelates had got the upper hand, that the commandment in Exodus xxii. 18 was invoked: 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.' After that denunciations were welcomed, and the accused, guilty and not guilty alike, were subjected to harsh treatment in the hope of wringing a confession from them.

In this no difference was made between sorcerers and alchemists, or men whose natural curiosity led them to make experiments in primitive science. The Rabbi Jachiel, who lived in France, may well have been part alchemist and part scientist, for he is said to have lighted his house by supernatural power and, when an unwelcome visitor arrived, by pressing a button to have made sparks flash from his door knocker; which strongly suggests that he had stumbled on electricity.

Despite the Church's new, uncompromising attitude toward sorcery, many of her ambitious junior priests sold themselves to the Devil in exchange for worldly success. The effects of insufflation are well known. By this process of prolonged, warm breathing on a person of the opposite sex, sexual desire is aroused. So many priests applied this method of preparing for seduction women who knelt before them while confessing, that Augustine, Jerome and Gregory all publicly condemned it as sorcery.

The Curé of Peifane seduced the Dame de Lieu in this fashion and was burnt at the stake for it. So too, in 1611, was Louis Gaufridi, a priest of Accules, near Marseilles. When in prison, charged with this and numerous foul sorceries, his examiners found the Devil's mark in three places upon his body – small areas in which he could feel no pain.

Another case was that of Pierre Girard of Aix. In 1731, having seduced a Mademoiselle Cadière, he committed many revolting acts on her, trading upon her simplicity and religious fervour; but, in due course, her parents learnt of it and he was arrested. In her ecstasies this young woman displayed the stigmata, and it is a curious feature of these ecclesiastical sorceries that many of the women concerned developed bleeding hands, feet and foreheads, or other Christ-like phenomena.

More usually these physical manifestations appeared on nuns of extreme piety who became frenzied during their passionate devotions, and it was assumed by some that these brides of Christ were possessed by their divine husband. As this cannot possibly have been the case with women having sexual relations with evil priests, it can only be assumed that the Dark Power caused the manifestation to encourage the women to give themselves up to sin still further.



The burning of Urbain Grandier

The most sensational case of this kind was that of Urbain Grandier. This priest was confessor to the nuns at the Convent of Loudun, and, according to the accounts of his trial in 1634, by means of sorcery he converted the whole place into a harem for himself. When he was examined witch marks were also found on him. Even after he had been burnt, the nuns continued for a considerable time to behave lecherously and to blaspheme, and it took several exorcists to free them from the demons that Grandier had used to possess them. Aldous Huxley wrote a book on the subject and suggested that the ravings of the nuns and their bawdy behaviour were really due to a certain type of rye in the bread they ate. But that would not

account for the many other cases in which nuns became possessed owing to abuse by lecherous priests.

As we have seen earlier, it was not only junior clerics who became Satanists. Several popes and many bishops practised the black art. All over Europe, too, there were laymen practising sorcery. In Germany they were particularly prevalent, and in England we had the notorious John Dee. He combined sorcery, astrology and necromancy with genuine science and great learning. He advised Queen Elizabeth I on a propitious date for her coronation and gave her lessons in mysticism. In 1560 a wax image of the Queen with a pin thrust through its heart was found in Lincoln's Inn Fields. This caused great alarm, and immediately Her Majesty was informed of it she sent for John Dee to cast a spell for her protection. His other activity was as a brilliant mathematician and geographer, advising navigators on the routes they should take on their voyages of discovery. It was, however, his misfortune to have as his companion one Edward Kelley, who was the worst type of rogue; and it was owing to Kelley that he had to spend the latter years of his life in Poland and Bohemia in very poor circumstances.

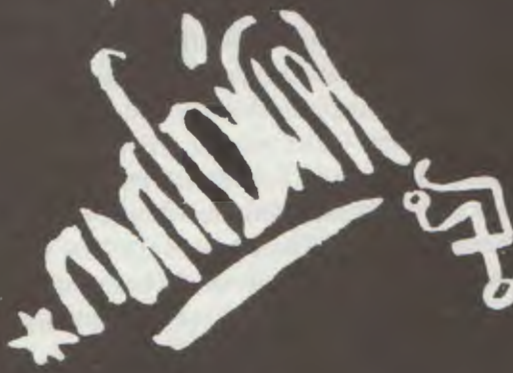
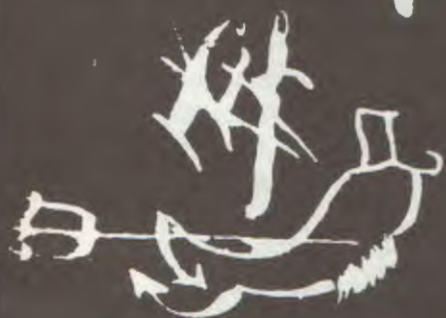
In France, in the fifteenth century, there lived one of the greatest sorcerers of all times, Joan of Arc's protector Gilles de Rais. He was born in 1404; his parents died when he was still in his 'teens, and he inherited vast wealth. At that time the English were masters of the greater part of northern France, including Rheims. Until a French ruler had been crowned there, he was not recognized as King of France, so the heir to the late king continued to be known as the Dauphin. De Rais was one of the barons who went to his assistance. He proved himself an excellent soldier and, with Joan, raised the siege of Orleans. This proved the turning point of the Hundred Years War. From then onward the fortunes of the English declined and Joan won many victories. The Dauphin was crowned in Rheims Cathedral as Charles VII, and de Rais, at the age of twenty-six, was made a Marshal of France.

In 1430, Joan was captured by the Burgundians and handed over to their English allies. For some inexplicable reason, neither her King nor de Rais made any attempt either to rescue or to ransom her. She was tried by a French ecclesiastical court as a heretic, then burnt at the stake.

Soon afterwards, de Rais seems to have lost all interest in war. He retired to his enormous castle at Tiffanges in Brittany and lived there in a splendour that outdid the Court of the King. Gilles was far from being a typical uncouth, lice-ridden baron of his period. He spoke Latin fluently, dressed always in the finest silks, had his hair curled and his beard dyed blue. It was this latter fancy that later led to his becoming thought of as the Bluebeard of the fairy tale; but the story originated in the East. De Rais was a great lover of the beautiful and a lavish patron of the arts. He supported a crowd of hangers-on, as well as scores of men-at-arms, huntsmen, musicians, poets, jugglers and a host of servants.

Even his immense wealth could not stand this strain, and, after a few years, he had to begin selling off parts of his estates. Then he took to alchemy. He had a wing of the castle converted into a great laboratory; and there, shut up with

V. pater noster Iesu christe ihu elisbe & in An
 ny Restat uisq. Hic talem accept p
 eris ubi orandus qui nobis. & Huic p
 am mul. Hic in virginum decus non h
 formab triduo. Hic illi carn er. nobis offert
 in ano Saz. Sig. sub rēds locubus. Sū & cel
 nobis roget. Hic erit q̄rēt. Vivit en lig. fel
 in trā Hom. & ben postea int nos m ale. d.
 Sact in inf. int. coss. am



sig. pos. mag. dicit & dæni. Hic in dæni.

PIRATASSIS &

Antoine de Palerne, François Lombard and the Paris goldsmith Jean Petit, he spent days on end.

His attempt to become an alchemist having failed, he turned to the black art. Soon there were rumours that children had disappeared from nearby villages. The horrors he practised upon them were almost beyond belief – caressing them and feeding them with sweets before suddenly committing sodomy on them, then disembowelling them. In 1440 he committed the cardinal folly of attacking another man in a church. For this sacrilege he was arrested. Accusations of sorcery followed. He was condemned, and before his execution he made such pious repentance that the hearts of all present seem to have been touched, and he was received back into the Church. Later, the skeletons and skulls of no fewer than 200 children were dredged up from the moat of his castle. This monster was one of the most fiendish, bestial sadists that ever inhabited a human body.

The most potent of all ceremonies practised by sorcerers who are Satanists is the Black Mass. But let us be clear that this is the name given to the ceremony only in Christian countries. In any country, any ritual which is a reversal or travesty of the most sacred ritual normally celebrated in it is, in effect, a Black Mass.

The salient feature is that the representative of the Power of Light should be abjured and the Power of Darkness invoked by the offering up of blood and semen. A fair example is a practice by the Mau-Mau when they were endeavouring to terrorize the British into abandoning Kenya. Particulars of it were sent to me by an intelligence officer who had witnessed an initiation ceremony. After taking fearful oaths to the dark gods, the initiate vowed to murder all white men, women and children wherever opportunity offered; and to bind his vow he copulated with a sow, which was then slaughtered and eaten.

In Christian countries, to be of maximum potency a Black Mass should be performed by a priest, and, should he have been unfrocked, this makes no difference to the power inherent in him. But anyone sufficiently debased can perform a ritual of this kind.

At a Black Mass everything possible is done the opposite way to the correct procedure. The cross on the altar is upside down, crooked or broken. The acolytes should be youths who readily give themselves to sodomy. In the censers that they swing, instead of incense, opium and other drugs are burnt. The celebrant wears a black cape embroidered with serpents and other Satanic emblems. He is naked beneath it, and it is open down the front, exposing his genitals. The congregation should, preferably, be wearing animal costumes and masks. The litany and prayers are recited backwards. The congregation's responses are animal howls, snufflings and grunts. The ceremony is performed on the body of a naked woman, preferably a virgin – in the Middle Ages on her bottom, later on her belly. On the altar is a mattress covered with a black cloth. She lies on this with her head on a pillow below a broken crucifix; her arms are spread out and in her hands she holds two

Opposite The pact, written in his own blood, by which Urbain Grandier sold his soul to the Devil

black candles made from human fat. Her legs dangle down over the edge of the altar, and each time during the ritual that the priest should kiss the altar, instead he kisses the vagina of the woman. Sacramental wafers stolen from a church are scattered on the floor. The congregation tramples, then urinates, on them while repudiating Christ and vilifying the Virgin Mary. Some of the broken wafers are put in a chalice. The celebrant is handed an infant. He cuts its throat on the belly of the woman, who is lying on the altar, and catches its blood in the chalice. Having drunk some of the blood, he sprinkles the rest of it on the congregation, who, by then incited to a frenzy by the smoke from the drugs in the censers, are howling imprecations and blasphemies. Finally the celebrant copulates with the woman, while the congregation, as though possessed by demons, frantically slake their lust on one another in every way possible to conceive.

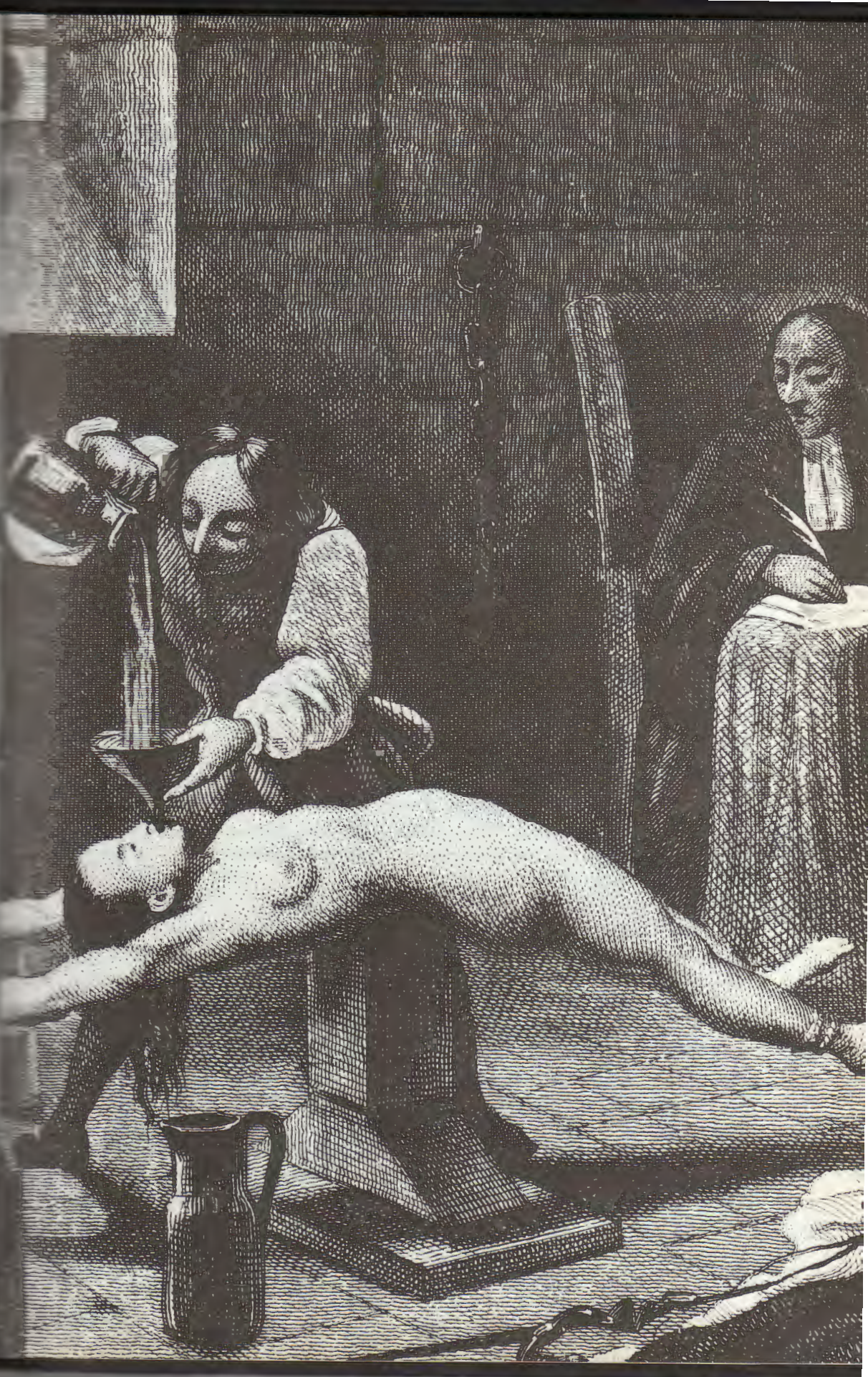
History records that, in the Middle Ages, there were hundreds of evil priests who celebrated Black Masses, and their number probably reached its apex later, in the reign of Louis XIV. At that time in France the Catholic Church had been split by the so-called Jansenist heresy, which greatly weakened the hold of orthodoxy among the laity, and the ascendancy gained by the Dark Power is demonstrated by the fact that, in the seven years between 1673 and 1680, over fifty priests were executed for sacrilege and sorcery, and many others imprisoned.

The activities of these sorcerers were by no means confined to sexual excesses and casting horoscopes. They dealt in potions for every need, and many of them were poisoners. At that time there were hundreds of witches in France, practising more or less openly, and through them a terrible epidemic of poisoning swept the country. Hundreds of unscrupulous people paid lavishly for the means to kill relatives from whom they expected to inherit. Among these was the beautiful Marquise de Brinvilliers. After trying out various poisons on unfortunate patients in hospitals, she and her lover poisoned her father and her two brothers. An attempt on her husband failed, and papers incriminating her were found. She escaped to England, but was arrested at Liège in 1676, brought to Paris, tried, condemned and executed. During her trial she declared, 'Half the people of quality are involved in this sort of thing, and if I cared to talk I could ruin them.'

It was probably her trial that led to the King's setting up a special court, under his Lieutenant of Police, to investigate such crimes. Inquiries led to the arrest of Catherine Deshayes, known as La Voisin, a society fortune-teller and sorceress. In her house there was found a Satanic temple, with all the usual trappings of black candles, a mattress on the altar, and so on. Behind it lay a furnace containing the charred bones of children who had been sacrificed in Black Masses on the naked bodies of the ladies of the Court.

Further investigation revealed that the King's mistress, Françoise-Athénaïs Marquise de Montespan, had been one of them, so he suppressed the court's further findings. His earlier mistress had been Louise de la Vallière, and Athénaïs de Montespan wished to supplant her. In 1667 Athénaïs consulted La Voisin,

Opposite The Marquise de Brinvilliers suffering water-torture under interrogation





After torture, the Marquise de Brinvilliers on her way to execution



La Voisin (Catherine Deshayes), the fortune-teller and sorceress

who procured a Père Mariette to celebrate a Black Mass upon her, with that intention. And a few months later the King had taken her as his mistress.

However, the career of Athénaïs is an example of the fact that Satan is far from being a master who can be relied on. Whenever he sights better game, he throws a devotee overboard without hesitation. A few years later, Athénaïs feared that she was about to lose the King's love, so she again repaired to La Voisin.

This time the sorceress procured for her another priest: the infamous Abbé Guibourg, who had celebrated the Black Mass on many women. He did so on Athénaïs, but Satan ignored her plea for help. And for an excellent reason. The rival who succeeded her in the King's affections was the governess of the Royal children, Madame de Maintenon. In the name of piety this evil woman persuaded Louis to revoke the Edict of Nantes, by which his grandfather, Henry IV, had granted freedom of religion to all his people.

This resulted in the persecution of the Huguenots. Many thousands of these French Protestants were dispossessed of their homes and property and driven into exile. Satan's work was well carried out by the disruption of the lives of these honest, hardworking citizens, who only wished to worship God in their own fashion. For them it must have been a grievous time, but their enforced emigration greatly benefited England, the United States and South Africa.

In due course, La Voisin was arrested, tortured, tried and finally executed in 1680. During her trial, her daughter Marguerite confessed to having been present at the Black Mass performed by the Abbé Guibourg on Athénaïs de Montespan.

She deposed that the beautiful Marquise had lain naked on a black-draped altar with her head veiled; and that while the repulsive old Abbé had performed upon her, in her outstretched hands she had held two black candles made from the fat of murderers, supplied by the Public Executioner, one of La Voisin's lovers.

The Tools of the Trade

The way of the would-be magician is far from easy. Not only has he to discover an adept who will instruct him, and spend as much time learning complicated formulae as a student would to obtain a University degree, he also has to discipline himself to achieve complete mastery of his mind and body, then provide himself with the properties necessary to invoke occult forces.

He will require a sword, a knife with an ebony handle, a wand, a cauldron, a pestle and mortar, candlesticks and candles, a cup, copper trays in which to burn herbs, a mirror or crystal, an astrolabe, a number of books and appropriate robes.

To procure all these does not sound very difficult; but the trouble is that, to be of maximum effect, they should be made by the magician himself from virgin materials. When that is not possible, they should at least be brand new, for, if they have been used by anyone else, that person's aura will have affected them and, quite possibly, produce a dangerous reaction when the magician uses them in an occult ceremony.

If the magician is an alchemist, he will also need an althazor – a furnace in the shape of an egg – and at least two score special instruments for his transmutations. If he is a Satanist, the candles must be black and made of human fat – preferably that of a murderer or stillborn infant – and sulphur. A human skull is also a useful adjunct.

According to the operation contemplated, various herbs and extracts are needed, either for burning or mixing in potions: aconite, pure alcohol, alder shoots, bitter aloes, ambergris, anise, asafoetida, basil, belladonna, black hellebore, camphor, cedar shavings, celandine, cinnamon, civet, cloves, coriander, cyclamen, deadly nightshade, endive, fern, frankincense, galbanum, galinal, garlic, ginseng, gladwyn, hawthorne, hazel shoots, heliotrope, hemlock, henbane, honey, jasmine, laurel leaves, mace, mandrake, marjoram, mastic, mint, musk, myrrh, myrtle, narcissus, nettle, nux vomica, onycha, opium, pansy, parsley, pepper, periwinkle, purselain, rose, rosemary, rue, saffron, sage, salt, sandalwood, scammony, storax, sulphur, tar-water, thorn-apple, valerian, vervain, vinegar, vitriol, wormwood and yew.

In addition to these, parts of various beasts, birds and reptiles are required for specified purposes: 'Eye of frog and tail of newt' and so on, as Shakespeare puts it. But the thing that counted above all when pronouncing a curse or compounding a love charm was to be able to include in the brew something worn by the person at whom the spell was aimed or, better still, some part of his anatomy. Nail-parings, some hairs from a brush or comb (much better, although hard to come by, a few pubic hairs), some drops of blood on a bandage from a cut finger, or a little flask of urine or pot of excrement, were very potent; but best of all was a piece of sheet

The Tools of the Trade

that had been soiled by semen or a sanitary towel soaked in menstrual blood.

To have forged the tools, learnt the rituals and acquired these nauseous horrors was still not enough unless the magician was prepared to risk his own destruction by calling upon the Powers of Darkness to carry out his wishes.

For conjuring up a demon he used either the *Clavicule of Salomon* – a copy of which had been taken by the Rabbi Aben Ezra to Arles in Provence, seized during a persecution of the Jews and then translated by the Archbishop of Arles – or the *Grimoire of Pope Honorius*.



But first he had to protect himself by drawing two magic circles and, within the inner one, a pentacle, in which he inscribed many occult symbols; and, in the space between the two circles, some such abjuration as *In nomine Pa + tris et Fi + lii et Spiritus + Sancti! + Hel + Heloym + Sother + Emmanuel + Sabaoth + Agia + Tetragrammaton + Agyos + Otheos + Ischiros +*. For only when inside the circle was he safe. Should he forget himself for one moment and put a foot outside it, at best he would be struck senseless, at worst die of a heart attack.

Demons do not come to serve sorcerers willingly. They resent being distracted from their own nefarious doings and have to be coerced. This can be done only if the magician knows their names; and names are of immense importance, because in a magical sense they are the essence of the individual.

Primitive man's given name was known only to his parents; for everyday purposes he assumed another, because if an enemy found out his real name he could use it to do him an evil. It will be recalled that in one of those early conversations between Abraham and Jehovah, the latter was far too cagey to give his name, and simply said, 'I am that I am', for fear that Abraham might have an advantage over him.

However, by the Middle Ages it seems to have become generally accepted that God the Father's real name was Tetragrammaton; and those of Lucifer's once-beautiful companions, now become hideous monstrosities, were also known.

MacGregor Mathers, a very prominent occultist of modern times and an early

Opposite A witches' altar high on the Yorkshire moors

Right Mandrake, the root, used in witches' potions, that was said to resemble the human form and to shriek when torn from the ground

Below A calf's heart, stuck with thorns for witchcraft, discovered in a Devon chimney



associate of Aleister Crowley, listed the ten evil Sephiroths under the supreme command of Samael as follows: Moloch, Beelzebub, Lucifuge, Astaroth, Asmodeus, Belphegor, Baal, Adrammelech, Lilith and Naamah.

This leaves out Abaddon, Mammon, Leviathan, Belial, Usiel, Nebiros and Thentus, all of whom I should have thought ranked pretty high. But having had no commerce with any of these gentry, I am in no position to judge.

Richard Cavendish, in his admirable book *The Black Arts*, tells us that the *Arbatel of Magic* lists seven Olympic spirits who rule the planets: Aratron (Saturn), Bethor (Jupiter), Phaleg (Mars), Och (the Sun), Hagith (Venus), Ophiel (Mercury) and Phul (the Moon). Each of them has subordinate spirits, and any sorcerer who knew his business would obviously call up whichever of these many entities he regarded as most suitable to the operation in hand.

However, perhaps the greatest authority on demons was John Wier, physician to the Duke of Cleves in the sixteenth century. In his famous book *Pseudomonarchia Daemonum* he provided a Burke's Peerage of the Dark Powers and calculated that the demon host numbered 7,409,127, led by seventy-nine princes.

A word should perhaps be added about protection from demons and evil spirits. They intensely dislike the smell of garlic, so people who feared their attentions often wore a wreath of it about their necks. Salt, too, is an abomination to them, because it is a preservative and their business is destruction.

Any symbol that has long been venerated as a representation of good is a protection, owing to its having acquired an aura of Light. The most ancient symbol of this kind is the swastika – but the reverse of that adopted by the Nazis as their emblem. Another is the horseshoe. The most potent in Christian countries is obviously the crucifix. It will give protection even to people who have become atheists. Anyone troubled by evil manifestations should not hesitate to say, 'Avaunt thee, Satan!' and call on Jesus Christ.

No one who has not called on the Powers of Darkness need ever fear them. We all have that spark of Light within us, and defiance followed by an appeal for help, with faith that it will be given, will never remain unanswered.

Reverting now to the magician. Having carried out the ritual with the most scrupulous care, standing in his pentacle, holding his sword and wand, the sorcerer addressed the demon required in, more or less, the following terms:

'I conjure and command thee, O Spirit X.Y.Z., by Baralamensis, Baldachienses, Paumachie, Apolorodedes and the most powerful Princes Genio and Liachide, Ministers of the Seat of Tartarus and Chief Princes of the Throne of Apologia in the ninth region; by Him who spoke and it was done; by the most Holy and Glorious names Adonai, El Elohim, Elohe, Zabaoth, Elion, Escherce, Jar and Tetragrammaton. Appear forthwith and show thyself to me, here outside this circle, in fair and human shape, without horror or deformity and without delay. Speak to me visibly, clearly and without deceit. Answer all my demands and perform all that I desire. Do not linger. The King of Kings commands thee.'

Thus it was that, for several centuries, men all over Europe who had the tenacity of purpose to spend many years studying and disciplining themselves, to risk being

tortured and burnt at the stake, and the courage to face terrifying entities from spheres unknown, explored and bent to their will the invisible influences.

A certain number of them were alchemists. Through the confused doctrines of many sects, they had discerned the true knowledge of the co-equal powers of good and evil that so mysteriously influence our every act. They secretly carried the torch that every man has God within him and can achieve advancement only through himself. But the great majority were evil men, inspired by the Dark Power to encourage lust, depravity and greed; to sow dissension, cause illness and death and act as the willing agents of the Destroyer.

The Sabbaths

During the centuries in which the Plantaganet kings ruled England and a great part of France from the Tower of London and Windsor Castle, those courageous missionaries who first crossed the Rhine and penetrated the dark forests of Germany had been followed generation after generation by many others; so that, from the Moorish frontier in Spain to the sparsely populated north, Christianity had become the official religion throughout the whole of western Europe.

In the cities, early Gothic cathedrals were going up and in towns and villages churches enough to accommodate their whole population on Sundays. But in those times habits changed very slowly, especially in the country, where, unless they had to go with their local lord to the wars, most men died within half a mile of the place where they had been born, never having travelled further than the nearest market town.

From Neolithic times, the simple country folk had never ceased to venerate the Horned God. During the centuries of Roman rule, and for many generations afterwards, he had been worshipped openly with music, dancing and processions in which young girls scattered flowers before him on feast days. Later, again for many generations, the Church pandered to these jollifications, calling him Jack-in-the-Green, or Robin Goodfellow. But gradually the rule of the Church grew sterner; less and less licence was permitted, until at length the Old God's high days were taken over by the Christian saints.

Yet the Old God did not die, because the people still had need of him. They found no satisfaction in a religion that failed to provide an occasional outlet for their love of revelry. Many of them, too, had more faith in the bawdy goat-man as a provider of good harvests and bonny babies than in the sad figure that hung so pitifully from the Cross. After all, no amount of fasting, chanting of dirges and wearing of hair shirts had persuaded him to put a stop to the Black Death until that terrible plague had killed off a third of the population of England.

So the weekly esbat and the monthly sabbath became a regular feature of country life throughout western Europe, and for many centuries there was nothing particularly wicked about them.

It must be remembered that, in those days, there were no buses and motor-bikes to take young people into the nearest town to cinemas and dance halls; no local football and cricket clubs, or bingo halls. The people were poor and worked from

dawn to dusk. Very few of them could read or even afford candles to provide light for parlour games on winter evenings. Apart from hiring fairs and the feasts of the Church, their only form of relaxation was the esbat. It would, therefore, be fair to look on it as a weekly local night club.

Sabbaths were usually held at the full of the moon, and four times a year there were grand sabbaths, such as those held in Germany on the Brocken, at which several congregations together celebrated the Old God's feasts. These were February 2nd (Candlemas), April 30th (Walpurgisnacht), August 1st (Lammas) and October 31st (Hallowe'en).

People all brought their contributions of poultry, poached game, fruit, cakes, honey and home-brewed drinks and congregated on a deserted moorland or in a forest glade. The man who represented the god dressed for the part as a goat, stag, dog or bull, and received homage in the god's name. He would, we may assume, have been a cheerful, popular fellow and probably the village joker. When homage had been paid, he and the village wise-woman gave advice on problems about which members of the congregation would not have cared to consult their priest, and provided herbal remedies for those in need of them. He then assumed a role similar to that of a master of ceremonies at a modern village hop, and led the revels.

Those who played instruments brought them and formed a band. Everyone else danced and joined in the sort of games that are still played at children's parties. Then these simple folk, who for the rest of the week could afford only the poorest fare, pooled all the good things they had brought and merrily set to on a real tuck-in.

The feast over, full to the gills with strong ale, cider and elder, cowslip or dandelion wine, the fun, as can be imagined, became fast and furious. Fornication and adultery were held to be sins by the Christian God, but the Old Religion taught that such doings aided fertility in crops and cattle, and the sanctity of marriage had not then been generally accepted as a serious matter. The Lord of the Manor could have any young woman who took his fancy, and, if she had a child by him, so much the better as it meant a rich godfather for the baby. And many a lord could claim to have sired over a hundred children by girls on his estate. Moreover, in those days, among the peasantry few parents objected to two young people who were well suited entering on a trial marriage, or spending what was termed a 'proving night' before they decided whether they liked one another well enough to have their union regularized by the Church; and, if they elected to seek other bedfellows, no shame was thought of either.

Came cockcrow, and the revellers, tired but happy, wended their way back to their poor hovels, to face another week of gruelling work; but with the cheering thought that at its end they would dance, feast and enjoy free love again.

Such were the esbats and sabbaths in the Middle Ages.

But time changes all things, and early in the sixteenth century the sabbaths began to take on a very different character. I suggest that the principal cause of this was the coming of the Reformation. Before it the peasantry had had no love

for either begging friars or wealthy abbots, but the very vices of this indolent priesthood inclined them to condone the loose morals of their flocks. They knew all about the revels over which representatives of the Old God presided, yet they never interfered. The only people tried and condemned for heresy were those stupid enough to deny Christ in public or commit sacrilege in a church.

The Reformation swept away many of these venal but tolerant priests, or forced them to become zealots. A new type of clergy arose: earnest, vociferous, puritanical men, who took their religion seriously and were determined to enforce conformity on everyone. It was they who stigmatized the Old God as the Devil, and threatened with eternal torment in the fires of Hell any of their parishioners who attended a sabbath.

This must have scared many worthy folk into forgoing further visits to the Saturday evening night club. Moreover, this new type of priest preached with real conviction about the goodness of Christ and of how he had sacrificed himself to redeem mankind; and, instead of Latin, the services were conducted in English, which everyone could understand. Printing had been invented, books slowly began to circulate and the yeoman farmers learnt to read. Much of the period's literature was religious: edifying tales of saints and martyrs and horrifying accounts of how worshippers of the Old God were often carried away by demons.

In the course of two generations all this must have swung the great bulk of the population over from being only nominally Christian to becoming devout believers.

A similar change of attitude took place in the Protestant countries on the Continent. It occurred, too, in the still Catholic countries, but for a different reason. In them the Holy Inquisition had by then got fully into its terrible stride. Sheer terror of being denounced as having attended a sabbath, and of being burnt at the stake, drove the greater part of the people to abandon the Old God, and after a while they became devout, out of habit.

But a great part of the Catholic clergy continued to be as depraved as ever, as we learn from the history of Madeleine Bavent. In 1625, at the age of eighteen, after being seduced by her confessor, she entered a convent at Louviers. There a Father David told her that God should be worshipped naked, as Eve had been in the Garden of Eden. As a sign of submission, all the nuns went naked to church and afterwards danced naked for the pleasure of the priests in the convent garden. The priests then incited the nuns to make lesbian love to one another, and copulate, some playing the male by using a leather phallus.

Later, a Father Picard became chaplain, with one Father Boullé as his assistant. These two beauties were Satanists and turned the games into sabbaths. The nuns were taken to a house near the convent, where there were other priests and also laymen wearing animal costumes. A Black Mass was then performed with every form of blasphemy. On one occasion one of the nuns brought her own new-born child. It was crucified alive, then roasted and eaten. The meetings finished with every lecherous act that could be thought of.

In 1647, Boullé was burnt at the stake, and the corpse of Picard, who had died a few years earlier, was dug up to be burnt with him. The unfortunate Madeleine



A sabbath of witches with their familiars

died in prison at the age of forty.

Outside the Church only the worst elements of the people were left to the Old God. These were outlaws and robbers who lived in the woods; men and women who were by nature anarchists and cherished a burning hatred of all authority; the greedy and unscrupulous who were prepared to risk discovery and punishment by the Church in order to obtain the secrets of casting spells and of making love



philtres and poisons which they could sell in secret for good money.

The Powers of Darkness never sleep, and here was a golden field for exploitation. From midnight picnics and bawdy gaiety, the sabbaths changed to blasphemous parodies of the Christian faith. Henceforth anyone who wanted to attend them had first to be initiated into a coven, and the chief of each coven ruled it by terror. The initiate had to deny Christ, spit on the Cross and, in token of submission to the devil, kiss the fundamental orifice of the goat-man chief.

They also had to sign in their own blood a pact with Satan, in which they surrendered their souls to him in exchange for a term of years during which he would ensure their prosperity. Such a pact signed by Urbain Grandier, who ravished the nuns in the Convent at Loudun, has been preserved. It was also customary for worshippers to present their children to the chief of the coven, sell them to the Devil and have them baptized into the Satanic faith.

It is quite probable that there are a number of people still living to whom this has happened. Soon after the publication of my first book with an occult background, *The Devil Rides Out*, a woman who said she had been sold to the Devil came to see me. She had nothing to gain by lying, and she asked nothing of me; from her personality and sincerity of manner, I believe that she was telling me the truth. She was quiet, respectable, middle-aged and very sad. This is what she told me:

'From my childhood I have always been "queer". Although I like animals, no dog will come near me. I cannot go into a church without being physically sick. When night falls, I seem to wake up and feel the urge to go out and do all sorts of things. In my 'teens I found that I had the power to ill-wish people; but I used it only mildly as a sort of wicked joke.

'Then I became a chorus girl. One evening I learnt that another girl had played me a filthy trick. We were in the dressing-room. I picked up what remained of a cake of soap, squeezed it in my hand and put this curse upon her: "As I crush this soap, so may you be crushed by misfortune."

'About a year later, my elder sister told me that she had seen this girl. She was suffering from some unknown wasting disease, was too ill to work and was living in poverty. I felt horrified and told my sister what I had done. She upbraided me, calling me a daughter of the Devil; and it was only as a result of this that I learnt my mother had been a witch and had sold me to the Devil when I was a baby.'

This poor woman added that she had since learnt to control her anger, but was still afflicted by her 'queerness'.

Reverting to the change in character of the sabbath. The chief of the coven first read the litany of Satan out of the Black Book. Every member then had to report the evil he or she had done since the last meeting, and woe betide any who had failed to create trouble and grief. They were savagely whipped. The chief was always disguised as some type of animal, and the majority of chiefs must have been powerful hypnotists to have been able to impose their wills on members who showed reluctance to conform. When the feast was held, filthy brews were drunk, loaded with aphrodisiacs which would arouse the drinkers into a sexual frenzy. Offal was eaten and, whenever possible, the flesh of a murdered child. The band struck up, but it played no tune, only made a horrid cacophony. They danced, but back to back. Then the orgy began, and it was no matter of joyful, healthy lust. The witches and warlocks came to these sabbaths masked and clad to represent wild beasts and vermin. Toads copulated with wildcats, wolves with great blue-bottles, rats with foxes; sometimes in pairs, often in groups, practising every conceivable form of depravity and obscenity.

Such were the sabbaths of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Church in western Europe had replaced the Horned God with the Devil and the power of Darkness again came into its own.

The Later Middle Ages

The term 'witch' is equally applicable to a man or a woman. The reason that it is now generally accepted as signifying a woman is, doubtless, because in Christian countries there have always been many more female than male witches. For this an explanation is not far to seek. Compared with other religions, Christianity had little to offer women.

Pagan faiths, however many other gods are included in their pantheons, had a supreme Trinity, which was usually of father, mother and son. Jehovah – almost alone of the ancient gods – remained unmarried, and this bachelor god was inherited from the Hebrews by Christians and Mohammedans alike. The Christians gave him a Son, but Christ did not marry. Mahomet did marry, and, although he did not claim divinity, he did a great deal for women by raising their status to become individuals with definite rights, including that of owning property.

In the pagan faiths, the mother goddess played a part that it is impossible to overestimate. She had borne a child, and so had suffered the fears of pregnancy and pains of giving birth. All women could count on her understanding and sympathy, and place themselves in her hands in a way they could not do with any male deity.

Realizing this weakness in their divine hierarchy, the early Christian Fathers endeavoured to make good their lack of a mother goddess by building up the figure of the Virgin Mary. A devotion to this chaste and sadly stricken mother of Christ has comforted countless millions of women; but it could never be more than a half measure, because – unlike Isis, Hera, Semiramis and the rest – she was not a goddess with limitless power in her own right. She could only intercede with her divine Son. And, after the Reformation, the Protestants threw away even this attraction for women to their churches.

Moreover, unlike Mohammedan women (who, despite their veiling and seclusion, were treated with respect), women in all Christian countries were, until quite recent times, legally chattels. Still worse, for many centuries they were regarded by the Church as vessels of evil, made deliberately in a form that would tempt men into the sin of lust; they were taught that to show themselves naked to their husbands was a wicked thing to do, and that for a man to caress their bodies for any purpose other than to get them with child was a way of taking the road to hell. Indeed, it was decreed that, even to enter a church, a woman must cover her head – symbolically putting ashes upon it – as an acknowledgment that she was the embodiment of original sin, and that it was her sex that had caused God the Father to drive mankind out of Paradise.

Can it then be wondered at that many a spirited woman resented the inferiority imposed on her by the Christian Church, and decided to give her allegiance secretly to the opposition?

In the fourteenth century there were a few skirmishes between the rival faiths. The Bishop of Coventry was, in 1303, accused of paying homage to a deity in the form of an animal, but he got off. So did Dame Alice Kyteler, who in 1324 was accused of sacrificing live animals to devils. Even the Carmelite friar Pierre Recordi, who was brought to trial in 1329, got off with imprisonment for life; although he admitted to having seduced three women by making images of them in wax mingled with his own blood and spittle, and burying them under the women's thresholds, then, after his success, making a sacrifice in thanks to the Devil.

In 1335, Catherine Delort and Anne Marie de Georgel were tried in Toulouse, and confessed that, for over twenty years, they had attended sabbaths and had long since given themselves to the Devil. They maintained that God ruled the heavens and the Devil the earth; that they were equal in power and that the war between them would continue for ever. This belief in the warring powers of Light and Darkness was obviously a survival of the Albigenses' so-called heresy.

Catherine deposed that she had first been taken to a sabbath by her lover, a shepherd. There she made obeisance to a great he-goat, then submitted to his pleasure and that of other men present. She said that they drank horrid liquids and ate the flesh of new-born children, but were rewarded by being taught by the goat spells that would harm people they disliked.

Anne Marie stated that one day, near the town, she had seen a huge dark man dressed in the skin of an animal coming towards her across the water. He had blown into her mouth, then possessed her; on the following Saturday, by his will, she had been carried to the sabbath. It was presided over by a great he-goat, who urged them to do all the harm they could to Christians, and taught them about poisonous plants.

It is not until a little before the middle of the fifteenth century that we get the first mention of witches riding through the nights to sabbaths on broomsticks. Levitation has been vouched for by a number of people who have witnessed Eastern mystics perform their wonders; and, if we are prepared to agree that to the two Supreme Powers all things are possible, certain witches may have been granted the ability to fly. But it is much more probable that the witches only believed that they had done so, owing to drug-induced dreams.

From many accounts, it is certain that the chiefs of covens sometimes gave witches an ointment with which to smear their bodies before coming to a sabbath. Professor A. J. Clark analysed two recipes for such ointments that have survived. He reported that aconite and belladonna were among the ingredients. The first produces irregular action of the heart and the second delirium. The effect of such a combination on a person would produce sleep, with a sensation of movement and falling through space. But for the chief of a coven to have given his witches an ointment knowing that it would prevent them from attending a sabbath does not make sense; so the possible explanation is that they did go, but only in spirit, and,

Opposite Walpurgisnacht: witches flying to a sabbath



when their spirits returned to their bodies and they woke, they brought back a complete memory of all that their spirits had encountered there and believed that they had physically participated.

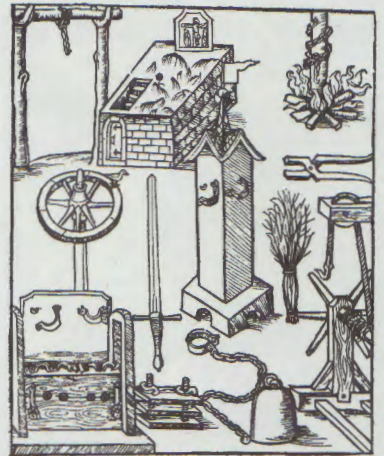
In 1441 Roger Bolingbroke, an astronomer; Thomas Southwell, a Canon of St Peter's, Westminster; and a witch named Margery Goodmayne were all charged with having conspired against the life of King Henry VI by sorcery, on the instructions of Dame Eleanor, a daughter of Lord Cobham. Southwell died in the Tower, Goodmayne was burnt at the stake and Bolingbroke was dragged through the streets on a hurdle tied to a horse's tail before being hanged, drawn and quartered. But Dame Eleanor got off with only having to do penance in public.

In the reign of Edward IV, the Duchess of Bedford was accused of having employed a sorcerer named Thomas Wake to enchant the King into marrying Elizabeth Woodville, by whom he had the two princes later murdered in the Tower; but the charge was withdrawn. After Edward's death, his one-time mistress, Jane Shore, was convicted of using witchcraft against his successor,



Above A witch kissing the Devil 'beneath his tail'

Right Instruments of torture used at witches' trials



Richard III, but she fared no worse than having to walk through the streets with a placard hung round her neck, declaring her to be a harlot. And she was so beloved by the people for her sweetness and charities that the crowds showed their sympathy for her.

In Savoy in 1477 a witch named Antoine Rose was brought to trial. She had told a neighbour that she badly needed money, so the friend took her to a sabbath where she was persuaded to do homage to the Devil. He had the form of a big, black dog; everyone present kissed his hindquarters, then the men copulated with the women, dog-fashion. They were told to take the Host at Communion, hold it in their mouths and, later, spit it out and trample on it. He gave them potions for making people and cattle ill, and told them to do all the harm they could. They knew him by the name of Robinet.

This is one of the many instances in which witches stated that the Devil was

spoken of by them as Robin, or some form of that name. Dame Alice Kyteler called him Robin Artisan, the Somerset witches called the chief of their coven Robin; and Puck, a deity of the Little People, was also known as Robin Goodfellow. Professor Murray remarks on the connection between the latter and Robin Hood, and points out that the legends regarding Robin Hood associate him with many places far removed from Sherwood Forest – for instance, Scotland. It will be noted that his band numbered twelve men, which, with himself, made up a coven; also that he was a declared enemy of the Church and took special delight in robbing rich abbots and priors for the benefit of the poor. Tales of his doings having arisen in so many localities, and the date of their origins differing greatly, might be accounted for if his name was an abbreviation of Robin with the Hood, as in witch trials the Devil is often described as wearing a hood, and the Little People always wore hoods from which they were most averse ever to be parted, evidently attaching some magical significance to them.

On December 5th 1484, Pope Innocent VIII opened the war against witchcraft, by publishing a bull entitled *Summis desiderantes affectibus*. This led to the creation of the Holy Office, as the Inquisition was officially called. It empowered inquisitors appointed by the Holy See to participate in all trials for heresy, to override the decisions of local courts, to proceed against persons of whatever rank and to punish all those found guilty.

The object of the bull was to stamp out the lawlessness that then threatened society. Votaries of the Left-hand Path had become so numerous that, by casting spells, inciting to rebellion and other nefarious activities, they were thought by the Church to be as much a menace to the Christian way of life as Communism is thought to be today.

The bull – initially aimed at Germany, where at that time Satanism was particularly rife – was inspired by Jacobus Sprenger, the Prior of the Convent of Cologne. In collaboration with Prior Heinrich Krämer he wrote the *Malleus Maleficarum* – the ‘Hammer of the Witches’. It was first published in 1486 and ran into many editions.

This dissertation of a quarter of a million words is the most famous of all books on witchcraft and demonology, as it examines the whole subject with great thoroughness.

An English translation with a long and most informative introduction by the Reverend Montague Summers was published in 1928. But the theological arguments in the text are so involved that the abbreviated edition published by the Folio Society in 1968 will be found much easier to follow.

In 1487 the Dominican friar Tomás de Torquemada was appointed Grand Inquisitor of Spain. Under the patronage of the fanatical Queen Isabella he instituted the indiscriminate reign of terror that has forever made the word Inquisition infamous. However, another century was to pass before the battle was fully joined, and, as is shown by many of the above cases, up till that time people of wealth and influence had nothing very much to fear if they were accused of practising the Old Religion.

The Great Persecution

In 1591, at North Berwick, a grand sabbath was held by thirty-nine persons (three covens), it is said at the instance of the 5th Earl of Bothwell, with the object of destroying King James VI of Scotland, later King James I of England. The King was about to set out to fetch as his bride, Princess Anne of Denmark. The grand master at the sabbath, a man named John Fane, shared out the duties among those present. Some were to arrange to secure a piece of the King's clothing, then a wax image of him would be made, wrapped in the cloth, and slowly burnt; others were to attempt to poison him, and others again to raise storms so that he would be drowned at sea. A storm did succeed in delaying his departure for some weeks; then, when he finally set sail – as was disclosed later by one of the principal witches, Agnes Simpson, at her trial – they took a cat, christened it the King and threw it into the foaming surf. This aroused a terrible tempest; but the King, owing it was said to his great piety, survived and, on his return to Scotland, initiated the first great witch-hunt, in order to wreak vengeance on those who had attempted to bring about his death.

Fane, Simpson and others were arrested, tortured, brought to trial and duly burnt. The confessions extracted revealed numerous Satanic practices. Fane acknowledged having broken into a church at night by means of a 'hand of glory'. This was the hand of a murderer cut from his corpse as it swung on a gibbet, then dipped in wax and used as a candle. All locks were supposed to open to this charm, and a deep sleep be imposed upon anyone in the building that the witch entered. Fane had then performed a service to the Devil in the church. Agnes Simpson said that she foretold the outcome of illnesses by the behaviour of a big black dog called Elva, and that she had danced endlong – that is, follow-my-leader – in the kirkyard with Barbara Napier and over a hundred other people, while Gilie Duncan played on a trump. She also described how, at Beigis Todd's house, she, Janet Campbell and two wives named Stobbin had prepared the cat before it was thrown into the sea, by knitting to its four paws the private parts of a dead man.

King James then wrote a book on demonology, and by early in the seventeenth century witch-hunting was in full swing, particularly in Scotland. In Pendle Forest, a lofty ruin known as Malkin Tower was a favourite place for holding sabbaths. Two rival witches, Mother Dundike and Mother Chattox, caused so much trouble in the neighbourhood that a local magistrate had them arrested. On the night of Good Friday, 1612, their covens met at the Tower to cast spells, with the object of freeing their leaders. Unluckily for them a child named Janet Device had been brought along, and she betrayed all she had seen and heard, so nearly all that group of witches were seized and went to the stake.

All Celtic witches were believed to be able to turn themselves into hares, in which form they sucked milk from the cows, leaving them dry. Similar beliefs about the power of witches to turn themselves into animals were world-wide. On the Continent they usually became werewolves and in Africa changed into were-leopards. There are many stories of men, when out at night, encountering a savage

animal and slicing off one of its forepaws, to find when they got home their wives with a hand missing and the arm a bleeding, bandaged stump.

Many witches had familiars, particularly those in the eastern counties of England, from which it has been deduced that the custom was brought over by the Norsemen; and it is thought to have originated with the Finns or Lapps. It is certain that the shamans, as the witch-doctors of the sub-Arctic races are called, kept familiars; and so did the Red Indians of North America.

The familiar was usually a cat or dog, and frequently some small animal such as a mouse, toad, adder or mole that could be kept in a box or pot. To the food of her familiar the witch added a drop of her own blood, by pricking her arm or finger, thus making the animal part of herself. It did her bidding, bringing misfortune to anyone to whom she sent it; but those were always anxious occasions, for if any harm befell the familiar, the witch herself would be affected.

A witch with a demon familiar



Frances Moore, tried in 1645, stated that the goodwife Weed gave her a white cat, telling her that, if she would deny God and affirm the same with her blood, then whomsoever she cursed and sent that cat unto, they should die shortly after.

Elizabeth Sawyer, the famous Witch of Edmonton, confessed that she kept a devil in the form of a black dog, and that 'when he came barking to me he had then done the mischife that I had bid him do for me'. When Elizabeth was searched by order of the magistrate, and in spite of her resistance, there was found on her, a 'thing like a Teate, the bigness of a little finger and the length of half a finger, which was branched at the top and seemed as though one had suckt it'.

Teats similar to this were frequently found on various parts of witches' bodies, when they were stripped and examined before being tried. They were believed to have been produced by the touch of the Devil, in order to enable the witches to feed their familiars. The other mark that was always sought for was one or more insensitive spots, such as those found on the body of Urbain Grandier.

For this professional prickers were employed and, as they got a good fee for every witch detected, it is certain that these unscrupulous fanatics sent many a poor innocent woman to a terrible death. The method employed was to strip the prisoner, blindfold her, then feel all over the body for some place where, perhaps after an accident, the skin had become hard. A pin was then pushed gently in. If the woman did not cry out, or the place start to bleed, she was told to find the pin and take it out. If her hand went to some other part of her body, that was taken as definite evidence that the place where the pin was had been touched by the Devil, and so she was a witch.

Among the most infamous of the prickers were John Kincaid of Trenent, John Balfour of Corhouse, John Dick and an inhabitant of Inverness called Paterson. On one occasion the last pricked eighteen women and one man in the Church of Wardlaw in one day, having first cut off all their hair. This terrible villain made a considerable fortune in this sadistic manner, but was later discovered to be a woman in men's clothes. The most notorious of all the witch-hunters was Matthew Hopkins, who with his assistant John Stearne terrorized the eastern counties.

Quite a number of people do have insensitive spots on their bodies, and it seems certain that many of the prickers' victims were innocent; but the practice was to push in a three-inch pin, and it is impossible to believe that the majority of the women who did not show any reaction had not had parts of their bodies anaesthetized by some unnatural, and presumably occult, means.

The story of the Lancashire Witches is known to many through Harrison Ainsworth's famous novel. The most notorious of them was Elizabeth Dundike. She brought up her children to be witches and also instructed her grandchildren in witchcraft. Such handing down in families of the secret art was common practice. To ensure a good feast at the sabbaths, the Lancashire Witches simply went to the house of a well-to-do farmer and helped themselves to what they liked from his larder. This was also the custom in many other localities, and the covens were so dreaded that the farmers made no protest.

One striking fact about the witches is that, almost without exception, they

refused to recant. After enduring the most awful tortures, they still insisted that the Devil was the true god and that attending the sabbaths had been the most wonderful thing in their lives, because they had experienced such ecstatic pleasure at them – and this in spite of the fact that many of them averred that each time the Devil copulated with them it was excruciatingly painful, because his huge member was covered with scales.

The victory of the Parliamentarians in the Great Rebellion greatly intensified the witch-hunts, because the Roundheads were Puritans to a man. As the Reverend Montague Summers put it in his *History of Witchcraft*, 'Envenomed by the poison

Matthew Hopkins compelling witches to reveal the names of their associates



of Calvin and John Knox, fire and cord were seldom at rest.' Levellers, Anabaptists and other fanatical sects gave no fair trial or the least mercy to any poor wretch upon whom could be pinned the faintest suspicion of having had anything to do with witchcraft. During the sixteen years that Britain was a republic, many hundreds of women and scores of men, doubtless innocent, were half-drowned by being ducked in ponds that formed the sewers of villages, were whipped, had their teeth torn out and finally were hanged.

There has been a tradition that before the Battle of Worcester, where the Royalists made their unsuccessful attempt to defeat the Roundheads and place Charles II on the throne, Oliver Cromwell sold his soul to the Devil for victory and a further seven years of power. Was it coincidence that he died seven years later to the very day, during the worst thunderstorm within human memory? At least half the people in England believed that the Devil had come to claim him.

At last, on May 8th 1660, Charles was proclaimed King. With his landing at Dover, the worst period of repression ever known in Britain came to an end, and on his thirtieth birthday, May 29, he rode triumphantly into Whitehall. He was not only a 'merry' monarch, but a man of the wisest and sweetest disposition. Even of the regicides who had voted for his father's death, after ten of them had been executed, he said, 'I am weary of hanging, let it rest'; and so spared the lives of the remainder.

Indiscriminate witch-hunting was brought to an end, but witch trials and burnings continued right up to early in the nineteenth century, and witches continued to assert that nothing would induce them to give up the Devil as a lover, although his embrace could be as agonizing as childbirth. In 1662, in Scotland, Isobel Gowdie told her accusers that the Devil was heavy like a malt sack and had a huge member that was cold as ice, but added, 'He is abler for us that way than any man can be.'

Paulus Grillandus, a judge who tried many witches in Rome, declared that they enjoyed connection with the Devil 'with the utmost voluptuousness'. Jeannette d'Abadie said that his member was enormous; that both it and his emission were cold and she suffered extreme pain. Nearly all of them testified to a madness of sensuality in which torment was mingled with delight.

On the Continent witch-hunting was pursued both by the Holy Inquisition and the Protestant ministers, with the same savage ferocity as in Britain. Remigius, a criminal judge in Lorraine, recorded that, during his sixteen years as a judge, no fewer than 800 witches were condemned and burnt in his area. That is at the rate of one every week. And he adds that about the same number saved themselves by enduring torture without confessing or by escaping.

The generally accepted idea of a witch is of a wrinkled, toothless old crone with straggling grey hair; but many were young and beautiful. One such was the Hungarian Countess Elizabeth Bathory. She once wrote to her husband, telling him of a new spell she had learnt. It was to beat a black hen to death with a white cane, keep the blood, then smear a little of it on the clothing or, better still, the body of one's enemy; and 'he will surely die'. Many beautiful women have regularly

bathed in asses' milk to preserve the freshness of their skins; the Countess preferred human blood. To ensure a fresh supply daily, she kept for bleeding several young peasant girls chained up in the cellars of her castle. In 1610 someone gave her away, and she was arrested. In the dungeons the bodies of fifty girls were found.

The thought of Middle Europe in those times brings to mind vampires. These were believed to be the bodies of evil people who had been buried but were not dead. They were said to leave their graves in the middle of the night, seek out a cottage where a door had been left unlocked, creep inside, fix their front teeth – which had become hollow fangs – into the neck of a sleeper and suck his blood.

The area in which a vampire could operate was limited by two factors: it was unable to cross running water and it had to be back in its grave by cock-crow; so, if one was known to be active in the neighbourhood, a watch could be set for it and it could be shadowed to its lair. Next day the village worthies attended Mass in the church, then followed the priest in solemn procession to the grave. It was then opened, and a stout stake was driven through the vampire's heart; with a terrible scream, it gave up the ghost.

The probable foundation for stories of these 'undead' is that now and then witches who were outcasts found that there could be worse homes than the spacious tomb of a noble family, and so lived in a graveyard, as we have seen the witch Erichtho did in Roman times; and at night they went out, not to suck blood, but to steal food.

There can be no doubt that, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many a poor old woman who lived alone in a cottage on the edge of a village, and talked to her pet animal (as anyone might do) as though it were a human being, was accused of witchcraft and sent to her death; and thousands who, falsely accused by malicious enemies, suffered torture and an agonizing death at the stake. But there were great numbers who were unquestionably guilty. It must be remembered that, not only did they indulge in the most revolting sexual practices, but they were murderers of children, poisoners, procurers and blackmailers, and had pledged themselves to a life of habitual crime, which inflicted immeasurable loss, distress, ill-health and misery upon innocent people.

The stamping out of witchcraft and Satanism needs no justification. It is in fact a duty incumbent on all those in authority. Their first concern should be the protection of law-abiding citizens within their jurisdiction.

The crime of which Catholic and Protestant Christians were equally guilty was that, while mouthing hypocritical declarations of their devotion to a God of love and mercy, they should have inflicted such unspeakable cruelties on their fellow human beings.

The Salem Witch Trials

The American colonies had their share of witch cults, although Satanism there was much less prevalent than in Europe. However, as we have seen, the most ferocious persecution of witchcraft in Britain took place when the country was dominated by the Puritans; so it is not surprising that witch-hunting was carried

out more ruthlessly in Puritan New England than in the southern colonies. The extraordinary courage and endurance displayed by the early settlers was due to their absolute faith in God, His Word and the rightness of the strict adherence to the letter of it as laid down by the fanatical John Calvin; so they would not tolerate anyone even questioning a passage in the Bible.

From early in the seventeenth century there had been a certain number of witch trials in Boston and other places, but the notorious affair at Salem did not occur until 1692, and it had some most unusual features.

It began in Salem village, in the house of the Reverend Samuel Parris. He had a nine-year-old daughter, Betty, a nervous, introspective child, and a niece of eleven, Abigail Williams, a bold and mischievous girl who dominated her cousin. Parris had lived for a while in Barbados, and had brought back with him two slaves: John Indian, a Negro who worked mostly outside the house, and his wife Tituba, a Negro-Carib half-caste, who cooked and cleaned.

Of Mrs Parris we know little, except that she was very devout and spent most of her time doing good works in the village; the children were really mothered by old Tituba, who adored them. Steeped in her Voodoo beliefs, inherited from Africa and the Caribbean, Tituba talked to the girls about them and, for their amusement, taught them how to cast some, probably more or less harmless, spells.

So proud were they of this secret knowledge that they boasted of it to several of their older friends: Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Booth and Susanna Sheldon, and later to several others, including Ann Putnam, the malicious daughter of a neurotic, scandal-loving mother; with the result that, before long, old Tituba's quarters became a real witch's kitchen.

What actually went on there nobody is now ever likely to know; but it must have been something pretty nasty, as first Betty, then Abigail and, in turn, all the other girls, became possessed. They suffered from vacancy of mind, fits of dizziness, then crawled about on all fours, making horrible animal noises.

Prayers proved of no avail. The girls screamed as though touched with a red hot iron at the sound of a sacred word. A Dr Gregg was called in but could be of no help, and he declared that the 'evil hand' was on them; so Parris appealed for spiritual assistance and two ministers, Nicholas Noyes and John Hale, arrived in the village.

Repeatedly they asked all the children who their tormenters were, but could get no reply. Mary Walcott's aunt then resorted to a stratagem. Suspecting Tituba, she persuaded her to make a witch-cake from an old country recipe. It consisted of rye meal mixed with the urine of the children. When Parris learnt this and charged his daughter with being a party to it, she went into such terrible hysterics that it was feared she would die. But out of Betty and her friends they at last got admissions that enabled them to charge Tituba with witchcraft. A slovenly creature named Sarah Good and Sarah Osburne, a woman of property who was suspected of immorality, were also charged.

Two magistrates – John Hathorne, a true zealot, and Jonathan Corwin, a milder man – were sent from Salem village to examine the witches; but the law in

Massachusetts at that time was primitive. The concept that an accused is innocent until proved guilty had not even been thought of; the prisoners were allowed no counsel to defend them, and it was enough for a witness to declare that he had seen the 'shape' of the accused riding through the air on a broomstick for him to be believed, however stoutly the poor wretch in the dock denied it.

Tituba was fortunate. The Reverend Mr Parris thrashed her again and again until her slave mentality saved her. She suddenly realized that to escape further punishment she must do as he wished – tell him the sort of things he hoped to hear from her. Once started, she went to it with a will, but she was too cunning to say that she had had dealings with the Devil. A tall man, she claimed, had come to her, told her that he was God and that she must serve him for six years. He had brought her a book. There were nine names in it, among them those of Osborne and Sarah Good. She had flown to sabbaths with the man, accompanied by a hog, two red cats and the winged head of a cat that was a creature of Osborne's. The witches' 'shapes' had tried to force her to harm Betty and Abigail, but she had resisted them.

All this was eagerly accepted by the court. It was evident that poor Tituba had been deceived by the Devil, and was the innocent victim of the witches. This was borne out by her also becoming possessed, rolling her eyes, frothing at the mouth and screaming that a demon was tormenting her for having spoken. Her husband, John Indian, was a quick learner. He roared, blasphemed and flung himself about on the floor of the courtroom in, apparently, paroxysms of agony; so obviously he was another victim of the horror that had come to Salem village.

Hysteria seized upon the Reverend Mr Parris's congregation. A dozen people said, and some perhaps honestly believed, that they had seen the 'shapes' of others against whom they had a grudge, sticking pins into poppets and supping up the unholy sacrament of red bread and bloody wine. Rebecca Nurse, a most respectable old lady, greatly beloved by her family, was dragged from a bed of sickness to be charged. John Proctor, an honest farmer, had the temerity to declare that the girls were liars, and their hysteria self-induced for the pleasure they got out of having drawn so much attention to themselves – which was, in part, certainly true. The result was that he was arrested as a witch and his property was confiscated before he had even been tried.

For every trial the girls were brought into court, and their unchecked behaviour had a shattering effect upon the accused. If a prisoner lifted his eyes to heaven, they all lifted theirs; if he blew his nose, they all blew theirs, and so on. If he denied a charge, they created pandemonium, howling him down and going into hysterical fits. Still worse, he was in effect tried by them. One by one the demented young creatures were carried to the prisoner and he was forced to take the hand of each in turn. If she continued to rave and twist, he was innocent; but if she became quiet, it was assumed that he had taken back into himself the demon he had sent out to torment her, and so was guilty.

A statement was made that the sabbaths were held in a meadow that had been leased to Parris, which was normally always avoided at night because it was plagued by a host of croaking frogs. It was said that a horn was sounded there,

which was inaudible to honest folk, but could be heard by every witch in Essex County. In Andover, Salisbury and Salmon Falls they all mounted their broomsticks and came screaming through the air to a sabbath. When they had taken unholy communion, the Devil delivered a sermon, telling them that they must get enough converts to overthrow the Church; then the good old times would come back. There would again be jollifications at Christmas, dancing round the Maypole, racing, cock-fights and all the delights that the Puritan New Englanders had forsworn.

The girls were constantly seeing 'shapes' all over the place, and so unshakable had their elders' belief in them become that, at the children's direction, they actually stabbed with their swords and threw pitchforks at the empty air where these 'shapes' were supposed to be.

A new Governor, Sir William Phips, arrived from England and with him Increase Mather, the father of Cotton Mather and later President of Harvard. Mather had been prominent in the Boston witch trials, but Phips was interested only in getting together an expedition against the French in Canada. Having decreed that all those in prison accused of witchcraft should be chained up in their cells, he left the business of trying them to his jurists. A special court of Oyer and Terminer was formed with the Deputy Governor, William Stoughton, as President, and six other judges.

People in the neighbourhood of Salem who feared to be 'cried out', as it was called, began to seek safety in flight. Among them was John Willard, the Deputy Constable, who had arrested several of the witches. In a sudden fit of disgust he turned on the girls, accused them of being fakes and cried out, 'Hang them all! Hang them!' The girls got back at him by declaring that they had seen his 'shape' strangling his own nephew who had just died. Willard fled, but failed to get any distance before he was caught, chained up in prison and accused of having bewitched to death eleven other people.

Suddenly the girls decided on the identity of the man who played the part of the Devil at the sabbaths. It was, they declared, the Reverend George Burroughs, who had held the living at Salem village ten years earlier. Shocked as the magistrates were that a minister should be involved, they did not hesitate. The sheriffs were dispatched to the distant parish where Burroughs was living. Striding into his house, they dragged him from the table in the middle of a meal and hauled him off to Salem.

To his amazement, he was accused of murdering a number of soldiers who had been killed near his parish while fighting Indians. Not physically of course. As with the crimes of which the other witches were accused, it was his 'shape' that had done these deeds. What possible defence could he put up to prove his innocence?

Poor old Rebecca Nurse was brought to trial. Her unblemished reputation stood her in good stead. Her family and numerous friends had the courage to testify. She was found not guilty. Instantly the courtroom became a bedlam. The girls howled and tore their hair, screaming that the old lady was guilty. Rebecca was brought back into the court. The jury was told to think again. This time they

reversed their verdict. On Tuesday, July 19th, she was one of five women hanged on Gallows Hill.

The terror spread. Scores of people were 'cried out'. Under Stoughton's presidency the court administered a travesty of justice. Prisoners who confessed could hope for clemency, those who stoutly denied their guilt were condemned. On September 22nd eight more were hanged, including one Mary Esty.

Now there occurred the most amazing happening in the whole awful business. On that day Mary Esty's 'shape' appeared to a servant girl named Mary Herrick and said to her, 'I am going upon the ladder to be hanged for a witch, but I am innocent and before a twelve-month be past you shall believe it.' Shortly afterwards her ghost caused Mary Herrick to denounce the wife of the minister John Hale. He knew the charge to be utterly false, and suddenly realized how many others of the accused might well be innocent.

This proved the beginning of a return to sanity. The Governor came back from the Canadian border. He was shocked to find that 150 people were chained up in prison awaiting trial for witchcraft. He decreed that in future spectral evidence should be inadmissible. This cut the ground from under the feet of those tireless persecutors Stoughton, Noyes and Parris. Accused after accused was found not guilty. The movement collapsed.

Out of this terrible madness only one thing emerges to the credit of the persecutors. Unlike the Calvinists and Holy Inquisition, in Europe, at least the American witch-hunters hanged their victims. They neither tortured them nor burnt them at the stake.

The Frauds

The second half of the eighteenth century was a time of great splendour in Europe. From vast Versailles down to the smallest German court, ladies and gentlemen went clothed in silks and satins. The aristocracy of England lived in great Georgian mansions, that of France in gracious chateaux. In Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Scandinavia there were scores of castles and palaces. Their occupants were served by whole companies of servants in rich liveries; coaches and horses filled the stables, and their owners collected costly paintings and libraries of beautifully bound books. They hunted and travelled, attended by big retinues, and entertained on the grand scale.

All this had to be paid for, and many of them could ill afford to have such costly display, so it is not surprising that magic was frequently resorted to, in the hope that it would replenish nearly empty coffers. The majority of sovereigns and richer nobles housed and fed astrologers who advised them about their ventures, and any rogue who claimed to know the secret formula by which the alchemists turned base metal into gold was welcome at every court.

One of the most successful of these gentry was the Comte de St-Germain, who appeared in Paris about 1750. He was a fine handsome fellow, who looked to be in early middle age; but he averred that he had discovered the Elixir of Life and by means of it had already lived for 2,000 years. Although no one could persuade him



Left The Comte de St-Germain, who claimed to have discovered the Elixir of Life
Centre Giuseppe Balsamo, 'Count Cagliostro', believed by Cardinal de Rohan to have made gold
Right Jacopo Casanova, who used the trappings of occultism to promote his love affairs

to share his secret, he became very popular in society, and Louis XV entrusted him with several secret diplomatic missions. He was involved in many of the political intrigues of the day until, in 1775, he retired to Schleswig-Holstein and gave himself up entirely to the study of the occult with Landgrave Charles of Hesse.

Another of these successful adventurers was Giuseppe Balsamo, who was born in 1743 in Palermo. Alexandre Dumas used him as the title character in *Memoirs of a Physician*, the first of that splendid series of five novels that cover the latter part of the reign of Louis XV and the French Revolution.

In 1776, styling himself Count Cagliostro, Balsamo arrived in London with a beautiful young Italian wife. He, too, asserted that he had lived for many hundreds of years, and had learnt all the secrets of the mysterious East. He was an extremely able hypnotist and in 1784, under the patronage of Cardinal de Rohan, held successful seances that became the rage of Parisian society. By slipping unseen some grains of gold into a mixture, then reducing it until only a sediment and the gold were left, he induced the gullible Cardinal to believe that he had made it.

The Cardinal was infatuated with Queen Marie Antoinette, and Cagliostro contributed to his downfall by promising him her love. In 1785 there occurred the Affair of the Diamond Necklace. Although not privy to the fraud, Cagliostro became involved in the scandal and Louis XVI banished him from France. Four years later, in Rome, his wife denounced him to the Holy Inquisition as a heretic, magician and Freemason. He was condemned to life imprisonment, and died in the dungeons of San Leo in 1795.

Much the most likable of this type of rogue was Giovanni Jacopo Casanova, whose name has passed into history as the most insatiable of seducers. A Venetian born in 1725, in his middle years he visited nearly every major city in Europe, and many of them several times; so the accounts of his life in them, given in his *Memoirs*, make a valuable contribution to the history of his times.

Again and again he drove away from a city in tears, having left behind the love

of his life, generally in order that she might better her position – only to encounter at the first inn another beauty who promptly became the love of his life. He gambled away half a dozen fortunes and cheated no more than his contemporaries, made several German princes rich by managing lottery systems for them, was a gifted conversationalist in many languages and had a most inquiring mind. So it was natural that such a man in such an age should, early in his life, become interested in magic.

Although he had no knowledge of the real secrets of the Cabala, he made adroit use of it and of formulae supposedly enabling him to communicate with invisible forces. With glib astrological and occult jargon he fooled many people, resorting to such tricks at times when his reckless gambling had left him in low water.

His greatest success in this direction was with an immensely wealthy elderly widow, the Marquise d'Urfé. It was generally accepted that no female could ever be made aware of the ultimate secrets of the Universe, and this good lady's one ambition was to be so. Casanova produced the excellent idea that, to achieve her end, she should be reborn as a boy.

A full-length novel could be written on the intriguing situations that followed. They covered several years while Casanova lived like a prince at the Marquise's expense. From time to time an evil-natured youth and several glamorous prostitutes were brought in to play parts in these magical proceedings. They quarrelled among themselves and endeavoured to blackmail Casanova. At length, all other formulae having failed, he decided that he must pretend to get the Marquise with child himself, and tell her that she would give birth to a male infant into whom her own spirit would be transferred. But Madame d'Urfé was no longer the lovely young thing she had been when the Duc d'Orléans, as Regent of France during Louis XV's minority, had been her lover. Fortunately she was heterosexual, so Casanova imported his pretty mistress, who was also heterosexual; and, having been excited by her during a threesome, he succeeded in raising enough steam to satisfy the old lady.

Needless to say the Marquise never achieved her ambition. Casanova's fortunes declined, but he spent his old age as librarian to the Count von Waldstein at the Castle of Dux in Bohemia, and it is to those years of retirement that we owe the twelve volumes of his fascinating memoirs.

Australasia and the Pacific

Little or nothing was known about these parts of the world until the middle of the eighteenth century. In Australia itself the aborigines were found to be, with the possible exception of the Hottentots, the most backward people known to man. Nevertheless they had knowledge of occult forces.

Like the African witch doctors, the Australian magic-men could cause a man to die without laying a hand on him. The method used was the pointing stick or bone. The stick is made of wood, tapered to a point at one end by charring it in a fire, and rounded at the other. Sometimes it is ornamented with dots or special lines burnt on with a fire-stick. A cord of twisted hair and fur two feet three inches long

is attached to the blunt end of the stick by white gum.

The person who has made the stick then 'sings' it – that is, endows it with his hatred for the proposed victim. After hiding the stick for a few days, he seeks a favourable opportunity to point it at his enemy, such as by taking up a position some way behind him when he is seated near a camp fire and his silhouette is clearly outlined. The stick is pointed at the victim with short, stabbing movements, the operator meanwhile willing the bad magic to be projected from the stick into his enemy's body. Sometimes the magic-man has an assistant who holds the end of the cord and reinforces the evil going out of the stick.

Another method used by the aborigines for ridding themselves of an enemy is to sing to themselves with him in mind the 'song of the dream-time snake'. An account of such a proceeding appeared in the British press a few years ago. A young native named Lyn Wulumu was hated by his mother-in-law, so she sang the song to put him out of the way. Its effect, so it is stated, is to cause a dream-snake to coil itself round the body of the sleeping victim, and it gradually crushes him until he can no longer breathe.

Lyn was unquestionably a dying man when a Methodist missionary had him flown down to Darwin Hospital. Four doctors could find nothing whatever wrong with him physically, but he was clearly about to die. They put him in an iron lung, and so saved his life.

The Maoris of New Zealand are a far more advanced people; but they, too, have their magic, as do other Polynesians and the Melanesians. The sea voyages made with remarkable precision from one island to another without compass or other mechanical aids to navigation, and often over great wastes of ocean, are evidence enough that they are sensitive to natural laws still unknown to science. Of all emigrations the most remarkable was that by Pacific peoples through the East Indies and across the Indian Ocean to Madagascar; and the combination of their magic with that of the African Negro's must have produced some very potent occultists among the Malagasis.

While in the Fijis I had the exceptional good fortune to see one of the comparatively infrequent fire-walks on the island of Beqa. We were received by the Vunivalu and his Council of Elders and, after the usual *yaggona* drinking ceremony of welcome, taken to sit on a grassy slope about fifty feet above a circular pit some twenty feet in diameter. The pit was three-quarters full of large stones covered with smouldering logs. By a fire lit at seven o'clock that morning the stones had been made red hot. At a signal from the Chief, a dozen natives approached the pit in pairs, each holding one end of a long, very tough, rope-like liana. Throwing these across the pit, they ran from it parallel to each other, so that the middle of the liana formed a bight and, as it narrowed, caught round one of the smouldering logs. In this way they dragged all the logs out of the pit. Next they approached the pit with long poles and prodded the stones until no points, which might trip a fire walker, were sticking up. As they were doing this, one of the poles snapped and the end, about two feet long, fell on the stones. It had not lain there for more than thirty seconds before it burst into flame. That was incontestable evidence that the stones



Fijians walking on red-hot stones

really were intensely hot.

From a nearby *bure*, in which they had been fasting for twenty-four hours, there emerged the eight men who were to make the fire-walk. They were naked to the waist, but wore short *sulus* of leather; their legs and feet were bare. Carrying themselves very upright, they walked with slow, dignified steps to the pit, down on to the stones, once round it, then out again. Not one of them faltered, made a murmur or showed any change of expression. Afterwards, laughing, they showed me the soles of their feet. There was not even the suggestion of a blister on them.

For passing unscathed through such an ordeal there is as yet no scientific explanation. It is achieved by white magic.

The Fijians are a splendid people, but only four or five generations ago they were cannibals, and they are convinced that a man's spirit can be forced to obey orders.

The houses still lived in by the Ratus – as their Rajahs are called – are supported on piles made from thick tree trunks. Before each of these was put in a man was lowered to the bottom of the hole and buried alive beneath it, with orders that his spirit was to protect the pile from being attacked by termites.

Of Apparitions

Generally speaking, apparitions are quite harmless, but there are several kinds, and some can be malicious.

In most cases a ghost is the etheric body, which the Egyptians called the *ka*, lingering for a while in the neighbourhood in which the physical body has died. Sometimes it is more than that, a *khu*, animated by the spirit of the dead person, who has deliberately returned because it promised someone to do so, because it has a message to convey, or because its body died in circumstances that, for a while, have caused it to become earthbound. Yet again, if the person who has died was possessed, its *ka* may be inhabited by a demon, or it may be that an elemental is impersonating the dead person for an evil purpose.

In the third volume of his great work *Death and its Mystery*, from which I have already quoted in another connection, the eminent French savant Camille Flammarion gives many accounts of apparitions, so well attested that it is impossible to doubt their veracity. It is unnecessary to quote more than a few.

The owner of a factory in Glasgow had in his employ a delicate youth named Robert Mackenzie, who after three years inadvisedly left him. A few years later he chanced to come upon Robert in the street. He was destitute and starving, so the manufacturer gave him his job back. From then on, Robert showed absolute devotion to him.

In due course the manufacturer went to live in London, and he forgot about his Scottish workman. One night he dreamt that he was seated at his desk, talking business with a customer. Robert entered the room and came toward him. Irritated, he asked the young man if he did not see that he was busy. With an air of annoyance Robert withdrew; but in the meantime his employer had noticed that his face was a livid blue and that on his forehead there were beads of sweat. As soon as the visitor had gone, Robert hurried forward again. Reproved, he protested that he had something most urgent to tell his master. He said he had been accused of an act he had not committed. Asked what it was, he would only reply that he wanted his benefactor to know that he was innocent. Pressed to say of what he had been accused, he said, 'Ye will ken it soon', then disappeared.

Soon after the manufacturer had woken from this strange dream, his wife ran into the room with an open letter in her hand and cried, 'Oh, James! A terrible thing has happened. Young Mackenzie has committed suicide.'

It transpired that on the previous Saturday the workmen at the Glasgow factory had held their annual dance. Robert, who was inclined to be solitary, had spent the evening helping in the refreshment room. Afterwards he had taken home a bottle that he believed to contain whiskey, and before getting into bed had taken a quick swig. It had been nitric acid. He had died in agony, and the symptoms his

master had seen on the face of the apparition were those which result from nitric acid poisoning.

A nurse named Mrs Chambers sent the following to Flammarion. Tommy Brown, a boy of twelve, belonging to a poverty-stricken family, was in hospital suffering from malnutrition. His mother came to visit him, and he said to her, 'Mama, there's Father.'

'No, dear,' his mother answered. 'There's no one there.'

'But there is,' the boy insisted. 'It's Father, and he's beckoning me to follow him, so that he can take me away with him.'

The mother thought that Tommy was delirious and remarked to Mrs Chambers that the boy's father had been dead for two years.

Hearing this, Tommy said, 'No, he's not dead. He's there, and beckoning me with his hand. He's calling me! He's calling me!'

Little Tommy died a few days later.

The next example concerns a young woman who died of cholera in St Louis in 1867. Nine years later her brother, to whom she had been devoted, went on a visit to the United States. One day, when working in his room, he suddenly realized that she was sitting beside him. He was thunderstruck, but delighted to see her as if in the flesh, looking happy and charming but for the fact that she had a nasty scratch across one cheek.

On returning home, he told his parents about this vision. His father was incredulous and made fun of him. But, when he mentioned the scratch on the girl's face, his mother fainted. She had made that scratch herself, accidentally with a pin, while arranging her daughter's body for burial. And nobody except herself could possibly have known about it.

Lord Brougham, the inventor of the form of carriage that bears his name, wrote in his memoirs:

'While at school I had a friend whom I particularly loved and esteemed. Several times we discussed the question of survival, and one day we were foolish enough to draw up a contract written in our own blood, stating whichever of us died first would return and show himself to the other.

'A few years later, at the age of twenty-one, I was travelling in Sweden. It was December and very cold so, on arriving at Gottenburg I immediately had a hot bath. I was just proposing to get out when I glanced at the chair on which I had put my clothes. To my stupefaction my friend was seated there, calmly gazing at me.

'On my return to Edinburgh I found a letter from India, telling me that my friend had died there on December 19th – the day that his ghost had appeared to me in Sweden.'

The following also concerns Sweden. Madame de Marteville's husband had been the Dutch Minister to that country. After his death one of his creditors demanded 25,000 Dutch florins. The widow felt sure that the debt had been paid, and to have paid it again would have put her in serious difficulties; so she went to the famous seer, Emanuel Swedenborg, and eight days afterwards she had a dream.

In it her husband appeared to her, and showed her the piece of furniture in which the receipt was, together with a hair-comb set with twenty diamonds, which she had believed lost. Getting up, she found the things, then went joyfully back to bed. The following morning Swedenborg called on her and, before she had said a word, told her that the previous night Monsieur de Marteville's spirit had appeared to him and had told him that it was about to appear to her.

During the civil war in the Vendée a weaver named Jean Goujon was killed. As he had no family, his thatched cottage was left empty and abandoned. Next harvest time a girl of nineteen was returning from the fields. To her horror, on passing the cottage she saw Goujon lying across the threshold of the door. The apparition called to her, saying that his savings were behind a stone in the chimney corner, and imploring her to have them used for the repose of his soul. The money was found and the masses were said.

Here is an account of how the lives of many people were probably saved. A Captain Dreiker was in command of a ship sailing from New York to the Tortugas. He states:

'One night, everything being as it should be, I left my absolutely trustworthy first mate in charge on the bridge and went down to my cabin. At ten to eleven I distinctly heard a voice say, "Return to the bridge and give orders to cast anchor."

'I called out, "Who's that?", but received no reply; so went up to the bridge. No-one from it had come down to me, and all was in order; so I went back to my cabin.

'At ten to twelve, a man in a long overcoat and a broad-brimmed hat that partially hid his face, entered it. He ordered me to go up and have the anchor cast. Then he turned away and I heard his heavy footsteps as he went off down the passage. Greatly agitated, I went up to the bridge again; but everything was all right and I felt confident that the ship was on her correct course.

'Too worried now to go to sleep, I sat in my cabin. At ten minutes to one, the vision again appeared and imperatively ordered me to have the anchor dropped. Suddenly I recognized the apparition as that of my old friend, Captain John Burton, who had been extremely kind to me when, as a boy, I had gone on voyages with him. Doubting the rightness of the order no longer, I ran up to the bridge and had the anchor cast. In the morning I found that had I not done so the ship would have run on to the rocks of Bahama.'

Here is a case of a spirit returning long after death. In March 1905 a game warden named Coccozza, who lived in a village up in the Abruzzi mountains, had his father appear to him in a dream. He was reproached by his father, who had been dead ten years, for having neglected his grave and allowing wolves to gnaw his bones. In the morning Coccozza told his sister of his dream. To his amazement she had had the same dream.

Although it was snowing hard, the game warden took his rifle and went out to the cemetery. His father's grave had been disturbed, there were the footprints of wolves in the snow, and scattered bones that had been gnawed. Coccozza complained to the authorities, and took action against the cemetery officials. It then transpired

that, the cemetery being very small, it was customary to open up graves after a corpse had been interred for ten years and remove the bones to a charnel house. The grave-diggers had been carrying out their work at the grave of Coccozza's father, when a blizzard had come on and caused them to stop, leaving the bones at the side of the grave.

I have, I think, better grounds than most people who believe they have seen an apparition for feeling certain that it really was a psychic manifestation, because I doubt if I had then ever heard about ghosts, and I took it for a burglar.

At the age of eight, being a delicate boy, I was sent to boarding school at Margate, in order that I might benefit from the reputedly healthy sea air that, in winter, often blew in icy gusts direct from the North Pole upon this seaside resort.

Owing to my tender age, instead of being put in a dormitory, I lived with three other youngsters in the headmaster's villa. It was a square, detached, three-storey house, having a single central stairway, with four bedrooms opening out on the first-floor landing.

One winter night, at about eight o'clock, I was going up to bed with a single companion. He was next to the wall, and I was next to the banisters. Only a dim light came up from the hall. When I was within three steps of the landing, my head was level with the top of the banisters. I chanced to look to my left and through the banisters. A figure was crouching on the lower steps of the upper flight leading to the second floor. It had one hand on the banister rail. Its face was below the hand, a white blob staring through the banisters into my eyes. Terrified, I halted. As I did so the figure glided silently up the stairs. Next moment I was flying down the stairs, yelling at the top of my voice, 'A burglar! A burglar!'

The headmaster, Mr Hester, and others promptly came on the scene with hockey-sticks. While his wife, who was only about twenty-five, and a friend of hers named Millie Evans, who often stayed with them, comforted me with lemonade and cake, the house was searched. The burglar had disappeared. Nothing had been taken, nothing disturbed. There was no building near enough for a man to have leapt from the roof to another. In the morning they went round the outside of the house. There were no scratches on the drain-pipes, no broken plants or footmarks on the flower-beds. Everyone insisted that I had imagined the whole thing. I swore that I had seen the outline of a crouching man, his hand on the banister and his face peering into mine.

Years later, during the First World War, I again met Millie Evans. After we had chatted for a while, she asked, 'D'you remember when you saw the ghost?'

Puzzled, I replied, 'Ghost? No. I've never seen a ghost.'

'Oh, of course,' she said. 'You thought it was a burglar. But it wasn't. The Hesters were very keen on spiritualism. In the evenings we frequently held seances and got wall-rappings. When no burglar could be found, we realized that the thing you had seen must have been something very nasty that we had called up, and we never held another seance.'

My only other psychic experience was on the Western Front. My division had had a pretty heavy pasting in the battle of Passchendaele, so we were taken out of



Faces believed to be of 'spirit guides' in a photograph taken by a medium

the Ypres sector and sent down to a very quiet part of the front opposite Cambrai. The officers of my battery were given a walled garden in which to pitch our tents. It lay behind a château that the Germans had blown up the previous summer before retreating for a few miles. They had used the château as a field hospital. In one corner of the yard in front of it there was a shed the roof of which had fallen in. Under it we found piles of bloodstained uniforms and battered helmets, so evidently the shed had been used as a place in which to put the equipment of the wounded and dying as they were brought in.

We had been told that we were to rest there all through the winter. Actually, within three weeks we were up to our necks in the battle of Cambrai; but meanwhile, having no idea of what was in store for us, we set two bricklayers to work on building us a lean-to Mess against the wall of the garden. It was early November, and getting chilly, so I decided to build a little lean-to-house with a fireplace in it,

for myself and the officer with whom I was sharing a tent, who was then on leave in England.

Owing to my duties I could work only in the evenings. But during the daytime my soldier servant collected bricks from the nearby ruined village and cleaned them ready for me. The nights were fine, with splendid moonlight, so I was able to carry on until about one o'clock in the morning.

One night, when I had been on the job for about a week, I set to work immediately after dinner. During the meal there had been the usual chat, and not a word about the occult or ghosts. The subject had not even crossed my mind. For three hours or so I was fully occupied laying and levelling the bricks. By then my three brother officers were all sound asleep in their tents. They were some distance from me; but, owing to the brilliant moonlight, I could just catch glimpses of the canvas through the branches of the pear and apple trees.

I was mixing a new lot of mortar and cheerfully humming to myself. Suddenly I had a feeling that someone was behind me. I swung round. There was nobody there, and it was utterly silent. I turned back to my mixing. Again I felt a presence menacing me from behind. I again whipped round and stared through the moonlit branches of the pear tree. Nothing there. I took myself to task, as I had made up my mind to lay one more row of bricks before turning in.

How long I stuck it I have no idea. Perhaps two minutes; perhaps only thirty seconds. My whole being told me that something malevolent was about to strike me down from behind. Dropping my shovel, I fled in terror to my tent. Sweat had broken out on my forehead; with trembling hands I managed to switch on my torch. I have never fainted in my life, but I came very near to it then.

I have no doubt that I was threatened by an elemental. Every good or bad thought that passes through the human brain creates a thought-form, either beautiful or horrible. The good ones give our guardian angel greater strength to protect us. The bad ones become elementals and, having been born, endeavour to maintain a life of their own. This they can do by feeding on the spirit forms of offal, excreta, vomit, blood and spilt semen. They build up etheric bodies like those of the demons in the paintings of Breughel. Normally they are invisible; but they are often seen by chronic alcoholics and drug-takers, on whom they feed as spiritual parasites, and when such a person dies the elemental blindly seeks someone else on whom to batten.

Modern Occultists

I had been reading books on ancient religions and occultism for the best part of twenty years when I decided to write my first novel with a black magic theme, *The Devil Rides Out*; but I did not feel that I really knew enough about the subject, so I secured introductions to the leading occultists of the day, asked each of them to dinner several times, and had long discussions with them.

One visitor was Harry Price, who of course was not a magician but a ghost-hunter. He had been particularly prominent in the investigation into the haunting of Borley Rectory. About whether the place was haunted or not there had been a



Borley Rectory, Essex, the 'most haunted house in England'

considerable difference of opinion, and after Price's death one of England's largest national newspapers sent one of their leading reporters down to endeavour to settle the question.

The reporter is a man of undoubted integrity and has since become a famous television personality. But, as he told me the following in confidence, I must refer to him as X. With him to Borley he took a staff photographer. They spent two days there without finding the least indication of haunting. Returning to London,



X. wrote his article. He was just finishing when the photographer came in with the films he had been developing, and said, 'X., look at this.'

It was a photograph of the Rectory taken from a field beyond a road that passed it. On the Rectory side of the road ran a wire fence, but it was said that at one time there had been a gate there. On the photographic plate there was the gate and, standing in it, the outline of the figure of a nun.

They took the photograph to the editor. For some reason it was against the

policy of the paper to confirm Price's contention that the rectory was haunted, so the photograph was suppressed.

The Reverend Montague Summers was a most interesting man. He was not only a great authority on witchcraft, werewolves and the rest, but also wrote a number of excellent books on the Restoration theatre. He always dressed as a clergyman, and, with the silvery locks that curled down on either side of his pale, aristocratic face, he was the very picture of a Restoration bishop. But quite a number of people maintained that he had either been defrocked or had never taken holy orders at all.

I recall his telling me one evening of an exorcism he had performed in Ireland. The wife of a cottager was apparently possessed by a devil. When Summers arrived she was foaming at the mouth and had to be held down. With bell and book he performed the ceremony. A small black cloud issued from the woman's mouth. She became quiet, the black cloud disappeared into a cold leg of mutton that had been put on the table ready for supper. A few minutes later, it was seen to be swarming with maggots.

Summers asked my wife and me to spend the weekend at his house in Alresford. We motored down on the Friday afternoon. When we were taken round the garden, my wife spotted the most gigantic toad she had ever seen, and in the bedroom we were given there were a dozen enormous spiders.

On the Saturday morning my host took me into a room that was empty except for a pile of books. Picking up a small leather-bound volume, he said, 'Look, this is just the thing for you. It is worth far more, but I'll let you have it for fifty pounds.'

I did not want it and, anyhow, could not have afforded it. Much embarrassed, I said so. Never have I seen a man's expression change so swiftly. From benevolent calm it suddenly became filled with demoniac fury. He threw down the book and flounced out of the room. An hour later I had sent myself a telegram. By Saturday evening my wife and I were home again in London. That was the last I saw of the 'Reverend' Montague Summers.

Rollo Ahmed was a very different character. He was an Egyptian by birth, and from his father's family had acquired his initial knowledge of the 'secret art'. However, his mother was a native of the West Indies and, while Rollo was still in his 'teens, his parents decided to leave Egypt. For many years he lived with them in devil-ridden islands and the little-explored forests of Yucatan, Guiana and Brazil. In these places he acquired first-hand knowledge not only of the primitive magic of the forest Indians, but also of Voodoo and the use of obeahs. Later he explored Europe and Asia for further knowledge of the mysteries and for a while lived in Burma, where he became a practitioner of Raja Yoga.

He was a small, slim man, neither bombastic nor subservient, with a most cheerful personality and a ready laugh, and he spoke English perfectly. Several times he dined with us in Queen's Gate. On one occasion on a freezing night in mid-winter he arrived without a hat or overcoat, dressed in a thin summer suit. He had walked all the way from Clapham Common; yet his hands were glowing with warmth. This he declared was due to his practising yoga, and he offered to teach

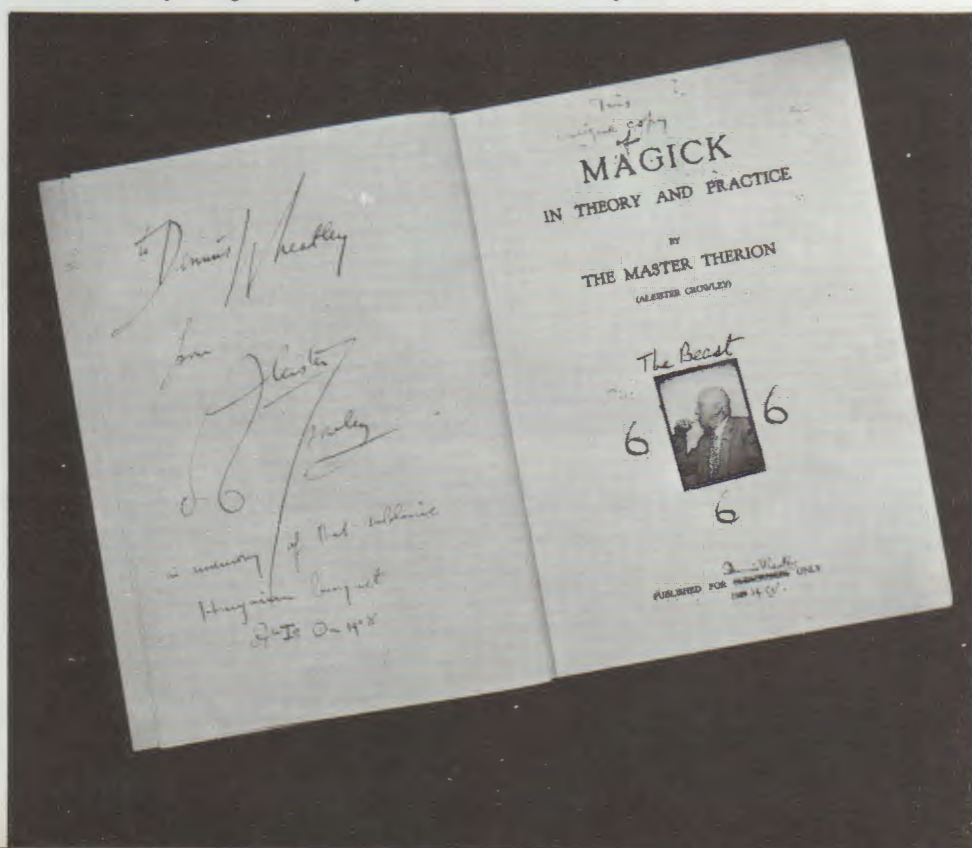
my wife and me yoga breathing. We had a few lessons, but were too heavily engaged with other matters to follow it up.

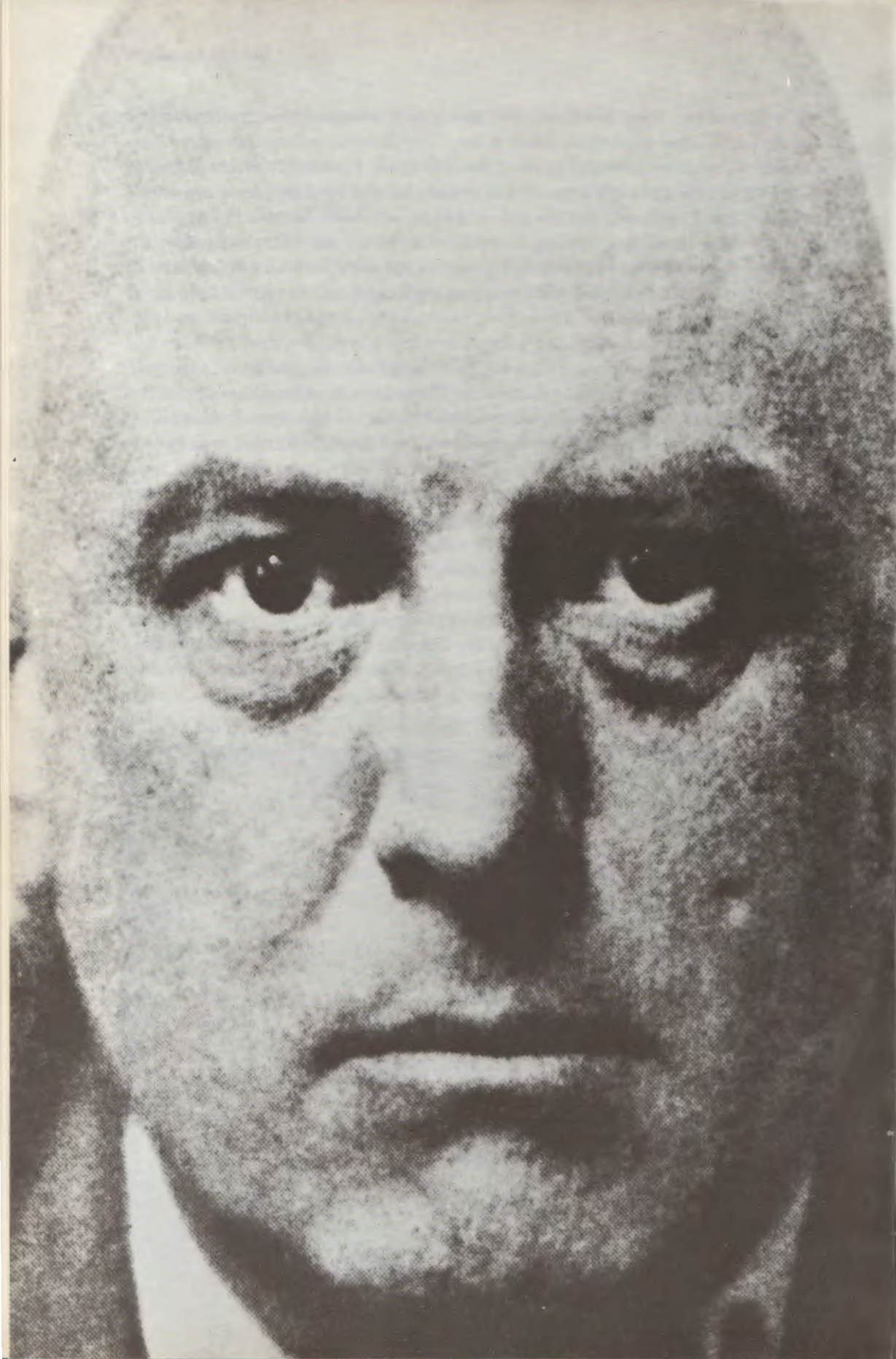
After the great success of *The Devil Rides Out*, my London publisher asked me to write a serious study of the occult. But in 1935 I did not feel that I was competent to do so, and I suggested that they should approach Rollo Ahmed. He wrote *The Black Art* for them, and, having re-read it recently, I am again amazed at the extent of his knowledge. From him I learnt a great deal. Later I was told that he had slipped up in a ceremony and failed to master a demon, who had caused all his teeth to fall out. Soon after the opening of the war, I lost sight of him, as I had other things to think about.

I was introduced to Aleister Crowley by a friend of mine who was a very well-known journalist and later, as a Member of Parliament, became one of the leaders of the Socialist Party. I will therefore refer to him as Z. Crowley dined with my wife and me several times. He was a fascinating conversationalist and had an intellect of the first order.

His interest in the occult dated from his days as an undergraduate at Cambridge. It is said that, while there, he wanted to put on a bawdy play by Aristophanes, but the Master of John's forbade it. Thereupon Crowley made a wax figure of the Master and, with a group of youngsters, took it out into a meadow one night at the full of the moon. While they stood in a circle round him, he recited an invocation and prepared to stick a long needle into the liver of the image. One of his companions was seized with qualms, broke the ring and grabbed his arm to stop him. The needle pierced the image's ankle instead of its liver. Next day the Master fell down the steps of the college and broke his ankle.

Aleister Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice*, inscribed by him to the author of this book





In Paris in the latter part of the last century there were several powerful practitioners of the black art, among them Éliphas Lévi, the defrocked priest Abbé Boullan and his ex-nun mistress Adèle Chevalier, Jules Bois, Julie Thibault, Oswald Wirth, J.-K. Huysmans and the Marquis Stanislas de Guaita, who founded the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Cross. There was bitter rivalry among these adepts, and there is reason to believe that Guaita killed Boullan by sorcery.

Meanwhile the Order of the Golden Dawn had been founded in England. It had over a hundred members, including Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Machen, W. B. Yeats, William Wynn Westcott of the Rosicrucians, MacGregor Mathers and Crowley. The two latter became deadly enemies. Mathers succeeded in getting Crowley expelled from the Order, upon which Crowley formed an order of his own, called the Silver Star. When Mathers died in 1918 many of his friends were convinced that Crowley had put a death spell on him.

For some years Crowley lived in Sicily, with a number of male and female disciples at the Abbey of Thelema, near Cefalu. Black masses were said there and animals offered up to Satan. It was then rumoured that human infants were also being sacrificed, upon which the authorities expelled Crowley from Italy.

In Crowley's book *Magick in Theory and Practice* he gives the degrees of initiation as follows:

The Order of the S.S.

Ipsissimus	10° = 1□
Magus	9° = 2□
Magister Templi	8° = 3□

The Order of the R.C.

(Babe of the Abyss – the link)

Adeptus Exemptus	7° = 4□
Adeptus Major	6° = 5□
Adeptus Minor	5° = 6□

The Order of the G.D.

(Dominus Liminis – the link)

Philosophus	4° = 7□
Practicus	3° = 8□
Zelator	2° = 9□
Neophyte	1° = 10□
Probationer	0° = 0□

(These figures have special meanings to the initiate and are commonly employed to designate the grades.)

The general characteristics and attributions of these grades are indicated by their correspondences on the Tree of Life, as may be studied in detail in Liber 777.

Opposite Aleister Crowley, who claimed to be the Devil's chief emissary on earth and identified himself with the Beast, whose number is 666, in the Book of Revelation

Student. His business is to acquire a general intellectual knowledge of all systems of attainment, as declared in the prescribed books.

Probationer. His principal business is to begin such practices as he may prefer, and to write a careful record of the same for one year.

Neophyte. Has to acquire perfect control of the Astral Plane.

Zelator. His main work is to achieve complete success in Asana and Pranayama. He also begins to study the formula of the Rosy Cross.

Practicus. Is expected to complete his intellectual training, and in particular to study the Qabalah.

Philosophus. Is expected to complete his moral training. He is tested in Devotion to the Order.

Dominus Liminis. Is expected to show mastery of Pratyahara and Dharana.

Adeptus Minor. Is expected to perform the Great Work and to attain the Knowledge and the Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

Adeptus Major. Is admitted to the practice of the formula of the Rosy Cross on entering the College of the Holy Ghost.

Adeptus Exemptus. Obtains a general mastery of practical Magick, though without comprehension.

Babe of the Abyss. Completes in perfection all these matters. He then either (a) becomes a Brother of the Left Hand Path or, (b) is stripped of all his attainments and of himself as well, even of his Holy Guardian Angel, and becomes a Babe of the Abyss, who, having transcended the Reason, does nothing but grow in the womb of its mother. It then finds itself a

Magister Templi (Master of the Temple): whose functions are fully described in Liber 418, as is this whole initiation from Adeptus Exemptus. See also 'Aha!'. His principal business is to tend his 'garden' of disciples, and to obtain a perfect understanding of the Universe. He is a Master of Samadhi.

Magus. Attains to wisdom, declares his law (see Liber 1, vel Magi) and is a Master of all Magick in its greatest and highest sense.

Ipsissimus. Is beyond all this and beyond all comprehension of those of lower degrees.

Having had Crowley to dinner several times, I told my friend Z. that, although I found him intensely interesting, I was convinced that he could not harm a rabbit.

'Ah!' replied Z. 'Not now, perhaps. But he was very different before that affair in Paris.' The affair in Paris was as follows.

Crowley wanted to raise Pan. One of his disciples owned a small hotel on the Left Bank. Crowley, with his twelve disciples, took it over for the weekend and the servants were given a holiday. On Saturday night a big room at the top of the house was emptied of all its furniture, swept and garnished. Crowley and his principal disciple, MacAleister (son of Aleister), were to perform the ceremony there, while the other eleven remained downstairs. He told them that, whatever noises they might hear, in no circumstances were they to enter the room before morning.

Down in the little restaurant a cold collation had been prepared. The eleven

had supper and waited uneasily. They all had a great deal to drink, but got only stale-tight. By midnight the place had become intensely cold. They heard shouting and banging in the room upstairs, but obeyed orders not to go up. In the morning they did go up. The door was locked and they could get no reply to their anxious calls, so they broke it down.

Crowley had raised Pan all right. MacAleister was dead and Crowley, stripped of his magician's robes, a naked gibbering idiot crouching in a corner.

Before he was fit to go about again, he spent four months in a lunatic asylum. Z., who told me all this, had been one of the disciples, and an eye-witness to this party.

Voodoo

This is one of the vilest, cruellest and most debased forms of worship ever devised by man. Its origins lay in darkest Africa, and the Negro has carried its foul practices with him to every part of the world which he inhabits; and now even, I am told on good authority, to several cities in England.

The Voodoo account of the Creation is that God took his woman into the bedroom and together they began it. According to these people, that is all that a woman is fit for, together with working and cooking for her man.

All 'teen-age girls are specially trained for marriage by old beldames. It is held that soft beds make a poor foundation for copulation. The girl is taught to lie on the hard floor supported only by her shoulders, elbows and the soles of her feet. On the day of her marriage she offers her vagina to her new owner in this position. During her training she has been erotically titillated, and on the morning of the wedding given aphrodisiacs, so that she will not disgrace herself by failing to exhaust her man.

The uplifted finger of Voodoo greeting represents the male member. The Voodoo handshake is the thumb of one person thrust between the thumb and first finger of the other, symbolizing copulation. At a Voodoo ceremony the *houngan* or priest asks the *mambo* or priestess 'What is truth?' Throwing back a veil, she exposes her sex organs. There follows a dance in which the woman throws off six more veils until she is naked. Working herself up into a frenzy, she at last collapses on the floor. Privileged males are then allowed to kiss her vagina.

The Caribbean islands, Brazil and the southern United States are all riddled with Voodoo, but its heartland is the black Republic of Haiti. In 1908 Celestina, the daughter of the President, and a powerful *mambo*, was married to a goat. When it died it was buried with the rites of the Christian Church.

On to the original pagan gods of the Congo, Nigeria and Dahomey, Voodoo has grafted the Christian saints. For instance, Damballah Ouedo, the snake god, who is the greatest of the Voodoo gods, is associated with St Patrick, because in pictures of that saint there is always a snake.

A Voodoo altar looks like a stall at a cheap jumble sale. One that I saw in Brazil had heaped on it pictures of the Virgin Mary and several saints, bottles of Coca-Cola, little pots of wilted flowers, shredded palm fronds, a dagger, a fly-whisk

and flasks of rum. But so primitive still are some of these people that Voodoo ceremonies are held to appease spirits that they believe to live at the sources of rivers.

Usually the ceremonies are held in a compound called a *hounfort*, where the *houngan* lives like an African chief. To the rise and fall of brilliantly coordinated drumming, rituals are carried out with a sword, flags and dancing. The couples dance skilfully among a maze of candles set up on the floor, and their movements represent copulation. The *houngan* also dances and, making the same movement, will press himself against the backsides of some of the dancers.

Now and then a man or woman will break away and whirl round and round, excited by the drumming into a frenzy. Their eyes roll and they become possessed by one of the many spirits they call *loas*. Through them the *loa* makes demands and prophecies; foaming at the mouth, the dancer then has a fit and falls to the ground.

There are two kinds of gods: the Rada, under Damballah, who are good gods, and the Petro, who are evil. The chief of the latter is called Baron Samedi, Baron Cimeterre and Baron Crois – three names (Lord of Saturday, Lord of the Cemetery and Lord of the Cross) for one deity. Damballah's day is Wednesday, and he likes to have a white cock and a white hen sacrificed to him. His woman is Aida Ouedo. The fourth high member of the pantheon is Papa Legba, the giver of opportunities. Maitre Carrefour (Lord of the Crossroads) is also important. He is worshipped in the form of a man-high cross on which has been hung a dirty old tail-coat and a battered top hat. The chants that are sung bring in innumerable other deities.

Sacrifices are then offered in a refinement of cruelty compared with which the Black Mass is a civilized proceeding. If it is a pig, they first cut off its testicles, then drink its blood; if it is a goat, it is buffeted and beaten before a deadly slash from the *houngan's* magic sabre puts it out of its misery; if it is a dog, its ears and tail are first cut off; if it is a pair of chickens or doves, the bones of the wings and legs are slowly broken before the necks are wrung. Few people can be so bestial as the Haitian Voodooists. Moreover, Zora Hurston also tells us in her very informative book *Voodoo Gods* that they are fundamentally dishonest and should never be paid in advance for any service, as they think themselves clever not to perform it, and they cannot be trusted with even a few cents.

They call a person's soul a *duppy* and believe that, like the Egyptian *ka*, it lingers near the body for a while; according to them, for nine days. On the ninth night the dead man's relatives and friends crowd into his hut and give his *ka* a party. He is supposed to feed off the spirit doubles of the food offered to him, and to take away with him the spirit doubles of his furniture and clothes, and depart contented. Eighteen months later another ceremony, called *koo-min-ah*, is performed. This is the formal closing of the dead man's grave; it is assumed that for several months he might leave it from time to time to wander about, but that after a year and a half he will really have settled down, so there is no longer any fear that, by closing

Opposite Votaries possessed in a Voodoo dance



it, he would be shut out. Voodoo has its black Venus, a sexually insatiable goddess named Erzulie. She is obsessed with jealousy. Woe betide the man whom she visits in a dream who does not henceforth become utterly devoted to her. She will tolerate no rival. Every Thursday and Saturday millions of candles are lighted in her honour, after thousands of wives have prepared their bed with clean sheets and perfumed the room; they are then turned out to sleep in the hen-run, while their husbands revel in erotic conflicts with the goddess. It is somewhat surprising to learn that, when a man seeks initiation to the cult of Erzulie, his baptism includes the reciting by the *houngan* of three Credos and three Ave Marias.

Side by side with the normal Voodoo ceremonies – which in all conscience are revolting enough – there are others carried out by several secret societies, where cannibalism is practised. The most powerful of these is the *Cochon Gris*. Its members are *bocors*, the Haiti name for witch-doctors.

Apart from cannibalism, their speciality is selling souls to Satan. Ambitious men make pacts with them to be granted prosperity for a year, in return for a soul; not their own, but that of some other member of their family, of whom they must be fond. As time goes on and they have sacrificed their children, their relatives and, at last, their wives, they are eventually brought to book and have to surrender themselves.

It is supposed that these souls acquired by the *bocors* become zombies. Everyone in Haiti, even the mulattos, who are predominantly white, and the ruling caste, fear the zombies and also that an enemy may cause them to be made into one.

The process is said to be that the *bocor* mounts his horse and, seated facing the tail, rides after dark to the selected victim's house. There he places his lips to the crack of the door, sucks out the victim's soul and rides off with it. The victim becomes ill and in a few hours is dead. The following night, after he has been buried, the *bocor* and his assistants go to the cemetery and open the grave. The corpse is called on by name, and is compelled to cooperate, as the *bocor* has its soul with him, perhaps in a bottle. The corpse is then allowed one sniff at his soul, which enables him to sit up. He is hauled out of the grave and hustled along to the *houmfort* and given a sip of a potion, the formula for which is a great secret. After that he is a zombie and will work tirelessly in the *bocor's* fields, or perform any simple tasks of evil that he is ordered to carry out.

It seems probable that the victim never actually dies, but is either bewitched or given some drug that temporarily stops his heart and gives him the appearance of death. In a hot country he would naturally be buried the following day. The *bocor* then disinters him and restores him to physical but not mental life, his brain having been atrophied by the potion that entirely destroys his knowledge of his personality, his reasoning faculties and his memory.

In extenuation of normal Voodoo ceremonies, it must be remembered that its votaries are among the most poverty-stricken people in the world, and, as the sabbaths were to the witches in Europe, their excesses are the only thing that makes like worth living. It is a tragedy that they should have been ensnared into such cruel and bestial practices.

Magic and the Fate of Nations

In ancient times triumph or disaster seems almost always to have depended on advice from occult sources, because it was the priests who informed warrior-kings of favourable days on which to join battle, and of ways in which they might best overcome their enemies.

With the advance of time, official religious sources were less frequently consulted; but there must have been many instances where the monarch's closest counsellor was an extremely strong personality who had risen from a lowly origin, owing to his hypnotic powers, and who was at least believed by his jealous rivals to have dealings with the Devil.

We have seen how Joan of Arc's 'voices' led to her imbuing the French army with such spirit that it broke the hold that England had had for many generations over a great part of France.

There is some evidence to show that, behind the scenes, the Rosicrucians played a considerable part in bringing about the French Revolution. Louis XVI was a very humane man and a very weak one, but the fact that he made no attempt to check the Revolution in the early days, when it could easily have been done, does suggest the possibility that he was under a spell. If he was not, it is difficult to understand how he could, on the fateful August 10th 1790, have given his devoted Swiss Guard orders that they were on no account to fire upon the mob, then watched every man of them being butchered before his eyes.

Many people are of the opinion that Rasputin was a black magician. It is certain that he was a most powerful hypnotist and healer, and that simply by the laying on of hands he checked the little Tsarevitch's haemophilia. That naturally won him the gratitude of the Tsar and Tsarina, but it seems a little too much that these two rabid autocrats should have allowed him to make a habit of kissing them upon the face.

That he was a lecher of the first order there is no doubt at all; and, although the Imperial Family was deeply religious, many people assert that the Tsarina and all four of her young daughters allowed him to become their lover. For them, and many well-born ladies of the Russian court, to have allowed an unwashed monk, who kept his long fingernails encrusted with dirt, to gratify his lust on their bodies, an explanation was advanced to me by my good friend Joseph Vecchi, who for many years ran the Hungaria Restaurant in London.

Before the war Vecchi had been the maitre d'hotel at the Grand Hotel, St Petersburg, so he knew many members of the Russian nobility; and later those who came to live in London after being driven into exile made the Hungaria their favourite meeting-place. Among others Prince Yusupov, who played the leading role in Rasputin's killing, was often there. Moreover it was at the Grand Hotel that Rasputin used to entertain, and on many occasions Vecchi had supervised parties for him in a big private dining-room in the basement, where the monk would sit down to dinner, the only man, with up to twenty ladies. Vecchi was, therefore, something of an authority on Rasputin.



By the women of the Russian Court he was undoubtedly venerated as a saint. Vecchi's belief was that he had introduced a new cult based on the masochistic outlook of St Paul – that humility was the key to Heaven and dirtiness next to godliness. How better could these ladies win favour in the sight of the Holy Trinity than by submitting to his caresses?

Be that as it may, Rasputin's influence over the Imperial Family is unquestioned. That the Revolution would have come about anyhow is highly probable; but there is a possibility that it might have been averted had the Tsar listened to advisers who urged him to forgo more of his authority in favour of his newly-formed parliament. Instead, with Rasputin's blessing, he went off to spend useless months at the headquarters of his army, leaving his wife and the monk to run the government. For personal ends Rasputin secured the appointment of several highly incompetent ministers, and their measures undoubtedly precipitated the revolution.

The French and Russian revolutions were among the greatest upheavals in modern history. During them many million people lost their lives, and scores of millions more had loved ones killed or were reduced to beggary. One of Satan's titles is Lord of Misrule. No circumstances could have better served his purpose.

It has been said that, as a young man, Winston Churchill was a member of the Illuminati of Adam Weishaupt. In view of his tirelessly inquiring mind, it would not be very surprising if that were so. But one is reminded of the saying 'A man who at the age of twenty is not a Communist has no heart; if he is still a Communist at the age of thirty, he has no head.'

Of one thing I feel positive. During the war Churchill had no truck with occultism of any kind. For three years it was my good fortune, as a member of the Joint Planning Staff of the War Cabinet and therefore one of Churchill's staff officers, to work in the fortress basement under Whitehall, from which the war was directed. I state this as evidence to my readers that I am no woolly-minded mystic, but have my feet very firmly planted on the ground. Unlike the majority of the other Planners, doubtless owing to the fact I was already a very well known author, I was privileged to count among my friends General Lord Ismay, Major Sir Desmond Morton and Commander 'Tommy' Thompson, R.N., who were respectively the Prime Minister's Chief Staff Officer, his Personal Assistant, and his personal Aide-de-Camp; so were all constantly with him. All three lunched and dined with me, and I with them, on many occasions. I cannot believe that I would not have picked up at least a rumour of it from one of them, had our great war leader owed anything to the Power of Darkness.

There is evidence that Hitler expressed great interest in Satanic ceremonies, and an American correspondent writes to me that Hitler once confided to Rauschnig that he was founding a secret order at the second stage of which a man-god would be worshipped throughout the world – and presumably Hitler intended to be that man.

Himmler was obsessed by a belief in occult power. He listened greedily to every potential magic-maker that his sycophants could produce for him; and Hitler frequently consulted astrologers whom he kept as permanent members of his

entourage. Not once, but on half a dozen occasions, he escaped assassination when by all the laws of chance he should have been killed. But, in view of the work he was doing, it paid the Power of Darkness well to keep him alive until it was no longer possible for him to do further harm. We recall, too, his last desperate efforts to destroy the German people with himself. That he survived as long as he did could surely be termed the 'luck of the Devil'.

The Black Art Today

In every age there have been secret societies, and the greater part of them have been brotherhoods concerned, to a greater or lesser degree, with magic. In the Western World, until the middle of the eighteenth century, their members dared not admit to belonging to them for fear of being accused of heresy. With the coming of the Age of Reason the power of the Church declined; so such societies were more freely talked of and written about; but, right up to very recent times, few people would freely confess that on certain nights they attended a sabbath, for to the ordinary person that still suggested evil doings and sexual promiscuity.

During the past decade, human behaviour has entered a new phase. It is termed the permissive society. The restraining powers of the Churches, parental authority and public opinion have all been overthrown by the younger generation. The majority of young people believe that they have the right to do what they like with their lives, irrespective of others, and comparatively few of them follow a religion.

Basically, of course, their instincts do not differ from those of their predecessors. Because a man chooses to grow his hair long, that does not indicate that he is effeminate or lacks courage, and it does not follow that, because a girl exposes all but a small portion of her body to the public gaze, she is necessarily immoral. But this young generation has been brought up in a new and terrible era, in which some maniac may bring an abrupt end to everything by launching nuclear war. In consequence young people lack a feeling of security and feel the urge to drown fear in excitement and excess. It is this, and the desperate seeking for some mental crutch to lean on, that has brought about this great upsurge in the practice of magic.

For many decades it had become so dormant that in 1951 Parliament repealed the ancient Act that made witchcraft a crime. This enabled its practitioners to come out into the open. One such was the late Dr Gerald B. Gardner, who lived in the Isle of Man and opened there the museum that, he claimed, was the only one in the world devoted to magic and witchcraft. He was responsible for the formation of many covens in Britain and initiated rites which are still followed by a considerable percentage of covens today, although they are repudiated by others who adhere to rites handed down from the Druids, and others again who regard their rites as more orthodox.

In Britain, the number of covens has now increased to several hundred, and in an article in the *New York Times* dated October 31st 1969, the Hampshire witch

Opposite Witches dancing in a circle





Above and right Charms printed on Tibetan paper, showing forms of sickness helplessly manacled



Miss Sybil Leek, who emigrated to the United States, is reported as saying that she knows of 400 covens there.

At sabbaths all indications of class are eliminated by the fact that those present wear uniform black robes or strip themselves naked. The latter custom is much more usual and is claimed to have the advantage because garments form, to some extent, a barrier that lessens the free flow of spiritual emanations from the body. With the object of raising a cone of power the participants perform the follow-my-leader dance with increasing frenzy until one of them becomes possessed, falls and, like a medium, speaks with the voice of the possessing spirit. The procedure is therefore essentially the same as that which takes place at a Voodoo ceremony.

The great majority of modern witches stoutly maintain that they practise only white magic, but the fact remains that anyone attending a sabbath lays himself open to Satanic influences, and in certain cases the evil resulting is incontestable.

The *Wall Street Journal*, of all papers, devoted to the subject an impressively long article, which opened with a column on the front page of the issue dated October 23rd 1969. It quotes Mr Anton Szandor LaVey – who acted as technical adviser in the film *Rosemary's Baby* – as saying with a grin, 'I am very much a devil's advocate.' He added that sex played a big part in the weekly night-time services he held, and that the 'Church' he had founded three years before had grown to a membership of 7,000.

In California there was the appalling case in which, apparently, members of a coven brutally murdered the eight-months-pregnant Sharon Tate and a number

Opposite A witch lying motionless for a night and a day



of other people. That it was a Satanic killing I had no doubt from the first account of it, because, although they were not hung, two of the victims were found with the traditional sign – the end of a rope tied round the neck.

In Britain, too, the black art is gaining votaries by the thousand. The biography, published in 1969, of Mr Alex Sanders, a Manchester man now living in London, states that, as a youth, he one day came upon his grandmother in her kitchen standing naked in a pentacle. She disclosed to him that she was the last of a long line of hereditary witches. Then, in due course, she initiated him, both into her secrets and sexually. He now claims to be the King Witch of England.

Personally I do not believe that there are many more genuine sorcerers practising today than there have been in the past. By that I mean initiates of the genuine Rosicrucians or adepts possessing the secrets of the Cabala who, by a perverted use of them, can call to their aid the Powers of Darkness. The majority of these covens, I am convinced, are run by unscrupulous individuals who, to satisfy their lusts, impose on the credulity of young people and induce them to participate in rituals ending in orgies, by promising the girls rich husbands, the men other women they desire, or success in other ventures on which they have set their hearts.

I believe, too, that in certain cases covens are operated for purposes of blackmail. In these, a 'talent scout' picks up a likely victim at an ordinary spiritualistic seance and says to him, 'This is only nursery stuff. I'll take you to a place next week where you can see the real thing.' After attending a few meetings of the coven, the victim is photographed from behind a curtain, bending over a lovely nude girl. He is then told to pay up – or else.

Assuming that I am right, and that such genuine black magicians as there are concern themselves very little with romps, but a great deal with bringing about disruption through causing conditions that lead to widespread labour unrest and (wherever possible) wars, this does not mean that the covens run by frauds are harmless. Far from it. One does not have to know the secret rituals to attract the interest of the Powers of Darkness.

By prayer to any source of good in which one believes, one can receive comfort and fortitude; by participating in Satanic rites, however sham, one can make oneself a focus for evil. The spilling of blood by the sacrifice of animals, the spilling of semen in lust without affection, and the practice of perversions are like ringing a bell for the Devil. All these thousands of young people who have become initiates of covens are liable to become pawns of the Power of Darkness in its eternal war with the Power of Light. If this continues on an ever-increasing scale, the inevitable result will be a return to the brutal lawlessness, poverty and insecurity of the Dark Ages.

It is the duty of every responsible person who values a life of order, stability and decency to do his utmost to prevent this from happening. But how are we to set about it?

Opposite The tusked wooden image of a guardian spirit, from the Nicobar Islands





Conclusions and the 'Way'

The original account of the Fall is symbolical of the relationship of the invisible Powers to Man. It was the intention of the Good Power that created Eden that its inhabitants should live there for ever in unity and happiness. But the Evil Power intervened and caused the prototypes of mankind to be driven in misery from the Garden.

Although we are not permitted to know why it should be so, the spirit of Man is the prize for which the two Powers have been at war ever since, and will continue so until the end of time.

Throughout recorded history the battle has swayed to and fro. Periodically the Power of Light sends a great teacher, such as Zoroaster, Gautama Buddha, Confucius, Jesus Christ, Mahomet – and, quite frequently, smaller ones – to show mankind the way to achieve peace and contentment. But invariably the Power of Darkness has caused evil men to pervert the teachings of the Enlightened Ones, until they become submerged in ceremonies, often performed by priests leading exemplary lives but blindfolded by the doctrines of their own narrow religions.

Today the world is threatened with a new age of Darkness. For this there are four reasons:

1. Stability has been disrupted by two world wars.
2. Nearly half this world's inhabitants are living under totalitarian systems, which destroy family unity and turn individuals into robots.
3. The governments of the more progressive nations have abandoned the task of ruling the backward countries, preserving peace in them and fostering the posterity of their peoples.
4. The rulers of the free world no longer maintain in them the state of law, order and morality which is essential to civilization.

There have been eras in which great groups of nations have lived in relative peace and security. The *pax Romana* lasted for several centuries. In the New World the Spaniards maintained stability in the greater part of its two continents for 200 years. And throughout an Empire on which the British used to boast that 'the sun never set' the *pax Britannica* was maintained for many generations.

The result of the dissolution of the great empires is grim with human misery. With the fall of Rome the Power of Darkness came into its own for centuries. Spain's decline led to 100 years of wars and bloody revolutions in Central and South America. What was the cost of hauling down the Union Jack? Civil war in

Opposite The Devil sowing discord in the haunts of men

India: a million dead and many millions more robbed of all they possessed. Prosperous Ceylon poverty-stricken. In Egypt the Suez Canal sabotaged, and a war with Israel that is bankrupting both countries. In the Sudan fifteen years of race-war between Arabs and Negroes with hundreds of thousands dead. Africa a hotch-potch of police states, countless Asians deprived of their homes and livelihoods and forced to emigrate; and for two and a half years the nightmare horror that has reduced the most prosperous part of Nigeria to a shambles. And those peoples who lived under the flags of Belgium, Holland and France paid a similar price for their freedom. The ghastly massacre in the Congo, the wholesale slaughter in Indonesia; and Vietnam!

Having locked themselves out of the kindergarten while leaving the children to play with loaded firearms, there is little that the grown-ups can now do about that. But at least they should restore order in their own houses.

The lesson the great empires left us was that *rulers should rule*, and for the past two decades the governments of the Western World have failed to do so. Freedom of speech, freedom of the Press and freedom of assembly are a part of our inheritance; but not the right to destroy property, gun down the police and attack peaceful citizens, nor the right to form covens that call upon occult forces and send their members out to rob, rape and murder.

Robbery with violence is rife and is increasing all over the United States. In Washington, D.C., not only white families but also well-to-do coloured ones have been moving out to the suburbs because it is no longer safe to live in the city. But in various country districts also to go out alone at night is to invite a hold-up and a bashing. And London is now little better.

In every city in Europe and the United States malcontents create riots in which they smash the windows of embassies, ruin sports grounds, set fire to buildings and commit outrages which no proper government would tolerate.

Is it possible that riots, wildcat strikes, anti-apartheid demonstrations and the appalling increase in crime have any connection with magic and Satanism?

It has been estimated by responsible investigators that there are now 30,000 members of covens in Great Britain. There are probably as many or more in the United States and scores of covens on the Continent, in Australia and in Canada. Let us agree that the great majority of these people have gone into the game only for fun, or to practise white magic. But how many of them could swear that they are not seeking to secure their own desires through occult power? Without realizing it they become a focus for evil.

Consider the case of the Salem madness. An old half-caste Negress, who certainly cannot have been a sorceress with a real knowledge of the black art, amuses eight or ten innocent children and teenage girls by teaching them a few spells. The girls become possessed. Within a few months the entire surrounding countryside is embroiled. Scores of people accuse their neighbours of witchcraft. Demoniac possession spreads. A dozen innocent people are hanged, others spend months chained up in prisons; suspicion, hatred, loss and misery bedevil the whole area.

Recently, in a churchyard not far from London, twelve corpses were dug up in

a single night, and the church desecrated with an unholy ritual. People who are capable of such acts are not out only for fun and games. And for benefits received Satan's price must be paid. It is no longer putting a murrain on some farmer's cattle, or causing some unfortunate woman to miscarry. The taking of drugs to create ecstasy at Satanic gatherings has long been habitual. Today thousands of young people are being hooked in this way and become willing agents in recruiting others to become addicts.

It is, I am convinced, the opening of the minds of thousands of people to the influence of the Powers of Darkness that has formed a cancer in society.

It is the duty of our elected rulers to rule. They are responsible for the well-being of their people. It is for them to take measures that will ensure the ordinary law-abiding citizen protection from attack, robbery, rape and murder. But they are failing to do this. Still worse, they cavil at strengthening the law to protect their long-suffering police from injury.

To stamp out Satanism entirely is, I believe, impossible. But the Roman Emperors kept it in check by forbidding sorcery, and in Britain, until 1951, the practising of witchcraft was a crime. No civilized person would dream of initiating witch-hunts such as took place in the seventeenth century. But I am most strongly of the opinion that to fight this evil, which is now a principal breeding-ground for dope-addicts, anarchists and lawlessness, new legislation should be introduced.

Psychic investigation should be encouraged, but only under licence; and persons participating in occult ceremonies other than those approved by a responsible body should be liable to prosecution.

Acts leading to the moral degradation of young people are surely as great a crime as acts of physical violence. Both should be punished, not by a mere fine which the offender can well afford to pay, but in a manner which should prove a real deterrent to the repetition of the offence and an example to others.

What is the solution? Some argue for corporal punishment. Others believe in various methods of re-education. In recent times, in Britain, a vociferous minority of do-gooders has turned the prisons into clubs where the inmates enjoy excellent food, games, libraries, television and concerts. Surely, to be effective, prisons should not be merely houses of *detention* but of *correction*. This might soon lead to their no longer being overcrowded.

Should our rulers fail us, and matters go from bad to worse, what can we do? I suggest the answer is to strive more than ever to increase the degree of Light in the spark of deathless spirit with which each one of us is endowed. Its cultivation can be a joy both to ourselves and to all with whom we come into contact. Moreover, not only is it a protection, but it also brings a great reward.

Who, having read this book, can doubt that each of us is animated by a spirit? Of its continued existence after death we have no incontestable proof. But many years ago I was given as near proof as, I think, anyone could hope to receive.

During the First World War, for a while before the battle of Cambrai, I shared a tent with a Lieutenant Pickett. He learnt that his sister was dying, and obtained compassionate leave to go to England. On his return to the Western Front, this is

what he told me:

'I was at my sister's bedside when she died. Her last whispered words were, "Hello, Daddy"; then, in pleased surprise, "Why, Jean - you here too!"'

Now it is reasonable to suppose that any person about to die may hope to be greeted on the other side by someone he loved who had preceded him; but Jean, the girl's brother-in-law, was a French officer, at that time believed to be still alive and with his regiment in France. The family only learnt *two days after the girl's death* that Jean had been killed in action a few hours before she died.

Accepting the view that our spirit does survive, is it reasonable to believe in the Last Judgment of the Hebrew-Christian faith, which provides only two alternatives? Either one is to sit for ever on the right hand of Jehovah, or be cast into eternal torment.

Are those who were born in poverty and dragged up by criminal parents to be everlastingly condemned because they lied, stole and committed murder, or to be excused and made members of the Saints' Club, because they were not given a chance? Are those who worked hard and earned money to be penalized because they did not give it all away, and the layabouts who never did an honest day's work to be favoured because they now and then shared a crust with another sponger? What of those born as mongols or epileptics, or habitual drunks, drug-addicts, schizophrenics and lunatics who, at times, have not been fully responsible for bestial acts they have committed, but have otherwise led exemplary lives? Are they to inhabit a heavenly mansion for all time, or roast for ever on the Devil's gridirons?

From the above it is abundantly clear that the idea of being judged on the record of a single life is unrealistic. But that one earns good marks or bad in it and, after an interval, is given another chance to do better, makes sense.

During the past centuries countless millions of people have believed in re-incarnation. Vast numbers of them still do, and more and more people have become convinced that it is the only logical explanation for the mystery of life and death.

Briefly the belief of reincarnationists is that all matter contains spirit, and is in the process of growth or decay; that the fluid spirit of earth formations and vegetation gradually coalesces into group-spirits which pass into a number of animals of the same species; that these in turn become concentrated into an individual spirit that passes into a human being; that the first incarnation of all of us was in the body of a primitive man, and that through many lives, male and female, we have progressed to our present advanced state.

It is believed that in each life, as during a term at school, we learn something. For the evil we have done in it we must pay in the next, or in some later life; for the good we are rewarded by being given a better start next time. This, as I have explained in the section on India, is called the law of *karma*, and it is not unusual to experience 'quick *karma*'. That is, if one does some generous act, one will shortly afterwards receive some unexpected benefit. It is also thought that between lives we enjoy long holidays or rest periods, which we spend happily with those

who, in our last or earlier lives, have been our loves, cherished relatives or closest companions. Then, when we are ready to face the trials of Earth once more, we take up the challenge by becoming the child of parents chosen as suitable for us.

Occultists also hold that, in deep sleep, our spirits leave our bodies and, remaining attached to them only by what is termed the 'silver cord', ascend to the astral planes where they can communicate with other spirits whose bodies are also asleep, and those of others not in incarnation. And that every experience we have been through in former lives is stored in our 'vase of memory', temporary access to this vast store of knowledge being the explanation for our so often waking in the morning with problems solved that were worrying us the previous night.

All of us have setbacks, but gradually we move up the ladder, acquiring wisdom as we go, and the virtues of fortitude, forbearance, generosity and gentleness. Eventually the time comes when we face the great test, by being given a position of high responsibility, and we are granted the power to influence for good or ill large communities by leadership, example or our writings. If we pass that test we return to Earth no more, but become one with the Lords of Light who watch over us and strive for the well-being of mankind.

There are then two 'ways' of life, and the choice of which to follow lies with us. You can follow the Left-hand Path, summed up in Aleister Crowley's precept 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law' – lie, steal, cheat, give free rein to all your basest instincts, and commit any act of meanness or brutality, regardless of the misery it may cause others, in order to get what you want. Or you can follow the Right-hand Path, summed up in the precept of Jesus Christ 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.'

Followers of the Right-hand Path are not called upon to deny themselves the joys of the flesh, or to forgo gaiety and the many pleasures of life. On the contrary, we should not have been given our instincts if we were to be blamed for enjoying them. It should be our aim to become conscious hedonists and derive pleasure ourselves from giving pleasure to other people. The only prohibition is that we should not gratify our desires if by doing so we are going to harm others.

None of us can hope to lead perfect lives. But, if we follow the Right-hand Path, we shall be armoured against the temptation to do evil. We need have no fear of the Devil and all his works; *nor need the idea of death hold any terror for us.* With this thought I leave my readers.

Notes on the Illustrations, and Acknowledgments

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<i>BN</i>	La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
<i>Bodleian</i>	The Curators of the Bodleian Library, Oxford
<i>Horniman</i>	The Horniman Museum, London
<i>Mansell</i>	The Mansell Collection, London
<i>ME</i>	The Mary Evans Picture Library, London
<i>ML</i>	Le Musée du Louvre, Paris
<i>RT</i>	The Radio Times Hulton Picture Library, London
<i>VA</i>	The Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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- 14 *BN.*
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