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PERCY MACKAYE

An Appreciation, So Far as Is Possible

By ALEISTER CROWLEY.

A PUBLISHER, hearing recently from Mr. Percy Mackaye, to whom he had sent a book for review, was advised by this great poet to have the volume rebound; for the cover was so brutal and repulsive that, for his part, he had thrown the book into the waste-paper basket without further investigation.

Here is the calibre of Mr. Mackaye's mind.

What insight! What knowledge of the world! How much must one know who judges of literature by what is not even its outward show, but an accident for which the writer is not, as a rule, in any way responsible.

This revelation of genius, the power to divine Hercules not from his own foot, but from the boot of somebody whom Hercules had never even met, sent me headlong to the library; for alas, my own shelves were bare of any such masterpieces as Percy Mackaye's.

The covers of his books were neither brutal nor repulsive; my path to the *chefs d'oeuvre* themselves was easy.

The "frightfulness" only appears on beginning to read.

I began with "A Thousand Years Ago." In a preface the great poet explains why he wrote this play; for which much thanks.

The scene is laid in Pekin. Mr. Mackaye has read the encyclopedia for China under the letter C, and for Drama under the letter D, and confined his information. But it must have been a somewhat poor encyclopedia.

All his characters rant like Ancient Pistol; wordy bombast, all at the top of their voices. "By the carcass of Charlemagne, I am dog-awearry of twanging these gutstrings for breakfast." (Dog-awearry is a new one on me, but it is probably poetic license. This stuff is printed as if it were blank verse, but the scansion is as poor as the sense.)

To get the Chinese flavor, Mr. Mackaye deems it sufficient to preface every other speech by an oath introducing the name of what he probably supposes to be a Chinese God. The emperor keeps on ejaculating "by holy Confucius!" "Great Buddha!" "My star!" His name, by the way, is Altorma, which does not sound very Chinese, somehow. But it doesn't matter much, for his courtiers talk Arabic, saying, "Salaam!" when asked to salute a superior, who then assumes a "toploftical" attitude, though probably still "dog-awearry."

The book is full of such delightful finds—almost every page has a gem. "Is he at the door?" "Not him."

The play itself is the veriest rag-bag of stale device. The Princess whose hand depends on the guessing of three riddles; the potion which if dropped on a sleeping lover's lips will make him tell his secret thought; the prince who disguises himself as a beggar, and so on. As the princess herself says, "O, you poor, bloody heads on Pekin's wall. Have you, then, died for this?"

I thought perhaps that Mr. Mackaye might be happier at home; so I turned to "Yankee Fantasies." Here also he graciously explains himself, and why he did it, and his importance to the theatre, and again I am very glad. He tells us how impossible it is to represent dialect graphically, but

in the text he proceeds, to do it, and by great Buddha I am dog-awearry.

But I do adore his stage directions; the climax of "Chuck" woke me up. Here you are:

"A locust rasps in an elm.

"Faint crickets chirp in the grass.

"An oriole flutes from an apple tree.

"From his hole, the wood-chuck crawls cautiously out, nosing, as he does so, a crumpled and earth-soiled veil, which clings to his dusky hair, half clothing him.

"Pulling from his burrow an ear of corn, he sits on his haunches, silently nibbling it—his small eyes half shut in the sunshine."

I do honestly hope the greatest success for Mr. Mackaye, the modern Shakespeare, because I want to see Sir Herbert Tree as The Woodchuck.

And now I am awake enough to get on to "Gettysburg." This play is printed in blank verse, minus capitals at the beginnings of the lines. But Mr. Mackaye is out to prove that blank verse need not be poetry. He ambles along with perfectly commonplace thought and language, which happens to scan. It simply makes the play read like shocking bad prose.

"O' course;

but I must take my little laugh. I told him I guessed I wasn't presentable any how, my mu'stache and my boots wa'n't blacked this morning. I don't jest like t' talk about my legs. Be you a-goin' to take your young school folks, Polly?"

Mr. Mackaye, like other amateur minor poets—if you can call him that—never suspects that there is a reason for using blank verse, that the only excuse for using it is to produce an effect which cannot be produced elsehow. Without exaltation of theme and treatment, blank verse is a blunder, and one can usually spot the poetical booby by his abuse of it.

In the books at my disposal I can find few lyrics. It may be that Percy Mackaye—how full of suggestion is that name!—has written some odes which leave the "Nightingale" and the "Grecian Urn" and "Melancholy" in the wastepaper basket along with that book with the brutal and repulsive cover; he may have "Prometheus Unbound" beaten a mile; he may have "Lycidas" and "Adonais" taking the count; he may be able to give cards and spades to "Atalanta" and "Dolores" and "Epipsychidion" and "Anactoria." Hope so. I want some first-rate fresh poetry to read. Hope so. But I have not seen it. Instead, I see this!

"Long ago, in the young moonlight,
I lost my heart to a hero;
Strong and tender and stern and right
And terribler than Nero.
Heigho, but he was a dear, O!"

At the conclusion of this, one of the listeners asks: "Was it a fragrance or a song?" In my considered opinion, it must have been a fragrance.

I am aware that this is a very short article, but there are really limits to the amount one can write about Nothing.

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SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

By ALEISTER CROWLEY.

LET me make confession of a personal prejudice. It would be an indeed unhappy home that I would leave to revel in even the best kind of Oriental poetry. The trail of the pedant is over it all. Its formalities, its affectations, its redundancies stifle the cries of the babe genius. The spirit of poetry cannot live in the air of the inhumanities of the grammarian. All Indian arts are peculiarly tainted with precision and preciosity. Indian music must be composed in an approved "rag," or (to them) "it is not music." Indian art is mostly ancestor worship; Indian religion is more rigid than Presbyterianism. Originality has been crushed under the stone of a petrified civilization. Such new art—in every branch—as has been created in India in the last thousand years is definitely due to the influence of some invading civilization, and even this imitative stuff has been seized on by the frozen perfections of classicism, its life vampirized by the suction of atavism, and its throat caught by the dead hand of tradition.

Now far be it from me to utter a word in dispraise of one who has received the rare and ineffable honor of knighthood from so gracious and discerning a sovereign as the latest—perhaps, if Providence in its inscrutable wisdom so decree, the last—of the Georges, but the poetry of Sir Rabindranath Tagore is certainly Oriental poetry, and I must plead prejudice and incapacity in excuse of my failure to admire it.

THE people of New York are doubtless more fortunate than I, in being able to read his works in the original Bengali, which I am unable to do. Their rapture is thus easily explicable. But some persons, even in New York, share my ignorance of Bengali, and these (so it seems to me) are possibly a little perfervid in their enthusiasms, a shade obsequious in their genuflexions.

As to the originals, though, one may remark that the people of Bengal are themselves as insensible as I myself to the beauties of Sir Rabindranath. His popularity in that great but unpleasant province depends upon a few popular "nationalistic" songs. The work on which he makes his American appeal is totally unknown in his own country. It consists principally of what appears to me to be a type of mysticism as spineless and amateurish and affected as Maeterlinck's, a collection of pious phrases tricked out with the tinsel of conventional similes. Ladies of a certain age are prone to weep when warmed with sherry and this kind of poetry, for the transference of the emotional stimulus from sex to religion is often accompanied by serious instabilities of mind. It is apparently to such individuals that Sir Rabindranath Tagore makes his most effective bow. Besides, he is a polite person; he says nothing, and he says it very nicely; he has a most noble and venerable beard, and the royal sword has been laid upon his shoulder. Keats, Shelley, Swinburne, Chaucer, Shakespeare himself—none of these attained that height.

BUT then they were not colored. There is something about the mere fact of color which appeals irresistibly to a certain type of female. This country in particular has been overrun with "Yogis," who have all succeeded beyond wonder, disputing the favors of idle women with Pekinese

dogs and dancing masters. At least the Indian poet is on a higher level than these; but, for all that, he owes much, if not all, of his popularity to some such itch of idleness, as accounts for the vogue of the others. It is an indignity for an artist to allow himself to be exploited in the salons of the nouveau riche; a man of virility and self-respect does not consent to be treated like a bearded lady or an ossified wonder. The true artist has then yet one more handicap in America; for if the devotees of culture learned to tolerate him, they would desire to pet him. Mrs. Leo Hunter never yet bagged a real lion; it is the straw-stuffed models, breathing by dint of bellows, that roar to order in the gaudy junk-shops which in this country pass for "artistic homes."

However, we will quote a little of Sir Rabindranath's poetry, and leave the reader to judge whether it be the lyre of Apollo, or the voice of Bottom; in any case, the style is W. B. Yeats, who varnished these poems from a "crib."

I.

I was walking by the road, I do not know why, when the noonday was past and bamboo branches rustled in the wind.

The prone shadows with their outstretched arms clung to the feet of the hurrying light.

The *koels* were weary of their songs.

I was walking by the road, I do not know why. [Nor do I.—A. C.]

II.

The hut by the side of the water is shaded by an overhanging tree.

Some one was busy with her work, and her bangles made music in the corner.

I stood before this hut, I know not why. [Tired, possibly? A. C.]

III.

The narrow winding road crosses many a mustard field, and many a mango forest.

It passes by the temple of the village and the market at the river landing place.

I stopped by this hut, I do not know why. [Nearly stopped by this stanza; I do not know why.—A. C.]

IV.

Years ago it was a day of breezy March when the murmur of the spring was languorous, and the mango blossoms were dropping on the dust.

The rippling water leapt and licked the brass vessel that stood on the landing step.

I think of that day of breezy March, I do not know why. [Memory is indeed a strange thing! How profound is this thought!—A. C.]

V.

Shadows are deepening and cattle returning to their folds.

The light is grey upon the lonely meadows, and the villagers are awaiting for the ferry at the bank.

I slowly return upon my steps, I do not know why. [Closing time?—A. C.]

It is faint, intangible stuff.

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A DEATH BED REPENTANCE. TO THE MEMORY OF SAMUEL BUTLER.

By ALEISTER CROWLEY.

I.

ACCORDING to the local G. P., there was no hope for Timothy Bird. There was nothing the matter with him beyond the fact that he was 86 and that his weakness was alarming. People snuff out at all ages: accident apart, our vital clocks vary immensely in the matter of mainspring.

The mind of Timothy Bird was extraordinarily clear and logical; in fact, so logical that he was unreasonable. He was unwilling to die until he had made one further effort to transform that which had most embittered his life into its crowning joy. At the last moment, said he, God will surely touch the heart of my dear lad.

He therefore telegraphed, with a faith which 30 years of disappointment had done nothing to shatter.

The telegram was worded thus:

John Nelson Darby Bird,
99 New Square,
Lincoln's Inn.

Jesus calls me at last unless He comes first come to your father and your God Luke XV

Father.

The curious wording of this message mirrored infallibly the mind of Timothy Bird.

Why (do you interrupt) assert religious beliefs in a telegram? Because the Holy Ghost may "use" the telegram to "reach" the clerks in the Post Office. Enough of such querulous query: to the facts!

John Nelson Darby was the founder of the "Brethren gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus" and called "Plymouth Brethren" owing to their early great successes having been won in Plymouth. This excellent man was a very fine Hebrew scholar, to say nothing of Greek. His eminence had entitled him to the offer of a seat on the Committee of the Revision of the Bible, but he had refused to meet other scholars of heterodox theological views, quoting:

Matthew, XVIII, 17,

II Thessalonians, III, 6 and 14,

Romans, XVI, 17,

and particularly

II John, 9, 10, 11.

His undoubtedly great all-round mind led him to see that One Infallible Authority is necessary to any religion. Rome had this in the Pope; he followed the apostasy of Luther, and proposed to replace this by the Bible. Now, since the Bible is the actual word of God, dictated by the Holy Ghost—else where is its authority?—this word must be taken literally in every part as well as in the whole. Now you may formulate a sorites from any one text and another sorities from any other. But a contradiction in your conclusions will not invalidate either of your first premisses!

This involves a somewhat complex metaphysic, in spite of the fact that metaphysic, being the work of heathen philosophers, is of its father the devil.

It is, however, impossible in practice to corner a Plymouth Brother in these or any other ways, because he scents danger from afar and replies with an argumentum ad hominem on these simple lines:

I am saved.

You are not I.

Therefore, you are damned (I John, v., 19.)

In these degenerate days fact is supposed by the ignorant

to be truer than fancy, and one must therefore plead for belief by referring the sceptic to Mr. Edmund Gosse's "Father and Son." Reviewers of that book cast doubt on the possibility of such narrowmindedness as is shown by Philip Gosse. But in the boyhood of another writer sprung of the loins of the Brethren, the poet of "The World's Tragedy," the name of Philip Gosse was a byword, a scorn and a reproach; he was an awful warning of the evils of latitudinarianism!

And Timothy Bird was of the anti-Ravenite section of the Exclusive Plymouth Brethren. His had been the dominant voice of that Assembly Judgment which "delivered" Philip Gosse and his kind "to Satan for a season"; and he had been the mainstay of the movement which expelled a majority of the remainder when Mr. F. E. Raven had "blasphemed" in a manner so obscure and complex that not one in twenty of the most learned of the seceders ever gained even a Pisgah glimpse of the nature of the controversy.

For Timothy Bird was indeed a Gulliver in Lilliput. He had known John Nelson Darby intimately; he had been the close friend of Wigram and Crowley, even of Kelly before his heresy; he was a scholar of merit if not of eminence; he was a baronet of the United Kingdom and a man of much property. Baronets not being mentioned in the New Testament, he had refused to use his title; but the other brethren, at least those in the lower middle classes, never forgot it.

He lived simply, using his large income principally for the distribution of tracts; he evangelized greatly while he had the strength, going from town to town to establish or confirm the brethren, and it was generally known that he had left the whole of his great fortune in trust to Arthur Horne and Henry Burton for the use of the brethren to the entire exclusion of the aforesaid John Nelson Darby Bird, who had not only backslidden but gone over wholly to Satan, being in fact a barrister of repute, the most distinguished member of the Rationalist Press Association, and, worse than all, a zealous and irrefutable advocate of easy divorce.

This disinheritance weighed little with the younger Bird, who at 44 was earning some £5,000 a year, and who had such painful memories of eighteen years of the most cruel (because perfectly well-meaning) form of slavery that the word "home" was habitually used by him in moments of excitement instead of the familiar "hell" of the pious Englishman.

Now, as Herbert Spencer (a little late in the day) maintained, "Action and reaction are equal and opposite"; and experience teaches that fanaticism does not escape this law. There are no anti-Christians like the children of Plymouth Brethren. They have the Bible at their fingers' ends; they quite agree that Brethrenism is the only logical form of Bible Christianity; they associate it with every grand tyranny or petty spite of the hated home; and so they are frankly of Satan's party. Terrible opponents they make. The Plymouth Brother can find a text of Scripture to buttress his slightest act, and his son has consequently an equal armory of blasphemy, which, with a little knowledge of Greek and Hebrew and of various infidel writers, makes him unchallengeable in debate.

Timothy Bird had learnt to fear his son. From the age of puberty he had been in fierce revolt; it was the subtleties of that five years' intense struggle that had made him intellectually supreme both in strategy and tactics, the most dangerous advocate at the Bar. He had become a fine psychologist as well; he had penetrated every blind alley of his father's

mind, and to that mind he was merciless. He, too, was a fanatic. He really wished (in a way) to avenge the tortures of his boyhood; and perhaps he felt that his emancipation was not complete until he had converted his torturer. However this may be, year after year with ever-gathering strength, he hurled battalion on battalion at the squat blind citadel—to foreseen repulse. It was probably the parable of the importunate widow, or the endurance which his horrible boyhood had taught him, that made him continue. It is impossible to argue with a Plymouth Brother, for his religion is really axiomatic to him, so that everything he says begs the question, and you cannot get him to see that it does so. This is not so unusual as it appears; it requires a very good mind to acquiesce, even for purposes of argument, in non-Euclidean geometry, so fixed is the mind in its certainty that the whole is greater than its part, and the like.

It is good to hear them discuss anything.

Propose the question of the Origin of Evil; your Plymouth Brother will remark sooner or later, but always irrelevantly, "God is a just God." You argue that his God is certainly not just, or he would not have commanded the rape of virgins by the thousand, or sent bears to devour forty and two little children whose sole fault was to call attention to the baldness of a prophet.

This is unanswerable; give up the story, as the better mind does, and you are launched for atheism or mysticism; hold to it—the Christian's only hope—and the sole possible reply is, "Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?" "Yes," you retort, "He shall: that is just my proof that your God is a tribal fetish, and not at all the judge of the whole earth." The conversation, after a sulphurous interlude, again rises to the dignity of argument, and on some infinitely subtle and obscure minor point which he had never thought of before—I speak of a rare incident much prized by connoisseurs—you do really and truly prove to him from Scripture that he is wrong.

Is he downhearted? NO!

The momentary cloud upon his brow passes: the glorious sun shines out amid the wrack:

"The devil can quote Scripture."

In vain you reply that this consuming doubt invalidates the whole of his arguments, which are all drawn from Scripture; and this again admitting of no reply, the worthy man will continue to breathe out lightnings and slaughter until physical weariness bids him desist.

Yet it was the cherished belief of John Nelson Darby Bird that the last straw will break the camel's back; or, more practically, that if you sandpaper bricks at the base of a building long enough the building will suddenly and without warning reel and fall. You remember that Noah spent 120 years building the ark—with hardly a shower. When the flood came, it came suddenly. J. N. D. Bird, K. C., was quite ready to "go to the ant, thou sluggard," or to Noah, as circumstances might indicate.

Before he answered his father's telegram he borrowed the billiard chalk from the waistcoat pocket of his clerk, whose sporting instincts had got the best briefs for his employers in horsey and divorcee circles.

(Lord John Darcy v. the Stewards of the Jockey Club. Riddell v. Riddell, Clay, Arthur, Thompson, Battersby, Jacobs, Bernheim, de la Rue, Griggles, Waite, Shirley, Williamson, Klein, Banks, Kennedy, Gregg, Greg and others. These were the remarkable cases that established the reputation of Mr. Bird. His successful defense of Mrs. Riddell had won him, in addition, a vice-presidency of the Anthropological Society.)

To those who are not Plymouth Brethren it will not be obvious why John Bird pocketed the billiard chalk, and a new

digression becomes Cocker.

Chalk is the commonest form in which carbonate of calcium is found in Nature. Under the microscope it is seen to be composed of the dust of the shells of minute marine animals. Geologists consider it impossible that a layer of chalk 10,000 feet thick should have been deposited in the course of a week, or even in the course of, say, 4,004 years.

The year after John Bird was called to the Bar he had fleshed his maiden steel upon his father by taking a piece of chalk, a microscope, and twenty-seven volumes of geology to Carnswith Towers for the long vacation. Father and son talked chalk day and night for nine weeks. It was a drawn battle. The father had to admit the facts of geology. "Then," said the son, "I cannot believe that God wrote a lie upon the rocks." Timothy replied, "Let God be true, and every man a liar!" He also very ably urged that it was not a lie. If men of science were not blinded by the devil (owing to their seared consciences and their quite gratuitous hatred of God) they would see, as he, Timothy Bird, saw, that it was obvious from the chalk itself that it had been created in a moment. Alternatively, God *had* written a lie upon the rocks in order to blind them. "God shall send them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie."

The immorality of this latter proceeding, of course, led to the old "God is a just God" line of argument with its inevitable conclusion in Sheol for the younger Bird.

Phoenix-like, however, he caused lumps of chalk to be conveyed to his father at irregular intervals; for he saw, with the astuteness that had discomfited Lord John Darcy, that his father's belief had really been shaken by the argument. The outworks held; the citadel crumbled. In the deepest shrine of sub-consciousness Timothy Bird, or, rather, Something that was in very truth *not* Timothy Bird, knew that the world was not made in six days, that the Book of Genesis was a Jewish fable, that the whole structure of "revelation" was a lie, that the Incarnation and the Atonement were but dreams.

Armed, therefore, with the integrity described by Horace and the billiard chalk, John Nelson Darby Bird went to Carnswith Towers by the 3.45 for a final wrestle with the Angel.

II.

The old man was sitting up when his son arrived. Arthur Horne and Henry Burton, the one pale, the other sallow, the one stumpy and fat, the other dried up, had come to pray with him. The doctor, who was not of the fold, appeared nauseated at the unctious of the vultures, and (before he left) communicated a portion of this feeling to the nurse who, although a "Plymouth Sister," had experience in her profession of the realities of life, and consequently to some extent saw things, though dimly, as they really were.

Burton was praying audibly as John Bird entered. Without moving a muscle, he directed the current of his supplications into a new channel.

"And, dear Jesus, we beseech Thee, on behalf of one among us, or perhaps now among us, or soon to be present among us (it would not do to admit that he knew of anything that was occurring in the room), one we truly fear dead in trespasses and sins and so it seems far indeed from the precious blood. May it please Thee that this thine aged servant may at last be gladdened, ere he pass into his exceeding great reward, by Thy wonderful mercy working in this hard heart and unregenerate Adam . . ."

With utter weariness of tautologies and repetitions, the prayer meandered on for another ten minutes. At last came the Amen.

Not until then did Timothy Bird open his eyes and greet

his son. Feeble as he was, he began to "plead with him" to "come to Jesus." The son had a terrible temptation to acquiesce, to spare the oldster "useless" pain. In the stern school of the Brethren, truth, or what passes for truth, must outweigh all human feelings, as if a sword were thrown into a scale wherein two oat-husks were contending. The obstinacy of those five terrible conscious years of revolt assisted his decision to sway to that austerity which here he thought was cruelty.

"Father," said he, "don't poison your last hours by these delusions! If there be a God, it is certain that He never trapped man as you say He did."

Arthur Horne interrupted: "God is a just God."

"Then why did he make vermin?" retorted the barrister.

A long and labored explanation followed from the excellent Horne, who never suspected that the repartee was not part of the argument.

It all wound its weary way back to the old subject of the sure and certain damnation of John Bird.

The latter paid no heed. His human feelings swamped all else. He knew instinctively at that moment the supreme human truth that the son is the father, literally identical of one substance. Also, in the great presence of death there is no place for religion of any kind. The sham of it becomes patent—a hideous masque and revelry of mocking thoughts. Even where it is the strongest of all drugs, it lowers, hypnotic cloud or levin of storm, shines never as a sun of life. The Pagans knew: try and write even a letter of condolence to a friend bereaved, and you will know it too. Glib consolations are the work of shallow hypocrites, or of cowards too scared to face their fear; they break into a sweat of piety; their eyes glaze with a film—the easy falsehood of immortality. The iridescent bubble of faith is easily burst—woe to the man who dares touch it by so much as one word of truth on any serious subject!

"My son," began Timothy Bird, to whom the approach of death now lent a majesty indescribable—the feeble baronet might have been a patriarch of the patriarchs—"my life has failed. Its one desire has been that God would bring my only son to His grace. It was not His will. To that I bow; my times are in His hand. His will, not mine, be done. It may be that my death may be the means . . ." and on he rambled the well-worn paths of "pleading with a soul," things so hackneyed that John Bird, facing his own problem as he was, hardly heard them trickle through his ears. He only marked a stumbling, a growing hesitation, and a look of trouble and of awe. It was a machine interrupted; yet, strangely, not so much as if it were breaking down, but as if a new hand were on the levers. Surely the end was near. The old man himself seemed to think so. He detected his own weakness; he flushed with a sort of shame; he seemed to gather himself for an effort.

"John," said he firmly, "shall not the Judge of the whole earth do right? You are a lawyer; you understand the value of testimony. Here are we four, three living and one almost gone to be with Christ, all ready to lift up our voices and testify to the saving grace of God. Is it not so?"

Solemnly enough, Horne, Burton and the nurse gave their assent.

"Will you not accept their witness?"

"I, too, have witnesses," replied John Bird; and he drew the billiard chalk from his pocket and laid it on the mantelpiece. "Let God be true," said he, "and every man a liar!"

The light of fanaticism that blazed from the eyes of the old man flashed once, and went suddenly out. An uncomprehending stare replaced it. He seemed to search the infinite. All thought he was at the extreme, and Horne and

Butler, intent as they were on their own plans, were frightened into silence. John Bird returned to his problem: it was himself that was dying. And yet no, for the true self was living in himself. And he understood that marriage is a sacrament, and must not be blasphemed by hedging it about with laws of property, and canon prohibitions, and inspection and superintendence sacerdotal. Every man is a king and priest to God; every man is the shrine of a God, the guardian of an eternal flame, the never-extinguished lamp of the Rosicrucian allegory.

The eyes of the old man were still fixed on the chalk in an unwinking-stare. His color heightened and his breath came faster. Yet his muscles grew ever more rigid; he seemed to grip the arms of the chair in which he was propped by pillows.

It was he at last who broke the silence. "Nurse," he said, very slowly but firmly and distinctly, "take my keys and open the buhl cabinet." The woman obeyed. "Bring me the paper in the lower middle drawer." She did so.

With perfect calm and deliberation, but with more vital energy than he had yet shown, and with his eyes shining now with a warm kindly lustre, he tore the paper across and across.

"Burn it!" said he. The nurse took it to the flame of her spirit lamp and consumed the pieces.

The son understood what had been done.

"Father," said he, "I don't want the money. I didn't come down here for that."

Placidly came the amazing retort: "Then give it to the Rationalist Press Association!"

Horne and Burton broke into a shrill twittering and rumbling of protest. His mind is gone, was the burden of their swan-song. The old man smiled, like a God smiling at his puppets. Their plaint turned to denunciation.

John Bird aroused himself. "You must leave the house," said he. With barely a push they complied; they were too astounded to do themselves justice.

The dying man beckoned his son. "Your life must have been a hell," said he, "and I made it so. But it was blindness and not unkindness, Jack." His son had not heard "Jack" for thirty years. He fell on his knees beside his father, and burst into strong sobs. Those thirty years of strife and wrong and misunderstanding came back, single, and in battalions, too!

The old man's head had fallen back; a smile had softened the old stern expression; the eyes closed as if in ecstasy.

Even the nurse was mistaken; she touched the shoulder of the barrister. But John would not move; and suddenly she recognized that the old man was breathing; from swift and shallow it deepened to strong and slow; a great sleep was upon him.

For three hours his son knelt by him, his lips fastened on one hand; and of the experience of those three hours who shall speak?

Then came the doctor—to pronounce the patient "wonderfully better."

And indeed he lived three years, sane, healthy and strong.

I saw him the year after at the annual dinner of the Rationalist Press Association—the weight of his theories rolled off the grand old shoulders. And far down the table I saw Messrs. Horne and Burton; but not being encouraged.

There is a cenotaph in the family vault. Following the usual recital of the virtues of the deceased, written in smiling irony by his own hand, comes this text:

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

PANTOMORPHOPSYCHONOSOPHILOGRAPHY

The New School of Literature: A Note on Louis Umfraville Wilkinson and John Cowper Powys.

By ALEISTER CROWLEY.

I HAVE a liver. This organ is so constituted that if, at midnight, at the Café des Beaux Arts, I consume a ham sandwich with its own weight in mustard, and a pint of iced coffee, the result is similar to, but more urgent than that alleged of a dose of a quarter of a grain of morphia. A sleepless night of violent and concentrated, yet widely roaming, thoughts, passionate yet pellucid, is obtained at this triing cost: I perceive and glorify the infinite goodness of God.

The ancients did not know these things; great classics (still unappreciated in some quarters, 'tis to be feared), like the authors of "East Lynne" and of "Lady Audley's Secret," show no acquaintance with these phenomena. When good Queen Victoria wept for priceless Albert these things were not so. At least, Emily Bronte, she alone, foresaw the possibilities of today.

The incalculable increase of human knowledge has been such that no mind could follow it. I have sat at meetings of the Chemical Society where only two or three of the eminent men present were competent to discuss the paper read; perhaps not more than a dozen could even follow it. The mind of man has, therefore, developed like a cancer, thrusting out tentacles in every direction, depositing strange poison even in the remotest tissues, and bearing no relation, save the most malignant enmity, to the rest of the structure. We have known too much; we have lost our standards of measurement. In "East Lynne" it is merely a question of the Ten Commandments. All our motives, as our acts, were as simple as they are—in those dear dead days beyond recall!

NOW we have discovered pantomorphism. We have broken down the line between man and monkey, nay, between man and moss and malachite. We can still argue that nothing has a soul, or that everything has a soul; but the half-way houses have lost their licenses.

Zola, in a vague symbolic way, makes his still or his locomotive accomplice in his tragedies; but it is only the modern pantomorphist who makes the seaweed and the spindrift characters in his novel as active as its human protagonists. It is really the old animism, the old demonology, come again, the Rosicrucian doctrine of elementals burst into sudden flower; and it comes triumphant over all its enemies, because it has placed itself beyond the reach of criticism, basing itself as firmly on the Academic Scepticism as on the Academic Theology. No self-consistent theory of the universe can rule it out.

Pari passu has come—almost as part of this—the discovery of the human soul. In the old days a man was a man and a rock was a rock, "and no damned nonsense about it, sir"—which nonsense consisted in persistence at "But what is a man? What is a rock?" and ended, as above stated, in pantomorphism.

So also our souls were not souls; we were going to heaven or hell or purgatory, and there was nothing to worry us. But what are "we," asked the man of science, and ended by the discovery: "Every man and every woman is a star." The soul is now recognized as an individual substance, beyond the categories of time and space, a king in itself; not one of a group, but capable of its own destiny. The old theory of

stars—night-lights in God's bedchamber or holes in the floor of heaven—has gone the way of phlogiston. We no longer confuse Sirius with Aldebaran. Each is itself. Just so every man is Himself, with his own Way to Heaven.

MANY of us are become conscious of this truth; and reaching out and up on our new wings, are at times liable to dizziness, to spiritual cremnophobia, agarophobia, claustrophobia—and nostalgia is in any case become quite normal to us.

Hence the psychonologists have begun to construct manuals of spiritual pathology. They have hardly done anything even to describe the varieties of disease. Von Krafft-Ebing was the first to gain popular appreciation. He saw (at least) that the Seventh Commandment was not a simple matter of the divorce court, and even got a glimpse of the fact that to inhale the perfume of a gentian on the mountain-side may imply a sexual "abnormality" more profound and possibly more terrible than a thousand rapes. He erred (he has since seen the error) in classing these manifestations as disease. They are "variations" in the Darwinian sense, evidence of the growth of the race. The ox, the savage, the Victorian, the modern American, the cave-man, do not suffer in this way from the specialization of the functions of the soul. But since these phenomena are undoubtedly accompanied by severe distress, we are at present justified in speaking of psychonology.

Now, the soul is eternally silent; it expresses itself only through the sexual instinct and its branches, Art and Religion. The Unconscious Will of a man is, therefore, his sex-instinct, in the first place. Therefore, this new passionate growth of his new-found soul must perforce express itself in sexual abnormality. Freud and Jung have done much to trace sex in the unconscious mind, in symbolic thinking, in instinctive selection of literary metaphor, and so on; Jung, in particular, has brilliantly perceived that sex expresses the Unconscious or True Will. But deeper thinkers, deeper because they are artists with the vision of Gods, not groping, purblind men of science, have gone further, and discerned sex beating at the heart of man's simplest, most conscious, and most rational acts.

I REFER to Louis Umfraville Wilkinson and John Cowper Powys. In the latter his "Eureka" is so vivid that it resembles the cry of an epileptic; the former bears himself more godlike, the cynical yet caressing smile of some hermaphrodite child of Pan and Apollo quivering faintly upon his lips. Powys makes you want to go out and invent something deliciously damnable; Wilkinson makes you feel that everything you have ever done is damnablely delicious. The former reveals to you the possibilities of life; the latter reveals you to yourself as a past master of all actualities.

It is needless, I trust, to insist that these masters have left Krafft-Ebing and his school with Dens and Liguori—nay, they have buried him far deeper. For the older writers did really understand the appalling possibilities of "innocent" things, though their simple standard of right and wrong prevented their perception of whither their facts tended. But Wilkinson and Powys see more clearly. They know that one can morally contaminate a soap-bubble, if one go the right

way to blow it, defile the virginity of a valley by looking at it, or corrode the soul of a strawberry by refusing to eat it. It will be hard for Puritan legislation to check the cerebralist!

BUT why (ask!) should we so uniformly perceive this curious development as evil? Wilkinson, it is true, is beyond the illusion of good and evil; not so is it with Powys, whose characters mostly understand themselves as unfathomable abysses, haunted by nameless horrors. The reason is simple: Powys is temperamentally a Christian. The soul is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"; therefore its will is evil; therefore its sex-instinct is evil; therefore its universe is evil. Such is the Puritan sorites; and to the inverted Puritan, whose pleasure consists of inventing "sins" in order to commit them, the Pagan simplicity of a Wilkinson is rather tragic. For the Pagan accepts joyfully the Law of Liberty: "Every man and every woman is a star": "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law." He delights in his independence, in pursuing the glory of his orbit, free, self-balanced, inscrutable, ineffably alive. The mind

which is bound to the Christian philosophy, the clinging, parasitic, Oedipus-complex, mind, dare not confront Immensity. In a word, a Christian, when he dies, wants to go to heaven; a Pagan shrugs his shoulders and takes things as they are.

But, will he, nill he, these pantomorphopsychonosophilographers have "unloosed the girders of the soul," as Zoroaster says, Wilkinson rather as a chorister in love for the first time, Powys as a child that has lost its mother; but the effect is the same. We must learn to take care of ourselves, to be suns in ourselves, not plants lackeying a central orb. We must conquer "air-sickness," the nostalgia for atavistic superstitions to comfort us. In a few years we shall be as happy in being ourselves as we have hitherto been in our dependence, physical, mental and moral, upon others. Then, not till then, will constructive work, the mapping-out of a free universe, become possible. And in that day let us not forget the noble, the austere, the elegant, the august spade work of these great pantomorphopsychonosophilographers, John Cowper Powys and Louis Umfraville Wilkinson. *Cras ingens iterabimus aequor.*

A LETTER TO LORD NORTHCLIFFE

(The following letter addressed to Lord Northcliffe was published in the London "Star" more than a year ago and created a sensation throughout England. A. G. Gardiner is a noted and fearless journalist, and his indictment of Northcliffe makes particularly interesting reading just now, in view of the fact that the Lord of Thanet has come to the United States in order to take personal charge of the organs of the Allies. "We all acknowledge the Kaiser as a very gallant gentleman, whose word is better than many another's bond." Thus exclaimed Northcliffe's "Evening News" October 17, 1913. Let us bear this in mind when the Northcliffe papers scream the loudest and demand the utmost sacrifice of blood and wealth.)

My Lord: This is not a time when I should wish to write to you or about you, for there is something indecent at such a moment in inflicting the old battle-cries on the public. But you have chosen to issue a book of newspaper scraps the object of which is to cover yourself and the *Daily Mail* with honor as the true prophets of the war and *The Daily News* and other representatives of Liberalism with odium as the false prophets of peace. To let such a challenge pass would be a wrong to the cause which this journal holds sacred, and therefore, unwillingly, I address you.

Your claim to be the true prophet of the war does not call for dispute. It has always been your part to prophesy war and cultivate hate. There is nothing more tempting to the journalist than to be an incendiary. It is the short cut to success, for it is always easier to appeal to the lower passions of men than to their better instincts. There is a larger crowd to address, and you have never deserted the larger crowd. The student of your career will find it difficult to point to anything that you have done and to say "Here Lord Northcliffe sacrificed his journalistic interests for the common good, for the cause of peace, for some great human ideal that brought no grist to his mill; here he used his enormous power not to enrich himself but to enrich the world." But he will have no difficulty in pointing to the wars you have fomented, the hatreds you have cultivated, the causes you have deserted, the sensations, from the Peking falsehood to the Amiens falsehood about the defeat of the British army, that you have spread broadcast. You have done these things not because of any faith that was in you, not because of any principle you cherished. You have done them because they were the short cut to success—that success which is the only thing you reverence amidst all the mysteries and sanctities of life.

"NOTHING."

If one could find in you some ultimate purpose, even some wholesome and honest hate, you would present a less pitiful

spectacle to the world. You would at least be a reality. But you are nothing. In all this great and moving drama of humanity you represent no idea, no passion, no policy, no disinterested enthusiasm. Like Mr. Lowell's candidate you scent which pays the best an' then
Go into it baldheaded.

When you preached war against the Boers it was not that you hated the Boers or loved England; it was only that you understood how to sell your papers. When you preached war against France, told her that we would roll her in "mud and blood" and give her colonies to Germany, it was not that you had any rooted antagonism to France, but that you knew how to exploit the momentary passions of the British mob. When you called for reprisals against Russia over the North Sea incident it was not that you did not know that there had been a mistake, but that you knew that a cry for war was a good newspaper thrill. When last spring you set all your papers from *The Times* downwards prophesying "civil war" and went to Ulster to organize your brigade of war correspondents and triumphantly announced that hostilities were about to begin, it was not that you cared for Unionism or hated Home Rule. You care for neither and have coquetted with both. It was only that you thought that Parliament was going to be beaten and that you could be the prophet of red ruin and the breaking up of laws. Even your loves are rooted in hates as meaningless as your loves. When you covered the Kaiser with adulation, called him "Our friend in need," and pleaded for an alliance with Germany, it was only to make your gospel of war with France more effective. In a word, you have been the incendiary of journalism for twenty years—a man ever ready to set the world in a blaze to make a newspaper placard.

MR. F. E. SMITH'S TRIBUTE.

And as you have been the preacher of war abroad so you have been the preacher of discord and hate at home. There