

# **ROLL AWAY THE STONE**

*An Introduction to Aleister Crowley's essays on the  
Psychology of Hashish*

by

ISRAEL REGARDIE

*with complete text of*  
**THE HERB DANGEROUS**  
by Aleister Crowley

“Where there is no vision  
the people perish.”

Proverbs, xxix, 15

“I am the Snake that giveth  
Knowledge & Delight a bright  
glory, and stir the hearts of  
men with drunkenness. To  
worships  
me take wine and strange drugs  
whereof I will tell my prophet,  
& be drunk thereof! They shall  
not harm ye at all. It is a lie,  
this folly against self.

Liber Legis, II, 22

## ROLL AWAY THE STONE

*An introduction to Aleister Crowley's essays on the psychology of Hashish.*

### I

“O my Son, yester Eve came the Spirit upon me that I should eat the Grass of the Arabians,” wrote Aleister Crowley pontifically (in *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*) concerning hashish around 1917—18 in New York City. “And by Virtue of the Bewitchment thereof beheld that which might be appointed for the Enlightenment of mine Eyes. Now then of this may I not speak, seeing that it involveth the Mystery of the Transcending of Time, so that in One Hour of our Terrestrial Measure did I gather the Harvest of an Aeon, and in Ten Lives I could not declare it.”

Some years before the above was written, this English poet and mystic had produced a series of ten large magazine-like volumes with board covers entitled *The Equinox*. The intention was to publish a separate issue every Spring and Autumn for five years—making ten numbers in all. Openly published in them were his superbly written essays on the psychology of hashish. These were his earliest overt admissions to the occasional use of hashish as a psychedelic agent.

The first four issues of this periodical contained an important serial entitled *The Herb Dangerous*. The opening essay, *The Pharmacy of Hashish*, by an English chemist, E. Whineray, was a clinical and chemical analysis of *Cannabis Indica*, hashish, whose first cousin is marihuana, *Cannabis Sattiva*.

The second essay entitled *The Psychology of Hashish* was written by Oliver Haddo, one of the innumerable pseudonyms used by Aleister Crowley. It was succeeded in the third issue by *The Poem of Hashish*, written by Charles Baudelaire, and translated beautifully from the French by Crowley himself.

The final installment of the serial consisted of selections from a fantastic piece of writing by H. G. Ludlow entitled *The Hashish Eater*. Easily a rival to de Quincy's *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, Ludlow's book was published by Harpers (New York, 1857), and now being out of print should certainly be re-published in the near future. These are the four essays comprising the main body of this text.

Who was this Aleister Crowley?

An Englishman by birth, a great poet and essayist, he was also an intrepid explorer and a mountain climber of the Himalayas and other lofty peaks, and, above all these other talents, was a very great mystic. Despite these manifold claims to considerable fame, a sinister journalistic aura has gathered about him to obscure for all too long the vision of what the man was actually like. This obfuscation of the facts was partly due to his own vanity and lack of diplomacy, the other part to be laid at the door of the ignorance and vindictiveness of some journalists who preyed vulture-like on his least unconventional act. The tragic outcome, however, is that there are few people today who know what he really stood for. Some few may have heard the usual scandalous rumors that he used drugs, was profligate sexually, was wholly without morals, and for these reasons had been roundly condemned by both the British Press and by the Hearst publications in the United States. I can still remember from boyhood the full page spreads in the magazine section of one of the yellow Sunday newspapers giving the most lurid and sensational accounts of some of his activities.

Insofar as Crowley was a mystic, he was known to the cultists of his day. Many of them considered him unequivocally evil and degenerate—though, despite this, some have not hesitated to steal much of his written material, using it altogether without acknowledgement. No one had a good word for him—save for an occasional reviewer of his verse, such as Gilbert K. Chesterton.

Much the same is true of many of the “metafizzlers” of today. I have read some of their recent literature condemning psychedelic drugs outright, as if these were a diabolical threat to their particular brand of mysticism. The most recent attack appeared in a Hollywood metaphysical monthly penned by a sincere enough writer who represents himself as a disciple of a stout ridiculous-looking Hindu "avatar", who, sworn to absolute silence, has not opened his mouth to speak for years, so it is said.

Instead — as if this were not speaking! — he uses a pointer and a printed alphabet-board through which he communicates his divine authoritative message to a God-hungry world. His face and neck, however, look as though he has used his mouth rather well for purposes other than talking. This is the type and symbol of many of Crowley's critics.

Recent years have evolved a roster of new and eloquent voices to corroborate and to confirm many of Crowley's once outrageous views relative to the psychedelic agents: Aldous Huxley, Alan Watts, Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert — to name but a few among the more commonly known celebrities who in our day are directing attention to the dramatic fact that there is now a chemical door which gives promise to open to higher and mystical states of consciousness. This is what Crowley, amongst other things, had been trying to state more than a half a century ago.

There is nothing radically new in their approach. But the one thing that is different is the laboratory development of a new chemical product which promises infinitely more reliability and effectiveness than, let us say, hashish, the drug that Crowley had once extolled in the absence of superior agents. He was not without awareness of the fact that hashish was an unpredictable drug, for he once wrote that the various preparations of *Cannabis Indica* are all alike in that their action is so uncertain as to be not easily or surely standardized. It is

not even a question of reasonable limits, he said; of two samples seemingly alike one may apparently degenerate fifty percent in strength within a few days. Some samples may be totally inert. It is this fact that has led to the total abandonment of the use of the drug in medicine. But, at the time he was writing, it was the best one he had been able to discover.

## II

How did Crowley first make the discovery that drugs could simulate or initiate the mystical state?

To begin with, it is certain that he had become familiar with the Gifford Lectures of William James, whose experimental frame of mind would have been wholly pleasing to the eager, intense young man just down from Cambridge. He must have read that wonderful passage that James had written: "Some years ago I myself made some observations on this aspect of nitrous oxide intoxication, and reported them in print. One conclusion was forced upon my mind at that time, and my impression of its truth has ever since remained unshaken. It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness, as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the flimsiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation . . ."

Not long after he came down from Cambridge in 1898, Crowley was introduced to membership in The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a nineteenth century secret society which taught an archaic system of ritual magic. This system, which served as the basis for his own organization which he founded a decade later, needs brief description at least, together with its Eastern counterpart — yoga. How he came to unite and correlate yoga and magic into a single exalted discipline to lead to the inner heights and depths, certainly had roots in ancient traditions, but for him nonetheless was a stroke of individual genius.

The Golden Dawn was an occult organization formulated out of some British high masonic lodges in the year 1878.

Authorization for its institution in England seems to have come from the continent, from alleged descendants of mediaeval Rosicrucian groups. It was thus a secret Rosicrucian body.

Its three chiefs, also high-grade Masons, believed, amongst other things, that women should not be disbarred from membership as they had been from Freemasonry. Artists, lawyers, physicians, actors, actresses, and humble men and women from all walks of life were included amongst its members. Many famous writers were also members — William Butler Yeats, Arthur Edward Waite, Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Machen, J. W. Brodie-Innes and a host of other luminaries of the literary world.

There were ceremonial grades and degrees not too dissimilar to those in the Masonic Order, the major difference being that certain occult teachings were transmitted to the aspirant during the ceremony. After he had successfully passed an examination that preceded advancement to successively higher grades, he was given further teachings and certain exercises to do. Naturally Crowley sailed through these examinations and degrees with flying colors and at great speed. He was an intense and vigorous young man and poet. Since he had read widely and profoundly prior to joining the Order at the hoary age of 23 years, there was not much at first in the way of theory that the Order could surprise him with.

As an occult organization, The Golden Dawn maintained the strictest secrecy. Initially its membership was selected with the utmost scrupulousness, an attitude which later was definitely relaxed. Its teachings and methods of instruction were guarded by penalties attached to the most awe-inspiring obligations in order to ensure that secrecy. Later, as changes were made in the governance of the Order because of the death of one chief and the resignation of another, dictatorial powers were assumed by McGregor Mathers who was a Qabalist of some distinction. He was the translator of three mediaeval

magical texts: *The Greater Key of King Solomon*, *The Kaballah Unveiled* (which consisted of certain portions from Knorr von Rosenroth's Latin rendition of the *Zohar*, prefixed by a lengthy introduction of some erudition), and *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.

With the passage of time, a revolt broke out amongst the rank, and file of the Order's membership, presumably because of the irrational dictator-like attitudes of Mathers. Of course there was the usual bickering, slander, and a lot of scandal, in which unfortunately Crowley came to play a prominent part.

Internal dissension continued for some years until it came to a blistering head with one group of members expelling its own Chief. Mathers retained a small handful of loyal adherents.

Yeats belonged to one of the dissident groups. Arthur E. Waite, whom Kenneth Rexroth has referred to amusingly as “a scholar”, formed another faction which he named the Reconstructed-Rosicrucian Order. It became stultified, burdened as it was by the massive weight of Waiters pompous jargon and ponderous literary style. Other groups were reorganized in various parts of Great Britain, all of them persisting in the prime work of the Order — to teach magical procedures as the Way to the Light.

In a few words, Magic is the name for a primitive psychological system. Its goal was illumination, being “brought to the Light.” The transcendental experience to be reached by means of ritual and other technical procedures was the heart of the system, which can hardly be guessed at by the uninformed layman, but which some psychologists, including Carl G. Jung (and who form, what Abraham Maslow has called the Third School) have been profoundly impressed with.

Some of the more ancient schools of initiation must have employed drugs of one kind or another in a sacramental manner. What, specific products they actually did use is not at

all clear. Henbane, belladonna, hashish, opium and the solanaceas have all been suspected. The modern school, headed by Mathers in the last quarter of the 19th century, frowned upon all such methods, preferring the classical secret techniques of mind and spiritual training.

Willis W. Harman, in a sensitively written essay “The Issue of the Consciousness-Expanding Drugs” (*Main Currents*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1963) asserted that down through the ages of recorded history, various groups within the several religious traditions alike have insisted that man has far vaster potentiality for knowledge, and hence power over his fate, than he ordinarily dreams of as possible. These included the ancient Gnostics to the modern Theosophists, including also the Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem and Christian religions. They have always claimed that it is possible to *know* — in a way that is completely different from the mere accumulation of facts — to realize man's essential nature and his true relationship to the creative force behind or within the universe. There, wrote Harman, his fulfillment lies — that is, what it is he values most highly when the meaning of life is clearly seen. For this particular species of knowledge, men have followed religious teachers of every shade and opinion, and joined secret societies. They have willingly submitted to the travails of elaborate initiation procedures and trained for years in different yoga and meditation techniques. They have practiced fasting, flagellation and all kinds of austerity. Among them all, the experience of gnosis, of direct perception and knowledge, has been most highly prized of all human experiences and attainments.

Magic then, being a primitive psychological technique that in recent times was taught and practiced within the Golden Dawn, it is evident that Crowley had been fully exposed to it once he became a member. A few years after such initiation, when he had become proficient as a practicing student, he

wrote an essay entitled *The Initiated Interpretation of Ceremonial Magic*, large parts of which need to be quoted here if only as a semantic device to define my terms.

As a prelude, I must state that at that time he was not familiar with psychoanalysis. Nothing in that field had yet been translated into English. Thus he was not acquainted with many of our now commonplace and popular mental constructs — such as the Unconscious, superego, libido, psycho-dynamics, and so forth. Instead, since he had studied some little neurology, he attempted to explain the results of Magic and Yoga in terms of cerebral physiology as he understood it, and adapted it to the exigencies of his thesis.

Though the essay is rather long, it is worthy of extensive quotation to show his rationalistic approach to these difficult and complex psycho-spiritual problems.

“It is loftily amusing to the student of magical literature who is not quite a fool — and rare is such a combination! — to note the criticism directed by the Philistine against the citadel of his science . . . I am not concerned to deny the objective reality of all 'magical' phenomena; if they are illusions, they are at least as real as many unquestioned facts of daily life; and, if we follow Herbert Spencer, they are at least evidence of some *cause*.

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

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

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

“Those Europeans who go a little deeper learn from Fichte, that the phenomenal Universe is the Creation of the Ego; Hindus, or Europeans studying under Hindu Gurus, are told that by Akasa is meant the Chit-akasa. The Chit-akasa is

situated in the 'Third Eye,' i.e., in the brain. By assuming higher dimensions of space, we can assimilate this fact to Realism; but we have no need to take so much trouble.

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

“Magical phenomena, however, come under a special subclass, since they are willed, and their cause is the series of 'real' phenomena called the operations of Ceremonial Magic.

“These consist of:

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

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

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

“And this is a purely materialistic rational statement; it is independent of any objective hierarchy at all. Philosophy has nothing to say; and Science can only suspend judgement,

pending a proper and methodical investigation of the facts alleged . . . Our Ceremonial Magic fines down, then, to a series of minute, though of course, empirical, physiological experiments, and who so will carry them through intelligently need not fear the results. . .”

Magical principles, similar to those just described, are being spontaneously applied at "happenings" that one occasionally hears of. These occur amongst some of the "hippy" and "swinger" exponents of the contemporary psychedelic movement. For example, from one description recently recounted, the following picture can be reconstructed:

(1) Sight. Colors, lights, swiftly flashing in kaleidoscopic movement, influencing the brain through the optic nerves.

(2) Sound. The noisiest kind of music, popular or classical, which blasts the mind almost into oblivion or insensibility.

(3) Smell. Marihuana is occasionally being used to heighten nervous system activity. Its peculiar, characteristic odor is stimulating for some people.

(4) Taste. Again, both alcohol (in moderate usage) and marihuana are used for gustatory stimulation.

(5) Touch. In a few instances, one hears of “orgies” and wife-swapping in the above context. The feel of bodies, warm skin, genitals, coitus, heighten the tactile experience.

(6) Mind. All of these — and perhaps their summation in the “peak” experience. A large number of changes may be rung upon these simple basic themes.

### III

What was really important, however, about this whole Order theme was his confrontation with two men who were members of the higher, so-called Adept grades. They were destined to play an enormous role in his own subsequent spiritual development. One of these was George Cecil Jones, a chemist and metallurgist, who remained in the closest contact with Crowley for many long years. He was friend, counsellor and advisor.

The other was Allan Bennett, of no consistent vocation. It has been said that he was an electrical engineer, a keen student of Eastern religions and philosophy — and a financially handicapped man. His enfeebled economic status was due, in part anyway, to his suffering from chronic bronchial asthma which had played havoc with his health and efficiency. It apparently prevented him from successfully exploiting his talents in any rewarding manner.

Because he was practically “down and out” when Crowley first met him, Allan was invited to share Crowley's apartment for an indefinite period of time. Money at that time presented no problem for Crowley, he having inherited a considerable sum. Allan thus became Crowley's guest, and perhaps for the first time in many years was well-housed, well-fed and well-clothed.

Inasmuch as Allan was an advanced adept of the Golden Dawn, his part of the *quid pro quo* was to teach Crowley whatever he knew of the magical arts. This task he accepted, and performed extremely well. Crowley proved to be an apt pupil, and Allan knew what he was doing. Together they accomplished a great deal, and the intellectual traces of this relationship remained with Crowley all his life.

Subsequently, Allan gave up the entire Golden Dawn methodology -and, with Crowley's financial and other kinds of

aid, left England for the Far East, his severe and chronic asthma playing a decisive role. There, in a far warmer and more satisfactory climate, he was relieved of much of his respiratory difficulty. In fact, it was while he was in Ceylon that he became converted to Buddhism, and in so doing fulfilled a lifelong dream. Under the new sacramental name of Bhikkhu Ananda Metteya, he played an important and efficient role in helping to bring Thera Vada Buddhism to the Western World. Crowley's utilization of the Buddhist skandhas as an analytical schema in *The Psychology of Hashish* can be traced directly to Allan.

What is most significant about this close association of the two men, however, is this fundamental fact. While living in Crowley's flat in London for about a year and a half, Allan was obliged to use many different drugs to obtain even temporary relief from his severe asthmatic paroxysms. The cold, damp and foggy English weather played havoc with his wheezy respiratory system. Some drugs seemed to work fairly well at first; others were grossly ineffectual. But even when a few did work, he had to use such enormous quantities that he became poisoned by them. For varying periods of time, he would be laid low and was lethargic, sleepy and inert.

However, in addition to the sought-after relief from the bronchial spasms, he came to discover that some of the medications he employed were psychedelics as we would now term them. They expanded the horizons of the mind, and dissolved the boundries of the ego, occasionally inducing ineffable states of mystic consciousness with which he was already familiar as a result of his meditative and devotional exercises.

Thus intrigued, he became a concentrated and profound student of pharmacology as it existed at that time, reading far and wide, and most intelligently too. He experimented with whatever drugs he could lay hands on. The immediate goal was

to find that one magical drug which would open the door to these higher states.

This was his basic thesis. And it was this thesis that Crowley inherited from Allan. It was adopted wholly and joyfully. Crowley too came to study pharmacology. He discussed the problem with many physicians, physiologists and neurologists, and experimented even more enthusiastically and extensively than had his guru, Allan Bennett.

(As an aside, it should be mentioned as a most curious phenomenon, that Crowley also came to develop bronchial asthma after several years had elapsed. Several of his intimate friends and later disciples also suffered from asthma.)

Meanwhile, he had the wanderlust. The world was his oyster. Having inherited a considerable fortune from his relatives connected with the brewing industry in the south of England, his wish to travel was made easy. He hiked, explored, climbed mountains in Scotland, Switzerland, Mexico, and eventually India — and attempted to emulate many of the exotic feats of another of his life-long idols, Sir Richard Burton. He walked across that part of the Sahara Desert adjoining Algeria and Tunisia, mingling freely with the Arabs whose masculinity and virility he came to admire. There also he met sheikhs of innumerable types and levels of importance, discovering that some of them were familiar with the use of drugs that exalted and expanded consciousness. He learned from them, and learned well. It is quite certain that under their tutelage, he learned a lot more than merely homosexual practices. Through the administration of these exotic drugs, including hashish of course, he experienced a wide variety of higher states of consciousness, about which he has written more illuminatingly than almost anyone else I know.

During a protracted visit to Ceylon, where he had gone to visit Allan Bennett, he practiced Yoga and studied oriental philosophies with his characteristic vigor and enthusiasm. On

two separate occasions in the first five years of this century, he climbed some of the highest peaks of the Himalayas, and almost made it — but not quite. However, one of the results of these expeditions was that he did enter the small mountain kingdoms of Nepal and Sikhim adjacent to Tibet, where he acquired considerable practical knowledge of Buddhist and lamaistic Tantric methods. The residue is palpable in his earliest technical writings.

So far as Yoga is concerned, one of the most authoritative of the ancient texts, Patanjali's Yoga aphorisms, defines Yoga as "the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle." Briefly, then, it is that psychological process which has concentration as its goal. That this achievement is considered to be the prime necessity or prerequisite to the attainment of spiritual experience, or Samadhi as it is called, is implicit in all the principal Eastern mystical writings. Having practised this art for many years and having become a master, as it were, of concentration and meditation, Crowley has written about this subject with wit, with clarity, and with an authoritative simplicity which is nowhere else to be found. One little book entitled Part I of Book IV is a gem of clarity and wisdom. In several of the Equinox publications are to be found a dozen or more classics of instruction in the various aspects of Yoga posture, breathing, concentration and so forth — all beautifully written and free of superfluity.

I should interpolate at this point that because of his effervescent sense of humor, which bubbled all over the place and penetrated almost everything he wrote, some readers and many critics saw merely a funny man. It never occurred to most of them that involved in his humor was a deadly serious purpose. It was a literary and psychological technique employed for a number of well-defined ends. Nor merely to debunk the subject, which of course was paramount, nor merely to separate the wheat from the chaff, but mainly to

separate the sheep from the goats. Thus it was used to test the reader. If the latter could not take this debunking and still clamoured for the old veneer of verbiage and superstition, this was not the kind of person to be encouraged in the Great Work. Or, if he were deceived by the humor into believing that there was nothing else present, Crowley thought that here was a fanatic who should be altogether discouraged from attempting this work. He felt that when the passage became rough, or when the external and internal pressures increased, as they were bound to do, such a person would succumb to neurotic illness, or worse. Crowley wanted none of these.

In a rather later work entitled *Eight Lectures on Yoga*, which is rich in commonsense, subtle humor, and an uncomplicated exposition of its deepest meanings, we find the following:

“(1) There is more nonsense talked and written about Yoga than about anything else in the world. Most of this nonsense, which is fostered by charlatans, is based upon the idea that there is something mysterious and Oriental about it. There isn't. Do not look to me for obelisks and odalesques, Rahat Loucoum, bul-buls, or any other tinsel imagery of the Yoga mongers. I am neat but not gaudy. There is nothing mysterious or Oriental about anything, as everybody knows who has spent a little time intelligently in the continents of Asia and Africa. . .

“(2) All phenomena of which we are aware take place in our own minds, and therefore the only thing we have to look at is the mind: which is a more constant quantity over all the species of humanity than is generally supposed . . .

“(3) We must then begin the study of Yoga by looking at the meaning of the word. It means Union, from the same Sanskrit root as the Greek word Zeugma, the Latin word Jugum, and the English word yoke. (Yeaug — to join). . .

“(4) Yoga means Union.

“In what sense are we to consider this? How is the word

Yoga to imply a system of religious training or a description of religious experience?

“You may note incidentally that the word Religion is really identifiable with Yoga. It means a binding together.

“(5) Yoga means Union.

“What are the elements which are united or to be united when this word is used in its common sense of a practice widely spread in Hindustan whose object is the emancipation of the individual who studies and practices it from the less pleasing features of his life on this planet?

“In the mind of a pious person, the inferiority complex which accounts for his piety compels him to interpret this emancipation as union with the gaseous vertebrate whom he has invented and called God. On the cloudy vapour of his fears, his imagination has thrown a vast distorted shadow of himself, and he is duly terrified. . . . It is because of this overwhelming miasma of fear that the whole subject of Yoga has become obscure. A perfectly simple problem has been complicated by the most abject ethical and superstitious nonsense. Yet all the time the truth is patent in the word itself . . .

“It may seem to some of you that these explanations have rather knocked the bottom out of Yoga; that I have reduced it to the category of common things. That was my object. There is no sense in being frightened of Yoga, awed by Yoga, muddled and mystified by Yoga, or enthusiastic over Yoga . . .

“On the *terrasse* of the Cafe des Deux Magots it was once necessary to proclaim the entire doctrine of Yoga in the fewest possible words 'with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel and with the Trump of God.' St. Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians, the Fourth Chapter and the sixteenth verse. I did so.

“Sit still. Stop thinking. Shut up. Get out!”

This is Crowley at his rationalistic best. It is to be more than favorably compared with Leary's mantram "Turn on, tune

in, drop out!" Basically, the difference between Leary and Crowley is that the latter made a special plea for discipline and training in the meditative arts as a major means of exploring the inner world of mind and spirit. In fact, this is the main point of these four essays on hashish. As a chemical tool to be harnessed to the employment of trained concentration and meditation, lysergic acid has much to be said for it. Crowley's contention was that we should thus expect far better results with its use than if the tool of meditation alone was used, and vice versa.

## IV

It was about ten years after he had first been initiated into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, that Crowley finally came to a standstill in England to form his own training organization. Those were ten long, significant and fruitful years spent in wandering over the face of the earth, experimenting with every known method of inducing the highest mystical states. Many of the traditional contents of the Golden Dawn became incorporated into the structure of Ms own order, the A.:A.: Yet, in many ways, the latter differed immeasurably from its predecessor. Principally, the major difference rested in his unification of Yoga and Magic into a single system having as its goal the attainment of the Light.

Each one of his travels had yielded a grain of some technique or inner discipline that could be utilized as a minute segment in the vast mosaic or panorama of methods and scientific approach. Some little view of this wide vista can be perceived in his essay *The Psychology of Hashish*. Clearly, it is not the work of a narrow-minded crackpot or fanatic. Really to appreciate the genius of this man, one should have become familiar with the technical instructions that he has written on all phases of the two ancient systems he had worked with. It must be accepted as factual that in each one, he had achieved the summit. This is evidenced by the content and context of the so-called official instructions of his Order, as well as by the following, which is particularly apt today when so many inexperienced youngsters are getting their "kicks" from the psychedelic drugs:

“Just so one's first dazzled delight in a new landscape turns, as one continues to gaze, to the appreciation of exquisite details of the view. At first they were blurred by the blinding rush of general beauty; they emerge one by one as the shock subsides, and passionate rapture yields to intelligent interest.

“In the same way the Adept almost always begins by torrential lyrics panting out mystical extravagances about 'ineffable love,' 'unimaginable bliss,' (This corresponds to the emotional and metaphysical fog which is the characteristic of the emergence of thought from homogeneity. The clear and concise differentiation of ideas marks the adult mind.) He usually loses his sense of proportion, of humour, of reality, and of sound judgement. His ego is often inflated to the bursting point, till he would be abjectly ridiculous if he were not so pitifully dangerous to himself and others. He also tends to take his new-found truths of illumination for the entire body of truth, and insists that they must be as valid and vital for all men as they happen to be for himself.”

It will have to be assumed that the general reader is by and large unfamiliar with what Crowley strove for. To remedy this defect, let us assume you were a student of mysticism and had applied to him as a so-called authority for training in the methods of the Great Work. This is an archaic term referring to the self discipline leading to enlightenment. The first responsibility set for the beginner was to do some reading from a preliminary list of authoritative literature given to him for study. When he had completed this mass of reading in some three months, he could apply for a written examination of the study material. The prime intention here was only to ensure that he had, at the very least, acquired an intellectual familiarity with basic classical material.

In the event that he was willing to proceed further, and was accepted, he was sworn in as a Probationer of Crowley's organization, the A.:A.: This oath merely stated in formal terms that he would apply himself to the Great Work.

Before him lay a year's arduous work on a practical experimental level. He had personally to select from the assorted materials he had read, a particular practice or several practices — meditation or magical or devotional. It was up to

his own discretion and ingenuity as to what he proposed to do. Nobody could tell him what to select or what to do.

Mandatory, however, was the keeping of a magical record, a diary. Whatever else he might be slipshod in, the diary had to be entered regularly and soberly and in detail. To fail in this was inexcusable. At the end of a whole year's work, this record was to be submitted to Crowley for examination. On the basis of what this record indicated and revealed, the student was advanced to the next grade of the Order. But over and above this, the diary disclosed to Crowley the character-structure of the experimenter. It revealed his personal idiosyncracies, his predilections, mental biases and emotional prejudices. And since Crowley, borrowing from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, had written that "equilibrium is the basis of the work" — he then prescribed specific exercises and practices that would tend to equilibrate the student's psychological structure.

Had the student chosen to work with Yoga alone in that first probationary year, Crowley might propose a number of supplementary things such as more simple but fundamental Yoga drills — disciplinary exercises that the student might easily be tempted to ignore. Or, secondly, Crowley might recommend some diametrically opposed practices — such as devotional exercises, ceremonial magic, or what-not. The effect of this was to prevent the student developing one-sided traits of character — and thus to prevent his going off half-cocked and becoming a fanatic.

In the event that the student showed promise, and was theoretically familiar with, let us say, William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* and other similar analyses of and descriptions of mystical and transcendental states of consciousness, Crowley *might* recommend the use of hashish. At the time when Crowley wrote his books, such drugs were procurable without a prescription, at any chemist or pharmacy

without breaking the established laws of England.

The purpose of this hashish-session was simply to provide the student with a fore-taste or some adumbration of the mystical experience towards which he was focusing all his energies. It was *never* the intention of Crowley at any time to use drugs as a substitute for the body-mind-discipline which he insisted on beyond all other things. This was the furthest notion from his mind. We must take him seriously when he asserted:

“I have no use for hashish save as a preliminary demonstration that there exists another world attainable — somehow. *Possibly if pharmacists were to concentrate their efforts upon producing a standard drug . . . we might find a valuable and harmless adjuvant to the process which I have optimistically named Scientific Illuminism.*” (Italics are mine.)

I want to emphasize unequivocally that Crowley has asserted not once but a thousand times that the discipline itself was far more important than any one particular result or attainment. His thesis was that in training a concert pianist for example, one concentrates on drills, scales and exercises until enough manual dexterity and self-discipline has been developed to play Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto*. One does not start with the latter. It is in this area that he differs seriously from most of our contemporaries.

However, since human nature is human nature after all, and since people do tend to become discouraged and, from there, give up the struggle for enlightenment, Crowley contended that if they could be given some inkling of what the ineffable experience could be like, perhaps then they would be willing to overcome their own inertia and despondency — and work. It was the carrot to be waved in front of the donkey's nose. But waved only long enough to get the donkey started.

“Let it not be imagined,” he wrote, “that I devised these thoughts from pure sloth or weariness. But with the mystical

means then at my disposal, I required a period of days or weeks to obtain any Result ... If only, therefore, I could reduce the necessary period to a few hours . . . My present appeal is to recognized physiologists and psychologists to increase the number and accuracy of their researches on the introspective lines which I have laid down above, possibly with further aid from the pharmacist.

“Once the pure physio-psychological action is determined, I shall then ask their further attention to the special results of combining the drug with the mystic process — *always involving trained observation* — and from that moment the future of Scientific Illuminism will be assured.” (Italics mine.)

Well, what he did hope for has been partly fulfilled. The chemists did produce lysergic acid in 1938, though some of its first psychic sequelae were not observed until 1945. Sad to say, that though Crowley lived to 1947, he was never aware of the fact that lysergic acid had been created and was really the drug of choice, the ideal chemical instrument he had yearned for as the experimental aid to the magico-mystical system he had developed.

One of Timothy Leary's former associates, Frank Ferguson, who gave up graduate work in anthropology to further the progress of a now defunct organization devoted to disseminating information about lysergic acid, once explained that Eastern mystics were able to control their nervous systems after some twenty to thirty years of study and self-discipline. He hastened to add, presumptuously I think, that, with the aid of the hallucinogens, these yogic skills might be taught in a matter of a few weeks. It was his opinion that the long and arduous traditional discipline of the yogis were nowadays not required for what Leary has described as “drug-induced satori.” This promise, naturally, is most appealing to all of us; satori without tears! Another writer in *The Harvard Review* commented that people who have worked with lysergic acid

have hoped to find a quick and easy way to reach the inner goals that, in the past, have only been attained by those who were willing to undergo the pain and work associated with the ancient disciplines.

This was far indeed from Aleister Crowley's basic premise. -As a counter to this, as though in anticipation of such abuse of oversimplification, he wrote:

“I could persuade other people that mysticism was not all folly without insisting on their devoting a lifetime to studying under me; and if only I could convince a few competent observers — in such a matter I distrust even myself — Science would be bound to follow and to investigate, clear up the matter once for all, and, as I believed, and believe, arm itself with a new weapon ten thousand times more potent than the balance and the microscope.”

His fundamental premise was stated over and over again, in a hundred different ways. It was *never* that the drug experience *per se* could possibly replace the basic mental and spiritual discipline that he stood for, and which all previous occult teachers insisted upon. In fact, he was relatively certain that whatever the drug experience did evoke would soon be forgotten to become a cold, gray, vague memory.

“As one would expect, such forms leave little impress upon the memory. Yet they are seductive enough, and I am afraid that the very great majority of mystics live all their lives wandering about in this vain world of shadows and of shells . . . What vain folly (of all true hope forlorn!) to seek in drugs, in drink, in the pistol or the cord, the paradise they have forfeited by a moment's weakness or a moment's wavering. . .”

What was required beyond all other things was endurance and persistency — the discipline of the body-mind system, in all the technical phases of the Work itself, to provide the basic necessary tools through which the mystical state would be reinstated, re-experienced, and re-explored.

Huston Smith, who wrote an essay in the LSD book edited by David Solomon, believes similarly to Crowley. He wrote:

“The case of Zen is especially pertinent here, for it pivots on an enlightenment experience — *satori* or *kensho* — which some (but not all) Zennists say resembles LSD. Alike or different, the point is that Zen recognizes that unless the experience is joined to discipline, it will come to naught.”

And then Smith proceeds to add, what is most significant to this thesis, that:

“Even the Buddha had to sit ... Without *jo riki* the particular power developed through *zazen* (seated meditation), the vision of oneness attained in enlightenment ... in time becomes clouded and eventually fades into a pleasant memory instead of remaining an omnipresent reality shaping our daily life ... To be able to live in accordance with what the Mind's eye has revealed through *Satori* requires, like the purification of character and the development of personality, a ripening period of *zazen*.”

Crowley indicated, though, that there might be occasions, even when one had acquired supreme skill in meditation, when an additional fillip or stimulus provided by the judicious and temperate use of hashish would enable one to surmount the sterility and grimness of the long-protracted discipline, to soar exaltedly above the armored restriction of the ego-functions into the ineffable. The opening of his own hashish essay deals with this very problem.

“I was also aware of the prime agony of meditation, the 'dryness' (as Molinos calls it) which hardens and sterilizes the soul.

“The very practice which should flood it with light leads only to a darkness more terrible than death, a despair and disgust which only too often lead to abandonment, when in truth they should encourage, for that — as the oracles affirm — it is darkest before the dawn.

“Meditation therefore annoyed me,” he commented wryly, “as tightening and constricting the soul. I began to ask if the 'dryness' was an essential part of the process. If by some means I could shake its catafalque of Mind, might not the Infinite Divine Spirit leap unfettered to the Light?”

And then he asks eloquently, for never let it be forgotten this man was a master of meditation: “Who shall roll away the stone?”

To answer his own question, he formulated the hypothesis: “Perhaps hashish is the drug which 'loosens the girders of the soul,' but is in itself neither good nor bad . . . Well, then, let me see whether by first exalting myself mystically and continuing my invocations while the drug dissolved the matrix of the diamond Soul, that diamond might not manifest limpid and sparkling, a radiance 'not of the Sun, nor of the Moon, nor of the Stars'; . . .”

## V

What is meant by the mystical experience is capable of a variety of explanations. We can use the idiom of modern psychological language, advancing the notion that the drug somehow attenuates the character armor or the mental defense mechanisms which cramp and stricture the psyche.

This attenuation would permit the emergence from the Unconscious of feelings, emotions, energy and other psychic contents, long buried, or which never yet have seen the light of day. Their emergence would thus expand the limited horizons of consciousness, and permit the experience of oceanic or nirvanic feelings. The attack on the ego functions is a deliberate controlled matter when meditation and concentration exercises are employed — as in Yoga and Zen — but, of course, more fortuitous when a psychedelic drug is employed.

A new school of psychologists is developing currently. They regard the mystical experience as a healthy development in the onward growth of the psyche. They do not consider this phenomenon outside of their psychological field, as did nineteenth century science. Since it is a piece of naturalistic human behavior, it is regarded as well within their scientific purview, rather than as belonging to the field of religion. Instead of the familiar phrase the “religious” or “mystical” experience, they have coined a new phrase, the “peak” experience to refer to the same inner phenomenon.

They are inclined to view its occurrence as a good deal more common than was previously supposed, and that there is a spontaneity in this frequency. More often than not, in non-religious people such as poets and artists, it is not evoked or precipitated by the use of prayer, devotion or other religious techniques.

“There is no difference in principle between sharpening perception with an external instrument, such as a microscope,”

wrote Alan Watts, “and sharpening it with an internal instrument, such as one of these three drugs. If they are an affront to the dignity of the mind, the microscope is an affront to the dignity of the eye and the telephone to the dignity of the ear ...”

A neurological explanation is also possible, and, all other things being equal, is just as valid. For example, there is one provided by Leary:

“The facts of the neurological capacities of the human being are simply astronomical. We possess, each of us, around 10 billion brain cells. This is several times the number of human beings in the world. Any one brain cell can be in relationship with as many as 25,000 others. The number of possible associations is of the order of 10 billion to the twenty-five-thousandth power, a quantity larger than the number of atoms in the universe. This electrical-chemical network, inconceivable in its complexity, is the anatomical structure of consciousness . . .

“How can we explain this extraordinary discrepancy between the potentials of the cortical computer and the poverty of the programs we impose upon it? There is little known about the function of the brain and about the learning processes by means of which the brain's enormous potential is limited and contracted. The term which seems most adequate to describe the process is *imprinting*:

“What is imprinting? ... It is 'very rapid learning that takes place in some animals... at a certain early stage of development.'

“Another awesome aspect of the imprinting process is its unpredictable and accidental quality. Because Conrad Lorentz happened to be present at the right moment, the goslings 'imprinted' him as the protective, maternal object. In another experiment, young birds were presented with a Ping-Pong ball at the critical moment and spent their remaining life pursuing

and making love to the plastic globes. This experiment is both amusing and frightening. It reminds us that each of us sees the world through perceptual structures (biochemical-neurological) which were laid down accidentally in our earliest moments. It raises the uneasy suspicion that, in spite of our vaunted rationality and conditioned certainty, we may be simply chasing the particular Ping-Pong balls which, at those sensitive shutter moments, had been imprinted on our cortical film . . .

“Certain alkaloid molecules possess the power of dramatically suspending the familiar, learned structural aspects of the nervous system; Consciousness is suddenly released from its conditioned patterning and flung into a flashing loom of unlearned imagery. However heatedly scientists may disagree about the value and social meaning of the psychedelic drugs, there is one point upon which they concur; the drugs do propel awareness into an eerie, novel landscape in which everything seems possible and nothing remains fixed . . . The psychedelic drugs may not only suspend old imprinted patterns, they may also provide the possibility of the 'death-rebirth' experience which is so often reported during psychedelic moments. Reimprinting means that during the psychedelic session the subject's nervous system is in a state of disorganized flux closely analogous to that of infancy. The planned, voluntary release of fixed perceptual patterns and the temporary opening up of fluid, boundaryless awareness suggests the hope of controlled, self-controlled reimprinting.”

We can proceed further to the religious concept, that the mystical experience represents Union with God. Crowley could be theistic as with Vedanta, or non-theistic as with Thera-Vada Buddhism, as he chose, depending on the circumstances. But whichever philosophical stance he adopted, it presented no problem to him as a vehicle to interpret life experiences, whether mystical or secular. In fact, more often than not, he adopted the non-theistic position as being more utilitarian. This

is expressed rather well in the following excerpt from his *Gospel According to St. Bernard Shaw*:

“The mystic attainment may be defined as the Union of the Soul with God, or as the realization of itself, or — there are fifty phrases for the same experience. The same, for whether you are a Christian or a Buddhist, a Theist or (as I am myself, thank God!) an Atheist, the attainment of this one state is as open to you as is nightmare, or madness, or intoxication. Religious folk have buried this fact under mountains of dogma; but the study of comparative religion has made it clear. One has merely to print parallel passages from the mystics of all ages and religions to see that they were talking of the same things; one gets even verbal identities, such as the 'That Tao which is Tao is not Tao' of the Chinese, the 'Not That, Not That' of the Hindu, the 'Head which is above all Heads, the Head which is not a Head' of the Qabalist, the 'God is Nothing' of the Christians, and the 'That is not which is' of a modern atheistic or pantheistic mystic.”

He could adopt yet other points of view which are as valid as the above. For instance, the following account is extrapolated from an early diary dated perhaps about 1909:

“When therefore I had made ready the chamber, so that all was dark, save for the Lamp upon the Altar, I began as recorded above, to inflame myself in praying, calling upon my Lord; and I burned in the Lamp that Pantacle which I had made of Him, renouncing the Images, that Himself might arise in me.

“And the Chamber was filled with that wondrous glow of ultra-violet light self-luminous without a source, that hath no counterpart in Nature unless it be in that Dawn of the North . . . Then subtly, easily, simply, imperceptibly sliding, I passed away into nothing. And I was wrapped in the black brilliance of my Lord, that interpenetrated me in every part, fusing its light with my darkness, and leaving there no darkness, but pure light.

“Also I beheld my Lord in a figure and I felt the interior trembling kindle itself into a Kiss — and I perceived the true Sacraments — and I beheld in one moment all the mystic visions in one; and the Holy Graal appeared unto me, and many other inexpressable things were known of me.

“Also, I was given to enjoy the subtle presence of my Lord interiorly during the whole of this twelfth day.

“Then I besought the Lord that He would take me into His presence eternally even now.

“But he withdrew Himself, for that I must do that which I was sent hither to do ... And the Light and the Perfume do certainly yet remain with me in the little Chamber, and I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. . .

“The clock of the Senate strikes; and my ears are ravished with its mysterious melody. It is the Infinite interior movement of things, secured by the co-extension of their sum with the all, that transcends the deadly opposites; change which implies decay, stability which spells monotony.

“I understand all the Psalms of Benediction; there is spontaneous praise, a fountain in my heart. The authors of the Psalms must have known something of this Illumination when they wrote them . . . My soul is singing . . . My soul is singing!”

In attempting to make the above paean rational even to a mild degree, we could fall back on *Science and Buddhism*, an essay which he wrote about 1903, not too long after he had experienced his first Dhyana following intense Yoga practice. In this essay, he wrote:

“Suppose, however, a dream so vivid that the whole waking man is abased before its memory, that his consciousness of it appears a thousand times more real than that of the things about him; suppose that his whole life is moulded to fit the new facts thus revealed to him; that he

would cheerfully renounce years of normal life to obtain minutes of that dream-life; that his time sense is uprooted as never before, and that these influences are permanent. Then you will say, delirium tremens (and the intoxication of hashish, in respect more particularly of the time sense) afford us a parallel. But the phenomena of delirium tremens do not occur in the healthy. As for the suggestion of auto-hypnosis, the memory of the 'dream' is a sufficient reply. However this may be, the simple fact of the superior apparent reality — a conviction unshakable, *inépuisable* (for the English has no word) is a sufficient test. And if we condescend to argue, it is for pleasure, and aside from the vital fact; a skirmish, and not a pitched battle.

“The 'dream' I have described is the state called Dhyana by the Hindus and Buddhists. The method of attaining it is sane, healthy, and scientific . . . It is simple. The mind is compelled to fix its attention on a single thought; while the controlling power is exercised and a profound watchfulness kept up lest the thought should for a moment stray.”

Or, he could avoid any one of the above postures with the utmost ease, to employ a more sceptical philosophical position, as indicated, for example, in his earliest book on Yoga, *Part I of Book IV*.

“In the course of our concentration we noticed that the contents of the mind at any moment consisted of two things, and no more; the Object, variable, and the Subject, invariable, or apparently so. By success in Dharana the object has been made as invariable as the subject.

“*Now the result of this is that the two become one.* This phenomenon usually comes as a tremendous shock. It is indescribable even by the master of language; and it is therefore not surprising that semi-educated stutterers wallow in oceans of gush.

“All the poetic faculties and all the emotional faculties are

thrown into a sort of ecstasy by an occurrence which overthrows the mind, and makes the rest of life seem absolutely worthless in comparison . . . *Even when one has become accustomed to Dhyana by constant repetition, no words seem adequate . . . The most important factor in Dhyana is, however, the annihilation of the Ego.* Our conception of the universe must be completely overturned if we are to admit this as valid; and it is time that we considered what is really happening . . . *The man who has experienced any of the more intense forms of Dhyana is thus liberated. The Universe is thus destroyed for him, and he for it. His will can therefore go on its way unhampered . . .* A most astounding phenomenon has happened to us; we have had an experience which makes love, fame, rank, ambition, wealth, look like thirty cents; and we begin to wonder passionately, 'What is truth?' The Universe has tumbled about our ears like a house of cards and we have tumbled too. Yet this ruin is like the opening of the Gates of Heaven!"

In *A History of Zen Buddhism* by Heinrich Dumoulin, S.J., there is an account of the "Great Dying" which, in its own non-theistic way, would have been altogether accepted by Crowley, since it corresponded to one of his own mystical experiences during the walk across the Southern borders of China, near Vietnam, in the year 1906:

"If you wish to attain the true Nonego," says a monk Hakuin in that history, "you must release your hold over the abyss. If thereafter you revive you will come upon the true ego of the four virtues. What does it mean to release one's hold over the abyss? A man went astray and arrived at a spot which had never been trodden by the foot of man. Before him there yawned a bottomless chasm. His feet stood on the slippery moss of a rock and no secure foothold appeared around him. He could step neither forward nor backward. Only death awaited him. The vine which he grasped with his left hand and

the tendril which he held with his right hand could offer him little help. His life hung as by a single thread. Were he to release both hands at once, his dry bones would come to nought.

“Thus it is with the Zen disciple. By pursuing a single Koan he comes to a point where his mind is as if dead and his will as if extinguished. This state is like a wide void over a deep chasm and no hold remains for hand or foot. All thoughts vanish and in his bosom burns hot anxiety. But then suddenly it occurs that with the koan both body and mind break. This is the instance when the hands are released over the abyss. In this sudden upsurge it is as if one drinks water and knows for oneself heat and cold. Great joy wells up. This is called rebirth (in the Pure Land). This is termed seeing into one's own nature. Everything depends on pushing forward and not doubting that with the help of this concentration one will eventually penetrate to the ground of one's own nature.”

In *The Psychology of Hashish*, reprinted herewith, Crowley had much more to say concerning the fundamental criteria of the mystical experience, which is worth quoting:

“It may be useful here to distinguish once and for all between false and real mystical phenomena; for in the previous sections we have spoken of both without distinction. In the 'astral visions' the consciousness is hardly disturbed; in magical evocations it is intensely exalted; but it is still bound by its original conditions. The Ego is still opposed to the non-Ego; time is, if altered in rate, still there; so, too, is Space, the sort of Space we are all conscious of. Again, the phenomena observed follow the usual laws of growth and decay.

“But all true mystical phenomena contradict these conditions.

“In the first place, the Ego and non-Ego unite explosively, their product having none of the qualities of either. It is precisely such a phenomenon as the direct combination of

Hydrogen and Chlorine. The first thing observed is the flash; in our analogy, the ecstasy or ananda (bliss) attending the Dhyana. And as this flash does not aid us to analyse the Hydrochloric acid gas, so the Ananda prevents us by startling us from perceiving the true nature of the phenomenon. In higher mystical states, then, we find that the Yogi or Magician has learnt how to suppress it.

“But the combination of the elements will usually be a definite single act of a catastrophic energy . . . The new consciousness resulting from the combination is, too, always a simple one.”

## VI

What is so important about these psychedelic drugs that we should give attention to them? Or devote time to what Crowley had to say years ago about them? Perhaps the most convenient answer to this question is to be found in a few statements made by some of the con-temporaries named above.

In an essay entitled "Culture and the Individual" Aldous Huxley wrote emphatically:

"Unprecedentedly rapid technological and demographic changes are steadily increasing the dangers by which we are surrounded, and at the same time are steadily diminishing the relevance of the traditional feeling-and-behavior patterns imposed upon all individuals, rulers and ruled alike, by their culture. Always desirable, widespread training in the art of cutting holes in cultural fences is now the most urgent of necessities. Can such a training be speeded up and made more effective by a judicious use of the physically harmless psychedelics now available? On the basis of personal experience and the published evidence, I believe it can. In my Utopian fantasy, *Island*, I speculated in fictional terms about the ways in which a substance akin to psilocybin could be used to potentiate the non-verbal education of adolescents and to remind adults that the real world is very different from the misshapen universe they have created for themselves by means of their culture-conditioned prejudices." And at this point, Huxley replied to some of his critical reviewers with rather deadly humor: "Having Fun with Fungi' — that was how one waggish reviewer dismissed the matter. But which is better; to have Fun with Fungi or to have Idiocy with Ideology, to have Wars because of Words, to have Tomorrow's Misdeeds out of Yesterday's Miscreeds?"

Then there is the significant passage in Alan Watts' book

### *The Joyous Cosmology.*

“The reaction of most cultured people to the idea of gaining any deep psychological or philosophical insight through a drug is that it is much too simple, too artificial, and even too banal to be seriously considered. A wisdom which can be 'turned on' like the switch of a lamp seems to insult human dignity and degrade us to chemical automatons. One calls to mind pictures of a brave new world in which there is a class of synthesized Buddhas, of people who have been 'fixed' like the lobotomized, the sterilized, or the hypnotized, only in another direction . . .”

Whether the diehards and arch-conservatives of religious mysticism will like it or not, he proceeds to say:

“Despite the widespread and indiscriminating prejudice against drugs as such, and despite the claims of certain religious disciplines to be the sole means to genuine mystical insight, I can find no essential difference between the experiences induced, under favorable conditions, by these chemicals and the states of 'cosmic consciousness' recorded by R. M. Bucke, William James, Evelyn Underhill, Raynor Johnson and other investigators of mysticism . . .”

And finally, there is the clear, precise, and unequivocal testimony of Dr. Timothy Leary in his address “LSD — The Consciousness Expanding Drug”:

“The non-game visionary experiences are, I submit, the key to behavior change — drug induced *satori*. In three hours under the right circumstances the cortex can be cleared. The games that frustrate and torment can be seen in the cosmic dimension. But the West has no ritual, no game to handle the CE (consciousness-expansion) drug experience. In the absence of relevant rituals we can only impose our familiar games, the politics of the nervous system, the mind controlling the brain . .

“There are many methods for expanding consciousness

beyond the game limits . . . Physical traumas can do it. Electrical shock. Extreme fatigue. Live in another and very different culture for a year where your roles and rituals and language just don't mean a thing. Or separate yourself from the game pressure by institutional withdrawal. Live for a while in a monastic cell. Or marry a Russian. Sensory deprivation does it ... The most efficient way to cut through the game structure of Western life is the use of drugs, consciousness-expanding drugs . . .” In order to arrive at any appreciation of the intrinsic worth of Crowley's essay *The Herb Dangerous*, the reader preferably should have had some type of “peak” or psychedelic experience himself. Only in this way, could he arrive at a sympathetic understanding of what Crowley, as well as our contemporaries, are trying to tell us. Failing that, then at the very least, he should be familiar with a few of what we can already call the classics of this new and ever-expanding literature.

For example, I would strongly recommend the following:

*Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* — A. H.

Maslow

*Varieties of Religious Experience* — William James

*Doors of Perception* — Aldous Huxley

*Drugs and Mind* — Dr. Robert S. de Ropp

*LSD — The Consciousness-Expanding Drug* — edited

by David Solomon

*The Joyous Cosmology* — Alan Watts

*My Self and I* — Constance A. Newland

*The Beyond Within* — Sidney Cohen, M.D.

The entire topic of drug experimentation for psychedelic ends is dealt with in these books from various points of view. Some writers are wholly in favor of the wide employment of the new chemicals which include not merely lysergic acid, but mescaline, psilocybin and several other more recently synthesized ones. Most of the authors take a firm stand against

any usage of the drugs outside of medically controlled institutions and research centers. A few others are more cautious — steering a mid-course between Scylla and Charybdis, A bird's eye view of the whole field and of current attitudes towards the consciousness-expanding drugs can, however, be thus obtained.

Dr. Sidney Cohen, in the book mentioned above, is very rational, avoiding the total condemnation of lysergic acid as do many of his medical colleagues, as well as the over-enthusiastic acceptance of it *a la* Leary *et al.* He attempts to differentiate the “drug-induced *satori*” from both sanity and insanity by coining a new word “unsanity,” which will do for the time being. His thorough-going rational attitude is expressed in this passage from his book:

“Some of us quite understandably seek out the spiritual value of Rousseau's return to nature — with drugs if necessary. The answers are simple and at hand. All one needs is the faith to believe the mystic.

“Few are willing to accept the alternative. The alternative is the recognition that we are an evolving species and that Final Truths are not discernable at this phase of our development. We must be satisfied with a willingness either to accept truths as sufficient to the day, or (and this is more difficult) to contemplate the questions without accepting answers.”

I am quite certain that Crowley would have agreed with this sceptical viewpoint. But he would have added, on the basis of his own practical work with the mystical disciplines that “There is only one rock which Sceptics cannot shake; the Rock of Experience.” And it was upon this rock that he built his edifice.

In addition to the above list, there is one other book I should like to wholeheartedly recommend — *The Psychedelic Experience* by Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert, et al I mention it apart from the others because it is the only single text which

approximates, albeit distantly, the hashish essays of Crowley. The *Psychedelic Experience* is a do-it-yourself manual, predicated on the use of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* edited by Dr. W. Y. Evans Wentz, as a psychopompic guide to the transcendental experience.

The authors deserve enormous commendation and great credit for the degree of insight and understanding evinced in this truly magnificent text — something quite novel and unique in our culture. Were Crowley alive today and familiar with this work, I am altogether confident that he would have immediately written a “rave” review of it in one of his *Equinox* publications. At the same moment of giving praise, he might also have directed attention to his own personal drug investigation, to the degree of excellence of his manifold instructions in the arts of meditation, magic, and tantra, and to an early attempt on his part at analysis of the specific effects of hashish. And for this, some would have called him egotistical.

Once having read some of the above-named books, I recommend turning to the second of the four essays of *The Herb Dangerous* by Oliver Haddo, published here, remembering that it was written fifty years ago. However, much of it is timeless. It may help to give form and direction to contemporary efforts to measure the extent and depth and action of the current psychedelic agents.

If I have repeated the claim that Crowley had the edge over most of our present-day researchers, it is primarily because we must do something to restore the historical balance, and to provide this generation with clear signposts and markers.

“Scientific Illuminism” was the phrase stamped on the front cover of every issue of *The Equinox* from 1909 to 1914. Accompanying this phrase were two others: “The Aim of Religion. The Method of Science.” At various times, Crowley was called upon to elaborate what he meant by these phrases.

Perhaps the best exposition is to be found in an Editorial he wrote for one of the issues of *The Equinox*:

“1. We perceive in the sensible world, Sorrow. Ultimately that is: we admit the Existence of a problem requiring Solution.

“2. We accept the proofs of Hume, Kant, Herbert Spencer, Fuller, and others of this thesis:

“The Ratiocinative Faculty or Reason of Man contains in its essential nature an element of self-contradiction.

“3. Following on this, we say:

“If any resolution there be of these two problems, the Vanity of Life and the Vanity of Thought, it must be in the attainment of a Consciousness which transcends both of them. Let us call this super-normal consciousness, or for want of a better name, 'Spiritual Experience.'

“4. Faith has been proposed as a remedy. But we perceive many incompatible forms of Faith founded on Authority — The Vedas, The Quran, The Bible; Buddha, Christ, Joseph Smith. To choose between them we must resort to reason, already shown to be a fallacious guide.

“5. There is only one rock which Scepticism cannot shake; the Rock of Experience.

“6. We have therefore endeavored to eliminate from the conditions of acquiring Spiritual Experience its dogmatic, theological, accidental, climatic and other inessential elements.

“7. We require the employment of a strictly scientific method. The mind of the seeker must be unbiased; all prejudice and other sources of error must be perceived as such and extirpated.

“8. We have therefore devised a Syncretistic-Eclectic Method combining the essentials of all methods, rejecting all their trammels, to attack the Problem, through exact experiments and not by guesses.

“9. For each pupil we recommend a different method (in

detail) suited to his needs; just as a physician prescribes the medicine proper to each particular patient.

“10. We further believe that the Consummation of Spiritual Experience is reflected into the spheres of intellect and action as Genius, so that by taking an ordinary man we can by training produce a Master.

“This Thesis requires proof; we hope to supply such proof by producing Genius to order.”

Corroboration is still necessary: but it is not entirely outside the bounds of possibility. It seems to me that the day is at hand when Crowley and what he stood for should obtain some tardy recognition. For entirely too long a period of time has this man been maligned and villified on the most stupid or invalid grounds — grounds today which would hardly be justified by the ordinary intelligent person. This has resulted in the by-passing of his considerable accomplishments in the realm of mysticism. It has resulted in our ignoring his rude exposure of the psycho-social booby-traps into which we have aimlessly wandered, as though he had never put them on record. We are the losers thereby.

What were his qualifications? Some of these have already been delineated. In addition, he had received a fine classical and scientific education at Cambridge. Further, in his mountaineering exploits in Scotland, the Swiss Alps and the Himalayas, he had demonstrated a peculiar kind of what some considered to be a foolhardy courage accompanied by a special type of caution, both of which characteristics were especially useful when he came to tackle the problem of the psychedelic drugs. This was also depicted in his usually solitary walks across Spain in 1908 when this sort of thing was hardly popular, and across the northern boundaries of the Sahara Desert and Algeria in 1909 as well as many times later, climbing several of the extinct volcanoes in Mexico, and hiking across the lower borders of China adjoining Vietnam with a wife and

child. All this was done during a period of early twentieth century history which was not in the least bit as safe — transportation wise — as it is today. Topping these accomplishments, he was a superb prose writer as these and other essays indicate, and a fine lyrical poet.

Furthermore, and this is by far and away the most important consideration here, Crowley was an experimental mystic of the highest magnitude. He had practiced yoga and magical techniques assiduously for many years until he had achieved a thorough-going mastery over both Eastern and Western methods. All of these rare skills were eventually brought to bear on his experimentation with a variety of drugs. These essays bear witness to, and provide massive evidence of, his objective and scientific attitude to the whole process. For instance:

“One single trained observer with five years' work, less money than would build a bakehouse, and no more help than his dozen of volunteer students could give him, would earn himself a fame loftier than the stars, and set mankind on the royal road to the solution of the One great problem. Scientific Illuminism would have deserved its name, or mysticism would have received a blow which would save another young fool like myself from wasting his whole life on so senseless a study and enable him to engage in the nobler career of cheating and duping his fellows in the accredited spheres of commerce and politics, to say nothing of the grosser knaveries of the liberal professions.

“But I have no doubts. Let the investigator study his own brain on the lines I have laid down, possibly in the first place with the aid of hashish or some better physical expedient to overcome the dull scepticism which is begotten of idleness upon ignorance; it is useless to study the no-brain of another, on the strength of a reputation for fraud, as the spiritualism investigators seem to do. Your own brain is the best; next, the

trained and vigorous brains of clever and educated men, in perfect health, honest and wary.”

This, I think, will demonstrate clearly and adequately some of the motives Crowley had in writing about his experiences with hashish.

## VII

An enormous bibliography relative to lysergic acid is in process of creation. Various of the authors contributing to the Solomons' book, for example, list as many as seventy odd titles. These include books, papers, essays, articles, etc. However, McGlothlin\* in his essay on the subject, declares that since the discovery of its manifold psychic effects in the year 1943, more than 700 papers have been published on lysergic acid.

This unusually wide interest was at first stimulated by hopes within the psychiatric field of producing a model schizophrenia which could be helpful in the study of the commonly occurring mental illnesses. This anticipation was subsequently abandoned when it was found that there were enormous differences between the two psychic states. In place, however, of the hope of a model psychosis, there have developed techniques of employing the drug as an aid to the psychotherapy of the more intractable psychoneuroses. There is evidence that success is being achieved in this direction. Constance Newland's book *My Self and I* is one particular indication of what has been attempted here.

In my own case, the psychedelics were responsible not only for several shaking peak-experiences, but even more important, as the "thrill" of unfamiliarity wore off, some profound insights that had altogether eluded me despite many years of intensive depth therapy. If for no other reason than this, there is great value in these chemical agents. Nor am I alone in this realization. Several psychologists of the various analytical schools have had similar revealing experiences, though because of the current legal situation, some are not

---

\* *Long-lasting Effects of LSD on Certain Attitudes in Normals.* An Experimental Proposal William H. McGlothlin, the Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, California, 1962.

willing to expose themselves to punitive social action by declaring this fact and placing their own experience on record.

Rather more conclusive than this, however, has been the discovery that alcoholism is by far the most common pathology to respond favorably to the drug. The Canadian psychiatrists were, I believe, among the first to perceive this fact and to experiment with the drug with satisfactory results. Several reports have been written, sparked by Humphrey Osmond, D.P.M.

But what has actually triggered the vast public interest in lysergic acid was the discovery that (a) intense pleasurable feelings were stimulated and released during the drug experience, and that (b) transcendental mystical states were simulated.

The first reaction has led to the beatnik involvement on the University campus and elsewhere, with massive bootlegging of the drug for use, unfortunately by pubescents and early adolescents. These people have no earthly justification for such experimentation — not at least until they have established themselves in some kind of solid involvement in the socio-economic order in which they find themselves. Otherwise, it is neurotic escape, pure and simple, as well as the expression of their revolt against family and society.

Youngsters have the right to rebel against the established order of things. Theirs is not only the right to rebel, but rebellion is inherent in their very structure. To the adolescent, society is hopelessly bogged down in a worn-out set of useless attitudes, activities, and institutions. None of them seems to appeal overmuch to the adolescent of today.

Given the passage of two decades, and imperceptibly these people will have become part of the social order against which previously they had rebelled. It has changed because of their earlier non-conformity, yet curiously it remains the same. And then it may seem to them that despite all the criticisms

legitimately to be made, there are phases of society that persist because of their survival value. This being so, we should permit and even encourage the younger person in his growth and rebellion, but we must nonetheless guard him against possible damage to his own personal usefulness later on.

I suggest the rebel would do better in his rebellion against society by burrowing from within. Acquire all the "tools" society has to offer, and then, in the process of adaptation, employ these tools to modify or destroy what is meaningless or useless in society. But to use the psychedelics as a means of rebelling, of undercutting society, is hardly the most intelligent use of the psychedelic drugs. To "drop out" of the struggle for existence is idiocy of the most grotesque kind.

The use of lysergic acid, or any other hallucinogenic agent, merely for "kicks", as has been suggested as the freest, most spontaneous attitude for experimentation, sounds far too much like the irresponsible attitude of some present-day high school kids. One's first and immediate reaction is purely negative. It would seem to constitute an abuse of the drug.

Yet, alcohol is used for this purpose today. For the most part, it is a socially acceptable drug, and despite some national concern about alcoholism, not too very much is made of this disease, for so it has come to be currently considered — or when the ordinarily sober person goes off on an occasional "bender" at a party.

Conventional society provides many avenues to the average man and woman for "kicks." Driving a car is commonly used for this purpose quite apart from the prosaic notion of transportation. The price in deaths on the highway runs to staggeringly high figures.

Business activity may be used not merely to provide for the exchange of goods and services, but it is often used as a means of getting a "kick" out of life. It is not altogether condemned for that purpose — even though the price

frequently paid is coronary disease and the gastric ulcer.

Many responsible physicians have called frequent attention to some of the adverse sequellae of the psychedelic drugs. Suicides, depressed and anxious reactions, psychotic breakdowns and neurotic exacerbations are amongst these side effects. The toll amongst neurotic adolescents is undeniably heavy. The use of lysergic acid is not altogether without serious dangers, and some unwise people are bound to suffer irrevocably. To deny this is to put blinkers in front of one's eyes and demonstrate a high degree of personal and social irresponsibility.

There is a price to be paid for the use of drugs — though this need not be necessarily a major and over-riding objection. It is simply a factor to be recognized.

It should certainly not be toyed with by him who runs and reads. It needs to be administered by experts trained in the use of drugs — preferably by a sympathetic psychiatrist and attended by a psychologist or some other person really experienced in the role and duties of a “psycho-pomp.” Admittedly, there are some lay people who have acquired extensive experience in the art of “psychedelic baby-sitting.” But things being what they are, and the legal and medical situation as it is, the experimenter needs to be watched during and after the “trip” by competent and professional people.

It is no use denying, as some foolishly have done, that there have been mishaps following upon the ingestion of lysergic acid. Aspirin, for example, sometimes causes fatality, and so has penicillin — and many another useful drug. The better part of wisdom and valor would dictate that due acknowledgement be made of this fact, and be guided accordingly. But the fact that accidents do occur and will surely continue to occur, is of itself not sufficient an argument to warrant the discontinuance of lysergic acid. It is going to be used legitimately or otherwise, legally or illicitly. But those

who are ill-advised to use it illicitly, and without proper guidance, have only themselves to blame if they come to harm.

“The grounds for any possible suppression of these medicines are almost entirely superstitious.” So wrote Alan Watts. “There is no evidence for their being as deleterious as alcohol or tobacco, nor indeed, for their being harmful in any way except when used in improper circumstances, or, perhaps, with psychotic subjects. They are considerably less dangerous than many of the ordinary contents of the family medicine cupboard or kitchen closet . . . Speaking quite strictly, mystical insight is no more in the chemical than biological knowledge is in the microscope.”

It is worth while taking note of a set of observations made by Crowley in the twenties, when much of his most mature writing was done:

“Intoxication, that is, ecstasy, is the Key to Reality . . . Religious ecstasy is necessary to man's soul. Where this is attained by mystical practices, directly, as it should be, people need no substitutes. Thus the Hindus remain contentedly sober, and care nothing for the series of invaders who have occupied their country from time to time and governed them. But where the only means of obtaining this ecstasy, or a simulacrum of it, known to the people is alcohol, they must have alcohol. Deprive them of wine, or beer, or whatever their natural drink may be, and they replace it by morphia, cocaine, or something easier to conceal, and to take without detection.

“Stop that, and it is Revolution. As long as man can get rid of his surplus Energy in enjoyment, he finds life easy and submits. Deprive him of Pleasure, or Ecstasy, and his mind begins to worry about the way in which he is exploited and oppressed. Very soon he begins furtively to throw bombs; and, gathering strength, to send his tyrants to the gallows.”

So appropriate do these warnings appear, that my mind harks back automatically to the grim era of the Volstead Act —

During the 1920's in the United States, millions of otherwise decent and law-abiding citizens went out of their way to show their utter contempt for the Prohibition legislation. Even those who, previously, had used little or no alcoholic beverages found themselves drawn willy-nilly into this maelstrom of law-defiance. The Federal agencies set up to enforce the observance of the law discovered an obstinate confrontation by a wilful and determined citizenry aided and abetted unfortunately by gangster elements which had found the brewing, distillation and distribution of intoxicating drinks far more lucrative than a gold-mine.

Eventually the Act had to be repealed. But it was only after heaven alone knows how many peoples' health had suffered from drinking bootlegged whiskey and other drinks, and vast wealth had been squandered fruitlessly in both breaking and enforcing an unpopular law. Furthermore, it inaugurated a period when respect for the law fell to an all-time low, and I do not think we have yet fully recovered. This is the anarchy Crowley seems to refer to above.

Something similar is about to occur on a contemporary basis. Regardless of a few unverified scientific findings about the danger to body and mind involved in the use of the psychedelic drugs, too vast an impact has been made on all levels of society for an easy halt to be engineered. If laws must be passed, then they should be oriented primarily for the protection of the minor - certainly not to deprive the so-called adult population of satisfactory emotional outlets through means which possess but little danger. If this is not respected, the lawlessness of the 20's may be experienced by a new generation.

Random reports indicate that over one million adults have to-date experienced the psychedelic drugs, including scores or more of medical doctors and psychotherapists. Many priests and ministers have affirmed the experience as profoundly

religious or transcendental. For them, faith has been replaced by personal experience.

This other reaction (b) has engaged the attention of some of the finest speculative minds that our generation has seen — from Aldous Huxley and Alan Watts to Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary.

Since the latter two psychologists were expelled in controversy from Harvard — intense public interest has revolved about all their activities. They have written and lectured widely on the subject, whipping the already deep interest in lysergic acid into a national preoccupation. So vast has the latter become that several states have legislated against the possession of the hallucinogenic drugs, though the Federal government cautiously has held hearings concerning the advisability of so doing. The last word has not yet been said, of this I am quite certain. We are too close to what is happening. But if I may be permitted to hazard a guess, I would suggest that the above writers may yet go down in psycho-religious history as outstanding figures who have been instrumental in transforming current, dead religious attitudes into vital mystical experience. This could result, on the one hand, in increased membership in the several religious institutions in the country — for which I am quite certain the churches will never express appreciation — and in a revived experimental attitude towards the whole topic of mysticism which has never been equalled before in the known history of mankind. In any event, the latter will leaven the public religions, and transform them. The result of all this may prove to be the final vindication of Aleister Crowley, and of what he came to call his system of “Scientific Illuminism.”

A half a century has elapsed since he coined this phrase. Today, only a few people are in the least bit aware of the superb analytical writing produced by Crowley. With lysergic acid practically a byword on so many lips, and when so much

excellent writing pro and con has appeared, it seems to me imperative to revive the original study by Crowley. He had so much to say in this connection and he has said it very well. Moreover, because of his training, experience, and mystical accomplishments, he was in a far better position to articulate what he did than most of our contemporaries. This is hardly to decry our present-day writers. They have done, on the positive side of the ledger, a yeoman job to indicate that the prudent use of psychedelic drugs may vastly expand the limited horizon of the human mind.

## VIII

One of the several sticks with which Crowley was attacked by his contemporaries was the sexual one. Crowley had developed his own ideas about sex and sexual mores which he was not in the least bashful or reticent in talking about. He wrote them prolifically for anybody who could read. They were to the effect that the social and moral inhibitions and restrictions of his day were a crime against nature for which a severe toll would be exacted. Not wholly unlike *Playboy's* philosophy of sex, for which Heffner has been widely extolled and abused, they were far ahead of his time.

Crowley was a bit scattered. That is to say, much of his thinking, precise and beautifully expressed though it may have been, is diffused throughout many volumes. He was never really able to elaborate his lifetime philosophy in a single clear volume. Though he did attempt this, it was in symbolic and poetic language, occasionally in archaic literary styles, so that it missed its purpose of common elucidation for the public almost wholly.

For example, he meant *Liber Aleph* or *The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, written possibly in 1917-18 and published posthumously by his disciples, to be a mature statement of his final philosophy and attitude towards those matters, including sex, which had preoccupied him all his life. But the book was couched in an archaic form which undoubtedly required enormous skill and concentration to write on his part. Reading it for most people is not calculated to win him ardent disciples nor to favorably influence his enemies. Following after the short paragraph opening this Introduction there is another, continuing the same theme:

“But I make Effort in vain, O my Son, to record this Matter in Detail; for it is the Quality of this Grass to Quicken the Operation of Thought it may be a Thousandfold, and

moreover to figure each Step in Images complex and overpowering in Beauty, so that one hath not Time wherein to conceive, much less to utter, any Word for a Name of any one of them.”

I have stated that his liberal attitudes relative to sex are not unlike those of Heffner as published in *Playboy*. But this is not all. He meaningfully related sex to mysticism, arguing that the ecstasy of one was not too dissimilar to the ecstasy of the other, and that one could be causally connected to the other. He once wrote, simply and sincerely: “When you have proved that God is merely a name for the sex instinct, it appears to me not far to the perception that the sex instinct is God.”

On the basis of his wide world travel, with its undoubted vast opportunity for sexual experience and experiment, he wrote some technical instructions on rendering this relationship effective. They became part and parcel of the particular mystico-magical philosophy that he came to elaborate — piecemeal, for it took many years for his experience to fill in many theoretical gaps in what he was originally taught. This may be one of the several reasons why so many of them are couched in symbolic form, a form from which many people have retreated — defeated. But there is really little need for retreat or defeat. A little meditation, a little illumination (with or without psychedelics) and the door swings wide open to reveal an ineffable brilliance.

I was therefore excited when I read in the September, 1966 issue of *Playboy* an interview with Timothy Leary. It almost seemed to me a flashback to fifty years ago — with Crowley being interviewed, but this time in a sympathetic environment, not by a group of stupid, hostile reporters who wrote for John Bull and the sensation-mongering group of newspapers owned by Lord Beaverbrook.

For example, Leary has stated in that interview: “The sexual impact is, of course, the open hut private secret about

LSD, which none of us has talked about in the last few years. It's socially dangerous enough to say that LSD helps you find divinity and helps you discover yourself. You're already in trouble when you say that. But then if you announce that the psychedelic experience is basically a *sexual* experience, you're asking to bring the whole middle-aged, middle-class monolith down on your head . . . The sexual ecstasy is the basic reason for the current LSD boom. When Dr. Goddard, the head of the Food and Drug Administration, announced in a Senate hearing that ten percent of our college students are taking LSD, did you ever wonder why? Sure, they're discovering God and meaning; sure, they're discovering themselves; but did you really think that sex wasn't the fundamental reason for this surging youthful social boom? You can no more do research on LSD and leave out sexual ecstasy than you can do microscopic research on tissue and leave out cells . . . The LSD session, you see, is an overwhelming awakening of experience; it releases potent, primal energies, and one of these is the sexual impulse, which is the strongest impulse at any level of organic life . . .”

Even a hasty perusal of Crowley's literary output will reveal similar notions, preoccupations and conclusions. But he carried them far beyond this simple theme to the experience of the identity of God and sexual ecstasy.

## IX

At the time when Crowley wrote about these topics, the legal situation was far different from now. At that time, many of the then-known hallucinogenic drugs could be purchased without too much difficulty in the open market — from the nearest pharmacy. Earlier, de Quincy had described this open situation at some length in his *Confessions of An English Opium Eater*. Nowadays, all of this has changed. Some of these drugs are not even available to a licensed physician. Only an occasional clinic or institute devoted to research is able to obtain, for example, lysergic acid.

That there is an extensive black market in lysergic acid and marihuana is well-known. I have heard that in Northern California there is such an open black market that it is possible to place an order for lysergic acid and get a dozen capsules — each of three hundred micrograms — within a half an hour. However, there are stringent laws against possession and disposing of these psychedelic drugs. *Caveat emptor!*

Sooner or later the question is going to be raised “Where then do we get these psychedelic drugs?” I am quite sure that someone is going to write me a letter, assuming that I possess some and am willing to distribute some, and so ask for several doses.

At the outset, therefore, *let me state unequivocally that I have none of these psychedelic drugs and have no access to them.* My personal experiences with lysergic acid date back some years when I participated, gratefully, in a research project with a local psychiatrist. At that time I took four "trips" which I count among the most valuable and memorable experiences of a lifetime. *But I am not now a source for the psychedelics nor have I ever been.*

What then, can I recommend the reader, knowing that most of these research projects have been cut back? Black market?

Hardly. That is certainly not the best solution to the problem of need. When Leary was asked this question in the *Playboy* interview, he answered rather cautiously: "LSD is against the law, and I certainly would not advise anyone to violate the law. I will say this, however: Throughout human history, men who have wanted to expand their consciousness, to find deeper meaning inside themselves, have been able to do it if they were willing to commit the time and energy to do so. In other times and countries, men would walk barefooted 2000 miles to find spiritual teachers who would turn them on to Buddha, Mohammed or Ramakrishna."

Apart from all legal considerations, there is the ever-present doubt of the essential purity of the black-market product. More likely than not, it is bound to have been adulterated for possible financial gain, now that the criminal syndicates have seen an opening for vast profits. And what effect on health and other factors the possible adulteration may have can be left to anyone's imagination.

About the only thing that can be safely recommended today is wide inquiry relative to research enterprises. The Veterans Administration in its various facilities all over the country is forever experimenting and conducting research and investigation of the value of this and many another drug. It could be contacted with a view to ascertaining if volunteers are needed. The agency of the Armed Services that always conducts experiments in chemical agents for war purposes and for defense against attack may also require volunteers. It is possible, however, that such volunteers are mainly recruited from duly enlisted members of the various branches of the Armed Services. Mental hospitals in the various states of this country likewise may be engaged in research programs where this and similar psychedelic drugs are investigated. The hospitals connected with many Universities are committed to research for which volunteers are always needed. It seems to

me, therefore, that in such medical facilities as those just described, lie the best possibilities for gaining legal access to experimentation with the psychedelic drugs.

Moreover, personal experimentation should be under expert supervision — and this I think is most important. Investigating the reactions of these psychedelic drugs without competent assistance is in my estimation stupidity of the most grotesque kind. On the other hand, evidence supports the idea that medical supervision is not necessarily the most advantageous kind of guidance. Perhaps in due course of time, the authorities who handle this research may come to realize, with Leary and Crowley and many others, that the best guide in this sense is the person who has been “there” several times himself. It may well be that as the more sensational type of publicity dies down, and a more serious attitude sets in, this counsel may come to be recognized. It may also transpire that other facilities will eventuate which may make it more possible for mature, intelligent, and progressive persons to partake of the benefits and advantages of the psychedelic experience.

In this connection, I must register parts of an interview with a relatively unknown Los Angeles poet, Charles Bukowski, in the Los Angeles Free Press, March 3, 1967, when he was asked his opinion about lysergic acid.

“I think that everything should be made available to everybody, and I mean LSD, cocaine, codeine, grass, opium, the works. Nothing on earth available to any man should be confiscated and made unlawful by other men in more seemingly powerful and advantageous positions . . . I grow tired of 18th century moralities in a 20th century space-atomic age. If I want to kill myself I feel that should be my business; if I want to get hooked on the mainline that should be my business. If I go out and hold up gas stations at night to pay for my supply it is because the law inflates a very cheap thing into an escalated war against my nerves and my soul. The law is

wrong: I am right.

“What more can you do with the dead than kill them? Look at our safe, undrugged populace now in the busses, at the sporting-events, in the supermarkets, and tell me if they are a pleasant sight. And why should the M.D.'s be the dolers out of goodies? Aren't they fat enough now? Wealthy enough? Spoiled enough? . . .

“My objection to the current LSD-craze-phase-blaze is that it has been taken over by the hippies, the swing-kitties, the dull-heads as a kind of private stomping ground, as a substitute for soul . . . Being unable to take the truth, being unable to face an honest mirror, they PLAY AT SOUL, at being IN, bop, boot, beard, beret, hip, opo, anything.' Long hair, short skirts, sandals, anything, psychedelic parties, paintings, music, psychedelic grapefruit, psychedelic guerrila frong, opo cups, shades, bikes, yogi, psychic lightsounds, disco, girls are Richards, fuzz now Soap, Kid Goldstein the super pop new boy, The Jefferson Airplane, Hell's Angels, anything, any damn thing to give them identity, to give them a facade of Being to Cover the Horrible Hole. Bob Dylan is their soul: 'Something's happening and you don't know what it is, do you Mr. Jones?'. . .

“Or a group of them get down on the floor in a circle and pass the grass and talk about Leary and the good old Left, talk about Andy Warhol, and how horrible the war in Vietnam is, and only a damn fool can hold a job, and who wants to drive? — walking is better. And somebody ought to shoot Johnson. And there are candles on the floor. And the boys are mother's boys, and the women are twice-married, twice-divorced, grey, bitter and in their mid-forties. Don't think! Freak-in. Freak-out. Lights, LSD. Leary, Guitars, Love . . .

“Not all their ideas are totally without merit but in the essence of all thinking alike on like subjects they cover the Horrible Hole, they imagine themselves objective, loveable human beings . . . But really they are one big shit-mind of jelly

grabbing at LSD like the Holy Cross and making me hate it because of their footprints, their mindprints are across my eyesight. Maybe when they move on to their next hype I will test a little acid. Until then, let them wallow in it until they get a pigbellyfull.”

This is almost like hearing the ghost of Crowley of forty years ago laughing ribaldry down the dark corridors of time.

## X

In the meantime, until some reliable and legitimate sources for the psychedelics are discovered, there is much that the proposed experimenter can do. No drug alone or psychospiritual technique can eradicate the basic insecurity that lurks in the depths of the human psyche. This fact has to be faced some time, and actually should be faced prior to any hallucinogenic excursion. It is for this and similar reasons that I have long insisted that the student of the Mysteries should precede his practical experiments with a more or less lengthy familiarity on the couch with one or the other forms of psychotherapy. Whether it is Freudian, Jungian, Reichian or any other variation of the basic psychoanalytic school makes little difference. The analytical experience will at least have brought the student in touch with aspects and functions and contents of his own psyche that he might otherwise have never known. Whether the neurotic problem is resolved by this process really becomes a secondary consideration. It is the honest attempt to come face to face with oneself which is paramount. Beyond all other things, it will also result in the exposure of any latent psychosis, and separate the frankly neurotic from outright psychotic person. The latter then should be sternly counselled never, under any circumstances, to touch the psychedelic drugs.

What I would be particularly interested in is a tentative marriage of the Reichian non-verbal system of vegeto-therapy with the occasional and judicious use of lysergic acid. The former system is dedicated to the dissolution of the neuromuscular character armor — a technical term indicating all the ego's defenses on both the psychic and muscular levels of function. Since one of the effects of lysergic acid is apparently to dissolve the fixed boundaries of the ego, it seems to me that the joint use of both would be synergistic. Each would facilitate

the efficacy of the other, pointing the way to the peak-experience. In this way, time and effort and money — all vital factors in psychotherapy — would be saved, no mean feat.

Psychotherapy will also have exposed the student to his own concealed inferiorities, insecurities, fears and doubts as nothing else will. When this has been accomplished, whatever subsequently may emerge during the psychedelic experience will hardly be as terrifying and overwhelming as the records indicate it has been for some.

According to Gerald Heard, the greater the ego — implying that purely unconscious fears and guilts have been compensated for by a hypertrophy, as it were, of the ego-function — the more severe will be the period of terror elicited by lysergic acid. Before the sublime moments and the ecstatic experience of expansion can come and go, the ego must give up and, willingly or not, dissolve. This is the traditional surrender of the ego before the “mystical marriage” can occur.

For those who resist ego-dissolving, this process, the temporary “dying” induced by the three little pillules of 150 micrograms of lysergic acid, can be a devilish experience. It is no wonder that the bibliographies refer to a certain small percentage going through psychotic episodes as a result of a trip with lysergic acid. Fortunately in my case, I had had years of psychotherapy prior to the first experience with the hallucinogens, so that I was spared this horror. But — according to Alan Harrington, who wrote “A Visit to Inner Space,” one of the essays collected by David Solomon in his book LSD — The Consciousness Expanding Drug, already referred to — he was so concerned with hanging on to himself that he missed initially a great deal of the beauty. Though he hastens to add that once the surrender was consummated, he ascended to “the top of the universe” like everybody else.

I shall never forget an occasion of several years ago when I ‘baby-sat’ for a colleague about to take his first “trip,” as part

of the psychiatric research project in which we had both participated. About an hour after ingesting the three tiny pills, he began to experience a mild chill, gentle at first, but growing in intensity until his teeth chattered furiously. From then on, until the end of the trip many hours later, he was afflicted by a host of severe gastro-intestinal symptoms, retching, vomiting and diarrhoea. The trip merely intensified his current neurotic symptoms. They were present before the trip, and no doubt are still active. He was truly a piteous sight. The drug had stripped him practically of all his protective armor — and his righteousness was as rags. From that day forward, he was intellectually opposed even to the possibility of lysergic acid being considered an adjunct or a catalytic agent in psychotherapy or research of any kind. He had had it!

It was not until long afterwards, during a reflection upon the psyche-delic agents together with the remark of Gerald Heard, and, meditation upon my own and other people's experiences, that I realized how valid the Heard judgement is. The colleague was really attempting to hang on to himself by the "skin of his teeth." In spite of all other appearances, he was terrified to let go of himself. For this role-playing, he paid a very high price — the extent of which even he had not and could not recognize at the time.

Mention must also be made at this time of the commonly asserted thesis that Mysticism is an escape and a substitute for sexually frustrated energies. One often hears people, without direct knowledge of either Mysticism or the psychedelic experience, refer to both of them as escapes. These are glib phrases, often used by writers in the popular press. Of course, this attitude expresses the conservative theme, usually being uttered either to maintain the status quo or to conceal their own fear and inner bankruptcy.

On the other hand, the indiscriminate use of the hallucinogens by adolescents certainly argues their

irresponsible substitution for life and living experience. A fantasy life, no matter how triggered, is a feeble substitute for reality, and no matter how ineffable the ecstasy, or vivid the imagery, or keen the senses during a “trip,” the ability to handle life, people and the world is bound inevitably to suffer. One pays a very high price, adaptation-wise for “escape.”

David Solomon, the editor of the collection of essays on lysergic acid previously referred to, in describing his own “trip” avers that the drug did induce a flight, but in this case a flight directly into reality. This was no escape in any literal or conventional sense of the word. He states that he had never before seen, or sensed in any way, a personal unity and involvement with the concrete material world which, under the impact of this sensory expansion, took on another meaning. His experience brought him to perceive that there is not a material world with enormous tones and overtones of which we are but rarely aware. His was no evasive flight from, but a deep probe, into reality. And — very much like Crowley fifty years before — he comments that his drug-accelerated mind did not merely grasp the symbolic poetic import, the utter simplicity and truth of Blake's ecstatic vision. For the first time in his life he literally saw “the world in a grain of sand.”

In conclusion, the final question asked by the interviewer of Leary in *Playboy* should be repeated: “How will this psychedelic regimen enrich human life?” Leary's answer, simple and eloquent, is one that Crowley also might have respected and approved of.

“It will enable each person to realize that he is not a game-playing robot put on this planet to be given a Social Security number and to be spun on the assembly line of school, career, insurance, funeral, goodbye. Through LSD, each human being will be taught to understand that the entire history of evolution is recorded inside his body; the challenge of the complete

human life will be for each person to recapitulate and experientially explore every aspect and vicissitude of this ancient and majestic wilderness. Each person will become his own Buddha, his own Einstein, his own Galileo. Instead of relying on canned, static, dead knowledge passed on from other symbol producers, he will be using his span of 80 or so years on this planet to live out every possibility of the human, prehuman and even subhuman adventure. As more respect and time are diverted to these explorations, he will be less hung upon trivial, external pastimes. And this may be the natural solution to the problem of leisure. When all of the heavy work and mental drudgery are taken over by machines, what are we going to do with ourselves — build even bigger machines? The obvious and only answer to this peculiar dilemma is that we are going to have to explore the infinity of inner space, to discover the terror and adventure and ecstasy that lie within us all.”

If man is to achieve inner peace, which could and must lead to world harmony, he must do so according to his own inner nature. This must be explored. Then he might become capable of achieving what he already is potentially. “Every man and every woman is a star.”

The process of self-realization releases the unifying energy needed for harmonious relationships with the world at large and all things and people therein. Beneath all our contemporary violence and sensationalism, a wave of the future is already in evidence. A momentum is being generated in the direction of aiding man to fulfill his deepest potentials. The peak experience — whether spontaneous or induced through the various methods briefly discussed in this essay — produces a release of energy from the unconscious parts of the psyche leading to the realization of these inherent possibilities.

This was Crowley's lifelong thesis; thus his insistence that the mystic state be studied by scientific men without prejudice and without further delay.

# THE HERB DANGEROUS

- I. The Pharmacy of Hashish. By E. WHINERAY, M.P.S.
- II. The Psychology of Hashish. With an attempt at a new classification of the mystic states of mind known to me, with a plea for Scientific Illuminism. By OLIVER HADDO.
- III. The Poem of Hashish. By CHARLES BAUDELAIRE. (Translated.)
- IV. Selections illustrating the Psychology of Hashish, from "The Hashish-Eater." By H. S. LUDLOW.



# A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY OF CANNABIS SATIVA

(BEING A COLLATION OF FACTS AS KNOWN  
AT THE PRESENT DATE)

CANNABIS INDICA was introduced into England by O'Shaughnessy, and the first extract was made by the late Mr. Peter Squire, the well-known pharmacist of Oxford Street. According to the "British Pharmacopeia" the official variety may consist of the flowering or fruiting tops; and is frequently of inferior quality, seeing that the fruiting tops yield less resin.

According to the "Journal" of the Chemical Society's Transactions, the important constituent is a resin. The active principle is stated to be a red oil, Cannabinol, which is liable to be come oxidised and inert.

Its medicinal properties are sedative, anodyne, hypnotic and antispasmodic. It has been used with success in migraine and delirium, neuralgia, pain of the last stages of phthisis and in acute mania, also in menorrhagia and dysmenorrhoea. ("Squire's Companion," Page 167, 1904 edition.)

It does not produce constipation or loss of appetite; on the contrary it restores the appetite which had been lost by chronic opium or chloral drinking. (1889, *Lancet*, vol. I. page 65.)

## THE EQUINOX

Dr. Martindale remarks that recently the Cannabis imported had more toxic effects than formerly (this in spite of the fact that a high export duty has been placed upon the drug); it has indeed been stated that toxic symptoms have been produced by doses of the extract within the official limits. According to the "British Pharmacopeia" the dose is  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 1 grain. The *Lancet* vol. i, page 1042 (1908), records two interesting cases of toxic symptoms caused by taking overdoses of the tincture.

Antidotes for Cannabis poisoning are the stomach-pump or emetics followed by stimulating draughts of brandy and water or strong coffee, vegetable acids, such as lemon juice or vinegar.

Dr. Robert Hooper in his "Lexicon Medicum" (page 315), published in 1848, says: "Cannabis Indica is a variety of hemp much used in the East as an excitant. The Hindoos call it *Bangue*, the Arabs *Hasheesh*, the Turks *Malach*."

"The leaves are chewed or smoked like those of tobacco and an intoxicating liquor is prepared from them. This plant is also used by the Hottentots who call it *Dacha*."

The following article by Mr. David Hooper, F.C.S., F.L.S. (Curator of the Botanical Gardens at Calcutta) read at the last meeting of the British Pharmaceutical Conference at Aberdeen, throws a certain amount of light on to the commercial side of the question. At the close of the discussion Mr. D. B. Dott, an eminent Scottish Pharmacist, remarked that Professor Stockman had refused to investigate the drug, as it was useless. Mr. Edmund White, Ph.C., considered that the deterioration of the drug was due to enzymes, and suggested careful storage to preclude enzymic activity.

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

### CHARAS OF INDIAN HEMP

BY DAVID HOOPER, F.C.S., F.L.S.

Although “charas” has been properly described as “a foul and crude drug, the use of which is properly excluded from civilised medicine,” it is imported into British India to the value of £120,000 per annum, a total exceeding the combined value of all the other medicinal imports, so that it is an article which deserves more than passing notice. Indian hemp (*Cannabis Sativa*), when grown in the East, secretes an intoxicating resinous matter on the upper leaves and flowering spikes, the exudation being marked in plants growing throughout the Western Himalayas and Turkestan, where charas is prepared as a commercial article. Formerly it was cultivated in fields in Turkestan, but now it is grown as a border around other crops (such as maize), the seeds of both being sown at the same time. A sticky exudation (white when damp and greyish when dry) is found on the upper parts of the plant before the flowers show, and in April and May, when the plants attain a height of 4 or 5 ft. and the seeds ripen, the *Cannabis* is gathered, after reaping the crops, and stored in a cool, dry place. When dry the powdery resinous substance can be detached by even slight shaking, the dust being collected on a cloth. In some districts the plants are cut close to the roots, suspended head downwards, and the dust or *gard* shaken from them and collected on sheets placed on the floor. The leaves, seeds, etc., are picked out, and sand, etc., separated by passing through a fine sieve, the powder being collected and stored in cloth or skin bags, when it is ready for export. In some villages the charas or

## THE EQUINOX

extract is made up into small balls, which are collected by the middleman.

On reaching British territory all charas is weighed before the nearest magistrate, by whom it is sealed, a certificate of weight swigned by the Deputy Commissioner being given to the owner. The trader, before leaving the district, obtains a permit allowing him to take the drug to a special market. The zamindars of Chinese Turkestan are the vendors of the drug, the importers being Yarkhandis or Ladakhis, who dispose of it at Hoshiapur and Amritsar principally, returning with piece-goods, or Amritsar merchants who trade with Ladakh. The drug in this way reaches the chief cities of the Punjab during September and October. Thence it is distributed over the Central and United Provinces as far as Bombay and Calcutta, and is used everywhere for smoking. Charas, though a drug, plays the part of money to a great extent in the trade that is carried on at Ladakh, the price of the drug depending on the state of the market, and any fluctuations causing a corresponding increase or decrease in the value of the goods for which it is bartered. The exchange price of charas thus gives rise to much gambling. A pony-load (two pais or three maunds) sells for Rs. 40 or Rs. 50, the cost of transport to Hoshiapur (the chief Punjab depot) is Rs. 100, and there it fetches from Rs. 30 to Rs. 100 per maund. Retail dealers sell small quantities at a price that works out at Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per maund. Five years ago the Kashgar growers, encouraged by the high prices, sowed a large crop and reaped a bumper harvest, only to find the market already overstocked and prices on the Leh Exchange fallen from Rs. 60 to RS. 30 per maund. The following are

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

the imports of charas from Ladakh and Kashmir between 1904 and 1907:

	1904-5	...	1905-6	...	1906-7
Cwt. . .	2818		2446		2883
Value . .	Rs. 12,13,860		Rs. 18,39,960		Rs. 22,90,560

Small quantities of charas are made, chiefly for local consumption, in the Himalayan districts of Nepal, Kumaon, and Garhwal, and in Baluchistan. Samples of Baluchistan charas made in the Sarawan division of the Kalat State have been sent to the Indian Museum by Mr. Hughes-Buller.

The following is the mode of preparation.

“The female ‘*bhang*’ plants are reaped when they are waist high and charged with seed. The leaves and seeds are separated and half dried. They are then spread on a carpet made of goat’s hair, another carpet is spread over them and slightly rubbed. The dust containing the narcotic principle falls off, and the leaves, etc., are removed to another carpet and again rubbed. The first dust is the best quality, and is known as *nup*; the dust from the second shaking is called *tahgalim*, and is of inferior quality. A third shaking gives *gania*, of still lower quality. Each kind of dust is made unto small balls called *gabza*, and kept in cloth bags. The first quality is recognised by the ease with which it melts.”

The local rates per tola are: for first quality 2a.5p., second quality 1a.7p., and third quality 11p. Small quantities of charas find their way from Thibet into British and Native Garhwal, and a little is prepared in Simla and Kashmir; while other sources are Nepal and the hill districts of Almora and Garhwal. In preparing Nepal charas, the ganja-plant is squeezed between the palms of the hands, and the sticky

## THE EQUINOX

resinous substance scraped off. *Momea*, black wax-like cakes, valued at Rs. 10 per seer, and *Shahjehani*, sticks containing portions of leaf, valued at Rs. 3 per seer, are the two kinds of Nepal charas, a few maunds being exported annually to Lucknow and Cawnpore. No charas is made in the plains of India, except a small quantity in Gwalior, the Bengal ganja yielding no charas in all the handling it undergoes in the process of preparation—thus emphasising the fact that the intoxicating secretion is developed in plants growing where the altitude and climate are suitable, as in the Himalayas and Turkestan.

*Adulterations.*—Aitchison in 1874 stated that no charas of really good quality ever came to Leh, the best charas in the original balls being sent to Bokhara and Kokan. He said the chief adulterant is the mealy covering of the fruits of the wild and cultivated Trebizond date (*Eloeagnus hortensis*). The impression in the United Provinces and the Punjab is that the Yarkhand drug is sophisticated, and a preference is given in some quarters to the Nepal and other Himalayan forms, which command a higher price. The Special Assistant in Kashgar declares there is no advantage in increasing the weight, as when dealers in India buy the drug they test it, otherwise they would pay a heavy duty on the adulterant as well as on the charas itself; so no exporter at present would spoil his charas by adding extraneous substances.

Mr. Hooper added descriptions of samples, namely: Kashgar charas, Yarkhand charas, Baluchistan charas, Gwalior charas, Kumaon charas, Garhwal charas, Nepal charas and Momea charas, from Simla.

*Chemical Examination.*—The table of analyses appended is taken from the author's report to the Indian Hemp Drug

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

Commission of 1893-4, but a few recent analyses have been added:

Description of Charas	Extract, Alcoholic	Vegetable Matter	Ash Soluble	Sand	Volatile Matter
Yarkhand	40.0	18.2	23.9	11.4	6.5
Amballa "Mashak"	42.7	12.9	12.4	28.2	5.8
Amritsar "Bhara"	38.1	14.9	10.8	29.8	6.4
"    "Mashak"	46.5	12.6	10.0	27.3	3.6
Delhi Dust, 12a.	42.4	17.9	9.8	25.9	4.0
"    11. 1a.	42.6	18.8	11.1	23.2	4.3
"    "Mashak"	41.1	11.3	10.7	29.5	7.4
11. 9a.					
Bombay	36.1	20.2	11.8	27.3	4.6
Gwalior	43.3	27.7	8.2	17.7	3.1
Kumaon (wild)	22.4	52.0	9.2	7.4	9.1
"    (cult.)	34.2	46.3	9.0	3.0	7.5
Garhwal	41.9	37.0	7.9	5.5	7.7
Almora	36.9	40.5	10.5	4.6	7.5
Nepal	44.6	35.1	8.2	6.5	5.6
"    "Shahjehani"	44.4	37.7	9.6	4.1	4.2
Simla "Momea" . . .	37.0	32.0	12.3	9.3	9.4
Baluchistan (1) 1903	22.4	19.9	14.8	38.6	4.3
"    (2) "	22.0	35.2	20.8	15.1	6.9
"    (3) 1905	24.2	16.0	13.3	39.3	7.2
"    (4) " . . .	26.0	24.1	9.6	31.0	9.3
"    (5) "	24.9	27.3	11.5	25.8	10.5
Kashgar (1)	40.2	21.1	9.2	16.8	12.7
"    (2)	40.9	16.3	9.9	20.5	12.4
"    (3)	48.1	15.6	8.2	16.1	12.0

According to Fluckiger and Hanbury, charas yields one-fourth to one-third of its weight of amorphous resin, and it has been stated that good samples yield 78 per cent. of resin. It will be seen above that the average yield in the North Indian samples is 40 per cent., the highest being from Kashgar and the lowest from Baluchistan and from Kumaon wild plants, the last-named corresponding to a good sample of ganja.

## THE EQUINOX

*Physiological Values.*—Captain J. F. Evans. I.M.S., Chemical Examiner to the Government of Bengal, also gave results of his physiological tests in the Indian Hemp Drug Commission's Proceedings for 1893-4. His experiments were made with alcoholic extracts, and only one sample --- Amritsar best charas --- approached in definite physiological effects the extract, taken as a standard, prepared from Bengal ganja. The following are the values compared with that of Amritsar mashak, designated as 32:

Amritsar Mashak . . . . .	32		Bombay . . . . .	4
Delhi Mashak . . . . .	24		Amballa Mashak . . . . .	2
Amballa Mashak . . . . .	23		Delhi dust . . . . .	2
Garhwal . . . . .	21		Kumaon wild . . . . .	1
Delhi dust (2nd) . . . . .	20		Kumaon cultivated . . . . .	1
Amritsar Bhara . . . . .	19		Gwalior . . . . .	1

so that the best Amritsar charas is thirty-two times as potent as the Gwalior product, the latter from plants grown in the plains, while the amount of alcoholic extract bears no relation to the physiological activity of the drug.

Professor Greenish in his well-known work on *Materia Medica* says the *Cannabis Indica* is an annual dioecious herb indigenous to Central and Western Asia, but largely cultivated in temperate countries for its strong fibres (hemp) and its oily seed (hemp-seed) and in tropical countries also for the resinous secretions which it there produces. The secretion possesses very valuable and powerful medicinal properties; but it is not produced in the plant when grown in temperate climates; on the other hand the fibre of the plant under the latter condition is much stronger than that of the tropical plant.

The hemp plant grown in India differs, however, in certain

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

particulars from that grown in Europe; and the plant was formerly considered a distinct species and named *Cannabis Indica*, but this opinion is now abandoned.

The cultivation of hemp for its seed and fibre dates from very remote periods. It was used as an intoxicant by the Persians and Arabians in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and probably much earlier, but was not introduced into European medicine until the year 1838. For medicinal use it is grown in the districts of Bogra and Rajshaki to the North of Calcutta and westward, thence through central India to Gujerat. Very good qualities of the drug are purchased in Madras, but the European market is chiefly supplied with inferior grades from Ghalapur.

The pistillate plants by which alone the resin is secreted in any quantity are pruned to produce flowering branches, the tops of these flowering branches are collected, allowed to wilt, and then pressed by treading them under the feet into more or less compact masses. This forms the drug known as “ganjah,” or (on the London market) Guaza.

The larger leaves are collected separately; when dried they are known as “bhang.”

During the manipulations to which the plant is subjected in preparing the drug, a certain quantity of the resin is separated; it is collected and forms the drug known as “charas” (Churrus). Charas is also prepared by rubbing ganjah between the hands or by men in leather garments brushing against the growing plants, in any case separating part of the active adhesive resin; hence the official description limits the drug to that from which the resin has not been removed.

## THE EQUINOX

All these forms of the drug are largely used in India for producing an agreeable form of intoxication; ganjah and charas are smoked, while bhang is used to prepare a drink or sweetmeat.

The drug has a powerful odour, but is almost devoid of taste.

Numerous attempts have been made to isolate the active constituent of Indian hemp; it is not possible here to do more than allude to the chief late ones.

In 1881 Siebold and Bradbury isolated a thick yellowish oily liquid which they termed *Cannabinine* and their results were confirmed in 1884 by Warden and Waddell.

In 1894 Robert separated a dark red syrupy mass possessing intoxicating properties and in 1896 Wood, Spivey, and Easterfield obtained from charas under reduced pressure certain inactive terpenes and a viscous resin *Cannabinol* which when warmed melts to an oily liquid. Cannabinol when taken internally induces delirium and sleep, and, as far as at present known, is the intoxicating constituent of Indian hemp.

In addition to this principle Matthew Hay in 1883 obtained colourless crystals of an alkaloid *tetano-cannabine* which in physiological action resembled strychnine.

*Cannabis Indica* was formerly used as a hypnotic and anodyne but is uncertain in its action.

It is administered in mania and hysteria as an anodyne and antispasmodic.

Mr. E. M. Holmes, F.L.S., Curator of the Pharmaceutical Society's Museum, writing on the subject of *Cannabis Indica* says "The Dervishes make a preparation by macerating the resinous type in almond oil and give a small quantity of it in soup to produced prolonged sleep."

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

A strong dose of Cannabis produces curious hallucinations abolishing temporarily the ideas of time and distance; but the ordinary drug as imported is never the current crop, which the Hindoos keep for their own use. The active principle Cannabinol (as far as is known) rapidly oxidises and loses its properties so that if a really active preparation is required, it is best to get it made in India, using absolute alcohol and the fresh tops, or recently made charas, which, being a solid mass, does not readily oxidise.

Before closing it might be well to notice in detail the final investigations made by Messrs. Wood, Spivey, and Easterfield.

The following is re-printed from the "Proceedings of the Chemical Society" for 1897-8, and is to be found on page 66.

### CANNABINOL

"The Authors have continued their examination of Cannabinol, the toxic resinous constituent of Indian Hemp (Trans. 1896, 69, 539).

"The substance boils with slight decomposition at about 400° its absorption spectrum shows no characteristic bands, its vapour-density at the temperature of boiling Sulphur corresponds with the formula  $C_{18}H_{24}O_2$  already assigned to the compound.

"An account is given of the reaction of Cannabinol with Acetic Anhydride, benzoyl Chloride and phosphoric Anhydride; the results indicate that one hydroxyl group is present. In the case of Acetic Anhydride or Acetyl chloride, however, a crystalline compound melting at 75° is one of the products of the

## THE EQUINOX

reaction. The Authors assign the formula  $C_{15}H_{18}O_2$  to this compound. The same compound has recently been described by Dunstan and Henry (Proc. 1898, 14, 44, Feb. 17), who ascribe the formula  $C_{18}H_{22}OAc$  to it, fuming hydriodic Acid gives no methyl or ethyl iodide when boiled with Cannabinol. Reduction with hydrodic Acid in sealed tubes produces a hydro-carbon,  $C_{10}H_{20}$ .

“By long boiling with or without dehydrating agents a hydro-carbon  $C_{10}H_{16}$  is formed.

“Oxidation with aqueous chromic acid, alkaline or acid permanganate or dilute nitric acid is accompanied by the production of a caproic acid, lower fatty acids being probably produced at the same time. The action of fuming nitric acid upon cannabinol dissolved in cold glacial acetic acid removes one carbon atom as carbonic anhydride, and produces a red amorphous substance which gives numbers on analysis agreeing with the formula  $C_{17}H_{20}N_2O_6$ .

“This substance when boiled with nitric acid yields a light-red substance  $C_{17}H_{20}N_2O_8$  which upon further oxidation yields among other substances a yellow acid crystalline compound  $C_{13}H_{15}N_2O_5$ , which forms sparingly soluble crystalline sodium, ammonium and silver salts and is probably a dinitrophenol, and a compound  $C_{11}H_{11}NO_4$ , the properties of which agree closely with those of the oxycannabin of Bolas and Francis (*Chemical News* 1871, 24, 77).

“This compound has the properties of a nitro-lactone, as has already been shown by Dunstan and Henry.

“Corresponding crystalline potassium and silver Salts have been prepared and analysed. The name Cannabinic Acid is proposed for the unnitrated parent oxy-acid.

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

“Amido-Cannabinolactone,  $C_{11}H_{11}O_2NH_2$  is obtained in colourless crystals melting at  $119^\circ$  when the nitro-lactone is reduced either by hydriodic acid, or by tin and hydrochloric acid.

“The base is readily re-crystallised from hot water, its salts cannot be recrystallised from water without decomposition; the hydriodide and the platinochloride have been analysed.”

In a later paper read before the Chemical Society Messrs. Wood, Spivey, and Easterfield (Proc. Chem. Soc. 1897-8, page 184) say:

“The oily lactone prepared from nitrocannabinolactone (oxycannabin) is shown to be a metatolybutyrlactone, oxycannabin being the corresponding nitroderivative.

“By the oxidation of Cannabinolactone a lactonic acid is produced which on fusion with potash yields isophthalic acid. Nitrocannabinolactonic acid is obtained by oxidising oxycannabin either by nitric acid in sealed tubes or by potassium permanganate. The volatile fatty acids produced on oxidising Cannabinol by nitric acid are shown to be normal butyric (Dunstan and Henry, Proc. Chem. Soc. 1898, 14, 44) normal valeric and normal caproic acids, Valeric acid being formed in largest amount.”

Through the courtesy of Messrs. Parke, Davis and Co., manufacturing chemists of London and Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., we are enabled to reproduce a clear pharmacological study of the drug by E. M. Houghton, Ph.C., M.D.; and H. C. Hamilton, M.S. (Excerpt from an article in the *American Journal of Pharmacy* for January 1908.)

From several samples of Cannabis Americana fluid

## THE EQUINOX

extracts and solid extracts were prepared according to the U.S.P., and were tested upon animals for physiological activity.

The method of assay, which has previously been called to the attention of this Society, is that which one of us (Houghton) devised and has employed for the past twelve years. This method consists essentially in the careful observation of the physiological effects produced upon dogs from the internal administration of the preparation of the drug under test. It is necessary in selecting the test animals to pick out those that are easily susceptible to the action of the Cannabis, since dogs as well as human beings vary considerably in their reaction to the drug. Also, preliminary tests should be made upon the animals before they are finally selected for test purposes, in order that we may know exactly how they behave under given conditions. After the animals have been finally selected and found to respond to the standard test dose, 0.01 Gm. per kilo, they are set aside for this particular work, care being taken to have them well fed, well housed, and in every way kept under the best sanitary conditions. Usually we have found it desirable to keep two or more of the approved animals on hand at all times, so there may not be delay in testing samples as they come in.

In applying the test, the standard dose (in form of solid extract for convenience) is administered internally in a small capsule. The dog's tongue is drawn forward between the teeth with the left hand and the capsule placed on the back part of the tongue with the right hand. The tongue is then quickly released and the capsule is swallowed with ease. In order that the drug may be rapidly absorbed, food should be

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

withheld for twenty-four hours before the test and an efficient cathartic given if needed.

Within a comparatively short time the dog begins to show the characteristic action of the drug. There are three typical effects to be noticed from active extracts on susceptible animals: first a stage excitability, then a stage of inco-ordination, followed by a period of drowsiness. The first of these is so dependent on the characteristics of the dog used that it is of little value for judging the activity of the drug, while with only a few exceptions the second, or the stage of inco-ordination, invariably follows in one or two hours; the dog loses control of its legs and of the muscles supporting its head, so that when nothing occurs to attract its attention its head will droop, its body sway, and, when severely affected, the animal will stagger and fall, the intoxication being peculiarly suggestive and striking.

Experience is necessary on the part of the observer to determine just when the physiological effects of the drug begin to manifest themselves, since there is always, as in the case of many chemical tests, a personal factor to be guarded against. When an active extract is given to a susceptible animal, in the smallest dose that will produce any perceptible effect, one must watch closely for the slightest trace of incoordination, lack of attention, or drowsiness. It is particularly necessary for the animals to be confined in a room there nothing will excite them, since when their attention is drawn to anything of interest the typical effect of the drug may disappear.

The influence of the test dose of the unknown drug is carefully compared with that of the same dose of the standard

## THE EQUINOX

preparation administered to another test dog at the same time and under the same conditions.

Finally, when the animals become drowsy, the observations are recorded and the animals are returned to their quarters.

The second day following, the observations upon the two dogs are reversed, *i.e.*, the animal receiving the test dose of the unknown receives a test dose of the known, and *vice versa*, and a second observation is made. If one desires to make a very accurate quantitative determination, it is advisable to use, not two dogs, but four or five, and to study the effects of the test dose of the unknown specimen in comparison with the test dose of the known, making several observations on alternate days. If the unknown is below standard activity, the amount should be increased until the effect produced is the same as for the test dose of the standard. If the unknown is above strength, the test dose is diminished accordingly. From the dose of the unknown selected as producing the same action as the test dose of the standard, the amount of dilution or concentration necessary is determined. The degree of accuracy with which the test is carried out will depend largely upon the experience of the observer and the care he exercises.

Another point to be noted in the use of dogs for standardising Cannabis is that, although they never appear to lose their susceptibility, the same dogs cannot be used indefinitely for accurate testing. After a time they become so accustomed to the effects of the drug they refuse to stand on their feet, and so do not show the typical inco-ordination which is its most characteristic and constant action.

Previous to the adoption of the physiological test over twelve years ago, we were often annoyed by complaints of

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

physicians that certain lots of drugs were inert; in fact some hospitals, before accepting their supplies of hemp preparations, asked for samples in order to make rough tests upon their patients before ordering. Since the adoption of the test we have not had a well-authenticated report of inactivity, although many tons of the various preparations of Cannabis Indica have been tested and supplied for medicinal purposes.

At the beginning of our observations careful search of the literature on the subject was made to determine the toxicity of the hemp. Not a single case of fatal poisoning have we been able to find reported, although often alarming symptoms may occur. A dog weighting 25 pounds received an injection of two ounces of an active U.S.P. fluid extract in the jugular vein with the expectation that it would certainly be sufficient to produce death. To our surprise the animal, after being unconscious for about a day and a half, recovered completely. This dog received, not alone the active constituents of the drug, but also the amount of alcohol contained in the fluid extract. Another dog received about 7 grammes of Solid Extract Cannabis with the same result. We have never been able to give an animal a sufficient quantity of a U.S.P. or other preparation of the Cannabis (*Indica Americana*) to produce death.

There is some variation in the amount of extractive obtained, as would be expected from the varying amount of stems, seeds, etc., in the different samples. Likewise there is a certain amount of variation in the physiological action, but in every case the administration of 0.01 gramme of the extract per kilo body weight, has elicited the characteristic symptoms in properly selected animals.

## THE EQUINOX

The repeated tests we have made convince us that Cannabis Americana properly grown and cured is fully as active as the best Indian drug.

Furthermore, we have placed our quantities of fluid extract and solid extract of Cannabis Americana in the hands of experienced clinicians, and from eight of these men, who are all large users of the drug, we have received reports which state that they are unable to determine any therapeutic difference between the Cannabis Americana and the Cannabis Indica.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The method, outlined in the paper, for determining the physiological activity of Cannabis Sativa by internal administration to especially selected dogs, has been found reliable when the standard dose of extract 0.01 gramme per kilo body weight, is tested on animals, the effects being noted by an experienced observe in comparison with the effects of the same quantity of a standard preparation.

2. Cannabis Sativa, when grown in various localities of the United States and Mexico, is found to be fully as active as the best imported Indian-grown Cannabis Sativa, as shown by laboratory and clinical tests.

Much has been written relative to the comparative activity of Cannabis Sativa grown in different climates (Cannabis Indica, Mexicana and Americana). It has been generally assumed that the American-grown drug was practically worthless therapeutically, and that Cannabis Sativa grown in India must be used if one would obtain physiologically active preparations.

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

Furthermore, it has been claimed that the best Indian drug is that grown especially for medicinal purposes, the part used consisting of the flowering tops of the unfertilised female plants, care being taken during the growing of the drug to weed out the male plants. According to our experience, this is an erroneous notion, as we have repeatedly found that the Indian drug which contains large quantities of seed is fully as active as the drug which consists of the flowering tops only, provided the seed be removed before percolation.

Several years ago we began a systematic investigation of American-grown *Cannabis Sativa*. Samples from a number of localities were obtained and carefully investigated. From these samples fluid and solid extracts were prepared according to the Pharmacopoeial method, and carefully tested upon animals for physiological activity, and eventually they were standardised by physiological methods. Repeated tests have convinced us that *Cannabis Americana* properly grown and cured is fully as active as the best Indian drug, while on the other hand we have frequently found Indian *Cannabis* to be practically inert.

Before marketing preparations of *Cannabis Americana*, however, we placed specimens of the fluid and solid extracts in the hands of experienced clinicians for practical test; and from these men, all of whom had used large quantities of *Cannabis Indica* in practice, we have received reports which affirm that they have been unable to determine any therapeutic difference between *Cannabis Americana* and *Cannabis Indica*. We are, therefore, of the opinion that *Cannabis Americana*, will be found equally as efficient as, and perhaps more uniformly reliable than *Cannabis Indica* obtained from abroad,

## THE EQUINOX

since it is evident that with a source of supply at our very doors proper precautions can be taken to obtain crude drug of the best quality.

The proper botanical name of the drug under consideration is *Cannabis Sativa*. The Indian plant was formerly supposed to be a distinct species *per se*, but botanists now consider the two plants to be identical. The old name of *Cannabis Indica*, however, has been retained in medicine. *Cannabis Indica* simply means *Cannabis Sativa* grown in the Indies, and *Cannabis Americana* means *Cannabis Sativa* grown in America. Its introduction into Western medicine dates from the beginning of the last century, but it has been used as an intoxicant in Asiatic countries from time immemorial, and under the name of "hashish," "bhang," "ganja," or "charas," is habitually consumed by upwards of two hundred millions of human beings.

The physiological action of *Cannabis Americana* is precisely the same as that of *Cannabis Indica*. The effects of this drug are said to be due chiefly to its action upon the central nervous system. It first produces a state of excitement similar to that of the initial stage of acute alcoholism. This excitement of the motor areas and other lower centres in the brain, according to W. E. Dixon, of the University of Cambridge, "is not the result of direct stimulation of these, but is due to depression of the highest and controlling centres. At all events there is a depression of the highest centres, and this is shown by diminished efficiency in the performance of mental work, by inability to concentrate attention, and by feeble judgment." In lower animals the effects of *Cannabis Indica* resemble those in man, and present the same

## A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

variations. A stage of exaltation with increased movements is sometimes present, and is followed by depression, lassitude and sleep. Reflex excitability is first increased and then diminished. Cannabis Indica differs from opium in producing no disturbance of digestion and no constipation. The heart is generally accelerated in man when the drug is smoked. Its intravenous injection into animals slows the pulse, partly through inhibitory stimulation and partly through direct action upon the heart muscle. The pupil is generally somewhat dilated. Death from acute poisoning is extremely rare, and recovery has occurred after enormous doses. The continued abuse of hashish by natives of the East sometimes leads to mania and dementia, but does not cause the same disturbance of nutrition that opium does; and the habitual use of small quantities, which is almost universal in some Eastern countries, does not appear to be detrimental to health.

Cannabis Americana is employed for the same medicinal purposes as Cannabis Indica, which is frequently used as a hypnotic in cases of sleeplessness, in nervous exhaustion, and as a sedative in patients suffering from pain. Its greatest use has perhaps been in the treatment of various nervous and mental diseases, although it is found as an ingredient in many cough mixtures. In general, Cannabis Americana can be used when a mild hypnotic or sedative is indicated, as it is said not to disturb digestion, and it produces no subsequent nausea and depression. It is of use in cases of migraine, particularly when opium is contra-indicated. It is recommended in paralysis agitans to quiet the tremors, in spasm of the bladder, and in sexual impotence not the result of organic disease, especially in combination with nux vomica and ergot.

## THE EQUINOX

The ordinary dosage is:

Extractum Cannabis Americanae, 0.01 gramme (1.5 grain).

Fluidextractum Cannabis Americanae, 0.05 cc. (1 minim).

The dosage of Cannabis Americana is the same as that of Cannabis Indica, as from our experiments we find that there is no therapeutic difference in the physiological action of the two drugs.

Cannabis Sativa, when grown in the United States (Cannabis Americana) under careful precautions, is found to be fully as active as the best imported Indian-grown Cannabis Sativa, as shown by the laboratory and clinical tests. The advantages of using carefully prepared solid and fluid extracts of the home-grown drug are apparent when it is considered that every step of the process, from planting of the drug to the final marketing of the finished product, is under the supervision of experts. The imported drug varies extremely in activity and much of it is practically inert or flagrantly adulterated.

The writer desires to acknowledge the able assistance given him in preparing the above notes by Mr. E. M. Holmes, F.L.S., and Mr. S. Jamieson, M.P.S. (Messrs. Parke, Davis and Co.) Readers acquiring further information on the subject are referred to the British Pharmaceutical Codex (1907) and Squire's "Companion to the British Pharmacopoeia," recently published.

# A PHARMACEUTICAL STUDY

## REFERENCES

- Marshall, London *Lancet*, 1897, i. p. 235.  
Dixon, *British Medical Journal*, 1899, ii p. 136.  
Fraenkel, *Arch. f. exp. Path. u. Pharm.* xlix, p. 266.  
Cushny, "Textbook of Pharmacology," 1906, p. 232.  
Houghton and Hamilton, *Am. Jour. Pharm.*, January  
1908.  
*Transactions Chem. Society*, 1896, 69, 539.  
*Proceedings Chem. Soc.* 1898, 14, 44, Feb. 17; *Ibid.* 1898, p.  
184.  
Squires, "Companion to British Pharmacopoeia," 1908.  
Martindale's "Extra Pharmacopoeia," 1908.  
Hooper's "Medical Dictionary."  
*Chemist and Druggist.*

E. WHINERAY, M.P.S., ETC.

# THE HERB DANGEROUS

PART II

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

BY

OLIVER HADDO



# THE HERB DANGEROUS

“The girders of the soul, which give her breathing, are easy to be unloosed.”

“Nature teaches us, and the oracles also affirm, that even the evil germs of matter may alike become useful and good.”

ZOROASTER.

COMPARABLE to the Alf Laylah wa Laylah itself, a very Tower of Babel, partaking alike of truth both gross and subtle inextricably interwoven with the most fantastic fable, is our view of the Herb—Hashish—the Herb Dangerous. Of the investigators who have pierced even for a moment the magic veil of its glamour ecstatic many have been appalled, many disappointed. Few have dared to crush in arms of steel this burning daughter of the Jinn; to ravish from her poisonous scarlet lips the kisses of death, to force her serpent-smooth and serpent-stinging body down to some infernal torture-couch, and strike her into spasm as the lightning splits the cloud-wrack, only to read in her infinite sea-green eyes the awful price of her virginity—black madness.

Even supreme Richard Burton, who solved nigh every other riddle of the Eastern Sphinx, passed this one by. He took the drug for months “with no other symptom than increased appetite,” and in his general attitude to hashish-

## THE EQUINOX

intoxication (spoken of often in the "Nights") shows that he regards it as no more than a vice, and seems not to suspect that, vice or no, it had strange fruits; if not of the Tree of Life, at least of that other Tree, double and sinister and deadly. . . .

Nay! for I am of the Serpent's party; Knowledge is good, be the price what it may.

Such little fruit, then, as I may have culled from her autumnal breast (mere unripe berries, I confess!) I hasten to offer to my friends.

And lest the austerity of such a goddess be profaned by the least vestige of adornment I make haste to divest myself of whatever gold or jewellery of speech I may possess, to advance, my left breast bare, without timidity or rashness, into her temple, my hoped reward the lamb's skin of a clean heart, the badge of simple truthfulness and the apron of Innocence.

In order to keep this paper within limits, I may premise that the preparation and properties of *Cannabis indica* can be studied in the proper pharmaceutical treatises, though, as this drug is more potent psychologically than physically, all strictly medical account of it, so far as I am aware, have been hitherto both meagre and misleading. Deeper and clearer is the information to be gained from the brilliant studies by Baudelaire, unsurpassed for insight and impartiality, and Ludlow, tainted by admiration of de Quincey and the sentimentalists.\*

\* At the time of writing this article, I had only glanced rapidly through Baudelaire's essay. When I made the experiments, I knew only Ludlow, and the brief note in "Martindale and Westcott." My research results, therefore, such as

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

My contribution to the subject will therefore be strictly personal, and so far incomplete; indeed in a sense valueless, since in such a matter personality may so largely outweigh all other factors of the problem. At the same time I must insist that my armour is more complete in several directions than that of my predecessors, inasmuch as I possess the advantage not only of a prolonged psychological training, a solid constitution, a temperament on which hashish acts by exciting perception (Sañña), quite unalloyed by sensation (Vedana) and a perfect scepticism; but also of more than an acquaintance with ceremonial drunkenness among many nations and with the magical or mystical processes of all times and all races. It may fairly be retorted upon me that this unique qualification of mine is the very factor which most vitiates my results. However . . .

With the question of intoxication considered as a key to knowledge let me begin, for from that side did I myself first suspect the existence of the drug which (as I now believe) is some sublimated or purified preparation of *Cannabis indica*.

## II

“Labour thou around the Strophalos of Hecate.”

ZOROASTER.

In 1898-1899 I had just left Cambridge and was living in rooms in Chancery Lane, honoured by the presence of Allan Bennett (now Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya) as my guest.

they are, are unbiased by knowledge. The coincidences with Baudelaire now appear very striking.

## THE EQUINOX

Together for many months we studied and practised Ceremonial Magic, and ransacked the ancient books and MSS. of the reputed sages for a key to the great mysteries of life and death. Not even fiction was neglected, and it was from fiction that we gathered one tiny seed-fact, which (in all these years) has germinated to the present essay.

Through the ages we found this one constant story. Stripped of its local and chronological accidents, it usually came to this—the writer would tell of a young man, a seeker after the Hidden Wisdom, who, in one circumstance or another, meets an adept; who, after sundry ordeals, obtains from the said adept, for good or ill, a certain mysterious drug or potion, with the result (at least) of opening the gate of the Other-world. This potion was identified with the Elixir Vitae of the physical Alchemists, or one of their “Tinctures,” most likely the “White Tincture” which transforms the base metal (normal perception of life) to silver (poetic conception), and we sought it by fruitless attempts to poison ourselves with every drug in (and out of) the Pharmacopœia.

Like Huckleberry Finn’s prayer, nuffin’ come of it.

I must now, like the Baker, skip forty years, or rather eight, and reach a point where my travels in India had familiarised me with their systems of meditation and with the fact that many of the lesser Yogis employed hashish (whether vainly or no we shall discuss later) to obtain Samadhi, that oneness with the Universe, or with the Nothingness, which is the feeble expression by which alone we can shadow that supreme trance. I had also the advantage of falling across Ludlow’s book, and was struck by the circumstance that he, obviously ignorant of Vedantist and

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

Yogic doctrines, yet approximately expressed them, though in a degraded and distorted form.

I was also aware of the prime agony of meditation, the “dryness”\* (as Molinos calls it) which hardens and sterilises the soul.

The very practice which should flood it with light leads only to a darkness more terrible than death, a despair and disgust which only too often lead to abandonment, when in truth they should encourage, for that—as the oracles affirm—it is darkest before the dawn.

Meditation therefore annoyed me, as tightening and constricting the soul. I began to ask myself if the “dryness” was an essential part of the process. If by some means I could shake its catafalque of Mind, might not the Infinite Divine Spirit leap unfettered to the Light?

Who shall roll away the stone?

Let it not be imagined that I devised these thoughts from pure sloth or weariness. But with the mystical means then at my disposal, I required a period of days or of weeks to obtain any Result, such as Samadhi in one of its greater or lesser forms; and in England the difficulties were hardly to be overcome. I found it impossible to meditate in the cold, and fires will not last equably. Gas stinks abominably; heating apparatus does not heat; electricity has hitherto not been available. When I build my temple, I shall try it.

The food difficulty could be overcome by Messrs. Fortnum and Mason, the noise difficulty by training, the leisure difficulty

\* The period of the rule of Apophis in the mystic regenerative process Isis Apophis Osiris I A O; or the Black Dragon in the alchemical translation from the First Matter of the Work into the Elixir.

## THE EQUINOX

by sending all business to the devil, the solitude difficulty by borrowing a vacant flat; but the British climate beat me. I hope one day to be rich enough to build a little house expressly for the purpose; but at present there is on the horizon no cloud even so large as the littlest finger of a man!

If only, therefore, I could reduce the necessary period to a few hours!

Moreover, I could persuade other people that mysticism was not all folly without insisting on their devoting a lifetime to studying under me; and if only I could convince a few competent observers—in such a matter I distrust even myself—Science would be bound to follow and to investigate, clear up the matter once for all, and, as I believed, and believe, arm itself with a new weapon ten thousand times more potent than the balance and the microscope.

Imagine me, therefore, if you please, selecting these few facts from the millions of others in the armoury of my brain, dovetailing them, and at last formulating an hypothesis verifiable by experiment.

### III

“But I evolve all these mysteries in the profound abyss of Mind.”—ZOROASTER.

This was my hypothesis:

“Perhaps hashish is the drug which ‘loosens the girders of the soul,’ but is in itself neither good nor bad. Perhaps, as Baudelaire thinks, it merely exaggerates and distorts the natural man and his mood of the moment.” The whole of

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

Ludlow's wonderful introspection seemed to me to fortify this suggestion.

“Well, then, let me see whether by first exalting myself mystically and continuing my invocations while the drug dissolved the matrix of the diamond soul, that diamond might not manifest limpid and sparkling, a radiance ‘not of the Sun, nor of the Moon, nor of the Stars’;” and then, of course, I remembered that this ceremonial intoxication constitutes the supreme ritual of all religions.

First, however, it was necessary to determine the normal action of the drug upon my particular organisation. There are various preparations of *Cannabis indica*, all alike in this, that their action is so uncertain as to be not easily or surely standardised. It is not even a question of reasonable limits: of two samples apparently alike one may be fifty times stronger than the other. A sample may apparently degenerate 50 per cent. in strength within a few days. Some samples may be totally inert.

This fact has led to the almost total abandonment of the use of the drug in medicine.

Further, the personal equation counts for much. Allan Bennett in Chancery Lane had on one occasion taken sufficient Conium (hemlock) to kill forty men without the smallest result of any kind.

In Kandy I had (for the first time in my life) taken two hundred and twenty-five drops of Laudanum in five hours, also with no more result than would have been produced by ten drops upon the average man.

Our equation was therefore composed exclusively of variables, and wide variables at that! Nothing for it, then,

## THE EQUINOX

but rule-of-thumb! The old Chancery Lane rule: begin with half the minimum dose of the Pharmacopoeia, and if nothing happens within the expected time, double the dose. If you go on long enough, something is nearly sure to happen!

### IV

“The Mind of the Father said Into Three! and immediately all things were so divided.”—ZOROASTER.

Let my readers be good enough to remember, then, that what follows concerns myself only. This must excuse the use of the first person, highly improper in a scientific essay, were it not that the personality of the experimenter is perhaps an essential. I cannot assert that my results would be achieved by another. Yet I have the strong conviction that I have eliminated many sources of error, and that my observations may possess a more absolute value in psychology than those of Ludlow or even of my great master Baudelaire. The few on whom I have been able to test the drug have in large measure confirmed, and in no way contradicted, my results.

In the first place, I make an absolute distinction between three effects of hashish, which may be, and I think probably are—so distinct they appear—due to three separate substances.

Possibly a simple stimulus-curve may account for it, but I do not think so.

#### I. *The volatile aromatic effect (a).*

This, the first evanescent symptom, gives the “thrill” described by Ludlow, as of a new pulse of power pervading

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

one. Psychologically, the result is that one is thrown into an absolutely perfect state of introspection. One perceives one's thoughts and nothing but one's thoughts, and it is as thoughts that one perceives them. Material objects are only perceived as thoughts; in other words, in this respect, one possesses the direct consciousness of Berkeleyan idealism. The Ego and the Will are not involved; there is introspection of an almost if not quite purely impersonal type; that, and nothing more.

I am not to be understood as asserting that the results of this introspection are psychologically valid.

### 2. *The toxic hallucinative effect* ( $\beta$ ).

With a sufficiently large dose—for it is possible to get effect ( $\alpha$ ) only as a transient phenomenon—the images of thought pass more rapidly through the brain, at last vertiginously fast. They are no longer recognized as thoughts, but imagined as exterior. The Will and the Ego become alarmed, and may be attacked and overwhelmed. This constitutes the main horror of the drug; it is to be combated by a highly—may I say magically?—trained will.

I trust my readers will concede that the practice of ceremonial magic and meditation, all occult theories apart, do lead the mind to immense power over its own imaginations.

The fear of being swept away in the tide of relentless images is a terrible experience. Woe to who yields!

### 3. *The narcotic effect* ( $\gamma$ ).

One simply goes off to sleep. This is not necessarily due to the brain-fatigue induced by ( $\alpha$ ) and ( $\beta$ ); for with one sample of *Cannabis*, I found it to occur independently.

# THE EQUINOX

## V

“For this Paternal Intellect, which comprehendeth the Intelligibles and adorneth things ineffable, hath sowed symbols through the World.”

“Comprehending that Intelligible with extended Mind; for the Intelligible is the flower of Mind.”

“A similar fire flashingly extending through the rushings of air, or a Fire formless whence cometh the Image of a Voice, or even a flashing Light abounding, revolving, whirling forth, crying aloud. Also there is the vision of the fire-flashing Courser of Light, or also a Child, borne aloft on the shoulders of the Celestial Steed, fiery, or clothed with gold, or naked, or shooting with the bow shafts of Light and standing on the shoulders of the horse; then if thy meditation prolongeth itself, thou shalt unite all these symbols into the Form of a Lion.”—ZOROASTER.

The most important of the psychological results of my experiments seem to me to lie in (*a*). I devoted much pains to obtaining this effect alone by taking only the minutest doses, by preparing myself physically and mentally for the experiment, and by seeking in every possible way to intensify and prolong the effect.

Simple impressions in normal consciousness are resolved by hashish into a concatenation of hieroglyphs of a purely symbolic type.

Just as we represent a horse by the five letters h-o-r-s-e, none of which has in itself the smallest relation to a horse, so an even simpler concept such as the letter A seems resolved into a set of pictures, a fairly large number, possibly a constant number, of them. These glyphs are perceived together, just as the skilled reader reads h-o-r-s-e as a single word, not letter by letter. These pictorial glyphs, letters as it were of the

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

word which we call a thought, seem to stand at a definite distance in space behind the thought, the thought being farther from the perceiving soul. Looking at each glyph, one perceives, too, that itself is made up of other glyphs yet nearer to the Self, these glyphs, however, being formless and nameless; they are not truly perceived, but one is somehow aware of them.

Unfortunately, the tendency to fall into effect ( $\beta$ ) makes it very difficult to concentrate on the analysis of these ideas, so that one is hurried on to a similar examination of the next thought. It is curious, though, to notice how this analysis corresponds to the worlds of the Qabalah, the single "pure soul" at the back of all, the shadowy "creative" world, the varied "formative world," and the single though concrete "material" world.

It puzzles one, too (at the time, in the very course of the analysis), to ask: If the external simple impression be made up of so many glyphs, and each of these again of many more, how can one ever return to the "pure soul"? For all the while one is clearly conscious of a simple Ego or "pure soul" which perceives all this.

The only solution appears to lie in a metaphysical identification of Monotheism and Pantheism.

Again, one is conscious of a double direction in the phenomena. Not only is it true to say that the thoughts are analysed into glyphs and so on, back to the pure soul; but also that the pure soul sends forth the glyphs, which formulate the thought. Here again we must identify the Atman system of Hinduism centred in Ego with the Anatta system of Buddhism, in which the impressions are all.

## THE EQUINOX

Further, there arises an exceedingly remarkable state of mind, described in the Bhagavad-Gita (I quote Arnold):

“I, who am all, and made it all, abide its separate Lord.”

The experience could not be better phrased. Zoroaster, too:

“Who first sprang from Mind, clothing the one Fire with the other Fire, binding them together, that he might mingle the fountainous craters, while preserving unsullied the brilliance of His own Fire.”

“Containing all things in the one summit of his Hyperx, He Himself subsists wholly beyond.”

It is almost impossible to describe so purely metaphysical a state, which involves clearly enough a contradiction in terms. Yet the consciousness is so vivid, so intense, so certain, that logic is condemned unflinchingly as puerile. The best escape for the logician is to argue that the three assertions are closely consecutive, so closely that mind thinks them one; just as the two points of a pair of compasses pressed upon certain parts of the body are felt as one point only. While the mystic will mutter some esoteric darkness about the true interpretation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

I think one should add that these results of my introspection are almost certainly due to my own training in philosophy and magic, and that nothing but the intensification of the introspective faculty is due to the hashish. Probably, too, this effect (*a*) would be suppressed or unnoticed in a subject who had never developed his introspection at all.

Yet I am inclined to believe that this effect (*a*) is the true effect; and that Ludlow's “access of self-consciousness” is but the same operating on the organization of a man evidently nervous and timid.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

## VI

“The Intelligible is the principle of all section.”

“The Mind of the Father whirled forth in re-echoing roar, comprehending by invincible Will Ideas omniform; which flying forth from that one fountain issued; for from the Father alike was the Will and the End (by which are they connected with the Father according to alternating life, though varying vehicles). But they were divided asunder, being by Intellectual Fire distributed into other Intellectuals. For the King of all previously placed before the polymorphous World a Type, intellectual, incorruptible, the imprint of whose form is sent forth through the World, by which the Universe shone forth decked with Ideas all-various, of which the foundation is One, One and alone. From this the others rush forth distributed and separated through the various bodies of the Universe, and are borne in swarms through its vast abysses, ever whirling forth in illimitable radiation.

“They are intellectual conceptions from the Paternal Fountain partaking abundantly of the brilliance of Fire in the culmination of unresting time.

“But the primary self-perfect Fountain of the Father poured forth these primogenial Ideas.”

“The Soul, being a brilliant Fire, by the power of the Father remaineth immortal, and is Mistress of Life, and filleth up the many recesses of the bosom of the world.”—ZOROASTER.

The alleged annihilation of time and space, which so frequently reappears in articles on hashish, seems to me solved more simply by a more accurate analysis of the phenomenon. The normal explanation involves the assumption that man naturally possesses a perfect and infallible “time-sense” as regular as a clock. Which is absurd; were it so, we should not need watches. We are accustomed to work (whether the idea be philosophically tenable or not is not german to the matter) with a minimum cogitabile both of space and of time. Just as a definite number of beats of the pendulum makes an

## THE EQUINOX

hour, so mentally a less definite but far from indefinite number of thoughts makes an hour's consciousness. Perhaps powerful and vivid thoughts count for a longer lapse of time than weak ones. Deep sleep passes like an invisible electric discharge.

The apparently contrary fact that time seems short when we have been reading an interesting book or performing a pleasant and absorbing task is explained thus; the multitude of impressions is harmonised into one impression. Read an unharmonious and dull book, or an essay like this, and the time appears ineffably long.

The other contrary fact, that a minute's Samadhi appears as an eternity, though Samadhi is a single thought, is explained by the intensity of that thought and by other considerations which I shall hope to discuss more fully in section xiii. of this essay.

This, then, is what happens to the eater of hashish. For each impression he has thousands of glyphs (effect( $\alpha$ )) or in the more common\* effect ( $\beta$ ) the images are so multiplied and superimposed that all harmony is lost; the brain fails to keep pace with its impressions, still less to codify and control them. It finds then that from the idea "cat" to the idea "mouse" is a journey through the million dying echoes of cat to the million dawn-rays of mouse, and that the journey takes a million times as long as usual.

This analysis of a thought into its dawn, noon, and sunset, is well drawn in Buddhist psychology.†

Often, too, most often, one of the "cat-echoes" will be so loud that the whole chain is shattered; the cat-echo becomes

\* More common, judging by the reports of Ludlow and others. I never permitted myself to fall under its dominion.

† See Mrs. Rhys David's book.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

the dominant, and its harmonics (or inharmonics) themselves usurp the throne—and so on and so on—through countless ages of insane hallucination.

The same criticism applies to space; for in practice we judge of space by the time required to pass through it, either by the small angular or focussing movements of the eye or by our general experience. So that if I cross a room, and think a million thoughts on the way, the room seems immense. It is by the tedium of the journey, not by any hallucination of the physical eye, that this illusion is produced.

In writing my notes on one occasion I found that my right arm (which of course is not in the line of vision at all, normally) was many thousands of miles in extent. It was strange and difficult to control such colossal sweeps through space to the fine work of the pen. Yet my handwriting was no worse than usual—I admit this says little! It was the time that it apparently took to get one word written that caused the illusion of extravagant size, itself therefore a rational illusion, turned to phantastic absurdity by the excited imagination, which visualized it.

## VII

“The Intelligible is the principle of all section.”

“God is never so turned away from man, and never so much sendeth him new paths, as when he maketh ascent to divine speculations or works in a confused or disordered manner, and as it adds, with unhallowed lips, or unwashed feet. For of those who are thus negligent, the progress is imperfect, the impulses are vain, and the paths are dark.”—ZOROASTER.

Another and highly important result of thought-analysis is the criticism of thought as it arises. Just as the impres-

## THE EQUINOX

sions are represented by pictorial glyphs, so each reflection upon an impression is accompanied by either one or two (more only when the control is imperfect) *critical* glyphs, as it were in small type, an annotation of approval or otherwise. Thus, a chain of thought A—B—C will have three approving pictures in a fainter key; the soul justifying the sequence. Should one continue A—B—C—E an opposing glyph will warn of the falsity, or at least cast doubt upon it. In the generally unstable condition of the thought, such a critical glyph may be strong enough to become the dominant; and then the whole line of thought breaks down. Let me give an example:

<i>Thought</i>	<i>Criticisms and their glyphs.</i>
1. Man	a man reaping—meaning “Good—go on.” a horse = “True—Mill’s definition.”
2. Featherless Biped.	Three horses in a field = “Are there no other featherless bipeds?” a stream = “Stop—Stop—Stop.”
3. Was it Mill?	A tombstone on a hill = “Was it Locke?”
4. Locke? Locke?	a battle. thousands of other violent glyphs.

The whole mind is now a raging sea of confused thought: doubts, attempts to remember accurately who on earth first said “featherless biped” even an agony to recover thought 1, and start again. This one unfortunate weakness of thought 2 has drawn the thought-current away from the consideration of “man” to an academic question; and, as hashish goes, one is unlikely ever to get back to it. On the contrary, one of the critical glyphs attacking the thought “Locke? Locke?” will probably be strong enough to carry away the thought into a new channel, in its turn to be diverted. This at the best: for one is now ready to fall into the Maelstrom of effect ( $\beta$ ).

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

There is only one remedy for this state of affairs, the discipline of thought which we call in its highest forms meditation and magic. The existence of the disease, it will be noticed, indeed perfectly explains the nature of thought-wandering as observed by me in simple meditation without drugs. It should be taken, I think, as the normal action of the untrained mind. So long as the thoughts are strongly thrown out, rational, the critical glyphs approve, and the thought-current moves harmoniously to its end. Such are the trained thought-currents of educated man. The irresponsible and aimless chatter of women and clergymen is the result of weak thoughts constantly drowned by their associated critical glyphs. Mere sympathetic glyphs, too, may be excited in really feeble intelligences. Puns and other false associations of thought are symptomatic of this imbecility. An extreme case is the classical "Cat—mousetrap—kittens" chain of the lunatic, when somebody said "hat."

As I said, there is but one remedy; we all more or less subject to this wandering of thought, and we may all wisely seek to overcome it; that remedy is to train the mind constantly by severe methods; the logic of mathematics, the concentrated observation necessary in all branches of science, the still more elaborate and austere training of magic and meditation.

Too many people mistake reverie for meditation; the chemist's boy who thought Epsom salts was oxalic acid is a less dangerous person. Reverie is turning thought out to grass; meditation is putting him between the shafts.

The so-called poet with his vague dreams and ideals is indeed no better than a harmless lunatic; the true poet is the

## THE EQUINOX

worker, who grips life's throat and wrings out its secret, who selects austere and composes concisely, whose work is as true and clean as razor-steel, albeit its sweep is vaster and swifter than the sun's!

The discursive prattle of such superficial twaddlers as Longfellow and Tennyson is the most deadly poison of the mind. All this is true enough in the merest exoteric necessity of adult civilisation. But if we are to go further into the nature of things, to dive deeper than the chemist, soar higher than the poet, look wider than the astronomer, we must furnish ourselves with a blade of still better temper.

## VIII

“It is not proper to understand that Intelligible One with vehemence, but with the extended flame of far-reaching Mind, measuring all things except that Intelligible. But it is requisite to understand this; for if thou inclinest thy Mind thou wilt understand it, not earnestly; but it is becoming to bring with thee a pure and inquiring sense, to extend the void mind of thy soul to that Intelligible, that thou mayst learn the Intelligible, because it subsisteth beyond Mind.”

“Thou wilt not understand it, as when understanding some common thing.”—ZOROASTER.

In other of my philosophical writings I have endeavoured to show that the ratiocinative faculty was in its nature unable to solve any single problem of the universe.

Its *reductio ad absurdum* is clear enough in the gorgeous first section of Herbert Spencer's First Principles. Kant demonstrated the Dualism and inherent Self-contradiction well enough in the Prolegomena and its four theses and their

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

antitheses (§ 51); and Hegel's Logic, if properly understood, would have brought the whole thing into contempt.

But unfortunately the "common sense" of mankind retorted that after all the interior angles of every triangle *are* together equal to two right-angles; and that a mental process which deduced this so accurately from a few simple axioms and definitions must be trustworthy; adding something uncomplimentary about Germans and Metaphysics.

Both are right, and both are wrong. In the world of common sense, reason works; in the world of philosophy, it doesn't. The metaphysical deadlock is a real and not a verbal one. The inner nature of things is not rational, at least so long as we are asked to define "rational" as "rationalistic." Why should it be? Why should the rules of golf govern the mechanics of the flight of a golf-ball?

It is this fact that has made it possible for the faith-mongers to make head against the stream of philosophy. Fichte is really and truly just as right and as wrong as Schelling; Hume is quite as impregnable as Berkeley.

Let us not try to shirk the truth of it, either by the "common-sense" folly, or the "faith" folly, or the Hegelian folly.

It may, I think, be readily conceded that the reasoning faculty is not apodeictically absolute. It represents a stage in human thought, no more.

You cannot convince a savage of the truth of the Binomial Theorem; should we then be surprised if a mystic fails to convert a philosopher?

Yet must he try.

# THE EQUINOX

## IX

“For being furnished with every kind of armour, and armed, he is similar to the goddess.”—ZOROASTER.

My dear Professor, how can you expect me to believe this nonsense about bacteria? Come, saith he, to the microscope; and behold them!

I don't see anything.

Just shift the fine adjustment—that screw there—to and fro very slowly!

I can't see—

Keep the left eye open; you'll see better!

Ah!—But how do I know? . . .

Oh, there are a thousand questions to ask!

Is it fair observation to use lenses, which admittedly refract light and distort vision?

How do I know those specks are not dust?

Couldn't those things be in the air?

And so on.

The Professor can convince me, of course, and the more sceptical I am the more thoroughly I shall be convinced in the end; but not until I have learned to use a microscope. And when I have learned—a matter of some months, maybe years—how can I convince the next sceptic?

Only in the same way, by teaching him to use the instrument.

And suppose he retorts, “You have deliberately trained yourself to hallucination!” What answer have I? None that I know of. Save that microscopy has revolutionised surgery,

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

&c., just as mysticism has revolutionised, again and again, the philosophies of mankind.

The analogy is a perfect one. By meditation we obtain the vision of a new world, even as the world of microorganisms was unsuspected for centuries of thinking—thinking without method—bricks without straw!

Just so, also, the masters of meditation have erred. They have attained the Mystic Vision, written long books about it, assumed that the conclusions drawn from their vision were true on other planes—as if a microscopist were to stand for Parliament on the platform “Votes for Microbes”—never noted possible sources of error, fallen foul of sense and science, dropped into oblivion and deserved contempt.

I want to combine the methods, to check the old empirical mysticism by the precision of modern science.

Hashish at least gives proof of a new order of consciousness, and (it seems to me) it is this *primâ facie* case that mystics have always needed to make out, and never have made out.

But to-day I claim the hashish-phenomena as mental phenomena of the first importance; and I demand investigation.

I assert—more or less *ex cathedrâ*—that meditation will revolutionise our conception of the universe, just as the microscope has done.

Then my friend the physiologist remarks:

“But if you disturb the observing faculty with drugs and a special mental training, your results will be invalid.”

And I reply:

“But if you disturb the observing faculty with lenses and a special mental training, your results will be invalid.”

## THE EQUINOX

And he smiles gently:

“Patient experiment will prove to you that the microscope is reliable.”

And I smile gently:

“Patient experiment will prove to you that meditation is reliable.”

So there we are.

## X

“Stay not on the precipice with the dross of matter, for there is a place for thine image in a realm ever splendid.”

ZOROASTER.

“When thou seest a terrestrial demon approaching, cry aloud and sacrifice the stone Mnizourin.”—ZOROASTER.

As a boy at school I enjoyed a reputation for unparalleled cowardice; in the world I am equally accused of foolhardiness. The judgment of the boys was the better. The truth is that I have always been excessively cautious, have never willingly undertaken even the smallest risk.

The paradoxical result is that I have walked hundreds of miles unroped over snow-covered glaciers, and that nobody (so far as I know) has ever attempted to repeat my major climbs on Beachy Head. One may add a little grimly that the same remark applies to my excursions into the regions of the mind, the conscience, and the soul.

This bombastic prelude to a simple note on the precautions which I took in my experiments.

First, the use of the minutest care in estimating doses.

Secondly, the rule never to repeat my experiment before the lapse of at least a month.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

Frankly, I doubt if these were necessary. I do not suppose my will to be abnormally strong; I believe rather that there is a definite type of drug-slave, born from his mother's womb; and that those who achieve it or have it thrust upon them are a very small percentage. In saying this I include such obsessions as music, religion, gambling, among drugs. Is the "Keswick week" less of a debauch than the navy's Bank Holiday? There are people who rush from meeting to meeting, and give up their whole lives to this unwholesome excess of stimulant; they are happy nowhere else; they become as irritable as the cocaine-fiend, and render wretched the lives of those who are forced to come in contact with them.

Personally, I have never felt the bearing-rein of habit, though I have tried all the mental and physical poisons in turn. I smoke tobacco, the strongest tobacco, to excess, as I am told; yet a dozen times I have abandoned it, in order to see whether it had any hold upon me. It had none; I resigned it as cheerfully as a small boy resigns the tempting second half of his first cigar. After a meal (for the first day or two) my hands would go to my pockets from habit; finding nothing there, I would remember, laugh, and forget the subject at once.

I think, therefore, that we may dismiss the alleged danger of acquiring the hashish habit as fantastic.

Nobody will acquire the habit but the destined drug-slave; and he may just as well have the hashish habit as any other; he is sure to fall under the power of some enchantress.

All these alarmist reports, however, are really worthless, worthless at the best as the *omne ignotum pro terribili* fear

## THE EQUINOX

of the savage for an unfamiliar shape of bottle, worthless at the worst as the temperance crank's account of the fatal effects of alcohol, the vegetarian's account of the dangers of meat-eating, or the missionary's account of the religion of the people he lives among. The alleged sensuality of hashish—even Baudelaire admits it—simply does not exist for me, perhaps because there is no germ of lasciviousness in my mind. Of course if you excite, by whatever stimulus, a foul imagination, you will get pestilent effects. When Queen Mab tickles the lawyer, he dreams of fees. So the people who associate nudity with debauchery, and see Piccadilly Circus in Mona Lisa, will probably obtain the fullest itching from the use of the drug.

I recommend it to them for, slaves and swine as they are, it must inevitably drag them to death by the road of a certifiable insanity less dangerous to society than their present subtler moral beastliness.

I think, too, that Baudelaire altogether exaggerates the reaction. I never felt the slightest fatigue or lassitude; but went from the experiments to my other work with accustomed freshness and energy. Probably, however, these effects depend largely on the sample of the drug employed; some may contain more active or grosser toxic agents than others.

Putting aside all these optimistic considerations, one is yet perfectly in accord with Baudelaire's conclusion, and for the same reason. (We discard his preliminary sophisms.)

I have no use for hashish save as a preliminary demonstration that there exists another world attainable—somehow. Possibly if pharmacists were to concentrate their efforts upon

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

producing a standard drug, upon isolating the substance responsible for effect (*a*), and so on, we might find a reliable and harmless adjuvant to the process which I have optimistically named Scientific Illuminism.

But at least for the present we have not arrived so far. In my own case I should know fairly well what to do, well enough to get my little "loosening of the girders of the soul" at a guess twice in five times, perhaps more.

Not surely enough to guarantee results to other people without a lengthy series of experiments, still less to recommend them to try for themselves, unless under skilled supervision.

My present appeal is to recognised physiologists and psychologists to increase the number and accuracy of their researches on the introspective lines which I have laid down above, possibly with further aid from the pharmacist.

Once the pure physio-psychological action is determined, I shall then ask their further attention to the special results of combining the drug with the mystic process—always invoking trained observation—and from that moment the future of Scientific Illuminism will be assured.

I must add a paragraph or two on the nature of the mystic process and the general character of the transcendental states of consciousness resulting from its successful practice.

## XI

"He maketh the whole World of Fire, Air, Water, and Earth,  
and of the all-nourishing Ether."—ZOROASTER.

One truth, says Browning, leads right to the world's end; and so I find it impossible to open a subject, however small

## THE EQUINOX

in appearance, without discovering an universe. So , as I set myself to discuss the character of mystic states, it is immediately evident that if I am to render myself at all intelligible to English readers, a totally new system of classification must be thought out.

The classical Eight Jhanas will be useless to us; the Hindu system is almost as bad; the Qabalistic requires a preliminary knowledge of the Tree of Life whose explanation would require a volume to itself; but fortunately we have, in the Buddhist Skandhas and the Three Characteristics which deny them, a scheme easily assimilable to Western psychology.

In "Science and Buddhism" I dealt in some detail with these Skandhas; but I will briefly recapitulate.

In examining any phenomenon and analysing it we first notice its Name and Form (Nama and Rupa). "Here is a Rose," we say. In such a world live the entirely vulgar.

Next (with Berkeley) we perceive that this statement is false. There is an optical sensation (Vedana) of red; an olfactory sensation of fragrance; and so on. Even its weight, its space, are modifications of sense; and the whole statement is transformed into "Here is a pleasurable set of sensations which we group under the name of a rose." In such a world lives the sensuous artist.

Next, these modifications of sense are found to be but percepts; the pleasure or pain vanishes; and the sensations are observed coldly and clearly without allowing the mind to be affected. This perception (Sañña) is the world of the surgeon or the man of science.

Next, the perception itself is seen to be dependent on the

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

nature of the observer, and his tendency (Sankhara) to perceive. The oyster gets no fun out of the rose. This state establishes a dualistic conception, such as Mansel was unable to transcend, and at the same time places the original rose in its cosmic place. The creative forces that have made the rose and the observer what they are, and established their relation to one another, are now the sole consciousness. Here lives the philosopher.

Easily enough, this state passes into one of pure consciousness (Viññanam). The rose and the observer and their tendencies and relations have somehow vanished. The phenomenon (not the original phenomenon, "a rose," but the phenomenon of the tendency to perceive the sensation of a rose) becomes a cloudless light; a static, no longer a dynamic conception. One has somehow got behind the veil of the universe. Here live the mystic and the true artist.

The Buddhist, however, does not stop here, for he alleges that even this consciousness is false; that like all things it has the Three Characteristics of Sorrow, Change, and Unsubstantiality.

Now all this analysis is a purely intellectual one, though perhaps it may be admitted that few philosophers have been capable of so profound and acute a resolution of phenomena. It has nothing to do with mysticism as such, but its rational truth makes it a suitable basis for our proposed classification of the mystic states which result from the many religious and magical methods in use among men.

# THE EQUINOX

## XII

“The Vast sun, and the brilliant moon.”

“O Ether, sun, and spirit of the moon! Ye, ye are the leaders of air!”

“The Principles, which have understood the Intelligible works of the Father, He hath clothed in sensible works and bodies, being intermediate links existing to connect the Father with Matter, rendering apparent the Images of unapparent Natures, and inscribing the Unapparent in the Apparent frame of the World.”

“There are certain Irrational Demons (mindless elementals), which derive their subsistence from the Aerial Rulers; wherefore the Oracle saith, Being the Charioteer of the Aerial, Terrestrial and Aquatic Dogs.”

“The Aquatic when applied to Divine Natures signifies a Government inseparable from Water, and hence the Oracle calls the Aquatic Gods, Water Walkers.”

“There are certain Water Elementals whom Orpheus calls Nereides, dwelling in the more elevated exhalations of Water, such as appear in damp, cloudy Air, whose bodies are sometimes seen (as Zoroaster taught) by more acute eyes, especially in Persia and Africa.”

“Let the immortal depth of your soul lead you, but earnestly raise your eyes upwards.”—ZOROASTER.

*Nama-Rupa*.—Purely material, and therefore shadowy and meaningless, are the innumerable shapes which haunt the mind of man. In one sense we must here include all purely sensory phenomena, and the images which memory presents to the mind which is endeavouring to concentrate itself upon a single thought.

In other systems of mysticism we must include all astral phantoms, divine or demoniac, which are merely seen or heard without further reflection upon them. To obtain these it is sufficient to perform the following experiment:

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

Sit down comfortably; it is perhaps best to begin in the dark.

Imagine as strongly as possible your own figure standing in front of you.

Transfer your consciousness to that figure, so that you look down upon your physical body in the chair.

(This is usually the one difficulty.)

Feeling perfectly at home in your imagined body, let that body rise through the air to a great height.

Stop. Look around you. Probably the eyes of your "astral" body will be closed. It is sometimes difficult to open them.

You will then perceive all sorts of forms, varying as you travel about. Their nature will depend almost entirely on your power of control. Some people may even perceive the phantoms of delirium and madness, and truly go mad from fear and horror.

Let the "astral" body return and sit down, coinciding with the physical body.

Closely unite the two: the experiment is over.

Practice makes perfect.

This practice is delusive and even dangerous; it is best to precede and follow it by a carefully performed "Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram."\* Better still, have a skilled teacher. The experiment is an easy one; with two pupils only (of some dozens) I have failed, and that completely; with the others the first experiment was a success.

We must include, too, in this section the forms appearing in answer to the rites of ceremonial magic.

\* Mr. Haddo's suggestions have been officially taken up and a book of careful instruction compiled. *See Liber O.*—ED

## THE EQUINOX

(Consult “Goetia,” the “Key of Solomon,” Eliphaz Levi, Cornelius Agrippa, Pietro di Abano, Barrett and others for instructions.)

These forms are more solid and real, much more dangerous, and are excessively difficult to obtain. I have known very few successful practitioners.

All these forms and names are almost infinitely varied. The grosser visual and auditory phenomena of hashish belong to the group. It is not just to suppose that a vision of a Divine being of ineffable splendour is necessarily of higher type than this shadowy form-world. Mistake on this point has led many a student astray. Highest among these things are the three visual and seven auditory phenomena of Yoga. (We omit consideration of the other senses; the subject requires a volume.) These are referred to the Sun, the Moon, and Fire; and their appearance marks the attainment of Dhyana. They are dazzling, and accompanied with such intense though passionless bliss that they partake of the nature of Vedana and may under certain conditions even rise to touch Sañña. Of the auditory are sounds heard like bells, elephants, thunder, trumpets, sea-shells, “the sweet-souled Vina,” and so on; they are of less importance and are much more common.

As one would expect, such forms leave little impress upon the memory. Yet they are seductive enough, and I am afraid that the very great majority of mystics live all their lives wandering about in this vain world of shadows and of shells.

All this, too, is the pleasant aspect of the affair. Here belong the awful shapes of delirium and madness, which obsess and destroy the soul that fails to control and dismiss them. Here lives the Dweller of the Threshold, that concen-

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

tration into a single symbol of the Despair and Terror of the Universe and of the Self. Yet on all the paths is He, ready to smite whoso falters or swerves, though he have attained almost the last height.

How many have I known, like Childe Roland and his peers, who have come to that Dark Tower! One young, one brave, one pure—lost! lost! penned in the hells of matter, swept away in the whirling waters of insane vision, true victims of the hashish of the soul.

What poignant agony, what moaning abjectness, what self-disgust! What vain folly (of all true hope forlorn!) to seek in drugs, in drink, in the pistol or the cord, the paradise they have forfeited by a moment's weakness or a moment's wavering!

This "two-handed engine at the door stands ready to smite" each one of us who has not attained to Arahatship, admission to the Great White Brotherhood. Is it not enough to make us throw away our atheism and exclaim, "O God be merciful to me a sinner, and keep me in the way of Truth!" Nay, for those of us who know what triple silver cord of moonlight binds the red blood of our heart to the Ineffable Crown of Brilliance, who have seen what Angel stands in the moon-ray, who have known the perfume and the vision, seen the drops of dew supernal stand on the silver lamen of the forehead—for us is neither fear nor pride, but silence in the one thought of the One beyond all thought.

The world of phantoms has no terror left; we can take the blood of the Black Dragon for our Red Tincture. We understand the precept *Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenias Occultum Lapidem*; and harnessing to our triumphal car the White Eagle and the Green Lion we voyage at our ease

## THE EQUINOX

upon the Path of the Chameleon, by the Towers of Iron and the Fountains of Supernal Dew, unto that black unutterable Sea most still.

### XIII

“From the Cavities of the Earth leap forth the terrestrial Dog-faced demons, showing no true sign unto mortal man.”

“Go not forth when the Lictor passeth by.”

“Direct not thy mind to the vast surfaces of the Earth; for the Plant of Truth grows not upon the ground. Nor measure the motions of the Sun, collecting rules, for he is carried by the Eternal Will of the Father, and not for your sake alone. Dismiss (from your mind) the impetuous course of the Moon, for she moveth always by the power of necessity. The progression of the Stars was not generated for your sake. The wide aerial flight of birds gives not true knowledge, nor the dissection of the entrails of victims; they are all mere toys, the basis of mercenary fraud; flee from these if you would enter the sacred paradise of piety, where Virtue, Wisdom, and Equity are assembled.”

“Stoop not down unto the darkly splendid World; wherein continually lieth a faithless Depth, and Hades wrapped in clouds, delighting in unintelligible images, precipitous, winding, a black ever-rolling Abyss; ever espousing a Body unluminous, formless and void.”

“Stoop not down, for a precipice lieth beneath the Earth, reached by a descending Ladder which hath Seven Steps, and therein is established the Throne of an evil and fatal force.”

“Stay not on the Precipice with the dross of Matter, for there is a place for thy Image in a realm ever splendid.”

“Invoke not the visible Image of the Soul of Nature.”

“Look not upon Nature, for her name is fatal.”

“It becometh you not to behold them before your body is initiated, since by always alluring they seduce the souls from the sacred mysteries.”

“Bring her not forth, lest in departing she retain something.”

“The Light-hating World, and the winding currents by which many are drawn down.”—ZOROASTER.

It may be useful here to distinguish once and for all between false and real mystical phenomena; for in the

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

previous section we have spoken of both without distinction. In the “astral visions” the consciousness is hardly disturbed; in magical evocations it is intensely exalted; but it is still bound by its original conditions. The Ego is still opposed to the non-Ego; time is, if altered in rate, still there; so, too, is Space the sort of Space we are all conscious of. Again, the phenomena observed follow the usual laws of growth and decay.

But all true mystical phenomena contradict these conditions.

In the first place, the Ego and non-Ego unite explosively, their product having none of the qualities of either. It is precisely such a phenomenon as the direct combination of Hydrogen and Chlorine. The first thing observed is the flash; in our analogy, the ecstasy of Ananda (bliss) attending the Dhyana. And as this flash does not aid us to analyse the Hydrochloric acid gas, so the Ananda prevents us by startling us from perceiving the true nature of the phenomenon. In higher mystic states, then, we find that the Yogi or Magician has learnt how to suppress it.

But the combination of the elements will usually be a definite single act of catastrophic energy.

This act, too, does not take place in time or space as we know them. I think that for the first time of experiencing a Dhyana it is necessarily single. Certain mystical methods may teach us to retain the image; but the criterion of true Dhyana is the singleness, so totally opposed as it is to the vague and varying phantoms of the “astral plane.”

The new consciousness resulting from the combination is, too, always a simple one. Even where it is infinitely complex, as in Atmadarshana or the Vision of the Universal

## THE EQUINOX

Peacock, its oneness is the truer of these two contradictory truths.

So for the matter of time and space. All time is filled; all space is filled; the phenomenon is infinite and eternal.

This is true even though its singleness makes the duration of the phenomenon but one minimum cogitabile. In short, it is experienced in some other kind of time, some other kind of space.

There is nothing irrational about this. Non-Euclidean geometries, for example, are possible, and may be true. It is only necessary to a theory of the universe that it should be true to itself within itself; for there is no other thing outside by which we can check our calculations.

Nor is it inconceivable that many of these worlds may exist, interpenetrating. Assume four dimensions, and there is room for an infinite number of them. For though a plane fills a square completely, it must always leave a cube entirely empty.

Concerning the laws which govern this new realm we can say nothing here. The most mystics have been led away from the proper line of research, usually by the baser (*i.e.*, the emotional or devotional) attractions of the Vedana-phenomena which we are about to notice; but perhaps even the best must be baffled by the non-congruity of their Experience with the symbols of language.

One may add that the language difficulty is in some ways an essential one. Language begins with simple expression of the common needs of the most animal life. Hence we see that all sciences have formulated a technical language of their own, not to be understood of the common people. The

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

reproach against mystics that their symbols are obscure is just as well founded as a similar reproach against the algebraist or the chemist. A paper at the Chemical Society is often completely intelligible only to some three or four of the odd hundred distinguished chemists in the room.

What is gained to “popular science” is lost to exactitude; and in a paper of this sort I fear rather the reproach of my mystical masers than that of the bewildered crowd.

More important and certain than the mere characteristics of mystic traces in themselves is the great and vital diagnostic that the result of a true trance is to inspire the Yogi with power to do first- rate work in his own department.

People who produce maudlin and hysterical gush, inane sentimentality, who are faddists, fools, drivellers, dodderers—these I refuse to accept as mystics. The true phenomena of mysticism can only occur in a high-class brain and a healthy brain; and their action on that brain is to repose it, to fortify it, to make it more capable of lofty and continuous thought. Beware of the sheep in lions’ skins, the asses that bray and think “the tiger roars!”

Physically too the mystic is to be known by his atmosphere of power, cleanliness and light; by his self-control, his concentration of thought and action, his vigour, his patience.

You will rarely find them at afternoon tea gossiping about clairvoyance, or even “playing Adam.”

What? you don’t know how to play “Adam”? And you call yourself a sage? Tut!

The game of “Adam” is played as follows.

Take a key, a Bible, an elastic band.

## THE EQUINOX

Open the Bible at random till you find a favourable text.

There insert the key, leaving the barrel and ring outside.

Put the elastic band round the book, so as to fix the key firmly in it.

Balance the whole arrangement by putting your thumb and that of the Assistant Magus of Art under the ring, thumb against thumb.

(An important but, as I hold, heterodox school of adepts employ the forefinger.)

Keep very still; and ask your question: "Adam, Adam, tell me true! Shall I——" &c.

If the Bible turns in a dextro-rotary manner the answer is "yes"; if in the opposite direction, "no."

This sublime method of tearing out the heart of destiny is evidently derived from a slightly more elaborate one in the "Key of Solomon" (Book I., chap. ix.) for detecting theft, which is done with a sieve, and which I supposed (until "Adam" advised me to the contrary) to represent the lowest debauchery in which the human intellect could wallow.

The game is, however, much esteemed by charlatan clairvoyants; and I can well understand their indignation at finding that I do not recognise their proficiency in this game and that of swindling and blackmail as entitling them to a seat at the Round Table of the Adepts.

Let us, however that may be, return to our classification.

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

## XIV

“There is a certain Intelligible One whom it becometh you to understand with the Flower of Mind.”

“Having mingled the Vital Spark, from two according substances, Mind and Divine Spirit, as a third to these He added Holy Love, the venerable Charioteer uniting all things.”

“Filling the Soul with profound Love.”

“The Soul of man does in a manner clasp God to herself. Having nothing mortal, she is wholly inebriated with God. For she glorieth in the harmony under which the moral body subsisteth.”

“As rays of Light his locks flow forth, ending in acute points.”

ZOROASTER.

*Vedana*.—Pertaining to Sensation we may first notice in the beginner's concentrating mind the class of distracting thoughts which refer to the emotions. The taking of pleasure in, or the endurance of pain from, the meditation itself is in particular to be dreaded.

Of mystic phenomena we may notice the immense class of devotional apparitions. Vishnu, Christ, Jehovah and other deities appear in response to long-continued and passionate love. See “Bhagavad Gita,” chap. xi., the visions of many Catholic saints, Teresa, Gertrude, Francis and others, Anna Kingsford (“Clothed with the Sun,” Part III.), Idra Rabba Qadisha and so on.

The Virgin Mary is a favourite with many; it is all one phenomenon.

Observe, though, that many such apparitions are not of the Dhyana type at all; they are mostly mere hallucinations of the “astral plane.” In section xiii. we have indicated the diagnostics.

## THE EQUINOX

Methods of obtaining these states are to be found in any book on Bhakta Yoga—Swami Vivekananda's is the best I know of—and in Loyola's "Exercitios Espirituales," whose discipline and method is, in my opinion, unsurpassed.

These phenomena are nearly always tainted with sexuality, and are excessively dangerous from this cause. "Dirt is matter in the wrong place," and to mix, consciously or unconsciously, either morality or immorality with religion is dirty; and dirt makes disease. The victim becomes a fanatic at the best, at the worst and most frequent a driveller.

Of a lower type are the loves of Magi and invoked elementals. As Levi says, "the love of the Magus for such beings is insensate, and may destroy him." It surely will, if he beware not in time.

Higher again because more purely formless and for this reason truer to the Vedana type are the ecstasies of joy and agony experienced by such men as Luther, Fox, Molinos, and others. Professor William James treats most adequately of this matter in his "Varieties of Religious Experience."

The limitations of this stage are first, its absorption in self; secondly, its almost always insuperable tendency to self-limitation and narrowness.

Two mystics, the one wallowing in Jesus and the other in Vishnu, will describe their experiences in almost identical language, yet denounce each other as "heathen" and "Mlechha" respectively.

Among hashish phenomena the correspondences are those of the intense emotions experienced (well described

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

by de Quincey (opium) and Ludlow in particular). Such are fear, pride, love, laughter, anguish, and the rest.

In the case of Vishvarupadarshana (the vision of Vishnu) and even of such results as those of St. Francis and St. Ignatius, the best mystics may steer clear of the selfishness, narrowness, and emotionalism, and raise their experience to the type of Sañña or even of Sankhara.

The "Bhagavad Gita" certainly reaches the latter height—or at least a reflection from that height—at one or two points.

We must not omit to attribute to this section the lower aspect of what Abramelin the Mage calls the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, another (and less metaphysically pretentious) way of speaking of the "Higher Self" or "Genius." It is indeed but a low aspect, for in truth the phenomenon pertains to Viññanam. Yet in simpler souls this peculiar Grace condescends—may one say?—to this level, just as a father may join in the games of his child, thus gaining its sympathy and confidence as a basis for a higher union.

### XV

"The Mind of the Father riding on the subtle guiders which glitter with the inflexible tracings of relentless fire."

"The Oracles assert that the types of Characters and of other Divine visions appear in the Ether (or Astral Light)."

ZOROASTER.

*Sañña*.—Chief among the phenomena of Sañña, in the case of the beginner trying to concentrate his mind, are those

## THE EQUINOX

disturbing thoughts which analyse the very process itself. Harder to destroy are they than the others, since they come no longer from memory or physical conditions, but from the practice itself, so that they cannot be shut off, but must needs be faced and conquered directly.

In the mystic world, we come to those strange metaphysical ecstasies which (I am convinced) lie behind many philosophical dogmas.

St. Athanasius had probably experienced something of this type when he penned his insane creed. So the Hindus with their attempts to affirm Parabrahma by denying him all qualities, their dogmas of the "pairs of opposites," their assertion of Sat-Chit-Ananda as transcending these pairs; so too perhaps with Herbert Spencer it was direct Samadhic perception of this Sañña type that led him to formulate his irrational doctrine of Transcendental Realism, just as (certainly) Berkeley's doctrine arose from Samadhi of the type of Vedana. For the stigma of this class of mystic experience is undoubtedly first its resolution of all concepts into purely formless and passionless perception, secondly (and above this), its transcendence of the laws of thought, as we have been accustomed to understand them.

(This is only in part true. Keynes' "Formal Logic," profoundly studied, leads one perilously close to the suprarational. The eminent professor is perhaps hardly aware of how his eagle-flights have brushed the sun with their fiery wings.)

If a dweller upon this plane meditate upon a God, his first experience of that God will be no longer of His appearance or of His effect upon himself, but rather of His nature in some

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

region of pure thought. In the case of the god Osiris, for example, he will no longer express his vision by the name Osiris or by the green face, by the white robes starred with the three active colours, by the crown and by the crook and scourge; nor will he chant wondrous hymns of the descent into Amennti, the death and resurrection of the God; but he will express all this by some pure symbol, such as the cross, the hexagram, or even the number 6. And those upon his plane will understand him.

Here, too, we must class the revelations of the pure Qabalah, and the discovery of the relations between symbols.

So exalted in truth are the states upon this Sañña grade that the rational man will almost always fail to understand them. Of the Rupa visions he has some experience, if only in analogy; he calls the mystic of Rupa a silly fool; so too of Vedana, whose mystic he calls a besotted ass; but the mystic of Sañña appears to him as a raving lunatic.

The hashish correspondences of this stage are the mental analyses which I have gone into so fully above, sections v. and vii.

The methods for obtain success in this matter are far more formidable than those previously sufficient. The whole mind must be intended for long unbroken periods, concentrated absolutely upon its own working until this becomes normal to it, when the state called Pratyahara is attained. The first result will be its resolution into disconnected impressions. Following this may occur a terrible experience; the consciousness of the disconnectedness of all phenomena, and of the units of consciousness of the observer. Both the Universe and the Self are insane. The mind may become a

## THE EQUINOX

total blank, the only relief (strange as it sounds) being the all but intolerable mental agony of the consciousness. This agony, belonging to the lower stage of Vedana, is the drag, ever pulling back the mystic as he endeavours to break down the blackness of his insanity. Yet the unity of its anguish is the proof of its Selfhood, and the earnest of its resurrection from the abyss. Such a mystic state may last through several days, perhaps through weeks. I should not care to assert limitations. The slightest error in the process would almost certainly result in permanent and hopeless melancholia; suicide might be the most fortunate termination.

## XVI

“O how the world hath inflexible intellectual rulers!”

ZOROASTER.

*Sankhara.*—The reader will notice—I trust with pained sympathy—the increasing difficulty of expressing these results of meditation in language. At this point one almost desires to exclaim with Fichte that if it were only possible to start all over again, one would begin by inventing a totally new scheme of symbolism.

Here in Sankhara, hashish-analogy is somewhat at fault. Possibly the conviction of the irresistibility of the connection of cause and effect, the consciousness of the necessity of subject and object to each other through immutable glyphs may represent it. It may be that my experience of hashish is even more imperfect than I have supposed, and that more gifted experimenters might fill this gap.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

In the beginner's concentration—though he is hardly to be called a beginner at this stage—Sankhara presents a terrible obstacle. For the distraction to his even flow of thought is that very flow itself; not as in Sañña, the accidents necessarily arising from that flow, as it were the rocks in the bed of the stream, but the law of gravitation itself, its necessary tendency to follow its own course. So that the good young Yogi finds himself thus awkwardly placed; that having created a mighty engine and removed all conceivable impediments to its smooth working, he is now confronted by the inertia of all that majesty and might.

Frankenstein!

The mystic states of Sankhara are more awful and tremendous than any we have yet noticed. Atmadarshana, for instance, is only to be described feebly (yet I fear unintelligibly, even so) by speaking of a consciousness of the entire Universe as One, and as All, in Its necessary relation to Itself in and out of Time and Space.

Here, too, is the result of Sammasati, a comprehension of one's own self and its relation to, and identity with, everything.

. . . But I feel that I am drivelling. The effort to think of these things, to translate them into the language of philosophy, gives the feeling—I grope and find no other expression—that one's head is going to blow off. One feels inclined to get up and shout for very feebleness, and only the utter fatuity of that or any other method of obtaining relief keeps one quietly writing. One feels, too, like the old woman in Thérèse Raquin, dumb and paralysed even while bursting with the tremendous secret. Small wonder then if the adepts demand years of training before the things themselves are

## THE EQUINOX

thought! “Look not upon the Visible Image of the Soul of Nature; for Her Name is Fatality; it becometh not thy body to behold Her, until it be first cleansed by the Sacred Mysteries.”

The methods most practical and easy of obtaining these states are principally as follow:

First, the cultivation of the “magical memory.” The practice is to remember the events of the day backwards; *i.e.*, first dinner, then tea, lunch, and breakfast. Except, of course, that by this time one has abandoned meals for ever! The memory acquires the habit, and eventually goes on working backwards through sleep, back, back, through birth and previous states until (saith Bhikhu Ananda Metteyya) going ever back through the past one comes right round to the future—“Which is pretty, but I don’t know what it means!”

I think it right to mention that I never obtained any sort of success in this meditation, and only give it on hearsay.

The real key to the stage is Sammasati—Right Recollection. One considers all known factors which have gone to make one up such as one is, oneself and not another. Clearly the omission of a single minute item must alter the whole course of events.

Consider then, why thus, and not thus.

“Explore the River of the Soul, whence, or in what order you have come: so that although you have become a servant to the body, you may again rise to the Order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason.”

Why was I born in England, not in Wales?

Why were my parents just who they were and not others?

Why did I take to climbing, not to cricket?

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

So for every known fact that concerns one—and all known facts concern one, if only to ask, “Why do I know this fact?”

How does it all fit in? It must, for the Universe is not insane—that blackness has been passed.

Who then am I? And why? And why?

Reaching ecstasy or Samadhi through this channel, the riddle of Kamma is answered, and one is able to enter the realm of pure consciousness. The Universe, mastered long ere now in its effects, is at last mastered in its causes; and it is indeed a Magister of the Temple who can say:

*Vi Veri Vniversum Vivus Vici.*

### XVII

"All things subsist together in the Intelligible World."

ZOROASTER.

I must insert a short note on the word Samadhi, source of infinite misunderstanding.

Etymologically it is composed of *Sam* (Greek *συν*), *together with*, and *Adhi* (Heb. Adonai), *the Lord*, especially the Personal Lord, or Holy Guardian Angel.

The Hindus accordingly use it to name that state of mind in which subject and object, becoming One, have disappeared. Just as H combines with Cl, and HCl results, so the Yogi combines with the object of his meditation (perhaps his own heart) and these disappearing, Vishnu appears. It is not that the Yogi perceives Vishnu.\* The Yogi is gone, just as the

\* The difficulty of showing this makes the author of the “Bhagavad Gita” descend to Rupa-symbols when he ought to have been in Viññanam (chap. xi.). It is quite essential to change the subject of the sentence. Thus the Auto-

## THE EQUINOX

Hydrogen is gone. It is not that the Heart has become Vishnu, or that Vishnu has filled the heart. The heart is gone, just as the Chlorine is gone. There is the tube, and it is full of HCl out of all relation to its elements, through the result of their union. (I purposely take the “elementary chemistry” view of the matter.)

Samadhi is therefore with the Hindu a result, the result of results indeed. There are higher and lower forms. That called Nirvikalpa-Samadhi, when the trance results from banishing thought altogether, instead of concentrating on one thought, is the highest kind.

But, with the Buddhist, Samadhi, though the state of mind meant is the same, is not an end, but a means.

The holy-man-of-the-East must keep this state of mind unimpaired during his whole life, using it as a weapon to attack the Three Characteristics (the antithesis of Nibbana) even as one uses one’s normal dualistic consciousness to attack that dualism.

But I must observe that this idea is so tremendous that I almost doubt its possibility, and tremble as to my own understanding of it. Samadhi twelve seconds in duration is a phenomenon to shake the soul of a man, to uproot his Kamma, to destroy his Identity—and Bhikku Ananda Metteyya cheerfully talks of practically perpetual Samadhi as the first step to attainment!

The Hindu, too, asks this question.

biography of a Mystic would run: foetus, babe, child, boy, youth, man, 418. There is no personal identity as a link between the man who is on the brink of “attainment” and the Being who arises in him, annihilating him, and Whom he subsequently remembers as his “Genius.”

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

“I,” he says, “define Phenomena as changeful and Atman the Noumenon as without change. When challenged, I merely retort by distinguishing between Atman and Paramatman. You say the same, but for Atman you say ‘Nibbana.’”

The Buddhist can only retort, rudely enough: There is no Atman; and there is Nibbana.

The Hindu probably mutters something about criticism of Nibbana having forced some Buddhists to a conception of Parinibbana, simply but neatly defined as That to which none of the criticisms apply! Yet Atman and Nibbana are defined in almost identical terms.

It is clearly idle for us who know neither perfectly to attempt to arbitrate in so delicate an imbroglio. On the contrary, we had better set to and attain them both, and That which combines, denies, and transcends them both. Words are cheap!

## XVIII

“In this the things without figure are figured.”

“A similar Fire flashingly extending through the rushings of Air, or a Fire formless whence cometh the Image of a Voice, or even a flashing Light abounding, revolving, whirling forth, crying aloud. Also there is the vision of the fire-flashing Courser of Light, or also a Child, borne aloft on the shoulders of the Celestial Steed, fiery, or clothed with gold, or naked, or shooting with the bow shafts of Light, and standing on the shoulders of the horse; then if thy meditation prolongeth itself, thou shalt unite all these Symbols into the form of a Lion.”

“But God is He having the Head of the Hawk.”—ZOROASTER.

*Viññanam.*—If hashish-analogy be able to assist us here, it is in that supreme state in which the man has built himself

## THE EQUINOX

up into God. One may doubt whether the drug alone ever does this. It is perhaps only the destined adept who, momentarily freed by the dissolving action of the drug from the chain of the four lower Skandhas, obtains this knowledge which is his by right, totally inept as he may be to do so by any ordinary methods.

In the case of the aspirant to meditation, this stage is even more terrible than the last. He has, to use our previous figures, suspended the law of gravitation; the stream is still, and the Sun of the soul is faithfully reflected in its brilliance; the mighty engine is stopped.

But—*there it is!* We have got rid of motion, but matter remains. (Again must I apologise for taking so elementary a view of physics.) And while there is a particle of matter, it must fill the Universe—there is no place for spirit. His thought is controlled and smooth; his thought (even!) is stopped: but there the thought is. Immutable it abides, stronger than ever in its silence and vastness; and—O unhappy one! *that which can be thought is not true.*

Thou hast taken thee the lies, those little foxes that spoil the grapes. Lie after lie thou has suppressed; and what hast thou achieved?

Thou hast smitten all the illusions—O miserable slave! All thou hast done is to harmonise and weld all the lies and illusions into one universal lie, one infinite illusion. It is one; there is nothing to oppose to it. Thou art ten million-fold more in the grip of Maya than ever, thou who callest thyself Parabrahma, Hua, IAO!

The mystic states of this grade are the final and perfect identity of the Self with the Holy Guardian Angel, the Vision

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

of Pan, the Four Formless States of Buddhism, namely, Samadhi upon consciousness, Space, Nothing, and that which is neither P nor p', in logical phraseology. Here, too, we should place Shivadarshana, the Vision of the Destruction of the Universe, the Opening of the Eye of Shiva.

(Which is why adepts of this stage wear an eye as a badge.)

Of this vision what can one say, save that the Universe, as previously known through Atmadarshana, is annihilated? Yet the negation of this phrase is only apparent; the sense is that all that negative Atmadarshana is destroyed; it is only an illusion that goes. Yet there is indeed Nothing in its place—and the only way to express the matter is to spell that Nothing with a capital N.

If the rationalist reader has had the quite super-Stylite patience to read to this point, he will surely now at last throw down the book with an ethically justifiable curse.

Yet I beg him to believe that there is a shade of difference between me and a paradox-monger. I am not playing with words—Lord knows how I wish I could! I find that they play with me!—I am honestly and soberly trying to set down that which I know, that which I know better than I know anything else in the world, that which so transcends and excels all other experience that I am all on fire to proclaim it.

Yet I fail utterly. I have given my life to the study of the English language; I am supposed by my flatterers to have some little facility of expression, especially, one may agree, in conveying the extremes of thought of all kinds.

## THE EQUINOX

Yet here I want to burn down the Universe for lack of a language. So the angry mood passes, and one understands how one's predecessors, in the same predicament, got out of it by quietly painting a "Heart girt with a Serpent," or a "Winged Globe" or some similar device.

If I persist, seeing that my little gift of language must be mine for some purpose, and therefore for this purpose, since no other purpose can there be, let my rationalist friends excuse me, as the agony of my impotence most terribly avenges them.

Concerning the methods of obtaining these particular states, I am almost at one with Sri Parananda, my godly friend, when he talks of "the Grace of the Lord Shiva," and with my ungodly friend Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya, when he hints that the accidental coincidence of the circumferences of the Nibbana-Dhatu and the Samsara-Chakra with the Brahmarandra of the sphere of the 99-year-old-Talipot-palm-like sucking Arahat may have something to do with it.

Plainly, we know so very little; so few ever attain this class of experience that one is perhaps hardly justified in maintaining (as I always have maintained and that stoutly) that the reward is according to the work. It may conceivably be that work does not affect the question, as it clearly does in the lower grades, it may be that an outsider may pull off the big thing—Agnosco!

Still, I advise people to work at it.

Perhaps the most direct method is that of sitting in your Ajna Chakra (that point in your brain where thoughts rise, a point to be discovered and rendered self-conscious by repeated

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

experiment) and without thinking of anything whatever, killing the thoughts as they rise with a single smack, like a child killing flies. The difficulty is of course to kill them without thinking of the killing, which thought is naturally just as bad as any other thought. I never got any good out of this method myself. It may, I believe, happen with fair frequency that in the course of any advanced meditation or invocation this particular type of spiritual experience may suddenly arise without apparent cause.

Anyway, let us hope so!

As a matter of practical politics, I think that a judicious mixture of the methods of East and West is likely to give the best results.

Let the young Adept, for example, master thoroughly the groundwork of the Hindu system.

Let him master Asana, posture, so that he can sit motionless for hours without any message from his body reaching and so disturbing his brain. Let him include in his accomplishments Pranayama, control of the breath and of the vital nervous currents which react in sympathy with it.

Let him then exalt to the utmost his soul by the appropriate ritual of ceremonial magic; and when by this means he has most thoroughly identified himself with the Supreme, let him, as that Supreme One, continue to meditate with intense force upon Himself, until his sphere is entirely filled with the single Thought.

Lastly, if this, the male energy, suffice not, let him transform it into a pure and perfect emptiness and passivity, as of one waiting for the Beloved One, with intense longing rendered passionless by the certainty that He will come.

## THE EQUINOX

Then, it may be, the Eye will open upon him, and the tomb of his Pyramid be unsealed.

It is impossible in a few words to explain thoroughly this eclectic system; for each act and thought of the ritual demands an expert teacher, and even a good pupil might study for years before mastering the method. By which time he might not impossibly have discovered one of his own.

Howbeit, I must do my best; and if by that best I can help “the least of these little ones,” so much the better.

## XIX

“The Intelligible subsisteth beyond Mind.”—ZOROASTER.

*Nerodha-samapatti.*—It must be very satisfactory, you will probably be thinking, to wear that Eye as a badge, to have got so near to the End.

And that is where the joke comes in. Yet to the adept the Anglo-Indian proverb, “A jok’s a jok (leech) but a jok up your nose is no joke” (Nose is not the word; but no matter!), may occur with painful intensity.

For he is no nearer to Nibbana than when he started. Though he has stripped off all the husks of thought and touched Thought itself, even attaining to Negation of thought; yet he is still upon the plane of Thought. And—that which can be thought is not true.

All his righteousness is as filthy rags; even his eternity of Shivadarshana, his stored crores of Mahakalpas in the Arupa-Brahma-Lokas must pass; he must come back to his horses—and this time as a horse-fly.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

So then he must abandon the whole series of ecstasies; all this time he has been on the wrong road. For the Three Characteristics are true of Viññanam as they are of Rupa; Change, Sorrow, Unsubstantiality.

He has only one asset; the habit of One-pointedness—Ekâgrata. He may be all kinds of a black magician; but at least he has learnt to concentrate his mind. But what is he to aim at? Hashish-analogy is better than ever here; for Nibbana stands to the attainment of the Eight Jhanas, the Four Formless States κ.τ.λ. as the Decalogue does to any of his hashish-states. It has nothing whatever to do with it.

All this time he has been walking round the circumference of a wheel, cheerfully singing “Nearer, my God, to Thee; Nearer to Thee!” while his God is in the centre. He has done the medicine-man trick, and wasted a lot of maidens in the hope of making rain.

So—one must suppose, for here I reach a point where, as Mr. Waite jeers, we are driven to take refuge in portentous darkness and irretrievable mystery (because we don't know anything about it)—he sits down and contemplates the Three Characteristics. This will presumably be very difficult to do because he is probably (for all the “Grace of the Lord Shiva” business) an expert in the Viññanam trances, and having thus created an eternal Universe and an even more eternal Absence of Universe, both of which, too, are probably mere masses of Sat—Chit—Ananda (Being—Knowledge—Bliss) while he is trying to think of Change—Sorrow—Unsubstantiality.

At last, as I imagine, probably without foundation, he succeeds in seeing first the truth and then the falsity of the Three Characteristics—and that is Nibbana.

## THE EQUINOX

(One may explain, as with Samadhi, that the man is not “in” Nibbana; the Characteristics are not “in” Nibbana: but—Nibbana is.)

It would be easy to string up a paradox-scheme in which Change, not-Change, both-Change-and-not-Change, and neither-Change-nor-not-Change were all four perceived at once; and indeed some authors have done something very like this; but, between you and me, I don't believe they knew anything about it; and as I certainly don't know anything myself, if it's all the same to you, I'd rather leave the subject alone. We really can't have another Hargrave Jennings on “The Rosicrucians: their Rites and Mysteries.”

So there the matter must rest. I have added this section for the sake of completeness; but it is all hearsay. I am too blind to see the necessity of the section at all; I am far from convinced that the Viññanam phenomena do not represent finality; so stupendous are they that even to one who is accustomed to them it must always be difficult to imagine a state not merely beyond them but out of their dimension. Yet? . . . Perhaps that which I now urge is indeed the Great Illusion. . . .

At least, having adopted the Buddhist Skandhas as the basis of my classification, I was bound in mere courtesy to give the Buddhist doctrine as I have heard it from the one man who really understands it, Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya.

If I could only understand Him. . . !

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

## XX

“If thou extendest the Fiery Mind to the work of piety, thou wilt preserve the fluxible body.”

“For three days and no longer need ye sacrifice.”—ZOROASTER.

We are at the end of our little digression upon mystic states, and may cheerfully return to the consideration of Scientific Illuminism. We have had, you may say, a poor half-pennyworth of Science to an intolerable deal of Illuminism. Well, that is what I wanted you to say. Were it not so, I would not have spent these two nights over this paper, when I want to be fresh every morning to go to the Prado and gloat over Velasquez!

Here, gentlemen, are a number of genuine mystic states; some home-grown, some imported. Please tell us what they are! (You are fond of telling us what things are.)

It is useless to label the whole lot as insane: nor are they unimportant.

In my view, most of the great men of the world have known them; themselves attributed their greatness to these experiences, and I really do not see why admittedly lesser men should contradict them. I hope to argue this point at greater length when I am better documented; but at the very least, these states are of the most extraordinary interest. Even as insanities, they would demand the strictest investigation from the light they throw upon the working of the brain. But as it is! All the sacred literature of the world is full of them; all the art and poetry of all time is inspired by them; and, by the Lord Harry! we know nothing about them. Nothing but what vague and troubled reflections the minds of

## THE EQUINOX

the mystics themselves, untrained in accuracy of observation, bring back from the fountains of light; nothing but what quacks exploit, and dotards drivel of.

Think of what we claim! That concentration and its results can open the Closed Palace of the King, and answer the Riddle of the Sphinx. All science only brings us up to a blind wall, the wall of Philosophy; here is your great Ram to batter a breach and let in the forlorn hope of the Children of the Curse to storm the heights of heaven.

One single trained observer with five years' work, less money than would build a bakehouse, and no more help than his dozen of volunteer students could give him, would earn himself a fame loftier than the stars, and set mankind on the royal road to the solution of the One great problem. Scientific Illuminism would have deserved its name, or mysticism would have received a blow which would save another young fool like myself from wasting his whole life on so senseless a study and enable him to engage in the nobler career of cheating and duping his fellows in the accredited spheres of commerce and politics, to say nothing of the grosser knaveries of the liberal professions.

But I have no doubts. Let the investigator study his own brain on the lines I have laid down, possibly in the first place with the aid of hashish or some better physical expedient, to overcome the dull scepticism which is begotten of idleness upon ignorance; it is useless to study the no-brain of another, on the strength of a reputation for fraud, as the spiritualist investigators seem to do. Your own brain is the best; next, the trained and vigorous brains of clever and educated men, in perfect health, honest and wary.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HASHISH

You will get more from them than you will from some maudlin hysteric professional mountebank. All talk to the contrary is the merest froth; Mohammed was a great lawgiver and a great fighter; try your experiment with the sane, and not with the crazy!

True, you will get hallucinations more easily with the unsound; but you will never, never, never find a woman or a degenerate who is capable of any trance of type higher than Vedana. Take my word for it!

No! take my word for nothing: try all things; hold fast that which is good!

MADRID,

*August 1908, O.S.*

# THE HERB DANGEROUS

## PART III

### THE POEM OF HASHISH



# THE POEM OF HASHSISH

## CHAPTER I

### THE LONGING FOR INFINITY

THOSE who know how to observe themselves, and who preserve the memory of their impressions, those who, like Hoffmann, have known how to construct their spiritual barometer, have sometimes had to note in the observatory of their mind fine seasons, happy days, delicious minutes. There are days when man awakes with a young and vigorous genius. Though his eyelids be scarcely released from the slumber which sealed them, the exterior world shows itself to him with a powerful relief, a clearness of contour, and a richness of colour which are admirable. The moral world opens out its vast perspective, full of new clarities.

A man gratified by this happiness, unfortunately rare and transient, feels himself at once more an artist and more a just man; to say all in a word, a nobler being. But the most singular thing in this exceptional condition of the spirit and of the senses—which I may without exaggeration call heavenly, if I compare it with the heavy shadows of common and daily existence—is that it has not been created by any visible or easily definable cause. Is it the result of a good hygiene and of a wise regimen? Such is the first explanation which

## THE EQUINOX

suggests itself ; but we are obliged to recognise that often this marvel, this prodigy, so to say, produces itself as if it were the effect of a superior and invisible power, of a power exterior to man, after a period of the abuse of his physical faculties. Shall we say that it is the reward of assiduous prayer and spiritual ardour? It is certain that a constant elevation of the desire, a tension of the spiritual forces in a heavenly direction, would be the most proper regimen for creating this moral health, so brilliant and so glorious. But what absurd law causes it to manifest itself (as it sometimes does) after shameful orgies of the imagination; after a sophistical abuse of reason, which is, to its straight forward and rational use, that which the tricks of dislocation which some acrobats have taught themselves to perform are to sane gymnastics? For this reason I prefer to consider this abnormal condition of the spirit as a true "grace;" as a magic mirror wherein man is invited to see himself at his best; that is to say, as that which he should be, and might be; a kind of angelic excitement; a rehabilitation of the most flattering type. A certain Spiritualist School, largely represented in England and America, even considers supernatural phenomena, such as the apparition of phantoms, ghosts, &c., as manifestations of the Divine Will, ever anxious to awaken in the spirit of man the memory of invisible truths.

Besides this charming and singular state, where all the forces are balanced; where the imagination, though enormously powerful, does not drag after it into perilous adventures the moral sense; when an exquisite sensibility is no longer tortured by sick nerves, those counsellors-in-ordinary of crime or despair: this marvellous

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

State, I say, has no prodromal symptoms. It is as unexpected as a ghost. It is a species of obsession, but of intermittent obsession; from which we should be able to draw, if we were but wise, the certainty of a nobler existence, and the hope of attaining to it by the daily exercise of our will. This sharpness of thought, this enthusiasm of the senses and of the spirit, must in every age have appeared to man as the chiefest of blessings; and for this reason, considering nothing but the immediate pleasure he has, without worrying himself as to whether he were violating the laws of his constitution, he has sought, in physical science, in pharmacy, in the grossest liquors, in the subtlest perfumes, in every climate and in every age, the means of fleeing, were it but for some hours only, his habitaculum of mire, and, as the author of "Lazare" says, "to carry Paradise at the first assault." Alas! the vices of man, full of horror as one must suppose them, contain the proof, even though it were nothing but their infinite expansion, of his hunger for the Infinite; only, it is a taste which often loses its way. One might take a proverbial metaphor, "All roads lead to Rome," and apply it to the moral world: all roads lead to reward or punishment; two forms of eternity. The mind of man is glutted with passion: he has, if I may use another familiar phrase, passion to burn. But this unhappy soul, whose natural depravity is equal to its sudden aptitude, paradoxical enough, for charity and the most arduous virtues, is full of paradoxes which allow him to turn to other purposes the overflow of this overmastering passion. He never imagines that he is selling himself wholesale: he forgets, in his infatuation, that he is matched against a player more cunning and more strong than

## THE EQUINOX

he; and that the Spirit of Evil, though one give him but a hair, will not delay to carry off the whole head. This visible lord of visible nature—I speak of man—has, then, wished to create Paradise by chemistry, by fermented drinks; like a maniac who should replace solid furniture and real gardens by decorations painted on canvas and mounted on frames. It is in this degradation of the sense of the Infinite that lies, according to me, the reason of all guilty excesses; from the solitary and concentrated drunkenness of the man of letters, who, obliged to seek in opium and anodyne for a physical suffering, and having thus discovered a well of morbid pleasure, has made of it, little by little, his sole diet, and as it were the sum of his spiritual life; down to the most disgusting sot of the suburbs, who, his head full of flame and of glory, rolls ridiculously in the muck of the roads.

Among the drugs most efficient in creating what I call the artificial ideal, leaving on one side liquors, which rapidly excite gross frenzy and lay flat all spiritual force, and the perfumes, whose excessive use, while rendering more subtle man's imagination, wear out gradually his physical forces; the two most energetic substances, the most convenient and the most handy, are hashish and opium. The analysis of the mysterious effect and the diseased pleasures which these drugs beget, of the inevitable chastisement which results from their prolonged use, and finally the immorality necessarily employed in this pursuit of a false ideal, constitutes the subject of this study.

The subject of opium has been treated already, and in a manner at once so startling, so scientific, and so poetic that I shall not dare to add a word to it. I will therefore content

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

myself in another study, with giving an analysis of this incomparable book, which has never been fully translated into French. The author, and illustrious man of a powerful and exquisite imagination, to-day retired and silent, has dared with tragic candour to write down the delights and the tortures which he once found in opium, and the most dramatic portion of his book is that where he speaks of the superhuman efforts of will which he found it necessary to bring into action in order to escape from the damnation which he had imprudently incurred. To-day I shall only speak of hashish, and I shall speak of it after numerous investigations and minute information; extracts from notes or confidences of intelligent men who had long been addicted to it; only, I shall combine these varied documents into a sort of monograph, choosing a particular soul, and one easy to explain and to define, as a type suitable to experiences of this nature.

## CHAPTER II

### WHAT IS HASHISH?

THE stories of Marco Polo, which have been so unjustly laughed at, as in the case of some other old travellers, have been verified by men of science, and deserve our belief. I shall not repeat his story of how, after having intoxicated them with hashish (whence the word "Assassin") the old Man of the Mountains shut up in a garden filled with delights those of his youngest disciples to whom he wished to give an idea of Paradise as an earnest of the reward, so to speak, of a passive and unreflecting obedience. The reader may consult, concerning the secret Society of Hashishins, the work of Von Hammer- Purgstall, and the note of M. Sylvestre de Sacy contained in vol. 16 of "Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres"; and, with regard to the etymology of the word "assassin," his letter to the editor of the "Moniteur" in No. 359 of the year 1809. Herodotus tells us that the Syrians used to gather grains of hemp and throw red-hot stones upon them; so that it was like a vapour-bath, more perfumed than that of any Grecian stove; and the pleasure of it was so acute that it drew cries of joy from them.

Hashish, in effect, comes to us from the East. The exciting properties of hemp were well known in ancient Egypt, and the use of it is very widely spread under different names in

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

India, Algeria, and Arabia Felix; but we have around us, under our eyes, curious examples of the intoxication caused by vegetable emanations. Without speaking of the children who, having played and rolled themselves in heaps of cut lucern, often experience singular attacks of vertigo, it is well known that during the hemp harvest both male and female workers undergo similar effects. One would say that from the harvest rises a miasma which troubles their brains despitefully. The head of the reaper is full of whirlwinds, sometimes laden with reveries; at certain moments the limbs grow weak and refuse their office. We have heard tell of crises of somnambulism as being frequent among the Russian peasants, whose cause, they say, must be attributed to the use of hemp-seed oil in the preparation of food. Who does not know the extravagant behaviour of hens which have eaten grains of hemp-seed, and the wild enthusiasm of the horses which the peasants, at weddings and on the feasts of their patron saints, prepare for a steeplechase by a ration of hemp-seed, sometimes sprinkled with wine? Nevertheless, French hemp is unsuitable for preparing hashish, or at least, as repeated experiments have shown, unfitted to give a drug which is equal in power to hashish. Hashish, or Indian hemp (*Cannabis indica*), is a plant of the family of *Urticaceae*, resembling in every respect the hemp of our latitudes, except that it does not attain the same height. It possesses very extraordinary intoxicating properties, which for some years past have attracted in France the attention of men of science and of the world. It is more or less highly esteemed according to its different sources: that of Bengal is the most prized by Europeans; that, however, of Egypt, of Constantinople, of Persia, and

## THE EQUINOX

of Algeria enjoys the same properties, but in an inferior degree.

Hashish (or grass; that is to say, *the grass par excellence*, as if the Arabs had wished to define in a single word the *grass* source of all material pleasures) has different names, according to its composition and the method of preparation which it has undergone in the country where it has been gathered: In India, *bhang*; in Africa, *teriaki*; in Algeria and in Arabia Felix, *madjound*, &c. It makes considerable difference at what season of the year it is gathered. It possesses its greatest energy when it is in flower. The flowering tops are in consequence the only parts employed in the different preparations of which we are about to speak. The *extrait gras* of hashish, as the Arabs prepare it, is obtained by boiling the tops of the fresh plant in butter, with a little water. It is strained, after complete evaporation of all humidity, and one thus obtains a preparation which has the appearance of a pomade, in colour greenish yellow, and which possesses a disagreeable odour of hashish and of rancid butter. Under this form it is employed in small pills of two to four grammes in weight, but on account of its objectionable smell, which increases with age, the Arabs conceal the *extrait gras* in sweetmeats.

The most commonly employed of these sweetmeats, *dawamesk*, is a mixture of *extrait gras*, sugar, and various other aromatic substances, such as vanilla, cinnamon, pistachio, almond, musk. Sometimes one even adds a little cantharides, with an object which has nothing in common with the ordinary results of hashish. Under this new form hashish has no disagreeable qualities, and one can take it in a

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

dose of fifteen, twenty, and thirty grammes, either enveloped in a leaf of *pain à chanter* or in a cup of coffee.

The experiments made by Messrs. Smith, Gastinel, and Decourtive were directed towards the discovery of the active principles of hashish. Despite their efforts, its chemical combination is still little known, but one usually attributes its properties to a resinous matter which is found there in the proportion of about 10 per cent. To obtain this resin the dried plant is reduced to a coarse powder, which is then washed several times with alcohol; this is afterwards partially distilled and evaporated until it reaches the consistency of an extract; this extract is treated with water, which dissolves the gummy foreign matter, and the resin then remains in a pure condition.

This product is soft, of a dark green colour, and possesses to a high degree the characteristic smell of hashish. Five, ten, fifteen centigrammes are sufficient to produce surprising results. But the haschischine, which may be administered under the form of chocolate pastilles or small pills mixed with ginger, has, like the *dawamesk* and the *extrait gras*, effects more or less vigorous, and of an extremely varied nature, according to the individual temperament and nervous susceptibility of the hashish-eater; and, more than that, the result varies in the same individual. Sometimes he will experience an immoderate and irresistible gaiety, sometimes a sense of well-being and of abundance of life, sometimes a slumber doubtful and thronged with dreams. There are, however, some phenomena which occur regularly enough; above all, in the case of persons of a regular temperament and education; there is a kind of unity in its variety which

## THE EQUINOX

will allow me to edit, without too much trouble, this monograph on hashish-drunkenness of which I spoke before.

At Constantinople, in Algeria, and even in France, some people smoke hashish mixed with tobacco, but then the phenomena in question only occur under a form much moderated, and, so to say, lazy. I have heard it said that recently, by means of distillation, an essential oil has been drawn from hashish which appears to possess a power much more active than all the preparations hitherto known, but it has not been sufficiently studied for me to speak with certainty of its results. Is it not superfluous to add that tea, coffee, and alcoholic drinks are powerful adjuvants which accelerate more or less the outbreak of this mysterious intoxication?

## CHAPTER III

### THE PLAYGROUND OF THE SERAPHIM

WHAT does one experience? What does one see? Marvellous things, is it not so? Wonderful sights? Is it very beautiful? and very terrible? and very dangerous? Such are the usual questions which, with a curiosity mingled with fear, those ignorant of hashish address to its adepts. It is, as it were, the childish impatience to know, resembling that of those people who have never quitted their firesides when they meet a man who returns from distant and unknown countries. They imagine hashish-drunkenness to themselves as a prodigious country, a vast theatre of sleight-of-hand and of juggling, where all is miraculous, all unforeseen.—That is a prejudice, a complete mistake. And since for the ordinary run of readers and of questioners the word “hashish” connotes the idea of a strange and topsy-turvy world, the expectation of prodigious dreams (it would be better to say hallucinations, which are, by the way, less frequent than people suppose), I will at once remark upon the important difference which separates the effects of hashish from the phenomena of dream. In dream, that adventurous voyage which we undertake every night, there is something positively miraculous. It is a miracle whose punctual occurrence has blunted its mystery. The dreams of man are of two classes. Some, full of his ordinary

## THE EQUINOX

life, of his preoccupations, of his desires, of his vices, combine themselves in a manner more or less bizarre with the objects which he has met in his day's work, which have carelessly fixed themselves upon the vast canvas of his memory. That is the natural dream; it is the man himself. But the other kind of dream, the dream absurd and unforeseen, without meaning or connection with the character, the life, and the passions of the sleeper: this dream, which I shall call hieroglyphic, evidently represents the supernatural side of life, and it is exactly because it is absurd that the ancients believed it to be divine. As it is inexplicable by natural causes, they attributed to it a cause external to man, and even to-day, leaving out of account oneiromancers and the fooleries of a philosophical school which sees in dreams of this type sometimes a reproach, sometimes a warning; in short, a symbolic and moral picture begotten in the spirit itself of the sleeper. It is a dictionary which one must study; a language of which sages may obtain the key.

In the intoxication of hashish there is nothing like this. We shall not go outside the class of natural dream. The drunkenness, throughout its duration, it is true, will be nothing but an immense dream, thanks to the intensity of its colours and the rapidity of its conceptions. But it will always keep the idiosyncrasy of the individual. The man has desired to dream; the dream will govern the man. But this dream will be truly the son of its father. The idle man has taxed his ingenuity to introduce artificially the supernatural into his life and into his thought; but, after all, and despite the accidental energy of his experiences, he is nothing but the same man magnified, the same number raised to a very high power. He

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

is brought into subjection, but, unhappily for him, it is not by himself; that is to say, by the part of himself which is already dominant. "He would be angel; he becomes a beast." Momentarily very powerful, if, indeed, one can give the name of power to what is merely excessive sensibility without the control which might moderate or make use of it.

Let it be well understood then, by worldly and ignorant folk, curious of acquaintance with exceptional joys, that they will find in hashish nothing miraculous, absolutely nothing but the natural in a superabundant degree. The brain and the organism upon which hashish operates will only give their ordinary and individual phenomena, magnified, it is true, both in quantity and quality, but always faithful to their origin. Man cannot escape the fatality of his mortal and physical temperament. Hashish will be, indeed, for the impressions and familiar thoughts of the man, a mirror which magnifies, yet no more than a mirror.

Here is the drug before your eyes: a little green sweet-meat, about as big as a nut, with a strange smell; so strange that it arouses a certain revulsion, and inclinations to nausea—as, indeed, any fine and even agreeable scent, exalted to its maximum strength and (so to say) density, would do.

Allow me to remark in passing that this proposition can be inverted, and that the most disgusting and revolting perfume would become perhaps a pleasure to inhale if it were reduced to its minimum quantity and intensity.

There! there is happiness; heaven in a teaspoon; happiness, with all its intoxication, all its folly, all its childishness. You can swallow it without fear; it is not fatal; it will in nowise injure your physical organs. Perhaps (later on) too

## THE EQUINOX

frequent an employment of the sorcery will diminish the strength of your will; perhaps you will be less a man than you are today; but retribution is so far off, and the nature of the eventual disaster so difficult to define! What is it that you risk? A little nervous fatigue to-morrow—no more. Do you not every day risk greater punishments for less reward? Very good then; you have even, to make it act more quickly and vigorously, imbibed your dose of *extrait gras* in a cup of black coffee. You have taken care to have the stomach empty, postponing dinner till nine or ten o'clock, to give full liberty of action to the poison. At the very most you will take a little soup in an hour's time. You are now sufficiently provisioned for a long and strange journey; the steamer has whistled, the sails are trimmed; and you have this curious advantage over ordinary travellers, that you have no idea where you are going. You have made your choice; here's to luck!

I presume that you have taken the precaution to choose carefully your moment for setting out on this adventure. For every perfect debauch demands perfect leisure. You know, moreover, that hashish exaggerates, not only the individual, but also circumstances and environment. You have no duties to fulfil which require punctuality or exactitude; no domestic worries; no lover's sorrows. One must be careful on such points. Such a disappointment, an anxiety, an interior monition of a duty which demands your will and your attention, at some determinate moment, would ring like a funeral bell across your intoxication and poison your pleasure. Anxiety would become anguish, and disappointment torture. But if, having observed all these preliminary conditions, the weather is fine; if you are situated in favourable surroundings, such as a picturesque

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

landscape or a room beautifully decorated; and if in particular you have at command a little music, then all is for the best.

Generally speaking, there are three phases in hashish intoxication, easy enough to distinguish, and it is not uncommon for beginners to obtain only the first symptoms of the first phase. You have heard vague chatter about the marvellous effects of hashish; your imagination has preconceived a special idea, an ideal intoxication, so to say. You long to know if the reality will indeed reach the height of your hope; that alone is sufficient to throw you from the very beginning into an anxious state, favourable enough to the conquering and enveloping tendency of the poison. Most novices, on their first initiation, complain of the slowness of the effects: they wait for them with a puerile impatience, and, the drug not acting quickly enough for their liking, they bluster long rigmaroles of incredulity, which are amusing enough for the old hands who know how hashish acts. The first attacks, like the symptoms of a storm which has held off for a long while, appear and multiply themselves in the bosom of this very incredulity. At first it is a certain hilarity, absurdly irresistible, which possesses you. These accesses of gaiety, without due cause, of which you are almost ashamed, frequently occur and divide the intervals of stupor, during which you seek in vain to pull yourself together. The simplest words, the most trivial ideas, take on a new and strange physiognomy. You are surprised at yourself for having up to now found them so simple. Incongruous likenesses and correspondences, impossible to foresee, interminable puns, comic sketches, spout eternally from your brain. The demon has encompassed you; it is useless to kick against the pricks of this hilarity, as painful as tickling

## THE EQUINOX

is! From time to time you laugh to yourself at your stupidity and your madness, and your comrades, if you are with others, laugh also, both at your state and their own; but as they laugh without malice, so you are without resentment.

This gaiety, turn by turn idle or acute, this uneasiness in joy, this insecurity, this indecision, last, as a rule, but a very short time. Soon the meanings of ideas become so vague, the conducting thread which binds your conceptions together becomes so tenuous, that none but your accomplices can understand you. And, again, on this subject and from this point of view, no means of verifying it! Perhaps they only think that they understand you, and the illusion is reciprocal. This frivolity, these bursts of laughter, like explosions, seem like a true mania, or at least like the delusion of a maniac, to every man who is not in the same state as yourself. What is more, prudence and good sense, the regularity of the thoughts of him who witnesses, but has been careful not to intoxicate himself, rejoice you and amuse you as if they were a particular form of dementia. The parts are interchanged; his self-possession drives you to the last limits of irony. How monstrous comic is this situation, for a man who is enjoying a gaiety incomprehensible for him who is not placed in the same environment as he! The madman takes pity on the sage, and from that moment the idea of his superiority begins to dawn on the horizon of his intellect. Soon it will grow great and broad, and burst like a meteor.

I was once witness of a scene of this kind which was carried very far, and whose grotesqueness was only intelligible to those who were acquainted, at least by means of observation of others, with the effects of the substance and

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

the enormous difference of diapason which it creates between two intelligences apparently equal. A famous musician, who was ignorant of the properties of hashish, who perhaps had never heard speak of it, finds himself in the midst of a company, several persons of which had taken a portion. They try to make him understand the marvellous effects of it; at these prodigious yarns he smiles courteously, by complaisance, like a man who is willing to play the fool for a minute or two. His contempt is quickly divined by these spirits, sharpened by the poison, and their laughter wounds him; these bursts of joy, this playing with words, these altered countenances—all this unwholesome atmosphere irritates him, and forces him to exclaim sooner, perhaps, than he would have wished that this is a poor *rôle*, and that, moreover, it must be very tiring for those who have undertaken it.

The comicality of it lightened them all like a flash; their joy boiled over. “This *rôle* may be good for you,” said he, “but for me, no.” “It is good for us; that is all we care about,” replies egoistically one of the revellers.

Not knowing whether he is dealing with genuine madmen or only with people who are pretending to be mad, our friend thinks that the part of discretion is to go away; but somebody shuts the door and hides the key. Another, kneeling before him, asks his pardon, in the name of the company, and declares insolently, but with tears, that despite his mental inferiority, which perhaps excites a little pity, they are all filled with a profound friendship for him. He makes up his mind to remain, and even condescends, after pressure, to play a little music.

But the sounds of the violin, spreading themselves through

## THE EQUINOX

the room like a new contagion, stab—the word is not too strong—first one of the revellers, then another. There burst forth deep and raucous sighs, sudden sobs, streams of silent tears. The frightened musician stops, and, approaching him whose ecstasy is noisiest, asks him if he suffers much, and what must be done to relieve him. One of the persons present, a man of common sense, suggests lemonade and acids; but the “sick man,” his eyes shining with ecstasy, looks on them both with ineffable contempt. To wish to cure a man “sick” of too much life, “sick” of joy!

As this anecdote shows, goodwill towards men has a sufficiently large place in the feelings excited by hashish: a soft, idle, dumb benevolence which springs from the relaxation of the nerves.

In support of this observation somebody once told me an adventure which had happened to him in this state of intoxication, and as he preserved a very exact memory of his feelings I understood perfectly into what grotesque and inextricable embarrassment this difference of diapason and of pity of which I was just speaking had thrown him. I do not remember if the man in question was at his first or his second experiment; had he taken a dose which was a little too strong, or was it that the hashish had produced, without any apparent cause, effects much more vigorous than the ordinary—a not infrequent occurrence?

He told me that across the scutcheon of his joy, this supreme delight of feeling oneself full of life and believing oneself full of genius, there had suddenly smitten the bar sinister of terror. At first dazzled by the beauty of his sensations, he had suddenly fallen into fear of them. He had asked himself the question: “What would become of my intelligence

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

and of my bodily organs if this state" (which he took for a supernatural state) "went on always increasing; if my nerves became continually more and more delicate?" By the power of enlargement which the spiritual eye of the patient possesses, this fear must be an unspeakable torment. "I was," he said, "like a runaway horse galloping towards an abyss, wishing to stop and being unable to do so. Indeed, it was a frightful ride, and my thought, slave of circumstance, of *milieu*, of accident, and of all that may be implied by the word chance, had taken a turn of pure, absolute rhapsody. 'It is too late, it is too late!' I repeated to myself ceaselessly in despair. When this mood, which seemed to me to last for an infinite time, and which I daresay only occupied a few minutes, changed, when I thought that at last I might dive into the ocean of happiness so dear to Easterns which succeeds this furious phase, I was overwhelmed by a new misfortune; a new anxiety, trivial enough, puerile enough, tumbled upon me. I suddenly remembered that I was invited to dinner, to an evening party of respectable people. I foresaw myself in the midst of a well-behaved and discreet crowd, every one master of himself, where I should be obliged to conceal carefully the state of my mind while under the glare of many lamps. I was fairly certain of success, but at the same time my heart almost gave up at the thought of the efforts of will which it would be necessary to bring into line in order to win. By some accident, I know not what, the words of the Gospel, "Woe unto him by whom offences come!" leapt to the surface of my memory, and in the effort to forget them, in concentrating myself upon forgetting them, I repeated them to myself ceaselessly. My catastrophe, for it was indeed a catastrophe,

## THE EQUINOX

then took a gigantic shape: despite my weakness, I resolved on vigorous action, and went to consult a chemist, for I did not know the antidotes, and I wished to go with a free and careless spirit to the circle where my duty called me; but on the threshold of the shop a sudden thought seized me, haunted me, forced me to reflect. As I passed I had just seen myself in the looking-glass of a shop-front, and my face had startled me. This paleness, these lips compressed, these starting eyes!—I shall frighten this good fellow, I said to myself, and for what a trifle! Add to that the ridicule which I wished to avoid, the fear of finding people in the shop. But my sudden goodwill towards this unknown apothecary mastered all my other feelings. I imagined to myself this man as being as sensitive as I myself was at this dreadful moment, and as I imagined also that his ear and his soul must, like my own, tremble at the slightest noise, I resolved to go in on tiptoe. ‘It would be impossible,’ I said to myself, ‘to show too much discretion in dealing with a man on whose kindness I am about to intrude.’ Then I resolved to deaden the sound of my voice, like the noise of my steps. You know it, this hashish voice: grave, deep, guttural; not unlike that of habitual opium-eaters. The result was the exact contrary of my intention; anxious to reassure the chemist, I frightened him. He was in no way acquainted with this illness; had never even heard of it; yet he looked at me with a curiosity strongly mingled with mistrust. Did he take me for a madman, a criminal, or a beggar? Nor the one nor the other, doubtless, but all these absurd ideas ploughed through my brain. I was obliged to explain to him at length (what weariness!) what the hemp sweetmeat was and what purpose

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

it served, ceaselessly repeating to him that there was no danger, that there was, so far as he was concerned, no reason to be alarmed, and that all that I asked was a method of mitigating or neutralising it, frequently insisting upon the sincere disappointment I felt in troubling him. When I had quite finished (I beg you well to understand all the humiliation which these words contained for me) he asked me simply to go away. Such was the reward of my exaggerated thoughtfulness and goodwill. I went to my evening party; I scandalised nobody. No one guessed the superhuman struggles which I had to make to be like other people; but I shall never forget the tortures of an ultra-poetic intoxication constrained by decorum and antagonised by duty.”

Although naturally prone to sympathise with every suffering which is born of the imagination, I could not prevent myself from laughing at this story. The man who told it to me is not cured. He continued to crave at the hands of the cursed confection the excitement which wisdom finds in itself; but as he is a prudent and settled man, a man of the world, he has diminished the doses, which has permitted him to increase their frequency. He will taste later the rotten fruit of his “prudence”!

I return to the regular development of the intoxication. After this first phase of childish gaiety there is, as it were, a momentary relaxation; but new events soon announce themselves by a sensation of coolth at the extremities—which may even become, in the case of certain persons, a bitter cold—and a great weakness in all the limbs. You have then “butter fingers”; and in your head, in all your being, you feel an embarrassing stupor and stupefaction. Your eyes

## THE EQUINOX

start from your head; it is as if they were drawn in every direction by implacable ecstasy. Your face is deluged with paleness; the lips draw themselves in, sucked into the mouth with that movement of breathlessness which characterises the ambition of a man who is the prey of his own great schemes, oppressed by enormous thoughts, or taking a long breath preparatory to a spring. The throat closes itself, so to say; the palate is dried up by a thirst which it would be infinitely sweet to satisfy, if the delights of laziness were not still more agreeable, and in opposition to the least disturbance of the body. Deep but hoarse sighs escape from your breast, as if the old bottle, your body, could not bear the passionate activity of the new wine, your new soul. From one time to another a spasm transfixes you and makes you quiver, like those muscular discharges which at the end of a day's work or on a stormy night precede definitive slumber.

Before going further I should like, *à propos* of this sensation of coolth of which I spoke above, to tell another story which will serve to show to what point the effects, even the purely physical effects, may vary according to the individual. This time it is a man of letters who speaks, and in some parts of his story one will (I think) be able to find the indications of the literary temperament. "I had taken," he told me, "a moderated dose of *extrait gras*, and all was going as well as possible. The crisis of gaiety had not lasted long, and I found myself in a state of languor and wonderment which was almost happiness. I looked forward, then, to a quiet and unworried evening: unfortunately chance urged me to go with a friend to the theatre. I took the heroic course, resolved to overcome my immense desire to to be idle and motionless. All

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

the carriages in my district were engaged; I was obliged to walk a long distance amid the discordant noises of the traffic, the stupid conversation of the passers-by, a whole ocean of triviality. My finger-tips were already slightly cool; soon this turned into a most acute cold, as if I had plunged both hands into a bucket of ice-water. But this was not suffering; this needle-sharp sensation stabbed me rather like a pleasure. Yet it seemed to me that this cold enveloped me more and more as the interminable journey went on. I asked two or three times of the person with whom I was if it was actually very cold. He replied to me that, on the contrary, the temperature was more than warm. Installed at last in the room, shut up in the box which had been given me, with three or four hours of repose in front of me, I thought myself arrived at the Promised Land. The feelings on which I had trampled during the journey with all the little energy at my disposal now burst in, and I give myself up freely to my silent frenzy. The cold ever increased, and yet I saw people lightly clad, and even wiping their foreheads with an air of weariness. This delightful idea took hold of me, that I was a privileged man, to whom alone had been accorded the right to feel cold in summer in the auditorium of a theatre. This cold went on increasing until it became alarming; yet I was before all dominated by my curiosity to know to what degree it could possibly sink. At last it came to such a point, it was so complete, so general, that all my ideas froze, so to speak; I was a piece of thinking ice. I imagined myself as a statue carved in a block of ice, and this mad hallucination made me so proud, excited in me such a feeling of moral well-being, that I despair of defining it to you. What added to my abominable

## THE EQUINOX

enjoyment was the certainty that all the other people present were ignorant of my nature and of the superiority that I had over them, and then with the pleasure of thinking that my companion never suspected for a moment with what strange feelings I was filled, I clasped the reward of my dissimulation, and my extraordinary pleasure was a veritable secret.

“Besides, I had scarcely entered the box when my eyes had been struck with an impression of darkness which seemed to me to have some relationship with the idea of cold; it is, however, possible that these two ideas had lent each other strength. You know that hashish always invokes magnificences of light, splendours of colour, cascades of liquid gold; all light is sympathetic to it, both that which streams in sheets and that which hangs like spangles to points and roughnesses; the candelabra of *salons*, the wax candles that people burn in May, the rosy avalanches of sunset. It seems that the miserable chandelier spread a light far too insignificant to quench this insatiable thirst of brilliance. I thought, as I told you, that I was entering a world of shadows, which, moreover, grew gradually thicker, while I dreamt of the Polar night and the eternal winter. As to the stage, it was a stage consecrated to the comic Muse; that alone was luminous; infinitely small and far off, very far, like a landscape seen through the wrong end of a telescope. I will not tell you that I listened to the actors; you know that that is impossible. From time to time my thoughts snapped up on the wing a fragment of a phrase, and like a clever dancing-girl used it as a spring-board to leap into far-distant reveries. You might suppose that a play heard in this manner would lack logic and coherence. Undeceive yourself! I discovered an exceeding subtle sense in

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

the drama created by my distraction. Nothing jarred on me, and I resembled a little that poet who, seeing *Esther* played for the first time, found it quite natural that Haman should make a declaration of love to the queen. It was, as you guess, the moment where he throws himself at the feet of Esther to beg pardon of his crime. If all plays were listened to on these lines they all, even those of Racine, would gain enormously. The actors seemed to me exceedingly small, and bounded by a precise and clear-cut line, like the figures in Meissonier's pictures. I saw distinctly not only the most minute details of their costumes, their patterns, seams, buttons, and so on, but also the line of separation between the false forehead and the real; the white, the blue, and the red, and all the tricks of make-up; and these Lilliputians were clothed about with a cold and magical clearness, like that which a very clean glass adds to an oil-painting. When at last I was able to emerge from this cavern of frozen shadows, and when, the interior phantasmagoria being dissipated, I came to myself, I experienced a greater degree of weariness than prolonged and difficult work has ever caused me."

It is, in fact, at this period of the intoxication that is manifested a new delicacy, a superior sharpness in each of the senses: smell, sight, hearing, touch join equally in this onward march; the eyes behold the Infinite; the ear perceives almost inaudible sounds in the midst of the most tremendous tumult. It is then that the hallucinations begin; external objects take on wholly and successively most strange appearances; they are deformed and transformed. Then—the ambiguities, the misunderstandings, and the transpositions of ideas! Sounds cloak themselves with colour; colours blossom

## THE EQUINOX

into music. That, you will say, is nothing but natural. Every poetic brain in its healthy, normal state, readily conceives these analogies. But I have already warned the reader that there is nothing of the positively supernatural in hashish intoxication; only those analogies possess an unaccustomed liveliness; they penetrate and they envelop; they overwhelm the mind with their masterfulness. Musical notes become numbers; and if your mind is gifted with some mathematical aptitude, the harmony to which you listen, while keeping its voluptuous and sensual character, transforms itself into a vast rhythmical operation, where numbers beget numbers, and whose phases and generation follow with an inexplicable ease and an agility which equals that of the person playing.

It happens sometimes that the sense of personality disappears, and that the objectivity which is the birthright of Pantheist poets develops itself in you so abnormally that the contemplation of exterior objects makes you forget your own existence and confound yourself with them. Your eye fixes itself upon a tree, bent by the wind into an harmonious curve; in some seconds that which in the brain of a poet would only be a very natural comparison becomes in yours a reality. At first you lend to the tree your passions, your desire, or your melancholy; its creakings and oscillations become yours, and soon you are the tree. In the same way with the bird which hovers in the abyss of azure: at first it represents symbolically your own immortal longing to float above things human; but soon you are the bird itself. Suppose, again, you are seated smoking; your attention will rest a little too long upon the bluish clouds which breathe forth from your pipe; the idea of a slow, continuous, eternal evaporation will possess itself of

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

your spirit, and you will soon apply this idea to your own thoughts, to your own apparatus of thought. By a singular ambiguity, by a species of transposition or intellectual barter, you feel yourself evaporating, and you will attribute to your pipe, in which you feel yourself crouched and pressed down like the tobacco, the strange faculty of smoking you!

Luckily, this interminable imagination has only lasted a minute. For a lucid interval, seized with a great effort, has allowed you to look at the clock. But another current of ideas bears you away; it will roll you away for yet another minute in its living whirlwind, and this other minute will be an eternity. For the proportion of time and being are completely disordered by the multitude and intensity of your feelings and ideas. One may say that one lives many times the space of a man's life during a single hour. Are you not, then, like a fantastic novel, but alive instead of being written? There is no longer any equation between the physical organs and their enjoyments; and it is above all on this account that arises the blame which one must give to this dangerous exercise in which liberty is forfeited.

When I speak of hallucinations the word must not be taken in its strictest sense: a very important shade of difference distinguishes pure hallucination, such as doctors have often have occasion to study, from the hallucination, or rather of the misinterpretation of the senses, which arises in the mental state caused by the hashish. In the first case the hallucination is sudden, complete, and fatal; beside which, it finds neither pretext nor excuse in the exterior world. The sick man sees a shape or hears sounds where there are not any. In the second case, where hallucination is progressive,

## THE EQUINOX

almost willed, and it does not become perfect, it only ripens under the action of imagination. Finally, it has a pretext. A sound will speak, utter distinct articulations; but there was a sound there. The enthusiast eye of the hashish drunkard will see strange forms, but before they were strange and monstrous these forms were simple and natural. The energy, the almost speaking liveliness of hallucination in this form of intoxication in no way invalidates this original difference: the one has root in the situation, and, at the present time, the other has not. Better to explain this boiling over of the imagination, this maturing of the dream, and this poetic childishness to which a hashish-intoxicated brain is condemned, I will tell yet another anecdote. This time it is not an idle young man who speaks, nor a man of letters. It is a woman; a woman no longer in her first youth; curious, with an excitable mind, and who, having yielded to the wish to make acquaintance with the poison, describes thus for another woman the most important of her phases. I transcribe literally.

“However strange and new may be the sensations which I have drawn from my twelve hours’ madness—was it twelve or twenty? in sooth, I cannot tell—I shall never return to it. The spiritual excitement is too lively, the fatigue which results from it too great; and, to say all in a word, I find in this return to childhood something criminal. Ultimately (after many hesitations) I yielded to curiosity, since it was a folly shared with old friends, where I saw no great harm in lacking a little dignity. But first of all I must tell you that this cursèd hashish is a most treacherous substance. Sometimes one thinks oneself recovered from the intoxication; but it is only a deceitful peace. There are moments of rest, and then recru-

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

descences. Thus, before ten o'clock in the evening I found myself in one of these momentary states; I thought myself escaped from this superabundance of life which had caused me so much enjoyment, it is true, but which was not without anxiety and fear. I sat down to supper with pleasure, like one in that state of irritable fatigue which a long journey produces; for till then, for prudence sake, I had abstained from eating; but even before I rose from the table my delirium had caught me up again as a cat catches a mouse, and the poison began anew to play with my poor brain. Although my house is quite close to that of our friends, and although there was a carriage at my disposal, I felt myself so overwhelmed with the necessity of dreaming, of abandoning myself to this irresistible madness, that I accepted joyfully their offer to keep me till the morning. You know the castle; you know that they have arranged, decorated, and fitted with conveniences in the modern style all that part in which they ordinarily live, but that the part which is usually unoccupied has been left as it was, with its old style and its old adornments. They determined to improvise for me a bedroom in this part of the castle, and for this purpose they chose the smallest room, a kind of boudoir, which, although somewhat faded and decrepit, is none the less charming. I must describe it for you as well as I can, so that you may understand the strange vision which I underwent, a vision which fulfilled me for a whole night, without ever leaving me the leisure to note the flight of the hours.

“This boudoir is very small, very narrow. From the height of the cornice the ceiling arches itself to a vault; the walls are covered with narrow, long mirrors, separated by

## THE EQUINOX

panels, where landscapes, in the easy style of the decorations, are painted. On the frieze on the four walls various allegorical figures are represented, some in attitudes of repose, others running or flying; above them are brilliant birds and flowers. Behind the figures a trellis rises, painted so as to deceive the eye, and following naturally the curve of the ceiling; this ceiling is gilded. All the interstices between the woodwork and the trellis and the figures are then covered with gold, and at the centre the gold is only interrupted by the geometrical network of the false trellis; you see that that resembles somewhat a very distinguished cage, a very fine cage for a very big bird. I must add that the night was very fine, very clear, and the moon brightly shining; so much so that even after I had put out my candle all this decoration remained visible, not illuminated by my mind's eye, as you might think, but by this lovely night, whose lights clung to all this broidery of gold, of mirrors, and of patchwork colours.

“I was at first much astonished to see great spaces spread themselves out before me, beside me, on all sides. There were limpid rivers, and green meadows admiring their own beauty in calm waters: you may guess here the effect of the panels reflected by the mirrors. In raising my eyes I saw a setting sun, like molten metal that grows cold. It was the gold of the ceiling. But the trellis put in my mind the idea that I was in a kind of cage, or in a house open on all sides upon space, and that I was only separated from all these marvels by the bars of my magnificent prison. In the first place I laughed at the illusion which had hold of me; but the more I looked the more its magic grew great, the more it took life, clearness, and masterful reality. From that moment

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

the idea of being shut up mastered my mind, without, I must admit, too seriously interfering with the varied pleasures which I drew from the spectacle spread around and above me. I thought of myself as of one imprisoned for long, for thousands of years perhaps, in this sumptuous cage, among these fairy pastures, between these marvellous horizons. I imagined myself the Sleeping Beauty; dreamt of an expiation that I must undergo, of deliverance to come. Above my head fluttered brilliant tropical birds, and as my ear caught the sound of the little bells on the necks of the horses which were travelling far away on the main road, the two senses pooling their impressions in a single idea, I attributed to the birds this mysterious brazen chant; I imagined that they sang with a metallic throat. Evidently they were talking to me, and chanting hymns to my captivity. Gambolling monkeys, buffoon-like satyrs, seemed to amuse themselves at this supine prisoner, doomed to immobility; yet all the gods of mythology looked upon me with an enchanting smile, as if to encourage me to bear the sorcery with patience, and all their eyes slid to the corner of their eyelids as if to fix themselves on me. I came to the conclusion that if some faults of the olden time, some sins unknown to myself, had made necessary this temporary punishment, I could yet count upon an overriding goodness, which, while condemning me to a prudent course, would offer me truer pleasures than the dull pleasures which filled our youth. You see that moral considerations were not absent from my dream; but I must admit that the pleasure of contemplating these brilliant forms and colours and of thinking myself the centre of a fantastic drama frequently absorbed all my other thoughts. This stayed long, very

## THE EQUINOX

long. Did it last till morning? I do not know. All of a sudden I saw the morning sun taking his bath in my room. I experienced a lively astonishment, and despite all the efforts of memory that I have been able to make I have never been able to assure myself whether I had slept or whether I had patiently undergone a delicious insomnia. A moment ago, Night; now, Day. And yet I had lived long; oh, very long! The notion of Time, or rather the standard of Time, being abolished, the whole night was only measurable by the multitude of my thoughts. So long soever as it must have appeared to me from this point of view, it also seemed to me that it had only lasted some seconds; or even that it had not taken place in eternity.

“I do not say anything to you of my fatigue; it was immense. They say that the enthusiasm of poets and creative artists resembles what I experienced, though I have always believed that those persons on whom is laid the task of stirring us must be endowed with a most calm temperament. But if the poetic delirium resembles that which a teaspoonful of hashish confection procured for me I cannot but think that the pleasures of the public cost the poets dear, and it is not without a certain well-being, a prosaic satisfaction, that I at last find myself at home, in my intellectual home; I mean, in real life.”

There is a woman, evidently reasonable; but we shall only make use of her story to draw from it some useful notes, which will complete this very compressed summary of the principal feelings which hashish begets.

She speaks of supper as of a pleasure arriving at the right moment; at the moment where a momentary remission,

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

momentary for all its pretence of finality, permitted her to go back to real life. Indeed, there are, as I have said, intermissions, and deceitful calms, and hashish often brings about a voracious hunger, nearly always an excessive thirst. Only, dinner or supper, instead of bringing about a permanent rest, creates this new attack, the vertiginous crisis of which this lady complains, and which was followed by a series of enchanting visions lightly tinged with affright, to which she so assented, resigning herself with the best grace in the world. The tyrannical hunger and thirst of which we speak are not easily assayed without considerable trouble. For the man feels himself so much above material things, or rather he is so much overwhelmed by his drunkenness, that he must develop a lengthy spell of courage to move a bottle or a fork.

The definitive crisis determined by the digestion of food is, in fact, very violent; it is impossible to struggle against it. And such a state would not be supportable if it lasted too long, and if it did not soon give place to another phase of intoxication, which in the case above cited interprets itself by splendid visions, tenderly terrifying, and at the same time full of consolations. This new state is what the Easterns call *Kaif*. It is no longer the whirlwind or the tempest; it is a calm and motionless bliss, a glorious resignèdness. Since long you have not been your own master; but you trouble yourself no longer about that. Pain, and the sense of time, have disappeared; or if sometimes they dare to show their heads, it is only as transfigured by the master feeling, and they are then, as compared with their ordinary form, what poetic melancholy is to prosaic grief.

But above all let us remark that in this lady's account

## THE EQUINOX

(and it is for this purpose that I have transcribed it) it is but a bastard hallucination, and owes its being to the objects of the external world. The spirit is but a mirror where the environment is reflected, strangely transformed. Then, again, we see intruding what I should be glad to call moral hallucination; the patient thinks herself condemned to expiate somewhat; but the feminine temperament, which is ill-fitted to analyse, did not permit her to notice the strangely optimistic character of the aforesaid hallucination. The benevolent look of the gods of Olympus is made poetical by a varnish essentially due to hashish. I will not say that this lady has touched the fringe of remorse, but her thoughts, momentarily turned in the direction of melancholy and regret, have been quickly coloured by hope. This is an observation which we shall again have occasion to verify.

She speaks of the fatigue of the morrow. In fact, this is great. But it does not show itself at once, and when you are obliged to acknowledge its existence you do so not without surprise: for at first, when you are really assured that a new day has arisen on the horizon of your life, you experience an extraordinary sense of well-being; you seem to enjoy a marvellous lightness of spirit. But you are scarcely on your feet when a forgotten fragment of intoxication follows you and pulls you back; it is the badge of your recent slavery. Your enfeebled legs only conduct you with caution, and you fear at every moment to break yourself, as if you were made of porcelain. A wondrous languor—there are those who pretend that it does not lack charm—possesses itself of your spirit, and spreads itself across your faculties as a fog spreads itself in a meadow. There, then, you are, for some hours yet,

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

incapable of work, of action, and of energy. It is the punishment of an impious prodigality in which you have squandered your nervous force. You have dispersed your personality to the four winds of heaven—and now, what trouble to gather it up again and concentrate it!

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MAN-GOD

IT is time to leave on one side all this jugglery, these big marionettes, born of the smoke of childish brains. Have we not to speak of more serious things—of modifications of our human opinions, and, in a word, of the *morale* of hashish?

Up to the present I have only made an abridged monograph on the intoxication; I have confined myself to accentuating its principal characteristics. But what is more important, I think, for the spiritually minded man, is to make acquaintance with the action of the poison upon the spiritual part of man; that is to say, the enlargement, the deformation, and the exaggeration of his habitual sentiments and his moral perception, which present then, in an exceptional atmosphere, a true phenomenon of refraction.

The man who, after abandoning himself for a long time to opium or to hashish, has been able, weak as he has become by the habit of bondage, to find the energy necessary to shake off the chain, appears to me like an escaped prisoner. He inspires me with more admiration than does that prudent man who has never fallen, having always been careful to avoid the temptation. The English, in speaking of opium-eaters, often employ terms which can only appear excessive to those innocent persons who do not understand the horrors of this

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

downfall—*enchained, fettered, enslaved*. Chains, in fact, compared to which all others—chains of duty, chains of lawless love—are nothing but webs of gauze and spider tissues. Horrible marriage of man with himself! “I had become a bounden slave in the trammels of opium, and my labours and my orders had taken a colouring from my dreams,” says the husband of Ligeia. But in how many marvellous passages does Edgar Poe, this incomparable poet, this never-refuted philosopher, whom one must always quote in speaking of the mysterious maladies of the soul, describe the dark and clinging splendours of opium! The lover of the shining Berenice, Egæus, the metaphysician, speaks of an alteration of his faculties which compels him to give an abnormal and monstrous value to the simplest phenomenon.

“To muse for long unwearied hours, with my attention riveted to some frivolous device on the margin or in the typography of a book; to become absorbed, for the better part of a summer’s day, in a quaint shadow falling aslant upon the tapestry or upon the floor; to lose myself, for an entire night, in watching the steady flame of a lamp, or the embers of a fire; to dream away whole days over the perfume of a flower; to repeat monotonously some common word, until the sound, by dint of frequent repetition, ceased to convey any idea whatever to the mind; to lose all sense of motion or physical existence, by means of absolute bodily quiescence long and obstinately persevered in: such were a few of the most common and least pernicious vagaries induced by a condition of the mental faculties, not, indeed, altogether unparalleled, but certainly bidding defiance to anything like analysis or explanation.”

## THE EQUINOX

And the nervous Augustus Bedloe, who every morning before his walk swallows his dose of opium, tells us that the principal prize which he gains from this daily poisoning is to take in everything, even in the most trivial thing, an exaggerated interest.

“In the meantime the morphine had its customary effect—that of enduing all the external world with an intensity of interest. In the quivering of a leaf—in the hue of a blade of grass—in the shape of a trefoil—in the humming of a bee—in the gleaming of a dew-drop—in the breathing of the wind—in the faint odours that came from the forest—there came a whole universe of suggestion—a gay and motley train of rhapsodical and immethodical thought.”

Thus expresses himself, by the mouth of his puppets, the master of the horrible, the prince of mystery. These two characteristics of opium are perfectly applicable to hashish. In the one case, as in the other, the intelligence, formerly free, becomes a slave; but the word *rapsodique*, which defines so well a train of thought suggested and dictated by the exterior world and the accident of circumstance, is in truth truer and more terrible in the case of hashish. Here the reasoning power is no more than a wave, at the mercy of every current and the train of thought is infinitely more accelerated and more *rapsodique*; that is to say, clearly enough, I think, that hashish is, in its immediate effect, much more vehement than opium, much more inimical to regular life; in a word, much more upsetting. I do not know if ten years of intoxication by hashish would be diseases equal to those caused by ten years of opium regimen; I say that, for the moment, and for the morrow, hashish has more fatal results. One is a soft-spoken enchantress; the other, a raging demon.

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

I wish in this last part to define and to analyse the moral ravage caused by this dangerous and delicious practice; a ravage so great, a danger so profound, that those who return from the fight but lightly wounded appear to me like heroes escaped from the cave of a multiform Proteus, or like Orpheus, conquerors of Hell. You may take, if you will, this form of language for an exaggerated metaphor, but for my part I will affirm that these exciting poisons seem to me not only one of the most terrible and the most sure means which the Spirit of Darkness uses to enlist and enslave wretched humanity, but even one of the most perfect of his avatars.

This time, to shorten my task and make my analysis the clearer, instead of collecting scattered anecdotes I will dress a single puppet in a mass of observation. I must, then, invent a soul to suit my purpose. In his "Confessions" De Quincey rightly states that opium, instead of sending man to sleep, excites him; but only excites him in his natural path, and that therefore to judge of the marvels of opium it would be ridiculous to try it upon a seller of oxen, for such an one will dream of nothing but cattle and grass. Now I am not going to describe the lumbering fancies of a hashish-intoxicated stockbreeder. Who would read them with pleasure, or consent to read them at all? To idealise my subject I must concentrate all its rays into a single circle and polarise them; and the tragic circle where I will gather them together will be, as I have said, a man after my own heart; something analogous to what the eighteenth century called the *homme sensible*, to what the romantic school named the *homme incompris*, and to what family folk and the mass of *bourgeoisie* generally brand with the epithet "original." A constitution half nervous, half

## THE EQUINOX

bilious, is the most favourable to the evolutions of an intoxication of this kind. Let us add a cultivated mind, exercised in the study of form and colour, a tender heart, wearied by misfortune, but still ready to be made young again; we will go, if you please, so far as to admit past errors, and, as a natural result of these in an easily excitable nature, if not positive remorse, at least regret for time profaned and ill-spent. A taste for metaphysics, an acquaintance with the different hypotheses of philosophy of human destiny, will certainly not be useless conditions; and, further, that love of virtue, of abstract virtue, stoical or mystic, which is set forth in all the books upon which modern childishness feeds as the highest summit to which a chosen soul may attain. If one adds to all that a great refinement of sense—and if I omitted it it was because I thought it supererogatory—I think that I have gathered together the general elements which are most common in the modern *homme sensible* of what one might call the lowest common measure of originality. Let us see now what will become of this individuality pushed to its extreme by hashish. Let us follow this progress of the human imagination up to its last and most splendid serai; up to the point of the belief of the individual in his own divinity.

If you are one of these souls your innate love of form and colour will find from the beginning an immense banquet in the first development of your intoxication. Colours will take an unaccustomed energy and smite themselves within your brain with the intensity of triumph. Delicate, mediocre, or even bad as they may be, the paintings upon the ceilings will clothe themselves with a tremendous life. The coarsest papers which

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

cover the walls of inns will open out like magnificent dioramas. Nymphs with dazzling flesh will look at you with great eyes deeper and more limpid than are the sky and sea. Characters of antiquity, draped in their priestly or soldierly costumes, will, by a single glance, exchange with you most solemn confidences. The snakiness of the lines is a definitely intelligible language where you read the sorrowing and the passion of their souls. Nevertheless a mysterious but only temporary state of the mind develops itself; the profoundness of life, hedged by its multiple problems, reveals itself entirely in the sight, however natural and trivial it may be, that one has under one's eyes; the first-come object becomes a speaking symbol. Fourier and Swedenborg, one with his analogies, the other with his correspondences, have incarnated themselves in all things vegetable and animal which fall under your glance, and instead of touching by voice they indoctrinate you by form and colour. The understanding of the allegory takes within you proportions unknown to yourself. We shall note in passing that allegory, that so spiritual type of art, which the clumsiness of its painters has accustomed us to despise, but which is really one of the most primitive and natural forms of poetry, regains its divine right in the intelligence which is enlightened by intoxication. Then the hashish spreads itself over all life; as it were, the magic varnish. It colours it with solemn hues and lights up all its profundity; jagged landscapes, fugitive horizons, perspectives of towns whitened by the corpse-like lividity of storm or illumined by the gathered ardours of the sunset; abysses of space, allegorical of the abyss of time; the dance, the gesture or the speech of the actors, should you be in a theatre; the first-come phrase if your eyes fall upon a

## THE EQUINOX

book; in a word, all things; the universality of beings stands up before you with a new glory unsuspected until then. The grammar, the dry grammar itself, becomes something like a book of "barbarous names of evocation." The words rise up again, clothed with flesh and bone; the noun, in its solid majesty; the adjective's transparent robe which clothes and colours it with a shining web; and the verb, archangel of motion which sets swinging the phrase. Music, that other language dear to the idle or the profound souls who seek repose by varying their work, speaks to you of yourself, and recites to you the poem of your life; it incarnates in you, and you swoon away in it. It speaks your passion, not only in a vague, ill-defined manner, as it does in your careless evenings at the opera, but in a substantial and positive manner, each movement of the rhythm marking a movement understood of your soul, each note transforming itself into Word, and the whole poem entering into your brain like a dictionary endowed with life.

It must not be supposed that all these phenomena fall over each other pell-mell in the spirit, with a clamorous accent of reality and the disorder of exterior life; the interior eye transforms all, and gives to all the complement of beauty which it lacks, so that it may be truly worthy to give pleasure. It is also to this essentially voluptuous and sensual phase that one must refer the love of limpid water, running or stagnant, which develops itself so astonishingly in the brain-drunkenness of some artists. The mirror has become a pretext for this reverie, which resembles a spiritual thirst joined to the physical thirst which dries the throat, and of which I have spoken above. The flowing waters, the sportive waters; the musical water-

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

falls; the blue vastness of the sea; all roll, sing, leap with a charm beyond words. The water opens its arms to you like a true enchantress; and though I do not much believe in the maniacal frenzies caused by hashish, I should not like to assert that the contemplation of some limpid gulf would be altogether without danger for a soul in love with space and crystal, and that the old fable of Undine might not become a tragic reality for the enthusiast.

I think I have spoken enough of the gigantic growth of space and time; two ideas always connected, always woven together, but which at such a time the spirit faces without sadness and without fear. It looks with a certain melancholy delight across deep years, and boldly dives into infinite perspectives. You have thoroughly well understood, I suppose, that this abnormal and tyrannical growth may equally apply to all sentiments and to all ideas. Thus, I have given, I think, a sufficiently fair sample of benevolence. The same is true of love. The idea of beauty must naturally take possession of an enormous space in a spiritual temperament such as I have invented. Harmony, balance of line, fine cadence in movement, appear to the dreamer as necessities, as duties, not only for all beings of creation, but for himself, the dreamer, who finds himself at this period of the crisis endowed with a marvellous aptitude for understanding the immortal and universal rhythm. And if our fanatic lacks personal beauty, do not think he suffers long from the avowal to which he is obliged, or that he regards himself as a discordant note in the world of harmony and beauty improvised by his imagination. The sophisms of hashish are numerous and admirable, tending as a rule to optimism, and one of the

## THE EQUINOX

principal and the most efficacious is that which transforms desire into realisation. It is the same, doubtless, in many cases of ordinary life; but here with how much more ardour and subtlety! Otherwise, how could a being so well endowed to understand harmony, a sort of priest of the beautiful, how could he make an exception to, and a blot upon, his own theory? Moral beauty and its power, gracefulness and its seduction, eloquence and its achievements, all these ideas soon present themselves to correct that thoughtless ugliness; then they come as consolers, and at last as the most perfect courtiers, sycophants of an imaginary sceptre.

Concerning love, I have heard many persons feel a school-boy curiosity, seeking to gather information from those to whom the use of hashish was familiar, what might not be this intoxication of love, already so powerful in its natural state, when it is enclosed in the other intoxication; a sun within a sun. Such is the question which will occur to that class of minds which I will call intellectual gapers. To reply to a shameful sub-meaning of this part of the question which cannot be openly discussed, I will refer the reader to Pliny, who speaks somewhere of the properties of hemp in such a way as to dissipate any illusions on this subject. One knows, besides, that loss of tone is the most ordinary result of the abuse which men make of their nerves, and of the substances which excite them. Now, as we are not here considering effective power, but motion or susceptibility, I will simply ask the reader to consider that the imagination of a sensitive man intoxicated with hashish is raised to a prodigious degree, as little easy to determine as would be the utmost force possible to the wind in a hurricane,

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

and his senses are subtilised to a point almost equally difficult to define. It is then reasonable to believe that a light caress, the most innocent imaginable, a handshake, for example, may possess a centuple value by the actual state of the soul and of the senses, and may perhaps conduct them, and that very rapidly, to that syncope which is considered by vulgar mortals as the *summum* of happiness; but it is quite indubitable that hashish awakes in an imagination accustomed to occupy itself with the affections tender remembrances to which pain and unhappiness give even a new lustre. It is no less certain that in these agitations of the mind there is a strong ingredient of sensuality; and, moreover, it may usefully be remarked—and this will suffice to establish upon this ground the immorality of hashish—that a sect of Ishmaelites (it is from the Ishmaelites that the Assassins are sprung) allowed its adoration to stray far beyond the Lingam-Yoni; that is to say, to the absolute worship of the Lingam, exclusive of the feminine half of the symbol. There would be nothing unnatural, every man being the symbolic representation of history, in seeing an obscene heresy, a monstrous religion, arise in a mind which has cowardly given itself up to the mercy of a hellish drug and which smiles at the degradation of its own faculties.

Since we have seen manifest itself in hashish intoxication a strange goodwill toward men, applied even to strangers, a species of philanthropy made rather of pity than of love (it is here that the first germ of the Satanic spirit which is to develop later in so extraordinary a manner shows itself), but which goes so far as to fear giving pain to any one, one may guess what may happen to the localised sentimentality applied to a

## THE EQUINOX

beloved person who plays, or has played, an important part in the moral life of the reveller. Worship, adoration, prayer, dreams of happiness, dart forth and spring up with the ambitious energy and brilliance of a rocket. Like the powder and colouring-matter of the firework, they dazzle and vanish in the darkness. There is no sort of sentimental combination to which the subtle love of a hashish-slave may not lend itself. The desire to protect, a sentiment of ardent and devoted paternity, may mingle themselves with a guilty sensuality which hashish will always know how to excuse and to absolve. It goes further still. I suppose that, past errors having left bitter traces in the soul, a husband or a lover will contemplate with sadness in his normal state a past overclouded with storm; these bitter fruits may, under hashish, change to sweet fruits. The need of pardon makes the imagination more clever and more supplicatory, and remorse itself, in this devilish drama, which only expresses itself by a long monologue, may act as an incitement and powerfully rekindle the heart's enthusiasm. Yes, remorse. Was I wrong in saying that hashish appeared to a truly philosophical mind as a perfectly Satanic instrument? Remorse, singular ingredient of pleasure, is soon drowned in the delicious contemplation of remorse; in a kind of voluptuous analysis; and this analysis is so rapid that man, this natural devil, to speak as do the followers of Swedenborg, does not see how involuntary it is, and how, from moment to moment, he approaches the perfection of Satan. He admires his remorse, and glorifies himself, even while he is on the way to lose his freedom.

There, then, is my imaginary man, the mind that I have

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

chosen, arrived at that degree of joy and peace where he is compelled to admire himself. Every contradiction wipes itself out; all philosophical problems become clear, or at least appear so; everything is material for pleasure; the plentitude of life which he enjoys inspires him with an unmeasured pride; a voice speaks in him (alas, it is his own!) which says to him: "Thou hast now the right to consider thyself as superior to all men. None knoweth thee, none can understand all that thou thinkest, all that thou feelest; they would, indeed, be incapable of appreciating the passionate love which they inspire in thee. Thou art a king unrecognised by the passers-by; a king who lives, yet none knows that he is king but himself. But what matter to thee? Hast thou not sovereign contempt, which makes the soul so kind?"

We may suppose, however, that from one time to another some biting memory strikes through and corrupts this happiness. A suggestion due to the exterior world may revive a past disagreeable to contemplate. How many foolish or vile actions fill the past!—actions indeed unworthy of this king of thought, and whose escutcheon they soil? Believe that the hashish-man will bravely confront these reproachful phantoms, and even that he will know how to draw from these hideous memories new elements of pleasure and of pride!

Such will be the evolution of his reasoning. The first sensation of pain being over, he will curiously analyse this action or this sentiment whose memory has troubled his existing glory; the motive which made him act thus; the circumstances by which he was surrounded; and if he does not find in these circumstances sufficient reasons, if not to absolve, at least to extenuate his guilt, do not imagine that he admits

## THE EQUINOX

defeat. I am present at his reasoning, as at the play of a mechanism seen under a transparent glass. "This ridiculous, cowardly, or vile action, whose memory disturbed me for a moment, is in complete contradiction with my true and real nature, and the very energy with which I condemn it, the inquisitorial care with which I analyse and judge it, prove my lofty and divine aptitude for virtue. How many men could be found in the world of men clever enough to judge themselves; stern enough to condemn themselves?" And not only does he condemn himself, but he glorifies himself; the horrible memory thus absorbed in the contemplation of ideal virtue, ideal charity, ideal genius, he abandons himself frankly to his triumphant spiritual orgy. We have seen that, counterfeiting sacrilegiously the sacrament of penitence, at one and the same time penitent and confessor, he has given himself an easy absolution; or, worse yet, that he has drawn from his contemplation new food for his pride. Now, from the contemplation of his dreams and his schemes of virtue he believes finally in his practical aptitude for virtue; the amorous energy with which he impresses this phantom of virtue seems to him a sufficient and peremptory proof that he possesses the virile energy necessary for the fulfilment of his ideal. He confounds completely dream with action, and his imagination, growing warmer and warmer in face of the enchanting spectacle of his own nature corrected and idealised, substituting this fascinating image of himself for his real personality, so poor in will, so rich in vanity, he ends by declaring his apotheosis in these clear and simple terms, which contain for him a whole world of abominable pleasures: "I am the most virtuous of all men." Does not that remind you a little of

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

Jean-Jacques, who, he also having confessed to the Universe, not without a certain pleasure, dared to break out into the same cry of triumph (or at least the difference is small enough) with the same sincerity and the same conviction? The enthusiasm with which he admired virtue, the nervous emotion which filled his eyes with tears at the sight of a fine action or at the thought of all the fine actions which he would have wished to accomplish, were sufficient to give him a superlative idea of his moral worth. Jean-Jacques had intoxicated himself without the aid of hashish.

Shall I pursue yet further the analysis of this victorious monomania? Shall I explain how, under the dominion of the poison, my man soon makes himself centre of the Universe? how he becomes the living and extravagant expression of the proverb which says that passion refers everything to itself? He believes in his virtue and in his genius; can you not guess the end? All the surrounding objects are so many suggestions which stir in him a world of thought, all more coloured, more living, more subtle than ever, clothed in a magic glamour. "These mighty cities," says he to himself, "where the superb buildings tower one above the other; these beautiful ships balanced by the waters of the roadstead in homesick idleness, that seem to translate our thought 'When shall we set sail for happiness?'; these museums full of lovely shapes and intoxicating colours; these libraries where are accumulated the works of science and the dreams of poetry; this concourse of instruments whose music is one; these enchantress women, made yet more charming by the science of adornment and coquetry: all these things have been created for me, for me, for me! For me humanity has

## THE EQUINOX

toiled; has been martyred, crucified, to serve for pasture, for pabulum to my implacable appetite for emotion, knowledge, and beauty.”

I leap to the end, I cut the story short. No one will be surprised that a thought final and supreme jets from the brain of the dreamer: “I am become God.”

But a savage and burning cry darts from his breast with such an energy, such a power of production, that if the will and the belief of a drunken man possessed effective power this cry would overthrow the angels scattered in the quarters of the heaven: “I am a god.”

But soon this hurricane of pride transforms itself into a weather of calm, silent, reposeful beatitude, and the universality of beings presents itself tinted and illumined by a flaming dawn. If by chance a vague memory slips into the soul of this deplorable thrice-happy one—“Might there not be another God?”—believe that he will stand upright before Him; that he will dispute His will, and confront Him without fear.

Who was the French philosopher that, mocking modern German doctrines, said: “I am a god who has dined ill”? This irony would not bite into a spirit uplifted by hashish; he would reply tranquilly: “Maybe I have dined ill; but I am a god.”

## CHAPTER V

### MORAL

BUT the morrow; the terrible morrow! All the organs relaxed, tired; the nerves unstretched, the teasing tendency to tears, the impossibility of applying yourself to a continuous task, teach you cruelly that you have been playing a forbidden game. Hideous nature, stripped of its illumination of the previous evening, resembles the melancholy ruins of a festival. The will, the most precious of all faculties, is above all attacked. They say, and it is nearly true, that this substance does not cause any physical ill; or at least no grave one; but can one affirm that a man incapable of action and fit only for dreaming is really in good health, even when every part of him functions perfectly? Now we know human nature sufficiently well to be assured that a man who can with a spoonful of sweetmeat procure for himself incidentally all the treasures of heaven and of earth will never gain the thousandth part of them by working for them. Can you imagine to yourself a State of which all the citizens should be hashish drunkards? What citizens! What warriors! What legislators! Even in the East, where its use is so widely spread, there are Governments which have understood the necessity of proscribing it. In fact it is forbidden to man, under penalty of intellectual decay and death, to upset

## THE EQUINOX

the primary conditions of his existence, and to break up the equilibrium of his faculties with the surroundings in which they are destined to operate; in a word, to outrun his destiny, to substitute for it a fatality of a new kind. Let us remember Melmoth, that admirable parable. His shocking suffering lies in the disproportion between his marvellous faculties, acquired unostentatiously by a Satanic pact, and the surroundings in which, as a creature of God, he is condemned to live. And none of those whom he wishes to seduce consents to buy from him on the same conditions his terrible privilege. In fact every man who does not accept the conditions of life sells his soul. It is easy to grasp the analogy which exists between the Satanic creations of poets and those living beings who have devoted themselves to stimulants. Man has wished to become God, and soon?—there he is, in virtue of an inexorable moral law, fallen lower than his natural state! It is a soul which sells itself bit by bit.

Balzac doubtless thought that there is for man no greater shame, no greater suffering, than to abdicate his will. I saw him once in a drawing-room, where they were talking of the prodigious effects of hashish. He listened and asked questions with an amusing attention and vivacity. Those who knew him may guess that it must have interested him, but the idea of *thinking despite himself* shocked him severely. They offered him *dawamesk*. He examined it, sniffed at it, and returned it without touching it. The struggle between his almost childish curiosity and his repugnance to submit himself showed strikingly on his expressive face. The love of dignity won the day. Now it is difficult to imagine to oneself the maker of the theory of will, this spiritual twin of

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

Louis Lambert, consenting to lose a grain of this precious substance. Despite the admirable services which ether and chloroform have rendered to humanity, it seems to me that from the point of view of the idealist philosophy the same moral stigma is branded on all modern inventions which tend to diminish human free will and necessary pain. It was not without a certain admiration that I once listened to the paradox of an officer who told me of the cruel operation undergone by a French general at El-Aghouat, and of which, despite chloroform, he died. This general was a very brave man, and even something more: one of those souls to which one naturally applies the term *chivalrous*. It was not, he said to me, chloroform that he needed, but the eyes of all the army and the music of its bands. That might have saved him. The surgeon did not agree with the officer, but the chaplain would doubtless have admired these sentiments.

It is certainly superfluous, after all these considerations, to insist upon the moral character of hashish. Let me compare it to suicide, to slow suicide, to a weapon always bleeding, always sharp, and no reasonable person will find anything to object to. Let me compare it to sorcery or to magic, which wishes in working upon matter by means of arcana (of which nothing proves the falsity more than the efficacy) to conquer a dominion forbidden to man or permitted only to him who is deemed worthy of it, and no philosophical mind will blame this comparison. If the Church condemns magic and sorcery it is that they militate against the intentions of God; that they save time and render morality superfluous, and that she—the Church—only considers as legitimate and true the treasures gained by assiduous goodwill. The gambler who

## THE EQUINOX

has found the means to win with certainty we all cheat; how shall we describe the man who tries to buy with a little small change happiness and genius? It is the infallibility itself of the means which constitutes its immorality; as the supposed infallibility of magic brands it with Satanic stigma. Shall I add that hashish, like all solitary pleasures, renders the individual useless to his fellow creatures and society superfluous to the individual, driving him to ceaseless admiration of himself and dragging him day by day towards the luminous abyss in which he admires his Narcissus face? But even if at the price of his dignity, his honesty, and his free will man were able to draw from hashish great spiritual benefits; to make a kind of thinking machine, a fertile instrument? That is a question which I have often heard asked, and I reply to it: In the first place, as I have explained at length, hashish reveals to the individual nothing but himself. It is true that this individual is, so to say, cubed, and pushed to his limit, and as it is equally certain that the memory of impressions survives the orgy, the hope of these utilitarians appears at the first glance not altogether unreasonable. But I will beg them to observe that the thoughts from which they expect to draw so great an advantage are not in reality as beautiful as they appear under their momentary transfiguration, clothed in magic tinsel. They pertain to earth rather than to Heaven, and owe great portion of their beauty to the nervous agitation, to the greediness, with which the mind throws itself upon them. Consequently this hope is a vicious circle. Let us admit for the moment that hashish gives, or at least increases, genius; they forget that it is in the nature of hashish to diminish the will, and that

## THE POEM OF HASHISH

thus it gives with one hand what it withdraws with the other; that is to say, imagination without the faculty of profiting by it. Lastly, one must remember, while supposing a man adroit enough and vigorous enough to avoid this dilemma, that there is another danger, fatal and terrible, which is that of all habits. All such soon transform themselves into necessities. He who has recourse to a poison in order to think will soon be unable to think without the poison. Imagine to yourself the frightful lot of a man whose paralysed imagination will no longer function without the aid of hashish or of opium! In philosophical states the human mind, to imitate the course of the stars, is obliged to follow a curve which loops it back to its point of departure, when the circle must ultimately close. At the beginning I spoke of this marvellous state into which the spirit of man sometimes finds itself thrown as if by a special favour. I have said that, ceaselessly aspiring to rekindle his hopes and raise himself towards the infinite, he showed (in every country and in every time) a frenzied appetite for every substance, even those which are dangerous, which, by exalting his personality, are able to bring in an instant before his eyes this bargain Paradise, object of all his desires; and at last that this daring spirit, driving without knowing it his chariot through the gates of Hell, by this very fact bore witness to his original greatness. But man is not so God-forsaken, so barren of straightforward means of reaching Heaven, that he need invoke pharmacy and witchcraft. He has no need to sell his soul to buy intoxicating caresses and the friendship of the Hur Al'ain. What is a Paradise which must be bought at the price of eternal salvation? I imagine a man (shall I

## THE EQUINOX

say a Brahmin, a poet, or a Christian philosopher?) seated upon the steep Olympus of spirituality; around him the Muses of Raphael or of Mategna, to console him for his long fasts and his assiduous prayers, weave the noblest dances, gaze on him with their softest glances and their most dazzling smiles; the divine Apollo, master of all knowledge (that of Francavilla, of Albert Dürer, of Goltzius, or another—what does it matter? Is there not an Apollo for every man who deserves one?), caresses with his bow his most sensitive strings; below him, at the foot of the mountain, in the brambles and the mud, the human fracas; the Helot band imitates the grimaces of enjoyment and utters howls which the sting of the poison tears from its breast; and the poet, saddened, says to himself: “These unfortunate ones, who have neither fasted nor prayed, who have refused redemption by the means of toil, have asked of black magic the means to raise themselves at a single blow to transcendental life. Their magic dupes them, kindles for them a false happiness, a false light; while as for us poets and philosophers, we have begotten again our soul upon ourselves by continuous toil and contemplation; by the unwearied exercise of will and the unflinching nobility of aspiration we have created for ourselves a garden of Truth, which is Beauty; of Beauty which is Truth. Confident in the word which says that faith removeth mountains, we have accomplished the only miracle which God has licensed us to perform.”

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE  
(*Translated by* ALEISTER CROWLEY)

THE HERB DANGEROUS

PART IV

A FEW EXTRACTS FROM H.G. LUDLOW,

THE HASHEESH EATER

WHICH BEAR UPON THE PECULIAR  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE  
DRUG'S ACTION



## THE HASHEESH EATER

FOR a place, New York for instance, a stranger accounts, not by saying that any one of the many who testify to its existence copied from another, but by acknowledging "there is such a place." So do I account for the fact by saying "there is such a fact."

We try to imitate Eastern narrative, but in vain. Our minds can find no clew to its strange untrodden by-ways of speculation; our highest soarings are still in an atmosphere which feels heavy with the reek and damp of ordinary life.

We fail to account for those storm-wrapped peaks of sublimity which hover over the path of Oriental story, or those beauties which, like riviers of Paradise, make music beside it.

We are all of us taught to say, "The children of the East live under a sunnier sky than their Western brethren: they are the *repositors* of centuries of tradition; their semi-civilised imagination is unbound by the fetters of logic and the schools." But the Ionians once answered all these conditions, yet Homer sang no Eblis, no superhuman journey on the wings of genii through infinitudes of rosy ether. At one period of their history, France, Germany, and England abounded in all the characteristics of the untutored Old World mind, yet when did an echo of oriental music ring from the lute of minstrel,

## THE EQUINOX

*minnesinger*, or "*trouvère*"? The difference can not be accounted for by climate, religion, or manners. It is not the supernatural in Arabian story which is inexplicable, but the peculiar phase of the supernatural both in beauty and terror.

I say inexplicable, because to me, in common with all around me, it bore this character for years. In later days, I believe, and now with all due modesty assert, I unlocked the secret, not by a hypothesis, not by processes of reasoning, but by journeying through those self-same fields of weird experience which are dinted by the sandals of the glorious old dreamers of the East. Standing on the same mounts of vision where they stood, listening to the same gurgling melody that broke from their enchanted fountains, yes, plunging into their rayless caverns of sorcery, and imprisoned with their genie in the unutterable silence of the fathomless sea, have I dearly bought the right to come to men with the chart of my wanderings in my hands, and unfold to them the foundations of the fabric of Oriental story.

The secret lies in the use of hasheesh. A very few words will suffice to tell what hasheesh is. In northern latitudes the hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*) grows almost entirely to fibre, becoming, in virtue of this quality, the great resource for mats and cordage. Under a southern sun this same plant loses its fibrous texture, but secretes, in quantities equal to one-third of its bulk, an opaque and greenish resin. Between the northern and the southern hemp there is no difference, except the effect of diversity of climate upon the same vegetable essence; yet naturalists, misled by the much greater extent of gummy secretion in the later, have distinguished it from its brother of the colder soil by the name *Cannabis indica*. The

## THE HASHEESH EATER

resin of the *Cannabis indica* is hasheesh. From time immemorial it has been known among all the nations of the East as possessing powerful stimulant and narcotic properties; throughout Turkey, Persia, Nepaul, and India it is used at this day among all classes of society as an habitual indulgence. The forms in which it is employed are various. sometimes it appears in the state in which it exudes from the mature stalk, as a crude resin; sometimes it is manufactured into a conserve with clarified butter, honey, and spices; sometimes a decoction is made of the flowering tops in water or arrack. Under either of these forms the method of administration is by swallowing. Again, the dried plant is smoked in pipes of chewed, as tobacco among ourselves.

. . . a pill sufficient to balance the ten-grain weight of the scales. This, upon the authority of Pereira and the Dispensatory, I swallowed without a tremor as to the danger of the result.

Making all due allowance for the fact that I had not taken my hasheesh bolus fasting, I ought to experience its effects within the next four hours. That time elapsed without bringing the shadow of a phenomenon. It was plain that my dose had been insufficient.

For the sake of observing the most conservative prudence, I suffered several days to go by without a repetition of the experiment, and then, keeping the matter equally secret, I administered to myself a pill of fifteen grains. This second was equally ineffectual with the first.

Gradually, by five grains at a time, I increased the dose to thirty grains, which I took one evening half an hour after tea.

## THE EQUINOX

I had now almost come to the conclusion that I was absolutely unsusceptible of the hasheesh influence. Without any expectation that this last experiment would be more successful than the former ones, and indeed with no realisation of the manner in which the drug affected those who did make the experiment successfully, I went to pass the evening at the house of an intimate friend. In music and conversation the time passed pleasantly. The clock struck ten, reminding me that three hours had elapsed since the dose was taken, and as yet not an unusual symptom had appeared. I was provoked to think that this trial was as fruitless as its predecessors.

Ha! what means this sudden thrill? A shock, as of some unimagined vital force, shoots without warning through my entire frame, leaping to my fingers' ends, piercing my brain, startling me till I almost spring from my chair.

I could not doubt it. I was in the power of the hasheesh influence. My first emotion was one of uncontrollable terror—a sense of getting something which I had not bargained for. That moment I would have given all I had or hoped to have to be as I was three hours before.

No pain anywhere—not a twinge in any fibre—yet a cloud of unutterable strangeness was settling upon me, and wrapping me impenetrably in from all that was natural or familiar.

As I heard once more the alien and unreal tones of my own voice, I became convinced that it was some one else who spoke, and in another world. I sat and listened; still the voice kept speaking. Now for the first time I experienced that vast change which hasheesh makes in all measurements of time. The first world of the reply occupied a period sufficient

## THE HASHEESH EATER

for the action of a drama; the last left me in complete ignorance of any point far enough back in the past to date the commencement of the sentence. Its enunciation might have occupied years. I was not in the same life which had held me when I heard it begun.

And now, with time, space expanded also. At my friend's house one particular arm-chair was always reserved for me. I was sitting in it at a distance of hardly three feet from the centre table around which the members of the family were grouped. Rapidly that distance widened. The whole atmosphere seemed ductile, and spun endlessly out into great spaces surrounding me on every side. We were in a vast hall, of which my friends and I occupied opposite extremities. The ceiling and the walls ran upward with a gliding motion as if vivified by a sudden force of resistless growth.

Oh! I could not bear it. I should soon be left alone in the midst of an infinity of space. And now more and more every moment increased the conviction that I was watched. I did not know then, as I learned afterward, that suspicion of all earthly things and persons was the characteristic of the hasheesh delirium.

In the midst of my complicated hallucination, I could perceive that I had a dual existence. One portion of me was whirled unresistingly along the track of this tremendous experience, the other sat looking down from a height upon its double, observing, reasoning, and serenely weighting all the phenomena. This calmer being suffered with the other by sympathy, but did not lose its self-possession.

The servant had not come.

## THE EQUINOX

“Shall I call her again?” “Why, you have this moment called her.” “Doctor,” I replied solemnly, and in language that would have seem bombastic enough to any one who did not realise what I felt, “I will not believe you are deceiving me, but to me it appears as if sufficient time has elapsed since then for all the Pyramids to have crumbled back to dust.”

Any now, in another life, I remembered that far back in the cycles I had looked at my watch to measure the time through which I passed. The impulse seized me to look again. The minute-hand stood half-way between fifteen and sixteen minutes past eleven. The watch must have stopped; I held it to my ear: no, it was still going. I had travelled through all that immeasurable chain of dreams in thirty seconds. “My God!” I cried, “I am in eternity.” In the presence of that first sublime revelation of the soul’s own time, and her capacity for an infinite life, I stood trembling with breathless awe. Till I die, that moment of unveiling will stand in clear relief from all the rest of my existence. I hold it still in unimpaired remembrance as one of the unutterable sanctities of my being. The years of all my earthly life to come can never be as long as those thirty seconds.

Before entering on the record of this new vision I will make a digression for the purpose of introducing two laws of the hasheesh operation, which, as explicatory, deserve a place here. First, after the completion of any one fantasia has arrived, there almost invariably succeeds a shifting of the action to some other stage entirely different in its surroundings. In this transition the general character of the emotion

## THE HASHEESH EATER

may remain unchanged. I may be happy in Paradise and happy at the sources of the Nile, but seldom, either in Paradise or on the Nile, twice in succession. I may writhe in Etna and burn unquenchably in Gehenna, but almost never, in the course of the same delirium, shall Etna or Gehenna witness my torture a second time.

Second, after the full storm of a vision of intense sublimity has blown past the hasheesh-eater, his next vision is generally of a quiet, relaxing, and recreating nature. He comes down from his clouds or up from his abyss into a middle ground of gentle shadows, where he may rest his eyes from the splendour of the seraphim or the flames of fiends. There is a wise philosophy in this arrangement, for otherwise the soul would soon burn out in the excess of its own oxygen. Many a times, it seems to me, has my own thus been saved from extinction.

When I woke it was morning—actually morning, and not a hasheesh hallucination. The first emotion that I felt upon opening my eyes was happiness to find things again wearing a natural air. Yes; although the last experience of which I had been conscious had seemed to satisfy every human want, physical or spiritual, I smiled on the four plain white walls of my bed-chamber, and hailed their familiar unostentatiousness with a pleasure which had no wish to transfer itself to arabesque or rainbows. It was like returning home from an eternity spent in loneliness among the palaces of strangers. Well may I say an eternity, for during the whole day I could not rid myself of the feeling that I was separated from the preceding one by an immeasurable lapse of time. In fact, I never got wholly rid of it.

## THE EQUINOX

I rose that I might test my reinstated powers, and see if the restoration was complete. Yes, I felt not one trace of bodily weariness nor mental depression. Every function had returned to its normal state, with the one exception mentioned; memory could not efface the traces of my having passed through a great mystery.

No. I never should take it again.

I did not know myself; I did not know hasheesh. There are temperaments, no doubt, upon which this drug produces, as a reactionary result, physical and mental depression. With me this was never the case. Opium and liquors fix themselves as a habit by becoming necessary to supply that nervous waste which they in the first place occasioned. The lassitude which succeeds their exaltation demands a renewed indulgence, and accordingly every gratification of the appetite is parent to the next. But no such element entered into the causes which attached me to hasheesh. I speak confidently, yet without exaggeration, when I say that I have spent many an hour in torture such as was never known by Cranmer at the stake, or Gaudentio di Lucca in the Inquisition, yet out of the depths of such experience *I* have always come without a trace of its effect in diminished strength or buoyancy.

Had the first experiment been followed by depression, I had probably never repeated it. At any rate, unstrung muscles and an enervated mind could have been resisted much more effectually when they pleaded for renewed indulgence than the form which the fascination actually took. For days I was even unusually strong; all the forces of life were in a state of pleasurable activity, but the memory of the wondrous glories

## THE HASHEESH EATER

which I had beheld wooed me continually like an irresistible sorceress. I could not shut my eyes for midday musing without beholding in that world, half dark, half light, beneath the eyelids, a steady procession of delicious images which the severest will could not banish nor dim. Now through an immense and serene sky floated luxurious argosies of clouds continually changing form and tint through an infinite cycle of mutations.

Now, suddenly emerging from some deep embowerment of woods, I stood upon the banks of a broad river that curved far off into dreamy distance, and glided noiselessly past its jutting headlands, reflecting a light which was not of the sun nor of the moon, but midway between them, and here and there thrilling with subdued prismatic rays. Temples and gardens, fountains and vistas stretched continually through my waking or sleeping imagination, and mingled themselves with all I heard, or read, or saw. On the pages of Gibbon the palaces and lawns of Nicomedia were illustrated with a hasheesh tint and a hasheesh reality; and journeying with old Dan Chaucer, I drank in a delicious landscape of revery along all the road to Canterbury. The music of my vision was still heard in echo; as the bells of Bow of old time called to Whittington, so did it call to me—"Turn again, turn again." And I turned.

It will be remembered that the hasheesh states of ecstasy always alternate with less intense conditions, in which the prevailing phenomena are those of mirth or tranquillity. In accordance with this law, in the present instance, Dan, to whom I had told my former experience, was not surprised to hear me break forth at the final cadence of our song into a

## THE EQUINOX

peal of unextinguishable laughter, but begged to know what was its cause, that he might laugh too. I could only cry out that my right leg was a tin case filled with stair-rods, and as I limped along, keeping that member perfectly rigid, both from fear of cracking the metal and the difficulty of bending it, I heard the rattle of the brazen contents shaken from side to side with feeling of the most supreme absurdity possible to the human soul. Presently the leg was restored to its former state, but in the interim its mate had grown to a size which would have made it a very respectable totter for Brian Boru or one of the Titans. Elevated some few hundred feet into the firmament, I was compelled to hop upon my giant pedestal in a way very ungraceful in a world where two legs were the fashion, and eminently disagreeable to the slighted member, which sought in vain to reach the earth with struggles amusing from their very insignificance. This ludicrous affliction being gradually removed, I went on my way quietly until we again began to be surrounded by the houses of the town.

And now that unutterable thirst which characterises hasheesh came upon me. I could have lain me down and lapped dew from the grass. I must drink, wheresoever, howsoever. We soon reached home—soon, because it was not five squares off from where we sat down, yet ages, from the thirst which consumed me and the expansion of time in which I lived. I came into the house as one would approach a fountain in the desert, with a wild bound of exultation, and gazed with miserly eyes at the draught which my friend poured out for me until the glass was brimming. I clutched it—I

## THE HASHEESH EATER

put it to my lips. Ha! a surprise! It was not water, but the most delicious metheglin in which ever bard of the Cymri drank the health of Howell Dda. It danced and sparkled like some liquid metempsychosis of amber; it gleamed with the spiritual fire of a thousand chrysolites. to sight, to taste it was metheglin, such as never mantled in the cups of the Valhalla.

Hasheesh I called the “drug of travel,” and I had only to direct my thoughts strongly toward a particular part of the world previously to swallowing my bolus to make my whole fantasia in the strongest possible degree topographical.

There are two facts which I have verified as universal by repeated experiment, which fall into their place here as aptly as then can in the course of my narrative. First: At two different times, when body and mind are apparently in precisely analogous states, when all circumstances, exterior and interior, do not differ tangibly in the smallest respect, the same dose of the same preparation of hasheesh will frequently produce diametrically opposite effects. Still further, I have taken at one time a pill of thirty grains, which hardly gave a perceptible phenomenon, and at another, when my dose had been but half that quantity, I have suffered the agonies of a martyr, or rejoiced in a perfect phrensy. So exceedingly variable are its results, that, long before I abandoned the indulgence, I took each successive bolus with the consciousness that I was daring an uncertainty as tremendous as the equipoise between hell and heaven. Yet the fascination employed Hope as its advocate, and won the suit. Secondly: If, during the ecstasy

## THE EQUINOX

of hasheesh delirium, another dose, however small—yes, though it be no larger than half a pea—be employed to prolong the condition, such agony will inevitably ensue as will make the soul shudder at its own possibility of endurance without annihilation. By repeated experiments, which now occupy the most horrible place upon my catalogue of horrible remembrances, have I proved that, among all the variable phenomena of hasheesh, this alone stands unvarying. The use of it directly after any other stimulus will produce consequences as appalling.

I extinguished my light. To say this may seem trivial, but it is as important a matter as any which it is possible to notice. The most direful suggestions of the bottomless pit may flow in upon the hasheesh eater through the very medium of darkness. The blowing out of a candle can set an unfathomed barathrum wide agape beneath the flower-wreathed table of his feast, and convert his palace of sorcery into a Golgotha. Light is a necessity to him, even when sleeping; it must tinge his visions, or they assume a hue as sombre as the banks of Styx.

It was an awaking, which, for torture, had no parallel in all the stupendous domain of sleeping incubus. Beside my bed in the centre of the room stood a bier, from whose corners drooped the folds of a heavy pall; outstretched upon it lay in state a most fearful corpse, whose livid face was distorted with the pangs of assassination. The traces of a great agony were frozen into fixedness in the tense position of every muscle, and the nails of the dead man's fingers pierced

## THE HASHEESH EATER

his palms with the desperate clinch of one who has yielded not without agonising resistance. Two tapers at his head, two at his feet, with their tall and unsnuffed wicks, made the ghastliness of the bier more luminously unearthly, and a smothered laugh of derision from some invisible watcher ever and anon mocked the corpse, as if triumphant demons were exulting over their prey. I pressed my hands upon my eyeballs till they ached, in intensity of desire to shut out the spectacle; I buried my head in the pillow, that I might not hear that awful laugh of diabolic sarcasm.

But—oh horror immeasurable! I behold the walls of the room slowly gliding together, the ceiling coming down, the floor ascending, as of old the lonely captive saw them, whose cell was doomed to be his coffin. Nearer and nearer am I born toward the corpse. I shrunk back from the edge of the bed; I cowered in most abject fear. I tried to cry out, but speech was paralysed. The walls came closer and closer together. Presently my hand lay on the dead man's forehead. I made my arm as straight and rigid as a bar of iron; but of what avail was human strength against the contraction of that cruel masonry? Slowly my elbow bent with the ponderous pressure; nearer grew the ceiling—I fell into the fearful embrace of death. I was pent, I was stifled in the breathless niche, which was all of space still left to me. The stony eyes stared up into my own, and again the maddening peal of fiendish laughter rang close beside my ear. Now I was touched on all sides by the walls of the terrible press; there came a heavy crush, and I felt all sense blotted out in darkness.

I awoke at last; the corpse was gone, but I had taken his

## THE EQUINOX

place upon the bier. In the same attitude which he had kept I lay motionless, conscious, although in darkness, that I wore upon my face the counterpart of his look of agony. The room had grown into a gigantic hall, whose roof was framed of iron arches; the pavement, the walls, the cornice were all of iron. The spiritual essence of the metal seemed to be a combination of cruelty and despair. Its massive hardness spoke a language which it is impossible to embody in words, but any one who has watched the relentless sweep of some great engine crank, and realised its capacity for murder, will catch a glimpse, even in the memory, of the thrill which seemed to say, "This iron is a tearless fiend," of the unutterable meaning I saw in those colossal beams and buttresses. I suffered from the vision of that iron as from the presence of a giant assassin.

But my senses opened slowly to the perception of still worse presences. By my side there gradually emerged from the sulphurous twilight which bathed the room the most horrible form which the soul could look upon unshattered—a fiend also of iron, white-hot and dazzling with the glory of the nether penetralia. A face that was the ferrous incarnation of all imaginations of malice and irony looked on me with a glare withering from its intense heat, but still more from the unconceived degree of inner wickedness which it symbolised. I realised whose laughter I had heard, and instantly I heard it again. Beside him another demon, his very twin, was rocking a tremendous cradle framed of bars of iron like all things else, and candescent with as fierce a heat as the fiend's.

And now, in a chant of the most terrific blasphemy which it is possible to imagine, or rather of blasphemy so fearful that no human thought has ever conceived of it, both the

## THE HASHEESH EATER

demons broke forth, until I grew intensely wicked merely by hearing it. I still remember the meaning of the song they sand, although there is no language yet coined which will convey it, and far be it from me event to suggest its nature, lest I should seem to perpetuate in any degree such profanity as beyond the abodes of the lost no lips are capable of uttering. Every note of the music itself accorded with the thought as symbol represents essence, and with its clangour mixed the maddening creak of the for ever oscillating cradle, until I felt driven into a ferocious despair. Suddenly the nearest fiend, snatching up a pitchfork (also of white-hot iron), thrust it into my writing side, and hurled me shrieking into the fiery cradle. I sought in my torture to scale the bars; they slipped from my grasp and under my feet like the smoothest icicles. Through increasing grades of agony I lay unconsumed, tossing from side to side with the rocking of the dreadful engine, and still above me pealed the chant of blasphemy, and the eyes of demoniac sarcasm smiled at me in mockery of a mother's gaze upon her child.

“Let us sing him,” said one of the fiends to the other, “the lullaby of Hell.” The blasphemy now changed into an awful word-picturing of eternity, unveiling what it was, and dwelling with raptures of malice upon its infinitude, its sublimity of growing pain, and its privation of all fixed points which might mark it into divisions. By emblems common to all language rather than by any vocal words, did they sing this frightful apocalypse, yet the very emblems had a sound as distinct as tongue could give them. This was one, and the only one of their representatives that I can remember. Slowly they began, “To-day is father of to-morrow, to-morrow hath a son that

## THE EQUINOX

shall beget the day succeeding.” With increasing rapidity they sang in this way, day by day, the genealogy of a thousand years, and I traced on the successive generations, without a break in one link, until the rush of their procession reached a rapidity so awful as fully to typify eternity itself; and still I fled on through that burning genesis of cycles. I feel that I do not convey my meaning, but may no one else ever understand it better.

Withered like a leaf in the breath of an oven, after millions of years I felt myself tossed upon the iron floor. The fiends had departed, the cradle was gone. I stood alone, staring into immense and empty spaces. Presently I found that I was in a colossal square, as of some European city, alone at the time of evening twilight, and surrounded by houses hundreds of stories high. I was bitterly athirst. I ran to the middle of the square, and reached it after an infinity of travel. There was a fountain carved in iron, every jet inimitably sculptured in mockery of water, yet dry as the ashes of a furnace. “I shall perish with thirst,” I cried. “Yet one more trial. There must be people in all these immense houses. Doubtless they love the dying traveller, and will give him to drink. Good friends! water! water!” A horribly deafening din poured down on me from the four sides of the square. Every sash of all the hundred stories of every house in that colossal quadrangle flew up as by one spring. Awakened by my call, at every window stood a terrific maniac. Sublimely in the air above me, in front, beside me, on either hand, and behind my back, a wilderness of insane faces gnashed at me, glared, gibbered, howled, laughed horribly, hissed and cursed. At the unbearable sight I

## THE HASHEESH EATER

myself became insane, and leaping up and down, mimicked them all, and drank their demented spirit.

Hasheesh is indeed an accursed drug, and the soul at last pays a most bitter price for all its ecstasies; moreover, the use of it is not the proper means of gaining any insight, yet who shall say that at that season of exaltation I did not know things as they are more truly than ever in the ordinary state? Let us not assert that the half-careless and uninterested way in which we generally look on nature is the normal mode of the soul's power of vision. There is a fathomless meaning, an intensity of delight in all our surroundings, which our eyes must be unsealed to see. In the jubilation of hasheesh, we have only arrived by an improper pathway at the secret of that infinity of beauty which shall be beheld in heaven and earth when the veil of the corporeal drops off, and we know as we are known. Then from the muddy waters of our life, defiled by the centuries of degeneracy through which they have flowed, we shall ascend to the old-time original fount, and grow rapturous with its apocalyptic draught.

I do not remember whether I have yet mentioned that in the hasheesh state an occasional awakening occurs, perhaps as often as twice in an hour (though I have no way of judging accurately, from the singular properties of the hasheesh time), when the mind returns for an exceedingly brief space to perfect consciousness, and views all objects in their familiar light.

Awaking on the morrow after a succession of vague and

## THE EQUINOX

delicious dreams, I had not yet returned to the perfectly natural state. I now began to experience a law of hasheesh which developed its effects more and more through all future months of its use. With the progress of the hasheesh life, the effect of every successive indulgence grows more perduring until the hitherto isolated experiences become tangent to each other; then the links of the delirium intersect, and at last so blend that the chain has become a continuous band, now resting with joyous lightness as a chaplet, and now mightily pressing in upon the soul like the glowing hoop of iron which holds martyrs to the stake. The final months of this spell-bound existence, be it terminated by mental annihilation or by a return into the quiet and mingled facts of humanity are passed in one unbroken yet chequered dream.

Moreover, through many ecstasies and many pains, I still supposed that I was only making experiments, and that, too, in the most wonderful field of mind which could be opened for investigation, and with an agent so deluding in its influence that the soul only became aware that the strength of a giant was needed to escape when its locks were shorn.

Upon William N—— hasheesh produced none of the effects characteristic of fantasia. There was no hallucination, no volitancy of unusual images before the eye when closed.

Circulation, however, grew to a surprising fulness and rapidity, accompanied by the same introversion of faculties and clear perception of all physical processes which startled my in my first experiment upon myself. There was stertorous breathing, dilation of the pupil, and a drooping appearance of

## THE HASHEESH EATER

the eyelid, followed at last by a comatose state, lasting for hours, out of which it was almost impossible fully to arouse the energies. These symptoms, together with a peculiar rigidity of the muscular system, and inability to measure the precise compass and volume of the voice when speaking, brought the case nearer in resemblance to those recorded by Dr. O'Shaughnessy, of Calcutta, as occurring under his immediate inspection among the natives of India, than any I have ever witnessed.

At half-past seven in the evening, and consequently after supping instead of before, as I should have preferred, he took twenty-five grains of the drug. This may seem a large bolus to those who are aware that from fifteen grains I frequently got the strongest cannabine effect; but it must be kept in mind that, to secure the full phenomena, a much greater dose is necessary in the first experiment than ever after. Unlike all other stimuli with which I am acquainted, hasheesh, instead of requiring to be increased in quantity as existence in its use proceeds, demands rather a diminution, seeming to leave, at the return of the natural state (if I may express myself by rather a material analogy), an unconsumed capital of exaltation for the next indulgence to set up business upon.

For a while we walked silently. Presently I felt my companion shudder as he leaned upon my arm. "What is the matter, Bob?" I asked. "Oh! I am in unbearable horror," he replied. "If you can, save me!" "How do you suffer?" "This shower of soot which falls on me from heaven is dreadful!"

## THE EQUINOX

I sought to turn the current of his thoughts into another channel, but he had arrived at that place in his experience where suggestion is powerless. His world of the Real could not be changed by any inflow from ours of the Shadowy. I reached the same place in after days, and it was then as impossible for any human being to alter the condition which enwrapped me as it would have been for a brother on earth to stretch out his hands and rescue a brother writhing in the pangs of immortality. There are men in Oriental countries who make it their business to attend hasheesh-eaters during the fantasia, and profess to be able to lead them constantly in pleasant paths of hallucination. If indeed they possess this power, the delirium which they control must be a far more ductile state than any I have witnessed occurring under the influence of hasheesh at its height. In the present instance I found all suggestion powerless. The inner actuality of the visions and the terror of external darkness both defeated me.

And now, in the midst of the darkness, there suddenly stood a wheel like that of a lottery, surrounded by one luminous spot, which illustrated all its movements. It began slowly to revolve; its rapidity grew frightful, and out of its opening flew symbols which indicated to him, in regular succession, every minutest act of his past life: from his first unfilial disobedience in childhood—the refusal upon a certain day, as far back as infancy, to go to school when it was enjoined upon him, to the latest deed of impropriety he had committed—all his existence fled before him like lighting in those burning emblems. Things utterly forgotten—things at

## THE HASHEESH EATER

the time of their first presence considered trivial acts—as small as the cutting of a willow wand, all fled by his sense in arrow-flight; yet he remembered them as real incidents, and recognized their order in his existence.

This phenomenon is one of the most striking exhibitions of the state in which the higher hasheesh exaltation really exists. It is a partial sundering, for the time, of those ties which unite soul and body. That spirit should ever lose the traces of a single impression is impossible.

In the morning he awoke at the usual time; but, his temperament being perhaps more sensitive than mine, the hasheesh delight, without its hallucination, continued for several days.

And now a new fact flashed before me. This agony was not new; I had felt it ages ago, in the same room, among the same people, and hearing the same conversation. To most men, such a sensation has happened at some time, but it is seldom more than vague and momentary. With me it was sufficiently definite and lasting to be examined and located as an actual memory. I saw it in an instant, preceded and followed by the successions of a distinctly recalled past life.

What is the philosophy of this fact? If we find no ground for believing that we have ever lived self-consciously in any other state, and cannot thus explain it, may not this be the solution of the enigma? At the moment of the soul's reception of a new impression, she first accepts it as a thing entirely of the sense; she tells us how large it is, and of what quality. To this definition of its boundaries and likeness succeeds, at times

## THE EQUINOX

of high activity, an intuition of the fact that the sensation shall be perceived again in the future unveiling that is to throw open all the past. Prophetically she notes it down upon the indestructible leaves of her diary, assured that it is to come out in the future revelation. Yet we who, from the tendency of our thought, reject all claims to any knowledge of the future, can only acknowledge perceptions as of the present or the past, and accordingly refer the dual realisation to some period gone by. We perceive the correspondence of two sensations, but, by an instantaneous process, give the second one a wrong position in the succession of experiences. The soul is regarded as the historian when she is in reality the sibyl; but the misconception takes place in such a microscopic portion of time that detection is impossible. In the hasheesh expansion of seconds into minutes, or even according to a much mightier ratio, there is an opportunity thoroughly to scrutinise the hitherto evanescent phenomena, and the truth comes out. How many more such prophecies as these may have been rejected through the gross habit of the body we may never know until spirit vindicates her claim in a court where she must have audience.

In this world we are but half spirit; we are thus able to hold only the perceptions and emotions of half an orb. Once fully rounded into symmetry ourselves, we shall have strength to bear the pressure of influences from a whole sphere of truth and loveliness.

It is this present half-developed state of ours which makes the infinitude of the hasheesh awakening so unendurable, even when its sublimity is the sublimity of delight. We have no

## THE HASHEESH EATER

longer anything to do with horizons, and the boundary which was at once our barrier and our fortress is removed, until we almost perish from the inflow of perceptions.

It would be no hard task to prove, to a strong probability, at least, that the initiation to the Pythagorean mysteries, and the progressive instruction that succeeded it, to a considerable extent consisted in the employment, judiciously, if we may use the word, of hasheesh, as giving a critical and analytic power to the mind, which enabled the neophyte to roll up the murk and mist from beclouded truths till they stood distinctly seen in the splendour of their own harmonious beauty as an intuition.

One thing related of Pythagoras and his friends has seemed very striking to me. There is a legend that, as he was passing over a river, its waters called up to him in the presence of his followers, "Hail! Pythagoras."

Frequently, while in the power of the hasheesh delirium, have I heard inanimate things sonorous with such voices. On every side they have saluted me, from rocks, and trees, and waters, and sky, in my happiness filling me with intense exultation as I heard them welcoming their master; in my agony heaping nameless curses on my head as I went away into an eternal exile from all sympathy. Of this tradition of Iamblichus I feel an appreciation which almost convinces me that the voice of the river was indeed heard, though only by the quickened mind of some hasheesh-glorified esoteric. Again, it may be that the doctrine of the metempsychosis was first communicated to Pythagoras by Theban priests; but the astonishing illustration which hasheesh would contribute to

## THE EQUINOX

this tenet should not be overlooked in our attempt to assign its first suggestion and succeeding spread to their proper causes.

I looked, and lo! all the celestial hemisphere was one terrific brazen bell, which rocked upon some invisible adamantine pivot in the infinitudes above. When I cam it was voiceless, but I soon knew how it was to sound. My feet were quickly chained fast to the top of heaven, and, swinging with my head downward, I became its tongue. Still more mightily swayed that frightful bell, and now, tremendously crashing, my head smote against its side. It was not the pain of the blow, though that was inconceivable, but the colossal roar that filled the universe, and rent my brain also, which blotted out in one instant all sense, thought, and being. In an instant I felt my life extinguished, but knew that it was by annihilation, not by death.

When I awoke out of the hasheesh state I was as overwhelmed to find myself still in existence as a dead man of the last century could be were he now suddenly restored to earth. For a while, even in perfect consciousness, I believed I was still dreaming, and to this day I have so little lost the memory of that one demoniac toll, that while writing these lines I have put my hand to my forehead, hearing and feeling something, trough the mere imagination, which was an echo of the original pang. It is this persistency of impressions which explains the fact of the hasheesh state, after a certain time, growing more and more every day a thing of agony. It is not because the body becomes worn out by repeated nervous shocks; with some constitutions, indeed, this wearing may occur; it never did with me, as I have said, even to the extent

## THE HASHEESH EATER

of producing muscular weakness, yet the universal law of constantly acceleration diabolisation of visions held good as much in my case as in any others; but a thing of horror once experienced became a *κτήμα ἧς ἄεί*, an inalienable dower of hell; it was certain to reproduce itself in some—to God be the thanks if not in all—future visions. I had seen, for instance, in one of my states of ecstasy, a luminous spot on the firmament, a prismatic parhelion. In the midst of my delight of gazing on it, it had transferred itself mysteriously to my own heart, and there became a circle of fire, which gradually ate its way until the whole writing organ was in a torturous blaze. That spot, seen again in an after-vision, through the memory of its former pain instantly wrought out for me the same accursed result. The number of such remembered faggots of fuel for direful suggestion of course increased proportionally to the prolonging of the hasheesh life, until at length there was hardly a visible or tangible object, hardly a phrase which could be spoken, that had not some such infernal potency as connected with an earlier effect of suffering.

Slowly thus does midnight close over the hasheesh-eater's heaven. One by one, upon its pall thrice dyed in Acharon, do the baleful lustres appear, until he walks under a hemisphere flaming with demon lamps, and upon a ground paved with tiles of hell. Out of this awful domain there are but three ways. Thank God that over this alluring gateway is not written,

“Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate!”

The first of these exits is insanity, the second death, the third abandonment. The first is doubtless oftenest trodden

## THE EQUINOX

yet it may be long ere it reaches the final escape in oblivion, and it is as frightful as the domain it leaves behind. The second but rarely opens to the wretch unless he prises it open with his knife; ordinarily its hinges turn lingeringly. Towards the last let him struggle, though a nightmare torpor petrify his limbs—though on either side of the road be a phalanx of monstrous Afreets with drawn swords of flame—though demon cries peal before him, and unimaginable houris beckon him back—over thorns, through furnaces, but into—Life!

To the first restaurant at hand we hastened. Passing in, I called for that only material relief which I have ever found for these spiritual sufferings—something strongly acid. In the East the form in use is sherbet; mine was very sour lemonade. A glass of it was made ready, and with a small glass tube I drew it up, not being able to bear the shock of a large swallow. Relief came but very slightly—very slowly. Before the first glass was exhausted I called most imperatively for another one to be prepared as quickly as possible, let the flames should spread by waiting. In this way I kept a man busy with the composition of lemonade after lemonade, plunging my tube over the edge of the drained tumbler into the full one with a precipitate haste for which there were mortal reasons, until six had been consumed.

I returned to hasheesh, but only when I had become hopeless of carrying out my first intention—its utter and immediate abandonment. I now resolved to abandon it gradually—to retreat slowly from my enemy, until I had passed the borders of his enchanted ground, whereon he warred with me at vantage.

Once over the boundaries, and the nightmare spell

## THE HASHEESH EATER

unloosed, I might run for my life, and hope to distance him in my own recovered territory.

This end I sought to accomplish by diminishing the doses of the drug. The highest I had ever reached was a drachm, and this was seldom necessary except in the most unimpressible states of the brain, since, according to the law of the hasheesh operation which I have stated to hold good in my experience, a much less bolus was ordinarily sufficient to produce full effect at this time than when I commenced the indulgence. I now reduced my daily ration to ten or fifteen grains.

The immediate result of even this modified resumption of the habit was a reinstatement into the glories of the former life. I came out of my clouds; the outer world was reinvested with some claim to interest, and the lethal torpor of my mind was replaced by an airy activity. I flattered myself that there was now some hope of escape by grades of renunciation, and felt assured, moreover, that since I now seldom experienced anything approaching hallucination, I might pass through this gradual course without suffering on the way.

As lemon-juice had been sometimes an effectual cure for the sufferings of excess, I now discovered that a use of tobacco, to an extent which at other times would be immoderate, was a preventive of the horrors of abandonment.

As, some distance back, I have referred to my own experience upon the subject, asserting my ability at times to *feel sights, see sounds, &c.*, I will not attempt to illustrate the present discussion by a narrative of additional portions of my own case. It might be replied to me, "Ah! yes, all very likely; but probably you are an exception to the general rule:

## THE EQUINOX

nobody else might be affected so.” This was said to me quite frequently when, early in the hasheesh life, I enthusiastically related the most singular phenomena of my fantasy.

But there is no such thing true of the hasheesh effects. Just as inevitably as two men taking the same direction, and equally favoured by Providence, will arrive at the same place, will two persons of similar temperament come to the same territory in hasheesh, see the same mysteries of their being, and get the same hitherto unconceived facts. It is this characteristic which, beyond all gainsaying, proves the definite existence of the most wondrous of the hasheesh disclosed states of mind. The realm of that stimulus is no vagary; it as much exists as England. We are never so absurd as to expect to see insane men by the dozen all holding to the same hallucination without having had any communication with each other.

As I said once previously, after my acquaintance with the realm of witchery had become, probably, about as universal as anybody's, when I chanced to be called to take care of some one making the experiment for the first time (and I always was called), by the faintest word, often by a mere look, I could tell exactly the place that my patient had reached, and treat him accordingly. Many a time, by some expression which other bystanders thought ineffably puerile, have I recognised the landmark of a field of wonders wherein I have travelled in perfect ravishment. I understood the symbolisation, which they did not.

Though as perfectly conscious as in his natural state, and capable of apprehending all outer realities without hallucination, he still perceived every word which was spoken to him

## THE HASHEESH EATER

in the form of some visible symbol which most exquisitely embodied it. For hours every sound had its colour and its form to him as truly as scenery could have them.

The fact, never witnessed by me before, of a mind in that state being able to give its phenomena to another and philosophise about them calmly, afforded me the means of a most clear investigation. I found that his case was exactly analogous to those of B. and myself; for, like us, he recognised in distinct inner types every possible sensation, our words making a visible emblematic procession before his eyes, and every perception of whatever sense becoming tangible to him as form and audible as music.