

CONCENTRATION AND ORISON

A STUDY of the practices advocated by the adherents of the numerous "freak religions"—as many modern systems of thought are disparagingly termed by those who find in orthodoxy their surest help—reveals one or two points of more than passing significance.

It cannot be gainsaid that a large number of those to whom "heterodoxy," as expressed by New Thought, Higher Thought, Spiritualism, and Theosophy, makes appeal, are attracted by the definite rules for conduct and self-development laid down, and the attempt to give with mathematical precision "lessons" in self-healing, thought-control, "going into the silence," etc., the search for the marvellous occupying a merely secondary place. The modern rediscovery of the enormous effect of sustained thought and the power of a determined will set in any one direction, the widespread use of every variant of hypnotic suggestion for ills of body and mind have proved the ground material on which the theory of practice of such Societies has been based and the means by which their principal results are obtained; for that definite cures and development do take place no unprejudiced investigator can deny.

On the other hand, the very methods employed are fraught with a measure of danger, because real understanding of the occult effect of thought as a force is to-day in its infancy; we stand only on the fringe of discovery of the wisdom of the ancients in this direction.

Vision

The emphasis laid on the power of man as a self-conscious entity to achieve his own salvation,—in effect to use his thought as a miraculous agent for the fulfilment of his desire, whether that desire be for things temporal or eternal,—has tended to relegate the efficacy of, and necessity for, prayer to a shadowy background. In fact, many of the modern schools of thought assert that man, according to his power of unswerving concentration, is either the giver or refuser of the object of his desire.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this dependence of man upon himself rather than upon a Heavenly Agent, is a natural reaction from the utilitarian element that has invaded the domain of prayer. The degeneracy of that which should be the supreme meeting-point of man and God into an act of supplication has wrested prayer from its true place in man's spiritual life, and so long as it is looked upon as a means of obtaining benefits—whether material or spiritual—its practice will appeal only to a certain type of mind which is certainly not the highest. The supplicatory prayer is of necessity an external act ; it is an exercise of the mind, not an emotion of the heart or soul, and even at its best is merely a form of spiritual cupidity.

Not for a moment do we belittle the power of supplicatory prayer, nor deny that, in the phrase so beloved by many of its practisers, in accordance with the strength of the demand so will be the return. There is logic in the claim that he who prays intensely with an assured faith fulfils the first condition necessary for the granting of his request, but while admitting the efficacy of such prayer of supplication, which may

Concentration and Orison

range from the most earthly desire to the purest spiritual longing, the soul who rests content therewith knows prayer only in its first dimension. The lovelier meaning of "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet Him" is not yet unveiled.

Thus the prayer of supplication stands leagues apart from the "Orison of Quiet" that has been supremely demonstrated by the great mediæval mystics.

True "orison" is no supplicatory act, neither is it a form of character-building based on the assumption that "what a man thinks on, that he becomes." Rather is it a mystical progress of the soul from the outer court to the innermost Holy of Holies, the journey of an exile to her native Kingdom of Light, the approach unto that intimate and precious sweetness of marriage with the Beloved. In a word, the purpose of orison is *Union*.

The lives of the great mystics, such for instance as St. Teresa, St. Catherine of Siena, the Blessed Suso—names chosen almost at random from the galaxy of saints—leave no doubt that this quest for Union was the supreme aim of all practice of prayer, although the definite states experienced in approaching thereunto are described in terms that differ according to the particular theological upbringing.

Almost without exception such mystics speak of three definite states experienced in their approach to Union. Theoretically these states are known to every student of Christian Mysticism, but in practice they belong only to a high grade of mystical development. The Orison of Recollection and the Orison of Quiet are the beautiful terms used by the mediæval

Vision

mystics to describe the first and second degrees of approach to that most sublime Orison of Union, wherein the Spiritual Marriage of the Soul with her Lord is consummated.

The present-day practice of Concentration as a preliminary to Meditation has a certain likeness to the Recollection of mediæval mystics. It must be remembered that the term Recollection denotes, not Remembrance, but the recall or re-collection of thought from many directions, until a condition of one-pointedness be attained. In Concentration the attention is focused upon an object or idea until the restive mind is curbed, and the soul lives by infusion of spiritual life rather than by reaction to external stimuli.

The Recollection of the Christian mystics was an arduous discipline, difficult of accomplishment, and an external aid was often sought, such as a crucifix or picture of the Saviour, to focus the mind in a set direction. In the East, the devotee of to-day is taught to fix his gaze upon the tip of his nose if he would enter the state of contemplation, and modern systems of mind-training include concentration on physical objects with the same purpose in view.

All such Recollection and Concentration is one in result. As soon as the mind is one-pointed, "in contemplation fixed," a certain tranquillity of the body ensues, followed by a translation of the consciousness to supra-liminal levels. Those who assume that passivity is the characteristic of the state reverse its true nature. Passivity—that empty, trance-like condition, a form of self-hypnosis—indicates a sinking

Concentration and Orison

into the subliminal deeps rather than the lifting of the soul's activity to supra-liminal heights. It is the quietism of which Mme. Guyon has often been falsely accused, the trap into which many would-be occultists of the present day have fallen.

To rest passively in the silence which follows the tranquillising of the body is spiritual sloth. A condition of intense inner activity with a corresponding heightening of the consciousness of active search should ensue ; a search, not for spiritual riches, for that appertains to an exercise of magic—a term used here in no derogatory sense,—but for the Divine Lover of Souls.

So much has been written in popular vein on Meditation as an alternative to supplicatory prayer that, as often happens through insensitive handling of beautiful themes by those who know by theory only, it appears a cheap and easily gotten achievement, instead of one of the deep treasures of the soul. After much reading of modern instruction in its art, there is refreshment in turning to the beautiful witness of the mediæval mystics, whose testimony is born of the womb of their own experience. As one, they show us that the Orison of Quiet (or Meditation) following upon Recollection is not passivity, but the key of entrance to that Divine Darkness or Unquenchable Light wherein the expectant soul hears the voice of Consolation and sees the vision of supernal Love.

So great sweetness and joy is here encountered that it might well seem the cup is filled, but out of that Quiet the Soul is lifted, sometimes only for one ineffable moment, into the Great Transcendence (it

Vision

was St. Augustine who cried in unforgettable words, "I was swept up to Thee by Thy Beauty, and torn away from Thee by my own weight") wherein even the cry of "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine" is silenced, because all sense of "I" and "Thou" is merged in the untranslatable knowledge of One-ness.

Such is the consummation of true orison, but much spade work has need to be done before even the first steps thereto may be trodden. There is a necessary purification of the sense-nature, and it is at this point that most pseudo-occult systems stop short, otherwise as the mind grows tranquil, lying like a fair page awaiting inscription, unconquered desires with their coarser vibrations may overpower the more sensitive impress of the soul.

We have noted that the Orison of Recollection has much in common with the Concentration advocated by many modern Societies, but Recollection was practised solely as a preliminary to the Orisons of Quiet and Union, and equally Concentration should be looked upon as a stepping-stone to the spiritual exercises of Meditation and Contemplation, and not as an Aladdin's lamp for the production of temporal benefits. The catch advertisements of the many mind-training schools emphasize unduly the belief that he who can concentrate has a sure recipe for success in his pocket. Their teaching that anything on which the desire is set tends to come within the grasp may prove a rock of offence in the path of those who have not taken the precaution to set the goal of

Concentration and Orison

their desire beyond the furthest star. Material prosperity looms large for those whose focus is primarily on the sensory world, and to them the magical aspect of concentration makes a sure appeal.

It is not so with the mystic. "Magic" is as distasteful to him as the visionary outlook of the mystic is alien to the "magician." By "magician" neither charlatan nor trickster is here implied, but rather one who seeks to develop his own inherent powers so that he may become a centre of spiritual force, in fact, a magnet capable of drawing everything of like nature unto himself. His is the way of Knowledge, and his watchword Power.

A mystic longs only to strip from himself every impediment that hampers him in his journey to "the country of the soul." His life is a perpetual quest for the unattained, expressed often as the longing of a lover for his Beloved. "If any man love, he knoweth what is the cry of this voice."* His supreme goal is his immergence as a drop in the Abysmal Deep of God. St. Catherine of Siena hears the Divine Voice saying to her, "How glorious is that soul which has indeed been able to pass from the stormy ocean to Me, the Sea Pacific, and in that Sea, which is Myself, to fill the pitcher of her heart." Thus the mystic's way is that of the heart, and the watchword Love.

A wise and perfect tolerance is needed from "magician" and mystic in their judgment of each other's modes of approach to Reality. Both follow the flame, for their supreme characteristics—knowledge and love—are, as a modern writer on mysticism has emphasized

* Thomas à Kempis.

Vision

"the two most intense aspirations of the human soul."

"Dionysius the Areopagite divided those angels who stand nearest God into the Seraphs who are aflame with perfect Love, and the Cherubs, who are filled with perfect knowledge. . . . The wise cherubs . . . are 'all eyes,' but the loving seraphs are 'all wings.' "*"

A study of Mysticism by the Magician and Occultism by the Mystic will at least lead to appreciation of the deep sincerity lying behind the quest of the other. Understanding is the death-blow to bitterness, and therefore it is well to read widely beliefs alien to our own. If by so doing we fear to shake our own conviction, there is need to look to the security of our foundations.

DOROTHY GRENSIDE.



NOCTURNE

TALL fairy buildings lifting high
Blue roofs towards a darkling sky.

Wet mirrored pavements silver-bright
In mystic pools of spectral light.

Grey mists that, gently stealing, fall
In ghostly shadows over all.

Strange secrets from a distance borne
Told 'twixt the sunset and the morn.

H. L. HUBBARD.

* *Mysticism* by Evelyn Underhill, p. 54.

THE MISTRESS OF VISION

A COMMENTARY UPON FRANCIS THOMPSON'S POEM

THIS wonderful poem, which repays study as much as any verse in the English language, was conceived by Francis Thompson at the lowest ebb of his life, though it was probably not written down and finished until the summer in the 'nineties, which he spent with the Franciscan monks at Pantasaph, in North Wales.

His natural mysticism deepened into a reality of vision and truth during those years when his only home was a seat on the Embankment, or Kensington Gardens on a summer night. He sold matches on the curbstone for a bare living, within easy distance of starvation. His soul dwelt upon spiritual heights, unreachable by those who have not forsworn, or been robbed of luxury. The outcome of the poet's own life was the "Mistress of Vision."

It is one of the most passionately pictorial things in existence. It begins and ends in the heart of a garden, where we are shown, in almost mysterious words, the inner meaning of a little flower, a star that gleams in the blue above, and the pain that may lurk in a song.

The Mistress of Vision herself was interwoven with the mystic light that, coming from the sun, lay like an aureole about her body when her spirit shone.

Yet it was only a low sun, and a half light that lit that garden. The glory of the golden fire came there only as a cloud of incense smoke. Behind it, the Mistress of Vision read what alternately transfigured and frightened her, the beauty, the wonder, the awe, of the distant world, the historic past, and the inspiration of the future.

Her eyes held secrets visible only to those who car

Vision

read the meaning of even a commonplace garden, where the beauty of common flowers, changing leaves, the sigh of summer, and the murmur of bees, all seem to link the material present with the invisible, but most real side of life.

When the trend or purpose of life is seen in some moment of spiritual intuition, as a glimpse that is also a blinding flash, it is terrifying, but it is also stupendously wonderful. It belittles for ever our former point of view, and our petty satisfactions. This flashing insight may be read in the eyes of the Mistress of Vision.

Many changes rise on
Their phantasmal mysteries,
They grow to an horizon
Where earth and Heaven meet ;
And like a wing that dies on
The vague, twilight verges,
Many a sinking dream doth fleet,
Lessening down their secrecies,
And as dusk with day converges,
Their orbs are troublously
Overgloomed and overglowed
With hope and fear of things to be.

The whole poem describes in symbolic and mystic language the hidden thread of affinity which binds, or may bind, the whole of true history, fact, and future together. We can only look with concrete eyes upon our own little bit of existence and atmosphere. Yet experience should be the great factor in the making of sympathy, and the finding of hidden affinities in unlikely places

Perhaps this mystical discovery of a thread of life which, in the hidden heart of things, binds everything together, is one of the greatest discoveries that a mind or a heart can make. When outward discrepancies, clashes of thought, selfish or arrogant points of view,

The Mistress of Vision

false standards of both position and conduct, have passed away, this thread of inward truth and sympathy which links realities together may be clear to the soul of the whole world.

The Mistress of Vision sees it first in a peak of Himalay, covered by trackless snow, which even the eagles never reach. There, maybe, live the people known in old fables. They hide from the shock and terror of Day. Yet it is Day's tumult, the sound of the Sun clanging over the horizon into full life, that reveals with music and with terror what the Mistress of Vision saw.

Such revelation remains merely a passing glimpse if it is not followed by clear and permanent vision. The seer in this poem is master, author, almost controller of the vision, which at the same time permeates and inspires the eye and centre of her soul.

She is at the same time the dreamer and the dream, and the actual, practical outcome of both. Mystic seers are not by any means unpractical. It is because they act upon their visions that they have largely been the ones to move the world. We have only to glance back over the history of thought and action to recognise that it is unconsciously upon the foundation of dreams that the apparently solid world has moved. The visions and ethics of so-called mad men have become the deliberate and much-praised action of those who were born into facts once rejected contemptuously as dreams. Such a statement is almost a truism. Yet generation after generation we go on repeating the contempt when we see glimmerings of the vision.

Lend me, O lend me
The terrors of that sound,
That its music may attend me,
Wrap my chant in thunders round ;
While I tell the ancient secrets in that Lady's singing found.

Vision

On Ararat there grew a vine
Where Asia from her bathing rose,
Our first sailor made a twine
Thereof, for his prefiguring brows.
Canst divine
Where, upon our dusty earth, of that vine a cluster grows ?

On Golgotha there grew a thorn,
Round the long pre-figured brows.
Mourn, oh mourn !
For the vine have we the spine
Is this all the Heaven allows ?

On Calvary was shook a spear,
Press the point into thy heart—
Joy and fear !
All the spines upon the thorn into curling tendrils start.

Here we have the tracing of the hidden link that binds together the childhood of the world in the vine on Ararat, with the sorrow of the world which became its salvation. Out of the vine and the spines of the thorn start the curling tendrils with which, in our turn, we may bind about the world new visions of understanding and sympathy. Thus we may reach that unity which lies somewhere at the source of all real, disinterested thought, if it is the outcome of vision.

From the spear and thorn alone
May be grown
From the front of saint or singer, any divinising twine.

Francis Thompson was guilty of inventing words, though many of the unusual ones which he uses are revivals, rather than inventions. In the *Mistress of Vision* he speaks of two mythical and idealistic places of existence—the Land of Luthany and the tract of Elenore. In these far spaces to which the mystic soul is on pilgrimage, hides the singing happiness which yet hath chords of weeping. Thompson is like Blake

The Mistress of Vision

in his absolute realisation and certainty of the fact that under grief and loneliness may run a hidden thread of joy, possible of development apart from all circumstances. Neither poet really believed in circumstances. They were to either but accidents that surrounded, but did not even cloud, the real stuff of life. Neither ever made much effort to alter his circumstances. Both had developed quite naturally an indifference which many a rich man, and also many a poor materialist, might envy. It was in the Land of Luthany that the soul of this poet dwelt, when his body's home was a slum in winter, or a park seat on a summer night.

All the reality of living, all its finest essence, rarest atmosphere, keenest vitality, and finest joy, is to Thompson rightly hidden under a half transparent, but never fully drawn aside veil. Many hearts perhaps recognise this veil, even respect it, but sooner or later lift it with a fool's hand and profess to lay bare its mysteries, but never really reach the secrets of the reverent soul.

Thompson leaves the Land of Luthany behind its locked gates. Yet he knows that there is a key. Within that gate may be learnt not the riddle of the universe, that is beyond any mortal mind to fathom, but the secrets of life which make living possible.

Pierce thy heart—to find the key.
With thee take
Only what none else would keep.
Learn to dream when thou dost wake,
Learn to wake when thou dost sleep,
Learn to water joy with tears,
Learn from fears to vanquish fears ;
To hope, for that thou dar'st not despair,
Exult, for that thou dar'st not grieve.
Plough thou the rock until it bear ;
Know, for thou else couldst not believe ;
Lose, that the lost thou mayst receive ;
Die, for none other way canst live.

Vision

When earth and heaven lay down their veil,
And that apocalypse turns thee pale ;
When thy seeing blindeth thee
To what thy fellow mortals see ;
When their sight to thee is sightless ;
Their living death ; their light, most lightless—
Search no more—
Pass the gates of Luthany, tread the region Elenore.

When to the new eyes of thee,
All things by immortal power
Near or far,
Hiddenly,
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star ;
O seek no more !
Pass the gates of Luthany. Tread the region Elenore.

To study such a passage as the one just quoted is to feel irresistibly, at any rate for the time being, the utter worthlessness and nothingness of the purely concrete side of life. Yet this wonderful, intangible, idealistic existence which is free to all who possess the power to enter in, is not an anæmic, effortless dream life that drifts upon a sea of space here and there at will.

Nowhere is there a more exhilarating call to achievement of purpose than in the words "Plough thou the rock until it bear." No expression could more realistically set forth the surmounting of what is almost impossibly difficult, but can be done if a man put his soul and spirit into the task.

Thompson's pruning of himself is never merely ascetic. He never casts everything away just in order that he may have a spiritual satisfaction in being without it. He sees too much of the sacramental in the everyday element for that. He has an almost psychic sense of values, and a far larger sense of proportion than the ordinary liver of life. When

The Mistress of Vision

he says "With thee take only what none else would keep" he is stern, he is even a little ironic, but he knows that his reader who fully apprehends that line is most likely to follow it. It is the same advice given to the young ruler. Get rid of superfluous needs as well as desires, because only naked can the spirit dwell in the Kingdom of Heaven. The things which none else would keep are apt to appear strange, unconventional, almost laughable possessions in the eyes of the stereotyped world which strains nervously after effect and monotony of environment. Yet in the long run perhaps to everybody they appear to be the true things of angel or of faery, but it is too late then for the once contemptuous world to learn to appreciate. The cultivation of the power of appreciation is one of the surest roads to both happiness and wisdom which life and personality can find.

"Lose, that the lost thou mayest receive," is a phrase permeated with the very soul of sympathy. The man who wrote it had not been down among the lost merely in order to see them suffer, or even to suffer with them. He had shared the abyss because he must. He had felt the fellowship and known the help of the underworld because he needed it, and it was offered to him when he could get, and desired, no other. He did not seek for loss in order to gain. He spoke of something more sublime than what is commonly understood by losing one's life to find it. Through life he was little concerned with the saving of his own soul. He left that to a divine and magnificent chance. He cried to the respectable, the smug, and the safe to become lost that they might feel their kinship, their fellow spiritual humanity, with those whom they had always regarded as the denizens of outer darkness.

Only through sympathy, never through superiority, comes vision. It is not the correct, or the decorous, or

Vision

the student who touches the flower and feels the troubling of the star. It is often the vagabond, or the idler, or the hungry, who can see the many splendoured thing when the rich turn empty away.

It is not mere beauty which the Mistress of Vision wishes to impress upon the spirit that is able to unwind her hidden thread. A love of beauty alone makes no soul master of its visions, but rather their slave.

The poet ends upon a note of high longing. He fears that henceforth, away from her witchery, he may not be able to hear the fine appeal of the music of life. He knows that the greatest difficulty is not to feel, but to sustain, an inspiration.

And as a necromancer
Raises from the rose ash
The ghost of a rose ;
My heart so made answer
To her voice's silver plash—
Stirr'd in reddening flash,
And from out its mortal ruins the purpureal phantom blows.

When she shall unwind
All those wiles she wound about me,
Tears shall break from out me,
That I cannot find
Music in the holy poets to my wistful want, I doubt me.

FLORENCE BONE.



A great city is that which has the greatest men and women,
If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world.—WALT WHITMAN.

SOME NOTES ON THE TAROT CARDS

THE LOVERS, THE HANGED MAN, AND THE LIGHTNING-STRUCK TOWER

THE Tarot Cards are all curious, and the fact that there is no contemporary literature regarding them makes consideration of their meaning extremely hazardous. No one who has collated the speculations, historical or other, of writers regarding them will fail to recognise this fact. From the learned and fertile work of Papus to that of the cautious and scholarly Mr. Waite there is a wide choice of theories, but little fact upon which one can build.

In search of something tangible I have been driven to consider some of the older packs. But, of course, it has to be remembered that the earliest of these were made at a time prior to printing, and each artist impressed his own views upon them. On the other hand, while personal glosses are many, there are broad lines of convention which constantly have been reproduced.

Take the card of *The Lovers*. This card usually bears the number six. There are two editions of it broadly, one of which will be found reproduced in *Taylor on Playing Cards* (1865), on p. 57, and also by Papus in *The Tarot of the Bohemians*. It appears also in the Bologna pack of 1728. A winged and blind-fold cupid encircled by a nimbus shoots, from above, an arrow directed at a man who stands below in jerkin and hose, and who is being addressed on the right and left simultaneously by richly clad women. The lady on the left wears either a laurel wreath or a diadem; the lady on the right is chapleted with roses. Both quite manifestly solicit him.

Papus makes the man cross his arms and interprets the card as the great choice between vice and virtue.

Vision

The blindfold Cupid is Justice which bends his bow—so Papus says—at the figure of Vice. I repeat—so Papus says;—for there is no sign of this in the cards. Nor do his interpretations otherwise appear to be sound. The one woman is really Fame, and the other is Pleasure, and, of course, the winged figure is not Justice, but Cupid.

The other form of this card is found in the Venetian and Minchiate sets. In these you still find the flying blindfold god, but there are only two figures below, a man and a woman. Mr. Waite has used this convention in his sixth card, and while he has idealised the situation considerably, he has retained what seems to me the underlying idea.

In the Minchiate cards of both the older and the newer set the woman bestows a crown on the man, who kneels. In the *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. III, p. 237, there is a card called the *lovers*, which shows a man and a woman entering the bond of matrimony. The learned author of the article says the idea of the card is that law should consecrate marriage.

There is no doubt that the wealth of meaning which the Minchiate card is meant to convey has been lost by left- and right-hand turnings. Love, says that card, descends from the spirit, and is given to woman, who gives of her grace to man. She is the minister of Love; she is its soul, and as the soul lightens the body, so the love of woman spiritualises the nature of man. All other views of love are exoteric and mean.

I pass to the twelfth card, that of the *Hanged Man*. A writer in the *Occult Review* quite rightly said of my recent essay on the Tarots, that I had done nothing to elucidate the mystery of this card. I agree that its meaning is hopelessly obscure. Some of the Tarot sets clearly exhibit the belief that the hanged man is Judas Iscariot. This appears in the Minchiate cards. The older Minchiate exhibits him holding a pentacle in

The Tarot Cards

each hand. In the newer Minchiate he holds bags of money. In one of the sets described in the *Burlington Magazine* (*supra*) the card of Hope shows a man kneeling with a rope round his neck and on his robe are the words "Juda Traditore." In the Bologna geographical set a man's leg is attached to a tree by a rope, and the inscription is "Gulino traditore" i.e. Julian the Apostate.

I think this is the left-hand way of tradition. The true traitor card of the pack is the Devil.

On the other hand the *Hanged Man* is often shown as a figure without arms or hands. Mr. Waite thinks they are bound behind. It may, however, be that by design they are not there. Also Mr. Waite is possibly in error in exhibiting the *Hanged Man* on a Tau Cross. None of the ancient Tarots so depicts that from which he hangs. The early Italian cards show twin pillars with capitals; the Minchiate, posts which do not touch the ground, the Bologna geographical card the branch of a tree. Papus shows a gibbet resting on two trees, each with six branches lopt off. The point is not very material except that the idea of the Cross may suggest some allusion to the Crucifixion of Christ. Of course that would be wrong.

A search in mythology does not enable one to discover anyone of fame who was ever gibbeted by one leg. The earlier Minchiate card makes the matter more curious by omitting the cord which ties the right foot. That foot is simply applied to the roof above.

The author of the article in the *Burlington Magazine* says it is the card of Prudence, representing a Mercury poised on one foot. Of course Mercury was sometimes represented without arms and sometimes also with one leg only. Mercury is Trismegistus and there is something in the idea that when Man discovers Truth the ordinary course of living and all ideas

Vision

regarding it are inverted. So the Minchiate card may be meant to explain that the foundation on which man truly stands is above and not below.

But there is one great mythological figure, Prometheus, whose character does supply nearly all that this card idealises. Curiously enough, like Mercury, he is well known to Egyptian mythology. Prometheus was bound by one leg on Mount Caucasus to expiate the sin of having brought fire to man. He is the "Saviour" of mythology. Of course the traditional anchorage was a rock, but he brings true in other respects the idea of Mr. Waite's beautiful twelfth card: for though he suffers an ignominious penalty, he suffers for man, and round his head is the aureole of the martyr.

These suggestions, however, in no way exhaust the possible explanation of this card. There is a custom in various parts of Europe of taking, once a year, Death, in the form of an effigy, to the woods and destroying him, and in his place there is brought back a living tree, on which hang the clothing of the Dead. If the card of the *Hanged Man* and *Death* are cards in opposition, they tell the tale of death destroyed and reborn: of life reborn and already dying. The mystery, true of the body, is true also of the soul. It must die to live.

Also there is the mystery of the god who is hanged. It appears that the ancients believed that even the gods do not live for ever, and to restore their power they did them to death by hanging. No blood must be shed, and as they hung their glory returned, together with their beauty and their youth.

Again, the hanging thing may be the mistletoe, that would account for the idea that it is tied on a foreign tree and that it hangs downwards.

To such speculation there need be no end. Papus may be right in his guess that its symbol is a Latin

The Tarot Cards

Cross resting on the horizontal side of an equilateral triangle. It ought to be borne in mind that these cards belong to an order of thought which is unfamiliar to us. And the reason of this may be that although there are no Spanish Tarots, these cards had their origin in Moorish culture, which so strongly influenced the thought of Europe, and found so powerful an echo in the soul of Provence. From the Moor to Egypt the way is but brief, and it may be that the tradition of the *Hanged Man* will yet be found to be of Egyptian origin.

The *Lightning-struck Tower* has a left- and a right-hand way. The traditional card of Waite and Papus shows a building falling under the stroke of a thunderbolt, and two figures, apparently male, thrown out of it. It will be remembered that Etna was set ablaze by a thunderbolt to suppress Enceladus—who lies imprisoned under it. There is very little suggestion in these cards.

But the Minchiate Tarots of the *Tower* exhibit here a building from the door of which a man expels a woman whose waist and thighs are garlanded. It will be remembered that this card usually either precedes or follows that of the Devil. It may be suggested, of course, that the *Tower* being one of the cards of the Way, bears the lesson that on the spiritual plane there is no marrying or giving in marriage, and that from him who seeks the Way the ties of sex entirely fall away. That solution fails to explain why man thrusts woman from the house of life. But if the meaning of the card of the *Lovers* be properly explained above, then this card explains that the first result of the work of the Devil is to destroy the reverence of man for woman. The Devil works to separate the spiritual from the material. He does so in a fashion so subtle that long after the material has been despiritualised, it still hypocritically retains the appearance of the Higher Way.

Vision

One of the Devil's first actions, in materialising the outlook of life, is to separate man from woman in their true relation to each other. It is not necessary to resort to violent estrangements. He merely turns the spiritual nature of woman towards vanity and so deprives her of her true human office. No man lives by bread alone. But when he finds in his helpmeet his own materiality reflected, he turns away in loss and shame. That loss is final.

And then comes a mist and a dropping rain :
And the world is never the same again.

W. INGRAM, M.A., LL.B., D.Sc.



REPENT

STIRRING the withered reeds to trembling life
There pealed through desert paths and silent ways
A clarion Voice that cried, "Repent ! Repent !"

And lo ! from rose-red dawn to purple eve
An answering throng pressed forth with eager feet
To seek the Kingdom in the wilderness.

Still down the whispering galleries of Time,
Haunted by shadow-shapes of memory pale,
A sighing echo comes, "Repent ! Repent !"

From feast and mirth the shrinking soul must fare
To listen for a Cry upon the wind,
And learn God's wisdom in His loneliness.

ESTHER RAWORTH.

THE CRAFTSMEN

We are Thy craftsmen, chosen from our birth
To hew and carve the ages yet to be.
The outline lies in shadows on the earth,
The full design remains, O Lord, with Thee.

There is a measure that we may not use,
A symmetry we know not orders all.
Great things and small we mingle and confuse,
To Thee the great is great, the small is small.

We are Thy craftsmen, not at hazard brought
Into Thy workshop, labourers unskilled.
For every task one hand alone was sought,
And every post by one alone is filled.

Not one shall hew the rock as others hewed,
No hand may carve what hands have carved before.
Each with his separate cunning stands indued,
His own unmatched ; his own for evermore.

Thou wilt not chafe Thy craftsmen in their task,
Setting before them terms of life and age,
Nor chide the self-distrustful who may ask
A hundred thousand years of pupilage.

Here we but feel the first hot rush of fire
The fierce pulsation of the wheels that spin
Driving the sobbing engine through the mire,
Blindly impelled by flames that leap within.

We feel, and yet we see not ; all is dim
And unproportioned. But the hammers beat
On that new world, of which we carve the rim,
Upon new man, for whom we mould the feet.

Vision

For we are all Thy craftsmen ; they who learn
Their craft betimes, or seek Thy benches late.
Never a laggard workman Thou didst spurn.
Lord, Thine are all the ages ; Thou canst wait.

Thy craftsmen have no death ; but one may bring
Some fruit made nearly perfect in man's day.
Another waits the spirit's harvesting
Till worlds and suns and time have rolled away.

For we believe that never hand has wrought
One task in love that crumbles into dust,
That not one offering is by Thee unsought
On which the workman graved Thy name in trust.

We are Thy craftsmen, though the chiselling fail
Of that perfection which Thine eyes should see,
Thine hands may weigh us in another scale
And flaws to man be perfect stones to Thee.

Let but the hands be strong upon the haft,
Whatever tools Thou givest man to wield.
Revealing unto every man his craft
Thou art Thyself in craftsmanship revealed.

E. GODFREY HOARE.



To the large majority Death is Pluto, King of the dark Unknown, whence no traveller returns, rather than Azrael, brother and friend, lord of this mansion of Life. . . . When the hour strikes he comes,—very gently, very tenderly, if we will but have it so—folds the tired hands together, takes the wayworn feet in his broad strong palm ; and lifting us in his wonderful arms he bears us swiftly down the valley, and across the waters of remembrance.

MICHAEL FAIRLESS.

A RUSSIAN GHOST

[The accuracy of the following uncanny story is vouched for by an officer in the R.A.M.C., who heard it at first hand from "Ivanoff" in the spring of last year, while on the Russian frontier. "Ivanoff's" real name is withheld, but he was attached to the British forces in the capacity of Russian interpreter.]

IVANOFF joined the Russian forces at the age of eighteen, and subsequently obtained a commission. During his term of service he fell in love with a girl of his own nationality, but who was by no means his equal in birth. She reciprocated his love and pleaded with him to marry her, but he, having a good deal of family pride, felt it would be an impossibility to introduce her to his parents as his bride.

Matters remained for some time at a deadlock. She was a woman of exceptional beauty and charm, and Ivanoff was torn between desire for her and a keen realisation of the disadvantages of such disparity between their social positions. However, after a good deal of inward conflict, he decided against the marriage, and proceeded to pay a certain amount of attention to another woman who possessed the necessary qualification of good birth. His first love thereupon made a determined effort to commit suicide, and he, full of remorse, came back to her. Her beauty conquered, and a marriage was arranged between them.

In accordance with the usual custom in Russia, he bought two rings, one for her and the other for himself. They were alike in design, being very broad and heavy of make, and both were of the same quality of gold, i.e. roughly the equivalent of our English 9 carats (the unit is different in Russia). Contrary to the usual Russian custom, however, he did not have his name and hers engraved on the rings, as he still felt rather ashamed of the marriage.

Vision

Three days before the wedding he called to see his future bride, but as she was not ready to receive him he was entertained for some minutes by her mother. Suddenly there came the sound of a fall from the next room. Ivanoff rushed in, to find his fiancée lying full length on the floor, black in the face. In spite of all attempts at resuscitation she proved to be dead. It was found afterwards that she had been choked by the very ring that Ivanoff had given her. She had evidently taken it off in order to wash her hands, and had held it in her mouth, from where it must have slipped and stuck in her throat, resulting in suffocation.

Ivanoff's love for her was fierce and passionate, and at the funeral, overwhelmed by grief, he threw his own ring into the coffin—in Russia the coffins have no lids—and swore with deep oaths that in spite of death he was her husband and would marry no other woman.

It should be noted at this point that the ring thus buried was (1) very broad, of heavy make; (2) composed of gold the equivalent of 9 carats; (3) plain, with no name inscribed on it; (4) too big for his finger, so that it tended to slip off easily.

Four years passed, during which he was faithful to the dead girl's memory; but at the end of that time it so happened that in his mother's house he met another woman, his equal in birth, for whom he felt a strong attraction. One night, while in the garden with her, after a little preliminary conversation, he attempted to kiss her.

Thereupon a strange and terrifying thing happened. He was thrown to the ground by some unseen force, while the girl was hurled into one of the garden chairs. She was naturally terror-struck, though scarcely more than he was, and, shaking with fear, she asked him what was the "white thing" that had come between

A Russian Ghost

them. But Ivanoff had seen nothing ; he had merely felt the violence of the impact.

Nothing further of an untoward nature, however, occurred, and Ivanoff waited no longer than their fifth meeting before he asked his new love to marry him. She accepted his proposal, and arrangements for the marriage proceeded apace. He bought two rings, *close fitting*, of gold equivalent to 18 *carats* (English), *narrow* in width, light of weight, and had them *engraved* with his own name and that of his future bride. In every respect they were dissimilar from his former selection.

The night before the wedding he gave a bachelor's farewell drinking party, and after it was over, he went, as was the custom, to a cobbler in Tiflis who told fortunes.

"You have a wife in God," this soothsayer told him.

Ivanoff denied it, but the cobbler answered sternly, "Do not lie, for I speak the truth. You can never marry again except with her ring and her permission."

Knowing that the ring was buried in his first love's coffin, and that the permission to marry was equally unobtainable, Ivanoff went home to bed, miserable and uneasy.

The next day, the marriage morning, his wife to be (who, as well as Ivanoff, is known to the officer who records the story) sent for Ivanoff in a state of great perturbation. She declared that in the night she had had a dream (?) of extraordinary reality, and she demanded of him whether he had ever been married.

He denied it. She then said that a woman who claimed to be his wife had come to her in the dream, saying that Ivanoff belonged to *her*, and that he had sworn a most solemn oath that he would marry none other. But the stranger woman went on to say that because she—the girl for whom he had broken hi

Vision

word—was pure and beautiful of character, she would sanction the marriage as it would be for Ivanoff's good.

They went to church for the marriage, and Ivanoff gave the two rings to the priest, who completed the ceremony with them. As they were leaving the building Ivanoff's ring *fell off*; it was no longer close fitting.

He looked at it, and a chill ran down his spine as he saw that it was no longer narrow but *broad* and heavy, the name inscribed on it had disappeared and it was now *plain*, and the gold was not the equivalent of 18 carats but of *nine*.

That night his wife asked to see the ring, but on taking it into her hand she fainted. On two other occasions she has tried to hold it, but with the same result. She now refuses to touch it.

Ivanoff has never told his wife the real history of the past; often he is torn with the longing to do so, but he hesitates. Yet it is ever present in his own memory, for a perpetual reminder of it is on his finger, in the ring that fits so loosely that he is obliged to wear a keeper lest he lose it, the ring that should be narrow with a name inscribed upon it, but which is heavy, bare of inscription, and of inferior gold.

M. B.



Let us remember that nothing befalls us that is not of the nature of ourselves. There comes no adventure but wears to our soul the shape of our everyday thoughts; and deeds of heroism are but offered to those who, for many long years, have been heroes in obscurity and silence.

MAETERLINCK.

CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICS

RUSKIN

It seems almost unnecessary to say that art should be beautiful, but Ruskin did not hesitate to use a phrase which to-day might be regarded as cliché, simply because of its inherent truth and of the modern desire to be before all things "smart." And Ruskin wished not only that art should be beauty in the narrow sense, but in that broader sense when its spirit alone should possess the ideal society of his vision wherein beauty should rule the hearts and actions of men. It was thus that his account of art was all commingled with his concept of work, and with a mass of social economy from which it can never truly be separated.

Man, being what he is, it was impossible that art, which is of sensation, and which Ruskin held to permeate life to its very foundation, should not have induced him to that attitude of mind which brought down upon him the accusation of sentimentality. Indeed he was a sentimentalist, such an one as is necessary to the right seeing of mankind, and such an one, mistaken as he so often was, that the world is better for him.

The first principle of art he held to be its subservience to some real human purpose, and it must have been this that must first have attracted him to the study of the principle of Gothic architecture, for architecture is at one and the same time the most universal of human arts and the most formative in the sense of environment. Monotony, that blasting influence of conventional work, appalled his spirit, and when he had perceived not only conventional design but real structural unscience in the buildings of his time, he had no option but to revert to the sounder principles adopted by the Guilds of Free Masons, in whatsoever part of Europe they were called

Vision

upon to do their work. Beyond their right concept of structure, they had dealt with the question of decoration with a perfect sense of proportion, and the immediacy of the appeal of their work is such that its effect is felt by the least impressionable.

That they were engaged upon the raising of Christian temples, was a further argument in favour of that particular class of work, for it was a matter of which he infinitely approved and to which he referred all the questions of his life, and indeed all artistic questions. Quite wrongly he attributed the Gothic occupation with natural objects to the Christianity of its exponents, and he has gone so far as to say that no real appreciation of nature is found in any other religion than that of the Hebrews. This queer but comprehensible bias of his mind led him into a perfunctory but severe condemnation of all pagan art, so that he had little or no sympathy with Grecian work nor with some of the best profane work of the Renaissance. He had failed entirely to appreciate that it was possibly a turning from introspection to nature, led by Pagan natural mysticism, which made the wonder period what it was.

This necessity for the artist to study nature at first hand was even more vehemently preached to painters than to Architects, although it was decidedly his idea that nothing but a replica of a natural object should be used for the adornment of a building. His gospel was that, while talent varied immensely, nature provided essential work for all degrees of talent. He wished, indeed, to enforce that geological strata, existing buildings, human beings in their normal dress and environment formed the proper material for artistic representation. But more than the accuracy of reproduction involved in the painting of geological strata, he desired that ideality which should, although scientifically exact, present the view as it was really

Ruskin

seen by the human eye. Throughout his critical work he insists primarily upon the provision of the fullest measure of such definite realism as the artist could achieve.

Holding such views it would have been impossible for him to refuse support to the little body of enthusiasts who broke away from convention, and who termed themselves Pre-Raphaelites. Their impulse was a return to nature, and although it is questionable whether the great master himself would not have been the first to subscribe to their principle, they were right in their opposition to the principle of learning to paint any subject from the manner of another picture, and not from the subject itself. They did not, however, nor did Ruskin wish them to forego the advantage in form which they gained from the discoveries in perspective of Michael Angelo and Raphael, so that they did not really return to a time before him, but to the principle upon which he himself worked. On the same grounds it was equally impossible for Ruskin to withhold his support from the wonderful and gigantic precursor of the Pre-Raphaelites, Turner.

Part, however, of Ruskin's preoccupation with Turner's work was due to the latter's immense interest in landscape and his comparative indifference to the human figure. Ruskin was more than indifferent, although he was delighted with sculpture of a religious character, but that indifference was due to the exiguity of his idea of that which was fitting for artistic reproduction. It was part and parcel of his mistaken contempt for Pagan achievement and of his singular inhumanity in certain directions, which was more than outweighed by his liberality of thought in almost similar ways.

Beyond and before the effect of the finished product upon the seer, Ruskin was concerned very greatly

Vision

with the effect of the work upon the producer. Deadly as monotony in architectural design, in pictorial composition, in character of household interior decoration, in any art which impinges always upon the life of a people, can be, it is not when completed only that it slays the spirit. If it is harmful when finished, how much more harmful must it be to the unfortunate whose daily toil is an interminable reproduction of somewhat which is untrue, unfaithful, and indeed is so often made in circumstances of the most utter commercial degradation. He would have any buyer of art gravely consider the circumstances of its origin before accepting it as life-worthy both to its user and to its producer. Not only must the finished product be the best work of individual talent, but all thought must be devoted to the knowledge of the education of that talent to its utmost possibility.

Such knowledge can only be achieved by the most earnest conviction that the reflex action of art is the clearest indication of the wealth of a people. Art which is of one conventional type where all progress is arrested, because the people imagine themselves to be more worthily employed on other matters is a portent of unimagined significance, significance of the utter unhealth of that people. Art which is unconventional, daring, useful, observed, tangible to the life of a people, universal in that life, each member of which so far as in him lies, is devoted to the adornment of home and person ; adornment, not only in covering, but in flesh and blood, and in that personal matter spreading throughout the people, love of beauty which is love of life, that art, which is what Ruskin so sincerely desired, will be, when it is once again achieved, not of unimagined significance, but of immediate importance as almost the be-all and end-all of human existence.

G. E. FUSSELL.

WHEN I HEAR MUSIC

WHEN I hear Music, Something stirs within me. Something which, for a long time, I could not understand.

In vain I sought to explain it by words, or by vibrations ; in vain to solve it as one would a quadratic equation.

Many devious routes had I to follow before I came to understanding. It was only by wandering back to the cradle of man that I found the true way. Back to the time, before language was born, or words invented, when Nature spoke to her children through the elemental language of earthquake, storm and fire.

The gentle sighing of evening zephyrs through the autumn reeds, or the ripple of lapping waters on a sandy beach, formed a soothing lullaby alike to the crooning infant and to the tired hunter.

The joyous songs of birds in the mating season impulsed the young to marriage.

The roar of the hungry leviathan seeking food, steeled heart and sinews to danger.

In the diapason of the storm, in the bass of the thunder, the child-man had his first thoughts and fears of a power higher and stronger than himself.

In the splintering trees, the fleeing fear-ridden beasts ; in the rushing floods, the falling, rending rocks, he tremblingly heard the harsh voice of an angry God.

Thus did Nature's Music alternately soothe and excite, create confidence and fear. And the creature in whom she had just planted the Soul-germ, responded to her notes, and in responding, sought to imitate them by the invention of primitive musical instruments. The hollowed gourd, the dried reed were his first steps at self-expression.

Before ever he conceived language, or found the

Vision

need for words, he sought to set up communion between his soul and his God by music ; music made on Nature's gifts, and music imitating Nature's sounds. And in seeking so to express the God within him, man became a co-partner in the creation of his mind and soul.

Musing on these things, I thought of the myriads of songs and dances, of wails and laments, of dirges and chants, of marches and martial music, which, ages ago, I had taken part in ; for what am I, but fragments of my ancestors who did all these ?

In such wise, I realised that the stirring within me was but the awakening from their long sleep, of all those unremembered actions, of all those dormant memories, which Time had drifted along the blood-stream of inheritance.

And also, I realised that the emotion so evoked within me is not for a useless purpose, nor for a pleasant transient emotion, nor for whiling away an idle hour.

Its true function is to stimulate to action ; for if I allow the emotion evoked to be the end, and not the means to some useful purpose, then is my soul dead to music.

Thus do I account for the Something which music stirs within me.

Music, the divine stimulus to human heart and mind and soul, evolving, developing, amplifying each, that each may act and react on each, so that the longings and yearnings, resolves and inspirations kindled, created and inspired by music shall be challenges to heart and mind and soul, to strive, to dare, to do.

And those who do not so translate musical emotions into actions, are merely echoes. They do not understand that music is one of Nature's elements in her synthesis of Soul.

HENRY J. BAX.



A BORDER GHOST STORY

"THE LOST TEN THOUSAND ACRES"

I LOOKED about me over the rolling moorland, its rough pelt warmed by autumnal tints in the heather, bent and bracken, and felt pleased at the slow "clop-clop" of the ancient mare—a maid of all work—as she slowly pulled the "machine" up the brae from the little station. This was my introduction to the Border country, for owing to my late father's ill health I had lived chiefly abroad, though I had been educated at Eton and was now at Oxford preparing for Holy Orders.

I was on my way to visit my uncle, the Rev. William Armstrong, who had recently exchanged livings with the Rector of Old Town on the Moor, being desirous to end his days in his native country.

My companion, the driver, was an ancient cynic with bowed shoulders, peaked face, and a malicious eye that came squinting round like that of a mist-stretched horse. When I inquired tentatively how my uncle was progressing with his new parishioners he answered contemptuously, "Wey, there's nae *harm* in him. He loves his pipe, an' his books, an' his glass o' whisky, but," here he paused significantly, "he's a furrinor, an' Aa divvn't haud wi' furrinors."

"Foreigner!" I exclaimed indignantly, "he's no foreigner. Why he was born and bred in the county, and now out of love for it has returned to his native land. No doubt," I admitted, "our clan of Armstrong was originally Scotch and dwelt in Liddesdale, but after James's accession they distributed themselves throughout the North."

"Aa nivvor could abide a Scot," retorted my companion, seizing hold of my admission, "and Old Town would be aal the better wantin' them." With

Vision

this home-thrust my driver—"boots," ostler and man of all work at the little inn, "The Bird in the Bush"—relapsed into his habitual silence.

By this time we were descending the fell, and I could see the little village, my destination, spread out below me, whose grey houses seemed to link hands and surround the green as in some country dance, with the old Church and burying-ground in the centre.

To the north frowned the high Mote hills of our Anglo-Saxon Fathers, and at the head of the village rose the tall pale tower built by the descendants of the Norman Lord of the Manor, and which now served as the Rectory.

As I descended from the "machine" under the shadow of the tower I could see high above me the carved coat of the proud Norman chieftain, bearing the sword that the Conqueror had given him in token of his services.

My uncle came to the door to welcome me, and taking me within, set me down before a great fire of logs and peat. "Some people insist," he said, "that the village should be called Cold Town rather than Old Town, but with fuel as abundant as here I keep warmer than I have often been in Italy. Your Aunt is away to-night on a visit, so we'll have high tea at once instead of supper. It's rather a favourite meal with me, though your aunt does not approve. I expect you're ready enough?"

"Yes," I assented readily. "Hunger and high tea are a splendid combination."

Forthwith we adjourned to the dining-room deep set within its massive walls and stone-barrelled roof which seemed filled with mysterious shadows, for the only lights were four candles on the old oak table. After a wonderful meal of tea, bacon and eggs, barley bannocks and heather honey, we went upstairs to my uncle's library, which was furnished with modern

A Border Ghost Story

windows in the heavy walls, giving a magnificent view over the high fells whereon the setting sun was "closing his benediction." The table was spread with maps, old and new, and as soon as the Rector had lit his pipe he began to pore over them intently.

"The Bishop was here two days ago for the consecration of our new churchyard," he said, "and he informed me that my parish was once the largest in England, covering an extent of some eighty thousand acres, and that according to an old Palatinate map at Durham, before the separation of the dioceses, ten thousand acres had been somehow or another lost."

"The Scots," I suggested flippantly as I lit a cigarette, "must have 'lifted' them."

"Ten thousand acres," retorted the Rector, "are not put into the breeches pockets, or slung over the saddle-bow of a Scots reiver. I'm trying to discover whither they have disappeared. I might find my tithes considerably increased!"

The Rector became absorbed in his voyage of discovery, and I occupied myself in exploring the library and looking out of the windows upon the foresight of a former Rector who had planted geans, dogwood and rowan on the east and south banks of the Monks' burn which ran round about the tower.

In the lingering sunset light the dogwood flamed scarlet and purple, the wild cherry seemed adrip with wine, and the rowan's fire was like the burning bush unconsumed. An anthem of flame surrounded the old tower; fire answered fire with exultant voice. The prospect was so lovely, wild and romantic that I asked leave to go without and wander up the burn.

My uncle waved a hand as though he were glad to be left undisturbed, so I gladly fared forth and took my way up the burnside among the dappled birches towards the moor beyond.

The moon had risen as I emerged from the en-

Vision

chanted and fairy wood:—softly and mysteriously in the quiet October twilight she spread her downy wings over the sleeping moor.

Beside a waterfall I stayed and plucked a rowan branch, then stepped across the water and so on to the moor.

Scarcely had I done so than I suddenly perceived a figure advancing towards me; it seemed lame, but hirkled along at a good pace.

"A crippled herd-laddie," I thought to myself. Then he cried to me and pointed with his hand to a height on the fell above. "Ho-way," he called, "ho-way to the Pele, the headman will be returning wi' a fine prey the nicht. Pit your best foot foremost, my young 'Book-a-bosom.'" Whereupon, seized with sudden eagerness, I ran forward towards the upspringing light, but—*what did he mean by "my young Book-a-bosom?"* No matter. I was impatient to see what was forward at the Pele. As I drew near I saw a woman replenishing the bale fire on the bastion overhead, and I heard my own voice crying eagerly, "Is the Headman returning 'heavy'? Has he run a good foray?"

"Ay, that has he," she returned. "I can descry a mass o' stirks an' yowes by the ford."

As I stood I heard the splashing of hoofs in the water, and the bellowing of prodded kine, and could see the gleam of torches. Shortly, as I stayed at gaze, I could spy through the misty light a plump of Border spears driving before them a tumultuous herd of bestial. Yet there seemed no sign of joy in the riders over their spoil. They appeared to ride sullenly and in sorrow.

Suddenly the woman raised an anxious voice. "Whaur is the Headman?"

"He's here, Mistress Effie," replied a voice disconsolately, "but he lies stricken wi' an arrow."

Deep silence fell on all. Then with a woeful cry

A Border Ghost Story

the woman rushed forth from the Pele ; the horsemen made respectful way for her, and so disclosed a sorrowful group—four footmen bearing a rough bier of grey hazels whereon lay the Headman. With a sobbing cry the woman beside the bier stood gazing on her “man’s” face in the wan light. She whispered hoarsely, “*My Si—my lovely Si,*” then lifting up her arms to heaven as in despair she swayed and fell forward on the bier, her face against her man’s. The keening cry arose—sound of a mighty lamentation—and I knew instinctively that the woman too was dead. I too felt a pang strike through my heart. Then I heard myself cry aloud, “*Orate pro animabus Simonis et Euphemiae Armstrong,*” and I bowed my head in grief on my breast. Standing thus awhile I felt the night wind beat about my neck, and then I noticed that a mist had stolen over the moor unperceived and now concealed the sorrowing mourners from my view.

Just at that moment I heard a loud hullah-balloo behind me and saw a red light waving up and down in the distance. Wondering greatly what this could mean I retraced my steps to the burn. Then I could perceive through the mist a dark figure brandishing a lantern and I heard my uncle’s voice crying aloud in some agitation, “Eric, Eric, where are you?” Then, seeing me approach across the magic burn, he cried again joyfully, “Thank God, my boy, you are safe. I feared you might have fallen into the Lynn and been drowned.”

“I’m sorry, uncle,” said I, as I grasped his outstretched hand, and then to myself I added, “*I have discovered the lost ten thousand acres.*”

HOWARD PEASE.



NIGHT

LISTEN to the song of the night, cold, sweet, compelling ! It is the time when the Spirit walks abroad unmasked.

My soul was borne away on the wind to the moors, that lay stretched out on all sides like a purple sea, out of which rose the dome of the sky twinkling with innumerable stars.

The purple silence heaved and spoke. The dews came like acolytes gathering the scent of thyme and heather, and wafting it like incense up to heaven ; while all the rest of nature watched and prayed and stirred at times with a murmuring sigh as the Spirit passed through the midst.

Then my soul was carried on to where the purple of the moors was merged into the steel blue of the sea. On its wide expanse floated wisps of foam white as the stars and glistening. And the water moaned and sobbed, and its breast heaved tumultuously as it clung to the grey sands ; but suddenly the moaning became music and its sobbing became soothed into whispered prayers, for the Spirit walked on the waters.

Then my soul passed on to a deep wood where the very air was green and throbbed with deep soft shadows. Among the trees there came never a whisper ; not a leaf stirred : their rugged arms were outstretched in supplication. Soon a low tremulous sigh rippled through the dusky leaves and stirred even the branches, for the Spirit passed and blessed them.

Then my soul was drawn on to where myriads of lights strove to blot out the stars ; and it shuddered and shrank back as the dull roar of a mighty populace came up through the red haze. It crept along the crowded streets where the garish blaze of shop windows robbed the night of the colour of its robes, and where

Snowfall

many people passed to and fro with weary faces that never once looked up to the vast sky.

And the eyes of my soul closed.

"I have lost the Spirit!" it cried. "It will never pass this way."

But suddenly its eyes were opened and it saw the Spirit standing still among the hurrying throng. And the Spirit turned and smiled at my Soul and said:

"Nay, say not that you have lost me, for these are my people and from them I never pass away."

NESTA SAWYER.



SNOWFALL

O WORLD not fully white, but covered o'er
With a frail garment, crystal in the sun,
O world, thy days of winter nakedness
Are passed and done.

Even the oak trees, knotted, bare and gnarled,
Their shriveled dead brown leaves by autumn thinned,
Have now a fairy jewelling unstirred
By icy wind.

The hanging bramble and rough clumps of broom,
The bracken, gorse and common earthy things,
The little hedge of rust-red beech,—all wear
A cloak for kings.

O world not fully white, O world at rest,
Clothed in thy garment of frail loveliness,
Folded in snowy veil, with pearl thick set,
Thy God doth bless!

D. G.



THE SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY

FOREMOST among the beautiful gifts the artists pour into the lives of men is the presentment of tragedy, the song of life that is the echo of the spirit, the triumph of the Unseen Something which is mightier than the dust in which it lives and moves and has its being.

The note of Tragedy is in all Nature. The voice of the wind as it catches the earth in its hair is as sad as age weeping at the tomb of a child. It is as if Nature were trying vainly to reveal some mighty secret ; as if some pain were gnawing eternally as the Vulture of Prometheus ; for even in her most joyous moments she rarely loses the *motif* of this minor melody. She never laughs unless to weep at herself afterwards, as if, in the dawning smile of each opening flower, she sang a reluctant swan song of its decay.

She binds rhythmically all lives and scatters them, mixing together coarseness and beauty so that the soul may learn the meaning of its own pain. Is the shadow waiting so silently a vague fatalism, a certain knowledge that the thing dreaded is the thing unforeseen ? Sorrow as well as joy lingers in the magic cup, and if Tristan and Isolde will drink of it, they must taste both. The tree which stands mutely stark in the winter storm must shed again one day its unborn leaves, and there are those who are doomed temperamentally from the day of their birth.

After all, what is tragedy ? It is not mere failure to accomplish a desired end, for comedy also uses failure in her machinery. Tragedy has fingers which clutch at the root of life, but comedy plays lightly with the leaves and blossoms. Comedy has her place ; often she is the saving clause in existence ; but Tragedy, mysterious in her aloofness, full of grace and dignity, is nearer the heart of things. Her triumph is that her sad lingering kiss holds something touching the meaning and essence of all life of which laughing Comedy does not dream—a quality of godlike endurance and heroic calm beside which fragile pleasure is a cheap tinsel. There is a beauty in all sorrow that joy cannot distil, and tragedy is a realisation of this beauty. The

The Spirit of Tragedy

statue has lost its wings, but is in itself lofty in emotion, fine in expression of character, and it is because it is broken that it is expressive of all the beauty that ever was or will be. All tragedy is a recognition of this eternal failure of the form to complete the ideal ; to do anything greater than dimly shadow forth some marvellous archetype existing alone within the brain of God.

The weakness of the characters makes the play, saving the action from banality. Life is life's eternal quest. The fulfilment of life is happiness, or nobility ; failure to find this fulfilment is tragedy, and yet the great secret of all tragedy lies in the old paradox—" Failure is Success."

That is why Tragedy is nearer in its appeal than Comedy—tragedy is the serpent coiled round the heart of the tree of life.

There are two kinds of serious plays. In the primitive type, the Fates, as an external destiny, are called in to arbitrate the action. We will have none of this. The whole modern tendency is to paint the Fates as ourselves, to draw supermen who alone, and of their own volition, limit Destiny. Modern tragedy reveals the weakness or credulity of the individual, and its aim is to show that if the fire burns, that is no fault of the fire—the fire that does not burn has ceased to be a fire. The Fates may pursue, exterior circumstance pile coincidence on coincidence, but the heroic characters throughout captain their destiny, and if they fail, their failure is unique, and their weakness that of Achilles—the unarmoured point of their own soul. This tragedy of character is always more subtle than tragedy of circumstance or of action.

Tragedy always justified itself. It leaps up with a hoarse cry in its throat : " Away with sluggish existence ! Better a thousand deaths, a thousand sorrows in the cause of beauty ! " There is no injury that may not be condoned, except the mutilation of the divine spirit of beauty, for this is a crime against love and not to be forgotten. It forgives everything else with a wisdom that passes understanding.

Had the ancient mariner not sinned, he had not voyaged. His transgression gave Fate her chance, and she was not slow to seize it. Without some covetous spur of glory, th

Vision

Golden Fleece had not been sought, fought for and won. There is, at the beginning, a lack of harmony which must at the last become resolved into pure melody. The alloy in the gold has its divine destiny in the life of the vessel. And yet, like the hair of Samson, that which is its strength is also its weakness; eternally the alloy is base; never may it become pure.

There is the briefness when the naked loveliness which lies within men's hearts tears aside her vestures and the soul glimpses its own divinity, but this moment is a peak which must be left for the plains of common life, and it is this acknowledgment that makes tragedy inevitable. The Romeos and the Juliets must die at the height of their passion, or they sink to the commonplace—their *dénouement*, the satiety of the suburbs.

The spirit is invincible. It is also uncontainable. If the vase that would hold it is not strong enough, it lies shattered. A great passion demands more than life can pay. All that is limiting must go, and, sooner, or later, the soaring spirit must destroy the form. Tragedy is the collapse of the action as the moment of supreme beauty is reached.

The tragic is the inextinguishable triumph of the beautiful. It carves beauty out of horror and sorrow until the soul is transfixed at this new white marble loveliness. The destructive forces may do their worst. Beauty has been destroyed. Greater beauty has come into its own.

E. D. NEWTON.



He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day;
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the midday sun;
Himself in his own dungeon.—MILTON.

Silence is not God, nor speaking is not God; onliness is not God, nor company is not God; nor yet any of all the other such two contraries. He is hid between them, and may not be found by any work of thy soul, but all only by love of thine heart.—*An Epistle of Discretion* (14th Century).

ABANDONED

I STAND in the heart of the sleeping world
—Shadow among shadows, ghost among ghosts—
While up the shining stairway of the stars
 Pass hosts
Of white-robed women. Sleep holds their surface
 selves
And they are free to wend their way to Thee.
But who shall say they love Thee more than I?
 Yet me
She passes by. The crape-clad, silent night
 Enfolds me as I, shiv'ring, swoon to see
The stairway vanish, star by star—drawn up
 By Thee
Into the closing skies. Night, watching, sighs,
 With shining eyes, and thrusts me hence. So be
It; she must follow. . . . All things pass to Thee
 Save me,
Save me, O Christ . . . save only me!

VERA G. PRAGNELL.



LIFT UP THINE HEART

THOUGH life submergèd be
Beneath dark waves of ill;
Though Pain keep house for thee,
 Hope still, hope still.

Though all thy sweets turn sour
And grief thy heart's-blood spill;
Though Love fade like a flower,
 Hope still, hope still.

Though all thy fair dreams die,
Thy heart break, and thy will
Dissolve; with life's last sigh
 Hope still, hope still.

MEREDITH STARR.

THE DAY'S RULE :

A MYSTIC'S CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

READERS are invited to assist in the compilation of this monthly calendar of quotations which is intended to serve as a daily rule for the direction of thought and meditation. See *Vision* Prize Competition at the end of this number.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Feb.
1. | <p>Arise ! Awake ! Seek out the great ones, and get understanding.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">THE UPANISHADS.</p> |
| 2. | <p>In flame of sunshine bathe my mind,
O Master of the Hidden Fire,
That, when I wake, clear-eyed may be
My soul's desire.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">FIONA MACLEOD.</p> |
| 3. | <p>O Nature ! why do I not name thee " God " ?
Art not thou " The living garment of God " ?
Is it in very deed He then that ever speaks
through thee ; that lives and loves in thee ?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARLYLE.</p> |
| 4. | <p>When the sun rises do you not see a round disk of
fire something like a guinea ? Oh ! no ! no !
I see an innumerable company of the heavenly
host crying : " Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God
Almighty ! "</p> <p style="text-align: right;">BLAKE.</p> |
| 5. | <p>All transient things are permanent in God.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">THOMAS TRAHERNE.</p> |
| 6. | <p>Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent
some Idea and body it forth.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARLYLE.</p> |

The Day's Rule

7. "Tell me what is in the heart
Of the smallest of the seeds."
"God Almighty, and with Him
Cherubim and Seraphim."
G. K. CHESTERTON.
8. He who tastes a crust of bread tastes all the stars
and all the heavens.
PARACELUS.
9. All pathways by His feet are worn,
His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea,
His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,
His cross is every tree.
JOSEPH MARY PLUNKETT.
10. He who attributes least mystery to matter is
furthest from the truth, and he highest who
conjectures the Absolute to be present in fulness
of being in the atom.
Æ.
11. God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth.
His light is like a niche in which is a lamp—the
lamp encased in glass—the glass, as it were, a
glistening star.
THE KORAN
12. He is neither manifest nor hidden :
He is neither revealed nor unrevealed :
There are no words to tell what He is.
KABIR.
13. Spirit of Beauty . . .
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his
heart.
SHELLEY.

Vision

14.	I pray Thee, Oh God, that I may be beautiful within.	SOCRATES.
15.	But when the soul giveth heed with her proper faculty, she is at once away and off into that other world of Purity, Eternity, Immortality and things unchanging.	PLATO.
16.	Where thine infinite sky spreadeth for the soul to take her flight, a stainless white radiance reigneth ; wherein is neither day nor night, nor form nor colour, nor ever any word.	TAGORE.
17.	I went round the Streets and Squares of the City of this World seeking Thee ; and I found Thee not, because in vain I sought without for Him who was within myself.	S. AUGUSTINE.
18.	Nothing makes the soul so pure, so religious, as the endeavour to create something perfect.	MICHAEL ANGELO.
19.	Thou art not the more holy for being praised, nor the more worthless for being dispraised. What thou art, that thou art ; neither by words canst thou be made greater than what thou art in the sight of God.	THOS. À KEMPIS.
20.	If ye do good to them that do good to you, what reward have you ? Love your enemies, do good to them and lend, hoping for nothing again.	ST. LUKE.
21.	You have obliged a man, very well. What would you have more ? You have acted according to your nature, and must you have a reward over and above ?	MARCUS AURELIUS.

The Day's Rule

22. . . . Find full reward
Of doing right in right. Let right deeds be
Thy motive, not the fruit which comes from them
And live in action.
SONG CELESTIAL.

23. The man may teach by Doing, and not otherwise.
If he can communicate himself, he can teach,—
but not by words. He teaches who gives, and he
learns who receives.
EMERSON.

24. Action is the Word of God : Thought alone is but
His shadow. They who disjoin Thought and
Action seek to divide Duty, and deny the
Eternal Unity.
MAZZINI.

25. Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in
rising every time we fall.
CONFUCIUS.

26. Your soul has set sail like the returning Odysseus
for its native land.
PLOTINUS.

27. A man's life of any worth is a continual Allegory,
and very few eyes can see the Mystery of his life.
KEATS.

28. There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
WORDSWORTH.

29. While soul, sky, and music bleed together,
Let me give thanks even for those griefs in me,
The restless windward stirrings of whose feather
Prove them the brood of immortality.
FRANCIS THOMPSON.

EX LIBRIS

A GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF VISION

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE PRACTICAL MYSTIC. By Francis Grierson. With an Introduction by John Drinkwater. (John Lane, The Bodley Head, 5s.)

Mr. Francis Grierson's analytical study of Abraham Lincoln is extraordinarily fine. We define it as an analytical study because it cannot in the ordinary sense of the word be termed a historical life of the great American President. Rather is it an understanding dissection of the motives and guiding principles of one who is called the greatest practical mystic that the world has seen for nineteen hundred years.

A practical mystic is one who not only perceives a great ideal, but who strives to make it concrete in the world of action, and whose deeds are governed by a more remote consideration than present benefit. Mr. Grierson shows us that such a man was Abraham Lincoln—simple, uncouth almost in appearance, great and majestic in the measure of his performance.

Many authorities are cited in emphasis of the views expressed by the author. These tend to show the wide reading which has gone to the making of this comparatively slim volume, but of more value than the quotations are Mr. Grierson's conclusions thereon, for he brings to his subject true vision and a power of spiritual analysis which lift his work far out of the rut of ordinary biography.

Mr. John Drinkwater's introduction is worthy of its writer, forming a fitting prelude to the study. A word of appreciation must be given to the excellence of the type and general production of an exceptional book. T. D.

THE RESTORATION OF THE KINGDOM. Five Essays in Religious Reconstruction. (Headley Bros., 2s.)

This little book is the outcome of a series of discussions between two Anglicans, a Wesleyan and a Friend, who have each contributed a broad, tolerant and sincere exposition of the faith within them and its application to present-day problems. It is men and women such as these—for

Ex Libris

one of the little group responsible for this book is a woman—who are real factors in the spiritual life of the community. It is admitted in the Introduction that the essays are “modernist.” “We do not despise tradition—far from it; but we refuse to acknowledge it as our sole guide in matters of faith and practice. The Spirit of God moves on the face of the waters to-day no less than in the years that are past. He has His prophets still—as in the past, so in the twentieth century.”

The Rev. H. Strawson writes on the Church and the Age, the Rev. H. L. Hubbard—whose work is well known to readers of *Vision*—contributes two essays, the first of which—“The Common Heritage”—being unquestionably the finer. In it he outlines the points of similarity between the Churches and emphasises that it is by dwelling on these rather than on the differences that a closer bond of unity will be knit between the various sects. Mr. F. M. Headley’s essay on “Worship and Ministry in the Society of Friends” makes a strong appeal, and is perhaps the best in the book. A brief outline of the history of the Society of Friends is given, followed by a description of the method of silent prayer which is the Quaker’s form of worship. Margaret Avery, B.A., under the title of “The Ministry of Women,” writes sanely and well in advocacy of the admission of women to the priesthood.

The book concludes with Psalm cxxii., so loved by many, beginning, “I was glad when they said unto me: Let us go into the House of the Lord.”

T. D.

MY COMMONPLACE BOOK. By J. T. Hackett. (T. Fisher Unwin, 12s. 6d.)

This collection of quotations is one of unusual interest, as it is the result of wide reading extending over many years, and is not merely a réchauffé of popular extracts. It strikes a singularly individual note. In no way perhaps can a more interesting sidelight be thrown upon a man’s taste in literature, ethics, humour, or his general outlook on life be gauged more shrewdly, than by a study of the quotations made by him during years of reading. Mr. Hackett’s taste bears such inspection well, and one of the

Vision

signals of the success of the present publication is that it creates a desire in the reader to follow an excellent example and make a "Commonplace Book" of his own. For a book of quotations is like an anthology, no one except its compiler is entirely satisfied with the selection that has been made.

Mr. Hackett has added much to the interest of the book by his thoughtful, well-written comments on many of the passages, and by the inclusion of a number of quaint and humorous quotations which a more ordinary individual might have hesitated to find a place for in a permanent record such as this. Yet it is just these passages that help to lift the collection out of the ordinary and remove from it the danger of monotony which is first cousin to boredom. The book is dedicated to Richard Hodgson, famed for his studies in psychical research. Mr. Hackett says in his preface that he was his close friend from childhood, and that the present book is largely indebted to him both directly and indirectly.

T. D.

THEOPHRASTUS PARACELSUS. By W. P. Swainson. (Rider & Son, 1s. 3d.)

This little book is a short sketch of the life of the Swiss alchemist and physician known as Paracelsus, and an outline of his work and philosophy.

The small compass of the book does not allow more than a brief consideration of such difficult and complex subjects as magic, alchemy and astrology with which the name of Paracelsus is so closely associated, but for those to whom Paracelsus is merely a name sufficient data is given to make a starting-point for more serious study.

W. E. G.

VERSE AND NOTHING ELSE. By T. L. Crombie. pp. 40. (Theosophical Publishing House, India.)

A COLLECTION of verse of a very uneven character. One or two of the poems are admirable, and betray a spirit in close touch with the Divine. On the other hand, there are certain technical irregularities in the verse and the grammar which distract the reader's attention and jeopardise the message of the poems. The chief criticism which we would make of

Ex Libris

the author is that he does not test each word sufficiently before admitting it to a place in his verse. Almost all the poems in this slender volume might be improved by a little polishing. At present they just fall short of being really good. The longer piece, "Britain and India," with which the book closes gives promise of better things to come.

H. L. H.

SCENES FROM THE MORTE D'ARTHUR. By Alan Seymour.
(Erskine Macdonald, 6s.)

When writing the *Idylls of the King* Tennyson obviously sought inspiration from the pages of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* rather than from the earlier Graal legends of the twelfth century, which were the source from which Malory compiled his version. Tennyson, while so doing, allowed himself much poetic licence, altering the traditional stories to suit his purposes and throwing certain characters—such as Galahad—into high relief in comparison with the shadowy and subordinate place occupied by them in the original Graal cycle. He emphasised the atmosphere of chivalry, and eliminated many of the coarser elements of the earlier versions, but his alterations have obliterated too frequently the deeply significant meaning of many of the adventures of the quest, and the legend of the Graal, which is pre-Christian in origin, is shown by him as a purely Christian vessel of grace. Much of the mystical meaning has been thus lost, and the *Idylls* are of interest chiefly as a poetic rather than symbolic work.

Mr. Alan Seymour's *Scenes from the Morte D'Arthur* cannot very well escape comparison with the *Idylls of the King*, so closely are they modelled on those great tales of chivalry, but—perhaps because the Knights of the Round Table appeal to a strain of romance within us that is all too seldom touched—his work endures the test surprisingly well. It has a sense of breadth and dignity not unworthy of its great theme.

Mr. Seymour follows closely the traditional tales as given by Malory, and those to whom the *Morte D'Arthur* has been a well-thumbed, much-read volume from boyhood upwards will read this attempt to portray anew the adven-

Vision

tures of Tristran, Percival, and Galahad with more than a degree of pleasure and appreciation. "Gareth and Lionore" is the longest, and at the same time the finest, of the episodes. "Lancelot at the Cross" and "Iseult at Joyous Garde" are others that deserve a special meed of praise.

Altogether the book comes like a breath of fresh air after much reading of ultra-modern verse. It should prove an excellent gift for boys and girls to whom tales of chivalry and romance never fail to make appeal. T. L. A. B.

ANGELS SEEN TO-DAY. By G. Maurice Elliot and Irene Hallam Elliot. (Robert Scott, 2s. 6d.)

The authors present with clearness and enthusiasm their evidence, strengthened by examples from the Old and New Testaments, for the belief in the constant, and often visible ministry of Angels among mankind to-day. They plead earnestly for the education of spiritual faith by meditation, and suggest that in the stress of self-preservation the Church, forgetting to support the Doctrine of Angels, has had to suffer the "infliction" of Spiritualism as a penalty for her neglect.

Part 3 contains descriptions of personal experiences in the Heaven-world. It is attempts like these to depict the transcendental, that so often make ineffectual what would otherwise have power to reveal some aspect of Truth to earnest seekers. There is too obvious a bias in these "glimpses," and too narrow a conception of the "sole source of quickening from above."

E. C. M.

THE DIVINE COMPANION. By James Allen. (L. N. Fowler & Co., 5s. 6d.)

The Divine Companion is yet another and apparently final addition to the James Allen Library, and will be welcomed by all lovers of his helpful books. The three sections of this volume are written in free verse, though the language is practical and straightforward rather than poetical or elaborate. This method of expression lends itself easily to earnest instruction and direct guidance in the difficult ways of life.

E. C. M.

VISION COMPETITIONS

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS FOR DECEMBER

1. The prize of HALF A GUINEA for the best mystical poem has been won by M. W. Osmond, 38 Wellington Road, N.W., whose contribution is published in this number.

Three other poems deserving special mention were submitted by the Rev. H. L. Hubbard, Esther Raworth, and Rupert Haywra.

The following competitors, whose names are mentioned in order of merit, submitted work reaching a certain standard :—

Ellen Hallmark (Stockport), Rosa Hobhouse (Hoxton), J. Palmer (Crewe), Margaret Ormiston (Coleherne Court), E. Dunkley (Exeter), E. Merry (Eastbourne), Edward Hall (London, S.W. 1), L. Malleson (W. 14), D. Gardiner (Blandford), Winifred Temporal (Sheffield), U. Malleson (W. 14), M. Mackintosh (Henley), E.M.H., "Bianca" (Margate), Queenie Jee (Manchester), John Baines (Birmingham), R. Vivyan Davies (Merthyr), H. Lee (Bromley), S. Thompson (Halifax), A. Walters (Portsmouth).

2. The prize of one year's subscription to *Vision* for the best set of quotations is awarded to Mrs. R. Darby, Schoolhouse, Studham, nr. Dunstable, Beds.

Three consolation prizes of copies of *The Mystic Arsenal* have been awarded to Hilda Finnemore, Elmstone, Northwood, Middlesex; William Daw, 10 Park View, Wallsend-on-Tyne; and Mrs. Gardner, 46 Leinster Gardens, Lancaster Gate, W. 2.

Other sets specially commended were received from Miss Mitchell (Brondesbury); A. Somerley (Surrey), Jeannie Forbes (Ayrshire), Miss L. Malleson (Kensington), Mrs. Cohen (London), Mrs. Hulbert (London, S.W.).



There is a little spellbound lake, which the bright sky has enchanted, so that it is always clear and smooth. It has a sky set apart to itself, and this is never clouded; it is a soft and dreamy blue through all the day, and at night the stars shine there. Who reads this parable rightly?

A. E. WAITE.

FEBRUARY COMPETITIONS

1. A prize of HALF A GUINEA is offered for the best mystical poem. A statement to the effect that the poem is original and has not appeared before in print must be enclosed. (Criticisms of poems will be given if a reading fee of 2s. 6d. for the purpose is enclosed.)

2. A copy of *Vision* will be sent post free for twelve months to the sender of the best set of quotations (either prose or verse) of not more than four lines from a mystical writer suitable for inclusion in a Mystic's Calendar, and three copies of *The Mystical Arsenal* will be awarded the senders of the next three quotations.

RULES FOR COMPETITION

Entries must be forwarded not later than the 30th of each month to the Editors of *Vision*, etc. The envelope should be marked "Prize." Only one side of the paper must be used, and the imprint from the cover (i.e. "Printed by W. Brendon & Son, etc.") must be enclosed with each entry. No entry can be returned, and the Editors reserve the right to make use of any of the entries submitted for competition. In all cases the Editors' decision must be regarded as final.



THE ASCETIC

THE pale hours lengthen into quiet years
Like counted prayers within the rosary,
Grown toneless now to long-accustomed ears
By constant repetition, 'til may be
Sudden the chain snaps to envision wide
A new horizon lit by other stars,
While the slow Aves drown in the quick tide
Surging around the self-forged iron bars ;
What if the heavens held no holier fire
For him who has staked all upon it, youth,
Delight, and love, success, and heart's desire,
Deeming his bondage the sole way to truth ;
Blind to the glory of life's perfumed flowers,
Heedless of Him who said "all things are ours."

M. W. OSMOND.