[*The* A.·. A.·. *has not approved the following Introduction; but in accordance with Its principle of never interfering with the will of others, has permitted the scribe employed to perform the work of tabulation to express his own views.*]

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VEL PROLEGOMENA SYMBOLICA AD SYSTEMAM SCEPTICO-MYSTICAE VIAE EXPLICANDAE, FUNDAMENTUM HIEROGLYPHICUM SANCTISSIMORUM SCIENTIAE SUMMAE

THE following is an attempt to systematise alike the data of mysticism and the results of comparative religion.

The sceptic will applaud our labours, for that the very catholicity of the symbols denies them any objective validity, since, in so many contradictions, something must be false; while the mystic will rejoice equally that the self-same catholicity all-embracing proves that very validity, since after all something must be true.

Fortunately we have learnt to combine these ideas, not in the mutual toleration of sub-contraries, but in the affirmation of contraries, that transcending of the laws of intellect which is madness in the ordinary man, genius in the Overman who hath arrived to strike off more fetters from our understanding. The savage who cannot conceive of the number six, the orthodox mathematician who cannot conceive of the fourth dimension, the philosopher who cannot conceive of the Absolute —all these are one; all must be impregnated with the Divine Essence of the Phallic Yod of Macroprosopus, and give birth to their idea. True (we may agree with Balzac), the Absolute recedes; we never grasp it; but in the travelling there is joy. Am I no better than a staphylococcus because my ideas still crowd in chains?

But we digress.

The last attempts to tabulate knowledge are the *Kabbala Denudata* of Knorr von Rosenroth (a work incomplete and, in some of its parts, prostituted to the service of dogmatic interpretation), the lost symbolism of the Vault in which Christian Rosenkreutz is said to have been buried, some of the work of Dr. Dee and Sir Edward Kelly, some very imperfect tables in Cornelius Agrippa, the "Art" of Raymond Lully, some of the very artificial effusions of the esoteric Theosophists, and of late years the knowledge of the Order Rosae Rubeae et Aureae Crucis and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Unluckily, the leading spirit in these latter societies found that his prayer, "Give us this day our daily whisky, and just a wee drappie mair for luck!" was sternly answered, "When you have given us this day our daily Knowledge-lecture."

Under these circumstances Daath got mixed with Dewar, and Beelzebub with Buchanan.

But even the best of these systems is excessively bulky; modern methods have enabled us to concentrate the substance of twenty thousand pages in two score.

The best of the serious attempts to systematise the results of Comparative

Religion is that made by Blavatzky. But though she had an immense genius for acquiring facts, she had none whatever for sorting and selecting the essentials.

Grant Allen made a very slipshod experiment in this line; so have some of the polemical rationalists; but the only man worthy of our notice is Frazer of the Golden Bough. Here, again, there is no tabulation; for us it is left to sacrifice literary charm, and even some accuracy, in order to bring out the one great point.

This: That when a Japanese thinks of Hachiman, and a Boer of the Lord of Hosts, they are not two thoughts, but one.

The cause of human sectarianism is not lack of sympathy in thought, but in speech; and this it is our not unambitious design to remedy.

Every new sect aggravates the situation. Especially the Americans, grossly and crapulously ignorant as they are of the rudiments of any human language, seize like mongrel curs upon the putrid bones of their decaying monkey-jabber, and gnaw and tear them with fierce growls and howls.

The mental prostitute, Mrs. Eddy (for example), having invented the idea which ordinary people call "God," christened it "Mind," and then by affirming a set of propositions about "Mind," which are only true of "God," set all hysterical, dyspeptic, crazy Amurrka by the ears. Personally, I don't object to people discussing the properties of four-sided triangles; but I draw the line when they use a well-known word, such as pig, or mental healer, or dung-heap, to denote the object of their paranoiac fetishism.

Even among serious philosophers the confusion is very great. Such terms as God, the Absolute, Spirit, have dozens and dozens of connotations, according to the time and place of the dispute and the beliefs of the disputants.

Time enough that these definitions and their inter-relation should be crystallised, even at some expense of accepted philosophical accuracy.

2. The principal sources of our tables have been the philosophers and traditional systems referred to above, as also, among many others, Pietro di Abano, Lilly, Eliphaz Levi, Sir R. Burton, Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu, Buddhist, and Chinese Classics, the Qúran and its commentators, the Book of the Dead, and, in particular, original research. The Chinese, Hindu, Buddhist, Moslem, and Egyptian systems have never before been brought into line with the Qabalah; the Tarot has never been made public.

Eliphaz Levi knew the true attributions, but was forbidden to use them.[1]

All this secrecy is very silly. An indicible Arcanum is an arcanum that *cannot* be revealed. It is simply bad faith to swear a man to the most horrible penalties if he betray . . ., &c., and then take him mysteriously apart and confide the Hebrew Alphabet to his safe keeping. This is perhaps only ridiculous; but it is a wicked imposture to pretend to have received from the Rosicrucians manuscripts which are to be found in the British Museum. To obtain money on these grounds, as has been done by certain moderns, is clear (and I trust, indictable) fraud; and ever to have countenanced those frauds, of which he must surely have been aware, seems hardly creditable to so earnest and venerable a student of the mysteries as Dr. Wynn Westcott.[2] It is presumable, however, that he was the dupe of his fear of, if not of his trust in, the Machiavellian Mystic of the Rue Mozart.

The secrets of Adepts are not to be revealed to men. We only wish they were.

[1] This is probably true, though in agreement with the statement of the traducer of Levi's doctrine and the vilifier of his noble personality.

[2] My correspondence with this gentleman has not tended to raise my opinion of his conduct.

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SEPTEMBER MCMXI

O. S.

"THE METHOD OF SCIENCE—THE AIM OF RELIGION

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But it is necessary to settle on something: bad rules are better than no rules at all. We may then hope that our critics will aid our acknowledged feebleness; and if it be agreed that much learning hath made us mad, that we may receive humane treatment and a liberal allowance of rubber-cores in our old age.

4. The Tree of Life is the skeleton on which this body of truth is built. The juxtaposition and proportion of its parts should be fully studied. Practice alone will enable the student to determine how far an analogy may be followed out. Again, some analogies may escape a superficial study. The Beetle is only connected with the sign Pisces through the Tarot Trump "The Moon." The Camel is only connected with the High Priestess through the letter ג.

Since all things whatsoever (including no thing) may be placed upon the Tree of Life, the Table could never be complete. It is already somewhat unwieldy; we have tried to confine ourselves as far as possible to lists of Things Generally Unknown. It must be remembered that the lesser tables are only divided from the thirty-two-fold table in order to economise space; *e.g.* in the seven-fold table the entries under Saturn belong to the thirty-second part in the large table.

We have been unable for the moment to tabulate many great systems of Magic; the four lesser books of the Lemegeton, the system of Abramelin, if indeed its Qliphothic ramifications are susceptible of classification, once we follow it below the great and terrible Demonic Triads which are under the presidency of the Unutterable Name, the vast and comprehensive system shadowed in the Book called the Book of the Concourse of the Forces, which we are now editing and hope to issue separately, interwoven as it is with the Tarot, being, indeed, on one view little more than an amplification and practical application of the Book of Thoth.

But we hope that the present venture will attract scholars from all quarters, as when the wounded Satan leaned upon his spear,

> "Forthwith on all sides to his aid was run
> By angels many and strong,"

and that in the course of time a far more satisfactory volume may result.

Many columns will seem to the majority of people to consist of mere lists of senseless words. Practice, and advance in the magical or mystical path, will enable them little by little to interpret more and more.

Even as a flower unfolds beneath the ardent kisses of the Sun, so will this table reveal its glories to the dazzling eye of illumination. Symbolic and barren as it is, yet it shall stand for the athletic student as a perfect sacrament, so that reverently closing its pages he shall exclaim, "May that of which we have partaken sustain us in the search for the Quintessence, the Stone of the Wise, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom, and Perfect Happiness."

So mote it be!

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