PART IV

THE SMALL CARDS

IV

THE FOUR ACES

The Aces represent the roots of the four elements. They are quite above, and distinct from, the other small cards in the same way as Kether is said to be symbolized only by the topmost point of the Yod of Tetragrammaton. In these cards is no real manifestation of the element in its material form. They form a link between the small cards and the Princesses, who rule the Heavens around the North Pole. The Meridian is the Great Pyramid, and the Elements rule, going Eastward, in the order of Tetragrammaton, Fire, Water, Air, Earth. Thus, roughly, Aces-Princesses Wands cover Asia, Cups the Pacific Ocean, Swords the Americas, Disks Europe and Africa. To make this relationship clear, one may go a little into the symbol of the pentagram, or Shield of David. It represents Spirit ruling the four elements, and is thus a symbol of the Triumph of Man.

The idea of the element of Spirit is very difficult to grasp. The letter Shin, which is the letter of Fire, has to do double duty by representing Spirit as well. Generally speaking, the attributions of Spirit are not clear and simple like those of the other elements. It is very remarkable that the Tablet of Spirit in the Enochian system is the key to all mischief; as, in the Hindu system, Akasha is the Egg of Darkness.

On the other hand, Spirit represents Kether. Perhaps it was never in the mind of the Exempt Adept or Adepts who invented the Tarot to go so far into this matter. The point to remember is that, both in their appearance and in their meaning, the Aces are not the elements themselves, but the seeds of those elements.

THE FOUR TWOS

These cards refer to Chokmah. From the point of view of the ordinary person, Chokmah is really No. 1 and not No. 2, because he is the first manifestation; Kether is completely concealed, so that nobody knows anything about it at all. Hence, only on reaching the Deuces does an element appear as the element itself. Chokmah is

uncontaminated by any influence; therefore the elements here appear in their original harmonious condition.

The Two of Wands is called the Lord of Dominion, and represents the energy of fire; fire in its best and highest form.

The Two of Cups is the Lord of Love, which performs a similar office for water.

The Two of Swords was formerly called the Lord of Peace Restored; but this word "restored" is incorrect, because there has been no disturbance. The Lord of Peace is therefore a better title: but it needs thinking hard to work this out, since the Sword is so intensely active. It may be helpful to study the Essay on Silence (p. 120) for a parallel: the Negative Form of the Positive Idea. See also the Essay on Chastity (*Little Essays toward Truth*, pp. 70–74) which concludes: Sir Knights, be vigilant: watch by your arms and renew your oath; for that day is of sinister augury and deadly charged with danger which ye fill not to overflowing with gay deeds and bold of masterful, of manful Chastity.

Witness also Catullus: *domi maneas paresque nobis Novem continuas futationes.*

Nor does he misunderstand the gesture of Harpocrates; Silence and Chastity are isomers.

It is all one case of the general proposition that the sum of the infinite Energy of the Universe is Zero.

The Two of Pentacles was of old time called the Lord of Harmonious Change. Now, more simply, Change; and here the doctrine must be stated a little more clearly. This suit being of Earth, there is a connection with the Princesses, and therefore with the final Hé of Tetragrammaton. Earth is the throne of Spirit; having got to the bottom, one immediately comes out again at the top. Hence, the card manifests the symbolism of the serpent of the endless band.

THE FOUR THREES

These cards are referred to Binah; in each of them is expressed the symbolism of Understanding. The idea has become fertilized; the triangle has been formulated. In each case, the idea is of a certain stability which can never be upset, but from which a child can issue.

The Three of Wands is accordingly the Lord of Virtue. The idea of will and dominion has become interpreted in Character.

The Three of Cups is called the Lord of Abundance. The idea of love has come to fruition; but this is now sufficiently far down the Tree to introduce a very definite differentiation between the suits, which was not previously possible.

The idea of division, of mutability, the idea of the airy quality of things, manifests itself in the Three of Swords, the Lord of Sorrow. Here one is reminded of the darkness of Binah, of the mourning of Isis; but this is not any vulgar sorrow dependent upon any individual disappointment or discontent. It is Weltschmerz, the universal sorrow; it is the quality of melancholy.

The Three of Pentacles, in a similar manner, exhibits the result of the idea of Earth, of the crystallization of forces; and so the Three of Pentacles is called the Lord of Work. Something has definitely been done.

THE FOUR FOURS

These cards are attributed to Chesed. The connection between the number Four and the number Three is extremely complex. The important characteristic is that Four is "below the Abyss"; therefore, in practice, it means solidification, materialization. Things have become manifest. The essential point is that it expresses the Rule of Law.

In the Wand suit, the card is called Completion. The manifestation promised by Binah has now taken place. This number must be very solid, because it is the actual dominating influence on all the following cards. Chesed, Jupiter-Ammon, the Father, the first below the Abyss, is the highest idea which can be understood in an intellectual way, and that is why the Sephira is attributed to Jupiter, who is the Demiurge.

The Four of Cups is called Luxury.

The masculine nature of fire permits the Four of Wands to appear as a very positive and clear-cut conception. The weakness in the element of water threatens its purity; it is not quite strong enough to control itself properly; so the Lord of Pleasure is a little unstable. Purity has somehow been lost in the process of satisfaction.

The Four of Swords is called Truce. This seems rather on the lines of "the strong man armed, keeping his house in peace". The masculine nature of air makes it dominant. The card is almost a picture of the formation of the military clan system of society.

As to the Disks, the heaviness of the symbol rather outweighs any considerations of its weakness. The card is called Power. It is the power which dominates and stabilizes everything, but manages its affairs more by negotiation, by pacific methods, than by any assertion of itself. It is Law, the Constitution, with no aggressive element.

THE FOUR FIVES

In the "Naples arrangement", the introduction of the number Five shows the idea of motion coming to the aid of that of matter. This is quite a revolutionary conception; the result is a complete upset of the statically stabilized system. Now appear storm and stress.

This must not be regarded as something "evil". The natural feeling about it is really a little more than the reluctance of people to get up from lunch and go back to the job. In the Buddhist doctrine of Sorrow this idea is implicit, that inertia and insensitiveness must characterize peace. The climate of India is perhaps partly responsible for this notion. The Adepts of the White School, of which the Tarot is the sacred book, cannot agree to such a simplification of existence. Every phenomenon is a sacrament. For all that, a disturbance is a disturbance; the five of Wands is called Strife.

On the other hand, the Five of Cups is called Disappointment, as is only natural, because Fire delights in superabundant energy, whereas the water of Pleasure is naturally placid, and any disturbance of ease can only be regarded as misfortune.

The Five of Swords is similarly troublesome; the card is called Defeat. There has been insufficient power to maintain the armed peace of the Four. The quarrel has actually broken out. This must mean defeat, for the original idea of the Sword was a manifestation of the result of the love between the Wand and the Cup. It is because the birth had to express itself in the duality of the Sword and the Disk that the nature of each appears so imperfect.

The Five of Disks is in equally evil case. The soft quiet of the Four has been completely overthrown; the card is called Worry. [See Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary*. The idea is of strangling, as dogs worry sheep. Note the identity with Sphinx.] The economic system has broken down; there is no more balance between the social orders. Disks being as they are, stolid and obstinate, as compared with the other weapons, for their revolution serves to stabilize them, there is no action, at least not in its own ambit, that can affect the issue.

THE FOUR SIXES

These cards are attributed to Tiphareth. This Sephira is in some respects the most important of all. It is the centre of the whole system; it is the only Sephira below the Abyss which communicates directly with Kether. It is fed directly from Chokmah and Binah; also from Chesed and Geburah. It is thus admirably fitted to dominate the lower Sephiroth; it is balanced both vertically and horizontally. In the planetary system it represents the Sun; in the system of Tetragrammaton it represents the Son. The entire geometrical complex of the Ruach may be regarded as an expansion from Tiphareth. It represents consciousness in its most harmonized and balanced form; definitely in form, not only in idea, as in the case of the number Two. In other words, the Son is an interpretation of the Father in terms of the mind.

The four Sixes are thus representative of their respective elements at their practical best.

The Six of Wands is called Victory. The outburst of energy in the Five of Wands, which was so sudden and violent that it even gave the idea of strife, has now completely won success. The rule, or lordship, in the suit of Wands is not quite as stable as it might have been if there had been less energy displayed. So, from this point, as soon as the current leaves the middle pillar, the inherent weakness in the element of Fire (which is this: that, for all its purity, it is not completely balanced) leads to very undesirable developments.

The Six of Cups is called Pleasure. This pleasure is a kind of pleasure which is completely harmonized. The zodiacal sign governing

the card being Scorpio, pleasure is here rooted in its most convenient soil. This is pre-eminently a fertile card; it is one of the best in the pack.

The Six of Swords is called Science. Its ruler is Mercury, so that the element of success turns away from the idea of division and quarrel; it is intelligence which has won to the goal.

The Six of Disks is called Success; the ruler is the Moon. This is a card of settling down; it is very heavy, wholly lacking in imagination, yet somewhat dreamy. Change is soon coming upon it; the weight of earth will ultimately drag the current down to a mere eventuation of material things. Yet the Moon, being in Taurus, the sign of her exaltation, the best of the Lunar qualities are inherent. Moreover, being a Six, the solar Energy has fertilized her, creating a balanced system for the time being. The card is worthy of the name Success. Remember only that all success is temporary; how brief a halt upon the Path of Labour!

THE FOUR SEVENS

These cards are attributed to Netzach. The position is doubly unbalanced; off the middle pillar, and very low down on the Tree. It is taking a very great risk to descend so far into illusion, and, above all, to do it by frantic struggle. Netzach pertains to Venus; Netzach pertains to Earth; and the greatest catastrophe that can befall Venus is to lose her Heavenly origin. The four Sevens are not capable of bringing any comfort; each one represents the degeneration of the element. Its utmost weakness is exposed in every case.

The Seven of Wands is called Valour. Energy feels itself at its last gasp; it struggles desperately, and may be overcome. This card brings out the defect inherent in the idea of Mars. Patriotism, so to speak, is not enough.

The Seven of Cups is called Debauch. This is one of the worst ideas that one can have; its mode is poison, its goal madness. It represents the delusion of Delirium Tremens and drug addiction; it represents the sinking into the mire of false pleasure. There is something almost suicidal in this card. It is particularly bad because there is nothing whatever to balance it—no strong planet to hold

it up. Venus goes after Venus, and Earth is churned into the scorpion morass.

The Seven of Swords is called Futility. This is a yet weaker card than the Seven of Wands. It has a passive sign instead of an active one, a passive planet instead of an active one. It is like a rheumatic boxer trying to "come back" after being out of the ring for years. Its ruler is the Moon. The little energy that it possesses is no more than dream-work; it is quite incapable of the sustained labour which alone, bar miracles, can bring any endeavour to fruition. The comparison with the Seven of Wands is most instructive.

The Seven of Disks is called Failure. This suit gives the extreme of passivity; there is no positive virtue in it below the Abyss. This card is ruled by Saturn. Compare it with the three other Sevens; there is no effort here; not even dream; the stake has been thrown down, and it is lost. That is all. Labour itself is abandoned; everything is sunk in sloth.

THE FOUR EIGHTS

The four Eights are attributed to Hod. Being in the same plane as the Sevens on the Tree of Life, but on the other side, the same inherent defects as are found in the Sevens will apply.

Yet one may perhaps urge this alleviation, that the Eights come as (in a sense) a remedy for the error of the Sevens. The mischief has been done; and there is now a reaction against it. One may, therefore, expect to find that, while there is no possibility of perfection in the cards of this number, they are free from such essential and original errors as in the Lower case.

The Eight of Wands is called Swiftness, as one might expect from its attribution to Mercury and Sagittarius. This is an etherealization of the idea of fire; all gross elements have disappeared.

(Let there be a short digression with regard to the signs of the Zodiac. In the case of each element, the Cardinal sign represents the swift, impulsive onrush of the idea. In the Kerubic sign, the element has come to its full balance of power; and in the other signs the force is fading away. Thus, Aries represents the rush of fire, Lightning; Leo, its power, the Sun; and Sagittarius, the rainbow,

its sublimation. Similar considerations apply to the other elements. See the Attributions section: The Triplicities of the Zodiac.)

In the Eight of Wands, fire is no longer conjoined with the ideas of combustion and destruction. It represents energy in its most exalted and tenuous sense; this suggests such forms thereof as the electric current; one might almost say pure light in the material sense of that word.

The Eight of Cups is called Indolence. This card is the very apex of unpleasantness. It is ruled by the planet Saturn; time, sorrow, have descended upon pleasure, and there is no strength in the element of water which can react against it. This card is not exactly "the morning after the night before"; but it is very nearly that. The difference is that the "night before" has not happened! This card represents a party for which all preparations have been made; but the host has forgotten to invite the guests; or, the caterers have not delivered the good cheer. There is this difference, though, that it is in some way or other the host's own fault. The party that he planned was just a little bit above his capacity; perhaps he lost heart at the last moment.

The Eight of Swords is called Interference. At first sight, it would seem easy to confuse it with the Eight of Cups; but the idea is, in reality, quite different. The card is attributed to Jupiter and Gemini; accordingly, there is no weighing down of the will by internal or external stress. It is simply the error of being good-natured when good-nature is disastrous. Gemini is an airy sign, an intellectual sign; Jupiter is geniality and optimism. This will not do in the world of Swords; if one must hit at all, a knock-out blow is best. But there is another element in this card; that of unexpected (the Eights, being at heart Mercurial, are always that) interference, sheer unforeseen bad luck. Trivial incidents have often altered the destiny of empires, brought to naught "the best-laid plans of mice and men".

The Eight of Disks is called Prudence. This card is a great deal better than the last two, because, in purely material matters, especially those relating to actual money, there is a sort of strength in doing nothing at all. The problem of every financier is, first of all, to gain time; if his resources are sufficient, he always beats the

market. This is the card of "putting something away for a rainy day".

Its attribution is Sol in Virgo; it is the card of the husbandman; he can do little more than sow the seed, sit back, and wait for the harvest. There is nothing noble about this aspect of the card; like all the Eights, it represents an element of calculation, and gambling is securely profitable if one has adjusted the cagnotte properly.

There is yet another point which complicates this card. The Eight of Disks represents the geomantic figure Populus, which is an easy-going figure, and at the same time stable. One thinks of Queen Victoria's time, of a man who is "something in the City" rolling up to Town with Albert the Good advertized by his watch-chain and his frock-coat; on the surface he is very affable, but he is nobody's fool.

THE FOUR NINES

These cards are attributed to Yesod. After the double excursion into misfortune, the current returns to the middle pillar. This Sephira is the seat of the great crystallization of Energy. But it takes place very far down the Tree, at the apex of the third descending triangle, and a flat triangle at that. There is little help from low, unbalanced spheres like Netzach and Hod. What saves Yesod is the direct ray from Tiphareth; this Sephira is in the direct line of succession. Each of these cards gives the full impact of the elemental force, but in its most material sense; that is, of the idea of the force, for Yesod is still in Yetzirah, the formative world. Zoroaster says: "The number Nine is sacred, and attains the summit of perfection." Egypt and Rome, also, had Nine Major Deities.

The Nine of Wands is called Strength. It is ruled by the Moon and Yesod. In "The Vision and the Voice", the eleventh Aethyr gives a classical account of the resolution of this antinomy of Change and Stability. The student should also consult the works of any of the better mathematical physicists. Of all important doctrines concerning equilibrium, this is the easiest to understand, that change is stability; that stability is guaranteed by change; that if anything

should stop changing for the fraction of a split second, it would go to pieces. It is the intense energy of the primal elements of Nature, call them electrons, atoms, anything you will, it makes no difference; change guarantees the order of Nature. This is why, in learning to ride a bicycle, one falls in an extremely awkward and ridiculous manner. Balance is made difficult by not going fast enough. So also, one cannot draw a straight line if one's hand shakes. This card is a sort of elementary parable to illustrate the meaning of this aphorism: "Change is Stability."

Here the Moon, the weakest of the planets, is in Sagittarius, the most elusive of the Signs; yet it dares call itself Strength. Defence, to be effective, must be mobile.

The Nine of Cups is called Happiness. This is a peculiarly good card, because happiness, as the word implies, is so much a matter of luck: the card is ruled by Jupiter, and Jupiter is Fortune.

In all these watery cards, there is a certain element of illusion; they begin by Love, and love is the greatest and most deadly of the illusions. The sign of Pisces is the refinement, the fading away of this instinct, which, begun with dreadful hunger and carried on with passion, has now become "a dream within a dream".

The card is ruled by Jupiter. Jupiter in Pisces is indeed good fortune, but only in the sense of complete satiety. The fullest satisfaction is merely the matrix of a further putrefaction; there is no such thing as absolute rest. A cottage in the country with the roses all around it? No, there is nothing permanent in this; there is no rest from the Universe. Change guarantees stability. Stability guarantees change.

The Nine of Swords is called Cruelty. Here the original disruption inherent in Swords is raised to its highest power. The card is ruled by Mars in Gemini; it is agony of mind. The Ruach consumes itself in this card; thought has gone through every possible stage, and the conclusion is despair. This card has been very adequately drawn by Thomson in "The City of Dreadful Night". It is always a cathedral—a cathedral of the damned. There is the acrimonious taint of analysis; activity is inherent in the mind, yet there is always the instinctive consciousness that nothing can lead anywhere.

The Nine of Disks is called Gain. The suit of Disks is much too dull to care; it reckons up its winnings; it does not worry its head about whether anything is won when all is won. This card is ruled by Venus. It purrs with satisfaction at having harvested what it sowed; it rubs its hands and sits at ease. As will be understood from the consideration of the Tens, there is no reaction against satisfaction as there is in the other three suits. One becomes more and more stolid, and feels that "everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds".

THE FOUR TENS

These cards are attributed to Malkuth. Here is the end of all energy; it is away from the "formative world" altogether, where things are elastic. There is now no planetary attribution to consider. So far as the Sephira is concerned, it is right down in the world of Assiah. By the mere fact of having devised four elements, the current has derogated from the original perfection. The Tens are a warning; see whither it leads—to take the first wrong step!

The Ten of Wands is called Oppression. This is what happens when one uses force, force, and nothing else but force all the time. Here looms the dull and heavy planet Saturn weighing down the fiery, ethereal side of Sagittarius; it brings out all the worst in Sagittarius. See the Archer, not shooting forth benign rays, but dealing the sharp rain of death! The Wand has conquered; it has done its work; it has done its work too well; it did not know when to stop; Government has become Tyranny. One thinks of the Hydra when one reflects that King Charles was beheaded in Whitehall!

The Ten of Cups is called Satiety. Its attribution is Mars in Pisces. The watery sign has sunk into a stagnant dream, but in it broods and breeds the violent quality of Mars, to putrefy it. As it is written: "Until a dart strike through his liver." The pursuit of pleasure has been crowned with perfect success; and constantly it is discovered that, having got everything that one wanted, one did not want it after all; now one must pay.

The Ten of Swords is called Ruin. It teaches the lesson which

statesmen should have learned, and have not; that if one goes on fighting long enough, all ends in destruction.

Yet this card is not entirely without hope. The Solar influence rules; ruin can never be complete, because disaster is a sthenic disease. As soon as things are bad enough, one begins to build up again. When all the Governments have smashed each other, there still remains the peasant. At the end of Candide's misadventures, he could still cultivate his garden.

The Ten of Disks is called Wealth. Here again is written this constantly recurring doctrine, that as soon as one gets to the bottom one finds oneself at the top; and Wealth is given to Mercury in Virgo. When wealth accumulates beyond a certain point, it must either become completely inert and cease to be wealth, or call in the aid of intelligence to use it rightly. This must necessarily happen in spheres which have nothing whatever to do with material possessions, as such. In this way, Carnegie establishes a Library, Rockefeller endows Research, simply because there is nothing else to do.

But all this doctrine lies behind the card; it is the inner meaning of the card.

There is another view to consider, that this is the last of all the cards, and therefore represents the sum total of all the work that has been done from the beginning. Therefore, in it is drawn the very figure of the Tree of Life itself. This card, to the other thirty-five small cards, is what the twenty-first Trump, The Universe, is to the rest of the Trumps.

THE ROOT OF THE POWERS OF FIRE

ACE OF WANDS

This card represents the essence of the element of Fire in its inception. It is a solar-phallic outburst of flame from which spring lightnings in every direction.

These flames are Yods, arranged in the form of the Tree of Life. (For Yod, see Atu IX supra.)

It is the primordial Energy of the Divine manifesting in Matter, at so early a stage that it is not yet definitely formulated as Will.

Important: although these "small cards" are sympathetic with their Sephirotic origin, they are not identical; nor are they Divine Persons. These (and the Court Cards also) are primarily sub-Elements, parts of the "Blind Forces" under the Demiourgos, Tetragrammaton. Their rulers are the Intelligences, in the Yetziratic world, who go to form the Schemhamphorasch. Nor is even this Name, "Lord of the Universe" though it be, truly Divine, as are the Lords of the Atu in the Element of Spirit. Each Atu possesses its own private, personal and particular Universe, with Demiourgos (and all the rest) complete, just as every man and every woman does.

For example II's or VI's Three of Disks might represent the establishment of such an oracle as that of Delphi, or VIII's might be the first formula of a Code such as Manu gave to Hindustan; V's, a cathedral, XVI's, a standing army; and so on. The great point is that all the Elemental Forces, however sublime, powerful, or intelligent, are Blind Forces and no more.

DOMINION

TWO OF WANDS

This card, pertaining to Chokmah in the suit of Fire, represents the Will in its most exalted form. It is an ideal Will, independent of any given object.

"For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect." AL. I.44.

The background of this card shows the power of the planet Mars in his own sign Aries, the first of the Signs. It there represents Energy initiating a Current of Force.

The pictorial representation is two Dorjes crossed. The Dorje is the Tibetan symbol of the thunderbolt, the emblem of celestial Power, but more in its destructive than its creative form.

More, that is, in its earlier rather than its later form. For destruction may be regarded as the first step in the creative process. The virgin ovum must be broken in order to fertilize it. Fear and

repulsion are therefore the primary reaction to the assault. Then, with understanding of the complete plan, willing surrender rejoices to co-operate.

Six flames issue from the centre. This indicates the influence of the Sun, who is exalted in Aries. This is the creative Will.

Mars in Aries is the attribution of the Geomantic Figure Puer. ⁂ The meaning of these figures is to be studied in the Handbook of that science: "The Equinox" Vol. I, No. 2. Remember that the Geomantic Intelligences (see Liber 777 Cols. XLIX and CLXXVIII) are all primarily Gnomes.

VIRTUE

THREE OF WANDS

This card refers to Binah in the suit of Fire, and so represents the establishment of primeval Energy. The Will has been transmitted to the Mother, who conceives, prepares, and gives birth to, its manifestation.

It refers to the Sun in Aries, the Sign in which he is exalted.

The meaning is harmonious, for this is the beginning of Spring. For this reason one sees the wand taking the form of the Lotus in blossom. The Sun has enkindled the Great Mother.

In the Yî King, Sol in Aries is represented by the 11th hexagram, Thai; its meaning is identical with the above description.

COMPLETION

FOUR OF WANDS

This card refers to Chesed in the suit of Fire. Being below the Abyss, it is the Lord of all manifested active Power. The original Will of the Two has been transmitted through the Three, and is now built up into a solid system:—Order, Law, Government. It is also referred to Venus in Aries, which indicates that one cannot establish one's work without tact and gentleness.

The wands are headed by the Ram, sacred to Chesed, the Father-god Amoun-Ra, as also to Aries; but at the other end of the wands are the Doves of Venus.

In the symbol, the ends of the wands touch a circle, showing the completion and limitation of the original work. It is within this circle that the flames (four double, as if to assert the balance) of the Energy are seen to play, and there is no intention to increase the scope of the original Will. But this limitation bears in itself the seeds of disorder.

STRIFE

FIVE OF WANDS

This card is referred to Geburah of the suit of Fire. Geburah itself being fiery, it is a purely active force. It is ruled also by Saturn and Leo. Leo shows the element of Fire at its strongest and most balanced. Saturn tends to weigh it down and to embitter it. There is no limit to the scope of this volcanic energy.

The symbol represents the wand of the Chief Adept, showing that the authority is derived from the superiors; were it not so, this card would be thoroughly disastrous. Moreover, there are also two wands of the Second, or Major Adept. They have the head of the Phoenix, which gives the idea of destruction (or rather purgation) through fire, and the resurrection of the energy from its ashes.

There is also a pair of wands of the Third, or Minor, Adept, which are daughters, so to speak, of the wands in the Three of Wands. In this card there is the mitigating influence of the Mother. One of the most difficult doctrines with regard to Geburah is that, while it represents all this tameless irrational energy and disturbance, yet it derives from the benign and gentle influence of the feminine.

The Egyptians understood this doctrine perfectly. Their Lion-goddess, Pasht, was hailed as "saeva" and "ferox", was even called "red in tooth and claw" by those fanatical devotees who wished to identify her with Nature. The idea of sexual cruelty is often inherent in the highest divine nature; compare Bhavani and Kali in the Hindu system, and observe the Shiva-Ṣakti coition portrayed on

many Tibetan banners. See also Liber 418, 4th, 3rd, and 2nd Aethyrs; and the description *supra* of Atu XI.

VICTORY

SIX OF WANDS

This card represents Tiphareth of the suit of Fire. This shows Energy in completely balanced manifestation. The Five has broken up the closed forces of the Four with revolutionary ardour, but a marriage has taken place between them; and the result is the Son, and the Sun.

The reference is also to Jupiter and Leo, which seems to imply a benediction on the harmony and beauty of this arrangement. It will be seen that the Three Wands of the Three Adepts are now orderly arranged; and the flames themselves, instead of shooting out in all directions, burn steadily as in lamps. They are nine in number, in reference to Yesod and the Moon. This shows the stabilization of the Energy, and its reception and reflection by the Feminine.

There is no circle to enclose the system. It is self-supporting, like the Sun.

VALOUR

SEVEN OF WANDS

This card derives from Netzach (Victory) in the suit of Fire. But the Seven is a weak, earthy, feminine number as regards the Tree of Life, and represents a departure from the balance so low down on the Tree that this implies a loss of confidence.

Fortunately, the card is also attributed to Mars in Leo. Leo is still the Sun in his full strength, but the marks of decadence are already to be seen. It is as if the wavering fire summoned the brutal energy of Mars to its support. But this is not enough to counteract fully the degeneration of the initial energy, and the departure from equilibrium.

The army has been thrown into disorder; if victory is to be won, it will be by dint of individual valour—a "soldiers' battle".

The pictorial representation shows the fixed and balanced wands of the last card relegated to the background, diminished, and become commonplace.

In front is a large crude uneven club, the first weapon to hand; evidently unsatisfactory in ordered combat.

The flames are dispersed, and seem to attack in all directions without systematic purpose.

SWIFTNESS

EIGHT OF WANDS

The remaining three cards of the suit belong to Sagittarius, which represents the subtilizing of the Fiery energy; and Mercury rules the card, thus bringing down from Chokmah the message of the original Will.

The card also refers to Hod, splendour, in the suit of Fire, whence it refers to the phenomena of speech, light, electricity.

The pictorial representation of the card shows the Light-wands turned into electrical rays, sustaining or even constituting Matter by their vibrating energy. Above this restored universe shines the rainbow; the division of pure light, which deals with maxima, into the seven colours of the spectrum, which exhibit interplay and correlation.

This card, therefore, represents energy of high velocity, such as furnishes the master-key to modern mathematical physics.

It will be noted that there are no flames; they have all been taken up into the wands to turn them into rays. On the other hand, the electric energy has created intelligible geometrical form.

STRENGTH

NINE OF WANDS

This card is referred to Yesod, the Foundation; this brings the Energy back into balance. The Nine represents always the fullest

development of the Force in its relation with the Forces above it. The Nine may be considered as the best that can be obtained from the type involved, regarded from a practical and material standpoint.

This card is also governed by the Moon in Sagittarius; so here is a double influence of the Moon on the Tree of Life. Hence the aphorism "Change is Stability".

The Wands have now become arrows. There are eight of them in the background, and in front of them one master arrow. This has the Moon for its point, and the Sun for the driving Force above it; for the path of Sagittarius on the Tree of Life joins the Sun and Moon. The flames in the card are tenfold, implying that the Energy is directed downwards.

OPPRESSION

TEN OF WANDS

The number Ten refers to Malkuth, which depends from the other nine Sephiroth, but is not directly in communication with them. It shows the Force detached from its spiritual sources. It is become a blind Force; so, the most violent form of that particular energy, without any modifying influences. The flames in the background of the card have run wild. It is Fire in its most destructive aspect.

The card also refers to the influence of Saturn in Sagittarius. Here is the greatest antipathy. Sagittarius is spiritual, swift, light, elusive, and luminous; Saturn is material, slow, heavy, obstinate, and obscure.

The eight Wands are still crossed, showing the enormous power of the completed energies of Fire; but they have lost their patents of nobility. Their ends seem more like claws; they lack the authority and intelligence shown in the earlier cards; and in front are the two formidable Dorjes of the Two of Wands, but lengthened to bars.

The whole picture suggests oppression and repression. It is a stupid and obstinate cruelty from which there is no escape. It is a Will which has not understood anything beyond its dull purpose,

its "lust of result", and will devour itself in the conflagrations it has evoked.

THE ROOT OF THE POWERS OF WATER

ACE OF CUPS

This card represents the element of Water in its most secret and original form. It is the feminine complement of the Ace of Wands, and is derived from the Yoni and the Moon exactly as that is from the Lingam and the Sun. The third in the Hierarchy. This accordingly represents the essential form of the Holy Grail. Upon the dark sea of Binah, the Great Mother, are Lotuses, two in one, which fill the cup with the Life-fluid, symbolically represented either as Water, as Blood, or as Wine, according to the selected purpose of the symbolism. This being a primordial card, the liquid is shown as water; it can be transformed into Wine or Blood as may be required.

Above the Cup, descending upon it, is the Dove of the Holy Ghost, thus consecrating the element.

At the base of the Cup is the Moon, for it is the virtue of this card to conceive and to produce the second form of its Nature.

LOVE

TWO OF CUPS

The Two always represents the Word and the Will. It is the first manifestation. Therefore, in the suit of Water, it must refer to Love, which recovers unity from dividuality by mutual annihilation.

The card also refers to Venus in Cancer. Cancer is, more than any other, the receptive Sign; it is the House of the Moon, and in that Sign Jupiter is exalted. These are, superficially, the three most friendly of the planets.

The hieroglyph of the card represents two cups in the fore-

ground, overflowing upon a calm sea. They are fed with lucent water from a lotus floating upon the sea, from which rises another lotus around whose stem are entwined twin dolphins. The symbolism of the dolphin is very complicated, and must be studied in books of reference; but the general idea is that of the "Royal Art". The dolphin is peculiarly sacred to Alchemy.

The number Two referring to Will, this card might really be renamed the Lord of Love under Will, for that is its full and true meaning. It shows the harmony of the male and the female: interpreted in the largest sense. It is perfect and placid harmony, radiating an intensity of joy and ecstasy.

Of necessity, the realization of the idea in the Four (as the suit develops) will gradually diminish the purity of its perfection.

ABUNDANCE

THREE OF CUPS

This card refers to Binah in the suit of Water. This is the card of Demeter or Persephone. The Cups are pomegranates: they are filled bountifully to overflowing from a single lotus, arising from the dark calm sea characteristic of Binah. There is here the fulfilment of the Will of Love in abounding joy. It is the spiritual basis of fertility.

The card is referred to the influence of Mercury in Cancer; this carries further the above thesis. Mercury is the Will or Word of the All-Father; here its influence descends upon the most receptive of the Signs.

At the same time, the combination of these forms of energy brings in the possibility of somewhat mysterious ideas. Binah, the Great Sea, is the Moon in one aspect, but Saturn in another; and Mercury, besides being the Word or Will of the All-One, is the guide of the souls of the Dead. This card requires great subtlety of interpretation. The pomegranate was the fruit which Persephone ate in the realms of Pluto, thereby enabling him to hold her in the lower world, even after the most powerful influence had been brought to

bear. The lesson seems to be that the good things of life, although enjoyed, should be distrusted.

LUXURY

FOUR OF CUPS

This card refers to Chesed in the sphere of Water. Here, below the Abyss, the energy of this element, although ordered, balanced and (for the moment) stabilized, has lost the original purity of the conception.

The card refers to the Moon in Cancer, which is her own house; but Cancer itself is so placed that this implies a certain weakness, an abandonment to desire. This tends to introduce the seeds of decay into the fruit of pleasure.

The sea is still shown, but its surface is ruffled, and the four cups which stand upon it are no longer so stable. The Lotus from which the water springs has a multiple stem, as if to show that the influence of the Dyad has gathered strength. For although the number Four is the manifestation and consolidation of the dyad, it is also secretly preparing catastrophe by emphasizing individuality.

There is a certain parallelism between this card and the Geomantic figures Via and Populus, which are attributed to the Moon in her decrease and increase respectively. The link is primarily the "Change=Stability" equation, already familiar to readers of this essay. Four is an "awkward" number; alone among the natural numbers, it is impossible to construct a "Magic Square" of four cells. Even in the Naples Arrangement, Four is a dead stop, a blind alley. An idea of a totally different Order is necessary to carry on the series. Note also the refolding-in-upon-itself suggested by the "Magic Number" of Four $1+2+3+4$ which is Ten. ⁂ Four is the number of the Curse of Limitation, of Restriction. It is the blind and barren Cross of equal arms, Tetragrammaton in his fatal aspect of finality, as the Qabalists knew him before the discovery of the Revolving Formula whereby the Daughter, seated upon the Throne of the Mother, "awakens the Eld of the All-Father".

For the meanings of Via and Populus, refer to the "Handbook of Geomancy" (Equinox Vol. I, No. 2).

DISAPPOINTMENT

FIVE OF CUPS

This card is ruled by Geburah in the suit of Water. Geburah being fiery, there is a natural antipathy. Hence arises the idea of disturbance, just when least expected, in a time of ease.

The attribution is also to Mars in Scorpio, which is his own house; and Mars is the manifestation on the lowest plane of Geburah, while Scorpio, in its worst aspect, suggests the putrefying power of Water. Yet the powerful male influences do not show actual decay, only the beginning of destruction; hence, the anticipated pleasure is frustrated. The Lotuses have their petals torn by fiery winds; the sea is arid and stagnant, a dead sea, like a "chott" in North Africa. No water flows into the cups.

Moreover, these cups are arranged in the form of an inverted pentagram, symbolizing the triumph of matter over spirit.

Mars in Scorpio, moreover, is the attribution of the Geomantic figure Rubeus ⁘. This is of such evil omen that certain schools of Geomancy destroy the Map, and postpone the question for two hours or more, when Rubeus appears in the Ascendant. Its meaning is to be studied in the "Handbook of Geomancy" (Equinox Vol. I, No. 2).

PLEASURE

SIX OF CUPS

This card shows the influence of the number Six, Tiphareth, in the suit of Water. This influence is fortified by that of the Sun, who also represents the Six. The whole image is that of the influence of the Sun on Water. His fierce, but balanced power operates that type of putrefaction—he is in the Sign of Scorpio—which is the basis of all fertility, all life.

The lotus stems are grouped in an elaborate dancing movement. From their blossoms water gushes into the Cups, but they are not yet full to overflowing, as they are in the corresponding card below; the Nine.

Pleasure, in the title of this card, must be understood in its highest sense: it implies well-being, harmony of natural forces without effort or strain, ease, satisfaction. Foreign to the idea of the card is the gratification of natural or artificial desires. Yet it does represent emphatically the fulfilment of the sexual Will, as shown by the ruling Sephira, planet, element, and sign.

In the Yî King, Sol in Scorpio is represented by the 20th Hexagram, Kwan, ䷓, which is also "Big Earth", being the Earth Trigram ☷ with doubled lines. Kwan means "manifesting", but also "contemplating". The Thwan refers directly to an High Priest, ceremonially purified, about to present his offerings. The idea of Pleasure—Putrefaction as a Sacrament is therefore implicit in this Hexagram as in this card; while the comments on the separate lines by the Duke of Chau indicate the analytical value of this Eucharist. It is one of the master-keys to the Gate of Initiation. To realize and to enjoy this fully it is necessary to know, to understand, and to experience, the Secret of the Ninth Degree of the O.T.O.

DEBAUCH

SEVEN OF CUPS

This card refers to the Seven, Netzach, in the suit of Water. Here recurs the invariable weakness arising from lack of balance; also, the card is governed by Venus in Scorpio. Her dignity is not good in this Sign; one is reminded that Venus is the planet of Copper, "external splendour and internal corruption". The Lotuses have become poisonous, looking like tiger-lilies; and, instead of water, green slime issues from them and overflows, making the Sea a malarious morass. Venus redoubles the influence of the number Seven.

The cups are iridescent, carrying out the same idea.

They are arranged as two descending triangles interlaced above the lowest cup, which is very much larger than the rest.

This card is almost the "evil and averse" image of the Six; it is a wholesome reminder of the fatal ease with which a Sacrament may be profaned and prostituted.

Lose direct touch with Kether, the Highest; diverge never so little from the delicate balance of the Middle Pillar; at once the holiest mysteries of Nature become the obscene and shameful secrets of a guilty conscience.

INDOLENCE

EIGHT OF CUPS

The Eight, Hod, in the suit of Water, governs this card. It shows the influence of Mercury, but this is overpowered by the reference of the card to Saturn in Pisces. Pisces is calm but stagnant water; and Saturn deadens it completely. Water appears no longer as the Sea but as pools; and there is no florescence in this card as there was in the last. The Lotuses droop for lack of sun and rain, and the soil is poison to them; only two of the stems show blossoms at all. The cups are shallow, old and broken. They are arranged in three rows; of these the upper row of three is quite empty. Water trickles from the two flowers into the two central cups, and they drip into the two lowest without filling them. The background of the card shows pools, or lagoons, in very extensive country, incapable of cultivation; only disease and miasmatic poison can flourish in those vast Bad Lands.

The water is dark and muddy. On the horizon is a pallid, yellowish light, weighed down by leaden clouds of indigo.

Compare with the last card; it represents the opposite and complementary error. The one is the Garden of Kundry, the other the Palace of Klingsor.

In the psychopathology of The Path, this card is the German Measles of Christian Mysticism.

HAPPINESS

NINE OF CUPS

The Number Nine, Yesod, in the suit of Water, restores the stability lost by the excursions of Netzach and Hod from the Middle

Pillar. It is also the number of the Moon, thus strengthening the idea of Water.

In this card is the pageant of the culmination and perfection of the original force of Water.

The Ruler is Jupiter in Pisces. This influence is more than sympathetic; it is a definite benediction, for Jupiter is the planet of Chesed which represents Water in its highest material manifestation, and Pisces brings out the placid qualities of Water.

In the symbol are nine cups perfectly arranged in a square; all are filled and overflowing with Water. It is the most complete and most beneficient aspect of the force of Water.

The Geomantic Figure Laetitia ⁘ is ruled by Jupiter in Pisces. For its meaning consult the "Handbook of Geomancy" (Equinox Vol I, No. 2). Laetitia, joy, gladness, is one of the best and most powerful of the sixteen figures; for the Solar, Lunar, and Mercurial symbols are, at the best, ambiguous and treacherously ambivalent; those of Venus portend rather relief than positive beneficence; Saturn and Mars are seen at their worst; and even the stable-companion of Laetitia, Acquisitio, has its unpleasant aspects, and even its dangers. But the consonance of Laetitia with this card amounts to little less than an identity; the wine is poured by Ganymede himself, unstinted vintage of true nectar of the Gods, brimful and running over, an ordered banquet of delight, True Wisdom self-fulfilled in Perfect Happiness.

SATIETY

TEN OF CUPS

This card represents a conflicting element. On the one hand, it receives the influence of the Ten, Malkah the Virgin. The arrangement of the cups is that of the Tree of Life. But, on the other hand, they are themselves unstable. They are tilted; they spill the water from the great Lotus which overhangs the whole system from one into the other.

The work proper to water is complete: and disturbance is due.

This comes from the influence of Mars in Pisces. Mars is the gross, violent and disruptive force which inevitably attacks every supposed perfection. His energy displays the greatest possible contrast with that of Pisces, which is both peaceful and spiritualized.

ACE OF SWORDS

The Ace of Swords is the primordial Energy of Air, the Essence of the Vau of Tetragrammaton, the integration of the Ruach. Air is the result of the conjunction of Fire and Water; thus it lacks the purity of its superiors in the male hierarchy, Fire, Sol and the Phallus. But for this same reason it is the first card directly to be apprehended by the normal consciousness of Mankind. The errors of such cards as the 7 and 10 of Cups are yet of an Order altogether higher than the apparently much milder 4 of Swords. The study of the subtle and gradual degradation of the planes is excessively difficult.

In nature, the obvious symbol of Air is the Wind "which bloweth whithersoever it listeth". It lacks the concentrated Will of Fire to unite with Water: it has no corresponding passion for its Twin Element, Earth. There is indeed, a notable passivity in its nature; evidently, it has no self-generated impulse. But, set in motion by its Father and Mother, its power is manifestly terrific. It visibly attacks its objective, as they, being of subtler and more tenuous character, can never do. Its "all-embracing, all-wandering, all-penetrating, all-consuming" qualities have been described by many admirable writers, and its analogies are for the most part patent to quite ordinary observers.

But, it will instantly be asked, what of the status of this Element in the light of other attributions? In the Yetziratic World, is not Air the first element to follow Spirit? Is not Vayu the first emergence of the phenomenal from the arcane obscurity of Akasha? How may one reconcile the doctrine of Mind with the fact that Ruh, or Ruach, actually means Spirit itself? "Achath Ruach Elohim Chiim" (777) means "One is the Spirit (not Air) of the Gods of the Living"? And is not Air, the element attributed to Mercury, also most properly the Breath of Life, the Word, the Logos itself?

The student must be referred to some less raw, cursory, elementary and superficial Treatise than this present bat-eyed, penguin-winged, bluebottle-brained buzzing. Nevertheless, although Air is in no system the lowest, and so cannot claim benefit of clergy from the doctrine that Malkuth automatically resolves into Kether, the following reference seems not wholly to lack either cogency or pertinence.

The Ruach is centred in the airy Sephira, Tiphareth, who is the Son, the first-born of the Father, and the Sun, the first emanation of the creative Phallus. He derives directly from his mother Binah through the Path of Zain, the sublime intuitive sense, so that he partakes absolutely of the nature of Neschamah. From his father, Chokmah, he is informed though the Path of Hé, the Great Mother, the Star, our Lady Nuit,[1] so that the creative impulse is communicated to him by all possibilities soever. Finally, from Kether, the supreme, descends directly upon him, though the Path of Gimel, the High Priestess, the triune light of Initiation. The Three-in-One, the Secret Mother in her polymorphous plenitude; these, these alone, hail him thrice blessed of the Supernals!

The card represents the Sword of the Magus (see Book 4, Part II) crowned with the twenty-two rayed diadem of pure Light. The number refers to the Atu; also $22 = 2 \times 11$, the Magical manifestation of Chokmah, Wisdom, the Logos. Upon the blade, accordingly, is inscribed the Word of the Law, θελημα. This Word sends forth a blaze of Light, dispersing the dark clouds of the Mind.

PEACE

TWO OF SWORDS

This card is ruled by Chokmah in the Element of Air. This suit, governing all intellectual manifestations, is always complicated

[1] How strikingly this fact confirms the counterchange of IV and XVII, above fully expounded: as a link between Chokmah and Tiphareth, the Emperor would have no great significance, and this exquisite doctrine of the Three Mothers would be lost.

and disordered. It is subject to change as is no other suit. It represents a general shaking-up, resulting from the conflict of Fire and Water in their marriage; and proceeds, when Earth appears, to crystallization. But the purity and exaltation of Chokmah are such that this card manifests the very best idea possible to the suit. The energy abides above the onslaught of disruption. This comparative calm is emphasized by the celestial attribution: the Moon in Libra.

The Moon is change, but Nature is peaceful; moreover, Libra represents balance; between them, they regulate the energy of the Swords.

In the card appear two swords crossed; they are united by a blue rose with five petals. This rose represents the influence of the Mother, whose harmonizing influence compounds the latent antagonism native to the suit. The Rose emits white rays, producing a geometrical pattern that emphasizes the equilibrium of the symbol.

SORROW

THREE OF SWORDS

Binah, the Great Mother, here rules the realm of Air. This fact involves an extremely difficult doctrine which must be studied at length in *The Vision and the Voice:* Aethyr 14.

Binah is here not the beneficent Mother completing the Trinity with Kether and Chokmah. She represents the darkness of the Great Sea.

This is accentuated by the Celestial Lordship of Saturn in Libra.

This card is dark and heavy; it is, so to speak, the womb of Chaos. There is an intense lurking passion to create, but its children are monsters. This may mean the supreme transcendence of the natural order. Secrecy is here, and Perversion.

The symbol represents the great Sword of the Magician, point uppermost; it cuts the junction of two short curved swords. The

impact has destroyed the rose. In the background, storm broods under implacable night.

TRUCE

FOUR OF SWORDS

The number Four, Chesed, is here manifested in the realm of the Intellect. Chesed refers to Jupiter who rules in Libra in this decanate. The sum of these symbols is therefore without opposition; hence the card proclaims the idea of authority in the intellectual world. It is the establishment of dogma, and law concerning it. It represents a refuge from mental chaos, chosen in an arbitrary manner. It argues for convention.

The hilts of the four Swords are at the corner of a St. Andrew's cross. Their shape suggests fixation and rigidity. Their points are sheathed in a rather large rose of forty-nine petals representing social harmony. Here, too, is compromise.

Minds too indolent or too cowardly to think out their own problems hail joyfully this policy of appeasement. As always, the Four is the term; as in this case there is no true justification for repose, its disturbance by the Five holds no promise of advance; its static shams go pell-mell into the melting-pot; the issue is mere mess, usually signalized by foetid stench. But it has to be done!

DEFEAT

FIVE OF SWORDS

Geburah, as always, produces disruption; but as Venus here rules Aquarius, weakness rather than excess of strength seems the cause of disaster. The intellect has been enfeebled by sentiment. The defeat is due to pacifism. Treachery also may be implied.

The hilts of the swords form the inverted pentagram, always a symbol of somewhat sinister tendency. Here matters are even worse; none of the hilts resembles any of the others, and their blades are

crooked or broken. They give the impression of drooping; only the lowest of the swords points upwards, and this is the least effective of the weapons. The rose of the previous card has been altogether disintegrated.

The historian is happy to observe two perfect illustrations of the mode of this card and the last in the birth of the Aeon of (1) Osiris, (2) Horus. He will note the decay of such Virtue as characterized Sparta and Rome, ending in the establishment of the Pax Romana. As Virtue declined, corruption disintegrated the Empire from within. Epicene cults, such as those of Dionysus (in its degraded form), of Attis, of Adonis, of Cybele, the false Demeter and the prostituted Isis, replaced the sterner rites of the true Solar-Phallic gods; until finally (the masters having lost the respect, and so the control, of the plebs, native and alien) the lowest of all the slave-cults, dressed up in the fables of the vilest of the parasitic races, swept over the known world, and drenched it in foul darkness for five hundred years. He will delight to draw close parallels with the cognate phenomena displayed before the present generation.

SCIENCE

SIX OF SWORDS

Tiphareth shows the full establishment and balance of the idea of the suit. This is particularly the case with this card, as the intellect itself is also referred to the number Six. Mercury, in Aquarius, represents the celestial Energy influencing the Kerub of the Man, thus showing intelligence and humanity.

But there is much more than this in the symbol. The perfect balance of all mental and moral faculties, hardly won, and almost impossible to hold in an ever-changing world, declares the idea of Science in its fullest interpretation.

The hilts of the Swords, which are very ornamental, are in the form of the hexagram. Their points touch the outer petals of a red rose upon a golden cross of six squares, thus showing the Rosy Cross as the central secret of scientific truth.

FUTILITY

SEVEN OF SWORDS

Netzach, in the suit of Swords, does not represent such catastrophe as in the other suits, for Netzach, the Sephira of Venus, means victory. There is, therefore, a modifying influence; and this is accentuated by the celestial rule of the Moon in Aquarius.

The intellectual wreckage of the card is thus not so vehement as in the Five. There is vacillation, a wish to compromise, a certain toleration. But, in certain circumstances, the results may be more disastrous than ever. This naturally depends upon the success of the policy. This is always in doubt as long as there exist violent, uncompromising forces which take it as a natural prey.

This card, like the Four, suggests the policy of appeasement.

The symbol shows six Swords with their hilts in crescent formation. Their points meet below the centre of the card, impinging upon a blade of a much larger up-thrusting sword, as if there were a contest between the many feeble and the one strong. He strives in vain.

INTERFERENCE

EIGHT OF SWORDS

The number Eight, Hod, here signifies lack of persistence in matters of the intellect and of contest. Good fortune, however, attends even these weakened efforts, thanks to the influence of Jupiter in Gemini, ruling the Decan. Yet the Will is constantly thwarted by accidental interference.

The centre of the card is occupied by two long Swords pointed downward. These are crossed by six small swords, three on each side. They remind one of weapons peculiar to their countries or their cults; we see here the Kriss, the Kukri, the Scramasax, the Dagger, the Machete and the Yataghan.

CRUELTY

NINE OF SWORDS

The number Nine, Yesod, brings back the Energy to the central pillar of the Tree of Life. The previous disorder is now rectified.

But the general idea of the suit has been constantly degenerating. The Swords no longer represent pure intellect so much as the automatic stirring of heartless passions. Consciousness has fallen into a realm unenlightened by reason. This is the world of the unconscious primitive instincts, of the psychopath, of the fanatic.

The celestial ruler is Mars in Gemini, crude rage of hunger operating without restraint; although its form is intellectual, it is the temper of the inquisitor.

The symbol shows nine swords of varying lengths, all striking downwards to a point. They are jagged and rusty. Poison and blood drip from their blades.

There is, however, a way of dealing with this card: the way of passive resistance, resignation, the acceptance of martyrdom.

Nor is an alien formula that of implacable revenge.

RUIN

TEN OF SWORDS

The number Ten, Malkuth, as always, represents the culmination of the unmitigated energy of the idea. It shows reason run mad, ramshackle riot of soulless mechanism; it represents the logic of lunatics and (for the most part) of philosophers. It is reason divorced from reality.

The card is also ruled by the Sun in Gemini, but the mercurial airy quality of the Sign serves to disperse his rays; this card shows the disruption and disorder of harmonious and stable energy.

The hilts of the Swords occupy the positions of the Sephiroth, but the points One to Five and Seven to Nine touch and shatter the central Sword (six) which represents the Sun, the Heart, the child

of Chokmah and Binah. The tenth Sword is also in splinters. It is the ruin of the Intellect, and even of all mental and moral qualities.

In the Yî King, Sol in Gemini is the virtue of the 43rd Hexagram, Kwai, the Watery modification of the Phallus; also, by the interlacing interpretation, the harmony of these two same Trigrams.

The signification is perfectly harmonious with that of the Ten of Swords. It represents the damping down of the Creative impulse, weakness, corruption, or mirage affecting that principle itself. But, viewing the Hexagram as a weapon or method of procedure, it counsels the ruler to purge the state of unworthy officers. Curiously, the invention of written characters to replace knotted strings is ascribed among Chinese scholars to the use of this hexagram by the sages. Gemini is ruled by Thoth; 10 is the key of the Naples Arrangement; and Apollo (Sol) is the patron of literature and the arts: so this suggestion might appear at least no less suitable to the Qabalistic correspondences than to their double emphasis on Water and the Sun.

Apart from this, however, the parallelism is complete.

ACE OF DISKS

The Ace of Disks pictures the entry of that type of Energy which is called Earth. It is here proper to insist a little strongly upon one of the essential theoretical theses which have inflamed the constitution of this present pack of Tarot cards; for this feature is significant, and distinguishes it from the numerous crude efforts of uninitiates to put themselves forward as adepts. The grotesque barber Alliette, the obscurely perverse Wirth, the poseur-fumiste Péladan, down to the verbose ignorance of such Autolycus-quacks as Raffalovitch and Ouspensky; none of these or their kin have done more than "play the sedulous ape" to the conventional Mediaeval designs. (Their luck was out: the Tarot is a razor!) Eliphaz Levi was a master-scholar, and knew the true attributions; but his grade in the Great White Brotherhood was only 6°=5° (Adeptus Major); and he had no instructed foresight of the New Aeon. He did indeed hope to find a Messiah in Napoleon III; but of the complete spiritual upheaval which accompanies the Proclamation of a new Magical

Formula he had no glimpse; no, not though he had Maistre Alcofribas Nasier to guide him![1]

Dr. Gérard Encausse, "Papus", who followed Eliphaz Levi, felt himself even more closely bound by his Oath of Secrecy, so that his dealings with the Tarot are worthless; and that although he was Grand Master of the O.T.O. in France, and Grand Hierophant 97° of the Rite of Memphis on the death of John Yarker.

These historical data are necessary to explain why all previous packs are of little more than archaeological interest; for the New Aeon demanded a new system of symbolism. Thus, in particular, the old conception of the Earth as a passive, immobile, even dead, even "evil" element, had to go. It was imperative to restore the King-Scale colour attribution to that of the Aeon of Isis, Emerald Green, as was understood by the Egyptian Hierophants. This green is, however, not the original vegetable green of Isis, but the new green of spring following the resurrection of Osiris as Horus. Nor are the Disks any more to be considered as Coins; the Disk is a whirling emblem. Naturally so; since it is now known that every Star, every true Planet, is a whirling sphere. The Atom, again, is no more the hard, intractable, dead Particle of Dalton, but a system of whirling forces, comparable to the Solar hierarchy itself.

This thesis dovetails perfectly with the new Doctrine of Tetragrammaton, where the Earthy component, Hé final, the Daughter, is set upon the Throne of the Mother, to awaken the Eld of the All-Father. The NAME itself, accordingly, is no longer a fixed symbol, emblem of extension and limit, but a continuously revolving sphere; in the words of Zoroaster, "rebounding, whirling forth, crying aloud".

It has been the custom of publishers or designers of packs to set their personal seal upon the Ace of Disks, for grammatical reasons not unconnected with the perhaps arbitrary differentiation

[1] See The Grands Annales ou croniques Tresveritables des filz. Roy des Dipsodes. 1542. Book I, Chapter LVIII, where is given not only a remarkable description of the social conditions of the twentieth century e.v., but even, in the last line of the Prophetic Riddle, a clear indication of the Magical Motto of the Adept chosen by the Masters to announce this Formula—this Word, openly given in the name of the Abbey itself. But, as so often is the case, it was too simple and straightforward to be seen!

in the Latin Language between the pronouns "meum" and "tuum". Saith not the Bard?

"Steal not this Book for fear of shame!
The Ace of Disks—the Author's name.
The Ace of Swords—thy corpse shall look
Like Agag's did, in Samuel's book.
The Ace of Cups—drink thou no less
Than Brinvilliers the Marchioness!
The Ace of Wands—thy death be reckoned
Like that of good King Edward Second!

The central symbol of the Ace of Disks is consequently the personal Hieroglyph of "the chosen priest and apostle of infinite space", "the prince-priest the Beast". (Liber AL. I.15.)

This is to be compared with the Sigillum Sanctum of the Order of A.·. A.·.

In the centre of all is yet another form of Tetragrammaton, the Phallus, showing Sol and Luna, with the number 666 duly inscribed, as if to equilibrate, to fit into the Vesica, with the seven sevens adding to 156 (BABALON $2 + 1 + 2 + 1 + 30 + 70 + 50 = (7 + 7) \div 7 + 77 + 77 = 156$) as the Magick Square of 6 adds to 666 (.·.1—6^2= ΤΟ ΜΕΓΑ ΘΗΡΙΟΝ $300 + 70 + 40 + 5 + 3 + 1 + 9 + 8 + 100 + 10 + 70 + 50$=תריון $400 + 200 + 10 + 6 + 50$). Should one choose to interpret the vertical line above 666 as 1, and add it, the number of the Scarlet Woman, 667, appears. (667 = Η ΚΟΚΚΙΝΗ ΓΥΝΗ $= 8 + 20 + 70 + 20 + 20 + 10 + 50 + 8 + 3 + 400 + 50 + 8$.) This cipher is enclosed in a Heptagram, as manifestly needful; and this figure again in interlaced Pentagons whose sides are extended, so forming a Wheel of 10 spokes whose boundary is a Decagon; and this again within a circular band, upon which is inscribed in full the name ΤΟ ΜΕΓΑ ΘΗΡΙΟΝ, of 12 (6×2) letters.

About this whirling Disk are its six Wings; the entire symbol is not only a glyph of Earth as understood in this New Aeon of Horus, but of the number 6, the number of the Sun. This card is thus an affirmation of the identity of Sol and Terra—and that will be best

understood by those who have punctually practised Liber Resh for the necessary number of years, preferably in such Hermitages as those of the Sahara Desert, where the Sun and the Earth can soon be instinctively recognized as living Beings, one's constant companions in a Universe of Pure Joy.

CHANGE

TWO OF DISKS

The number Two, Chokmah, here rules in the suit pertaining to Earth. It shows the type of Energy appropriate to Two, in its most fixed form. According to the doctrine that Change is the support of stability, the card is called Change.

Its celestial rulers are Jupiter and Capricornus; and these symbols are most inharmonious, so that in practical matters the good fortune of Jupiter is very limited. Their influence on the card is not great. Yet, Jupiter being himself the Wheel (Atu X), he emphasizes that idea.

The card represents two Pantacles, one above the other; they are the Chinese symbols of the Yang and Yin duplicated as in the Hsiang. One wheel is dextro- and the other laevo-rotatory. They thus represent the harmonious interplay of the Four Elements in constant movement. One may in fact consider the card as the picture of the complete manifested Universe, in respect of its dynamics.

About them is entwined a green Serpent (see Liber 65, chapter iii, verses 17–20). His tail is in his mouth. He forms the figure Eight, the symbol of the Infinite, the equation $0=2$.

WORK

THREE OF DISKS

The influence of Binah in the sphere of Earth shows the material establishment of the idea of the Universe, the determination of its

basic form. It is ruled by Mars in Capricornus; he is exalted in that Sign, and therefore at his best. His energy is constructive, like that of the builder or engineer. The card represents a pyramid viewed from above the apex. The base is formed by three wheels—Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt; Sattvas, Rajas, and Tamas in the Hindu system; Aleph, Shin, and Mem—Air, Fire, and Water—the three Mother letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

This pyramid is situated in the great Sea of Binah in the Night of Time, but the sea is solidified; hence the colours of the background are mottled, a cold thin dark grey with a pattern of indigo and green. The sides of the pyramid have a strong reddish tint, showing the influence of Mars.

POWER

FOUR OF DISKS

The Four, Chesed, shows the establishment of the Universe in three dimensions, that is, below the Abyss. The generating idea is exhibited in its full material sense. The card is ruled by the Sun in Capricornus, the Sign in which he is reborn. The disks are very large and solid; the suggestion of the card is that of a fortress. This represents Law and Order, maintained by constant authority and vigilance. The disks themselves are square; revolution is very opposite to the card; and they contain the signs of the Four Elements. For all that, they revolve; defence is valid only when violently active. So far as it appears stationary, it is the "dead centre" of the engineer; and Capricornus is the point at which the Sun "turns again Northward". The background is of deep azure, flecked yellow, suggesting a moat; but beyond this is a pattern of green and indigo to represent the guarded fields whose security is assured by the fortress.

In the Yî King, Sol in Capricornus is represented by the Second Hexagram, Khwăn, which is the Female Principle. Compare the English word Queen, Anglo-Saxon Cwen, old Mercian Kwoen. Cognate are Icelandic Kvan, Gothic Kwens, woman. The Indo-

Germanic type is g (w)eni and the Sanskrit root GwEN. Note also Cwm, coombe, and agnate words, meaning an enclosed valley, usually with water running from it. Womb—possibly a softened form?

Compare also the innumerable words, derived from the root *Cas*, which imply an enclosed and fortified space. Case, castle, chest, cyst, chaste, incest and so on.

The primary radicle in all this class of words is the guttural. Observe the Hebrew attributions: Gimel, the moon; Cheth, Cancer, the house of the moon; Kaph, the Wheel; Qoph, the Moon, XVIII, Guttur, the throat. Sounds so made suggest the other throat; one is the channel of respiration and nutrition, the other of reproduction and elimination.

WORRY

FIVE OF DISKS

The Number Five, Geburah, in the suit of Earth, shows the disruption of the Elements, just as in the other suits. This is emphasized by the rule of Mercury in Taurus, types of energy which are opposed. It needs a very powerful Mercury to upset Taurus; so the natural meaning is Intelligence applied to Labour.

The symbol represents five disks in the form of the inverted Pentagram, instability in the very foundations of Matter. The effect is that of an earthquake. They are, however, representative of the five Tatvas; these hold together, on a very low plane, an organism which would otherwise disrupt completely. The background is an angry, ugly red with yellow markings. The general effect is one of intense strain; yet the symbol implies long-continued inaction.

SUCCESS

SIX OF DISKS

The Number Six, Tiphareth, as before, represents the full harmonious establishment of the Energy of the Element. The

Moon in Taurus rules the card; and this, while increasing the approach to perfection (for the Moon is exalted in Taurus and therefore in her highest form) marks that the condition is transient.

The disks are arranged in the form of the Hexagram, which is shown in skeleton. In the centre blushes and glows the light rose-madder of dawn, and without are three concentric circles, golden yellow, salmon-pink, and amber. These colours show Tiphareth fully realized on Earth; it reaffirms in form what was mathematically set forth in describing the Ace.

The planets are arranged in accordance with their usual attribution; but they are only shown as disks irradiated by the Sun in their centre.

This Sun is idolized as the Rose and Cross; the Rose has forty-nine petals, the interplay of the Seven with the Seven.

FAILURE

SEVEN OF DISKS

The number Seven, Netzach, has its customary enfeebling effect, and this is made worse by the influence of Saturn in Taurus. The disks are arranged in the shape of the geomantic figure Rubeus, the most ugly and menacing of the Sixteen. (See Five of Cups.) The atmosphere of the card is that of Blight. On the background, which represents vegetation and cultivation, everything is spoiled. The four colours of Netzach appear, but they are blotched with angry indigo and reddish orange. The disks themselves are the leaden disks of Saturn. They suggest bad money.

PRUDENCE

EIGHT OF DISKS

The number Eight, Hod, is very helpful in this card, because it represents Mercury in his most spiritual aspect, and he both rules

and is exalted in the sign of Virgo, which belongs to the Decan, and is governed by the Sun. It signifies intelligence lovingly applied to material matters, especially those of the agriculturalist, the artificer and the engineer.

One might suggest that this card marks the turn of the tide. The seven of Disks is in one sense the fullest possible establishment of Matter—compare Atu XV—the lowest fallen and therefore the highest exalted. These last three cards seem to prepare the explosion which will renew the whole Cycle. Note that Virgo is Yod, the secret seed of Life, and also the Virgin Earth awaiting the Phallic Plough.

The interest of this card is the interest of the common people. The rulership of the Sun in Virgo suggests also birth. The disks are arranged in the form of the geomantic figure Populus. These disks may be represented as the flowers or fruits of a great tree, its solid roots in fertile land.

In the Yî King, Sol in Virgo is represented by the 33rd Hexagram, Thun, ䷠ "Big Air". It means "retiring"; and the commentary indicates how best to make use of that manœuvre. This is congruous enough with the essence of Virgo, the secret withdrawing of Energy into the fallow Earth. Populus, moreover, is the Moon retiring from manifestation to her conjunction with the Sun.

GAIN

NINE OF DISKS

The number Nine, Yesod, inevitably brings back the balance of Force in fulfilment. The card is ruled by Venus in Virgo. It shows good luck attending material affairs, favour and popularity.

The disks are arranged as an equilateral triangle of three, apex upwards, close together; and, surrounded at some distance by a ring, six larger disks in the form of a hexagon. This signifies the multiplication of the original established Word—by the mingling of "good luck and good management". The three central disks are of the magical pattern as in earlier cards; but the others, since the

descent into matter implies the gradual exhaustion of the original whirling energy, now take on the form of coins. These may be marked with the magical images of the appropriate planets.

As a general remark, one may say that the multiplication of a symbol of Energy always tends to degrade its essential meaning, as well as to complicate it.

WEALTH

TEN OF DISKS

The number Ten, Malkuth, as always, represents the final issue of the Energy. Here is great and final solidification. The force is completely expended and results in death. Mercury rules this card in Virgo; and this may imply that the acquired wealth, being inert, will be dissipated unless put to further use by devoting its power to objects other than mere accumulation.

The disks, or (as they have now become) coins, are arranged on the Tree of Life, but the Tenth coin is much larger than the rest; the image indicates the futility of material gain.

These disks are inscribed with various symbols of mercurial character, except that the coin in the place of Hod (Mercury) on the Tree is marked with the cipher of the Sun. This indicates the only possibility of issue from the impasse produced by the exhaustion of all the elemental forces. At the end of matter must be complete stagnation, were it not that in it is always inherent the Will of the Father, the Great Architect, the Great Arithmetician, the Great Geometer. In this case, then, Mercury will represent the Logos, the Word, the Will, the Wisdom, the Eternal Son, and Virgo the Virgin, in every implication of that symbol. This card is in fact a hieroglyph of the cycle of regeneration.

Among the Geomantic figures, Mercury in Virgo is Conjunctio ⁘. The meaning, conjunction, is shown plainly by the attraction of the descending (female) Triangle, the cipher of the Yoni, to the ascending (male) Triangle, that of the Lingam. This union com-

pleted, they appear interlaced, forming ⁂ the figure of Capricornus, the Sign in which the Sun finds his rebirth. It is the holy Hexagram, the symbol of the uniting of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm, the accomplishment of the Great Work, the Summum Bonum, True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness. Sic sit vobis!

INVOCATION

(An Oath written during the Dawn-Meditation)

Aiwaz! confirm my troth with Thee! my will inspire
With secret sperm of subtle, free, creating Fire!
Mould thou my very flesh as Thine, renew my birth
In childhood merry as divine, enchanted Earth!
Dissolve my rapture in Thine own, a sacred slaughter
Whereby to capture and atone the Soul of Water!
Fill thou my mind with gleaming Thought intense and rare
To One refined, outflung to Naught, the Word of Air!
Most, bridal bound, my quintessential Form thus freeing
From self, be found one Selfhood blent in Spirit-Being.

SCANS FROM ALEISTER CROWLEY'S

THE EQUINOX

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