

PART ONE

THE THEORY OF THE TAROT

I

THE CONTENTS OF THE TAROT

THE TAROT is a pack of seventy-eight cards. There are four suits, as in modern playing cards, which are derived from it. But the Court cards number four instead of three. In addition, there are twenty-two cards called "Trumps", each of which is a symbolic picture with a title to itself.

At first sight one would suppose this arrangement to be arbitrary, but it is not. It is necessitated, as will appear later, by the structure of the universe, and in particular of the Solar System, as symbolized by the Holy Qabalah. This will be explained in due course.

THE ORIGIN OF THE TAROT

The origin of this pack of cards is very obscure. Some authorities seek to put it back as far as the ancient Egyptian Mysteries; others try to bring it forward as late as the fifteenth or even the sixteenth century. But the Tarot certainly existed, in what may be called the classical form, as early as the fourteenth century; for packs of that date are extant, and the form has not varied in any notable respect since that time.

In the Middle Ages, these cards were much used for fortune telling, especially by gypsies, so that it was customary to speak of the "Tarot of the Bohemians", or "Egyptians". When it was found that the gypsies, despite the etymology, were of Asiatic origin, some people tried to find its source in Indian art and literature.

There is here no need to enter into any discussion of these disputed points.¹

THE THEORY OF THE CORRESPONDENCES OF THE TAROT

Unimportant to the present purpose are tradition and authority. Einstein's Theory of Relativity does not rest on the fact that, when

¹ It is supposed by some scholars that the R.O.T.A. (Rota, a wheel) consulted in the Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum—see the Manifesto "Fama Fraternitatis" of the Brothers of the Rosy Cross—was the Tarot.

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his theory was put to the test, it was confirmed. The only theory of ultimate interest about the Tarot is that it is an admirable symbolic picture of the Universe, based on the data of the Holy Qabalah.

It will be proper, later in this essay, to describe the Holy Qabalah somewhat fully, and to discuss relevant details. The part of it which is here relevant is called Gematria, a science in which the numerical value of a Hebrew word, each letter being also a number, links that word with others of the same value, or a multiple thereof. For example, AChD unity ($1+8+4$)= 13 ; and AHBH love ($1+5+2+5$)= 13 . This fact is held to indicate "The nature of Unity is Love". Then IHVH Jehovah ($10+5+6+5$)= $26=2\times 13$. Therefore: "Jehovah is Unity manifested in Duality." And so forth. One important interpretation of Tarot is that it is a Notarikon of the Hebrew Torah, the Law; also of ThROA, the Gate. Now, by the Yetziratic attributions—see table at end—this word may be read The Universe—the new-born Sun—Zero. This is the true Magical Doctrine of Thelema: Zero equals Two. Also, by Gematria, the numerical value of ThROA is $671=61\times 11$. Now 61 is AIN, Nothing or Zero; and 11 is the number of Magical Expansion; in this way also, therefore, ThROA announces that same dogma, the only satisfactory philosophical explanation of the Cosmos, its origin, mode, and object. Complete mystery surrounds the question of the origin of this system; any theory which satisfies the facts demands assumptions which are completely absurd. To explain it at all, one has to postulate in the obscure past a fantastic assembly of learned rabbins, who solemnly calculated all sorts of combinations of letters and numbers, and created the Hebrew language on this series of manipulations. This theory is plainly contrary, not only to common sense, but to the facts of history, and to all that we know about the formation of language. Nevertheless, the evidence is equally strong that there is something, not a little of something but a great deal of something, a something which excludes all reasonable theories of coincidence, in the correspondence between words and numbers.

It is an undeniable fact that any given number is not merely one more than the previous number and one less than the subsequent number, but is an independent individual idea, a thing in itself; a

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spiritual, moral and intellectual substance, not only as much as, but a great deal more than, any human being. Its merely mathematical relations are indeed the laws of its being, but they do not constitute the number, any more than the chemical and physical laws of reaction in the human anatomy give a complete picture of a man.

THE EVIDENCE FOR THE INITIATED TRADITION OF THE TAROT

1. *Eliphaz Levi and the Tarot.*

Although the origins of the Tarot are perfectly obscure, there is a very interesting piece of quite modern history, history well within the memory of living man, which is extremely significant, and will be found, as the thesis develops, to sustain it in a very remarkable way.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, there arose a very great Qabalist and scholar, who still annoys dull people by his habit of diverting himself at their expense by making fools of them posthumously. His name was Alphonse Louis Constant, and he was an Abbé of the Roman Church. For his "nom-de-guerre" he translated his name into Hebrew—Eliphas Levi Zahed, and he is very generally known as Eliphas Levi.

Eliphas Levi was a philosopher and an artist, besides being a supreme literary stylist and a practical joker of the variety called "Pince sans rire"; and, being an artist and a profound symbolist, he was immensely attracted by the Tarot. While in England, he proposed to Kenneth Mackenzie, a famous occult scholar and high-grade Freemason, to reconstitute and issue a scientifically-designed pack.

In his works are new presentations by him of the trumps called The Chariot and The Devil. He seems to have understood that the Tarot was actually a pictorial form of the Qabalistic Tree of Life, which is the basis of the whole Qabalah, so much so that he composed his works on this basis. He wished to write a complete treatise on Magick. He divided his subject into two parts—Theory and Practice—which he called *Dogma* and *Ritual*. Each part has twenty-two chapters, one for each of the twenty-two trumps; and each chapter

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deals with the subject represented by the picture displayed by the trump. The importance of the accuracy of the correspondence will appear in due course.

Here we come to a slight complication. The chapters correspond, but they correspond wrongly; and this is only to be explained by the fact that Levi felt himself bound by his original oath of secrecy to the Order of Initiates which had given him the secrets of the Tarot.

2. *The Tarot in the Cipher Manuscripts.*

At the time of the French Renaissance of the eighteen-fifties, a similar movement took place in England. Its interest centred in ancient religions, and their traditions of initiation and thaumaturgy. Learned societies, some secret or semi-secret, were founded or revived. Among the members of one such group, the Quatuor Coronati Lodge of Freemasonry, were three men: one, Dr. Wynn Westcott, a London coroner; a Dr. Woodford, and a Dr. Woodman. There is a little dispute as to which of these men went to the Farringdon Road, or whether it was the Farringdon Road to which they went; but there is no doubt whatever that one of them bought an old book, either from an obscure bookseller, or off a barrow, or found it in a library. This happened about 1884 or 1885. There is no dispute that in this book were some loose papers; that these papers turned out to be written in cipher; that these cipher manuscripts contained the material for the foundation of a secret society purporting to confer initiation by means of ritual; and that among these manuscripts was an attribution of the trumps of the Tarot to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. When this matter is examined, it becomes quite clear that Levi's wrong attribution of the letters was deliberate; that he knew the right attribution, and considered it his duty to conceal it. (It made much trouble for him to camouflage his chapters!)

The cipher manuscripts were alleged to date from the earliest years of the nineteenth century; and there is a note to one page which seems to be in the writing of Eliphas Levi. It appears extremely probable that he had access to this manuscript on his visit to Bulwer Lytton, in England. In any case, as previously observed, Levi shows constantly that he knew the correct attributions (with the exception, of course, of Tzaddi—why, will be seen later) and tried to

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use them, without improperly revealing any secrets which he was sworn not to disclose.

As soon as one possesses the true attributions of these trumps, the Tarot leaps into life. One is intellectually knocked down by the rightness of it. All the difficulties created by the traditional attributions as understood by the ordinary scholar, disappear in a flash. For this reason, one is inclined to credit the claim for the promulgators of the cipher manuscript, that they were guardians of a tradition of Truth.

3. *The Tarot and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.*

One must now digress into the history of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the society reconstituted by Dr. Westcott and his colleagues, in order to show further evidence as to the authenticity of the claim of the promulgators of the cipher manuscript.

Among these papers, besides the attribution of the Tarot, were certain skeleton rituals, which purported to contain the secrets of initiation; the name (with an address in Germany) of a Fraülein Sprengel was mentioned as the issuing authority. Dr. Westcott wrote to her; and, with her permission, the Order of the Golden Dawn was founded in 1886.

(The G . . . D . . . is merely a name for the Outer or Preliminary Order of the R.R. et A.C., which is in its turn an external manifestation of the A . . . A . . . which is the true Order of Masters¹—See *Magick*, pp. 229-244.)

The genius who made this possible was a man named Samuel Liddell Mathers. After a time, Frl. Sprengel died; a letter written to her, asking for more advanced knowledge, elicited a reply from one of her colleagues. This letter informed Dr. Westcott of her death, adding that the writer and his associates had never approved of Frl. Sprengel's action in authorising any form of group working, but, in view of the great reverence and esteem in which she was held, had refrained from open opposition. He went on to say that "this correspondence must now cease", but that if they wanted more advanced knowledge they could perfectly well get it by using in the proper

¹ An impudent mushroom swindle, calling itself "Order of Hidden Masters", has recently appeared—and disappeared.

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manner the knowledge which they already possessed. In other words, they must utilize their magical powers to make contact with the Secret Chiefs of the Order. (This, incidentally, is a quite normal and traditional mode of procedure.)

Shortly afterwards, Mathers, who had manœuvred himself into the practical Headship of the Order, announced that he had made this link; that the Secret Chiefs had authorized him to continue the work of the Order, as its sole head. There is, however, no evidence that he was here a witness of truth, because no new knowledge of any particular importance came to the Order; such as did appear proved to be no more than Mathers could have acquired by normal means from quite accessible sources, such as the British Museum. These circumstances, and a great deal of petty intrigue, led to serious dissatisfaction among the members of the Order. Frl. Sprengel's judgment, that group-working in an Order of this sort is possible, was shown in this case to be wrong. In 1900, the Order in its existing form was destroyed.

The point of these data is simply to show that, at that time, the main preoccupation of all the serious members of the Order was to get in touch with the Secret Chiefs themselves. In 1904 success was attained by one of the youngest members, Frater Perdurabo. The very fullest details of this occurrence are given in *The Equinox of the Gods*.¹

It is not here useful to discuss the evidence which goes to establish the truth of this claim. But it is to be observed that it is internal evidence. It exists in the manuscript itself. It would make no difference if the statement of any of the persons concerned turned out to be false.

4. *The Nature of the Evidence.*

These historical digressions have been essential to the understanding of the conditions of this enquiry. It is now proper to con-

¹ Consult especially pp. 61 to 119. The message of the Secret Chiefs is given in the *Book of the Law*, which has been published privately for initiates, and publicly in *The Equinox*, Vol. 1, No. 7 and No. 10; also, with full details, in *The Equinox of the Gods*, pp. 13 to 38. In a pocket at the end of that volume is a photolithographic reproduction of the manuscript. There is also a cheap pocket edition of the text of the Book by itself. There are also American Editions of the text.

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sider the peculiar numbering of the Trumps. It appears natural to a mathematician to begin the series of natural numbers with Zero; but it is very disturbing to the non-mathematically trained mind. In the traditional essays and books on the Tarot, the card numbered "O" was supposed to lie between the cards XX and XXI. The secret of the initiated interpretation, which makes the whole meaning of the Trumps luminous, is simply to put this card marked "O" in its natural place, where any mathematician *would* have put it, in front of the number One. But there is still one peculiarity, one disturbance in the natural sequence. This is that the cards VIII and XI have to be counterchanged, in order to preserve the attribution. For the card XI is called "Strength"; on it appears a Lion, and it quite evidently refers to the zodiacal sign Leo, whereas the card VIII is called "Justice", and represents the conventional symbolic figure, throned, with sword and balances, thus obviously referring to the zodiacal sign of Libra, the Balance.

Frater Perdurabo had made a very profound study of the Tarot since his initiation to the Order on 18th November, 1898; for, three months later, he had attained the grade of Practicus; as such, he became entitled to know the Secret Attribution. He constantly studied this and the accompanying explanatory manuscripts. He checked up on all these attributes of the numbers to the forms of nature, and found nothing incongruous. But when (8th April, 1904 e.v.) he was writing down the *Book of the Law* from the dictation of the messenger of the Secret Chiefs, he seems to have put a mental question, suggested by the words in Chapter I, verse 57: "the law of the Fortress, and the great mystery of the House of God" ("The House of God" is one name of the Tarot Trump numbered XVI) to this effect: "Have I got these attributions right?" For there came an interpolated answer, "All these old letters of my book are aright; but ♄ is not the Star. This also is secret; my prophet shall reveal it to the wise".

This was exceedingly annoying. If Tzaddi was not "the Star", what was? And what was Tzaddi? He tried for years to counterchange this card, "The Star", which is numbered XVII, with some other. He had no success. It was many years later that the solution came to him. Tzaddi is "The Emperor"; and therefore the positions

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of XVII and IV must be counterchanged. This attribution is very satisfactory.

Yes, but it is something a great deal more than satisfactory; it is, to clear thought, the most convincing evidence possible that the *Book of the Law* is a genuine message from the Secret Chiefs.

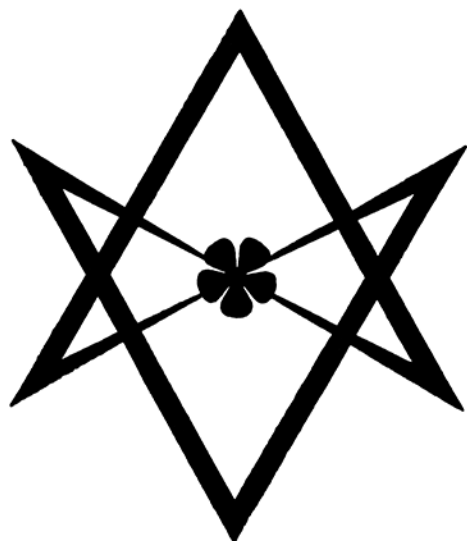
For "The Star" is referred to Aquarius in the Zodiac, and "The Emperor" to Aries. Now Aries and Aquarius are on each side of Pisces, just as Leo and Libra are on each side of Virgo; that is to say, the correction in the *Book of the Law* gives a perfect symmetry in the zodiacal attribution, just as if a loop were formed at one end of the ellipse to correspond exactly with the existing loop at the other end.

These matters sound rather technical; in fact, they are; but the more one studies the Tarot, the more one perceives the admirable symmetry and perfection of the symbolism. Yet, even to the layman, it ought to be evident that balance and fitness are essential to any perfection, and the elucidation of these two tangles in the last 150 years is undoubtedly a very remarkable phenomenon.

SUMMARY OF THE QUESTIONS HITHERTO DISCUSSED

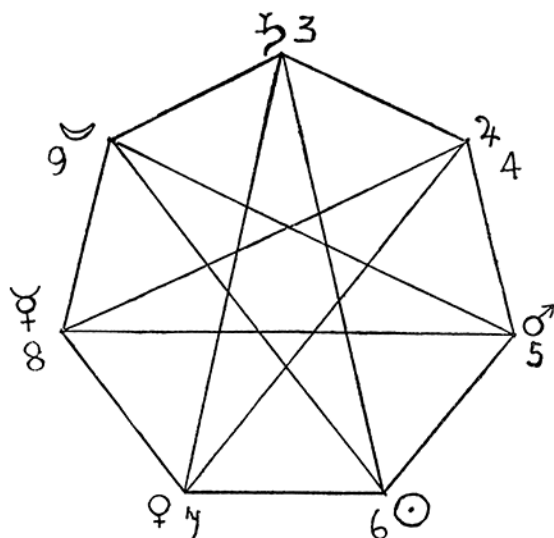
1. The origin of the Tarot is quite irrelevant, even if it were certain. It must stand or fall as a system on its own merits.
2. It is beyond doubt a deliberate attempt to represent, in pictorial form, the doctrines of the Qabalah.
3. The evidence for this is very much like the evidence brought forward by a person doing a crossword puzzle. He knows from the "Across" clues that his word is "SCRUN blank H"; so it is certain, beyond error, that the blank must be a "C".
4. These attributions are in one sense a conventional, symbolic map; such could be invented by some person or persons of great artistic imagination and ingenuity combined with almost unthinkably great scholarship and philosophical clarity.
5. Such persons, however eminent we may suppose them to have been, are not quite capable of making a system so abstruse in its entirety without the assistance of superiors whose mental processes were, or are, pertaining to a higher Dimension.

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Unicursal Hexagram

It has always been declared impossible to draw an Unicursal Hexagram; but this has now been accomplished. The lines, however, are strictly Euclidean; they have no breadth.



The Days of the Week

Read around the Hexagon, the (magical) Order of the Seven Sacred Planets. Read along the Hexagram, the order of the days of the week. (It is believed that this neat discovery is due to the late G. H. Frater D.D.C.F.)

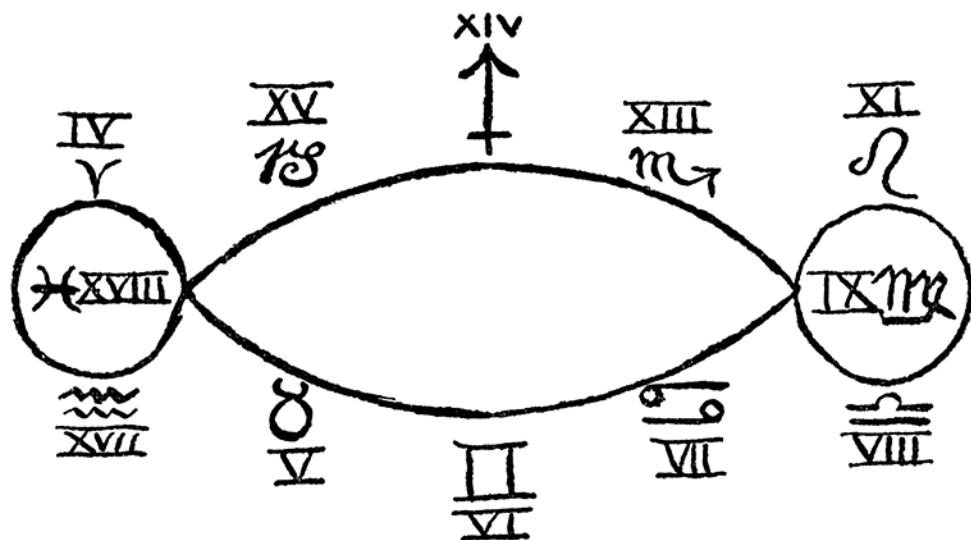


Diagram The Double Loop in the Zodiac

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One might take, by way of an analogy, the game of chess. Chess has developed from very simple beginnings. It was a mimic battle for tired warriors; but the subtleties of the modern game—which have now, thanks to Richard Réti, gone quite beyond calculation into the world of æsthetic creation—were latent in the original design. The originators of the game were “building better than they knew”. It is of course possible to argue that these subtleties have arisen in the course of the development of the game; and indeed it is quite clear, historically, that the early players whose games are on record had no conscious conception of anything beyond a variety of rather crude and elementary stratagems. It is quite possible to argue that the game of chess is merely one of a number of games which has developed while other games died out, because of some accident. One can argue that it is merely by chance that modern chess was latent in the original game.

The theory of inspiration is really very much simpler, and it accounts for the facts without violation of the law of parsimony.

II

THE TAROT AND THE HOLY QABALAH

THE NEXT issue is the Holy Qabalah. This is a very simple subject, and presents no difficulties to the ordinary intelligent mind. There are ten numbers in the decimal system; and there is a genuine reason why there should be ten numbers, and only ten, in a numerical system which is not merely mathematical, but philosophical. It is necessary, at this point, to introduce the “Naples Arrangement”. But first of all, one must understand the pictorial representation of the Universe given by the Holy Qabalah. (See diagram.)

This picture represents the Tree of Life, which is a map of the Universe. One must begin, as a mathematician would, with the idea of Zero, Absolute Zero, which turns out on examination to mean any quantity that one may choose, but not, as the layman

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may at first suppose, Nothing, in the "absence-of-anything" vulgar sense of the word. (See "Berashith", Paris, 1902).

"THE NAPLES ARRANGEMENT"

The Qabalists expanded this idea of Nothing, and got a second kind of Nothing which they called "Ain Soph"—"Without Limit". (This idea seems not unlike that of Space.) They then decided that in order to interpret this mere absence of any means of definition, it was necessary to postulate the Ain Soph Aur—"Limitless Light". By this they seem to have meant very much what the late Victorian men of science meant, or thought that they meant, by the Luminiferous Ether. (The Space-Time Continuum?)

All this is evidently without form and void; these are abstract conditions, not positive ideas. The next step must be the idea of Position. One must formulate this thesis: If there is anything except Nothing, it must exist within this Boundless Light; within this Space; within this inconceivable Nothingness, which cannot exist as Nothingness, but has to be conceived of as a Nothingness composed of the annihilation of two imaginary opposites. Thus appears *The Point*, which has "neither parts nor magnitude, but only position".

But position does not mean anything at all unless there is something else, some other position with which it can be compared. One has to describe it. The only way to do this is to have another Point, and that means that one must invent the number Two, making possible *The Line*.

But this Line does not really mean very much, because there is yet no measure of length. The limit of knowledge at this stage is that there are two things, in order to be able to talk about them at all. But one cannot say that they are near each other, or that they are far apart; one can only say that they are distant. In order to discriminate between them at all, there must be a third thing. We must have another point. One must invent *The Surface*; one must invent *The Triangle*. In doing this, incidentally, appears the whole of Plane Geometry. One can now say, "A is nearer to B than A is to C".

But, so far, there is no *substance* in any of these ideas. In fact

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there are no ideas at all, except the idea of Distance and perhaps the idea of Between-ness, and of Angular Measurement; so that Plane Geometry, which now exists in theory, is after all completely inchoate and incoherent. There has been no approach at all to the conception of a really existing thing. No more has been done than to make definitions, all in a purely ideal and imaginary world.

Now then comes *The Abyss*. One cannot go any further into the ideal. The next step must be the Actual—at least, an approach to the Actual. There are three points, but there is no idea of where any one of them is. A fourth point is essential, and this formulates the idea of matter.

The Point, the Line, the Plane. The fourth point, unless it should happen to lie in the plane, gives *The Solid*. If one wants to know the position of any point, one must define it by the use of three co-ordinate axes. It is so many feet from the North wall, and so many feet from the East wall, and so many feet from the floor.

Thus there has been developed from Nothingness a Something which can be said to exist. One has arrived at the idea of *Matter*. But this existence is exceedingly tenuous, for the only property of any given point is its position in relation to certain other points; no change is possible; nothing can happen. One is therefore compelled, in the analysis of known Reality, to postulate a fifth positive idea, which is that of *Motion*.

This implies the idea of *Time*, for only through Motion, and in Time, can any event happen. Without this change and sequence, nothing can be the object of sense. (It is to be noticed that this No. 5 is the number of the letter Hé in the Hebrew alphabet. This is the letter traditionally consecrated to the Great Mother. It is the womb in which the Great Father, who is represented by the letter Yod, which is pictorially the representation of an ultimate Point, moves and begets active existence).

There is now possible a concrete idea of the Point; and, at last, it is a point which can be self-conscious, because it can have a Past, Present and Future. It is able to define itself in terms of the previous ideas. Here is the number Six, the centre of the system: self-conscious, capable of experience.

At this stage it is convenient to turn away for a moment from

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the strictly Qabalistic symbolism. The doctrine of the next three numbers (to some minds at least) is not very clearly expressed. One must look to the Vedanta system for a more lucid interpretation of the numbers 7, 8 and 9, although they correspond very closely with the Qabalistic ideas. In the Hindu analysis of existence the Rishis (Sages) postulate three qualities: Sat, the Essence of Being itself; Chit, Thought, or Intellection; and Ananda (usually translated Bliss), the pleasure experienced by Being in the course of events. This ecstasy is evidently the exciting cause of the mobility of pure existence. It explains the assumption of imperfection on the part of Perfection. The Absolute would be Nothing, would remain in the condition of Nothingness; therefore, in order to be conscious of its possibilities and to enjoy them, it must explore these possibilities. One may here insert a parallel statement of this doctrine from the document called *The Book of the Great Auk* to enable the student to consider the position from the standpoint of two different minds.

"All elements must at one time have been separate.—That would be the case with great heat.—Now, when the atoms get to the Sun, we get that immense, extreme heat, and all the elements are themselves again. Imagine that each atom of each element possesses the memory of all his adventures in combination. By the way, that atom, fortified with memory, would not be the same atom; yet it is, because it has gained nothing from anywhere except this memory. Therefore, by the lapse of time and by virtue of memory, a thing could become something more than itself; thus, a real development is possible. One can then see a reason for any element deciding to go through this series of incarnations, because so, and only so, can he go; and he suffers the lapse of memory which he has during these incarnations, because he knows he will come through unchanged.

"Therefore you can have an infinite number of gods, individual and equal though diverse, each one supreme and utterly indestructible. This is also the only explanation of how a Being could create a world in which War, Evil, etc., exist. Evil is only an appearance, because (like "Good") it cannot affect the substance itself, but only multiply its combinations. This is something the same as Mystic Monotheism; but the objection to that theory is that God has to

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create things which are all parts of Himself, so that their interplay is false. If we presuppose many elements, their interplay is natural."

These ideas of Being, Thought and Bliss constitute the minimum possible qualities which a Point must possess if it is to have a real sensible experience of itself. These correspond to the numbers 9, 8 and 7. The first idea of reality, as known by the mind, is therefore to conceive of the Point as built up of these previous nine successive developments from Zero. Here then at last is the number Ten.

In other words, to describe Reality in the form of Knowledge, one must postulate these ten successive ideas. In the Qabalah, they are called "Sephiroth", which means "Numbers". As will be seen later, each number has a significance of its own; each corresponds with all phenomena in such a way that their arrangement in the Tree of Life, as shown in the diagrams (pp. 266, 268, 270), is a map of the Universe. These ten numbers are represented in the Tarot by the forty small cards.

THE TAROT AND THE FORMULA OF TETRAGRAMMATON

What, then, are the Court Cards? This question involves another aspect of the system of development. What was the first mental process? Obligated to describe Nothing, the only way to do so without destroying its integrity was to represent it as the union of a Plus Something with an equivalent Minus Something. One may call these two ideas, the Active and Passive, the Father and Mother. But although the Father and Mother can make a perfect union, thereby returning to Zero, which is a retrogression, they can also go forward into Matter, so that their union produces a Son and a Daughter. The idea works out in practice as a method of describing how the union of any two things produces a third thing which is neither of them.

The simplest illustration is in Chemistry. If we take hydrogen gas and chlorine gas, and pass an electric spark through them, an explosion takes place, and hydrochloric acid is produced. Here we have a positive substance, which may be called the Son of the marriage of these elements, and is an advance into Matter. But also, in

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the ecstasy of the union, Light and Heat are disengaged; these phenomena are not material in the same sense as the hydrochloric acid is material; this product of the union is therefore of a spiritual nature, and corresponds to the Daughter.

In the language of the alchemists, these phenomena were classified for convenience under the figure of four "elements". Fire, the purest and most active, corresponds to the Father; Water, still pure but passive, is the Mother; their union results in an element partaking of both natures, yet distinct from either, and this they called "Air".

One must constantly remember that the terms used by ancient and mediæval philosophers do not mean at all what they mean nowadays. "Water" does not mean to them the chemical compound H_2O ; it is an intensely abstract idea, and exists everywhere. The ductability of iron is a watery quality.¹ The word "element" does not mean a chemical element; it means a set of ideas; it summarises certain qualities or properties.

It seems hardly possible to define these terms in such a way as to make their meaning clear to the student. He must discover for himself by constant practice what they mean to him. It does not even follow that he will arrive at the same ideas. This will not mean that one mind is right and the other wrong, because each one of us has his own universe all to himself, and it is not the same as anybody else's universe. The moon that A. sees is not the moon that B., standing by him, sees. In this case, the difference is so infinitesimal that it does not exist in practice; yet there is a difference. But if A. and B. look at a picture in a gallery, it is very much not the same picture to both, because A's mind has been trained to observe it by his experience of thousands of other pictures; B. has probably seen an entirely different set of pictures. Their experience will coincide only in the matter of a few well-known pictures. Besides this, their minds are essentially different in many other ways. So, if A. dislikes Van Gogh, B. pities him; if C. admires Bougereau, D. shrugs his shoulders. There is no right or wrong about any matter whatsoever.

¹ Its magnetic virtue (similarly) is fiery, its conductivity airy, and its weight and hardness earthy. Yet, weight is but a function of the curvature of the "space-time continuum": "Earth is the Throne of Spirit."

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This is true, even in matters of the strictest science. The scientific description of an object is universally true; and yet it is not completely true for any single observer.

The phenomenon called the Daughter is ambiguous. It has been explained above as the spiritual ingredient in the result of the marriage of the Father and the Mother; but this is only one interpretation.

THE TAROT AND THE ELEMENTS

The Ancients conceived of Fire, Water and Air as pure elements. They were connected with the three qualities of Being, Knowledge and Bliss, previously mentioned. They also correspond with what the Hindus called the Three Gunas—Sattvas, Rajas and Tamas, which may be translated roughly as "Calm", "Activity", and "Slothful Darkness". The alchemists had three similar principles of energy, of which all existing phenomena are composed: Sulphur, Mercury and Salt. This Sulphur is Activity, Energy, Desire; Mercury is Fluidity, Intelligence, the power of Transmission; Salt is the vehicle of these two forms of energy, but itself possesses qualities which react on them.

The student must keep in his mind all these tripartite classifications. In some cases, one set will be more useful than others. For the moment, concentrate on the Fire, Water, Air series. These elements are represented in the Hebrew alphabet by the letters Shin, Mem and Aleph. The Qabalists call them the Three Mother Letters. In this particular group, the three elements concerned are completely spiritual forms of pure energy; they can only manifest in sensible experience by impinging upon the senses, crystallising out in a fourth element which they call "Earth", represented by the last letter of the alphabet, Tau. This, then, is another quite different interpretation of the idea of the Daughter, which is here considered as a pendant to the Triangle. It is the number Ten suspended from the 7, 8, 9 in the diagram.

These two interpretations must be kept in mind simultaneously. The Qabalists, devising the Tarot, then proceeded to make pictures of these extremely abstract ideas of Father, Mother, Son and Daughter, and they called them King, Queen, Prince and Princess. It is confusing, but they were also called Knight, Queen, King and

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Princess. Sometimes, too, the Prince and Princess are called "Emperor" and "Empress".

The reason for this confusion is connected with the doctrine of the Fool of the Tarot, the legendary Wanderer, who wins the King's daughter, a legend which is connected with the old and exceedingly wise plan of choosing the successor to a king by his ability to win the Princess from all competitors. (Frazer's *Golden Bough* is the authority on this subject.)

It has been thought better, for the present pack, to adopt the terms "Knight", "Queen", "Prince" and "Princess", to represent the series Father, Mother, Son, Daughter, because the doctrine involved, which is extraordinarily complex and difficult, demands it. The Father is "Knight" because he is represented as riding on a horse. It may make it more clear to describe the two main systems, the Hebrew and the Pagan, as if they were (and had always been) concrete and separate.

The Hebrew system is straightforward and irreversible; it postulates Father and Mother from whose union issue Son and Daughter. There an end. It is only later philosophical speculation to derive the Father-Mother Dyad from a Unity manifest, and later still to seek the source of that Unity in Nothing. This is a concrete and limited scheme, crude, with its causeless Beginning and its sterile End.

The Pagan system is circular, self-generated, self-nourished, self-renewed. It is a wheel on whose rim are Father-Mother-Son-Daughter; they move about the motionless axis of Zero; they unite at will; they transform one into another; there is neither Beginning nor End to the Orbit; none is higher or lower than another. The Equation "Naught=Many=Two=One=All=Naught" is implicit in every mode of the being of the System.

Difficult as this is, at least one very desirable result has been attained: to explain why the Tarot has four Court cards, not three. It also explains why there are four suits. The four suits are named as follows: "Wands", attributed to Fire; "Cups", to Water; "Swords", to Air; and "Disks" ("Coins", or "Pantacles"), to Earth. The student will notice this interplay and counterchange of the number 4. It is also important for him to notice that even in the tenfold arrangement,

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the number 4 takes its part. The Tree of Life can be divided into four planes: the number 1 corresponds to Fire; numbers 2 and 3, to Water; numbers 4 to 9, to Air; and the number 10 to Earth. This division corresponds to the analysis of Man. The number 1 is his spiritual essence, without quality or quantity; the numbers 2 and 3 represent his creative and transmissive powers, his virility and his intelligence; the numbers 4 to 9 describe his mental and moral qualities as concentrated in his human personality; the number 6, so to speak, is a concrete elaboration of the number 1; and the number 10 corresponds to Earth, which is the physical vehicle of the previous nine numbers. The names of these parts of the soul are: 1, Jechidah; 2 and 3, Chiah and Neschamah; 4 to 9, Ruach; and lastly 10, Nephesh.

These four planes correspond once more to the so-called "Four Worlds", to understand the nature of which one should refer, with all due reservations, to the Platonic system. The number 1 is Atziluth, the Archetypal World; but the number 2, as being the dynamic aspect of the number 1, is the Practical attribution. The number 3 is Briah, the Creative World in which the Will of the Father takes shape through the Conception of the Mother, just as the spermatozoon, by fertilizing the ovum, makes possible the production of an image of its parents. The numbers 4 to 9 include Yetzirah, the Formative World, in which an intellectual image, an appreciable form of the idea, is produced; and this mental image becomes real and sensible in the number 10, Assiah, the Material World.

It is by going through all these confusing (and sometimes seemingly contradictory) attributions, with unwearying patience and persistent energy, that one comes at the end to a lucid understanding, to an understanding which is infinitely clearer than any intellectual interpretation could possibly be. This is a fundamental exercise in the way to initiation. If one were a shallow rationalist, it would be quite easy to pick holes in all these attributions and semi-philosophical hypotheses, or near-hypotheses; but it is also quite simple to prove by mathematics that it is impossible to hit a golf ball.

Hitherto, the main theme of this essay has been the Tree of Life, in its essence the Sephiroth. It is now proper to consider the relations of the Sephiroth with each other. (See diagram, p. 268.) It

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will be noticed that twenty-two lines are employed to complete the structure of the Tree of Life. It will be explained in due course how it is that these correspond to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It will be remarked that in some respects the way in which these are joined up appears arbitrary. Notably, there is an equilateral triangle, which one would think would be a natural basis for the operations of Philosophy, consisting of the numbers 1, 4 and 5. But there are no lines joining 1 and 4, or 1 and 5. This is not an accident. Nowhere in the figure is there an erect equilateral triangle, although there are three equilateral triangles with the apex downwards. This is because of the original formula "Father, Mother, Son", which is three times repeated in a descending scale of simplicity and spirituality. The number 1 is above these triangles, because it is an integration of Zero and depends from the triple veil of the Negative.

Now the Sephiroth, which are emanations of the number 1, as already shown, are things-in-themselves, in almost the Kantian sense. The lines joining them are Forces of Nature, of a much less complete type; they are less abstruse, less abstract.

THE TWENTY-TWO KEYS, ATU, OR TRUMPS OF THE TAROT

Here now is an excellent example of the all-pervading doctrine of Equilibrium. The equation always reads $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$. If it does not equal 0, it is not an equation. And so, whenever any symbol loses importance in one place in the Qabalah, it gains in another. The Court cards and small cards form the skeletal structure of the Tarot in its principal function as a map of the Universe. But, for the special significance of the pack as a Key to magical formulæ, the twenty-two trumps acquire a peculiar importance.

To what symbols are they attributed? They cannot be related identically with any of the essential ideas, because that place is taken by the cards from 1 to 10. They cannot represent primarily the Father, Mother, Son, Daughter complex in its fulness, because the Court cards have already taken that position. They are attributed as follows: the three Mother letters, Shin, Mem and Aleph, represent the three active elements; the seven so-called double letters, Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Pé, Resh and Tau, represent the seven sacred

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planets. The remaining twelve letters Hé, Vau, Zain, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samekh, A'ain, Tzaddi and Qoph represent the Signs of the Zodiac.

There is a slight clotting or overlapping in this arrangement. The letter Shin has to do duty for both Fire and Spirit, in very much the same way as the number 2 partakes of the nature of the number 1; and the letter Tau represents both Saturn and the element of Earth. In these difficulties there is a doctrine.

But one cannot dismiss these twenty-two letters thus casually. The stone that the builders rejected becomes the head of the corner. These twenty-two cards acquire a personality of their own: a very curious personality. It would be quite wrong to say that they represent a complete universe. They seem to represent certain rather curious phases of the universe. They do not seem essential factors in the structure of the universe. They change from time to time in their relation to current events. A glance at the list of their titles seems to show no longer the strictly philosophical and scientific spirit of austere classification that is found in the other cards. There leaps at us the language of the Artist. These names are, the Fool, the Juggler, the High Priestess, the Empress, the Emperor, the Hierophant, the Lovers, the Chariot, Lust, the Wheel of Fortune, Adjustment, the Hanged Man, Death, Art, the Devil, the House of God, the Star, the Moon, the Sun, the Aeon, the Universe. Obviously these are not plain, straightforward symbolic representations of the signs, elements and planets concerned. They are rather hieroglyphs of peculiar mysteries connected with each. One may begin to suspect that the Tarot is not a mere straightforward representation of the Universe in the impersonal way of the system of the Yi King. The Tarot is beginning to look like Propaganda. It is as if the Secret Chiefs of the Great Order, which is the guardian of the destinies of the human race, had wished to put forward certain particular aspects of the Universe; to establish certain especial doctrines; to declare certain modes of working, proper to the existing political situations. They differ; somewhat as a literary composition differs from a dictionary.

It has been very unfortunate, but quite unavoidable, to be

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obliged to go so far into argument, and that this argument has involved so many digressions as a preliminary to a straightforward description of the pack. It may make it simpler to proceed to summarize the above statements.

Here is a simple statement of the plan of the Tree of Life. The numbers, or Things-in-Themselves, are ten, successive emanations from the triple veil of the Negative. The small cards numbered 1 to 10 correspond to the Sephiroth. These cards are shown in fourfold form, because they are not the pure abstract numbers, but particular symbols of those numbers in the universe of manifestation, which is, for convenience, classified under the figure of four elements.

The Court cards represent the elements themselves, each element divided into four sub-elements. For convenience, here follows a list of these cards:

Knight of Wands,	Fire of Fire
Queen of Wands,	Water of Fire
Prince of Wands,	Air of Fire
Princess of Wands,	Earth of Fire
Knight of Cups,	Fire of Water
Queen of Cups,	Water of Water
Prince of Cups,	Air of Water
Princess of Cups,	Earth of Water
Knight of Swords,	Fire of Air
Queen of Swords,	Water of Air
Prince of Swords,	Air of Air
Princess of Swords,	Earth of Air
Knight of Disks,	Fire of Earth
Queen of Disks,	Water of Earth
Prince of Disks,	Air of Earth
Princess of Disks,	Earth of Earth

The Tarot trumps are twenty-two in number; they represent the elements between the Sephiroth or Things-in-Themselves, so that their position on the Tree of Life is significant. Here are one or two examples. The card called "The Lovers", whose secret title is "The Children of the Voice, the Oracle of the Mighty Gods", leads from

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the number 3 to the number 6. The number 6 is the human personality of a man; the number 3 is his spiritual intuition. Therefore, it is natural and significant that the influence of the 3 upon the 6 is that of the intuitional or inspirational voice. It is the illumination of the mind and the heart by the Great Mother.

Consider again the card joining the number 1 to the number 6. This card is called "The High Priestess", and is attributed to the Moon. The card represents the Heavenly Isis. It is a symbol of complete spiritual purity; it is initiation in its most secret and intimate form, descending upon the human consciousness from the ultimate divine consciousness. Looked at from below, it is the pure and unwavering aspiration of the man to the Godhead, his source. It will be proper to enter more fully into these matters when dealing separately with the cards in turn.

From the foregoing it will be clear that the Tarot illustrates, first of all, the Tree of Life in its universal aspect, and secondly, the particular comment illustrating that phase of the Tree of Life which is of peculiar interest to those persons charged with the guardianship of the human race at the particular moment of the production of any given authorised pack. It is therefore proper for those guardians to modify the aspect of the pack when it seems to them good to do so. The traditional pack has itself been subjected to numerous modifications, adopted for convenience. For instance: the Emperor and the Empress, in the mediæval packs, were referred quite definitely to the Holy Roman Emperor and his Consort. The card originally called "The Hierophant", representing Osiris (as is shown by the shape of the tiara) became, in the Renaissance period, the Pope. The High Priestess came to be called "Pope Joan", representing a certain symbolic legend which circulated among initiates, and became vulgarised in the fable of a Female Pope. More important still, "The Angel", or "The Last Judgment", represented the destruction of the world by fire. Its hieroglyph is, in a way, prophetic, for when the world *was* destroyed by fire on 21st March, 1904,¹ one's attention was inevitably called to the similarity of this card to the Stélé of Revealing. This being the beginning of the New Aeon, it has seemed

¹ See *The Equinox of the Gods*, loc. cit.

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more fitting to show the beginning of the Aeon; for all that is known about the next Aeon, due in 2,000 years' time, is that its symbol is the double-wanded one.² But the new Aeon has produced such fantastic changes in the settled order of things that it would be evidently absurd to attempt to carry on the outworn traditions, "the rituals of the old time are black." It has consequently been the endeavour of the present Scribe to preserve those essential features of the Tarot which are independent of the periodic changes of Aeon, while bringing up to date those dogmatic and artistic features of the Tarot which have become unintelligible. The art of progress is to keep intact the Eternal; yet to adopt an advance-guard, perhaps in some cases almost revolutionary, position in respect of such accidents as are subject to the empire of Time.

III

THE TAROT AND THE UNIVERSE

THE TAROT is a Pictorial representation of the Forces of Nature as conceived by the Ancients according to a conventional symbolism.

The Sun is a star. Around him revolve a number of bodies called Planets, including the Moon, a satellite of the Earth.

These bodies revolve in one direction only. The Solar system is not a sphere, but a wheel. The planets do not remain in exact alignment, but swing to a certain (comparatively small) extent from one side of the true plane to the other. Their orbits are elliptical.

The Ancients imagined this wheel very much more clearly than modern minds are wont to do. They paid particular attention to the imaginary rim. Within the limits of this rim, they conceived that the Fixed Stars beyond were in a special way connected with the apparent motion of the Sun. This rim or belt of the wheel they called the Zodiac. The constellations outside this belt did not seem to

² See AL III, 34. The reference is to Maat, Themis, Lady of the Balance.

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them to matter so much to mankind, because they were not in the direct line of the great whirling force of the wheel. (T.A.R.O. = R.O.T.A. = wheel.)

THEORIES OF THE ANCIENTS

1. In old times, it was supposed that the Earth was the centre of the Universe. The Heavens being above the Earth—they did not realise them as being equally below it—they were accounted as of the Divine Nature. And as they recognised imperfections and irregularity in mundane affairs, they thought that the movements of the Heavenly Bodies, which they observed to be regular, must be perfect.

They then started some *à priori* thinking. Their mathematicians had the idea that a Circle was a *perfect* figure; therefore (they said, with characteristic theological reasoning) all heavenly bodies must move in circles.¹ This religious assumption caused great trouble to the astronomers. As their measurements became more extended and accurate, they found it increasingly difficult to reconcile observation with theory, at least to do so without putting themselves to vast inconvenience in their calculations. So they invented “cycles” and “epicycles” to explain the observed movements.

Ultimately Copernicus was goaded by this annoyance to suggest that it would really be very much more convenient (if only the idea were not so wicked) to imagine that the Sun, and not the Earth, was the centre of the System.

In mathematics there are no fixed facts. Bertrand Russell says that in this subject “nobody knows what he is talking about, and it matters to nobody whether he is right or wrong”.

For example: Begin with the assumption that the Moon is the immovable centre of the Universe. Nobody can contradict it; one simply switches the calculations over to suit. The practical objection to this is that it would not facilitate the work of navigators.

It is important to have this idea in one's mind, because otherwise one fails to grasp the whole spirit of modern Science-Philosophy. It does not aim at Truth; it does not conceive of Truth (in any ordinary sense of the word) as possible; it aims at maximum convenience.

¹ They did not understand that the Circle is only one case of the Ellipse: that in which the foci coincide.

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2. To return to the picture of the Solar System. The Sun is the Hub of the Wheel; the outermost Planet is on its rim; and beyond, but laterally within that rim, are the Twelve Constellations of the Zodiac.

Why twelve?

The first rough division of the circle is into four, according to the observed seasons. This choice may also have been influenced by the division of the Elements into Four—Fire, Air, Water, Earth. (These do not mean the objects now understood by these words, as explained above.)

Perhaps because they thought it necessary to introduce so sacred a number as Three into everything heavenly, or else because the observed constellations happened to be naturally divided into twelve groups, they divided the Zodiac into twelve signs, three to each Season.

The Influence of the Sun upon the Earth was observed to change as He passed through the Signs. So did quite simple things like the measure of time between Sunrise and Sunset.

When one says that the Sun enters the Sign of Aries, one means that if a straight line were drawn from the Earth to the Sun and prolonged to the Stars, that line would pass through the beginning of that Constellation. Suppose, for instance, that one observes the Full Moon on the first day of Spring, one will be able to see, behind her, the stars of the beginning of Libra, the sign opposite to Aries.

It was observed that the Moon took approximately twenty-eight days to pass from Full to Full; and to each day was assigned what was called a Mansion. Her mysterious influence was supposed to change in each Mansion. This theory does not enter directly into the Tarot, but it must be mentioned to help to clear up a certain confusion which is about to complicate the question.

3. Early astronomers calculated that the Sun took 360 days to go round the Zodiac. This was a closely guarded secret of the learned; so they concealed it in the divine name Mithras, which adds up, according to the Greek Convention (M 40—I 10—Th. 9—R 100—A 1—S 200) to 360. Better observation showed 365 days to be more accurate; so they decided to call it "Abraxas" (A 1—B 2—R 100—A 1—X 60—A 1—S 200). When the others found this out they

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put themselves right by altering the spelling of Mithras to Meithras, which adds (like Abraxas) to 365. In this there is still an error of not quite six hours; so that, in the course of centuries, the Calendar kept slipping. It did not assume its present form until the time of Pope Gregory.

The Point of all this, that they divided the Circle of the Zodiac into 360 degrees, is that this is a convenient basis for calculation.

Each angular measure of 10 degrees was called a Decanate. Of these there are thus thirty-six, dividing each Sign of the Zodiac into three sections. It was supposed that the influence of the Sign was very swift and fierce in the first Decan, powerful and balanced in the second, spiritualised and deciduous in the third.

A short digression. One of the most important doctrines of the Ancients was that of the Macrocosm and the Microcosm. Man is himself a little Universe; he is a minute copy of the big Universe. This argument was, of course, worked backwards; so the characteristics above given of the qualities of the Three Decans in the sign were probably due to an analogy with the course of a man's life.

4. The above remarks constitute a fairly complete idea of the arbitrary, or mostly arbitrary, presentation of the Cosmos by the Ancients. First of all, the division into Four Elements. These Elements pervade everything. They would argue something like this about the Sun. They would say that he was principally Fire, for obvious reasons; but he would have also in him the Airy quality of Mobility. The Watery part would be shown by his power to create Images; and the Earthy part, his immense Stability.

Similarly, of a Serpent, they would call his power of Death fiery; his Swiftess, airy; his undulatory motion, Watery; and his habit of life, Earthy.

These descriptions are obviously quite inadequate; they have to be filled up by attributing planetary qualities and zodiacal qualities to all objects. Thus, the Bull in the Zodiac is an Earthy sign, and this is the central sign of the three through which the Sun passes during Spring. But the bovine nature is also gentle; wherefore they said that Venus rules the Sign of Taurus. The Cow, moreover, is the principal milk-giving animal, so they made her the Great Mother-

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Goddess, thus identifying her with the Moon, the Mother of Heaven as the Sun is the Father. They represented this idea by saying that the Moon is "exalted" in Taurus—that is, that she exerts the most beneficent aspect of her influence when she is in that sign.

5. It is confusing at first, but most instructive and illuminating when the principle is thoroughly assimilated, to note how all these Elements subdivide and coalesce. One can only reach the comprehension of any one of these Symbols by making a composite picture of it, one composed of all the others in varying proportion. Thus each of the planets gives a certain portion of its influence to any object. This habit of thought leads to an understanding of the Unity of Nature (with its proper and spiritual exaltation) which could hardly be attained in any other way; it produces an internal harmony which ends in an acceptance of Life and of Nature.

It is now almost time to analyse and define the traditional characteristics of these symbols; but perhaps it would be better, first of all, to build on a sure foundation by consideration of the number Two, which hitherto has not been taken into account.

There are only two operations possible in the Universe, Analysis and Synthesis. To divide, and to unite. *Solve et coagula*: said the Alchemists.

If anything is to be changed, either one must divide one object into two parts, or add another unit to it. This principle lies at the basis of all scientific thought and work.

The first thought of the man of science is Classification, Measurement. He says, "This oak-leaf is like that oak-leaf; this oak-leaf is unlike this beech-leaf". Until one has grasped this fact, one has not begun to understand Scientific Method.

The Ancients were fully cognisant of this idea. The Chinese, in particular, based their whole philosophy on this primary division of the original Nothing. One must begin with Nothing; otherwise the question would arise, Whence came this postulated Something? So they wrote the equation—Zero equals *plus one* plus *minus one* $0 = (+1) + (-1)$.

"Plus One" they called the Yang, or Male Principle; "Minus One", the Yin or Female Principle. These then combine in varying

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proportion, giving the idea of Heaven and Earth in perfect balance, the Sun and the Moon in imperfect balance, and the Four Elements in unbalanced form. (See diagram: The Chinese Cosmos.)

This Chinese arrangement is thus tenfold, and has been shown to be admirably equivalent to the System which has been here examined.

6. The ancient scheme of the Elements, Planets and Zodiacal Signs, was summarised by the Qabalists in their Tree of Life.

This identity between the two systems was masked, until quite recently¹, by the fact that the Chinese continued with their doubling-up system, and so turned their eight trigrams into sixty-four hexagrams, while the scholars of Western Asia joined together their ten numbers on the Tree of Life by twenty-two Paths.

The Chinese have thus sixty-four principal symbols as against the thirty-two of the Tree; but the Qabalists have a concatenation of symbols which is capable of very subtle interpretation and handling. It is also better fitted to describe the internal relations of its Elements. Moreover, each can be multiplied or subdivided at will, as convenience may require.

THE TREE OF LIFE

1. This figure must be studied very carefully, for it is the basis of the whole system on which the Tarot is based. It is quite impossible to give a complete explanation of this figure, because (for one thing) it is quite universal. Therefore it cannot mean the same to any one person as to any other. A's universe is not B's universe. If A and B are sitting opposite each other at table, A sees the right side of the lobster, and B the left. If they stand side by side and look at a star, the angle is different; although this difference is infinitesimal, it exists. But the Tarot is the same for all in the same way in which any scientific fact or formula is the same for all. It is most important to remember that the facts of science, though universally true in the abstract, are still not precisely true for any one observer, because even if the observation of any common object is made by two people

¹ The present author discovered this fact during his study—still incomplete—of the Yi King.

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of identical sensory reactions from the same spot, it cannot be done directly at the same time; and even the smallest fraction of a second is sufficient to move both object and observer in space.

This fact is to be emphasised, because one must not take the Tree of Life as a dead fixed formula. It is in a sense an eternal pattern of the Universe, just because it is infinitely elastic; and it is to be used as an instrument in one's researches into Nature and her forces. It is not to be made an excuse for Dogmatism. The Tarot should be learnt as early in life as possible; a fulcrum for memory and a schema for mind. It should be studied constantly, a daily exercise; for it is universally elastic, and grows in proportion to the use intelligently made of it. Thus it becomes a most ingenious and excellent method of appreciating the whole of Existence.

2. It seems probable that the Qabalists who invented the Tree of Life were inspired by Pythagoras, or that both he and they derived their knowledge from a common source in higher antiquity. In any case, both schools agree upon one fundamental postulate, which is as follows: Ultimate Reality is best described by Numbers and their interplay. It is interesting to note that modern Mathematical Physics has been finally driven to some similar assumption. Further, the attempt to describe Reality by a single definite term has been abandoned. Modern thought conceives Reality under the image of a ring of ten ideas, such as Potential, Matter, and so on. Each term has no meaning in itself; it can only be understood in terms of the others. This is exactly the conclusion which appears earlier in this essay, with regard to the way in which the planets, elements and signs were all dependent on each other, and composed of each other.

But the further attempt to reach Reality led the Qabalists to sum up the qualities of these rather vague and literary ideas by referring them all to the numbers of the decimal scale.

Numbers, then, are the nearest approach to Reality which is shown in this system. The number 4, for instance, is not so specially the result of adding one to three, or squaring two, or halving eight. It is a thing in itself, with all sorts of moral, sensible, and intellectual qualities. It symbolises such ideas as Law, Restraint, Power, Protection and Stability.

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In the Qabalistic system the original idea is Zero,¹ which appears under three forms, rather as (in Chinese philosophy) the Tao becomes manifested little by little through the Teh, or as (in the best of the Hindu systems) the god of Destruction and Annihilation, Shiva, becomes manifested through the Infinite Energy, Sakti. The system begins therefore with Ain—Nothing, Ain Soph—Without Limit, and Ain Soph Aur—the Limitless Light.

One may now proceed to imagine any point in this "light", to select it for observation; the fact of doing so makes it Positive. This gives the number 1, which is called Kether, the Crown. The other numbers arise by reason of the necessity of thought, as explained in the following table:

THE NAPLES ARRANGEMENT²

- 61=0.
 61+146=0 as Undefined (Space).
 61+146+207=0 as basis of Possible Vibration.
1. The Point: Positive yet indefinable,
 2. " " Distinguishable from 1 other.
 3. " " Defined by relation to 2 others.
 The Abyss—between Ideal and Actual.
 4. The Point: Defined by 3 co-ordinates: Matter.
 5. Motion (Time)—Hé, the Womb; for only through Motion and
 in Time can events occur.
 6. The Point: now self-conscious, because able to define itself in
 terms of above.
 7. The Point's Idea of Bliss (Ananda).
 8. " " " Thought (Chit).
 9. " " " Being (Sat).
 10. " " " Itself fulfilled in its complement, as deter-
 mined by 7, 8 and 9.

It will be seen from the above that by means of these ten positive

¹ It is intentional to repeat here, in other language, the ideas explained already in this essay.

² So called because first worked out in that city.

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numbers, but not by any lesser number, one can arrive at a positive description of any given object or idea.

So far, the argument has been erected on a rigid, mathematical basis, with only the slightest tincture of philosophy to give it form. But it is at this point that, for the purpose of describing the objects of Thought and Sense, one is compelled to join hands with the astrologers. The problem now is: to assign to Pure Number the moral ideas which go with it. This is partly a matter of experience, partly of tradition derived from older experience. It would be unwise to discard tradition with complete contempt, because all thinking is bound by the laws of the mind itself, and Mind has been formed through thousands of years of evolution in each man by the thoughts of his ancestors. The cells of all living brains are just as much the children of the great thinkers of the past as the development of the organs and limbs.

There are very few people to-day who have heard of Plato and Aristotle. Not one in a thousand, perhaps ten thousand, of those few have ever read either of them, even in translations. But there are also very few people whose thinking, such as it is, is not conditioned by the ideas of those two men.

In the Tree of Life, therefore, is found the first attempt to connect the Ideal with the Actual. The Qabalists say, for example, that the number 7 contains the idea of Venus, and the number 8 that of Mercury, that the connecting path between 1 and 6 refers to the Moon, and that between 3 and 6 to the Sign of Gemini.

Then what is the true meaning, in the category of the Real, of these planets and signs? Here again one is faced with the impossibility of exact definition, because the possibilities of research are infinite; also, at any moment in any research, the one idea merges into the other and clouds the exact definition of the images. But this, of course, is the objective. These are all blind steps on the way to the Great Light: when the Universe is perceived as one, yet with all its parts, each necessary and each distinct.

The beginning of this work is, however, easy enough. One requires no more than elementary classical knowledge. Roughly speaking, for a start, the natures of the planets are described by those of the gods after whom the actual bodies in heaven were named,

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according to the old astrological ideas of their influence on the affairs of men. The same is true, to a less extent, of the Signs of the Zodiac. There is not so much information available about their natures; but it is helpful to note which planet rules which sign, and in which sign which planets are exalted. The individual Fixed Stars do not enter into the system of the Tarot.

THE TAROT AND THE TREE OF LIFE

The Tarot, while based on these theoretical attributions, was designed as a practical instrument for Qabalistic calculations and for divination. In it is little place for abstract ideas. The subject of the book—the Tarot is called *The Book of Thoth or Tahuti*—is the influence of the Ten Numbers and the Twenty-two Letters on man, and his best methods of manipulating their forces. There is therefore no mention of the Three Veils of the Negative, which was discussed in the description of the Tree of Life. The description begins with the “small cards”, numbered 1 to 10. These are divided into four suits according to the four elements.

Thus the Ace of Wands is called the Root of the Forces of Fire. It pertains to Kether, and purports to represent the first positive manifestation of the idea of Fire.

The 2 pertains to Chokmah. But here is already no more the simplicity of the idea of fire. An Idea in action or in manifestation is no more the pure Idea.

This card is attributed to the first Decan of the fiery sign Aries, which is ruled by Mars; this, then, gives the idea of a violent and aggressive force. The card is therefore called the Lord of Dominion. This progressive degradation of the idea of Fire goes on increasing through the suit. Each successive card becomes less ideal and more actual, increasingly so until, with the number 6 which corresponds to the Sun, the centre of the whole system, the fiery idea resurges, balanced; hence pure, although complex. Beyond this, the force is beginning to expend itself, or to spiritualise itself, in the cards of the Decan of Sagittarius. But the best fixation of the fiery force is found in the 9, which number is the foundation of the structure of the Tree of Life. Thus the card is called The Lord of Strength. The fire

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has been purified, etherealised and balanced. But in the 10, showing complete materialisation and nimity, the effect of fire is pushed to its extreme limit. Its death is impending, but it reacts against this as best it can by appearing as the Lord of Oppression, formidable on the surface, but with the seeds of decay already sprouting. The above summary can easily be applied by the student to the other suits.

The Court cards are sixteen in number, four to each suit. There is thus a subdivision of each element into its own system. The Knights represent the element of Fire, so that the Knight of Wands represents the fiery part of Fire, the Knight of Cups, the fiery part of Water. Similarly the Princesses or Empresses represent Earth, so that the Empress of Disks (Coins, or Pantacles) represents the earthy part of Earth.

These cards have many manifestations in natural phenomena. Thus, the Knight of Wands has the attribution of Aries, and represents swift violence of onset, the *lightning flash*. But the airy part of Fire is sympathetic with Leo, the steady force of energy, *the Sun*. Lastly, in the watery part of Fire, the harmony is with Sagittarius, which shows the fading, spiritualised reflection or translucence of the image of Fire, and this suggests *the Rainbow*. (See table of the Triplicities of the Zodiac).

THE ATU OF TAHUTI¹

*Or: The Twenty-two Houses of Wisdom,
Or: The Twenty-two Trumps of the Tarot.*

Twenty-two is the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is the number of the Paths of the Sepher Yetzirah. These paths are the paths which join the ten numbers on the figure called the Tree of Life.

Why are there twenty-two of them? Because that is the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and one letter goes to each path.

¹ Atu: House or Key, in Ancient Egyptian. Tahuti: Egyptian God of Wisdom, Magick, Science, also Illusion. In Coptic, Thoth; in Greek, Hermes; in Latin, Mercury. The Hindu and Scandinavian Gods corresponding are debased forms.

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Why should this be so? Why should these paths be arranged on the Tree in the way that the diagram shows? Why should there not be paths connecting the numbers 2 and 5 and the numbers 3 and 4?

One cannot answer any of these questions. Who knows "How A got leave an ox to be, No camel, quoth the Jews, like G". (Browning)? One knows only that this was the conventional arrangement adopted by whoever it was that devised the Tarot.

What is worse, it seems very confusing, very annoying; it shakes one's faith in these great sages. But at least there is no doubt that this is so.

The letters of the Hebrew alphabet are twenty-two. There are three "Mother" Letters for the Elements, seven "Double Letters" for the Planets, and twelve "Single" Letters for the Signs of the Zodiac.

But there are four Elements, not three. Or, including the element of Spirit (an important matter to initiates), there are five.

There are therefore two letters of the alphabet which have to do double duty. The element of Fire is very close kin to the idea of Spirit; so the letter Shin, belonging to Fire, may be taken to mean Spirit as well. There is a special reason why this should be so, although it only applies in later ages, since the introduction of the dogma that Spirit rules the four elements, and the formation of the "Pentagram of Salvation" connected with the Hebrew word IHShVH, Yeheshuah.

With regard to Earth, it was considered adequate to make the letter Tau, belonging to Saturn, correspond also to Earth.

These additions are clear evidence that the Tarot took definite and arbitrary steps to assert the new discovery in Magick some two thousand years ago; for no system is more rigid than a Hebrew system. And the system of the Sepher Yetzirah is the deepest rooted of all the elements of the Hebrew system, the most dogmatic of them all.

The Tarot is justified not by faith, but by works. The departures from the original bone-dry Qabalah have been justified by experience. The point (raised above) about the way in which the paths are selected to join certain numbers and not others, is found to express important doctrines connected with the facts of initiation. It must always be

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borne in mind that the Tarot is not only an atlas for recording facts, but a guide-book showing one how to travel through these countries previously unknown.

Travellers in China are somewhat bewildered at first when they are told that it is 100 li from Yung Chang to Pu Peng, but only 40 li from Pu Peng to Yung Chang. The answer is that the li is a measure of the time of marching, not of miles. The difference of calculation informs one that Pu Peng is a long way up the hill.

It is very much the same with the Tarot. The 6 of Wands is referred to Jupiter in Leo, and called the Lord of Victory. This indicates not only what victory is like, but also the conditions to be fulfilled in order to obtain victory. There is need of the fiery energy of the suit of Wands, the balance of the number 6, the stubborn courage of Leo, and also the influence of Jupiter, the little bit of luck that tips the scale.

These considerations are particularly important in dealing with the Atu, or Trumps. The Planets are already represented in the numbers or Sephiroth of the Tree of Life. But they have also attributions to certain of the Paths.

Some etymologists of a singularly idle disposition have tried to derive the French word "atout" from the ATU meaning House. It may seem simpler to suggest that "atout" is short for "bon à tout", meaning "good for anything", because a Trump will take any card of any suit.

The Atu of Tahuti, who is the Lord of Wisdom, are also called Keys. They are guides to conduct. They give you the map of the Kingdom of Heaven, and also the best way to take it by force. A complete understanding of any magical problem is necessary before it can be solved. Study from outside, and action from outside, are always abortive.

It is of the utmost importance to understand this extremely specialised character of the Trumps.

To say that the Trump numbered III, called The Empress, represents Venus, means something much less and also much more than appears if Venus be studied from a strictly astrological standpoint.

One abandons the contemplation of the whole in order to take

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practical advantage of a part. Just so Tactics differs from Strategy. A great general does not think of war in the abstract, but confines his attention to a minute part of his perhaps vast knowledge of the subject by considering the disposition of his forces at a given place and time, and how best to employ them against his adversary. This is of course true not only of the Trumps, but of all the other cards; and it must be true of any specialised studies. If one goes into a shop and asks for a map of a certain country, one cannot get a complete map, because any such map would necessarily merge into the Universe as it approached completeness, for a country's character is modified by the adjacent countries, and so on for ever. Nor would even any useful map be complete in the most vulgar practical way without leading to confusion. The shopman would want to know whether his customer wanted a geological map, an orographical map, a commercial map, a map showing the distribution of population, or a strategic map; and so on for ever.

The student of the Tarot must not therefore expect to find anything beyond a careful selection of the facts about any given card, a selection made for a quite definite magical purpose.

However, the Tarot does try to resume, in a single pictorial symbol, as many as possible of the useful aspects of the idea. In studying any card, one ought not to neglect any of the attributions, because each class of attribution does modify the form and colour of the card, and its use. This essay will endeavour, in the section describing each card in turn, to include as many of the correspondences as possible.

THE ROMAN NUMBERS OF THE TRUMPS¹

The Trumps are numbered in Roman figures in order to avoid confusion with the Arabic numbers of the Sephiroth. It has puzzled the traditional writers on the Tarot that these numbers should run from O to XXI. They seem to have thought that it would be proper to assume that O was the Fool, because he was a cipher, a good-for-nothing. They made this assumption simply because they did not

¹ Some paragraphs of this section repeat, in slightly different phrases, statements already made in earlier pages. This is intended.

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know the secret doctrine of the Qabalistic Zero. They did not know Elementary Mathematics. They did not know that mathematicians begin the decimal scale with Zero.

To make it quite clear to initiates that they did not understand the meaning of the card called The Fool, they put him down between the cards XX and XXI, for what reason it baffles the human imagination to conceive. They then attributed the card number 1, the Juggler, to the letter Aleph. In this simple yet ingenious manner they got the attribution of every card, except The Universe, XXI, wrong.

Meanwhile, the true attribution was well guarded in the Sanctuary; it only became public when the secret lection issued to members of the Grade of Practicus of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was published as a result of the catastrophe attending the English branch of the Order in 1899 and 1900, e.v., and the reconstruction of the whole Order in March and April, 1904, e.v. By putting the card marked O in its proper place, where any mathematician would have put it, the attributions fall into a natural order which is confirmed by every investigation.

There was, however, one kink in the rope. The card called Adjustment is marked VIII. The card called Lust is marked XI. To maintain the natural sequence, Lust must be attributed to Libra, and Adjustment to Leo.¹ This is evidently wrong, because the card called Adjustment actually shows a woman with sword and scales, while the card called Lust shows a woman and a lion.

It was quite impossible to understand why this reversal should have taken place until the events of March and April, 1904, which are recounted in detail in "The Equinox of the Gods". One need here give only one quotation: "All these old letters of my Book are aright; but ♄ is not the Star". (AL. I. 57.) This was making darkness deeper. It was clear that the attribution of "The Star" to the letter Tzaddi was unsatisfactory; and the question arose, how to find another card which would take its place. An incredible amount of work was done on this; in vain. After nearly twenty years the solution appeared.

The Star represents Nuit, the starry heavens. "I am Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof." (AL. I. 22.) She is represented

¹ The old titles of these cards were respectively "Strength" and "Justice": they are inadequate or misleading.

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with two vases, one pouring water, a symbol of Light, upon herself, the other upon the earth. This is a glyph of the Economy of the Universe. It continually pours forth energy and continually re-absorbs it. It is the realisation of Perpetual Motion, which is never true of any part, but necessarily true of the whole. For, if it were not so, there would be something disappearing into nothing, which is mathematically absurd. The principle of Carnot (the Second Law of Thermodynamics) is only true in *finite* Equations.

The card which must be exchanged for "The Star" is "The Emperor", who bears the number IV, which signifies Power, Authority, Law, and is attributed to the sign Aries. This proves very satisfactory. But it became infinitely more so as soon as it was seen that this substitution cleared up the other mystery about Strength and Justice. For Leo and Libra are, by this exchange, shown as revolved about Virgo, the sixth sign of the Zodiac, which balances the revolution of Aries and Aquarius about Pisces, the twelfth sign. This is a reference to a peculiar secret of the ancients which was very deeply studied by Godfrey Higgins and others of his school. It is useless to go far into the matter here. But the position is made clear enough by the accompanying diagram. It will be seen at a glance that now, for the first time, is a perfect symmetry established in the Tarot.

The justice of the exchange is evident when one considers Etymology. It is natural that the Great Mother should be attributed to Hé, which is her letter in the Tetragrammaton, while the letter Tzaddi is the natural letter of the Emperor in the original phonetic system, as shown in the words Tsar, Czar, Kaiser, Cæsar, Senior, Seigneur, Señor, Signor, Sir.

THE TAROT AND MAGICK

Magick is the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with the Will. In other words, it is Science, Pure and Applied.

This thesis has been worked out at great length by Dr. Sir J. G. Frazer. But in common parlance the word Magic has been used to mean the kind of science which ordinary people do not understand. It is in this restricted sense, for the most part, that the word will be used in this essay.

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The business of Science is to explore Nature. Its first questions are, What is this? How did it come to be? What are its relations with any other object? The knowledge acquired may then be used in Applied Science, which asks: How can we best employ such-and-such a thing or idea for the purpose that, to us, seems fit? An example may make this clear.

The Greeks of old were aware that by rubbing amber (which they called *Electron*) upon silk, the amber acquired the power of attracting to itself light objects such as small pieces of paper. But there they stopped. Their science was hoodwinked by theological and philosophical theories of the *à priori* type. It was well over 2,000 years before this phenomenon was correlated with other electrical phenomena. The idea of Measurement was hardly known to anyone but mathematicians like Archimedes, and astronomers. The foundations of Science, as it is understood to-day, were hardly laid at all 200 years ago. There was an immense amount of knowledge; but it was nearly all qualitative. The classification of phenomena depended chiefly upon poetic analogies. The doctrines of "correspondences" and "signatures" were based upon fanciful resemblances. Cornelius Agrippa wrote of the "antipathy" between a Dolphin and a Whirlpool. If a meretrix sat under an olive tree, it would bear no more fruit. If anything looked like something else, it partook in some mysterious way of its qualities.

This sounds to-day to many people mere superstitious ignorance and nonsense; but it is not altogether so. The old system of classification was sometimes good and sometimes bad, as far as it went. But in no case did it go very far. The natural ingenuity of their natural philosophers did compensate very largely for the weakness of their theory; and it did ultimately lead them (especially through Alchemy, where they were forced by the nature of the work to add real to their ideal observation) to introduce the idea of Measure. Modern Science, intoxicated by the practical success which attended this innovation, has simply shut the door on anything that cannot be measured. The Old Guard refuses to discuss it. But the loss is immense. Obsession with strictly physical qualities has blocked out all real human values.

The science of the Tarot is entirely based upon this older system. The calculations involved are very precise; but they never lose sight

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of the Incommensurable and the Imponderable.

The theory of Animism was always present in the minds of the mediaeval masters. Any natural object possessed not only its material characteristics, but was a manifestation of a more or less tangible idea on which it depended. The Pool was a pool, true; but also there was a nymph whose home it was. In her turn, she was dependent on a superior kind of nymph, who was much less closely attached to any given pool, but more to pools in general; and so on, up to the supreme Lady of Water, who exercised a general supervision over her whole dominion. She, of course, was subject to the General Ruler of all the Four Elements. It was exactly the same idea as in the case of the police constable, who has his sergeant, inspector, superintendent, commissioner, always getting more cloudy and remote until you reach the shadowy Home Secretary, who is, himself, the servant of a completely intangible and incalculable phantom called The Will of the People.

We may doubt how far the personification of these entities was conceived as real by the ancients; but the theory was that while anyone with a pair of eyes could see the pool, he could not see the nymph except by some accident. But they thought that a superior type of person, by dint of searching, study and experiment, might acquire this general power. A person still more advanced in this science could get into real connection with the superior, because subtler, forms of Life. He could perhaps cause them to manifest themselves to him in material shape.

A good deal of this rests upon the Platonic ideology, which maintained that any material object was an impure and imperfect copy of some ideal perfection. So men who wished to advance in spiritual science and philosophy strove always to formulate for themselves the pure idea. They tried to proceed from the Particular to the General; and this principle has been of the greatest service to ordinary science. The mathematics of $6+5=11$, and $12+3=15$, was all in bits. Advance only came when they wrote down their equations in general terms. $X^2-Y^2=(X+Y)(X-Y)$ covers all possible cases of subtracting the square of one number from the square of another. So the Meaningless and Abstract, when understood, has far more meaning than the Intelligible and Concrete.

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These considerations apply to the cards taken from the Tarot. What is the meaning of the Five of Wands? This card is subject to the Lord of Fire, because it is a Wand, and to the Sephira Geburah because it is a Five. It is also subject to the sign Leo, and to the planet Saturn, because this planet and sign determine the nature of the card. This is no more than saying that a Dry Martini has got some juniper in it, and some alcohol, and some white wine and herbs, and a bit of lemon peel, and some ice. It is a harmonious composition of various elements; once mixed, it forms a single compound from which it would be very difficult to separate the ingredients; yet each element is necessary to the composition.

The Five of Wands is therefore a *personality*; the nature of this is summed up in the Tarot by calling it "Strife".

This means that, if used passively in divination, one says, when it turns up, "There is going to be a fight". If used actively, it means that the proper course of conduct is to contend. But there is a further point about this card. It is governed from the angelic world by two Beings, one during the hours of Light, the other during the hours of Darkness. Therefore, in order to use the properties of this card, one way is to get into communication with the Intelligence concerned, and to induce him to execute his function. There are thus seventy-two "Angels" set over the thirty-six small cards; these are derived from the "Great Name of God" of seventy-two letters, called Shemhamphorasch.

THE SHEMHAMPHORASCH AND THE TAROT

This word means the Divided Name. The "Name" is Tetragrammaton: I.H.V.H., commonly called Jehovah. He is the Supreme Lord of the Four Elements which compose fundamentally the whole Universe.

There are three verses in Exodus (xiv, 19, 20, 21) each containing seventy-two letters. By writing down the first of these, and underneath this the next verse backwards, and under this again the last verse forwards, seventy-two columns of three letters each are obtained. These are read downwards, and the terminations AL or AH, according as they are male or female, appended. There is also an

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attribution of these Intelligences, one to each of the quaternaries or segments of five degrees of the Zodiac; but there are also innumerable other angels, demons, magical images, lords of triplicities, lesser assistant angels and so on, with demons to correspond. It is quite useless to study all these attributions. They could only be wanted in case of wishing to get into actual communication with one of them for some special purpose. These matters are here mentioned for the sake of completeness; but the Tarot will lose all its vitality for one who allows himself to be side-tracked by its pedantry.

THE TAROT AND CEREMONIAL MAGICK

The Tarot is, thus, intimately bound up with the purely magical Arts of Invocation and Evocation. By Invocation is meant the aspiration to the highest, the purest form of the part of oneself that one wishes to put into action.

Evocation is much more objective. It does not imply perfect sympathy. One's attitude to the Being evoked may even be, at least superficially, hostile. Then, of course, the further advanced one is in initiation, the less the idea of hostility enters one's mind. "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner." Thus, in order to understand any given card, one must identify oneself with it completely for the moment; and one way of doing this is to induce or compel the Intelligence ruling the card to manifest to the senses. For, as explained above, the ancient theory of the Universe included the thesis that every object in Nature possessed a spiritual guardian. Roughly speaking, this did not apply so much to manufactured objects, though there are exceptions to this, as in the case of the Gods of the Hearth, the Lintel, and the like; or of angels or spirits as supposed to be interested in one's sword or one's spear. A particularly powerful weapon was likely to get the reputation of not having been manufactured at all by human hands, but forged in volcanoes or in fairyland, and thus imbued with preternatural powers. Some famous swords had names, and were regarded as living beings; they were liable to fly out of the window if the owner played about too much, instead of killing people as is proper.

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THE TAROT AND ANIMISM

It is only natural, therefore, that at a time when pictorial or written representations of ideas were beyond the comprehension of any but a very few people, when Writing itself was considered magical, and Printing (as it is) an invention of the Devil, people should regard hieroglyphs (whether written or pictured) as living things having power in themselves. It may be that, even to-day, there are houses in darkest Shropshire where anyone who put another book on the top of the Family Bible would be told never to darken those doors again. Automatic action is everywhere ascribed to inanimate objects; for instance, Horseshoes on doors. There is an entire class of such superstitions. The problem of how any given superstition arose has not always been satisfactorily solved. One can (ignorantly) derive the Sitting-down-Thirteen-at-Table nonsense from the legend of the Last Supper. (Incidentally, it can hardly have been the first time that those thirteen sat down to table.)

But the really primitive superstitions cannot be explained so simply. It seems more probable that they arose from the unscientific habit (extremely common among men of science) of generalising from too few facts. It might happen by chance that on half a dozen occasions within a short period, a hunter, setting out at Full Moon, was killed. The old fallacy of *Post hoc propter hoc* would come in; and the village would say, "It is unlucky to go out hunting at Full Moon". This would gather force, as it was repeated through the generations, by virtue of mental indolence; and it would not be disturbed, because Tabu would render the original coincidence unlikely to recur. If, however, something similar came off at the New Moon, there would be a new superstition; and presently there would be a complete nexus of Tabu about the Moon.

A recent case. The late Mr. S. L. Mathers published, in 1898-9, the translation of a manuscript called *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* in a small private edition. Some hundreds of people bought it. One special group of purchasers under his personal observation

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were all, or nearly all, hit by misfortune. Within a year, people were saying that it was terribly dangerous to have the book on one's shelves.

Would this theory have resisted statistical examination? Who can say? But, curiously enough, in 1938 e.v., a neglected copy was taken from its hiding-place on an obscure shelf. Immediately, disasters occurred to most of the people concerned, and to those with whom they were in close relationship. *Post hoc propter hoc*. But who can be sure?

THE CARDS OF THE TAROT AS LIVING BEINGS

Victorian science, flushed with its victory over Supernaturalism, was quite right to declare the Immeasurable "Out of Bounds". It had a right to do so on technical grounds, and it was a strategical necessity of its offensive; but it hampered itself by limiting its scope. It laid itself open to the deadliest attacks from Philosophy. Then, especially from the angle of Mathematical Physics, its own generals betrayed its dogmatism. The essence of Science to-day is far more mysterious than the cloudiest speculations of Leibnitz, Spinoza or Hegel; the modern definition of Matter reminds one irresistibly of the definition of Spirit given by such mystics as Ruysbroek, Boehme and Molinos. The idea of the Universe in the mind of a modern mathematician is singularly reminiscent of the ravings of William Blake.

But the mystics were all wrong when they were pious, and held that their mysteries were too sacred to analyse. They ought to have brought in the idea of Measure. This is exactly what was done by the magicians and Qabalists. The difficulty has been that the units of measurement have themselves been somewhat elastic; they even tend to be literary. Their definitions were as circular as, but not more fugitive than, the definitions of the physicists of to-day. Their methods were empirical, though they strove to make them accurate, as well as lack of precise measures and standard apparatus permitted, because they had not yet formulated any true scientific theory.

But their successes were numerous. All depended on individual

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skill. One would rather trust oneself in illness to the born physician than to the laboratory experts of Battle Creek.

One of the great differences between ancient and modern Chemistry is the idea of the Alchemists that substance in its natural state is, in some way or other, a living thing. The modern tendency is to insist on the measurable. One can go into a museum and see rows of glass globes and bottles which contain the chemical substances which go to make up the human body; but the collection is very far from being a man. Still less does it explain the difference between Lord Tomnoddy and Bill Sykes. Nineteenth century chemists were at great pains to analyse opium and isolate its alkaloids, rather like a child pulling a watch to pieces to see what makes it go. They succeeded, but the results were not altogether wholesome. Morphine has much more direct hypnotic effect than opium; its action is speedier and more violent; but it is also a very dangerous drug, and its effects are often disastrous. The action of morphine is sensibly modified by the other twenty odd alkaloids which exist in opium. The intoxicating effect of alcohol differs according to whether one absorbs it in Richebourg '29 or in synthetic gin. An even more startling example comes from Venezuela, where running messengers chew coco leaves, cover their hundred miles a day, and sleep till they are rested. They have no bad reaction, and they do not acquire the habit. Cocaine is a different story. The adepts of the Tarot would say, quite simply, "We are alive and the plant is alive, so we can make friends. If you kill the plant first, you are asking for trouble."

All this is here written in defence of the system of the makers and users of the Tarot, of their methods of dealing with Nature, of making experiments without undue attention to the wish to get things done quickly. They would expose a mixture to the rays of the sun or moon for weeks or months, thinking that everything would be spoilt if they boiled it up violently. The processes of Nature (they would say) are slow and temperate; let us copy them!

There may have been good grounds for these views. Experience leads to that conclusion.

This is by way of Introduction to a thesis most necessary to the understanding of the Tarot. Each card is, in a sense, a living being;

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and its relations with its neighbours are what one might call diplomatic. It is for the student to build these living stones into his living Temple.

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