PART THREE

THE COURT CARDS

III

GENERAL REMARKS

These cards constitute a pictorial analysis of the powers of the four letters of the Name and the four Elements. They are also referred to the Zodiac; but instead of assigning the three decans of each sign to one card, the influence begins with the last decan of one sign and continues to the second decan of the next. There is a further difficulty. It might well be expected that the elemental attribution would harmonize with the Zodiacal attribution; but it is not so. For instance, one might anticipate that the fiery part of Fire would refer to the most active of the fiery signs, namely, Aries. On the contrary, it represents the last decan of Scorpio and the first two of Sagittarius, which is the watery part of Fire in the Zodiac, and the mildest in influence.

The reason for this is that in the realm of the Elements all things are mixed and confused; or, as the apologist might say, counter-checked and counter-balanced. The convenience of these arrangements is that these cards are suitable as being descriptive, in a rough and empirical fashion, of divers types of men and women. One may say briefly that any of these cards is a picture of the person whose Sun, or whose rising sign at his nativity, falls within the Zodiacal attribution of the card. Thus, a person born on 12th October might possess many of the qualities of the Queen of Swords; while, if he were born shortly before midnight, he would add many of the characteristics of the Prince of Wands.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOUR DIGNITARIES

The Knights represent the powers of the letter Yodh in the Name. They are the most sublime, original, active part of the Energy of the Element; for this reason they are represented on horseback and clad in complete armour. Their action is swift and violent, but transient. In the Element of Fire, for instance, the Knight corresponds to the Lightning flash; in the Element of Water, to Rain and Springs; in that of Air, to Wind; in that of Earth, to Mountains. It is very important as a mental exercise to work out for oneself these

correspondences between the Symbol and the Natural Forces which they represent; and it is essential to practical Magical work to have assimilated this knowledge.

The Queens represent the letter Hé of the Name. They are the complements of the Knights. They receive, ferment, and transmit the original Energy of their Knight. Quick to receive that Energy, they are also fitted to endure for the period of their function; but they are not the final product. They represent the second stage in the process of creation whose fourth and last state is material realization. They are represented as seated upon thrones. This emphasizes the fact that they are appointed to exercise definite functions.

The Princes represent the Forces of the letter Vau in the Name. The Prince is the Son of the Queen (the old King's daughter) by the Knight who has won her; he is therefore represented as in a chariot, going forth to carry out the combined Energy of his parents. He is the active issue of their union, and its manifestation. He is the intellectual image of their union. His action is consequently more enduring than that of his forbears. In one respect, indeed, he acquires a relative permanence, because he is the published record of what has been done in secret. Also, he is the "Dying God", redeeming his Bride in the hour, and by the virtue, of his murder.

The Princesses represent the Hé final of the Name. They represent the ultimate issue of the original Energy in its completion, its crystallization, its materialization. They also represent the counter-balancing, the re-absorption of the Energy. They represent the Silence into which all things return. They are thus at the same time permanent and non-existent. An audit of the equation $0=2$.

The Princesses have no Zodiacal attribution. Yet evidently they represent four types of human being. They are those numerous "elemental" people whom we recognize by their lack of all sense of responsibility, whose moral qualities seem to lack "bite". They are sub-divided according to planetary predominance. Such types have been repeatedly described in fiction. As Eliphaz Levi wrote: "The love of the Magus for such creatures is insensate, and may destroy him".

The relations between these Four Elements of the Name are extraordinarily complex, quite beyond the limits of any ordinary

treatise to discuss; they change with every application of thought to their meaning.

For instance, no sooner has the Princess made her appearance than the Prince wins her in marriage, and she is set upon the throne of her Mother. She thus awakens the Eld of the original old King; who thereupon becomes a young Knight, and so renews the cycle. The Princess is not only the perfect Maiden, but, owing to the death of the Prince, the forsaken and lamenting Widow. All this occurs in the legends characteristic of the Aeon of Osiris. It is hardly possible definitely to disentangle these complications, but for the student it is sufficient if he will be content to work with one legend at a time.

It is natural that the Aeon of Osiris, the regimen of Air, of strife, of intellect, should be thus confused; that its symbols and formulas should overlap, should contradict each other. It is impossible to harmonize the multitudinous fables or parables, because each was invented to emphasize some formula that was regarded as imperative to serve some local or temporal purpose.

SUMMARIZED DESCRIPTION OF THE SIXTEEN COURT CARDS

KNIGHT OF WANDS

The Knight of Wands represents the fiery part of Fire; he rules from the 21st degree of Scorpio to the 20th degree of Sagittarius. He is a warrior in complete armour. On his helmet for a crest he wears a black horse. In his hand he bears a flaming torch; a flame also in his mantle; and upon the flames does he ride. His steed is a black horse leaping.

The moral qualities appropriate to this figure are activity, generosity, fierceness, impetuosity, pride, impulsiveness, swiftness in unpredictable actions. If wrongly energized, he is evil-minded, cruel, bigoted and brutal. He is in either case ill-fitted to carry on his action; he has no means of modifying it according to circumstances. If he fails in his first effort, he has no resource.

In the Yî King, the fiery part of Fire is represented by the 51st

hexagram, *Kăn*. The signification there given is entirely in accordance with the doctrine of the Tarot, but great emphasis is laid on the startling, perilous, and revolutionary character of the events cognate. The Querent is advised to be apprehensive, yet cool, resolute and energetic: to beware of untimely action, but to go forward with tense confidence in his own ability.

All these correspondences of the Yî King are to be studied in that book (S.B.E. vol. XVI) and reference is here made to the text when important passages are too long to be conveniently quoted.

QUEEN OF WANDS

The Queen of Wands represents the watery part of Fire, its fluidity and colour. Also, she rules in the Zodiac from the 21st degree of Pisces to the 20th degree of Aries. Her crown is topped with the winged globe and rayed with flame. Her long red golden hair flows down upon her armour of scaled mail. She is seated upon a throne of flame, ordered into geometrical light by her material power. Beneath the throne the surging flames are steady. She bears a wand in her left hand; but it is topped with a cone suggestive of the mysteries of Bacchus. She is attended by a couchant leopard upon whose head she lays her hand. Her face expresses the ecstasy of one whose mind is well in-drawn to the mystery borne beneath her bosom.

The characteristics of the Queen are adaptability, persistent energy, calm authority which she knows how to use to enhance her attractiveness. She is kindly and generous, but impatient of opposition. She has immense capacity for friendship and for love, but always on her own initiative.

There is as much pride in this card as in the Knight, but it lacks the spontaneous nobility which excuses that error. It is not true pride, but self-complacent vanity and even snobbery.

The other side of her character is that she may have a tendency to brood, come to a wrong decision thereon, and react with great savagery. She may be easily deceived; then she is likely to shew herself stupid, obstinate, tyrannical. She may be quick to take offence, and harbour revenge without good cause. She might turn

and snap at her best friends without intelligible excuse. Also, when she misses her bite, she breaks her jaw!

In the Yî King, the watery part of Fire is represented by the 17th hexagram, Sui. It indicates reflection upon impulse, and the consequently even flow of action. There is great capacity for lucid conception and steady prosecution of work; but this is only at the bidding, and under the guidance, of some creative mind. There is a tendency to be fickle, even disloyal; the ideas which she obeys make no deep or permanent impression. She will "cleave to the little boy and let go the man of age and experience" or the reverse (lines 2 and 3) without realizing what she is doing. There is liability of fits of melancholy, which she seeks to cure by bouts of intoxication, or by panic-stricken outbursts of ill-considered fury.

PRINCE OF WANDS

The Prince of Wands represents the airy part of Fire, with its faculty of expanding and volatilising. He rules from the 21st degree of Cancer to the 20th degree of Leo. He is a warrior in complete armour of scale mail, but his arms are bare on account of his vigour and activity. He wears a rayed crown surmounted by a lion's head winged, and from this crown depends a curtain of flame. On his breast is the sigil of To Mega Therion. In his left hand he bears the Phoenix wand of the Second Adept (in the Ritual of 5°=6° of R.R. at A.C.), the wand of Power and Energy, while with his other arm he reins the lion which draws his chariot, the chariot which is fortified by a wheel radiating flame. He rides upon a sea of flames, both waved and salient.

The moral qualities appropriate to this figure are swiftness and strength. But he is sometimes inclined to act on impulse; sometimes easily led by external influences; sometimes, especially in trifles, a prey to indecision. He is often violent, especially in the expression of an opinion, but he does not necessarily hold the opinion about which he is so emphatic. He states a vigorous proposition for the sake of stating it. He is in fact very slow to make up his mind thoroughly on any subject, but always sees both sides of every question. He is essentially just, but always feels that justice is not to be attained in

the intellectual world. His character is intensely noble and generous. He may be an extravagant boaster, while slyly laughing both at the object of his boast and at himself for making it. He is romantic, especially in matters of history and tradition, to the point of folly, and may engineer "stunts" or play elaborate practical jokes. He might select some inoffensive nobody, and pursue him for years with every weapon of ridicule, as Swift tormented the unhappy Partridge, all without the least animus, ready to give the shirt off his back, should his victim be in need. His sense of humour is omnivorous, and may make him a mysterious figure, dreaded without reason by people who actually know nothing about him but his name—as a symbol of Terror. This is due to the influence of the last decan of Cancer upon this card. One of his greatest faults is pride; meanness and pettiness of any kind he holds in infinite scorn. His courage is fanatically strong, and his endurance indefatigable. He is always fighting against odds, and always wins in the long—the very long—run. This is principally due to his enormous capacity for work, which he exercises for its own sake, "without lust of result"; perhaps his haughty contempt for the world at large—which however coexists with profound and ecstatic respect for "every man and every woman" as "a star"—is responsible for this.

When this card is badly dignified, the character degenerates. Each of the qualities mentioned above is found in its antithesis. There is great cruelty in him, partly sadistic and partly due to callousness arising from indifference—and, in a sense, laziness! So too he may be intolerant, prejudiced and idle—principally because it saves trouble. He may furthermore be an empty boaster and a great coward.

In the Yî King, the airy part of Fire is represented by the 42nd Hexagram, Yî, which signifies addition, increase. Full of virtue, and confident therein, he contemplates work of stupendous scope, often with the idea expressed in line 5: "with sincere heart seeking to benefit all below". In this he may achieve immense success. But this course is fraught with commensurate danger. "We see one to whose increase none will contribute, while many will seek to assail him. He observes no regular rule in the ordering of his heart". (line 6) This peril avoided, there come "parties adding to the store of its subject

ten pairs of tortoise shells whose oracles cannot be opposed—Let the King employ them in presenting his offerings to God . . . ." (line 2).

PRINCESS OF WANDS

The Princess of Wands represents the earthy part of Fire; one might say, she is the fuel of Fire. This expression implies the irresistible chemical attraction of the combustible substance. She rules the Heavens for one quadrant of the portion around the North Pole.

The Princess is therefore shewn with the plumes of justice streaming like flames from her brow; and she is unclothed, shewing that chemical action can only take place when the element is perfectly free to combine with its partner. She bears a wand crowned with the disk of the Sun; and she is leaping in a surging flame which re-calls by its shape the letter Yodh.

This card may be said to represent the dance of the virgin priestess of the Lords of Fire, for she is in attendance upon the golden altar ornamented with rams' heads, symbolizing the fires of Spring.

The character of the Princess is extremely individual. She is brilliant and daring. She creates her own beauty by her essential vigour and energy. The force of her character imposes the impression of beauty upon the beholder. In anger or love she is sudden, violent, and implacable. She consumes all that comes into her sphere. She is ambitious and aspiring, full of enthusiasm which is often irrational. She never forgets an injury, and the only quality of patience to be found in her is the patience with which she lies in ambush to avenge.

Such a woman, ill-dignified, shews the defects of these qualities. She is superficial and theatrical, completely shallow and false, yet without suspecting that she is anything of the sort, for she believes entirely in herself, even when it is apparent to the most ordinary observer that she is merely in the spasm of mood. She is cruel, unreliable, faithless and domineering.

In the Yî King, the earthy part of Fire is described by the 27th hexagram, î. This shows a person omnivorous in passion of whatever kind, entirely reckless in the means of obtaining gratification, and insatiable. The Yî commentary is packed with alternate warning and encouragement.

KNIGHT OF CUPS

The Knight of Cups represents the fiery part of Water, the swift passionate attack of rain and springs; more intimately, Water's power of solution. He rules the Heavens from the 21st degree of Aquarius to the 20th degree of Pisces. He is clothed in black armour furnished with bright wings which, together with the leaping attitude of his white charger, indicates that he represents the most active aspect of Water. In his right hand he bears a cup from which issues a crab, the cardinal sign of Water, for aggressiveness. His totem is the peacock, for one of the stigmata of water in its most active form is brilliance. There is here also some reference to the phenomena of fluorescence.

The characteristics of the person signified by this card are nevertheless mostly passive, in accordance with the Zodiacal attribution. He is graceful, dilettante, with the qualties of Venus, or a weak Jupiter. He is amiable in a passive way. He is quick to respond to attraction, and easily becomes enthusiastic under such stimulus; but he is not very enduring. He is exceedingly sensitive to external influence, but with no material depth in his character.

When the card is ill dignified, he is sensual, idle and untruthful. Yet with all this he possesses an innocence and purity which are the essence of his nature. But he is, on the whole, so superficial that it is hard to reach this depth. "His name is writ in water."

In the Yî King, the fiery part of Water is represented by the 54th Hexagram, Kwei Mei. The commentary is singularly obscure, and somewhat sinister. It deals with the difficulties of rightly mating such opposites as fire and water (compare the Queen of Wands; but in that case Water is the calming and modulating influence, while here it is Fire which creates trouble.) Swiftness and violence ill suit a character naturally placid; it is rare indeed to meet with a person who has succeeded in harmonizing these conflicting elements. He tends to mismanage all his affairs; and unless sheer good fortune attend him, his whole career will be an unbroken record of failure and disaster. Often his mental "civil war" ends in schizophrenia or melancholy madness. The abuse of stimulants and narcotics may precipitate the catastrophe.

QUEEN OF CUPS

The Queen of Cups represents the watery part of Water, its power of reception and reflection. In the Zodiac it rules from the 21st degree of Gemini to the 20th degree of Cancer. Her image is of extreme purity and beauty, with infinite subtlety; to see the Truth of her is hardly possible, for she reflects the nature of the observer in great perfection.

She is represented as enthroned upon still water. In her hand she bears a shell-like cup, from which issues a crayfish, and she bears also the Lotus of Isis, of the Great Mother. She is robed in, and veiled by, endless curves of light, and the sea upon which she is enthroned conveys the almost unbroken images of the image which she represents.

The characteristics associated with this card are principally dreaminess, illusion and tranquillity. She is the perfect agent and patient, able to receive and transmit everything without herself being affected thereby. If ill-dignified, all these qualities are degraded. Everything that passes through her is refracted and distorted. But, speaking generally, her characteristics depend mostly upon the influences which affect her.

In the Yî King, the watery part of Water is represented by the 58th hexagram, Tui. The commentary is as colourless as the card; it consists of mild exhortations on the subject of pleasure. It may really be said that, normally, people of this type have no character at all of their own, unless it can be called a characteristic to be at the disposition of every impact or impression.

There is, however, a hint (line 6) that the chief pleasure of people of this type is to lead and attract others. Such are accordingly (often enough) exceedingly popular.

PRINCE OF CUPS

The Prince of Cups represents the airy part of Water. On the one hand, elasticity, volatility, hydrostatic equilibrium; on the other hand, the catalytic faculty and the energy of steam. He rules from the 21st degree of Libra to the 20th degree of Scorpio.

He is a warrior partly clad in armour, which seems, however, rather a growth than a covering. His helmet is surmounted by an eagle, and his chariot, which resembles a shell, is also drawn by an eagle. His wings are tenuous, almost of gas. This is a reference to his power of volatilization understood in the spiritual sense.

In his right hand he bears a Lotus flower, sacred to the element of Water, and in his left hand is a cup from which issues a serpent.

The third totem, the scorpion, is not shewn in the picture, for the putrefaction which it represents is an extremly secret process. Beneath his chariot is the calm and stagnant water of a lake upon which rain falls heavily.

The whole symbolism of this card is exceedingly complicated, for Scorpio is the most mysterious of the Signs, and the manifested portion of it symbolized by the eagle is in reality the least important part of his nature.

The moral characteristics of the person pictured in this card are subtlety, secret violence, and craft. He is intensely secret, an artist in all his ways. On the surface he appears calm and imperturble, but this is a mask of the most intense passion. He is on the surface susceptible to external influences, but he accepts them only to transmute them to the advantage of his secret designs. He is thus completely without conscience in the ordinary sense of the word, and is therefore usually distrusted by his neighbours. They feel they do not, and can never, understand him. Thus he inspires unreasonable fear. He is in fact perfectly ruthless. He cares intensely for power, wisdom, and his own aims. He feels no responsibility to others, and although his abilities are so immense, he cannot be relied upon to work in harness.

In the Yî King, the airy part of Water is represented by the 61st hexagram, *K*ung Fû. This is one of the most important figures in the Yî: it "moves even pigs and fish, and leads to great good fortune". Its dignities and correspondences are manifold and great; for it is also a "big Lî", the trigram of Sol formed by doubling the lines. By shape it suggests a boat, but also the geomantic figure of Carcer, Saturn in Capricornus.

This card is in consequence one of great power; Libra going over into Scorpio is of tremendous, active, critical energy and weight. To

such people good will, sincerity, and right mating are the essentials of success; their danger is overweening ambition.

PRINCESS OF CUPS

The Princess of Cups represents the earthy part of Water; in particular, the faculty of crystallization. She represents the power of Water to give substance to idea, to support life, and to form the basis of chemical combination. She is represented as a dancing figure, robed in a flowing garment on whose edges crystals are seen to form.

For her crest she wears a swan with open wings. The symbolism of this swan reminds one of the swan in oriental philosophy which is the word AUM or AUMGN, which is the symbol of the entire process of creation.[1]

She bears a covered cup from which issues a tortoise. This is again the tortoise which in Hindu philosophy supports the elephant on whose back is the Universe. She is dancing upon a foaming sea in which disports himself a dolphin, the royal fish, which symbolizes the power of Creation.

The character of the Princess is infinitely gracious. All sweetness, all voluptuousness, gentleness, kindness and tenderness are in her character. She lives in the world of Romance, in the perpetual dream of rapture. On a superficial examination she might be thought selfish and indolent, but this is a quite false impression; silently and effortlessly she goes about her work.

In the Yî King, the earthy part of Water is represented by the 41st Hexagram, Sun. This means diminution, the dissolution of all solidity. People described by this card are very dependent on others, but at the same time helpful to them. Rarely, at the best, are they of individual importance. As helpmeets, they are unsurpassed.

KNIGHT OF SWORDS

The Knight of Swords represents the fiery part of Air; he is the wind, the storm. He represents the violent power of motion applied

[1] See, for a full analysis and explanation of this Word, *Magick*, pp. 45–9.

to an apparently manageable element. He rules from the 21st degree of Taurus to the 20th degree of Gemini. He is a warrior helmed, and for his crest he bears a revolving wing. Mounted upon a maddened steed, he drives down the Heavens, the Spirit of the Tempest. In one hand is a sword, in the other a poniard. He represents the idea of attack.

The moral qualities of a person thus indicated are activity and skill, subtlety and cleverness. He is fierce, delicate and courageous, but altogether the prey of his idea, which comes to him as an inspiration without reflection.

If ill-dignified, the vigour in all these qualities being absent, he is incapable of decision or purpose. Any action that he takes is easily brushed aside by opposition. Inadequate violence spells futility. "Chimaera bombinans in vacuo".

In the Yî King, the fiery part of Air is represented by the 32nd hexagram, Hăng. This is the first occasion on which it has been simple to demonstrate the close technical parallelism which identifies Chinese thought and experience with that of the West. For the meaning is long continuance: "perseverance in well-doing, or continuously acting out the law of one's being", as Legge puts it in his note on the hexagram; and this seems incongruous with the Qabalistic idea of violent energy applied to the least stable of the elements. But the trigram of Air also indicates wood; and the hexagram may have suggested the irresistible flow of the sap, and its effect in strengthening the tree. This conjecture is supported by the warning in line 6: "The topmost line, divided, shows its subject exciting himself to long continuance. There will be evil."

Allowing this, the image of "the extended flame of mind", as Zoroaster calls it, may well be subjoined to the former description. It is the True Will exploding the mind spontaneously. The influence of Taurus makes for steadiness, and that of the first decanate of Gemini for inspiration. So let us picture him, "integer vitæ scelerisque purus", a light-shaft of the Ideal absorbing the entire life in concentrated aspiration, passing from earthy Taurus to exalted Gemini. Here, too, is shewn (as in the Yî) the danger to the subject of this symbol; for the first decan is the card called "Interference"; or, in the old pack, "Shortened Force".

QUEEN OF SWORDS

The Queen of Swords represents the watery part of Air, the elasticity of that element, and its power of transmission. She rules from the 21st degree of Virgo to the 20th degree of Libra. She is enthroned upon the clouds. The upper part of her body is naked, but she wears a gleaming belt and a sarong. Her helmet is crested by the head of a child, and from it stream sharp rays of light, illuminating her empire of celestial dew. In her right hand, she bears a sword; in her left hand, the newly severed head of a bearded man. She is the clear, conscious perception of Idea, the Liberator of the Mind.

The person symbolized by this card should be intensely perceptive, a keen observer, a subtle interpreter, an intense individualist, swift and accurate at recording ideas; in action confident, in spirit gracious and just. Her movements will be graceful, and her ability in dancing and balancing exceptional.

If ill-dignified, these qualities will all be turned to unworthy purposes. She will be cruel, sly, deceitful and unreliable; in this way, very dangerous, on account of the superficial beauty and attractiveness which distinguish her.

In the Yî King, the watery part of Air is represented by the 28th hexagram, Tâ Kwo. The Shape suggests a weak beam.

The character, excellent in itself, cannot support interference. Foresight and prudence, care in preparation of action, are a safeguard (line 1.) Advantage is to be won, moreover, by reliance on help from apparently unsuitable comrades (lines 2 and 5). This alien strength often supplies the defeat of inherent weakness, and may even create definite superiority to circumstance (line 4). In such an event, there may be temptation to undertake rash adventures, foredoomed to failure. But even so, no blame is incurred (line 6); the conditions of True Will have been satisfied, and the issue is compensated by the feeling that the right (however unfortunate) course has been adopted.

Such people acquire intense love and devotion from the most unexpected quarters.

PRINCE OF SWORDS

This card represents the airy part of Air. With its particular

interpretation, it is intellectual, it is a picture of the Mind as such. He rules from the 21st degree of Capricornus to the 20th degree of Aquarius.

The figure of this Prince is clothed with closely woven armour adorned with definite device, and the chariot which bears him suggests (even more closely) geometrical ideas. This chariot is drawn by winged children, looking and leaping irresponsibly in any direction that takes their fancy; they are not reined, but perfectly capricious. The chariot consequently is easy enough to move, but quite unable to progress in any definite direction except by accident. This is a perfect picture of the Mind.

On the head of this Prince is, nevertheless, a child's head radiant, for there is a secret crown in the nature of this card; if concentrated, it is exactly Tiphareth.

The operation of his logical mental processes have reduced the Air, which is his element, to many diverse geometrical patterns, but in these there is no real plan; they are demonstrations of the powers of the Mind without definite purpose. In his right hand is a lifted sword wherewith to create, but in his left hand a sickle, so that what he creates he instantly destroys.

A person thus symbolized is purely intellectual. He is full of ideas and designs which tumble over each other. He is a mass of fine ideals unrelated to practical effort. He has all the apparatus of Thought in the highest degree, intensely clever, admirably rational, but unstable of purpose, and in reality indifferent even to his own ideas, as knowing that any one of them is just as good as any other. He reduces everything to unreality by removing its substance and transmuting it to an ideal world of ratiocination which is purely formal and out of relation to any facts, even those upon which it is based.

In the Yî King, the airy part of Air is represented by the 57th hexagram, Sun. This is one of the most difficult figures in the book, on account of its ambivalence: it means both flexibility and penetration.

Immensely powerful because of its complete freedom from settled principles, capable of maintaining and putting forward any conceivable argument, insusceptible of regret or remorse, glib to

"quote Scripture" aptly and cunningly to support any thesis soever, indifferent to the fate of a contrary argument advanced two minutes earlier, impossible to defeat because any position is as good as any other, ready to enter into combination with the nearest element available, these elusive and elastic people are of value only when firmly mastered by creative will fortified by an intelligence superior to their own. In practice, this is rarely possible: there is no purchase to be had upon them, not even by pandering to their appetites. These may nevertheless be stormy, even uncontrollable. Faddists, devotees of drink, drugs, humanitarianism, music or religion, are often in this class; but when this is the case, there is still no stability. They wander from one cult or one vice to another, always brilliantly supporting with the fanaticism of a fixed conviction what is actually no more than the whim of the moment.

It is easy to be deceived by such people; for the manifestation itself has enormous potency: it is as if an imbecile offered one the dialogues of Plato. They may in this way acquire a great reputation both for depth and breadth of mind.

PRINCESS OF SWORDS

The Princess of Swords represents the earthy part of Air, the fixation of the volatile. She brings about the materialization of Idea. She represents the influence of Heaven upon Earth. She partakes of the characteristics of Minerva and Artemis, and there is some suggestion of the Valkyrie. She represents to some extent the anger of the Gods, and she appears helmed, with serpent-haired Medusa for her crest. She stands in front of a barren altar as if to avenge its profanation, and she stabs downward with her sword. The heaven and the clouds, which are her home, seem angry.

The character of the Princess is stern and revengeful. Her logic is destructive. She is firm and aggressive, with great practical wisdom and subtlety in material things. She shews great cleverness and dexterity in the management of practical affairs, especially where they are of a controversial nature. She is very adroit in the settlement of controversies.

If ill-dignified, all these qualities are dispersed; she becomes

incoherent, and all her gifts tend to combine to form a species of low cunning whose object is unworthy of the means.

In the Yî King, the earthy part of Air is represented by the 18th hexagram, Kû. This means "troubles"; it is, for all practical and material matters. the most unhappy symbol in the book. All the fine qualities of Air are weighed down, suppressed, suffocated.

People thus characterized are slow mentally, the prey of constant anxiety, crushed by every kind of responsibility, but especially in family affairs. One of both of the parents will usually be found in the aetiology.

It is hard to understand line 6, which "shows us one who does not serve either king or feudal lord, but in a lofty spirit prefers to follow his own bent". The explanation is that a Princess as such, being "the throne of Spirit", may always have the option of throwing everything overboard, "blowing everything sky high". Such action would account for the characteristics above given for the card when well dignified. Such people are exceedingly rare; and, naturally enough, they appear often as "Children of misfortune". Neverthless, they have chosen aright, and in due season gain their reward.

KNIGHT OF DISKS

The Knight of Disks represents the fiery part of Earth, and refers in particular to the phenomena of mountains, earthquakes, and gravitation; but it also represents the activity of Earth regarded as the producer of Life. He rules from the 21st degree of Leo to the 20th degree of Virgo, and is thus concerned greatly with agriculture. This warrior is short and sturdy in type. He is clothed in great solidity of plate armour; but his helmet, which is crested with the head of a stag, is thrown back, for at the moment his function is entirely confined to the production of food. For this reason he is armed with a flail. The disk which he bears, moreover, is very solid; it represents nutrition. These characteristics are borne out by his horse; a shire horse, solidly planted on all four feet, as was not the case with the other Knights. He rides through the fertile land; even the distant hills are cultivated fields.

Those whom he symbolizes tend to be dull, heavy and pre-

occupied with material things. They are laborious and patient, but would have little intellectual grasp even of matters which concern them most closely. Their success in these is due to instinct, to imitation of Nature. They lack initiative; their fire is the smouldering fire of the process of growth.

If ill-dignified, these people are hopelessly stupid, slavish, quite incapable of foresight even in their own affairs, or of taking an intelligent interest in anything outside them. They are churlish, surly, and jealous (in a dull sort of way) of what they instinctively realize is the superior state of others; but they have not the courage or intelligence to better themselves. Yet they are always irritably meddling about petty matters; they interfere with, and inevitably spoil, whatever comes their way.

In the Yî King, the fiery part of Earth is represented by the 62nd hexagram, Hsiâo Kwo. This is as important as its complement, *K*ung Fû (see under Prince of Cups); it is a "big Khan", the trigram of Luna with each line doubled. But it is also suggestive of the Geomantic figure Conjunctio, Mercury in Virgo, corresponding very closely indeed with the Fire of Earth attribution in the Qabalistic system.

To the Chinese sages, moreover, the shape of the figure gave the idea of a bird. The meaning is, accordingly, modified by human influence of the more frivolous and irresponsible kind, Shakespeare's "little wanton harlotry", the French cynic's "Souvent femme varie", and the fickle mob of Coriolanus; indeed, of History itself. But Mercury in Virgo symbolizes Intelligence (and even creative Idea) applied to Agriculture; and this (once more!) harmonizes perfectly with the Ten of Disks, which is ruled by this Planet and this Sign. This adds to the superabundant mass of proof that this whole system of symbolism is based upon Realities of Nature, as understood by the materialist School of Science—if such a school survives in some obscure and obsolescent University! Such coherence, such introverted exfoliation, cannot be the chance parallelism of the dreams of nebulous philosophies.

The character described by this card is therefore exceeding complex, yet admirably well-knit; but its dangers are indicated by the symbols of Luna and the bird. In the happiest cases, the qualities

thus indicated will be romance and imagination; but overweening ambition, the pursuit of Ignis Fatuus, superstition, and the tendency to waste time in idle dreaming, are perils all too frequently found in such sons of the soil. Thomas Hardy has painted many admirable portraits of the type. Ill-starred indeed and black with bile are those who have profaned the Sacred Fire, not enkindling Earth to new, more copious, more varied life, but peering in deceptive moonlight, turning their faces from their mother Earth.

QUEEN OF DISKS

The Queen of Disks represents the watery part of Earth, the function of that element as Mother. She rules from the 21st degree of Sagittarius to the 20th degree of Capricornus. She represents passivity, usually in its highest aspect.

The Queen of Disks is throned upon the life of vegetation. She contemplates the background, where a calm river winds through a sandy desert to bring to it fertility. Oases are beginning to shew themselves amid the wastes. Before her stands a goat upon a sphere. There is here a reference to the dogma that the Great Work is fertility. Her armour is composed of small scales or coins, and her helmet is adorned with the great spiral horns of the markhor. In her right hand she bears a sceptre surmounted by a cube, within which is a three-dimensional Hexagram, and in her left arm is curved her proper disk, a sphere of loops and circles interlaced. She thus represents the ambition of matter to take part in the great work of Creation.

Persons signified by this card possess the finest of the quieter qualities. They are ambitious, but only in useful directions. They possess immense funds of affection, kindness, and greatness of heart. They are not intellectual, and not particularly intelligent; but instinct and intuition are more than adequate for their needs. These people are quiet, hard-working, practical, sensible, domesticated, often (in a reticent and unassuming fashion) lustful and even debauched. They are inclined to the abuse of alcohol and of drugs. It is as if they could only realize their essential happiness by getting outside themselves.

If ill dignified, they are dull, servile, foolish; they are drudges

rather than workers. Life for them is purely mechanical; and they cannot rise, or even seek to rise, above their appointed lot.

In the Yî King, the watery part of Earth is represented by the 31st hexagram, Hsien. This has the meaning: Influence. The commentary describes the effect of moving various parts of the body, from the toes to the jaws and tongue. This is rather an amplification of what has been said above than an exact correspondence; yet there is no discordance. The general advice is to go forward quietly without overt attack upon existing situations.

PRINCE OF DISKS

The Prince of Disks represents the airy part of Earth, indicating the florescence and fructification of that element. He rules from the 21st degree of Aries to the 20th degree of Tarus.

The figure of this Prince is meditative. He is the element of Earth become intelligible. Clothed in light armour, his helmet is crowned with the head of a bull; and his chariot is drawn by an ox, this animal being peculiarly sacred to the Element of Earth. In his left hand he holds his disk, which is an orb resembling a globe, marked with mathematical symbols as if to imply the planning involved in agriculture. In his right hand he bears an orbed sceptre surmounted by a cross, a symbol of the Great Work accomplished; for it is his function to bring forth from the material of the element that vegetation which is the sustenance of the Spirit itself.

The character denoted by this card is that of great energy brought to bear upon the most solid of practical matters. He is energetic and enduring, a capable manager, a steadfast and persevering worker. He is competent, ingenious, thoughtful, cautious, trustworthy, imperturbable; he constantly seeks new uses for common things, and adapts his circumstances to his purposes in a slow, steady, well-thought out plan.

He is lacking almost entirely in emotion. He is somewhat insensitive, and may appear dull, but he is not; it so appears because he makes no effort to understand ideas which are beyond his scope. He may often appear stupid, and is inclined to be resentful of more spiritual types. He is slow to anger, but, if driven, becomes implac-

able. It is not very practicable to distinguish between the good and evil dignities in this card; one can merely say that, in case of his being ill-dignified, both the quality and quantity of his characteristics are somewhat degraded. The reaction of others to him will depend almost entirely upon their own temperaments.

In the Yî King, the airy part of Earth is represented by the 53rd hexagram, *K*ien. The commentary concerns the flight of wild geese, "gradually approaching the shore", then "the large rocks", then "advanced to the dry plains—the trees—the high mound"; finally, to "the large heights". It thus symbolizes slow, steady emancipation from repressive conditions.

The description is even happier than that given by the Qabalah, although in every way congruous with it. Practical considerations are never absent from Chinese thought, even at its most abstruse and metaphysical. The fundamental heresy of the Black Lodge is contempt for "the world, the flesh, and the devil", all which are essential to the plan of the Universe; it is cardinal to the Great Work for the Adept so to order affairs that "even the evil germs of Matter shall alike become useful and good".

The error of Christian Mystics on this point has been responsible for more cruelty, misery, and collective insanity than all others put together; its poison can be traced even in the teaching of Freud, who assumed that the Unconscious was "the devil", whereas in fact it is the instinct which expresses, beneath a veil, the inherent Point-of-View of each, and, properly understood, is the key to Initiation, and a hint of what seed may blossom and fructify as the "Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel". For "Every man and every woman is a star".

But no doubt the judgment of the Adepts Exempt (for it is they who determine, under the guidance of the Masters of the Temple, all such details of doctrine) in respect of this card has been influenced by its transition from Aries to Taurus. It is too often forgotten that Taurus is the House of Venus, and that Luna is exalted therein. The new doctrine set forth in this present Essay makes the primary colour of Earth not black, but green; it insists that every Disk is a living and revolving symbol. The central thesis of the Book of the Law asserts the Perfection of the Universe. In its pantheistic conception all

possibilities are equal in value; each and every Point-Event is "a play of Nuit", as it is written in the *Book of Wisdom or Folly*, "Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt. But whose availeth in this, let him be the chief of all!" Liber Al. I. 22. Or, yet more comprehensively and simply: "Every number is infinite; there is no difference." Ib I. 4.

PRINCESS OF DISKS

The Princess of Disks, the last of the Court cards, represents the earthy part of Earth. She is consequently on the brink of transfiguration. She is strong and beautiful, with an expression of intense brooding, as if about to become aware of secret wonder.

Her crest is the head of the ram, and her sceptre descends into the earth. There its head becomes a diamond, the precious stone of Kether, thus symbolizing the birth of the highest and purest light in the deepest and darkest of the Elements. She stands within a grove of sacred trees before an altar suggesting a wheatsheaf, for she is a priestess of Demeter. She bears within her body the secret of the future. Her sublimity is further emphasized by the disk which she bears; for in the centre thereof is the Chinese ideogram denoting the twin spiral force of Creation in perfect equilibrium; from this is born the rose of Isis, the great fertile Mother.

The characteristics of an individual signified by this card are too various to enumerate; one must summarize by saying that she is Womanhood in its ultimate projection. She contains all the characteristics of woman, and it would depend entirely upon the influences to which she is subjected whether one or another becomes manifest. But in every case her attributes will be pure in themselves, and not necessarily connected with any other attributes which in the normal way one regards as symbolic. In one sense, then, her general reputation will be of bewildering inconsistency. It is rather like a lottery wheel from which the extraction of any number does not predict or influence the result of any subsequent operation. The fruit of the Philosophy of Thelema is enjoyed, rare, ripe, nourishing and vitalizing at its highest and fullest in this meditation; for to the adept every

turn of the wheel is equally probable, and equally a prize; for every Event is "a play of Nuit".

In the Yî King the earthy part of Earth is represented by the 52nd hexagram, Kăn. The meaning is "a mountain"; of how sublime a significance is this Chinese doctrine of Balance, and how closely congruous with that of the Holy Qabalah!

The mountain is the most sacred of all terrestrial symbols, stark, rugged, and immoveable in its aspiration to the Highest, thrust up as it is by the Titan energy of Hidden Fire. It is no less an hieroglyph of the Inmost Godhead than the Phallus itself, even as Capricornus, the sign of the New Year, is exalted in the Zodiac, its deity autochthonous no less than the Most Holy Ancient One himself.

It is essential for the Student to trace this doctrine for himself in every symbol: Air, the elastic and flexible, yet all-pervading and the element of combustion; Water, fluid yet incompressible, the most neutral and composed of all components of living matter, yet destructive even of the hardest rocks by physical assault, and irresistible in its burning power of solution; and Fire, so kin to Spirit that it is not a substance at all, but a phenomenon, yet so integral to Matter that it is the very heart and essence of all things soever.

The characteristic of Kăn in the Yî King is rest; each line of the comment describes repose in the parts of the body in turn, and their effects; the toes, the calves, the loins, the spine, and the jaws.

This chapter is a close parallel in this respect, line by line, with the 31st, Hsien, which begins the second section of the Yî.

The Rosicrucian doctrine of Tetragrammaton could hardly be more adequately stated—to every ear that is to heavenly harmony attuned.

> "There's not a planet in the firmament
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim;
> But while this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth wrap us round, our nature cannot hear it.

Let every student of this Essay, and of this book of Tahuti, this living Book that guides man through all Time, and leads him to

Eternity at every page, hold fast this simplest, most far-reaching Doctrine in his heart and mind, inflaming the inmost of His Being, that he also, having explored each recess of the Universe, may therein find the Light of Truth, so come to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, and accomplish the Great Work, attain the Summum Bonum, true Wisdom and perfect Happiness!

SCANS FROM ALEISTER CROWLEY'S

THE EQUINOX

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