
SELECTED ESSAYS

VOLUME I
THE LOVECRAFT COLLECTORS LIBRARY
EDITED BY GEORGE WETZEL

first series

S E L E C T E D E S S A Y S

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HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

VOLUME ONE
THE LOVECRAFT COLLECTORS LIBRARY
EDITED BY GEORGE WETZEL



SSR PUBLICATIONS
North Tonawanda New York

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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POETRY AND THE GODS

A damp gloomy evening in April it was, just after the close of the Great War, when Marcia found herself alone with strange thoughts and wishes; unheard-of yearnings which floated out of the spacious twentieth century drawing room, up the deeps of the air, and Eastward to olive groves in distant Arcady which she had seen only in her dreams. She had entered the room in abstraction, turned off the glaring chandeliers, and now reclined on a dross divan by a solitary lamp which shed over the reading table a green glow as soothing as moonlight when it issued through the foliage about an antique shrine.

Attired simply, in a low-cut black evening dress, she appeared outwardly a typical product of modern civilisation; but tonight she felt the immeasurable gulf that separated her soul from all her prosaic surroundings. Was it because of the strange home in which she lived; that abode of coldness where relations were always strained and the inmates scarcely more than strangers? Was it that, or was it some greater and less explicable misplacement in Time and Space, whereby she had been born too late, too early, or too far away from the haunts of her spirit ever to harmonize with the unbeautiful things of contemporary reality? To dispel the mood which was engulfing her more and more deeply each moment, she took a magazine from the table, and searched for some healing bit of poetry. Poetry had always relieved her troubled mind better than anything else, though many things in the poetry she had seen detracted from the influence. Over parts of even the sublimest verses hung a chill vapor of sterile ugliness and restraint, like dust on a window pane through which one views a magnificent sunset.

Listlessly turning the magazine's pages, as if searching for an elusive treasure, she suddenly came upon something which dispelled her languor. An observer could have read her thoughts and told that she had discovered some image or dream which brought her nearer to her unattained goal than any image or dream she had seen before. It was only a bit of vers libre, that pitiful compromise of the poet who overleaps prose yet falls short of the divine melody of numbers; but it had in it all the unstudied music of a bard who lives and feels, who gropes ecstatically for unveiled beauty. Devoid of regularity, it yet had the harmony of winged, spontaneous words; a harmony missing from the for-

By Anna Helen Crofts and Henry Paget-Lowe. From THE UNITED AMATEUR; Volume 20, Number 1, September 1920.

mal, convention-bound, verse she had known. As she read on, her surroundings gradually faded, and soon there lay about her only the mists of dream; the purple, star-strown mists beyond time, where only Gods and dreamers walk.

Moon over Japan,
White butterfly moon!
Where the heavy-lidded Buddhas dream
To the sound of the cuckoo's call...
The white wings of moon butterflies
Flicker down the streets of the city,
Blushing into silence the useless wicks of sound
lanterns in the hands of girls.

Moon over the tropics,
A white-curved bud
Opening its petals slowly in the warmth of heaven..
The air is full of odours
And languorous warm sounds...
A flute drones its insect music to the night
Below the curving moon-petal of the heavens.

Moon over China,
Weary moon on the river of the sky,
The stir of light in the willows is like the
flashing of a thousand silver minnows
Through dark shoals:
The tiles on graves and rotting temples flash
like ripples,
The sky is flecked with clouds like the scales
of a dragon.

Amid the mists of dream the reader cried to the rhythmical stars, of her delight at the coming of a new age of song, a rebirth of Pan. Half closing her eyes, she repeated words whose melody lay hid like crystals at the bottom of a stream before dawn; hidden but to gleam effulgently at the birth of day.

Moon over Japan
White butterfly moon!

Moon over the tropics,
A white curved bud
Opening its petals slowly in the warmth of heaven.
The air is full of odours
And languorous warm sounds...languorous warm sounds.

Moon over China,
Weary moon on the river of the sky...weary moon!

* * * * *

Out of the mists gleamed godlike the form of a youth, in winged helmet and sandals, caduceus bearing, and of a beauty like to nothing

on earth. Before the face of the sleeper he thrice waved the rod which Apollo had given him in trade for the nine corded shell of melody, and upon her brow he placed a wreath of myrtle and roses. Then, adoring, Hermes spoke:

"O Nymph more fair than the golden-haired sisters of Cyane or the sky-inhabiting Atlantides, beloved of Aphrodite and blessed of Pallas, thou hast indeed discovered the secret of the Gods, which lieth in beauty and song. O Prophetess more lovely than the Sybil of Cumae when Apollo first knew her, thou hast truly spoken of the new age, for even now on Maenalus, Pan sighs and stretches in his sleep, wishful to wake and behold about him the little rose-crowned fauns and the antique Satyrs. In thy yearning hast thou divined what no mortal, saving only a few whom the world reject, remembereth; that the Gods were never dead, but only sleeping the sleep and dreaming the dreams of Gods in lotos-filled Hesperian gardens beyond the golden sunset. And now draweth nigh the time of their awakening, when coldness and ugliness shall perish, and Zeus sit once more on Olympus. Already the sea about Paphos trembleth into a foam which only ancient skies have looked on before, and at night on Helicon the shepherds hear strange murmurings and half-remembered notes. Woods and fields are tremulous at twilight with the shimmering of white saltant forms, and immemorial Ocean yields up curious sights beneath thin moons. The Gods are patient, and have slept long, but neither man nor giant shall defy the Gods forever. In Tartarus the Titans writhe and beneath the fiery Aetna groan the children of Uranus and Gaea. The day now dawns when man must answer for centuries of denial, but in sleeping the Gods have grown kind, and will not hurl him to the gulf made for deniers of Gods. Instead will their vengeance smite the darkness, fallacy and ugliness which have turned the mind of man; and under the sway of bearded Saturnus shall mortals, once more sacrificing unto him, dwell in beauty and delight. This night shalt thou know the favour of the Gods, and behold on Parnassus those dreams which the Gods have through ages sent to earth to show that they are not dead. For poets are the dreams of Gods, and in each and every age someone hath sung unknowingly the message and the promise from the lotos-gardens beyond the sunset."

Then in his arms Hermes bore the dreaming maiden through the skies. Gentle breezes from the tower of Aiolas wafted them high above warm, scented seas, till suddenly they came upon Zeus, holding court upon double-headed Parnassus; his golden throne flanked by Apollo and the Muses on the right hand, and by ivy-wreathed Dionysus and pleasure-flushed Bacchae on the left hand. So much of splendor Marcia had never seen before, either awake or in dreams, but its radiance did her no injury, as would have the radiance of lofty Olympus; for in this lesser court the Father of Gods had tempered his glories for the sight of mortals. Before the laurel draped mouth of the Corycian cave sat in a row six noble forms with the aspect of mortals, but the countenances of Gods. These the dreamer recognized from images of them which she had beheld, and she knew that they were none else than the divine Maeonides, the avernian Dante, the more than mortal Shakespeare, the chaos exploring Milton, the cosmic Goethe and the musalan Keats. These were those messengers whom the Gods had sent to tell men that Pan had passed not away, but only slept; for it is in poetry that Gods speak to men. Then spake the Thunderer:

"O Daughter, for, being one of my endless line, thou art indeed my daughter, behold upon ivory thrones of honor the august messengers that Gods have sent down, that in the words and writing of men there may be still some traces of divine beauty. Other bards have men justly crowned with enduring laurels, but these hath Apollo crowned, and these have I set in places apart, as mortals who have spoken the language of the Gods. Long have we dreamed in lotos-gardens beyond the West, and spoken only through our dreams; but the time approaches when our voices shall not be silent. It is a time of awakening and change. Once more hath Phaeton ridden low, searing the fields, and drying the streams. In Gaul lone nymphs with disordered hair weep beside fountains that are no more, and pine over rivers turned red with the blood of mortals. Ares and his train have gone forth with the madness of Gods, and have returned, Deimos and Phobos glutted with unnatural delight. Tellus moons with grief, and the faces of men are as the faces of Erinyes, even as when Astraea fled to the skies, and the waves of our bidding encompassed all the land saving this high peak alone. Amidst this chaos, prepared to herald his coming yet to conceal his arrival, even now toileth our latest born messenger, in whose dreams are all the images which other messengers have dreamed before him. He it is that We have chosen to blend into one glorious whole all the beauty that the world hath known before, and to write words wherein shall echo all the wisdom and the loveliness of the past. He it is who shall proclaim our return, and sing of the days to come when Fauns and Dryads shall haunt their accustomed groves in beauty. Guided was our choice by those who now sit before the Corycian grotto on thrones of ivory, and in whose songs thou shalt hear notes of sublimity by which years hence thou shalt know the greater messenger when he cometh. Attend their voices as one by one they sing to thee here. Each note shalt thou hear again in the poetry which is to come; the poetry which shall bring peace and pleasure to thy soul, though search for it through bleak years thou must. Attend with diligence, for each chord that vibrates away into hiding shall appear again to thee after thou hast returned to earth, as Alpheus, sinking his waters into the soul of Hellas, appears as the crystal arethusa in remote Sicilia."

Then arose Homeros, the ancient among bards, who took his lyre and chaunted his hymn to Aphrodite. No word of Greek did Marcia know, yet did the message not fall vainly upon her ears; for in the cryptic rhythm was that which spake to all mortals and Gods, and needed no interpreter.

So too the songs of Dante and Goethe, whose unknown words clave the ether with melodies easy to read and adore. But at last remembered accents resounded before the listener. It was the Swan of Avon, once a God among men, and still a God among Gods:

Write, write, that from the bloody course of war,
My dearest master, your dear son, may hie;
Bless him at home in peace, whilst I from far,
His name with zealous fervour sanctify.

Accents still more familiar arose as Milton, blind no more, declaimed immortal harmony:

Or let thy lamp at midnight hour
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I might oft outwatch the Bear
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
Th' immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook.

* * * * *

Sometime let gorgeous tragedy
In sceptered pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine.

Last of all came the young voice of Keats, closest of all the messengers to the beauteous faun-folk:

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
are sweeter; therefore, ye sweet pipes, play on...

* * * * *

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou says't
'Beauty is truth—truth beauty'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

As the singer ceased, there came a sound in the wind blowing from far Egypt, where at night Aurora mourns by the Nile for her slain Memnon. To the feet of the Thunderer flew the rosy-fingered Goddess, and kneeling, cried, "Master, it is time I unlocked the Gates of the East." And Phoebus, handing his lyre to Calliope, his bride among the Muses, prepared to depart for the jewelled and column-raised Palace of the Sun, where fretted the steeds already harnessed to the golden car of Day. So Zeus descended from his carven throne and placed his hand upon the head of Marcia, saying:

"Daughter, the dawn is nigh, and it is well that thou shouldst return before the awakening of mortals to thy home. Weep not at the bleakness of thy life, for the shadow of false faiths will soon be gone and the Gods shall once more walk among men. Search thou unceasingly for our messenger, for in him wilt thou find peace and comfort. By his word shall thy steps be guided to happiness, and in his dreams of beauty shall thy spirit find that which it craveth." As Zeus ceased, the young Hermes gently siezed the maiden and bore her up toward the fading stars; up, and westward over unseen seas.

* * * * *

Many years have passed since Marcia dreamt of the Gods and of their Parnassus conclave. Tonight she sits in the same spacious drawing-room, but she is not alone. Gone is the old spirit of unrest, for beside her is one whose name is luminous with celebrity; the young poet of poets at whose feet sits all the world. He is reading from a manuscript words which none has ever heard before, but which when heard will bring to men the dreams and the fancies they lost so many centuries ago, when

Pan lay down to doze in Arcady, and the Great Gods withdrew to sleep in lotos-gardens beyond the lands of the Hesperides. In the subtle cadences and hidden melodies of the bard the spirit of the maiden had found rest at last, for there echo the divinest notes of Thracian Orpheus; notes that moved the very rocks and trees by Hebrus' banks. The singer ceases, and with eagerness asks a verdict, yet what can Marcia say but that the strain is "fit for the Gods"?

And as she speaks there comes again a vision of Parnassus and the far-off sound of a mighty voice saying: "By his word shall thy steps be guided to happiness, and in his dreams of beauty shall thy spirit find all that it craveth."

IDEALISM AND MATERIALISM-A REFLECTION

Human thought, with its infinite varieties, intensities, aspects and collisions, is perhaps the most amusing yet discouraging spectacle on our terraqueous globe. It is amusing because of its contradictions, and because of the pompousness with which its possessors try to analyse dogmatically an utterly unknown and unknowable cosmos in which all mankind forms but a transient, negligible atom; it is discouraging because it can never, from its very nature, attain that ideal degree of unanimity which would make its tremendous energy available for the improvement of the race. The thoughts of men, moulded by an innumerable diversity of circumstances, will always conflict. Groups may coincide in certain ideas long enough to found a few definite intellectual institutions; but men thinking together in one subject differ in others, so that even the strongest of such institutions carries within itself the seed of its ultimate downfall. Conflict is the one in-escapable certainty of life; mental conflict which invariably becomes physical and martial when the intellectual breach attains sufficient width and the opposing minds are divided into factions of suitable proportions. Followers of the "world brotherhood" and "universal peace" delusion would do well to remember this scientific truth, grounded on the basic psychological nature of man, before deciding to continue in their always absurd and often disastrous course.

Most decided and obvious of all the eternal conflicts of human thought is that between the reason and the imagination; between the real and the material, and the ideal or spiritual. In every age each of these principals has had its champions; and so basic and vital are the problems involved, that the conflict has exceeded all others in bitterness and universality. Each side, having its own method of approach, is impervious to the attacks of the other; hence it is unlikely that anything resembling agreement will ever be reached. Only the impartial, objective, dispassionate observer can form a just verdict of the dispute; and so few are these observers that their influence can never be great.

Man, slowly coming into existence as an efflorescence of some simian stock originally knew nothing beyond the concrete and the immediate. Formerly guided by reflex action or instinct, his evolving brain was an absolute blank regarding anything beyond those simple matters

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of defense, shelter, and food-procuring, whose exigencies had brought it into being. As this primal brain developed along the path of the original impelling force, its intrinsic strength and activity outstripped the material it had to feed upon. Since no sources of information were in existence to supply it, its dawning curiosity perforce became inventive, and the phenomena of Nature began to be interpreted in such simple terms as a nascent race could devise and comprehend. The sun was good. Men were comfortable when it was present, uncomfortable when it was absent. Therefore men should act toward the sun as they might act toward a chieftain or a pack-leader who was able to confer and withdraw favours. Leaders give favours when people praise them and give them presents. Therefore the sun should be praised and propitiated with presents. And so were born the imaginative concepts of diety, worship, and sacrifice. A new and wholly illusory system of thought had arisen--the spiritual.

The development of an ideal world of imagination, overlying and trying to explain the real world of Nature, was rapid. Since to the untutored mind the conception of impersonal nature is impossible, every natural phenomenon was invested with purpose and personality. If lightning struck the earth, it was wilfully hurled by an unseen being in the sky. If a river flowed toward the sea, it was because some unseen being wilfully propelled it. And since men understood no sources of action but themselves, these unseen creatures of imagination were endowed with human forms, despite their more than human powers. So rose the awesome race of anthropomorphic gods, destined to exert so long a sway over their creators. Parallel illusions were almost innumerable. Observing that his welfare depended upon conformity to that fixed course of atomic, molecular, and mass interaction which we now call the laws of Nature, primitive man devised the notion of divine government, with the qualities of spiritual right and wrong. Right and wrong indeed existed as actualities in the shape of conformity and non-conformity to Nature, but our first thinking ancestors could conceive of no law save personal will, so they deemed themselves the slaves of some celestial tyrant or tyrants of human shape and unlimited authority. Phases of this idea originated the monotheistic religions. Then came the illusion of justice. Observing that exchange is the natural basis of human relations, and that favours are most frequently granted to those who give favours, Man's imagination extended the local principal to the cosmos, and formed the sweeping conclusion that boons are always repaid by equal boons; that every human creature shall be rewarded by the powers of governing gods of Nature in proportion to his good deeds, or deeds of conformity. This conclusion was aided by the natural greed of desire of acquisition inherent in the species. All men want more than they have, and in order to explain the instinct they invoke an imaginary "right" to receive more. The idea of retribution and divine punishment was an inevitable concomitant of the idea of reward and divine favour.

This element of desire played a vast part in the extension of idealistic thought. Man's instincts, made more complex by the added impressions received through the nascent intellect, in many cases developed novel physical and mental reactions; and gave rise to isolated phenomena of emotion. Emotion, working hand in hand with imagination, created such illusions as that of "immortality"; which is undoubtedly a

compound of man's notions of "another world" as gained in dreams, and of the increasing horror of the idea of utter death as appreciated by a brain now able to comprehend as never before the fact that every man must sooner or later lose forever his accustomed pleasures of hunting, fighting, and lying before his favourite tree or cave in the sun. Man does not want to lose these pleasures, and his mind seeks an escape from the unknown and perhaps frightful abyss of death. It is doubtful if the savage, remembering nothing but life, can conceive of absolute non-existence. He finds false analogies like the vernal resurgence of plant life, and the beautiful world of dreams, and succeeds in persuading his half-formed intellect that his existence in the real world is but a part of a larger existence; that he will either be reborn on earth or transplanted to some remote and eternal dream-world. Later on the illusion of justice plays a part in the comedy; and man, failing to find abstract equity in actual life, is glad to invent a future life of repayment and adjustment according to merit.

With such a beginning, we need not marvel at the development of an elaborate and highly cherished system of idealistic philosophy. The advance of the intellect without previous scientific knowledge to guide it had the effect of strengthening emotion and imagination without a corresponding strengthening of ratiocinative processes, and the immense residue of unchanged brute instinct fell in with the scheme. Desire and fancy dwarfed fact and observation altogether; and we find all thought based not on truth, but on what man wishes to be truth.

Lacking the power to conceive of a mighty interaction of cosmical forces without a man-like will and a man-like purpose, humanity forms its persistent conviction that all creation has some definite object; that everything tends upward toward some unknown purpose or perfection. Thus arise all manner of extravagant hopes which in time fasten themselves on mankind and enslave his intellect beyond easy redemption. Hope becomes a despot, and man comes at last to use it as a final argument against reason, telling the materialist that the truth cannot be true, because it destroys hope.

As the complexity of the mind increases, and reason, emotion, and imagination develop, we behold a great refinement, subtilisation, and systematisation of idealistic thought. In the interim aesthetic and intellectual interests have arisen, demanding improvements and concessions in the dominant religions or superstitions of man. Idealising must now be made to conform to the actual facts which have been unearthed, and to the quickened sense of beauty which has grown up. At this stage the great civilisations are forming, and each fashions one or more highly technical and artistic scheme of philosophy or theology. At first the advances tend to confirm the idealistic notion. Beauty breeds wonder and imagination, whilst partial comprehension of the magnitude and operation of Nature breeds awe. Men do not pause to question whether their gods could, in truth, create and manage a universe so vast and intricate, but merely marvel the more at Gods who are able to perform such cosmic prodigies. Likewise, each thing on earth becomes merely the type of some imaginary better thing, or ideal, which is supposed to exist either in another world or in the future of this world. Out of the pleasantest phases of all objects and experiences imagination finds it easy to build illusory corresponding objects and experiences which are all pleasant. Whilst all mankind is more or less

involved in this wholesale dreaming, particular notions developed particularly notable idealistic systems, based on their especial mental and aesthetic capacity. Here Greece, foremost of cultural centres, easily leads the rest. With a primitive mythology of unexcelled loveliness, she has likewise the foremost of later idealistic philosophies, that of Plato. It is this Platonic system, sometimes operating through the clumsy covering of an alien Hebraic theology, that forms the animating force in idealism today.

The idealists of today form two classes, theological and rationalistic. The former are frankly primitive, and use the crudest and least advanced methods of argument. The latter adopt an outwardly scientific attitude and honestly believe themselves to be working from facts alone, yet are overwhelmingly influenced by the illusions of human perfectability and a better world. In clinging to these hoary fancies they generally seize upon the rather recently discovered and indubitably proven law of evolution to sustain them; forgetting the infinite slowness of the process, and overlooking the fact that when evolution should have really effected our descendants to any appreciable degree they will no longer belong to the human race—any more than we belong to the simian race. Of the two idealistic types, the theological deserves respect for its accomplishments, the rationalistic for its intentions. Religion has undoubtedly been the dominating factor in facilitating human relations and enforcing a moral or ethical code of practical benefit in alleviating the sufferings of mankind. The human reason is weak in comparison to instinct and emotion, and up to the present these latter forces, in the guise of theology, have proved the only effective restraint from the disorders of utter license and animalism. The percentage of men civilised and governed by reason is still relatively slight. True, certain religions have claimed excessive credit. Christianity, for example, claims to have civilised Europeans; whereas in cold truth it is Europe which has civilised Christianity. The faith of Christus adopted for political reasons by the Emperor Constantinus, was forcibly seated in power, whence it naturally assimilated to itself all the characteristics of the Graeco-Roman culture of the later empire and of the European nations which rose from that Empire's ashes; a culture which would have elevated to supreme dignity any religion similarly linked with it. But despite such excessive claims, it remains fairly clear that some form of religion is at least highly desirable among the uneducated. Without it they are despondent and turbulent; miserable with unsatisfied and unsatisfiable aspirations which may yet lead the civilised world to chaos and destruction. The rationalistic idealist neglects this practical consideration, and denounces religion in terms of unmeasured scorn because he knows it to be untrue. Just as the Theist forgets that his faith may be fallacious though its effects be good, so does the idealistic atheist forget that his doctrine may have ill effects though it be true. Both are governed by emotion rather than reason in their campaign of mutual instruction. Both cling to the primitive ideal of the ought-to-be. The rationalist is honest, and therefore to be admired. But when he allows his relentless and idealistic hostility to fallacy to lead him into a destructive course, he is to be censured. He should not pull down what he cannot replace; and since a preponderance of obvious evidence is against the possibility of rational self-government

by the masses, he should obey the practical judgement which forbids a gardener to saw off the tree limb on which he is sitting, even though it be dead and useless save as a support. In his passionately intense and narrowly single-minded public crusade against religion, the militant atheist shows himself as unbalanced an idealist as the Christian fanatic. Like the latter, he is following up one idea with febrile ardor and conviction; forgetting general conditions and the relative unimportance of truth to the world. Usually he acts in protest against the many undeniable evils of religion; evils which are outweighed by good effects, and which at worst are no graver than the evils inseparable from an atheistic code. It is this crusade against irremediable evils which stamps the idealist of every kind as childish. To fancy that age-old principles can be improved suddenly, or to fancy that the necessary little hypocrasies and injustices of ordinary life form a pretext for overturning the whole social structure, is in truth puerility of the most pitiful sort. The spectacle of Christians and idealistic atheists in mortal combat is indeed grotesque—one thinks of such things as the battles of the frogs and the mice, or of the pygmies and the cranes.

The materialist is the only thinker who makes use of the knowledge and experience which ages have brought to the human race. He is the man who, putting aside the instincts and desires which he knows to be animal and primitive, and the fancies and emotions which he knows to be purely subjective and linked to the recognized delusions of dreams and madness, views the cosmos with a minimum of personal bias, as a detached spectator coming with open mind to a sight about which he claims no previous knowledge. He approaches the universe without prejudices or dogmata, intent not upon planning what should be, or of spreading any particular idea through the world, but devoted merely to the perception and as far as possible the analysis of whatever may exist. He sees the infinity, eternity, purposelessness, and automatic action of creation, and the utter, abysmal insignificance of man and the world therein. He sees that the world is but a grain of dust in existence for a moment, and that accordingly all the problems of man are as nothing—mere trifles without relation to the infinite, just as man himself is unrelated to the infinite. He sees through the feeble fallacy of justice, and perceives the absurdity of the doctrine of an immortal personality, when in truth personality and thought come only from highly organized matter. He recognizes the impossibility of such things as vague, uncorporeal intelligences—"gaseous vertebrates", as Haeckel wittily called them. But while thus disillusioned, he does not fall into the rationalistic idealist's error of condemning as wicked and abnormal all religions and kindred benevolent fancies. Looking beyond the bald facts of atheism, he reconstructs the dawn of the human mind and perceives that its evolution absolutely necessitates a religious and idealistic period; that theism and idealism are perfectly natural, inevitable, and desirable concomitants of primitive thought, or thought without information. That they are still desirable for the many he accepts as a plain consequence of man's backward and atavistical nature. Actually, it can be shown that man has made but little progress since the dawn of history save in facilities for physical comfort. What arouses the materialist to conflict is not the existence of idealism, but the extent to which idealists obtrude their illusions

upon thinking men in an endeavor to befog the truth. Truth, be it pleasant or unpleasant, is the one object of the materialist's quest—for it is the only object worthy of the quest of an enlightened mind. He seeks it not to spread it and wreck happiness, but to satisfy the craving of his intelligence for it; to establish his right to the position of a rational man. When theists or athiestical idealists try to force their childish doctrines down the throat of realistic thinkers, the trouble begins. With the humble and the unobtrusive Church or the quiet and undemonstrative Utopian the materialist has no quarrel. But when either of these adopts arrogant tactics and seeks to discredit a philosophy which is honest, quiet, and sincere, the eternal enmity of dissimilar thought once more becomes manifest. No manly reasoner will tamely allow himself to be lulled into mental inactivity by the emotional soothing-syrup of faith, be it faith in a supernatural goodness, or a non-existent perfectability of humanity.

Perhaps it is in the ethical field that materialists clash most decidedly with idealists; and curiously so, since in most cases the difference is one of approach rather than of actual code. Idealists believe in a right and wrong distinct from Nature, and therefore invent something they call "sin", building up a highly artificial system of mythology around it. They measure Man's acts not by the standard of practical value in promoting the comfort and smooth existence of the race, but by imaginary ideals of their own construction. That materialists should not believe in this mythical system of ideals enrages idealists vastly, yet when both come to apply their codes of moral government, a surprising similarity is shown. The fact is, that on the one hand ideals are largely formed with Nature as a pattern; whilst on the other hand, an ancient, practical code of ethics must always demand a bit more than it expects. A harmonious and workable moral system must satisfy as many aspects of nature as possible, and accomodate itself to the peculiarities of the age and place. Where an idealistic code is well grounded, the materialist leaves it unaltered as a matter of sound common sense. Where it is not, he consults Nature, history, and good taste, and advocates a system more nearly in accord with these things. A study of history will show that the basic moral ideals of the white race have been but little affected by its belief. Some systems bring out certain virtues more strongly than others, and some conceal vices more cleverly than others; but the general average is about the same. Of course, practical enforcement is another matter; and here the sincere materialist concedes the palm to religion. Superstition is stronger than reason, and a code will best touch the masses if sustained by supposed divine authority. In the case of our own Anglo-Saxon code, no honest materialist would wish to cause any marked alteration. With a little less Sabbatarianism and exaltation of meekness, the existing system would be admirably suited to natural wants and even these slight defects are now rapidly wearing away. If at the present time we complain at the tendency of the Church to assume a position of ostentatious moral guardianship, it is because we perceive the signs of its decay, and wish to preserve its ethical legacy as best we can in a rationalistic manner. We do not wish to see faith and morals so inextricably intertwined that the latter will collapse with the former.

Beyond the sphere of simple conduct lies the question of one's at-

titude toward life as a whole. That the philosophy of materialism is pessimistic, none can deny; but much may be said in favor of a calm, courageous facing of the infinite by the resigned, disillusioned, unhoping, unemotional atom as contrasted with the feverish, pathological struggle and agony of the Christian mind, coping desperately with the mythical shadows and problems it has invented, and agitated by emotions which idealism has overstimulated instead of repressing as emotions should be repressed. The materialist has nothing to lose; the idealist is eternally suffering the pains of disillusionment. And even the boasted theological "peace that passeth all understanding" is a weak, hollow thing as compared with the virtuous materialist's pride in an unshackled mind and an unsullied honour. If idealism really lived up to its promises, conditions might be otherwise; but no fallacy can wholly envelop the human mind, and there are terrible moments when even the unprepared intellect of the idealist is brought face to face with the truth about the cosmos and the lack of divine justice, purpose, and destiny.

Idealism as we know it today bases itself on the false promise that emotion forms under certain conditions a perfect substitute for reason in imparting positive knowledge. Mr. Dryden expressed this sentiment with great vividness at the beginning of his "Religio Laici":

And as those nightly tapers disappear
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
So dies and so dissolves in supernatural light.

Religious persons will assure you that they know their faith to be true by means of sensations or intuitions too deep to be expressed. The materialist cannot but smile at this readiness to accept hallucination as evidence. Those who make these assurances forget that other religions have undergone the same emotional experiences, and are equally certain that their respective faiths are the only true faiths; and they forget that many a man in Bedlam has the certain belief that he is Alexander, Caesar, or Napoleon. The subjective is always vague, variable, and visionary. It is based on false mental images like those of dreams, and can be proven to have no weight whatsoever in imparting facts, or distinguishing truth from error. The writer can cite a subjective childhood fancy of his own which well illustrates the false position of the intuitive theist. Though the son of an Anglican father and Baptist mother, and early accustomed to the usual pious tales of an orthodox house-hold and Sunday School, he was never a believer in the prevailing abstract and barren Christian mythology. Instead he was a devotee of Fairy Tales and "Arabian Nights' Entertainments"; none of which he believed, but which seemed to him as fully true as the Bible tales, and much more attractive. Then, at an age not much above six he stumbled on the legends of Greece—and became a sincere and enthusiastic classical pagan. Unlearned in Science, and reading all the Graeco-Roman lore at hand, he was until the age of eight a rapt devotee of the old gods; building altars to Pan and Apollo, Athena and Artemis, and benignant Saturnus, who ruled the world of the Golden Age. And at times this belief was very real indeed—there are vivid memor-

ies of fields and groves at twilight when the now materialistic mind that dictates these lines knew absolutely that the ancient Gods were true. Did not he see with his own eyes, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the graceful forms of dryads half mingled with the trunks of antique oaks, or spy with clearness and certainty the elusive little fauns and goat-footed old satyrs who leapt about so slyly from the shadow of one rock or thicket to that of another? He saw these things as plainly as he saw the antique oaks and the rocks and thickets themselves, and laughed at unbelievers, for he knew. Now he realises that he saw these things with the eye of imagination only; that his devotion to the Gods was but a passing phase of childish dreaming and emotionalism, to be dissipated with time and knowledge. But he has today every jot of Graeco-Roman paganism that any Christian has for Christianity, any Jew for Judaism, any Mohometan for Mohometanism, or any lodge for Spiritualism. What a mixture of crude instinct, desire, illusion fancy, autohypnotism, delerium, and aethetic fervour is the religious belief of the average Theist! Much of the zeal he displays is undoubtedly derived from a perversion or modification of rather baser instinct about which a psychologist of the Freudian type could speak more authoritively than the writer. This very connection betwixt religious and other emotion should be significant to the observer. It is the less thoughtful and more passionate man or race that possesses the deepest religious instincts, as we see in the case of the Negro. The colder, and more highly developed, mind of the European is the birth-place of materialism.

Idealism and Materialism! Illusion and Truth! Together they will go down into the darkness when man has ceased to be; when beneath the last flickering beams of a dying sun shall perish utterly the last vestige of organic life on our tiny grain of cosmic sand.

And upon the black planets that reel devilishly about a black sun shall the name of man be forgotten. Nor shall the stars sing his fame as they pierce the aether with cruel needles of pale light. But who shall be so heedless of analogy as to say that men, or things having faculties of men, do not swell on uncounted myriads of unseen planets that whirl about far stars? Greater or lesser than our own their minds may be—probably some worlds hold duller creatures, whilst some hold beings whom we would call Gods for their wisdom. But be their inhabitants greater or lesser than we, none can doubt that on every world where thought exists, there also exist the systems of Idealism and Materialism, eternally and unalterably opposed.

A CONFESSION OF UNFAITH

As a participant in "The Liberal"'s Experience Meeting, wherein amateurs are invited to state their theories of the universe, I must preface all my remarks by the qualifying admission that they do not necessarily constitute a permanent view. The seeker of truth for its own sake is chained to no conventional system, but always shapes his philosophical opinions upon what seems to him the best evidence at hand. Changes, therefore, are constantly possible; and occur whenever new or revalued evidence makes them logical.

I am by nature a sceptic and analyst, hence settled early into my present general attitude of cynical materialism, subsequently changing in regard to details and degree rather than basic ideals. The environment into which I was born was that of the average American Protestant of urban, civilised type—in theory quite orthodox, but in practice very liberal. Morals rather than faith formed the real keynote. I was instructed in the legends of the Bible and of St. Nicholas at the age of about two, and gave to both a passive acceptance not especially distinguished either for its critical keenness or its enthusiastic comprehension. Within the next few years I added to my supernatural lore the fairy tales of Grimm and the Arabian Nights; and by the time I was five had small choice amongst these speculations so far as truth was concerned, though for attractiveness I favored the Arabian Nights.

At one time I formed a juvenile collection of Oriental pottery and objets d' art, announcing myself as a devout Mussulman and assuming the pseudonym of "Abdul Alhazred". My first positive utterance of a sceptical nature probably occurred before my fifth birthday, when I was told what I really knew before, that "Santa Claus" is a myth. This admission caused me to ask why "God" is not equally a myth. Not long afterwards I was placed in the "infant class" at the Sunday School of the venerable First Baptist Church, an ecclesiastical landmark dating from 1775; and there resigned all vestiges of Christian belief. The absurdity of the myths I was called upon to accept, and the sombre greyness of the whole faith as compared with the Eastern magnificence of Mohometanism, made me definitely an agnostic; and caused me to become so pestiferous a questioner that I was permitted to discontinue attendance. No statement of the kind-hearted and motherly preceptress had seemed to me to answer in any way the doubts I honestly and explicitly expressed, and I was fast becoming a marked "man" through my

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searching iconoclasm. No doubt I was regarded as a corrupter of the simple faith of the other "infants".

When I was six my philosophical evolution received its most aesthetically significant impetus—the dawn of Graeco-Roman thought. Always avid for fairy lore, I had chanced on Hawthorne's "Wonder Book" and "Tanglewood Tales", and was enraptured by the Hellenic myths even in their Teutonised form. Then a tiny book in the private library of my elder aunt—the story of the Odyssey in "Harper's Half-hour Series"—caught my attention. From the opening chapter I was electrified, and by the time I reached the end I was for evermore a Graeco-Roman. My Bagdad name and affiliations disappeared at once, for the magics of silks and colors faded before that of fragrant templed groves, faun-peopled meadows in the twilight, and the blue beckoning Mediterranean, that billowed mysteriously out from Hellas into the reaches of haunting wonder where dwelt Lotophagi and Laestrygonians, where Aelus kept his winds and Circe her swine, and where in Thrinacian pastures roamed the oxen of radiant Helios. As soon as possible I procured an illustrated edition of Bulfinch's "Age of Fable", and gave all my time to the reading of the text, in which the true spirit of Hellenism is delightfully preserved, and to the contemplation of the pictures, splendid designs and half-tones of the standard classical statues and paintings of classical subjects. Before long I was fairly familiar with the principal Grecian myths and had become a constant visitor at the classical art museums of Providence and Boston. I commenced a collection of small plaster casts of the Greek masterpieces, and learned the Greek alphabet and rudiments of the Latin tongue. I adopted the pseudonym of "Lucius Valerius Messala"—Roman and not Greek, since Rome had a charm all its own for me. My grandfather had travelled observingly through Italy, and delighted me with long, first-hand accounts of its beauties and memorials of ancient grandeur. I mention this aesthetic tendency in detail only to lead up to its philosophical result—my last flickering of religious belief. When about seven or eight I was a genuine pagan, so intoxicated with the beauty of Greece that I acquired a half-sincere belief in the old gods and nature spirits. I have in literal truth built altars to Pan, Apollo, and Athena, and have watched for dryads and satyrs in the woods and fields at dusk. Once I firmly thought I beheld some of the sylvan creatures dancing under autumnal oaks; a kind of "religious experience" as true in its way as the subjective ecstasies of an Christian. If a Christian tell me he has felt the reality of his Jesus or Jehveh, I can reply that I have seen the hooped Pan and the sisters of the Hesperian Phaethusa.

But in my ninth year, as I was reading the Grecian myths in their standard poetical translations and thus acquiring unconsciously my taste for Queen-Anne English, the real foundations of my scepticism were laid. Impelled by the fascinating pictures of scientific instruments in the back of Webster's Unabridged, I began to take an interest in natural philosophy and chemistry; and soon had a promising laboratory in my cellar, and a new stock of simple scientific text-books in my budding library. Ere long I was more of a scientific student than pagan dreamer. In 1897 my leading "literary" work was a "poem" entitled "The New Odyssey"; in 1899 it was a compendious treatise on chemistry in several pencil-scribbled "volumes". But mythology was by no means neglected. In this period I read much in Egyptian, Hindoo, and

Teutonic mythology, and tried experiments in pretending to believe each one, to see which might contain the greatest truth. I had, it will be noted, immediately adopted the method and manner of science! Naturally, having an open and unemotional mind, I was soon a complete sceptic and materialist. My scientific studies had enlarged to include geographical, geological, biological, and astronomical rudiments. and I had acquired the habit of relentless analysis in all matters.

My pompous "book" called "Poemata Minora", written when I was eleven, was dedicated "To the Gods, Heroes, and Ideals of the Ancients", and harped in disillusioned, world-weary tones on the sorrow of the pagan robbed of his antique pantheon. Some of these very juvenile "poemata" were reprinted in THE TRYOUT for April 1919, under new titles and pseudonyms.

Hitherto my philosophy had been distinctly juvenile and empirical. It was a revolt from obvious falsities and ugliness, but involved no particular cosmic or ethical theory. In ethical questions I had no analytical interest because I did not realize that they were questions. I accepted Victorianism, with consciousness of many prevailing hypocrisies and aside from Sabbatarian and supernatural matters, without dispute; never having conceived of inquiries which reached "beyond good and evil". Though at times interested in reforms, notably prohibition, (I have never tasted alcoholic liquor) I was inclined to be bored by ethical casuistry; since I believed conduct to be a matter of taste and breeding, with virtue, delicacy, and truthfulness as a symbol of gentility. Of my word and honor I was inordinately proud, and would permit no reflections to be cast upon them. I thought ethics too obvious and commonplace to be scientifically discussed, and considered philosophy in its relation to truth and beauty, solely. I was and still am pagan to the core. Regarding man's place in nature, and the structure of the universe, I was as yet unawakened. This awakening was to come in the winter of 1902-3, when astronomy asserted its supremacy amidst my studies.

The most poignant sensations of my existence are those of 1896, when I discovered the Hellenic world, and of 1902, when I discovered the myriad suns and worlds of infinite space. Sometimes I think the latter event the greater, for the grandeur of that growing conception of the universe still excites a thrill hardly to be duplicated. I made of astronomy my principal scientific study, obtaining larger and larger telescopes, collecting astronomical books to the number of 61, and writing copiously on the subject in the form of special and monthly articles in the local daily press. By my thirteenth birthday I was thoroughly impressed with man's impermanence and insignificance, and by my seventeenth, about which time I did some particularly detailed writing on the subject, I had formed in all essential particulars my present pessimistic cosmic views. The futility of all existence began to impress and oppress me; and my references to human progress, formerly hopeful, began to decline in enthusiasm. Always partial to antiquity, I allowed myself to originate a sort of one-man cult of retrospective suspiration. Realistic analysis, favored by history and diffusive scientific learnings which now included Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley and various other pioneers, was checked by my aversion for realistic literature. In fiction I was devoted to the phantasy of Poe; in poetry and essays to the elegant formalism and conventionality of

the eighteenth century. I was not at all wedded to the illusions I retained. My attitude has always been cosmic, and I looked on man as if from another planet. He was merely an interesting species presented for study and classification. I had strong prejudices and partialities in many fields, but could not help seeing the race in its cosmic futility as well as in its terrestrial importance. By the time I was of age, I had scant faith in the world's betterment; and felt a decreasing interest in its cherished pomps and prides. When I entered Amateurdom in my 24th year, I was well on the road to my present cynicism; a cynicism tempered with immeasurable pity for man's eternal tragedy of aspirations beyond the possibility of fulfilment.

The war confirmed all the views I had begun to hold. The cant of idealists sickened me increasingly, and I employed no more than was necessary for literary embellishment. With me democracy was a minor question, my anger being aroused primarily by the audacity of a challenge to Anglo-Saxon supremacy, and by the needless territorial greed and disgusting ruthlessness of the Huns. I was untroubled by the scruples which beset the average liberal. Blunders I accepted; a German defeat was all I asked or hoped for. I am, I hardly need add, a warm partisan of Anglo-American reunion; my opinion being that the division of a single culture into two national units is wasteful and often dangerous. In this case my opinion is doubly strong because I believe that the entire existing civilisation depends on Saxon dominance.

About this time my philosophical thought received its greatest and latest stimulus through discussion with several amateurs; notably Maurice Winter Moe, an orthodox but tolerant Christian and inspiring opponent, and Alfred Galpin, Jr., a youth in approximate agreement with me, but with a mind so far in the lead that the comparison is impossible without humility on my part. Correspondence with these thinkers led to a recapitulation and codification of my views, revealing many flaws in my elaborated doctrines, and enabling me to secure greater clearness and consistency. The impetus also enlarged my philosophical reading and research, and broke down many hindering prejudices. I ceased my literal adherence to Epicurus and Lucretius, and reluctantly dismissed free-will forever in favor of determinism.

The Peace Conference, Frederick Nietzsche, Samuel Butler (the modern), H. L. Mencken, and other influences have perfected my cynicism; a quality which grows more intense as the advent of middle life removes the blind prejudice whereby youth clings to the vapid "All's right with the world" hallucinations, from sheer force of desire to have it so. As I near thirty-two I have no particular wishes, save to perceive facts as they are. My objectivity, always marked, is now paramount and unopposed, so that there is nothing I am not willing to believe. I no longer really desire anything but oblivion, and am thus ready to discard any gilded illusion or accept any unpalatable fact with perfect equanimity. I can at least concede willingly that the wishes, hopes, and values of humanity are matters of total indifference to the blind cosmic mechanism. Happiness I recognize as an ethereal phantom whose simulacrum comes fully to none and even partially but to a few, and whose position as the goal of all human striving is a grotesque mixture of farce and tragedy.

NIETSCHEISM AND REALISM

Concerning the quality of mastery, and of poise in trying situations, I believe that it arises more from hereditary than environmental considerations. Its possession cannot be acquired through the culture of the individuals, although the systematic culture of a certain class during many generations undoubtedly tends to bring out such strength to a degree which will cause that class to produce a higher average of dominant individuals than an uncultivated class of equal numerical magnitude.

I doubt whether it would be possible to create any class strong enough to sway permanently a vast body of inferiors, hence, I perceive the impracticability of Nietzscheism and the essential instability of even the strongest of governments. There is no such thing—and there never will be such a thing—as good and permanent government among the crawling, miserable vermin called human beings. Aristocracy and monarchy are most effective in developing the best qualities of mankind as expressed in achievements in taste and intellect, but they lead to an unlimited arrogance. That arrogance in turn inevitably leads to their decline and overthrow. On the other hand, democracy and ochlocracy lead just as certainly to decline and collapse through their lack of any stimulus to individual achievement. They may perhaps last longer, but that is because they are closer to the primal animal or savage state from which civilised man is supposed to have partly evolved.

Communism is a characteristic of many savage tribes; whilst absolute anarchy is the rule amongst the majority of wild animals.

The brain of the white human animal has advanced to such a stage that the colorless equality of the lower animals is painful and unendurable to it; it demands an individual struggle for complex conditions and sensations which can only be achieved by a few at the expense of the many. This demand will always exist, and it will never be satisfied because it divides mankind into hostile groups constantly struggling for supremacy, and successively gaining and losing it.

When there is an autocracy, we may be sure that the masses will some day overthrow it; and when there is a democracy or ochlocracy, we may be sure that some group of mentally and physically superior individuals will someday overthrow it by establishing a more or less enduring

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(but never wholly permanent) supremacy, either through judgement in playing men against each other, or through patience and ability in concentrating power by taking advantage of the indolence of the majority. In a word, the social organisation of humanity is in a state of perpetually and incurably unstable equilibrium. The very notion of such things as perfection, justice, and improvement is an illusion based on vain hopes and overdrawn analogies.

It must be remembered that there is no real reason to expect anything in particular from mankind—good and evil are local expedients—or their lack—and not in any sense cosmic truths or laws. We call a thing "good" because it promotes certain petty human conditions that we happen to like—whereas it is just as sensible to assume that all humanity is a noxious pest which should be eradicated like rats or gnats for the good of the planet or the universe. There are no absolutes, no values in the whole blind tragedy of mechanistic nature—nothing is either good or bad except as judged from an absurdly limited point of view.

The only cosmic reality is mindless, undeviating fate—automatic, unmoral, uncalculating inevitability.

As human beings, our only sensible scale of values is based on the lessening of the agony of existence. That plan is most deserving of praise which most ably fosters the creation of the objects and conditions best adapted to diminish the pain of living for those most sensitive to its depressing ravages.

To expect perfect adjustment and happiness is absurdly unscientific and unphilosophical. We can seek only a more or less trivial mitigation of suffering.

I believe in an aristocracy, because I deem it the only agency for the creation of those refinements which make life endurable for the human animal of high organization.

Since the only human motive is a craving for supremacy, we can expect nothing in the way of achievement unless achievement be rewarded by supremacy.

We cannot expect justice—justice is a mocking phantom—and we know that aristocracy has many undesirable features. But we also know—sadly enough—that we can never abolish the evils without abolishing everything of value to civilised man.

In an aristocracy some persons have a great deal to live for. In a democracy most persons have little to live for. In an ochlocracy nobody has anything whatever to live for.

Aristocracy alone is capable of creating thoughts and objects of value. Everyone, I fancy, will admit that such a state must precede democracy or ochlocracy in order to build the original culture.

Fewer are willing to admit the cognate truth that democracies and ochlocracies merely subsist parasitically on the aristocracies they overthrow, gradually using up the aesthetic and intellectual resources which autocracy bequeathed them and which they could never have created for themselves. The rate of squandering depends upon the completeness of the departure of the aristocracy.

Where the old spirit lingers, the process of deterioration may be very slow indeed—certain belated additions compensating for the decline. But where the rabble gain full sway, taste is certain to vanish, and dullness reigns darkly triumphant over the ruins of culture.

Wealth and luxury are essential alike to the creation and the full appreciation of beauty and truth. Indeed, it is the existence of wealth and luxury and of the standards which they establish, that gives most of the pleasure felt by the non-wealthy and non-luxurious. The masses would rob themselves by cutting off the real source of that slight enjoyment which they secure, as it were, by reflection.

When, however, I praise autocracy, I do not by any means refer to such absolute monarchies as czarist Russia or kaiseristic Germany.

Moderation is essential in all things, and overstressed political autocracy produces an infinity of stupid checks on art and intellect. A tolerable amount of political liberty is absolutely essential to the free development of the mind, so that, in speaking of the virtues of an aristocratic system, the philosopher has in mind less a governmental despotism than an arrangement of well-defined traditional social classes, like those of England and France.

Government aristocracy need go no further than to safeguard an aristocratic class in its opulence, and dignity, so that it may be left free to create the ornaments of life and to attract the ambition of others who seek to rise to it.

The healthiest aristocracy is the most elastic—willing to receive as accessions all men of whatever antecedents who prove themselves aesthetically and intellectually fitted for membership.

It gains, moreover, if its members can possess that natural nobility which is content with a recognition of its own worth, and which demonstrates its superiority in supreme works and behavior, rather than in snobbish and arrogant speech and attitude.

The real aristocrat is ever reasonable, kindly and affable toward the masses—it is the incompletely cultured noxus homo who makes ostentation of his power and since all are but the blind result of uncomposition.

Yet, in the last analysis, it is futile to pass judgement upon any type of social order, controlled by fate and utterly beyond the power of any statesman or reformer to alter or amend.

All human life is weary, incomplete, unsatisfying, and sardonically purposeless. It always has been and always will be; so that he who looks for a paradise is merely a dupe of myths or of his own imagination.

The will and emotion of man crave conditions that do not and never will exist, so that the wise man is he who kills will and emotion to a degree enabling him to despise life and sneer at puerile illusions and unsubstantial goals. The wise man is a laughing cynic; he takes nothing seriously, ridicules earnestness and zeal, and wants nothing because he knows the cosmos holds nothing worth wanting. And yet, being wise, he is not a tenth as happy as the dog or peasant that knows no life or aspiration above the simplest animal plane.

It is good to be a cynic—it is better to be a contented cat—and it is best not to exist at all.

Universal suicide is the most logical thing in the world—we reject it only because of our primitive cowardice and childish fear of the dark. If we were sensible, we would seek death—the same blissful blank we enjoyed before we existed.

It does not matter what happens to the race—in the cosmos the existence or non-existence of the earth and its miserable inhabitants is

a thing of the most complete indifference. Arcturus would glow just as cheerfully if the whole solar system were wiped out.

The undesirability of any system of rule not tempered with the quality of kindness is obvious, for "kindness" is a complex collection of various impulses, reactions, and realizations highly necessary to the smooth adjustment of botched and freakish creatures like most human beings. It is a weakness basically—or in some cases, an ostentation of secure superiority—but its net effect is desirable; hence, it is, on the whole, praiseworthy.

Since all motives at bottom are selfish and ignoble, we may judge acts and qualities only by their effects.

Pessimism produces kindness. The disillusioned philosopher is ever more tolerant than the priggish bourgeois idealist with his sentimental and extravagant notions of human dignity and destiny.

"The conviction that the world and man is something which we had better not have," says Schopenhauer, "is of a kind to fill us with indulgence toward one another. It reminds us of that which is after all the most necessary thing in life—the tolerance, patience and regard and love of neighbor, of which everyone stands in need, and which, therefore, every man owes to his fellow."

