

EPILOGUE AND DEDICATION

November 19, 1906.

MY DEAR ION,—I address you by the unfamiliar title in giving you, a man self-damned, God knows how unjustly, as the author of the phrase, “I am not an appreciator of poetry, and I have no Keats,” these volumes. For the matter thereof is already in great part yours and as such cannot be given. The rest I offer because it is hardly possible to close definitely, as I do now, a period of many years’ work, without reflecting upon that period as a whole. And, when I do so, I find you at the beginning like Ladas or Pheidippides of old, running — ready to run until you achieve the goal or your heart burst; but you are among a crowd. I join you. Eight years ago this day you, Hermes, let me blindfold to awake a chosen runner of the course. “In all my wanderings in darkness your light shone before me though I knew it not.” To-day (one may almost hope, turning into the straight) you and I are alone. Terrible and joyous! We shall find companions at the End, at the banquet, lissome and cool and garlanded; companions with a Silver Star or maybe a Jewelled Eye mobile and uncertain — as if alive — on their foreheads. We shall be bidden to sit, and they will wreath us with immortal flowers, and give us to drink of the seemly wine of Iacchus — well! but until then, unless my heart deceives me, no third shall appear to join us. Indeed, may two attain? It seems a thing impossible in nature. May it not be that — near as the resounding roar of the viewless spectators sounds to our dust-dimmed ears — there stands

some awful opposer in the way, some fear or some seduction? Why do you grip that bar in your left hand? Does not this loin-cloth irk my limbs? We should have shaved our heads before the race — the curls are moist and heavy! Why did we cumber ourselves with sandals? Long ere now our feet would have grown hard. Well, if my heart bursts, it bursts; you must give these volumes to the young athletes, that they may learn wherefore I failed — wherefore it was given unto me to run thus far. For, if I have put nothing else therein, most surely that is there.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.