

wisely determines, like Kirkpatrick, to make sure. And indeed the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of the flesh and the eye and the pride of life, and all the other enemies of the saint, do indeed choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

II THE DESERT

As a monastery is an unwholesome and artificial monotony, so is the desert nature's own cure for all the tribulations of thought.

And the soul undergoes a triplex weaving. First, the newness of the surroundings, their strange and salient simplicity, charm the soul. It has a premonition of its cure ; it feels the atmosphere of home. It is sure of its vocation. Next, the mind, its frivolity once satiate with novelty, becomes bored, turns to acrimony, even to passionate revolt. The novice beats against the bars ; the stranger in the desert flies to London or to Paris with the devil at his heels. A wise superior will not restrain a probationer who cannot restrain himself ; but in the desert, the refugee, if he doubts his own powers—still more, maybe, if he does not mistrust them!—would wisely make it impossible to return. But how should he do so ? Believe me who have tried it, the longest journey, the most bitter hardships, are as nothing, an arrow-flight of joy, when the great horror lies behind and the sanctuary of Paris ahead.

For, indeed, this is the great horror, solitude, when the soul can no longer bathe in the ever-changing mind, but, shut up in the castle of a few thoughts, paces its narrow prison, wearing down the stone of time, feeding on its own excrement. There is no star in the blackness of that night, no foam upon that stagnant and putrid sea. Even the glittering health that the desert brings to the body is like a spear in the soul's throat. The passionate ache to act, to think, this eats into the soul like a cancer. It is the scorpion striking itself in its agony, save that no poison can add to the torture of the circling fires. But against these paroxysms is an eightfold sedative. The ravings of madness are lost in soundless space ; the struggles of the drowning man are not heeded by the sea.

These are the eight genii of the desert. They are the eight Elements of Fohi :—

Sun—Lingam.	Water.	Wood (life).
Space.	Earth.	Moon—Yoni.
Wind.	Fire.	