

THE BOOK OF LIES. WHICH IS ALSO FALSELY CALLED BREAKS

By Frater Perdurabo. (Wieland & Co., 21s.)

Poetry and Drama says: Creation and destruction of Gods has been for centuries mankind's favourite religious mania and philosophical exercise. "The Book of Lies" is a witty, instructive, and wholly admirable collection of paradoxes, in themselves contradictory, summing up and illustrating various experiments in God-making. Frater Perdurabo, however, has not written a philosophical or mystical treatise; on the contrary, his book leaves one with a feeling of intense exhilaration and clearheadedness. The book cannot be judged by the mere reading of excerpts; nor can it be read straight through. Indeed, if one is really desirous to appreciate its subtleties, this should not be attempted before 12 p.m. To be carried about and discussed at leisure, to annoy, at the same time the quintessence of paradox and simplicity itself; yet when all this is said one is still far from the core, for just when one thinks to have discovered it, one finds that many obvious beauties of thought and expression have been overlooked, others misinterpreted. Sometimes one is even doubtful if the author himself could translate into definite terms the exact meaning of his aphorisms and paradoxes without detracting from the value of the book as artistic expression of his personality. This is, however, an individual appreciation. "The Book of Lies" will be interpreted differently by each reader and judged accordingly.—A. d. R.

The New Witness says: I have read with great care two very extraordinary books for which one Frater Perdurabo is partly or wholly responsible. "The Book of Lies," and "Book Four," both published by Messrs. Wieland & Co., Avenue Studios, South Kensington. "Book Four" is sold for a shilling, but "The Book of Lies" is evidently far more precious, for though its wisdom fills only 116 small black-edged pages, it is not obtainable for less than a guinea. Allow me to reproduce its name and description in full (done).

Now that, I thought, was rather pleasant, but looking on I perceived that these breaks could not be profitable to me without a severe intellectual preparation. I turned to "Book Four," and there I read: "This book is intentionally not the work of Frater Perdurabo. Experience shows that his writing is too concentrated, too abstruse, too occult for ordinary minds to apprehend." "Book Four" seems intended as a kind of introduction to the "Book of Lies." It has also other objects. It tells one, for example, how to procure certain of the very interesting works of Mr. Aleister Crowley for the insignificant sum of 6 guineas, 31 dollars, or 156 francs. It tells one, also, how to approach the throne of the Brother, how to gain a spiritual power not unlike his, although he is anxious, being "the most honest of all the great religious teachers," that nobody shall believe him. Hoping some day to be able to write little books that should sell for a guinea apiece, and also to understand "The Book of Lies," I set myself vehemently to the study of "Book Four." I experimented with "the seven keys to the great gate," though I admit my ambition led me to concentrate my energies chiefly on "Meditation," as Soror Virakam says that this, as described in "Book Four," is "The Way of Attainment of Genius or Godhead considered as a development of the Human Brain." Genius or Godhead; either would suit me well. I will not describe my experiments in detail but rather their results, which were a very bad cold in the head, and a few words of poetry which I am informed are worthy of Shakespeare and were indeed used by him in his noblest tragedy.

Facing page 25 of "Book Four" is a photograph of a man naked sitting on the floor hugging his shins and hiding his face in his knees. I observed it with reverence, for it might perhaps represent Frater Perdurabo himself, whom I have not the honour of knowing by sight. Opposite the picture I read: "The Student must now set his teeth and go through with it."

I set my teeth. I went through with it, and, perhaps because February is a rather wintry month, there resulted first the Shakespearean words and secondly a very bad catarrh. The words were these:—

"Poor Tom. . . . Tom's a-cold."

If any should doubt the Shakespearean nature of this inspiration, my informant, who knows the works of that great master, refers to the Tragedy of Lear, Act iii. Scene 4.

Frater Perdurabo has not been so foolish. Indeed, I fear that though his method lifted me to Shakespeare's level in "Genius or Godhead" it played its inventor false. Perhaps two or three or even more "ways of attainment" clashed with each other. Or—and with reverence must we contemplate this possibility—Frater Perdurabo attained too much. He put himself so vigorously in motion towards his goal that he overshot it and was carried past the common godhead or genius and hurled into something far beyond it, a region of super-divinity or super-genius so far above that language will not bridge the gap—the gulf that divides its perfect wisdom from our feeble groping expression. Let me give an example of the poetry of Frater Perdurabo. A few of the names of his poems will no doubt sharpen our appetite, so I copy them out from the list which Frater Perdurabo calls "Pro and Con Tents": "The Sabbath of the Goat," "The Hmog" (a note explains that this means "Holy Illuminated Man of God"), "Corn Beef Hash," "Trouble with Twins," "Skidoo," "Haggai-Howlings," "The Blind Pig" (a note explains that $\pi = \text{PG} = \text{Pig}$ without an $\text{I} = \text{Blind Pig}$). Many of the other titles are no less promising. Here, however, is the chapter called "Skidoo."

"SKIDOO."

"What man is at ease in his Inn?"—"Get out."—"Wide is the world and cold."—"Get out."—"Thou hast become an initiate."—"Get out."—"But thou canst not get out by the way thou camest in. The way out is THE WAY."—"Get out."—"For OUT is Love and Wisdom and Power."—"Get out."—"If thou hast T already, first get UT."—"Then get O."—"And so at last get out."

There are two notes to this chapter which do not, to my mind, much elucidate it. "O," we are told, "is VS, The Devil of the Sabbath; U = 8, the Hierophant or Redeemer; T = Strength, the Lion." "T" on the other hand, is "manhood, the sign of the cross or phallus; UT, the Holy Guardian Angel; UT, the first syllable of Udgita, see the Upanishads; O, Nothing, or Nuit."

Here is something far beyond Shakespearean simplicity. Perhaps I should have attained to it if I had persisted in my naked meditation on the floor, beyond the very bad cold that brought it to an end.

Let me take another example:—

"PHAETON."

"No."—"Yes."—"Perhaps."—"O!"—"Eye."—"Hi!"—"Y?"—"No."—"Hail! all ye spavined, gelded, hamstrung horses!"—"Ye shall surpass the planets in their courses."—"How? Not by speed, nor strength, nor power to stay, but by the Silence that succeeds the Neigh!"

There are no notes to this chapter.

"This book," another chapter tells us, "would translate Beyond-Reason into the words of Reason." The difficulty the author encountered was like that of explaining snow to the inhabitants of the Tropics. The result is quite unintelligible to a simple brother like myself, whose only effort so far has been to keep on the higher side of reason, who is also hampered by the cold in the head given him by the position pictured in "Book Four." Yet through these Haggai-Howlings, I admit, there does appear a personality, perhaps a philosophy, a doubt of a doubt of a doubt (I offer this phrase to Frater Perdurabo for his next book), a certain vehemence of passion, a sense of humour rare in philosophers, and a determination not to be too easily understood. "Adepts," we learn, "have praised silence; at least it does not mislead as speech does." Frater Perdurabo understood. That, I suggest, is a mistake. Page 5 of his book is occupied only by a mark of interrogation: a mark of howls aloud. That, I suggest, is a mistake. Page 6 of his book is occupied only by a mark of interrogation: a mark of howls aloud. That, I suggest, is a mistake. Perhaps we may take these pages as promises of an improved method. A more silent and so, in the view of "adepts," a less misleading guinea's worth might well be made by a development of the hitherto neglected occult meanings of spaces of blank paper, and the wonderful signs constrained usually by "the slaves of reason" to the servile punctuation of the common speech.—FRATER PERDITUS.