

present to experience this. We put the mind of the spectator in tune with the pure idea of austerity and melancholy which we call Saturn, or with the idea of force and fire which we call Mars, or with the idea of nature and love which we call Venus, and so for the others. If he becomes identified with this idea the union is one of ecstatic bliss, and its only imperfection is due to the fact that the idea in question, whatever it may be, is only partial. Ecstasy is therefore progressive. Gradually the adept unites himself with holier and higher ideas until he becomes one with the Universe itself, and even with that which is beyond the Universe. To him there is no more Death; time and space are annihilated; nothing is, save the intense rapture that knows no change for ever.

Then what of his body? The body of such an one continues subject to the laws of its own plane. Yet his friends find him calmer, happier, healthier, younger, his eyes bright and his skin clear even when he is old. But he has this which they have not, the power of slipping instantly out of this changeful consciousness into the Eternal, and there abiding, supremely single and complete, bathed in unutterable bliss, one with the All.

The present series of ceremonies is designed for beginners, for those who have as yet no experience at all.

Only the simplest formulae will be used, so that even those who are quite unfamiliar with the methods and aims of ritual may obtain the result, and comprehend the method.

Yet they will be profound and perfect, so that even those who are already skilful may obtain further success.

Let me add a short analysis of the present series of rites; which may be taken as illustrating Humanity, both good and evil.

Man, unable to solve the Riddle of Existence, takes counsel of Saturn, extreme old age. Such answer as he can get is the one word "Despair." Is there more hope in the dignity and wisdom of Jupiter? No; for the noble senior lacks the vigour of Mars, the warrior. Counsel is in vain without determination to carry it out. Mars, invoked, is indeed capable of victory; but he has already lost the wisdom of age; in the moment of conquest he wastes the fruits of it in the arms of luxury.

It is through this weakness that the perfected man, the Sun, is of dual nature, and his evil twin slays him in his glory. So the triumphant Lord of Heaven, the beloved of Apollo and the Muses, is brought down into the dust, and who shall mourn him but his mother Nature, Venus, the lady of love and sorrow? Well is it if she bears within her the Secret of Resurrection!