increase, growth, emotion, beauty, power, heat, energy; the sole and base of being, the sub-tending Love, or Fire-floor of Existence. Hence through Love man seizes directly on all that is, and can come into actual contact and *rapport* with every being that feels and loves and dwells within the confines of God's habitable universe." (Quoted from the Manifesto of the Grand Fraternity of the Rose Cross, issued by P. B. Randolph, Supreme Master of the Order, in 1871).

It is possible that there is a connection between the ideas of Randolph and those of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, the European brotherhood later made famous by Aleister Crowley. In his works, Randolph mentions a mysterious fraternity which he calls "the A.·. A.·."; and this is the title which Crowley adopted for his supreme occult order. According to Crowley, the initials stand for *Argenteum Astrum*, the Silver Star.

It is almost impossible to talk about the revival of magic in modern times without mentioning Aleister Crowley, the flamboyant, eccentric poet and mystic who gloried in the title of "The Great Beast" and whom the sensational press dubbed "The Wickedest Man in the World". Yet his 'wickedness' mainly consisted of practising sexual magic; which, as we have seen, was nothing new in the western world, either in theory or in practice. On the contrary, ritual sexual intercourse is a very old idea indeed — probably as old as humanity itself.

Obviously, it is the very opposite of promiscuity. Intercourse for ritual purposes should be with a carefully selected partner, at the right time and in the right place. How, indeed, could there be anything truly magical about an act that has been rendered common, tawdry and degraded?

We hear a good deal today about the so-called permissive society. But what in practice does the great permissive society permit? A happy, natural, loving relationship between man and woman — or the flaunting of everything that is ugly, degenerate and eventually repulsive? Its main preoccupation is not so much sex as the commercialisation of sex. And amid all the endless discussion of sexual techniques, what ever happened to love?

It is love and only love that can give sex the spark of magic. Love can take two quite ordinary people, and create

something beautiful between them, that no money can buy. To approach *magica sexualis* in a cold-blooded, calculating, clinical manner, is ultimately self-defeating.

One gets the impression from Aleister Crowley's secret magical diaries that he had an approach to sexual magic which was basically of this nature. The old practitioners used to choose a magical partner with great care, and practise only with her, so that a very close bond of affection developed between them. But Crowley would pick up a prostitute and literally use her for some magical rite. Perhaps this is why all his magical enterprises seemed in his lifetime to have little endurance; and his last words were "I am perplexed."

The order in which Crowley learned sexual magic, the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, or Order of the Temple of the East, was founded by a prosperous Viennese business man called Karl Kellner, in 1895. Kellner had previously made a journey to eastern lands, where he had received initiation and instruction from Arab and Hindu teachers. No doubt his status as a Freemason of high grade assisted him to gain entry into circles which might otherwise have remained unknown to him.

Kellner died in mysterious circumstances, in 1905. His place was taken by Theodor Reuss, assisted by Franz Hartmann, the author of a number of books about the Rosicrucians. Another famous occultist, Rudolf Steiner, was at one time a member of the O.T.O. It is evident from the fact that men like this were willing to join the order, that it did not at that time have or deserve the lurid reputation that it eventually acquired.

The O.T.O. kept its inner teachings of sexual magic very secret. In its journal, *The Oriflamme*, a little verse appeared, alluding to this secret teaching:

> Who seeks it, will suffer.
> Who finds it, conceal it.
> Who uses it, let no one know.
> He who is a true philosopher,
> Shall remain unknown.

The order consisted of nine degrees, with a tenth honorary degree bestowed upon the Head of the Order, to denote his office. It was in the eighth and ninth degrees that the secrets of *magica sexualis* were given. However, when Aleister Crowley,

on account of his friendship with Theodor Reuss, was made Head of the Order for Britain, he completely rewrote the rituals and added an eleventh degree, which was not in the original scheme of the order.

The teachings of the VIII° instructed in the use of one's own sexual fluids, obtained by ritual masturbation, for the charging of talismans. The IX° taught the magical use of sexual intercourse between man and woman. This was known as the Formula of the Rosy Cross, the cross in this symbolism representing the male genitals and the rose the female.

The basic magical principle behind these rituals is the same as that already described, in the quotations from P.B. Randolph. Its application to the IX° is obvious; and in the auto-erotic VIII°, secret instructions were given under the title *"De nuptiis deorum cum hominibus"*, "Concerning the marriages of the Gods with men". In other words, it was used for the invocation of a particular god or goddess, whom the magician visualized and concentrated on while performing the rite.

Crowley wrote in his Magical Record that he believed these rites worked by somehow moulding circumstances, which were already existing, so that things happened in one way rather than another, as the magician willed. In other words, just as sexual activity can produce a child on the physical plane, so a magical result can be produced upon the subtler planes, which is in a sense the 'child' begotten by the act. This will then manifest upon the physical plane as the circumstance the magician desires.

Sometimes an observation was made of astrological influences and the time for the ritual selected accordingly. A particularly potent time for starting a new magical current, according to magicians of the Golden Dawn tradition, is at the equinox, either of spring or autumn.

We can now get a sufficiently plain idea of the practices which Crowley added in the XI°, because much that could not previously be printed about him has now been published. See *The Great Beast: the Life and Magick of Aleister Crowley*, by John Symonds (MacDonald, London, 1971), and *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, edited by John Symonds and Kenneth Grant (Duckworth, London, 1972).

These books reveal quite clearly that Crowley had an anal-erotic fixation, as well as a general obsession with nastiness. This is a mental attitude well-known to psychologists and there is nothing 'magical' about it. I only mention it here in order to make it known that the magical uses of sex do not necessarily involve such practices as Crowley indulged in.

Sex is the supreme sacrament, because it is one manifestation of the Great Work, which is the union of opposites. Hence its tremendous potency, for good or ill. We have seen in the ancient Mystery Cults, how the participants in the *Orgia* offered their pleasure to the Gods, believing that it made the Gods happy to see people happy. Some moralists may frown; but surely this was a higher concept of the Godhead than that which pictures God as jealous, vengeful and begrudging of the fulfilment and joy that are the Creator's gift to humanity.

As Charles Godfrey Leland wrote in *Aradia: the Gospel of the Witches* (London, David Nutt, 1899):

> Are not the charms of love of every kind, and the enjoyment of beauty in all its forms in nature, mysteries, miracles, or magical?

VIII

Magic of Dreams

There is one way in which everyone, psychic or otherwise, contacts the unseen world every night. This is the way of dreams.

In all ages this fact has been recognized. The classical Greeks and Romans had legends of two gates to the world of dreams, the gate of ivory and the gate of horn. Through the former, false and illusory dreams came into the minds of sleeping humans; but through the latter, the gate of horn, came those visions which were true, and should be heeded.

The kingdom of sleep is a mysterious realm and full of secrets. Yet it seems so close at hand that we tend to take it for granted. Especially do we accept, in a matter of fact manner, the idea that some dreams have an element of the precognition of future events. This has been proven over and over again by innumerable experiences, both of famous people and of everyday folk. It poses the deepest questions of the nature of time and of the human mind; yet we seldom really think of its implications.

If anyone wishes to prove that the precognitive element in dreams is a fact, this is not difficult. It simply requires concentration and persistence. It is necessary, obviously, to recall one's dreams, so that they can be compared with future events. The best way to do this is to keep a notebook and pencil beside the bed, ready to jot down notes of one's dreams as soon as one awakes.

It will be found that unless recall of this kind is practised, the dream-images will be surprisingly fugitive. It is as if, as soon as normal thinking and reasoning take over, the mind switches itself out of the state in which dreams can be recalled. We have changed gear, so to speak, into another way of using

the mind and it cannot successfully function in both ways at once — or not for most people, at any rate.

However, if an effort is made to recall dreams immediately upon waking, but before the mind has completely readjusted itself to the ideas and responsibilities of every day, eventually more and more of our dream-life can be brought into our conscious life for consideration. I am so confident from personal experience that the precognitive faculty will then begin to manifest itself, that I can only say to readers — try it and see.

Sometimes the events thus prefigured are of importance; but much more frequently, they are quite trivial, though of some interest to the recipient. Some experiences of my own may serve to illustrate this.

Some years ago, I was making a particular study of the Qabalah. Books on the subject were not so easily found in those days as they are today, with the present renewal of interest in occult matters. Occult students had to search long and carefully on the shelves of second-hand bookshops, to find anything of real value.

In these circumstances, I had one night a vivid dream. I dreamed that I went to a second-hand bookshop which I often visited in search of books on the occult and there found a book on the Qabalah, which I bought for a moderate price. The book was of unusual size and shape, being large but quite thin, and it was in a red cover.

When I awoke, I remembered the dream clearly, and felt that this was a sign worth following. Accordingly, as soon as possible that day, I hurried to the bookshop. I searched all the likely shelves carefully; but alas, no such book as the one I had seen in my dream was to be found. Ah, well, I thought — just a dream! A pity it did not come true, as this would have been interesting in itself, apart from getting the book.

About a fortnight later, I happened to go into the shop again. There, on the shelf before my eyes, was the book of my dream, answering exactly to its description in size, shape, colour, subject and price. It was in fact Knut Stenring's translation of the Qabalistic treatise called the *Sepher Yetzirah*; and I have it still.

I was not unduly surprised by this phenomenon, as I had

already discovered that I sometimes had precognitive dreams. For instance, during the Second World War I was working in an office in London. One night, I dreamed that I was visiting an old aunt of mine, who lived on the south coast. I found her in a flurry of packing, about to move in haste. I asked her what was the matter, and she replied, in a state of great agitation, 'Get out of London! The Germans are going to start to shell us from the coast on the 13th!'

This was in June 1944, an exciting month, with the D-Day landings imminent. I told the girls at the office what I had dreamed and they laughed. They said I must have been reading the old World War One stories of the Germans' legendary super-gun, Big Bertha, which was supposed to be aimed from France to destroy London. The Germans couldn't possibly shell us from across the Channel.

I had to agree; but I felt uneasy, nevertheless. With the excitement of D-Day, everyone was tensed up. Then shortly after the 13th, we heard that a small German plane had crashed somewhere in London and exploded, doing a lot of damage. We didn't know it at the time; but this was the first flying bomb.

The flying bombs, or V1 and V2 rockets, Hitler's last terrifying weapons of destruction, were launched upon London from across the Channel and one of their main flight-paths was over the place where my aunt, whom I had spoken to in the dream, lived. Official war histories say that the first of them was launched on June 13th, 1944.

The faculty of dreaming true can be an uncomfortable one. One night in recent years, I had a vivid and horrible dream of seeing a man shot down in a sunlit street. I could see and smell the blood; and I was so shocked and upset by it that I mentioned it to a friend of mine who kept a local bookshop, telling her that I was sure there was going to be an assassination. Sure enough, a couple of days later we read in the national press that a United States diplomat had been assassinated in South America. I believe the report said that no less than nine bullets had struck him.

An account of this dream was broadcast over our local radio station, Radio Brighton. The lady who kept the bookshop was good enough to corroborate my statement, that I had told her

about the dream before the story appeared in the papers.

I never want to have another dream like that. I felt shaken for days afterwards. Nevertheless, it is interesting from a scientific point of view that the sense of smell entered into it, as well as those of sight and sound, which are usual in dreams. I have also, though not often, experienced taste and touch in dreams.

Usually, I find dreams exciting and enjoyable. I have always dreamed in colour; indeed, I never knew, until I read books about it, that people ever dreamed in anything else. Apparently, according to psychologists, many people only dream in black and white. However, the colours I see in dreams are usually more subtle than those of earth. They often have a quality of softness, a kind of translucence, which is hard to describe; but I have seen something like it in the works of great painters, and wondered if they derived inspiration from their dreams.

There are remarkable stories of people who have been inspired by dreams. Scientists, inventors, musicians, authors and poets — all have paid tribute to the truth of the old saying that "Night unto night showeth knowledge".

Two of the world's most famous weird stories were inspired by dream-experiences of their authors; namely, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Music from the realm of dreams can be heard in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. The composer wrote of this opera in a letter to Mathilde Wesendonk: "For once you are going to hear a dream, a dream that I have made sound . . . I dreamed all this; never could my poor head have invented such a thing purposely." The music of the prelude to Wagner's opera *Das Rheingold* is also based upon material that came to him in a dream.

The story of how Samuel Taylor Coleridge obtained his unfinished poem "Kubla Khan" in a dream is well-known. The poem remains a mere fragment, because while Coleridge was writing it down from memory, he was interrupted by a casual visitor, and he could never afterwards recall it. This illustrates the special nature of dream memories and how they seem to vanish back into the mists of the unconscious unless they are written down immediately upon waking.

We owe the invention of the sewing-machine to a dream that came to Elias Howe (1819-1867). Poor Howe had striven in vain to perfect his idea and was almost destitute, when one night he got a revolutionary new concept in a dream.

The trouble had been where to locate the eye of the sewing-machine needle. Howe had been following the model of the ordinary needle and this had proved unsatisfactory. Then one night he dreamed that he was building a sewing-machine for a savage king in some primitive land. It seemed that the king had given him twenty-four hours to complete the task, on pain of death if he failed. He worked and puzzled, but it was no use. The time was up and he was taken out to be executed. He found himself surrounded by fierce native warriors, all carrying spears. In the blade of each spear was a hole — and immediately he perceived the solution of his problem. The answer was a new kind of needle with its eye in the point. He awoke suddenly and forthwith went to his workshop and started on the design. This is the true story of the invention of the first successful lock-stitch sewing machine.

Closer to our own time is the experience of the atomic physicist, Niels Bohr (1885-1962). Bohr sought to picture the structure of the atom. However, the concept escaped him, until one night he dreamed that he was standing at the centre of a sun. It seemed to be composed of fiercely burning, gaseous matter. All around him revolved the planets of this solar system, which were attached to the central sun by thin filaments. He could hear the planets make a whistling noise as they passed him. Then the bright, gaseous matter seemed to cool and solidify. The planets became motionless, and the idea came to Bohr that what he was seeing was the model of the atom.

From Niels Bohr's dream came the idea of comparing the atom with the electrons revolving about a nucleus, to the solar system. The use of this dream analogy enabled Bohr to win the Nobel Prize in 1922 for his concept of the structure of the atom.

We may note in both these instances that the inspiration did not come without preparation. Both Elias Howe and Niels Bohr had been working hard on their problems before they had the inspirational dream. Their conscious minds had been

thinking with great concentration; so that when they slept the unconscious mind took over, solved the problem and presented the answer in the form of symbolism. We too can obtain counsel from our unconscious mind, if we study the symbolism presented by our dreams.

Ever since the days of Artemidorus of Ephesus, in the second century A.D., people have been compiling dream-books, with this idea in mind. The art of interpreting dreams was borrowed by the Greeks from the ancient Egyptians and Chaldeans; and from the Greeks it derives its name of Oneiromancy (from *oneiros*, 'dream', and *manteia*, 'divination'). Artemidorus was the author of one of the oldest and most famous dream-books. Most of the books on dream interpretation in succeeding centuries were based upon his ideas; but such books tended to become more frivolous and superstitious with the passing years, as the occult sciences fell into disrepute.

By the nineteenth century, consulting dream-books had become a popular pastime. Many of these old dream-books still survive; but they are more entertaining than reliable. A better way to learn to interpret dreams is to study dream symbolism for yourself, with reference to the findings of modern psychology. This is, of course, a vast subject; especially when we come to the work of such masters as Carl Gustav Jung. However, the enlightenment we may find if we persevere will take us far beyond the fortune-telling level on which most of the old dream-books were written.

A method of interpreting dreams which is often recommended by psychologists, is that of free association. This means that you think over the symbolism of the dream, and record whatever your mind spontaneously associates with it, however irrelevant such an association may at first appear. This will give you the end of the thread, so to speak, and you can in time acquire sufficient insight to understand something at any rate of what your unconscious mind is trying to tell you.

Suppose, for instance, a young man dreams of walking by the sea. It is getting dark and he watches the moon rise over the water. Then birds start flying round him. They are big, dark-winged, menacing — he gets rather frightened. He looks down, and sees that on his wrist is a golden handcuff. At this

point he wakes up. How would one interpret this dream?

For a start, one must always take into consideration the age and sex of the dreamer. The whole point of this dream is that the dreamer is a young, unmarried man. The thing he remembers most clearly is the frightening birds. Birds — birds — what does his mind associate with birds? *Girls*, of course! — it's just a slang term for girls. And the golden handcuff? A pretty obvious symbol of a wedding-ring and the bonds of matrimony, to someone who at the moment doesn't wish to be bound in them. Once one has grasped what the dream is basically about, the rest falls into place. The sea is the unconscious mind itself, the place of instinct and emotion. The moon is a universal mother-symbol.

Yes, mother keeps hinting that he ought to start thinking of getting married. But the dream is telling him that he is not yet emotionally mature enough to take this step; wise advice that both he and his mother would do well to heed.

This brief example may serve as an indication of the way in which modern psychology sets about interpreting people's dreams. It works on a very different principle from that of the old-fashioned dream-books, which merely set out a list of arbitrary meanings which were supposed to apply to everybody, whatever their age or status. Nevertheless, psychologists have found that some symbols do have a general meaning, in whatever dream they occur; hence they have been styled 'universal symbols'.

For instance, the moon very often represents the mother, or feminine influence generally, especially in the dreams of a man; and the sun can represent the father, or masculine influence generally, especially in the dreams of a woman. A road or a railway can mean one's progress through life. The sort of clothes one is wearing in a dream has something to do with one's personality. A hostile entity of some kind, a burglar or bandit, often means one's own repressed tendencies. A stallion, a bull, or other strong, fierce animal, can be one's libido or sexual drive. The sea is the unconscious mind. Water generally is a symbol of emotions. A growing tree means knowledge, especially knowledge of life. The archetypal figure which Jung called "the wise old man" represents the accumulated wisdom of our instinctive inheritance, derived

from our ancestors.

Sometimes the dream resolves itself into a sort of play in which the characters are really different aspects of the dreamer's personality; and quite often our unconscious mind makes use of puns and even anagrams to get its message across. To do full justice to this subject would need a book to itself.

To return to the subject of precognition in dreams, that is, the incidence of dreams that foretell the future, this is a matter with which some scientific investigators are now seriously concerning themselves. The new wave of interest started in 1966, when a number of people claimed to have received warnings in dreams about the Aberfan disaster, in which a school was buried beneath a moving mountain of sludge from old mine tips and 116 children were among those who lost their lives. This tragedy which overwhelmed the little Welsh community of Aberfan aroused the pity and horror of the whole country. An article in the *News of the World*, dated 11th December 1966, stated that a senior psychiatrist had collected 72 instances of people claiming to have had premonitions of the disaster, and the Psychophysical Research Unit at Oxford had received 50 such claims. In all, some 200 claims had been examined by this newspaper, from people all over Britain.

Applying the test that the premonition must have been recorded or witnessed to in some way *before* the disaster, the *News of the World* stated that its reporters had been able to authenticate seven definite cases of premonition. Of these, three came in the form of vivid dreams.

Arising from these enquiries, the senior psychiatrist concerned (he was later identified as Dr John Barker) suggested that some sort of early warning system might be set up, with the help of people who had this faculty of receiving premonitions. He thought that a central bureau might be established, to which people could send accounts of premonitions, whether in dreams, visions, or other psychic experiences. If a sufficient number of such accounts were received at any given time, the details of them could be fed into a computer, which would sort them out, see what they had in common and hopefully be able to give some definite warning which could be acted upon.

Dr Barker actually started an organization for this purpose; but unfortunately he did not live to see the full fruition of his work. He died in 1968. However, the idea has been carried on by Mrs Jennifer Preston, who (according to a newspaper report in October 1972) has been running a Premonitions Bureau from her home in Marlborough Lane, Charlton, London. Mrs Preston has collected hundreds of predictions of events, which have been fulfilled too closely for the old explanation of 'coincidence' to be anything but a worn-out phrase.

Two more instances of premonitory dreams may be mentioned which were reported in the national press in recent years.

In May 1968, an East London block of flats, called Ronan Point, partially collapsed after a gas explosion. The collapse was sudden and terrifying, the more so as the flats were new. No one had expected such a thing to happen; no one, that is, except a fifteen-year-old schoolgirl who lived opposite. A short while before the disaster, this young girl had a nightmare, in which she saw the flats falling down, while people screamed and ran for safety. She told her mother about it the next morning and also some school friends and a few people who lived in the block; but at the time no one took the warning seriously. Later, the *Daily Mirror* reported her story, which her mother confirmed.

Suppose people *had* taken the warning seriously? Could such a happening be prevented? If not, what is the reason for such dreams? When we talk about 'seeing the future', what exactly do we mean? Are events already formed in some other dimension, which we may contact while we sleep? Is this process part of what we vaguely call 'fate' or 'destiny' and what the wise men of the East call *Karma*? The faculty of dreaming true raises all these questions and more.

The idea of destiny seems to be especially relevant to another and still more recent case. In April 1973, a heartbreaking disaster hit four Somerset villages, Axbridge, Cheddar, Congresbury and Wrington. The members of the local Ladies' Guild set out in a chartered Vanguard airliner for what was to have been a happy day trip to Switzerland. Their plane encountered severe weather and crashed near

Basle, with the loss of over one hundred lives. Many children were left motherless; and like Aberfan, this was a tragedy which shocked the nation.

One family, however, was spared, because of a dream. According to a report carried by the *Daily Telegraph* on 12th April 1973, a young mother who had booked on the outing changed her mind and returned her ticket to the organizer, saying that she would be satisfied to get only half her money back. She had dreamed that she was in a plane which crashed into trees in a snowstorm and that she saw the bodies of her friends laid out in the snow. These were in fact the circumstances of the crash.

Why was that woman the one to be warned? Did others have such dreams and perhaps disregard them? We do not know the answers to these questions; but I feel that the value of dreams has been put beyond doubt.

IX
Magic of the Weather

All of us, even those who are city-dwellers, are linked to nature by the weather. Our moods respond to sunshine and rain, to a cloudy day or a clear, frosty night. We follow the changing seasons of the year, from Christmas to the first breezes of spring, through high summer to autumn mists, Bonfire Night and winter again. Our ancestors used to do this more consciously, because the succession of seasonal festivals made them able to be partakers in the life of nature. They were part of things, they belonged, instead of being lost and alienated.

Such festivals arose from a deep, instinctive feeling of the oneness of all life. This instinct was the foundation of primitive religion and magic, coupled as it was with the idea that life itself flowed from an unseen divine source, from which all things came and to which all would eventually return.

The idea that mystic and occult links somehow interconnected all things in nature, probably gave rise to the practice of sympathetic magic. What was done as a magical ritual, upon a small scale, would be repeated or reflected in the greater world, if the one who performed the ritual had the knowledge to be able to do it aright and the faith that it would succeed.

A particular instance of this kind of magic may be seen in the ceremonies used by witches to make rain. Reginal Scot describes some of these in his book, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584); though he treats with scepticism the belief of his contemporaries

> that the elements are obedient to witches, and at their commandment; or that they may at their pleasure send rain, hail, tempests, thunder, lightning; when she being but an old doting woman, casteth a flint stone

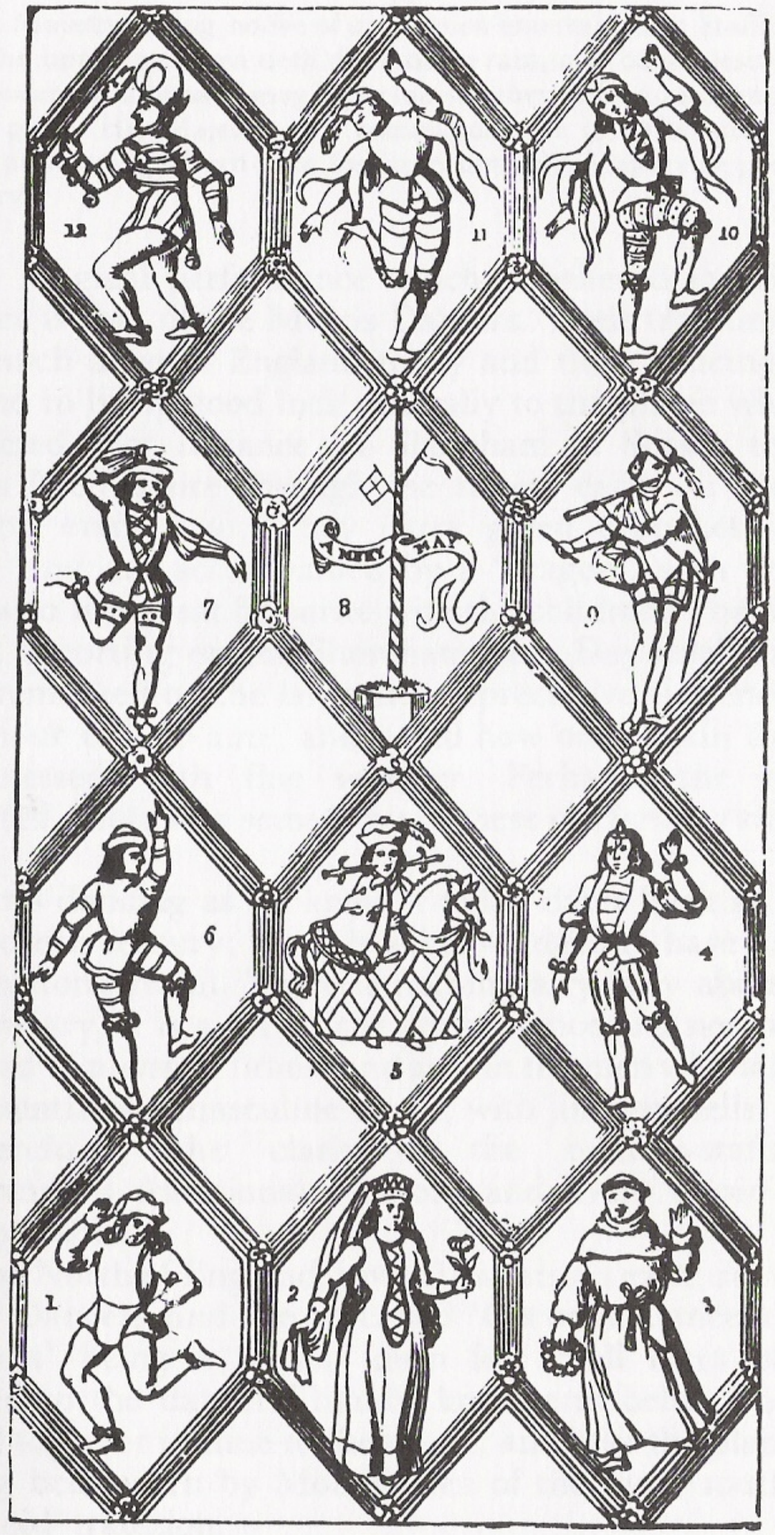
over her left shoulder, towards the west, or hurleth a little sea sand up into the element, or wetteth a broom sprig in water, and spinkleth the same in the air; or diggeth a pit in the earth and putting water therein, stirreth it about with her finger; or boileth hogs' bristles; or laieth sticks across upon a bank, where never a drop of water is; or burieth sage till it be rotten; all which things are confessed by witches, and affirmed by writers to be the means that witches use to move extraordinary tempests and rain.

Some of these actions are evidently sympathetic magic, especially the sprinkling of water in the air with a sprig of broom. Broom, or *Planta genista*, is so much associated with witchcraft that it used to be called hagweed, meaning 'witch-weed'. No doubt the sprinkling was accompanied by an invocation to the powers of nature to send rain. The water would have been carried in the witches' cauldron, or taken from a stream which ran from north to south, because such streams were believed to have magical properties.

The flint stone was cast towards the west, in the direction from which, in the British Isles, rain-bearing winds generally come. The idea was to stir up the influences which send rain. The stirring of water in a pit shows the same idea and so does throwing up sea-sand into the air. Such sand would have a natural affinity with water. The other ritual actions are harder to explain, though the boiling of hogs' bristles (no doubt in a cauldron in the open air) may be connected with the old belief that pigs can see the wind. Old country people regarded their pigs as being able to foretell the weather for this reason. If the pigs were unusually lively, running and frisking about, it was a sign that high winds were on the way. A change of the wind usually brings a change of the weather.

The climate of the British Isles is so notoriously changeable that it is often said that we do not have a climate at all — we just have weather. Nevertheless, a great deal of old-time spells and weather-magic seems to be devoted to bringing rain rather than sunshine. Perhaps, in the days before our modern piped water supply, this was the greater necessity.

In the British Museum is preserved a copy of a letter which was sent by the Lord Chamberlain, Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to the High Sheriff of Staffordshire, in the time of Charles I. It is dated 1st August 1636 and states:



Morris Dancers as shown in an old stained-glass window

> His Majesty taking notice of an opinion entertained in Staffordshire, that the burning of fern doth draw down rain, and being desirous that the country and himself may enjoy fair weather as long as he remains in those parts, His Majesty hath commanded me to write unto you, to cause all burning of fern to be forborne, until His Majesty be passed the country.

The magical performance which is believed to bring fine weather is that of the Morris Dancers. Their tradition is still very much alive in England today and their dancing is also believed to bring good luck generally to the places where it is performed. For instance, at Shoreham in Sussex the local Morris Men dance through the streets early on May Day morning every year. They carry green branches in their hands, and are accompanied by a 'dragon', with snapping jaws, who is a great favourite with the children. The *Shoreham Herald*, reporting on the Shoreham May Day celebrations of 1973, remarked on the large and appreciative audience at the early hour of 6.30 a.m., and noted how once again the event was blessed with fine weather. Perhaps, the reporter suggested, there was something in these old fertility rites after all.

Morris dancing as we know it today dates back at least to the fifteenth century; but it is acknowledged to have its origin in prehistoric ritual. There is nothing airy-fairy about it; on the contrary, it is a very virile performance and needs a high standard of physical fitness and skill in the men who take part. It is essentially a masculine dance, with jingling bells, waving handkerchiefs, the clash of the quarter-staffs (the countryman's traditional weapon) and lively music on the pipe and tabor.

In the North of England, several variations exist, such as the Sword Dancers and the so-called 'Coconut Dancers' — the 'coconuts' being a jocular term for small discs of wood fastened to the dancers' hands, knees and belts. These are rapped together in time to the music, and take the place of the jingling bells worn by Morris Men of the more southern or 'Cotswold' tradition.

The word 'Morris' is of uncertain origin. It is thought to be derived from 'Moorish' and this has led some people to think that the dances were originally brought from Moorish Spain

in the days of John of Gaunt. However, it may simply refer to the fact that the dancers often used to blacken their faces in order to preserve their anonymity. Some dancers still do this. It adds an extra touch of mystery to the ritual, rather like the effect of a mask.

We owe a good deal to the late Cecil Sharp for his work in preserving the music and steps of the Morris and other English folk dances. Thanks to him, a revival of interest has taken place this century and in 1934 the Morris Ring of England was formed to keep the good old tradition going.

In his book *Ages Not So Dark* (Privately printed, 1939), the late J. Foster Forbes mentions the Morris Dance, and says: "As to the origin of the term 'MORRIS', I have been assured by that admirable Celtic scholar, Dr Leigh Henry, that it relates to 'the motion of the winds'." Foster Forbes was an unorthodox antiquarian, who sought out all kinds of out-of-the-way knowledge. If this etymology of 'Morris' is correct, it throws quite a new light on why the dance is associated with bringing fine weather.

The power of witches to raise winds is featured in many old tales, especially from Scotland. The late John Gregorson Campbell was a famous collector of these, taking them down first-hand as they were told by old Scottish people. His book *Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Glasgow, 1902), tells several stories of witches who had power over the elements. A famous male witch was 'Macpherson of power' (*Mac-Mhuirich nam buadh*), who came from South Uist. This man was once on a sailing vessel, on a calm day, when the skipper, knowing his reputation, asked him to raise up a wind. Macpherson called for a gentle east wind. The skipper mocked at it and said it was trifling. Macpherson then called for a stronger wind from the north. It began to blow; but the skipper said, "It does not attain to praise yet."

Then Macpherson recited a third incantation:

> If there be a wind in cold hell,
> Devil, send it after us,
> In waves and surges;
> And if one go ashore, let it be I,
> And if two, I and my dog.

Such a great wind blew up that the ship capsized, and all on board were drowned except the wizard and his dog. So says the legend, at any rate; though if it is literally true, it is hard to see who survived to tell the tale, except Macpherson himself.

A widespread belief in the islands of Scotland and the Isle of Man was that witches could sell winds to sailors by means of the charm of a knotted cord. The cord had three knots in it, one for a light breeze, two for a strong wind and three for a gale. The sailor had to undo the knots when out at sea and the wind would blow as required.

Many witches' spells are associated with knotted cords and we still perform a minor spell of this kind when we tie a knot in our handkerchief to remember something. We are tying the thought of what we want to remember into the knot.

There are numerous instances of the belief that somehow human beings and the elements are in a kind of sympathy with each other. Not only do we respond to the weather by being cheered or depressed, but the weather may respond to the deeds of humans. Many dramas of both films and stage have introduced a thunderstorm at some climax of the play. Especially is this so when the action has an occult theme. Storms and magical rites seem somehow to belong together. For instance, old people of the Devonshire countryside used to remark when a storm arose, "Ah, there is a conjuring going on somewhere!"

The great storm which scattered the Spanish Armada was believed to have been raised by magical means. Some have credited the Devonshire witches with having called it up; while others said that Dr John Dee, the occultist who was consulted by Queen Elizabeth I, had a hand in it.

Another furious storm coincided with the death of Oliver Cromwell on 3rd September 1658. It was whispered among Royalist sympathizers that Cromwell had a pact with the Devil and that the Devil had come for his own. They pointed to the fact that his death took place seven years to the day after his decisive victory at the Battle of Worcester. 3rd September also happened to be his birthday and a mysterious coincidence like that was most impressive to those more credulous times.

Perhaps, however, some atmospheric phenomena are more

than coincidence? Both the beginning and the end of the First World War were marked in England by strange weather signs. On the evening of 4th August, 1914, the sun set in a sky so unnaturally deep in its crimson colour as to seem blood-red. I remember my parents describing how the first recruiting meetings were held, against the background of that terrible crimson sky. It seemed like an omen of the trials to come. However, on the morning of the day of peace, 11th November 1918, many people in the Midlands saw an unusual white rainbow spanning the sky. This was commented on in the *Birmingham Mail*, where it was described as "a very rare meteorological phenomenon".

There was an occasion in the Second World War, when a rainbow marked a critical period of the conflict. At dawn on D-Day, just as the Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy, a magnificent rainbow arched itself across the battle area. It was much commented on and became known as "the Rainbow of Invasion Morning". An impressive drawing of it by the artist Roland Davies appeared in the issue of *The Sphere* dated 24th June 1944.

Observation of the weather meant a great deal to the country folk of olden days and we may be sure that the village witches specialized in noting weather signs. A close and sympathetic observation of nature, in unspoilt outdoor surroundings, gave them years of experience on which to draw. In this way, they were able to make predictions which to an ordinary person may well have seemed magical.

Many old sayings and proverbs about the weather have been recorded and generations of country folk, though unlettered themselves, must have played a part in transmitting these sayings to posterity. While by no means infallible, it seems likely that they have some grounding in practical observation, to have been preserved for so long. Here is a selection of them:

As the day lengthens,
So the cold strengthens.

The coldest weather comes in after the Winter Solstice, when the days begin to lengthen again.

February, fill the dyke,
Either with the black or white.
If it's the white, it's the better to like.

In this verse, 'black' means rain and 'white', snow. A snowy February brings good weather after it.

March, black ram,
Comes in like a lion, goes out like a lamb.

The 'black ram' is an allusion to the Spring Equinox, when the sun enters the signs of Aries, the Ram.

March winds and April showers
Bring forth May flowers.

Mist in May, and heat in June
Make the harvest come right soon.

Red sky at night, shepherd's delight.
Red sky at morning, shepherd's warning.

The shepherd, who had to spend most of his time out in the open, took the red sunset as a sign of a fine day to follow; but a red sky in the early morning meant rain.

This must surely be one of the oldest weather sayings, because it is noted in the Gospel of St Matthew, Chapter 16, verses 2 and 3:

> He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red.
>
> And in the morning, It will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

Modern meteorologists have checked on the 'red sky' weather sign and found it to be fairly reliable. It has also been found that the old saying, "A green sky above the sunset foretells rain next day", is based on fact. Certainly within the British Isles, a greenish tinge seen in the sunset sky betokens wet and possibly stormy conditions the next day. So also does a pale yellow sunset.

Another old saw found to be reliable is the one that says:

"When on a dull morning a patch of blue sky appears big enough to make a sailor a pair of trousers, the day will turn out fine." The reason is that this means there is only one layer of low cloud, which is beginning to break up, leaving clear sky above it.

Pale moon doth rain, red moon doth blow,
White moon doth neither rain nor snow.

This refers to the appearance of the full moon. 'Pale' means lacking in light, because obscured by mist.

A ring around the moon,
Rain coming soon.

This phenomenon is known to meteorologists as a corona. It is caused by water droplets in the clouds, which refract the light, and it can also occur around the sun. An even larger and more spectacular ring, seen more often around the sun than around the moon, is called a halo. This is caused by the light shining through high, thin clouds of ice crystals, which have a prismatic effect, displaying a big circle, often of faint rainbow colours.

The solar halo is a beautiful sight, but it is also a very likely harbinger of rain within twenty-four hours. Occasionally, if conditions are right, the solar halo can appear like a cross in the sky, by sending out luminous rays centred on or near the sun. This may be the explanation of a famous phenomenon which appeared on the evening of Good Friday in 1929, when many people in England saw a cross of light shining in the sky. Such, at any rate, may be the *means* by which this sight was made to appear; but that it should be on Good Friday, and no other day, is at least a remarkable coincidence.

If the oak's before the ash,
Then you'll only get a splash.
If the ash precedes the oak,
Then you may expect a soak.

This is an observation about which tree first puts forth its leaves in spring, the oak or the ash, and how much rain we may expect afterwards. Both the oak and the ash were sacred trees in olden times; this may be the reason why they were looked to, as providing an omen for the coming summer.

When the mist comes from the hill,
Then good weather it doth spill.
When the mist comes from the sea,
Then good weather it will be.

'Spill' here means to spoil.

Rain before seven,
Fine before eleven.

A sunshiny shower
Never lasts half an hour.

Mare's tails and mackerel sky,
Not long wet and not long dry.

This refers to a sky full of small, broken clouds.

If on the trees the leaves still hold,
The winter coming will be cold.

Onion's skin very thin,
Mild winter coming in;
Onion's skin thick and tough,
Coming winter cold and rough.

I have met gardeners who firmly believe in this presage; but how does nature adjust itself in this way?

The reason for casting matters of country wisdom in rhyme, was to make them easier to remember. In addition to these scraps of verse, there were other traditions, such as that which called the little herb Scarlet Pimpernell (*Anagallis arvensis*) 'The Poor Man's Weather Glass'. This small, scarlet-flowered weed is a good indicator of likely weather to come, if observed in the morning. If it opens its flowers, it is a good sign; but if the flowers stay closed, it means damp in the air and hence possible rain.

The more active and busy spiders are in building their

webs, the more may fine weather be expected. If rooks are noisy, cawing loudly to each other, it is a sign of rain, and so is the flying of swallows near the ground. Bats flying about on a summer evening are a sign of fine, hot weather the next day.

The deeper the mole digs his hole, the more severe the winter will be. If he digs no more than one foot down, it will be a mild winter; but if he digs deeply, then the further he goes, the worse the weather we shall have.

The more bright red berries, rose hips and hawthorn haws may be seen in the hedges in autumn, the more frost and snow we shall have that winter; because this is nature's provision for the wild birds, against the coming hardship.

> Be it dry or be it wet,
> The weather will always pay its debt.

In other words, the balance of nature will always somehow be made up; a piece of time-honoured country wisdom that has much philosophy behind it.

It is widely believed that the weather is more likely to change at the four quarters of the moon than at any other time; that is, at new moon, first quarter, full moon and last quarter. Orthodox meteorologists may scoff at any connection between the moon and the weather; but the old idea stubbornly persists.

In the winter, a night sky full of very bright, clear stars is a sign of frost and domestic fires will burn more clearly and brightly in frosty weather. Sensitive people can distinctly smell frost or rain upon the wind; though this is less possible in the polluted air of our cities than it is in the open country.

The great collector of such traditional wisdom and weather lore, rhymes and sayings, as those given above, was Richard Inwards, the grand old man of English meteorology. He lived from 1840 to 1937 and was for many years the most senior and respected member of the Royal Meteorological Society.

In his lifetime he published three editions of his book *Weather Lore: A Collection of Proverbs, Sayings and Rules Concerning the Weather*; the last of which appeared in 1898. He bequeathed the copyright of this treasury of traditional lore to the Royal Meteorological Society and in 1950 a new edition

was issued, edited, revised and amplified by E.L. Hawkes, MA, FRAS, the Vice-President of the Society. (Published for the Royal Meteorological Society of London by Rider & Co., London, 1950).

The frontispiece of this new edition shows a photograph of Richard Inwards himself, a bearded, patriarchal figure looking like the reincarnation of an ancient Druid. However, he was no mere eccentric, but one of those extraordinary all-round scholars and inventors that the Victorian era produced so richly. He did everything from exploring the ruins of Tiahuanaco to being a master chessplayer when over eighty years of age. Those of us who love the magic of nature owe him a debt, for his painstaking collection of centuries of countryside tradition, so that we can still profit from it today.

When people become more conscious of natural things, they are bound to take an interest in the weather and respond to its moods. They soon discover, too, that the expression 'the spirit of a place' can be more than a mere figure of speech. Weather to us is a very local phenomenon, in spite of the scientific forecasts now available on radio and television. Without in any way belittling the importance of such forecasts, personal local observation, with the assistance of some at any rate of the old weather maxims given above, will help readers to become weather-wise and provide a constant source of interest and pleasure.

"We shall have weather, whether or not"; and the feel of the rain on one's face, the cry of the wind and the transforming beauty of the snow are as delightful in their own way as the sunshine of high summer. The pattern of a snow crystal under a microscope shows a beautiful six-rayed or six-pointed figure, and out of all the myriads of such crystals, no two are ever precisely alike.

There was an interesting discussion about weather on the *Dimbleby Talk-In* programme on BBC Television in April 1973. The participants were a number of orthodox meteorologists, together with farmers and students of weather folklore. One of the latter remarked that he had noticed for some years past, how four days in the year gave an epitome of what the weather was going to be like for the next quarter. These were Lady Day (25th March), Midsummer Day (24th June),

Michaelmas Day (29th September), and Christmas Day (25th December). As the weather was on those days, so it would generally be for the next three months.

It also appeared from the discussion that there were two dates in the year which gave a reverse forecast. That is, the weather from then on would be the opposite of what it had been like on that day, for a while. These two days are Halloween (31st October), and Candlemas (2nd February).

It will be noticed that the four dates first mentioned are shortly after the equinoxes and solstices; while the other two are ancient Celtic festivals. The reverse forecasts connected with the latter are commemorated in folk-rhymes also. One refers to Halloween and the next day, All Saints or All Hallows, as *Hollantide*, and says:

> If ducks do slide at Hollantide,
> At Christmas they will swim.
> If ducks do swim at Hollantide,
> At Christmas they will slide.

In other words, if there is ice on the pond at Hollantide, there will be none at Christmas, and vice versa.

The Candlemas rhyme runs as follows:

> If Candlemas Day be fair and bright,
> Winter will have another flight;
> But if Candlemas Day be clouds and rain,
> Winter is gone, and will not come again.

There are several versions of all these old rhymes, which may be found in different parts of England.

During the television discussion mentioned above, a remarkable suggestion was made by Mrs Doris Munday, a hypnotherapist who claims to be able to influence the weather. This lady said that she believed the weather was influenced by people's thoughts. In her opinion, the reason why the BBC's weather forecasts used to be more reliable than they are now, was that when broadcasting first came out, people tended to believe these forecasts implicitly and therefore they came true!

Mrs Munday, who lives in London, was once challenged to

demonstrate her powers by David Frost, who seems appropriately named for taking an interest in weather magic. She responded by causing snow to melt in twelve hours, instead of the usual forty-eight; but the sceptical Mr Frost put it down to coincidence. She also claims to have caused rain at the Olympic Games in Mexico in response to a challenge, to have shifted fog from Luton Airport and to have broken droughts in India and Australia.

Whatever the weather, here is a kindly old saw of good advice to end with:

> After drought cometh rain,
> After pleasure cometh pain;
> But yet it continueth not so.
> For after rain
> Cometh drought again,
> And joy after pain and woe.

X

Magic of the Cards

Many learned volumes have been written about the origin of playing cards; yet this remains one of the world's mysteries. We may feel fairly sure that our present pack derives from the more elaborate Tarot pack. Even so, our simpler four suits of hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades have considerable antiquity of their own.

They seem to have originated in France in about the fifteenth century, when the old Tarot emblems were modified into a simpler pack that was easier to use for gaming. In his book *Playing Cards: The History and Secrets of the Pack* (Spring Books, London), W. Gurney Benham shows how the playing cards we know today have originated from the designs of cards produced at Rouen, France, in about 1567.

The full Tarot pack consists of 78 cards, having in addition to the four suits a suit of trumps, which are a series of symbolic pictures, and having an extra court card, the Knight, in each of the suits. As a result of the revival of interest in occult matters, packs of Tarot cards have again become available at the present day. These cards have long been used on the Continent of Europe for fortune-telling, especially by the gypsies. In England, however, the ordinary playing cards were more frequently used, as Tarot cards were difficult to obtain. Consequently, the playing card pack has acquired an occult lore of its own.

It is a very curious fact that, although the pack of 52 cards was ostensibly produced simply for gaming, it contains a numerical symbolism which is related to the year and to nature.

The four suits correspond to the four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. They also remind us of the four elements and the four winds. The two colours, red and black,

represent day and night. The 52 cards represent the 52 weeks of the year. The four suits of thirteen cards each, correspond to the four quarters of the year, each having thirteen weeks. The twelve court cards are analogous to the twelve months of the year; and to the twelve hours between noon and midnight.

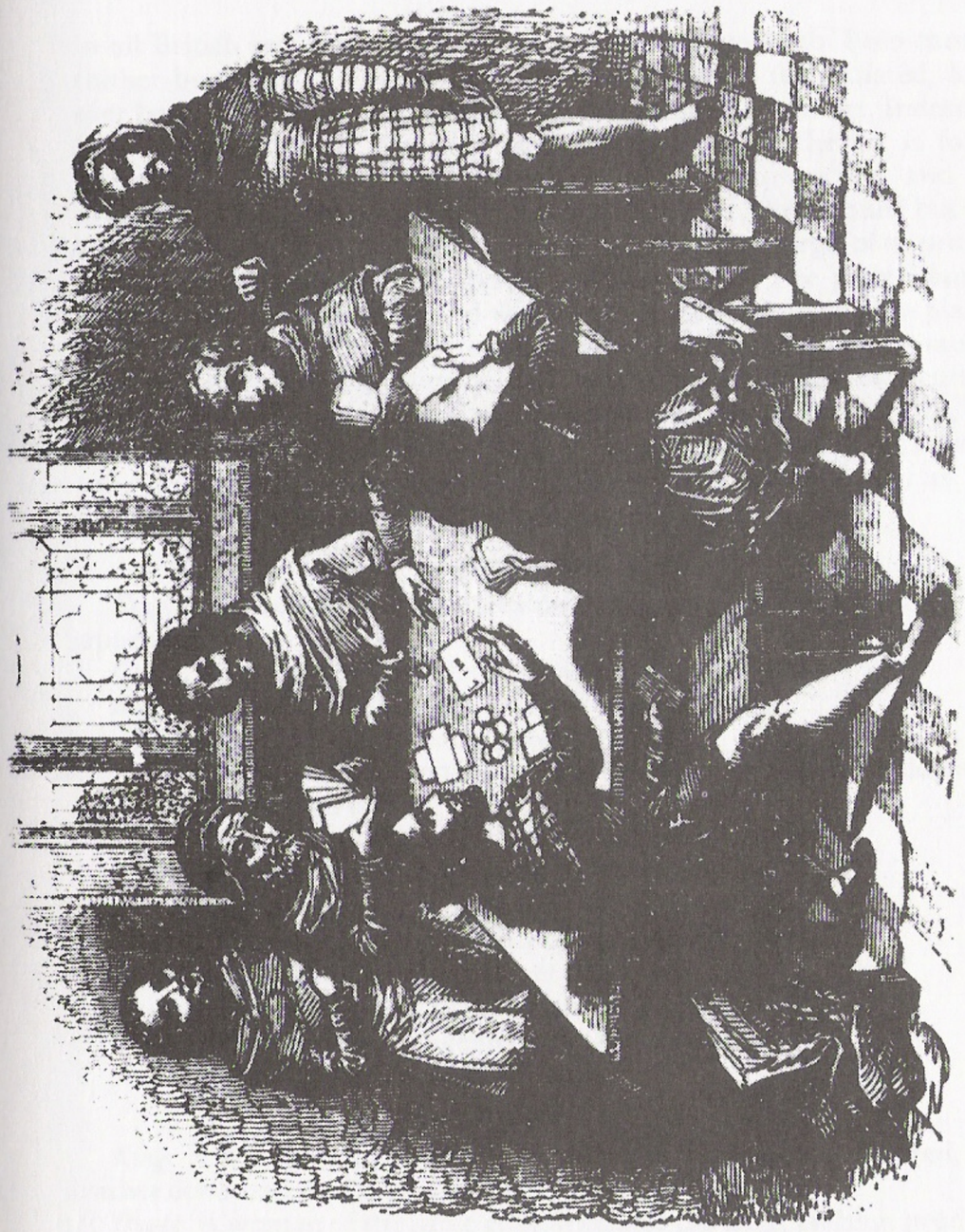
The face values, or pips, of each suit, from Ace to ten, add up to 55. If we call the Jack 11, the Queen 12, and the King 13, then the total of pips for each suit is 91. Multiply this by 4, and it gives a grand total for the whole pack of 364 — plus 1, the Joker and we have 365, the number of days in the year!

Furthermore, the four suits of thirteen cards each remind us of the four phases of the moon: new moon, first quarter, full moon and last quarter. These four phases make a lunar month and thirteen lunar months are reckoned to the year.

There are many books today dealing with cartomancy, or divination by cards. Most of them give different sets of meanings for the cards, so that one becomes completely confused. In this book, therefore, I suppose to go back to what, so far as I know, is the oldest set of meanings in print for divination by playing cards, in the English language at any rate.

These meanings and the method of laying out the cards associated with them were given by Robert Chambers in his monumental two-volume work, *The Book of Days: A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities*. The first volume, in which the article "The Folk-Lore of Playing Cards" appears, is dated 1869, and was published by W. & R. Chambers, London and Edinburgh.

Robert Chambers was born in 1802 and according to him he learnt the art of divination by cards from a soldier's wife who took care of him as a child. This would have been about the time of the Napoleonic Wars. If we presume that the soldier's wife had learnt it in her turn when she was younger, then this may be reasonably supposed to take us back at least to the eighteenth century for the origin of this system. Indeed, the meanings given for the cards themselves contain evidence of their antiquity. They refer to dangers from "a duel", or from "death on the scaffold", to which people could only have been exposed in the years before such things were banished by our present system of law. Such card meanings today would



A Card Party in olden days

have to be interpreted in a figurative sense only.

I think it worth while for antiquarian interest to give Robert Chambers' description in his own words. He refers to this method of card-reading as "the English system" and tells us that it is used

> in all British settlements over the globe, and has no doubt been carried thither by soldiers' wives, who, as is well known to the initiated, have ever been considered peculiarly skilful practitioners of the art. Indeed, it is to a soldier's wife that this present exposition of the art is to be attributed. Many years ago the exigencies of a military life, and the ravages of a pestilential epidemic, caused the writer, then a puny but not very young child, to be left for many months in charge of a private soldier's wife, at an out-station in a distant land. The poor woman, though childless herself, proved worthy of the confidence that was placed in her. She was too ignorant to teach her charge to read, yet she taught him the only accomplishment she possessed — the art of "cutting cards", as she termed it; the word cartomancy, in all probability, she had never heard. And though it has not fallen to the writer's lot to practise the art professionally, yet he has not forgotten it, as the following interpretation of the cards will testify.

DIAMONDS

King. A man of very fair complexion; quick to anger, but soon appeased.

Queen. A very fair woman, fond of gaiety, and a coquette.

Knave. A selfish and deceitful relative; fair and false.

Ten. Money. Success in honourable business.

Nine. A roving disposition, combined with honourable and successful adventure in foreign lands.

Eight. A happy prudent marriage, though rather late in life.

Seven. Satire. Scandal. Unpleasant business matters.

Six. Marriage early in life, succeeded by widowhood.

Five. Unexpected news, generally of a good kind.

Four. An unfaithful friend. A secret betrayed.

Trey. Domestic troubles, quarrels and unhappiness.

Deuce. A clandestine engagement. A card of caution.

Ace. A wedding ring. An offer of marriage.

HEARTS

King. A fair, but not very fair, complexioned man; good natured, but rather obstinate, and, when angered, not easily appeased.

Queen. A woman of the same complexion as the king; faithful, prudent, and affectionate.

Knave. An unselfish relative. A sincere friend.

Ten. Health and happiness, with many children.

Nine. Wealth. High position in society. The wish card.

Eight. Fine clothes. Pleasure. Mixing in good society. Going to balls, theatres, etc.

Seven. Many good friends.
Six. Honourable courtship.
Five. A present.
Four. Domestic troubles caused by jealousy.
Trey. Poverty, shame and sorrow, caused by imprudence. A card of caution.
Deuce. Success in life, position in society, and a happy marriage, attained by virtuous discretion.
Ace. The house of the person consulting the decrees of fate.

SPADES

King. A man of very dark complexion, ambitious and unscrupulous.
Queen. A very dark complexioned woman, of malicious disposition.A widow.
Knave. A lawyer. A person to be shunned.
Ten. Disgrace; crime; imprisonment. Death on the scaffold. A card of caution.
Nine. Grief; ruin; sickness; death.
Eight. Great danger from imprudence. A card of caution.
Seven. Unexpected poverty caused by the death of a relative. A lean sorrow.
Six. A child. To the unmarried a card of caution.
Five. Great danger from giving way to bad temper. A card of caution.
Four. Sickness.
Trey. A journey by land. Tears.
Deuce. A removal.
Ace. Death; malice; a duel; a general misfortune.

CLUBS

King. A dark complexioned man, though not so dark as the king of spades; upright, true, and affectionate.
Queen. A woman of the same complexion, agreeable, genteel and witty.
Knave. A sincere, but rather hasty-tempered friend.
Ten. Unexpected wealth, through the death of a relative. A fat sorrow.
Nine. Danger caused by drunkenness. A card of caution.
Eight. Danger from covetousness. A card of caution.
Seven. A prison. Danger arising from the opposite sex. A card of caution.
Six. Competence by hard-working industry.
Five. A happy, though not wealthy marriage.
Four. Danger of misfortunes caused by inconstancy, or capricious temper. A card of caution.
Trey. Quarrels. Or in reference to time may signify three years, three months, three weeks, or three days. It also denotes that a person will be married more than once.
Deuce. Vexation, disappointment.
Ace. A letter.

"The foregoing", says Robert Chambers, " is merely the alphabet of the art; the letters, as it were, of the sentences formed by the various combinations of the cards." He then continues with instructions about how the cards are to be laid out and interpreted. The person on whose behalf the cards are being read is represented, if male by the king, and if female by the queen, of the suit which accords with his or her complexion. If a married woman consults the cards, then the king of her own suit represents her husband; and if the consultant is a married man, then the queen of his own suit represents his wife. In the case of single people, however, a lover, whether present or future, is represented by a card of his or her own colouring.

All cards when representing persons, lose what other significations they have. Thus, for instance, the Knave of Spades could represent *either* "a lawyer" *or* "a person to be shunned", *or* the thoughts of the people represented by the King and Queen of Spades. All the knaves represent the thoughts of their respective kings and queens, and consequently the thoughts of the persons whom those kings and queens represent, in accordance with their complexions.

Two exceptions to these rules, however, apply. A man, whatever his complexion, if he wears the uniform of one of the armed forces, should be represented by the King of Diamonds. A widow, whatever her colouring may be, should take as her card the Queen of Spades.

The Ace of Hearts always denoting the house of the person consulting the decrees of fate, some general rules are applicable to it. Thus the Ace of Clubs signifying a letter, its position, either before or after the Ace of Hearts, shows whether the letter is to be sent to or from the house. The Ace of Diamonds, when close to the Ace of Hearts, foretells a wedding in the house; but the Ace of Spades betokens sickness and death.

The pack of cards should be well shuffled and then cut into three parts by the person for whom the reading is being done. The card-reader then takes up these parts, reassembling the pack, and proceeds to lay out the cards in rows of nine, face upwards. A pack of 52 cards, not being exactly divisible by nine, will thus give five rows of nine cards and one last row of seven cards.

> Nine is the mystical number. Every nine consecutive cards form a separate combination, complete in itself; yet, like a word in a sentence, no more than a fractional part of the grand scroll of fate. Again, every card, something like the octaves in music, is *en rapport* with the ninth card from it; and these ninth cards form other complete combinations of nines, yet parts of the general whole.

So says Robert Chambers, in rather involved and old-fashioned language. In practice, you lay out your pack of cards as described above and then count from the card which is the significator of the person you are reading for. Reckon the card you start from as 'one' and keep counting like this, from one to nine, the ninth card being the first of the next count and so on. Count from left to right, like reading the lines in a book, recommencing at the top if you reach the bottom of the spread. You will find that eventually you come back to the card you started from and this ends that part of the reading.

Note in addition what sort of cards are next to the significant cards and whether they are cards of good omen or ill. They may modify what you have to say about the meaning. Look also at the Knaves, representing people's thoughts, and at the Ace of Hearts, which is the 'house' card. These cards, too, are *en rapport* with the ninth card from them, which may be counted to and read.

The Nine of Hearts is the 'wish-card' and according to whether it is near to your significator or far off, you may deduce whether or not a particular wish is likely to be realized. After the general fortune has been told, another spread may be laid out to enquire if the consultant will obtain some particular wish and the answer is deduced from the position of the Nine of Hearts, as described above.

As with all systems of divination, practice and experience will bring greater facility to the diviner. Frivolous questions will get only frivolous answers. Naturally, a person who has some psychic powers to start with will make the best diviner; but at the same time the practice of divination, if carried out faithfully, will tend to develop psychic gifts.

In describing the practice of cartomancy among the poorer people of his own day, Robert Chambers declared his belief that, on the whole, its practitioners did good. They brought sympathy and consolation to people in distress and often gave

good moral advice. Moreover, they did not present their readings as being fatalistic: "They always take care to point out what they term 'the cards of caution', and impressively warn their clients from falling into the dangers those cards foreshadow, but do not positively foretell, for the dangers may be avoided by prudence and circumspection."

This is a wise attitude for the present-day card-reader to adopt also. To delight in filling people's minds with fear, by prophecies of inescapable doom and disaster, is irresponsible. Divination is meant to be helpful; otherwise there is no point in it.

The system of cartomancy given above is certainly a relic of olden days and at the same time eminently practical. Village wise women have used it, and probably the English gypsies also, as the latter seem less acquainted with the Tarot cards than their Continental brothers and sisters.

It may be appropriate, therefore, to end this chapter by describing the correct way to carry out the old custom of 'crossing the gypsy's hand with silver'. This is often referred to, but its real significance is little known. It is really a little ritual to ward off ill-luck, both from the diviner and the person whom the reading is for. Gypsies believe that silver is a sacred and magical metal, which wards off the evil eye. Today, unfortunately, the era of real silver coins is past and the coins we have to use are only an imitation of silver; but that is better than nothing.

The person who is seeking the reading should hold the coin between the thumb and fingers and make with it an X-shaped cross over the gypsy's outstretched palm. Then they should place the coin in the centre of this imagined cross, and leave it not merely as a fee, but as an offering to the spirits who are believed to assist in divination. A true gypsy seer who was approached in this way, even if the enquirer could only afford a silver coin of small value, would try sincerely to give them a psychic message.

XI
Magic of Birds and Animals

An essential part of nature is man's relationship with birds and animals — and indeed with all other things upon this planet. The occult philosophers of ancient time recognized this by ascribing astrological rulerships to the animal kingdom, even as they did to jewels, plants, colours and so on. Likewise, they believed that animals, birds, reptiles and even insects, had curious hidden virtues, which could be utilized in magic.

Unfortunately, this belief often led to acts of callous cruelty by man towards other living creatures, in order to obtain their blood or parts of their bodies for magic spells. Such practices are part of the evil realm of black magic, no matter what excuses the practitioners of them may put forward; and sooner or later the magician who follows this path will find karmic retribution at the end of it.

Let us therefore look, not at such matters as this, but at the fellowship which exists and always has existed, between humans and the rest of the living things we share this planet with. At the present day, we are developing the science of ecology and studying the interdependence of living things and the way in which this interacts with the environment. In times past, however, before such studies existed, mankind had a wordless fellowship, taken for granted, with the animals upon which he depended for food and transport.

Many primitive people have been found to have the idea of a kind of animal-god, who was the invisible ruler and guardian of all the beasts of a certain kind which they hunted. They would therefore not merely slay indiscriminately, but would first ask the guardian of the animals to give them permission to kill some of them for food. After a successful hunt, they

would render thanks to the Great Deer, or the Great Buffalo, or whatever the kind of animal involved was, for permitting them to kill the game.

Our ancestors in the Stone Age probably had similar beliefs. We know from their cave-paintings that they practised hunting magic and we find pictures of men upon the walls of the painted caves wearing animal masks and horns and evidently engaged in a kind of ritual dance. Perhaps they are trying to contact the guardian-god of the animals, by thus dressing themselves to look like him. In this way, they are putting themselves *en rapport* with the hidden group-soul of the great beasts, and with its mysterious ruler. They are attuning themselves to the world of nature, in those aspects of it which vitally affect them; for these pictures go back to before the time when man had learned to practise agriculture, to the days when hunting was the mainstay of his life.

The horned head-dress was probably man's earliest form of crown. All the time, archaeologists are discovering more relics of the past which illustrate this. Among the latest to be discovered are the now famous Tassili Frescoes in the Sahara Desert. One of these shows a tall horned god figure, surrounded by animals and humans, with the latter seemingly raising their arms to him in invocation. There is really no need to do as some modern writers have done, and postulate that these ancient drawings represent 'spacemen' with 'antennae' upon their heads. There are too many representations of horned gods and goddesses in ancient art, both primitive and highly cultured, to make such a speculation really tenable.

Right down to the days just before the arrival of Christianity, the Romans honoured Pan, whom they also called Faunus or Silvanus, as the guardian of flocks and herds. He was associated with the goddess Diana, and together they were the rulers of the woodland and of all creatures of the wild.

Pan was a merry, uninhibited old fellow, acknowledged to be from an older stratum of culture than the more dignified gods and goddesses such as Jupiter and his heavenly court. Earthy and orgiastic festivals were held in his honour, notably the famous Lupercalia in the spring, which everyone except long-faced moralists thoroughly enjoyed.

The God Pan, as drawn by Charles Godfrey Leland

Consequently, it was the great god Pan, with his horns and hoofs, his primitive life-force and sexuality, who furnished the model for the Christian image of the Devil or Satan. As the Roman Empire had spread itself over most of Western Europe, the civilization of those countries had been greatly influenced by Roman ways, and the culture of the old gods was everywhere to be found. It did not yield easily to Christianity. People went on clandestinely worshipping the old divinities of nature, who were declared by the new religion to be devils, and their devotees denounced as heretics and witches.

The Greek and Roman Pan found his counterpart among the Celtic people of Europe and the British Isles, as the god Cernunnos, 'the Horned One'. The pagan Romans quite happily accepted that the older, indigenous gods of the native people of their provinces were really just another version of their own gods, as seen through the eyes of a different people. Hence statues and carvings of Cernunnos are found in plenty, showing him as the guardian of animals, the giver of life and fertility and sometimes of wealth. These representations vary from the roughly carved figure in low relief, cut out of sandstone, which comes from Maryport in Cumberland, to the magnificent Gundestrop Cauldron, an elaborately worked vessel of Celtic silver, now in the National Museum at Copenhagen, Denmark.

In later times still, the old Horned One reappears as the god of the witches, worshipped and invoked in the underground witch covens. Sometimes he takes the form of a ram, a bull or a goat; or perhaps these animals are regarded as embodying something of his spirit, as the sacred bulls of Egypt embodied the spirit of Osiris. Sometimes he is impersonated by a man, the high priest of the coven, dressed up in a ceremonial regalia of horned mask and robe of animal skins. Such a figure, seen at midnight in a lonely place, by the flickering blaze of a ritual bonfire, must have been strange and unearthly, even to those who knew there was really a man under the mask.

The psychological effect of masked ceremonies can be very potent, even in broad daylight; as many can testify who have witnessed the strange, old-world atmosphere generated by the famous Obby Oss ceremony held every year in Padstow,

Cornwall, on May Day. The 'Oss' is actually a man in a fantastic mask and a huge black cloak draped over a kind of circular frame. In former days, the man who played the part of the Oss was naked beneath this black canopy, or so it was said. He dances through the little Cornish town, accompanied by traditional songs and general merriment. The streets are decorated with greenery, and many visitors come to see and join in the fun.

Behind it all, however, is a deep meaning. At the climax of the ceremony, the Oss pretends to be killed; only to be resurrected again every year. He is the representative of the old god of the life-force, the power of fertility for humans, animals and all of nature, ever dying and being resurrected from death. He is the ever-renewing cycle of life.

Another piece of folk-magic connected with animals is the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance in Staffordshire. This is still in lively observance each year and has been recently featured in a television film about old English customs. In the course of this broadcast, it was stated that the dancers had to be sure of visiting all the local farms with their performance and music, because it would be unlucky for any farm that was left out. This seems to establish a definite link between the performance of the dance and the bringing of luck and fertility.

Here is a nineteenth-century description of the dance, taken from a book called *Old English Customs Extant at the Present Time: An Account of Local Observance, Festival Customs, and Ancient Ceremonies, yet Surviving in Great Britain*, by P.H. Ditchfield, MA, FSA (George Redway, London, 1896). It has some points of interest not contained in later accounts:

> The annual wakes at Abbot Bromley, a village on the borders of Needwood Forest, near Stafford, is celebrated by a curious survival from mediaeval times called the Horn-dance. Six deer-skulls with antlers, mounted on short poles, are carried about by men grotesquely attired, who caper to a lively tune, and make "the deer", as the antlers are called, dance about. Another quaintly-dressed individual, mounted on a hobby-horse, is at hand with a whip, with which he lashes the deer every now and again in order to keep them moving. Meanwhile a sportsman with a bow and arrow makes believe to shoot the deer. The horn-dance used to take place on certain Sunday mornings at the main entrance to the parish church, when a collection was made for the poor. At the

The Hobby-horse and the "dragon with snapping jaws"

present day the horns are the property of the vicar for the time being, and are kept, with a bow and arrow and the frame of the hobby-horse, in the church tower, together with a curious old pot for collecting money at the dance. It takes place now on the Monday after Wakes Sunday, which is the Sunday next to September 4th. Similar dances formerly took place in other places in the county of Stafford, notably at the county town and Seighford, where they lingered until the beginning of the century. The under-jaw of the hobby-horse is loose, and is worked by a string, so that it "clacks" against the upper-jaw in time with the music. The money is collected by a woman, probably Maid Marion; the archer is doubtless a representation of Robin Hood; and besides these characters there is a jester. Dr Cox has examined the horns, and pronounced them to be reindeer horns.

Dr Plot in his *Natural History of Staffordshire*, published in 1686, gives a similar description of the dance, and he too describes the horns as being those of reindeer. This is strange, because reindeer have long been extinct in Britain; they were last heard of in Caithness, Scotland, in the twelfth century AD.

Some people have explained the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance by saying that it merely relates to the villagers' rights to hunt in the nearby Needwood Forest; but if, as Mr Ditchfield's account states, the dance was at one time performed in other parts of Staffordshire as well, then it evidently has no mere local origin and relates back to something much older and more fundamental than this. It is part of the ancient magic associated with the horned god.

Evidently, too, the present date on which the dance is performed is not that on which it originally took place. Dr Plot describes it as being celebrated "at Christmas (on New Year and Twelfth-day)." This connects the Horn Dance directly with similar commemorations of the horned god which took place in other parts of England at this time; for instance, the 'Christmas Bull', who used to appear in Dorset villages during the twelve days of Christmas, impersonated by a man wearing a horned mask and accompanied by the usual rustic music and merriment. One of these horned masks, called the Dorset Ooser, survived long enough to be photographed and described in *Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries*, in 1891; and to be noticed by Margaret Murray, in her book *The God of the Witches* (Faber and Faber, London, 1952), as being connected