

SÉDIR

THE MYSTIC

Upon the hillocks bathed by the Rance River, the antique city of Du Guesclin still preserves numerous vestiges of feudal times in the ogival arches of its thick ramparts. It was in one of the poorest abodes in the rue de la Lainerie in the network of its medieval lanes, with its corbelled and sculpted homes, close to the market place reeking with the acid pungent odors of the fish markets, that the young Yvon Le Loup was born. Following the customary administrative formulae: "thus it is stated upon the registries in the said commune (parish) of Dinan" the birth certificate dryly declares in plain words (as must be) that: "one Yvon Le Loup by name, son of Hippolyte and Séraphine Foeller, was born January 2, 1871 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon." Our Friend Sédír, much too reticent to reveal much of himself, rarely spoke of his childhood. However, some pages written later in life give us clues of his first impressions of Armorica¹ and of its grandiose past, wherein he describes with emotion the depths of the Brocéliande forest where the enchanter Merlin died. The drama, the setting must have left a deep impression upon his soul as a child. The basic elements relative to this period are lacking and we shall not attempt to romanticize them. To embellish the impecunious life of a woman which the exodus had relegated, to a strange city, with a small child; to embroider upon the life of a father who, as a regular soldier had to undergo all the fatigues and privations at the end of a war² which had been so hard for our side, would be too easy. However, most historians claim that in the life of certain great men, the influence and the role of a mother are important. We shall love to return to this leit-motive, but for the moment, it is the little boy with whom we are concerned. While others are all exuberantly twitter with their first steps and vibrate to the first awareness of life, he, in his little iron bed awaits, already resigned that the ordeal be modified. ³ Dr, Carton, in his book on human signatures, takes the one of Sédír as a model and example of wisdom. What a painful state, consecutive to a latent tuberculosis which privations had accentuated. The "mal de Pot" dragged on that much longer due to the menial situation; the still meager salary did not permit better care and on the contrary, presaged worse to come. For a very long time even his eyes were endangered; an almost total blindness necessitated medical care. Then it happened, that while looking at the large letters on the chart in the shop of the optician who was examining him, the poor child not being accustomed to the vertical position, took a fall which caused the first fracture of his leg. We can commiserate with his enduring long lonely days; the complications of life brought about by the conditions of a bed-ridden child moving from one to another poor Parisian lodging where he dwelt subsequently. In order to engage his reflective and avid mind, his studies began quite early. Upon the little board installed across the bed, the dramas of spilt inkwells alternated with his calligraphic effort. Madame Le Loup told us how people were surprised to see such beautiful penmanship. As time went on his hand-writing became more and more elegant, and its clearness drew the attention of all who saw it³. These harmonious curves penned upon white vellum were later to express so many words, such inspired and consoling thoughts □ reflections of the great soul of our Friend! Due to the Hessian origins of his mother, he learned the German language from birth, not only to speak but to write it easily, as at the age of fifteen he undertook the translation of Goethe's Memoirs. It might well be due to this text and later to the novel of Wilhelm Meister, wherein the author gives us to understand his odd mysterious researches and subsequent encounters, that the ferment of occult sciences started to develop within Sédír's mind. After the war of 1870 Mr. Le Loup reduced to a meager but insufficient military pension and not having any other trade, found himself obliged to take a position as a butler in the Pare Monceau district, and to park his little family in various lodgings in the Batignolles section. Due to his mother's religious principles, the boy probably took his first contact with a study program in an École Libre of the neighborhood as soon as his health permitted. This program could never be followed faithfully, because of all the childhood diseases and the constant accidents to his leg, which

frequently kept him confined to his room. 4 Though loving music, having even composed an Our Father, he had to give up the violin about 1906 - finally aware that he would always lack a good ear. These studies felt the effects of such accidents so much more so that thoughtful natures such as his often have due to such chaotic beginnings, a rather slow comprehensiveness and adaptiveness. The quartier or district was then rather secluded from the center of business and noise; small investors receiving annuities, artists and composers who had had their day were living amidst these calm surroundings. From time to time the omnibus Batignolles - Jardin des Plantes pulled by its large white horses would rumble heavily over the rounded cobble-stones, then silence would fall again upon the small private homes nestling in their gardens, and upon the houses in construction. The little boy, already solemn, would dreamingly walk dragging his leg through these provincial streets. Sédir often spoke to us of the first project of his youth, of his desire to become a shepherd, to lead into the heather and thyme his sheep and ewes guarded by a dog. In a charming anecdote published in our Bulletin and called "The Little Shepherd", one finds the nostalgia of this sickly child desiring space and escapement. To lead his flock! Has he not achieved it on a broader plane, in a decor not only calm but at least on a more grandiose scale? Dreams and anguish at the beginning are often for children with a precursive vision of the future. They are transpositions, a focus imposed by an inexorable destiny; and life proceeds in the regret of an unrealized dream... an unfulfilled dream. Yet, seen from the standpoint of Eternity, dreams and reality have often been intertwined without the lesson being well understood! Between the little shepherd Yvon and Sédir, the inspired leader of a school, there is little difference, since such was the will of God, and that he understood the modification of his childhood dream. Now the connection might irk some principles and cross-checking of memories but it happened that in 1882, the Le Loup couple was engaged by a lady who lived half-way up the rue du Rocher. This position, better remunerated made it possible for the young Yvon to take violin lessons; he played rather well. To note a rather peculiar lack in this extraordinarily endowed being, gifted in so many ways □ he did not have a good ear⁴. Regarding his religious formation, changing parishes brought him to catechism classes at the church of Saint-Augustin, still jubilant with gilt, gold and freshly remounted frescoes; although the atmosphere of such a new sanctuary was hardly propitious to the blossoming of a pious soul, we know that the young catechumen threw himself heart and soul assiduously with conviction into his studies. After his first communion, the health of the school-boy improved. Vacation over, the family had to think of having him continue his education in a serious institution, as all who knew him felt it imperative. In spite of heavy expenditures and sacrifices they thought of the School des Francs-Bourgeois, then one of the best religious education schools in Paris. The venerable building, designed by Ducerceau for the Duke of Mayenne having been at one time or another the center of the conspiracies of the Ligue, then the Favard school in the XVIII Century, had been finally taken over by the Brothers of Christian Doctrine in 1850. Situated in the Faubourg-Saint-Antoine where each stone speaks of a past of ostentatious show and riots, this center of learning must have been of interest to the sensitive mind of the young boy entering his 13th year. The teaching led by Father Argémir de Jésus was remarkable; moreover along with the program there was the stimulant of brilliant literary groups wherein the young Le Loup distinguished himself shortly thereafter. But one wintry day, upon the trench-like dips transformed into slides, our myopic little friend unable to gauge the danger fell again and broke his ill-starred leg for the second time. Long dismal gloomy days followed, but he filled his time with reading the Fathers of the Church. Sédir told us how he filled notebook after notebook with reflections and precious commentaries regarding dogmas without any of the professors being the wiser. Twenty years later, after having sought and probed all states of human thought, after having studied all religious forms and penetrated all initiatory arcana, having looped the loop of knowledge, he felt he had to return to this particular theme of faith — to amplify, to illuminate it with the marvelous inspiration of which his young years had already given us clues. Just as Pascal rediscovered the great mathematical principles, he too very early in life felt the evangelical breath, the influence of the great Certitudes permeating the metaphysical domains. * * * On par with the secret

garden of Sédir's thoughts, among the conscientious studies he undertook at the Frانس-Bourgeois School, sketching was a branch which he particularly favored, which he cultivated even after leaving school. A close observer, he mastered the skill of line drawing enabling him to make an adroit pen and ink sketch of a head, to design an ex-libris for his friends or sketch the various attitudes of his dogs. To the early dream of his childhood of becoming a shepherd, the hope of someday becoming a painter was secretly added. Literature, music and drawing became youthful and enthusiastic projects bequeathing the mature man a very rich palette of resources alternatively. He was always extraordinarily clever with his hands. He often told his close friends how much he would have wanted to be a "bricoleur" (jack of all trades). The living minute description of Andreas' workshop found in the first chapters of "Initiations" conjures up the framework in which he would have liked to live. But following a well known law of restraint, the adolescent had to renounce en bloc to all these beautiful dreams, to find himself confined for long years to come, right after the summer vacation which followed his last examinations. Having timidly formulated his hopes and wishes to his father, the latter a disciplined old soldier, still bound and restrained by his menial job, did not even discuss the matter. His practical and positive state of mind could not comprehend the refined sensitivity of his introverted silent son, still less the high aspirations concealed from view. The many sacrifices already made would add the total of six francs! Quite a fair salary for one of his age at the time! While youth seems to be most compromising and lashes out at restraints, often rebels to directives already abraded by suffering and reflexions, docilely he took the path of the Banque de France, where he remained for 20 years. Twenty years in the same department of "Dépôts de Titres" (Stocks and Bonds Securities Dept.) without resorting to any schemes or intrigues in view of advancement. Taking his talents and qualities into consideration, and we must admit his being ambitious by nature, one can only explain that fact because of the orientation of an already profound interior-life. The very few recollections we were able to amass from friends and Bank officials cite and express his cordiality and ever present good mood. According to the reports of one of his bosses answering a request for references, so said Sédir, not self-vaunting to say the least: "Agent giving remarkable services, an expeditious hard worker in spite of 5This report is that much more interesting that it emanates from a boss very strict in the Dept. service and often overloaded the over-expert employee. Knowing that Sédir wrote and published his works, he would augment his task. * T.N. Hotel means a large private residence, usually known as hotel particulier, a town-house. frail health and the hindrance caused by one of his legs which he has to keep extended beneath his desk".5 After having passed a strenuous competitive examination, the date of the admission of Yvon Le Loup as agent was to begin on Oct. 28, 1892. His assigned particular sector was in the Ventadour Annex, close to the ancient Hotel de Toulouse.* This annex built in the XVIII Century for Italian opera performances had housed and heard all the stars of song; the Patti had drawn all of the elegant Paris society. From all that glory, nothing remained but a monotonous labor of figures, from 9:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. indented only by 1h for lunch. At noon, off came his lustrine sleeves, and the young Le Loup would sally forth toward the cour du Louvre, the Seine and its quays. There, along the parapets of the river, totally free from constraints, he would ferret into the boxes open to the avidity of bibliophiles. He would read while munching a frugal meal. At that time, the hunt could still be fructuous and for a few sous, the rare book which Providence had "accidentally" placed within your reach became yours. What lucky moments for the young student ablaze with thirst for knowledge, finding the answer to latent questions. Coincidences? Luck? For us who recognize the importance which little events such as these may have at the beginning of a life such as the one we are delineating, we detect the hand of God preparing His servant. Reserved, distant by nature, having but a few friends, Sédir told us how, on the few Sundays when Mme. Le Loup permitted him to go out, and in the evenings when for some reason or other he could escape, he would spend them with a comrade who roomed in the vicinity of the Institute. There one read untransportable books, also those which parents would have disapproved of, not because of their moral insufficiency but because of their heterodox character. These escapades were a constant cause of torment for the mother always concerned about the

health of her "dear little one" (which term she will use up to her death), so much more so, as his nature had been particularly quiet so far. She would then remonstrate, warn him against these "girls who are too forward", who pervert youths and lead them to perdition! Reprimands he listened to with a bowed head. But as soon as could be, he would isolate himself in his cold little room, where his critical sense, his rare intuition which often led to clairvoyance, shielded him from the by-paths, the errors characteristic of young enthusiasts. Limited by time and means of purchase due to lack of funds, for the first two years he would absorb most of what he found. Added to the joy of discovery, of annotating, this intellectual clearing still remained very difficult. He had to recast alone what others do in secondary studies, though the classical structure of his-cultural formation did not prevent him from being drawn toward certain concordances, still imprecise, which he fathomed in the domains of symbolism and occultism. That is why he felt attracted to some of the last Romanticists - Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Gustave Flaubert, Honoré de Balzac, - particularly toward some of their philosophical stories which influenced his first writings. His quest for a definite style, searching for the exact terminology even made him correct himself without any scruples during a lecture, even professed that no matter how feeble it may be, the thought of a man may, by the chain of appropriate words, explain part of the Absolute; for him this quest will remain a constant lifelong preoccupation, especially when it concerns expressing the inspiration accorded him. The series of novels on "La Decadence Latine" by Peladan particularly influenced our young seeker because, aside from the documentation and originality of these studies on customs and morals, certain aspects of the "marvelous" incited him to write a letter of admiration to the author at the same time asking for an interview. Nothing remains of the encounter; but we know that, wearing his black hair long and curly, his beard Assyrian style, draped in violet folds, Peladan would receive his guests, seated upon an elevated armchair, wanting to be addressed as "Sar" connected with the Rose-Croix, he claimed to be entrusted with the role of social reformer. This spectacular window-dressing did not impress our young friend; but due to the contact with this peculiar erudite, he found a minefield. This encounter marked the decisive turn of the works Sédir was to undertake in the domain of what is called occult sciences (sciences dites "maudites"); he also took, along with a few books by Eliphas Levi and Fabre d'Olivet, the address of a center. ***** It was late in the day in the year 1890 that the orientation of young Le Loup's life took a precise turn. Not far from the Banque de France, at 29 rue de Trévis was a bookshop known as the "Librairie du Merveilleux", the back room of which was used as a lecture hall, and where for 50 centimes a day, it was possible to peruse the classics on Hermetism; but due to an overdose of timidity he had to struggle to overcome, he dared not enter. The recommendation issued by Peladan submerged his fears; it permitted him to meet Chamuel, who, a few years older than he, welcomed him affably. At their first meeting they discussed a few authors and the modus operandi with which Papus insufflated his entourage. The one who was known as the (vulgarisateur des sciences occultes) popularizer of occult sciences had just terminated his military service, yet while finishing his medical thesis, he still found time to write an impressive number of treatises which Chamuel, a recent friend, published faithfully. Several of these had already been reprinted and the association between the two men became more and more beneficial; thus it was understood that the next meeting would take place with Papus present. Many publications have evoked this first contact which, due to the divergences between the two natures, must have been quite odd. The one, tall, ungainly, not knowing what to do with his long thin arms, with his ill-fitting clothes though a bank employee, still careless of style or dress, beardless, seemed less than his 19 years. His hair parted unevenly, not in the two sleek masses as we later saw him, but by a vague part on the left of stubborn locks with spiky rebellious tufts. His skin, grayish and oily was, as often is the case at that age, constellated with pimples which he kept on scratching. His regard, rather strange due to the divergence of two enormous black pupils which in turn became visible or shaded off under the half shut lids — the blinking of myopics — remained always peculiar. Lastly from this not particularly appealing physiognomy, from this ensemble which one must say, was poor, sickly, debile and at first sight hardly prepossessing, there emanated something strange and

engaging which held one's attention. A few photographs taken at that time marked the contrast there might have been between him and the young doctor, short and thick-set, jovial, extrovert, and who due to his Spanish ancestry, seemed older than his 25 years. With a mustache and beard on a haughty and kinky head, somewhat Kalmouk looking, rather flashingly dressed, the ensemble gave an impression of strength and decision. The young Sédir spoke slowly, with kindness, in a rather deep, low pitched monochordous voice. He would smile somewhat artlessly. Papus, on the other hand, spoke with a well modulated voice and although by nature profoundly kind and good, his emphasis was easily authoritarian; often waggish. In spite of their opposite natures, Papus took an instant liking to this tall, timid and clumsy young man. He immediately felt his good will, surprised at the extent of his knowledge, especially about an already very individualistic judgement. For the services he offered to render, the young book-keeper, taken at his word, came for several weeks near the square d'Anvers, so as to file and methodically straighten out the books, pamphlets and documents which the bohemian doctor had neglected to put in order. Then came the hordes of acquaintances. Papus had him meet Charles Barlet who possessed an encyclopedia erudition, then Gaboriau, Jules Lermina, Paul Adam, Emile Gary de Lacroze, Victor Enile Michelet, Julien Lejay, Marc Haven and numerous others, who had already attained a certain standing; even some were already renowned. No one paid much attention to the "little clerk with a limpy leg." Yet they saw to it that he should come along one evening to 21 rue Pigalle to visit Stanislas de Guaita whose published scholarly works already placed him among the masters. A very powerful figure, this renowned short-set Lorrain, friend of Maurice Barrès, living alone in the midst of magic vocations, of dreams, and possessor of an initiatory library the most complete that ever existed. A dilettante without pretensions, descended from a family of men of letters, an erudite, de Guaita, more of a thinker than a realiser, however had conceived a Rosicrucian fraternity (one more added to others) to be composed of six unknown members whom one could call forth from the spirit world, and of six other Brothers who would meet at his comfortable and luxurious abode each month. This visit impressed our young friend Yvon. On the other hand, the magus felt curiously attracted to this silent student — probably anticipating what the future held, he opened wide his sanctuary with the permission of working there. This was a considerable gift to a young person, who two years previously was ferreting along the quais. Just as the prospectors of California washing for their "placer", Sédir suddenly found himself surrounded with everything he could ever hope for. A lead immediately exploited because Papus, submerged beneath many activities, demanded from his circle of friends send articles for his review "Initiation" of which he was director. All of them collaborated. One month after the entrance of Sédir at the rue de Trévis, appeared "Experiences on Practical Occultism", the first article signed Le Loup. He had forged ahead, fast! Immediately the demanding editor-in-chief ordered him to give a talk, a much more difficult task, taking the complex already mapped out into consideration. But effort, having always been for Sédir his sole reason for living — the first step being the one that counts — one evening before a small audience he made his debut. Having carefully proofread his discourse and forged his attire, he read or rather should we say, stammered falteringly through a fibrous development upon the "Divining sciences and chiromancy". Everyone, the lecturer included, was, so one heard, happy when it came to an end. And later, in spite of the admirable tenacity which he possessed, in spite of training himself daily in the domain of speechmaking, the art of oratory, we must admit, never became his. The doctor, according to his morphological system, had classified him among the "Melancholic willfuls". Aware of his powerful sense of work and comprehension of the most difficult problems, Papus asked him to take the secretariat in hand, also to become a "Martiniste". This group of men reviving the ideas and the cabalistic rites of Martinez de Pasqually, had just renovated and formed the first unitary echelon of the Rosicrucian fraternity of de Guaita. De Guaita had laid the foundations and as ** Louis Claude de Saint Martin, creator of a system of "pure spirituality" and the follower of the doctrines of Martinez de Pasqually in the 19th century. ***Sédir collaborated at this time to the "Matinées Espagnoles", to the "Revue Blanche", to "L'Hyperchimie", to the "Matines", to "La Thérapeutique Intégrale", to "L'Initiateur", etc.

Venerable of the Supreme Council read the discourse upon Sédir's reception which took place in great pomp at this home. The ceremony unfolded along the ritual of the ancient Masonic loges. At the end of the 18th Century the Portuguese Jews had created the one known as "Hermanubis" and as our recipient never did anything by halves, he decided to know all about the doctrine and the works of Louis-Claude de Saint Martin** whose fraternity he now belonged to. It is in one of his least known works titled "Le Crocodile" that our neophyte was particularly affected by a certain personage symbolizing the man of faith, whom the author, called "Sédir". This anagram of "désir", (desire) with its rather concise oriental flavor, its graphic form and especially its spirit had fascinated him, and as it was usual among the young authors of that period to choose a pseudonym, Encausse had become Papus, Lalande became Marc- Haven, so in order to separate himself from the needy life of the punctual employee, the new Martiniste chose that name. From that moment on, all of his articles which appeared in the reviews "Initiation", "Le Voile d'Isis" and others***, were signed "Sédir", as well as the books which Chamuel was to publish. These two short syllables which immediately attracted attention will incarnate throughout the various periods of his life the perfect desire of obeying the will of God, (and whatever his detractors might think) of forgetting his own interests to making the total sacrifice of his person. This period of effervescence in the revival of occult sciences will be but a passageway for Sédir. These glittering games of the intellect, and of knowledge will not prevent his perceptive awareness from always choosing the most difficult path so as to follow his destiny, the orientation of which he was not yet able to comprehend. Having been born poor, from humble parentage, with a debilitating state of health leaving him fragile for long periods, and a prepossessing outward appearance, a limited education, working at a monotonous job which could engulf him, he finds himself all of a sudden in the midst of a Pleiades of men of science, of letters, of action reuniting certain original laws, laws which humanity loses and rediscovers alternatively. It is evident that our positive 20th century may smile with indulgence at these spiritual organizations, at these consecrations with initiatory degrees devoid of any immediate or official value. However, thinking about the relativity of all things, is it not possible to admit that these idealists, far from being revolutionary, desirous of giving themselves a cadre, a frame work do arrive in the metaphysical realm, at creating values, and to recapture symbols less dangerous than most political formulae? Though attracting but a small minority, the need was no less felt during this period; the example given by these few men drew the unselfish zeal of a whole sincere phalanx. It even became necessary to aggrandize the locale; for **** This Almanach was published for five consecutive years. It contained a whole series of studies upon ancient works. ***** His work, published by Chacornac in 197-1 was but a mere outline. meetings, correspondence, and publications were overflowing the store of the rue de Trévis. Chamuel found it necessary to expand and take a new locale at 70 Faubourg Poissonnière. There Sédir became a more and more indispensable member of the household; his place in the dining room was always set, his bedroom always ready whenever an urgent or unforeseen event delayed him far into the night. As soon as the Bank closed, he would arrive to expedite the mail to foreign countries, to receive the transient subscribers, greet the people in quest for information. In his pockets, mixed with notes taken at odd moments upon loose leaf papers (a habit he kept all his long life), one would find an article to be finished, documentation to be looked up; proof sheets to be corrected for the "Almanach du Magiste"*****, the first issues of which, he in collaboration with Papus had just begun publishing, also those for his first work: "Les Tempéraments et la Culture Psychique" which was coming out shortly. At dinner time, they would go one flight up and while chatting and smoking a pipe, he and the friends who felt drawn into this atmosphere would continue working at the dining-room table. Whenever he was not detained either by a class or a lecture he would go back home to 4 rue l'Opéra where his parents were then living. On the 6th floor he had a small room filled with a certain amount of books, files and records; and above his narrow daybed was a large red hanging embroidered with Hebrew and astrological signs which in the zeal of a beginner he thought indispensable to the aurisation, the effluvia of his short nights. These are some of the delightful errors of youth, in whatever field it be,

from which no one is exempt. But this period in the Grands Boulevards sector could not last. There was a rumor, regarding subterranean excavations for the Métro, of razing houses for the Boulevard Haussmann. Chamuel, not a speculator at heart, did not want to wait to be expropriated. Moreover, Papus and his friends felt strongly drawn to the Left Bank, where one feels the soul of France, the Europe of old. Moving took place, two locations were chosen, the ground floor at No. 4 and an apartment at rue de Savoie. So we come to 1895. Papus had written and passed his thesis brilliantly, then he married. Having opened a private convalescent hospital at Auteuil he now has less free time, but his heart is set upon giving two classes per week at his "Faculté des Sciences Hermétiques", as well as lectures at the Sociétés Savantes. On the other hand, Sédir, in full command of all his faculties, assumes the heavier task. Each evening he gives lessons in Hebrew and Sanscrit (both of which he had mastered), from which he develops the ethnic genii and especially the dual meaning found in their Symbolism and Cabala; a course upon the psychic training of Hindu fakirs, followed by the divers systems of Yoga*****; thirdly, overall studies upon the ancient civilizations in their planetary and social ***** Paul Verlaine. 1844-1896. French lyric poet who influenced the Symbolistic School. * Cafes in the basements around the Halles, the large wholesale Market of Paris, now destroyed. aspects; not mentioning experimental alchemy, astrology, sociology and all the branches of the symbolism which he favored particularly. With the admirable assistance of other directors he organized research groups wherein each student could develop, each according to his taste, his aptitudes towards hypnotism, magnetism, even of spiritualism. This awakening, idealistic, totally sincere, centered upon these two young leaders grew, extending to foreign lands, while the Martinist Lodge augmented more secretly necessitating the creation of a new one, that of the Sphinx. Involved in helping Papus whom he liked and to whom he owed much, Sédir perceiving very quickly right through any situation, could not delude himself upon these activities any longer. Anyhow, his articles, his first published works are already giving us an inkling of the "dilemma" in which he found himself, wanting to conciliate the domain of secret sciences with Mysticism which very definitely attracted him. The first fires of enthusiasm abating, his aristocratic appreciation for the spirit made him understand the importance of an Elite in whatever field it might lie. Yet, during his free hours and being interested in all fields of life, he went along with friends, from the wine cellars of the Halles to the thundering meetings of anarchists and of the first socialists. His particular bent for beautiful literature made him seek out in the Latin Quarter the Brasseries where literary clans would meet. And still better, the miserable tavern where, amidst smoky stills on Wednesday nights, one could find Verlaine surrounded by his admirers*****. Most of the time the great poet morosely sunk into the chair before his absinthe whitened with brandy, (which he pompously called his "dynamite") remained silent. But on other evenings, becoming lyrical he would recite to whoever wished to listen his most beautiful verses on "Sagesse"*(wisdom). Once a week, the directors of the lodges met at the house of de Guaita, who had recently moved to Ave. Trudaine. He offered them a special mixture of Chinese teas. They spent agreeable hours discussing systems, points of view dear to each member. From time to time, the Docteur, in order to break up paradoxes would throw out a joyous sally which afforded the host, always cautious, the opportunity of redirecting the discussion. Sédir, on the other hand, who never could waste his time, was perusing old grimoires, always in search of the work which could help him, yet he never missed a chance of participating through a well placed word to the general hilarity. This particular and prodigious gift, of his being able to do several things at the same time, always amazed his friends. To follow through a very difficult question, to add up figures, calculate interminable additions which he had brought from the Bank, while carrying a conversation were a customary habit of his. Over and above his remarkable intelligence and lucidity, he could easily realize the dual mechanism to an extraordinary stage --- for example, of being able to play several games of chess at the same time without even seeing the pieces, wearing a blindfold. Regarding these evenings of our youth, who hasn't kept a fond memory of them! Each man reminiscing that which gave him the greatest pleasure. Hence the nights were spent fatigueless, one friend accompanying another home, upon the sonorous asphalt,

during calm hours and through deserted streets under a star-studded sky --- until time came for our office or clinic hours. The meetings of the new Lodge took place on the mezzanine of a little café on rue de l'Ancienne-Comédie. There Sédir came in close contact with Charles Barlet who, due to his English acquaintances, had enticed him to become a member of the "Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor". Then Marc Haven facilitated his entering into the "F. T. L. " of which he was one of the founders. Sédir had previously affiliated himself with the Gnostic Church, in which under the name of T Paul he had been consecrated under the honorific and sonorous title of Bishop of Concorezzo. Thriving in the apparent analogy of doctrines this extraordinary mind, not in the least seduced by the mirage of the East, quite to the contrary, and from lessons of old, to find its rhythm again, digging into a thousand wells, into a thousand sources, testing their resistance and their limitations, he decided to go ahead and forge the passage through... On one of the top floors of 5 rue de Savoie, a quiet and retired nook had been fitted up for magic evocations; de Guaita had traced the protective circle and spoken the customary formulae. Regarding these dangerous experiments, we shall say nothing, except to quote a thought of Sédir assuring us that: "It is here on earth, that for which we pay the most dearly." In a less obscure domain, his alchemical experiments permitted him to rediscover the basis of what is called the "Grand-Oeuvre". These details upon the secret life of our Friend demonstrate primarily his particular concern for Truth which made him experiment everything before being willing to speak of it. Secondly, they show how Sédir, having attained the highest summits of knowledge and powers was wise enough to break away from them as soon as he realized how worthless they were and how dangerous. * * * "Our good Sédir", as many of his friends were beginning to call him, with the regular step of the mountain climber who neither hurries nor stops, nor manifests any effort, was marching up the path. One felt him engrossed into recalling, reviving ancient conquests. He was advancing toward a goal, in fact --- toward the Goal --- with giant steps. According to the notes he left, it seems that he was reaching it on a certain Sunday of July, 1897. Though that particular day did not bring any immediate results, nevertheless it must be considered as the one, just as the one in which each of us has played a role and marked all the remainder of our lives. He described it in this manner: "I was with Chamuel when a special delivery from Encausse came, telling us to come immediately in order to have the chance of meeting Andréas." "At Auteuil, the children told us that he had left, but that he would take the 7 P.M. train at the Gare de Lyon. Convinced that we were running a wild goose chase we went to the station. We found him with his family and the Encausse." "I saw a short, rather thick set man, with a ruddy complexion, a heavy moustache, dressed neatly but simply. His wife and daughter were dressed without style. Smoking a Scoufflaire, a clay pipe, he was carrying a shoulder bag and had an ordinary thick cane. He was going to and fro without haste, speaking as a good family man. Mme. Encausse introduced me telling him that the natural aptitudes and gifts that I evinced would arouse his interest. He extended his hand with great cordiality, though his glance briefly told me: "This young man is not as extraordinary as they claim", but he voiced the reply: "So, you want me to take care of this young man!" The train was leaving. Sédir could hardly say a few words to this personage, who was talked about in a surprising and often extraordinary manner and who, as he expressed it, had just seemed to be a "good paterfamilias". Oriental poetry often evokes the neophyte going to the spring before the reflected images of the great sacred lake, to meet the Master. Here there were but a railroad platform, scuffle and hustle, and-train whistles. As if nothing had happened, Sédir seemingly equable went on at his steady pace, though the inner conflict remained constant. To a few very close friends, he admitted having remained in a state of furor during a whole month without being able to calm down. For those who knew him well, some imperceptible changes in the inflections of his voice, some particular nervous tics in the left cheek indicated the repressions of this nature who was really authoritarian and violent; but, to other people he seemingly remained calm placid, even jovial, jocular, disposed to jesting though never formulating any judgement. At the Bank, amidst its promiscuity, its frictions, its constant injustices, the monotonous labor had had a fair share in the grinding of the self --- yet he, accomplishing his task scrupulously without wasting a second, still succeeded at

keeping in his semi-opened drawer, the book he wanted to peruse, and the notebooks hidden beneath voluminous old waste papers. Having learned how to isolate himself from the noise of this large, sonorous and multi floored room, he pursued his work. As everything comes out into the open sooner or later, through anonymous informers, the bosses learned about the mysterious occupations of Le Loup; they increased his work; and yet, to the end, his desk would hide a text, and thin sheets of paper cut exactly to the size of the width of the columns of the register, would be filled with the expected articles. Thus were started a few English translations of: Jeanne Leade, Prentice Mulford and William Law. Later, following the traditions of any venerable elder of a Lodge who respects himself and who follows traditions, Sédir decided to present a thesis upon the Czechoslovakian Jacob Boehme, a great figure of the past, the "Most Beloved Master", as Louise-Claude de Saint-Martin called him. First a small brochure upon the life of the Shoemaker-Philosopher came out at Chamuel with a pen¹⁰ *La Mission des Français* *La Mission des Juifs* *La Mission des Ouvriers* — *Application sociale de la Synarchie* *La Mission des Souverains* — ed. Nord-Sud 1948, Helsinki ¹¹ The voluminous work was not published until much later. Financial difficulties obliged Papus to organize the "Society of the Friends of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre" which permitted the publication of this first edition. sketch portrait by Sédir. Then, he undertook the formidable translation of *De Signatura Rerum* which Chacornac was to publish seven years later. To transform this heavy laden 16th Century German, still more obscure because it emanated from an uneducated man, to transcribe this system with its subtle and hidden keys not only required a total mastery of the language but patience and amazing comprehension. Being undertaken amidst a thousand activities, this work seems to be the forerunner of the program which Sédir took upon himself later on, when he shall write: "One of the sacred texts upon which Jacob Boehme meditated the most was: the Father Who is in Heaven will send the Holy Spirit to whom ever asks it of him." Another brochure called *The Creation* which came out at this time avows his further detachment from the doctrines of the Brahmanic Vedanta. Anyway, the orientation toward Christian hermetism had already been outlined by Hoene-Wronski and especially by the marquis de Saint-Yves d'Alveydre. The various books entitled "Missions"¹⁰ of this latter rallied a great many followers and although living solitarily and in seclusion, the author welcomed truly interested searchers; Sédir was among them. Living alone in his grand Versailles mansion, the courteous old gentleman was pursuing (under the inspiration of his wife, who had died shortly before) what he considered a synthesis of all sciences, the arcane of the West, the famous "Archeomètre" which the world of searchers awaited¹¹. More theoretical than practical, this imposing system had, way above others, the advantage of demonstrating that, more than any other sacred book, the Gospel (The Bible), because of the divine Presence of Christ, contains all the Truth (Verity) — the Pater being its key. Papus in one of his works evokes the old Marquis and makes a parallel between the two masters living in France. But Sédir had already made his choice. From the social standpoint, the activity of the Hermetic School had just had a set-back, a grave financial perturbation due to the collapse of an attempt made in the U.S. by a Mr. Bliss who had founded lodges and had taken the engagement of helping the Paris movement. Chamuel not being able to subsidize it by himself had to back out for a while. In spite of the creation of a 3rd lodge, one had to subsist within the means at hand. None of those things preoccupied Sédir for any length of time, so certain was he that all organizations are ephemeral, that each esoteric system reaches a superior result, that any religion contains within itself a mysticism which surpasses it. Only the doctrine of the first Rose-Croix and the work of a few isolated great mystics still attracted him. In order to take contact with the one whom he had perceived as a good "Paterfamilias", Sédir spent his vacation of August, 1898 at Lyon; and though we know nothing about this secret garden, it seems possible to tie it in to a few conversations which Sédir will include later in *Initiations*. The "doctor" incarnating the man of science in the occult domain, the initiate who rushes in all good faith to storm Verity, to find on all sides but the inexorable barrier which throws him back toward the "ordinary tumult", only to hear Andreas telling him: "Yes, there is a wall" — "Is this wall temporary?" asks the troubled soul, "Should I climb over it or destroy it? Is it I who built it in the past? Is it an adversary?"

Is it a friend?" — "I cannot tell you, Doctor; you must see for yourself; you can destroy this wall, go around it, climb over it, or dig beneath; but don't try anything yet. Wait". And so, though the groping period of feeling his way had passed Sédir shall obediently await a few more years for the order to act - to receive the order for his mission. * * * Up to this period in Sédir's life, his studies, incessant writings, his standing which was becoming more and more important in the spiritual movements of the time, had removed any matrimonial ideas from his mind. Aware of the combats and also of the power of a chaste life, he had, though his role as educator had attracted a great many female admirers, kept his distance. Not wanting to exalt the man we have been scrutinizing through any idolatrous bias, we can affirm that regardless of any and all gossips and critiques in this domain, they were always founded upon mere appearances, hence worthless. In spite of the mystical asceticism to which Sédir adhered his whole life long, it is in Lyon that the idea of founding a home took hold. A home, or marriage is something one cannot undertake, nor be liberated from, without facing compromises. The absolute point of view in marriage means, that through pre-established choice, the two beings becoming a team, walking along together toward God, undertake getting along together and modifying each other daily. Sédir's first mate was beyond question an exemplary mate and her death worthy of a saint's. As many other Parisian workers, Alice Perret-Gentil used her needle-work as a dressmaker and was obliged to augment her meager salary by sewing at home. It was in this manner, that working for Mme. Encausse she met Sédir. But there was such a financial drawback! His salary at the Bank did not surpass 3,000 francs per year; his published works did not bring in anything yet. However, and without thought of tomorrow, their marriage took place June 13, 1899. A few of the friends who attended both the civil and religious consecrations partook of a very simple meal which took place at the old Café Voltaire. Papus and Chamuel being witnesses were automatically there, also the journalist Serge Basset (later killed at the beginning of the 1914-18 War) and a few old occultists who came to cheer the newly weds. Obligated to vacate the mansard room of the Avenue de l'Opéra, the young couple thanks to the * This artist who collaborated at the Hermetic School, had illustrated a few books; later he became rather well known, and occupied an important place among contemporary artist-painters. friendship of a young artist* took an apartment at 3 rue d'Orchampt, way up at the top of Montmartre. A short time later, Mme. Le Loup found a small apartment 500 feet away at 14 rue Girardon where they spent ten relatively happy and calm years. These happy years, the pattern of this change in their lives, are to be found, and reflected in a few lovely pages of Initiations: such as on the plateaus of Vélizy, the Compiègne Forest which evoke the lovely foliage of the Île-de-France where, the young couple invited at the home of friends would spend their Sundays. As soon as summer came, they in turn would entertain at Neuilly, in the rather large villa that an admirer loaned them each year. There, one played charades, would wear disguises, danced, played ball or played at 'quoits'. But these noisy and recreational meetings did not modify in any sense the spiritual program which more and more was taking shape. This home atmosphere even enabled Sédir to fulfill his service at the Bank better, without excursions. Arriving rue Ventadour at 10 A.M., he could, due to his working facility, accomplish his task in one straight stretch and profit during the lunch hour to write or else to rectify the errors of an unskilled colleague. On the other hand, Mme. Le Loup, outside of her household duties, did not remain inactive; she would copy articles or MSS, would visit the sick and often went to research at the Bibliothèque Nationale, though that particular chore was given to an elderly jobless family man — which given charitably for a long period of time rather depleted the budget of the young couple. As far as new publications were concerned, as we have mentioned, they became limited due to the backing out of Chamuel. In 1901, Ollendorff published Sédir's "Elements of Hebrew", and "The Magic Letters". Two years later, a bibliography of studies upon the Rose-Croix, and the preface to the treatise upon "The Revolution of Souls" by Isaac Loriah came out. But, Sédir, having met Médéric Beaudelot through friends, found a new understanding and faithful publisher. One of the most attractive personality of the times was Beaudelot! A fervent follower of Allan Kardec and of Léon Denis, at the very beginning he published a spiritualistic paper which, after meeting

Sédir, will eventually become the review "Psyché" to which Sédir contributed articles for a long time. This vibrant man incarnated the prototype of the knight in search of an ideal always ready to help; he would receive anyone in a somber exiguous ground-floor apartment on the rue du Bac, which was referred to as a bookstore. A hall, next door, became the meeting place of the new Lodge known as the "Sphinx". Living at Bourg-la-Reine at the same time as Péguy and Léon Bloy, Sédir's house became the rendezvous of the first Friends. One usually played ball, and so one day, it came about that Sédir stumbled against the root of a tree provoking a rather grave complication to the side of his leg, which developed into a white tumor, therefore losing part of his mobility. The Hermetic School, rue Séguier, followed its usual curriculum, Respecting the personality and concepts of each person, Sédir never would have thought of criticizing any one under the pretext he had modified his viewpoint; but one evening at the end of the trimester after he had delivered his class on astrology and magic, the public was astonished to notice that the program of the coming months did not include any esoteric subjects but on the other hand, a series of lectures upon the Gospels (The New Testament). From that day on, Sédir never mounted on the podium but for the sole goal of developing the new orientation of his thought -- before a smaller audience perhaps, but who never forsook him. From 9 P.M. on, for three quarters of an hour, in a willfully subdued and monochord voice he would develop the themes of that which would later be called "his doctrine". At the close, he would answer questions that had been written previously and left on the table. This life, which began as we noted in mediocrity and suffering could have, due to the wealth of his exceptional gifts taken a triumphant turn as so many do. The depth of knowledge and the authority with which they endowed Sédir added to the rapidity of his comprehension in all domains; plus the beauty and clarity of his style could have opened wide both a singularly renowned literary or philosophical career! But — before each new bifurcation which destiny offers us, before each more or less select solicitation, the choice of the one who deliberately abandons any speculative values in order to consecrate himself to the one Master of Eternity, is always to intentionally choose the place, the position or the assignment the least representative or the most thankless! This is what unconscionable critics — those who remain in the interzones searching for the Masters of the Earth will call a "deliquescent mystique". * * * Beyond what we can perceive about anyone, about their impact, their profound role, simply taking into consideration the human refractions which a divine determinism has marked differently — and even those are being influenced by a secondary atmosphere and ethnic currents — we finally face a complex and almost undisclosable morphology. The secret march of evolution also includes that of varied itineraries for individuals, raising some, reducing others without its being possible to judge any of them. A few, choosing the steep ascents, in the eyes of the beholders of the planes have a particular prestige and aureole, a radiation; their lofty-ceilingposition seems inaccessible to us. Having rapidly reached the altitude which his eagle eyes permitted him, Sédir as we have already seen, was one of those, but the originality of his case was that he did it while modifying his whole personality — in fact, in the eyes of all those who knew him, his bearing, his speech, his whole being gradually changed. However, someone close to him became a heavy load to bear in this second period of his life, a dolorous load (whom many might have reproached him socially speaking) but who, on the contrary, participated to the path of sacrifice which he had accepted, providing him to acquire all the qualities of the spiritual leader which he was. But one had to be closely entwined to this drama to understand the heroism it entailed. Counter to those thought of as initiates whom some call Masters and who, for a while exert upon their disciples an excessive authority, an ephemeral prestige, he to the contrary shall always remain profoundly humble in his role of self-effacement toward his friends. Rather, he sought to lessen his powers, his uncontestable means by placing himself on the level of those who met and those he directed. In reality, never did his tastes change. Craving solitude, a shepherd's hut in the mountains, he shall willfully transform his habits and tendencies in view of touching the greatest number of people. Drawn to the humble people, the masses whose generous riches he appreciated, loving both children and animals, right after the death of his wife Alice he took a stand and settled among the bourgeois world, the

snobs. Overcoming his timidity and though it cost him a lot, without thought of the morrow, since he did not have anymore encumbrances, he left the Banque de France and with his future assured, left Montmartre and moved successively first to the rue de Beaune, then rue Cardinet, finally rue de Seine. His door was open day and night to all those who wanted to see him; his home, with esthetically choice yet simple furnishings, welcomed everyone. He, whose tendency was rather bohemian even untidy, who took no notice of his clothes except that his wife saw to it, all of a sudden learned how to wear a collar (and they were very high at that time), to select his ties, to take care of his hands. He parted his rebellious locks of hair in the center, well combed. To meet the social invitations, in the evening he wore the prescribed full-dress and chose raglan coats in order to hide the drag of his leg. His figure, previously thin, gauche, even sickly, due to the progressive training of physical culture he took and excelled in, became transformed. This became a discipline which he followed in spite of fevers and fatigues to such a degree that, without exaggerating, he could claim to "do anything I want with my body". Very soon the large frame he had inherited from the Rhenish ancestry of his mother, filled out. His rather thick neck gave him both an imposing stature and easy deportment. Though he scrupulously weighed how he spent his time, he began visiting art galleries, and kept in touch with new literary works. Always encumbered with a four-footed friend for which he cared for paternally, and in spite of the affection those lovely animals gave back to him, it complicated his life constantly. Having a particular interest in the Brie species — he had a whole dynasty of dogs of various sizes and awkward progeny, many of whom bore the name of Guérotte. Having become a member of the Club des Briards, he wrote a book upon the breeding of these animals possessed of extraordinary intelligence and devotion. A few moving pages relating facts upon the examples these dogs can furnish humans are to be found in his works. These transformations confounded many of the first hour friends who could not quite understand these changes, therefore were affected; a few young neophytes arriving full of zeal, with their uncompromising naturalistic or vegetarian principles, could not quite accept the man, surprised at finding a well-dressed, soigné, almost elegant mystic, whereas the renunciation to earthly values was at the basis of his teaching. Yet — all along centuries, have there not been many confounding examples, such as the famous figure of Cagliostro? Bearing the imprint of exceptional power, those men mystify history in spite of historian-biographers trying to pigeon-hole them as adventurers or impostors — so difficult is it to detect the role which true Servants of God have come to perform while seemingly being "Friends of unwarranted wealth". Did not Jesus two thousand years ago scandalize the doctors of the Law, the Pharisees and even his close associates? As everything is bound together, the outer transformation of Sédir did nothing but refract the very much more important transformation of his inner life and his radiation! While at the very beginning of his mission he had affected anonymity in the teaching he gave regarding the various viewpoints of the Spirit, suddenly without warning, without pressuring anyone, he asserted a doctrine, he professed a precise personal path — meanwhile he continued to lecture and to answer questions from the floor. This change of attitude, while imposing a larger field of action and a chance of circulating more and more, enabled him to meet in the most diverse domains, the more influential personalities of the day, and especially to reach numerous souls in distress. Only the framework changed, because his faithful followers — who had heard him develop theories of occultism at Chamuel's, at a café on the Place de l'Odéon, on the ground floor rue de Savoie, at "Père Chocolat" on rue de la Harpe (where one partook of the beverage after the meetings), in the rear courtyard of the rue du Bac near the Beaudelot bookshop, at the Hermetic School in two old buildings of the rue Séguier — his faithful friends, trustful of his word followed the new developments he gave of the Gospels, in the hall rue Cardinet where the regular talks took place at first, then during the war 1914-18 at the "Sociétés Savantes" and later with an ever growing public in the large hall of the "Société pour l'Encouragement de l'Industrie rationale" across from Saint-Germain-des-Près. Out of town and in foreign countries, his friends organized for him a series of lectures. Also the various "Universités Populaires" (very much in vogue for the study of incongruous subjects), invited him for the first time in 1913 in a hall of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine; then in 1925 before a less democratic public, in a

hall of boulevard Raspail headquarters of the "Université Mercereau". This happened to be the last time Sédir spoke in public. * * * ** In 1912: The Spiritual Duty was published, by request of those who then called themselves his students and who desired precise directives. A later edition was retitled: The Spiritual Path. ***Our friend Albert Legrand who had taken charge of the works of Sédir, published "The Sermon on the Mount" at Bihorelles-Rouen in 1921; then came "The healings of Christ", "The Kingdom Of God" and "The Crowning of His Work" which constitutes all that Sédir has set down in writing on the Gospels. Humanly speaking, Sédir's ambition — and he certainly had some — could not be limited to the domain of intellect nor of knowledge, still less that of power. Having tested the weaknesses and febrility of these values, and in spite of the respect which he accorded them, neither would he waste his time with, still less exploit them. Service toward a high ideal had drawn him ever since a very youthful age and this ideal, having become more explicit in the revelation of Christ as the sole aim, as goal of his life -- he had thus become "engagé" — he was committed... Anyhow, this Master who had chosen him, as He does for each of His servants throughout eternity, once more put his trust in Him and gave him definite directives: the order was: "You shall write and you shall speak up to the day when no one shows up anymore." And so, Sédir kept on writing, lecturing everywhere he was asked, finally understanding after profound studies that the Gospels emanating directly out of the "Book of Life" are the rigorously exact refraction of the passage of the Word on earth. Transposable ad infinitum these four little books, even as to their "letter", need a transcriber, each tuned to his epoch, since theologies and doctrines become non-plussed. Speaking to other persons during those same years that authorized Person had also said that: "The Gospels would be re-written" (which confirms the role which Sédir was to play in our 20th Century). Up to that time his articles, his writing had been limited to the closed field of Hermetics, but they had been so numerous and of such superior quality as to launch his name and to win him a preponderant place in the milieu of searchers — though his tendency, his awakening, to Christian Mysticism was considered a "desertion" by many, still they continued to read and to listen to him. As with any profound work, his decanted slowly and was expurgated. In the first works** published by Beudelot between 1907 and 1911 thanks to the spontaneous generosity of his listeners, often poor, one still finds along with the new inspiration some remains of occult-like phraseology, a few vestiges of symbolism and a few oriental concordances. This disappeared in the re-vamping of the 2 vol. which became "The Childhood of Christ" (which came out on the eve of the 1914 War) and "The Sermon on the Mount".*** To that end the integral text of the four Gospels were transcribed at the beginning of each chapter. "That will force them to read", said he, thinking of the many searchers who did not know or did not read the evangelical texts anymore. Shortly thereafter, "The Mystical Forces and the Conduct of Life" came out in 12 little brochures. They comprised a series of lectures given rue Séguier and **** Chapters have been added to the recent editions of 1982. given also to another group of Nice. There again, donors made the publication possible. Finally, the building where Sédir lived rue de Seine became our meeting place. It was there he wrote "The Seven Mystical Gardens" which contain in a very few pages a startling description of the various steps leading to eternal landscapes, equal to those of Saint Teresa of Avila, of Saint John of the Cross and others who dwell on the summits. "Initiations" is the book which being perhaps the most appreciated, succumbed to more and more edifying transformations. Written practically in one sweep in a small garden of Bourg-la-Reine, at the verge of his illumination, it was published in a tiny format in 1908 by Beudelot. But so incendiary was this little brochure, too bewildering a subject to be left as is— being the crossroad and the program of a whole life, there had to be a development, it had to have a transposition upon all the various evolutionary planes, in fact upon all the numerous classes through which pass and re-pass the students that we are... Sédir recapturing his favorite subject gave it a vaster field; the little booklet evolved into a very powerful book wherein the irisation of human thought in its social or metaphysical concepts, even in its religious concepts gave discreetly to Christ and His doctrine its due place. This second aspect of "Initiations" came out in 1917 with the subtitle: "Story for Little Children". —Yes! And how! — with the dedication: "To my friends to

thank them for their élan toward the sole Pastor Whose love reassembles our dispersions so as bring us to the home of the Father." This edition was very quickly exhausted; the theme was taken up again, chapters were added and came out, at the end of the First World War, in its third state — the final one.**** Two important chapters were included with facts, anecdotes relative to the constant presence of the Master. Yet, we must admit that Sédir was not happy regarding this third edition; though we admire it, we can easily understand why, weighing the subject to be treated on the one hand with his innate desire for perfection per se. On the other hand, he had the illusion that the cinema would have been able to express both the miraculous and simple atmosphere better. It is a good thing that the "scenario grinders" did not come forth. In this feverish age of machinery and social complexities, this work shines with the original concept of bringing forth the living image of Christ. Sédir has been the first to bring Christ as a living presence to the humble people, to the sick, to put Him as one could say: on the street among us; then later on various writers under different headings followed suit. In the domain of realization, Sédir had already formed a group of men of good will whom he coached toward profound, serious actions; right after the war of '14-'18 when he had organized and revived the movement upward, a second state developed. The "School Master", the soul director began to emerge above and beyond the lecturer and writer. All of us, enthusiastic followers filled with illusions, driven by our legitimate desire to serve in action, urged Sédir to launch a publication, a review which ***** Later on, we were able to launch the last unpublished works of Sédir: "History and Doctrine of the Rose-Croix", "Christian Mysticism", and "The Incandescent Path". ***** Prof. Jan of the Cross Bielecki, chemist-scientist; b. Warsaw 1869 - d. Jan.3 1926. would be a means of broadcasting on the one hand, and especially of becoming a link with our sympathizers in the provinces. Ever since his debut with Chamuel, Sédir having always been submerged with the inherent difficulties of periodicals, understood the need for such diffusion, he accepted and in true Sédirian fashion assumed all responsibilities — a load — which cost him many a sleepless night spent on that task. The first issue came out February 1919. The subscription was for a year, at five francs — happy days! — and the bulletin came out monthly. The first number stated this axiom: "There must be a few amateurs of the impossible". Then came the consecration. In the July 16, 1920 Journal Official appeared the announcement of a "Free, Benevolent, Charitable Christian Association called "Les Amitiés Spirituelles", whose doctrine and sole aim are "to serve Christ as our Sole Master" — which seemed to be nothing new. At least conceived merely in a man's mind nor something from one of the ephemeral concepts, which under various names was sprouting within the religious mantle of the 19th Century. In reality, it was but the continuation of these small phalanxes which, from St. John and St. Paul (mentioning only the older apostles), are trying to maintain the integrity of the mystical evangelical teachings of the first era — those who work for a still far-away celestial Jerusalem, for a kingdom which beyond time group the true friends. Its founder, refusing, disdaining illusory successes was aware that the ascent is steep and that quantity and quality must never be confused, nor ever take the letter for the spirit. Sédir was in full form — at his best — and yet he was going to leave us.... And we unaware, unconsciously were demanding more and more from him! To his presentations on Mysticism came further works: "A Few Friends of God", "Ascetic Energy", "The Gospel and Sapience", "Love your Neighbor"; and as we were insistent upon a laic breviary, he wrote the magnificent short-cut "Meditations for 52 Weeks"; then "The Education of the Will". As a final touch "The Three Sacrifices" which were published posthumously.***** * * * Jan Bielecki, one of our most ardent friends in the service of Christ, had just passed away in the early part of January, 1926.***** Sédir referring to his passing had written:"I ask you to recall to mind unceasingly the example of Bielecki, true ascetic of science and of charity. When Heaven deprives us of a visible guide, let us not neglect to make an examen and to ask ourselves if we have taken into account how to profit from all the resources and instructions that this guide offered us". *****Mme de Graffenried; daughter of the explorer, the Marquis de Mores. (Hotel = Mansion, a Town House). ***** Published by Albert Legrand in 1926..."The Three Sacrifices", English translation. 1965. Little did we know that a few weeks later, these words

would hold the same imperative duty for our whole association. His intimate friends had noticed a certain slackening in the severe discipline of the athlete; having had to abandon his apartment rue de Seine due to distressing circumstances, ever since his return from vacation Sédir was living with friends on the second floor of their private home (hotel particulier) rue Henri-Heine, in Passy.***** They had allotted him a bedroom and a library where he could continue his arduous task. In that well organized brain, creative work never stopped; his moving Appeal for France had just been launched; three lectures had been announced to be given in February, the subject being: "The Sacrifice in Antiquity", "The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ", "The Sacrifice of the Disciple".***** This program which never took place was concretized by his own sacrifice. His whole being had been showing great fatigue — a few words of lassitude, a slackening in his occupations, a cold which persisted, constant headaches which obliged him to press a large verruca near his nose, from which black blood exuded — all of which denoted a congestive state and abnormal depression. But we were so accustomed at seeing him outgoing, affectionate and concerned with our difficulties, that selfishly we did not attach too much importance to these symptoms which only later became classified in our minds. In these winter months of 1925, we were particularly happy to have him among us more often, since when not in town he would attend our Friday meetings regularly. On January 15, 1926, leaving our hall rue de Seine, we walked with him up to the place of the Théâtre - Français, continuing our discussion, we went for a glass of beer. As the "Poverello" used to say regarding the talks he had with his young Brothers, Sédir too would let himself be fleeced while caressing his dog or giving her food. But that evening, feeling a chill, he took a taxi and went home earlier than usual. A week later, our reunion missed the absent "boss". But on Monday morning, the 25th, one of our closest friends entering Sédir's bedroom felt that something unusual had happened. Nothing had been moved, yet an atmosphere of drama reigned. The sole witness of that night had been Sédir's dog Guérotte, who frightened threw herself at the visitor, then went to lie down by the bed of her master; she later had to be taken from the house. Sédir with a high fever was suffering from violent pains in his head. A doctor summoned, immediately diagnosed general septicemia. Except, for the three close friends who attended him, no one was allowed in his room. Felled by a high fever, barely able to speak, he still manifested his pleasure at seeing us. News of his illness spread; consternation reigned, each person wanting to participate at nursing; letters and advice poured in. However, to all these affectionate offers, his sense of obedience and of example, which he had prescribed as necessary to follow thru the normal course of events, made him decline, anything which had not been prescribed by the doctor. He knew only too well and had often written that Providence decides and directs all things under the most banal appearances. The affluence and lifestyle of his hosts permitted him to have nurses round the clock, and when typhoid became certain, as the second blood tests revealed the source of illness, the library next to his bedroom was rapidly transformed into a bath-room. All in all within the fold of the Amitiés Spirituelles, optimism reigned; in spite of the prevailing sadness and the ardent prayers which friends recited even below his windows and in the four corners of France, one accepted, one understood the ordeal but certainly never anticipated his death. Sédir at 55, was in full form, he could not leave us! That was, unthinkable, we needed him badly! Alas, one could see that he was weakening from day to day; on the following Friday, it was apparent that he was failing; the medical staff began to worry about the state of his heart. In the beginning, when not yet knowing the cause of the illness one was fighting the fever, the aspect of Sédir was one of agitation, of disorder. His eyes particularly were startling, because due to his myopia he ordinarily kept them half-closed, but now in delirium, without seeing, they were wide open upon hallucinating images, his dark and enormous pupils were constantly rotating in deep set and darkened brownish orbits; his beard had grown, the half-opened dried caked lips upon a still darker shade of bistre skin gave his face an expression of a man undergoing torture. Febrility, alternated with extreme agitation; followed by a period of prostration with the return of lucidity with which one had to deal tactfully, On Sunday, neither baths nor antithermics could check the rising temperature, the fragile debile heart had to be sustained. Heaven turned a deaf ear to our prayers; all hope seemed lost.

Monday and Tuesday went by, but the lungs were filled, he was breathing oppressively; on Wednesday his power of resistance was exhausted, the hour had come! During the morning our anxiety mounted as his strength visibly decreased; the phone rang ceaselessly — the hosts and two friends were, seated in the living room, when at four P.M. the nurse asked us to go upstairs, the end was near. The second floor bedroom was more silent than ever; a presence hovered in the room, one felt the great Messenger having come to accomplish her task. The window curtains half closed let in a grayish light; the patient, in bed in the center of the room, propped up by pillows, still dominated the situation. Overcome by emotions our four shadows glided into the room; Sédir, sensing our approach more than being able to see us, made a gesture with his left arm on the window side, as if he wanted to draw us toward him. Madame de Graffenried came in tears, knelt by the foot of the bed, while his long diaphanous hand caressed her head affectionately; then drawing her to him kissed her forehead, and her husband who was sustaining her, also bent his face for a farewell kiss. Not a word was said, neither could the dying man beyond that possibility, nor the witnesses with a lump in their throats. Only the large white hand spoke in the silence. Then in a last gesture, his hand motioned for the two friends, to come for the kiss of peace — the last. The image of Christ, which hung in the empty alcove was presented to him and in one long regard of adoration, symbol of his whole life, Sédir made his ultimate effort... The head which had been slightly raised fell back, his breathing slowing more and more kept on — to stop definitively at 6:45 P.M. The night, three friends kept watch over the one who had given them such profound joys. The bed had been replaced in the alcove. Freshly shaven and washed, Sédir had almost regained his normal aspect. However death had etched his features; from the very pure line of the forehead followed the profile of a nose more aquiline than it had been in life. The mouth, pascalian through its almost dolorous fold, neutralized an unexpected strong and deeply hewn mask, reminiscent of the Corsair ancestor who probably had deeded him a few traits, reflector of one aspect of the hardy and proud character with which he had to battle his whole life. As for the feelings of those who kept watch by the long still body, beyond the pain they all felt, and the confusion at the loss of their chief, there followed a calm almost happy impression of Peace. The distress, the anguish of the past days, the restraint of the invisible presence of the Geni of death which had come to fulfill the order of the sealed letter each of us brings along at birth — all of that gave its place to the certitude that all this was but appearance, not reality. The beloved guide that Heaven had placed upon our path was remaining. This impression lasted during the three nights of the watch when other friends took turn at their posts by the two vacillating flames of the candelabra and the bouquet of Parma violets by the bedside. How many happy memories and animated conversations we evoked during these nights obumbrated by a winged presence! Then came the funeral, the religious service at the Church of Notre-Dame de la Miséricorde, all of it too ostentatious for the taste of many but which was the manifestation of a well-to-do family who saw in Sédir someone greater than a family member. His body was buried in the little St. Vincent Cemetery a few feet away from the rue Girardon, close to the tomb of his first wife Alice Le Loup; what remained of our guide was deposited in thin poplar planks into the earth. We were all amazed that not a trace, not a note, not an order, nor special directives were to be found among his papers; no choice as to who should be the one to replace him — who could have replaced him anyway? — not a letter to the directors he had chosen. Nothing — nothing but the simple retirement, obliteration of the servant who, once his task is finished, abandons, as his Master had done on the Cross, everything into the hands of the Father. But for us, his work is still there, filled with a program as he himself told us: "for many lives to come." There is nothing to do but to continue, alone now, and yet with, by and for Christ. * The two friends who were at his bedside were Emile Besson (1885-1975) and the author of this article, Max Camis (1890-...) * * * * * * Le Goéland, Juillet-Aout 1943. * Tr.n. Emile Besson, 1885-1975. Biography - The Man THE MAN AND HIS WORK THE MAN On February 3 1926, in Paris, one of the most prestigious and most moving voices ever heard was silenced — a voice which had poured into the hearts of many people: consolation, certitude, Peace — the voice of Sédir. "A voice" said the poet Théophile Briant, "which had consecrated itself to the

diffusion of the Gospels for years, and which had warned us against the multiplied prostitutions of His Word." "The debt of our times" said Sédir, "will be heavy when so much unhealthy prose is being printed, when so many nefarious and empty words are being hurled from pulpits and rostrums". "Silence" he wrote in 1923, "is not the unspoken word or non-speaking; it is a positive act, an affirmative force, it is a genie, it is a god. It is an occult kingdom, and it progresses as any other creature, between two counsellors: an angel of Light, and an angel of Darkness. "Everything speaks in the Universe, but also, everything listens; usually one seeks to find out what creatures are saying, but the sages are more concerned with finding out what they pass over in silence. "If the world of sounds contains the intellectual nourishment of our spirit, the world of silence is that of mystery, the place of the Ideal reserves, the original kingdom of Verity, of Beauty and of Good. Its doors are narrow and one finds them only after having wandered a long time in the brambles of speech. One must have experienced the truth of the Persian poem: 'The word that you hold back is your slave; the one which escapes you is your master'.* Who can foresee the consequences of a word? Speech between two silences is similar to time between two eternities; or as space between two infinities. To speak is to sow, but it is in the silence that mysteries are celebrated and where the gods plough souls". Paul Sédir, whose real name was Yvon Le Loup, was born January 2, 1871, at rue de Lainerie, in Dinan, France. He was the son of Hippolyte Le Loup and Séraphine Foeller, his wife, from Neustadt, near Fulda, (Hesse-Nassau). He did not remain very long in his native Brittany; he spent most of his childhood in Paris, first in the Batignolles section, then at 4 Avenue de l'Opéra. The one who is writing these lines lived for 20 years close to him and for the last 12 of these years, in daily contact as an intimate friend. He can vouch that the life of Sédir was one of humility and self-effacement.* Let us immediately state that what drew so many of us to him, that which made us cling to him, was most assuredly the scope of his mind, the nobility of his sentiments, his affability and graciousness, his radiation, but above all, his sincerity. Sédir lived what he preached, in profound simplicity; he was a living example of the virtues he extolled, bringing the luminosity they contained to the attention of his listeners and readers. In him, words and actions formed a magnificent unity; he was in all the truth and grandeur of the expression: a servant of Christ. That is why his words had such resonance. A simple word from his lips would perturb us, stir us to our very depths, because it was a cataract gushing from his heart, the expression of a spiritual reality, not only understood but lived. Near him one felt secure spiritually, one felt himself to be a better person; everything became clear and simple; we would be incited to work with courage, to endure, and go forth. From an early age he endured adversities, being affected by the financial straits of his parents. Accentuated by privations, a latent tuberculosis developed; then a second leg fracture developed Pott's disease (le mal de Pott). As a child he wanted to be a shepherd. It has been said that he would lead, to paraphrase Péguy's expression "quite another kind of flock to the right of the Father". Later, he had another desire, different yet akin. Having always been clever with his hands, he often told his close friends that he had dreamt of being an artisan, a handicraftsman, or 'bricoleur'. The live, minutely described workshop and bench of Andreas, in the first chapter of his book Initiations, evokes this hobby of which he was so fond. His mother told us that in 1882, came the possibility of his taking violin lessons; also that he played rather well. She also told us that even as a child he had a beautiful handwriting which he kept all his life. It was in the Church of St. Augustin that he attended catechism classes. He began, augmented by self-imposed research, his primary studies at the school of the Frangs-Bourgeois, where the Brothers of the Christian Doctrine taught. In addition to what he learned from the Brothers, he studied by himself much that was not in the curriculum. On July 10, 1883, he received his High school diploma for higher studies, (Certificat d'études supérieures). Then, in Aug. 1888, his Baccalauréate for Special Secondary Teaching, (Bachelors degree). He told us, that as a fervent chess player, he had occasionally lost games when he played with his eyes open, but that he had never lost a game when playing blindfolded. He also found it amusing to play several games at the same time. An untoward fall fractured his leg for the second time. During his immobilization he read widely and commented on the Fathers of the Church. Also, he cultivated

enthusiastically and in his spare time the art of sketching, in which he became very proficient. At that epoch the young Le Loup, was trying to lay the foundations to carve a career for himself. He had obtained a position in administration; later, an old friend of the family who had a post at the Banque de France, helped him to prepare for the entrance examinations. Le Loup entered the Banque de France on Oct. 28, 1892 as an auxiliary agent; he remained in the same department of "Depots de Titres" (Stocks & Bonds Dept. — The Securities Dept.) for 20 years. Having one hour and a quarter for lunch, he would stroll day after day to the quays of the Seine, where he ferretted into the Booksellers stalls and avidly * Lucien Chamuel, pseudonym for Lucien Mauchel, died 1936. 19 Victor-Emile Michelet, *Les Compagnons de la Hierophanie*. (Dorbon, 1938) read whatever struck his fancy. His mind found immense satisfactions, but it was an arduous task for him to methodically classify the sparse and varied scholastic facts and bits of knowledge he gleaned. * For approximately two years Sédir had been studying esotericism on his own, without any other guide save his inner Light, without any other adjuvants than his intelligence, his faculty of observation, his relentless drive and the books which his limited budget permitted him to acquire. It is then that he decided to get in touch with those in Paris who represented the course of ideas which he had so far studied by himself. About 1888, Lucien Chamuel*, who was to publish the first works of our young friend, had founded the "Librairie du Merveilleux", with Papus, (Docteur Gerard Encausse). This publishing house, having an adjoining lecture hall and a bookshop at 29 rue de Trévisé, was then the meeting place or rendez-vous of those interested in Hermetic Philosophy. It was there that at the end of 1889, Yvon Le Loup introduced himself. This is how a bystander relates this very first interview(19): "One evening I happened to be in the famous bookshop of the Rue de Trévisé, where the good Chamuel presided, when a slender slow-spoken young man presented himself, stating point-blank: "Here! I want to become an occultist. "At the rather gauche aspect of this diamond-in-the-rough newcomer, I could not help laughing. Time proved how wrong I was. Papus, who knew how to size up men, did not laugh. He replied: "Fine, my boy, come to my home next Sunday morning. "That Sunday, Papus entrusted to the neophyte the care of classifying and collating the precious library he was accumulating. "Thus did the young Breton boy, known as Yvon Le Loup make his debut into the rarefied studies". At that time, Papus — six and a half years older than Sédir, had already published the: *Traité Élémentaire de Sciences Occultes*; and his remarkable *Essai de Physiologie Synthétique* was in preparation. He founded the review *L'INITIATION* in 1888, and, in 1890 *Le Voile d'Isis* especially consecrated to the esoteric aspects of occultism. In 1890, he had also organized a group of occult students who were to meet later at 4 rue de Savoie, first under the name of "Groupe Indépendant d'Études Ésotériques" (1891), which later became known as "Université Libre des Hautes Études", with the subtitle of "Faculté des Sciences Hermétiques". From the beginning Papus had proven himself to be an outstanding animator. His height, his squarish frame already threatened with obesity, his powerful leonine features, his clear, incisive, luminous regard occasionally veiled in profound reverie, his wide mobile nostrils, his mouth * *L'Art Poétique*, by Boileau-Despréaux, 1636-1711. denoting kindness, his vast and beautifully moulded forehead — all together made him a remarkable man, hewn for combat. In contrast to the ebullient Papus in this retreat of the rue de Trévisé where the young Le Loup was making his debut, newcomers were greeted with open arms by the affable ponderous, calm Lucien Chamuel, who placed at the disposal of these avid questing adolescents thirsting for science while fomenting new ideas, the counsels of his experiences as realisor, and the treasures of his theoretical and practical knowledge. He knew how to canalize the enthusiasms of these who wanted to be "in print", before having really anything to say. Producing an enormous amount of painstaking labor himself, he had the authority to warn his young comrades against improvisations and advised them to work in depth: "Vingt fois sur le métier remettez votre ouvrage".* (Rework and reshape your material endlessly...) Erudite without vanity, a connoisseur of men, he would suggest to this one the undertaking of a certain study, he would clarify and correct the weak points in the work of that one, orient another toward the kind of research for which he showed an aptitude. He immediately extended a great friendship toward Sédir. It

is he who, later, when his publishing house was transferred to 5 rue de Savoie, published from 1894 to 1899, the first articles, the very first works of our young friend. * Possessing a prodigious memory, an extraordinary capacity for work, a keen analytical mind, and rare intuition, Sédir read and assimilated a considerable number of works — mostly those dealing with philosophy, symbolism, esotericism — while he subjected himself to veritable feats in order to create a literary style for himself. We believe there are no readers of Sédir's works who have not been captivated by the magnificence of his style. Above all, when he became aware that he was the bearer of a message of sublime importance, he wanted the form of this account to be as worthy as possible of the communication he had to transmit; and in truth the style of Sédir possesses a particular loftiness. Moreover, he speaks to the heart, he awakens within his reader a desire for the highest and for the best which slumbers in the depths of a being; he shows the path to the Ideal, that austere but alluring path taken by the privileged beings that Christ has designated as 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world'. Not only did Papus open the treasures of his library to Sédir, but he introduced him to the heads of the various occult movements of the time, one among whom was Stanislas de Guaita. A close relationship sprung up between them and Le Loup became an habitué of the meetings that de Guaita had in his apartment on l'Avenue Trudaine, where the elite among the followers of occult sciences met. De Guaita owned a large library which he placed at the disposal of his young friend, and Sédir after his working hours at the Banque de France, came back to de Guaita's house to pursue his studies. He very often spent entire nights reading and meditating. * Pseudonym for Albert Fauchaux. Immediately Sédir became one of the collaborators of L'INITIATION, in which he published his first article, EXPERIENCES d' OCCULTISME PRATIQUE in October 1890, under his name, Yvon Le Loup. It is in the October issue of L'INITIATION that the name 'SÉDIR' appeared for the first time. Our friend had found it in the story: LE CROCODILE by Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin. On May 6, 1891, Le Voile d'Isis had also announced featuring articles by Sédir. 'SÉDIR', an anagram of 'DÉSIR', means: Desire for God, aspiration toward the ultimate, inextinguishable desire for the Absolute, for the Permanent, above and beyond daily living which it magnifies, Desire for self-sacrifice, the evermore perfected service for his fellowmen in the love of Christ. A desire which always remained the incentive of his soul, the inspiration of his efforts. In 1892, Papus made him an associate lecturer at his Société des Conférences Spiritualistes. He gave Sédir charge of a class at his Faculty of Hermetic Sciences which had just opened its doors at 13 rue Séguier. Sédir was featured in a great number of publications of which we give a list in the appendix. * Papus also introduced Sédir into the occult circles; among the members were to be found Paul Adam, F. Charles Barlet, F. R. Gaboriau, Emile Gary de Lacroze, Julien Lejay, Jules Lermine, Victor-Emile Michelet, René Philipon. Sédir would equally meet Paul Verlaine in various taverns of the Latin Quarter. This was about the same time that Stanislas de Guaita undertook the renovation of the Rosicrucian Order, and that Papus founded the Martiniste Order. Yvon Le Loup affiliated himself with both of these associations and therein acquired various degrees. In the Kabbalistic Order of the Rose-Croix he became a Doctor-in-Kabbala, and in the Martinist Order he was a member of the Supreme Council. Thanks to Barlet, he became a member of the H.B. of L.(Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor), Barlet being its official representative in France.* This Association claimed it followed a tradition specifically Occidental. Le Loup later became subservient to (enfeoffed in) Gnosticism and was consecrated under the name of T Paul, Bishop of Concorezzo, in the Gnostic Church of Doinel's. Later on, Marc Haven brought him into the "F.T.L." of which he had been one of the founders. With Philipon he renovated the Maçonnerie de Mizraim. He was also a member of Jollivet-Castelot's Council of the Société Alchimique de France. Later on, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Barbey d'Aureville, Flaubert, Balzac and Péladan became his initiators. * * ERNEST HENTGES, Sédir, sa vie, son oeuvre (en allemand) (Zentralblatt für Okkultismus, août 1927). Practical Magic interested him very much. Chamuel relates that Sédir had extraordinary forces at his command,* for instance: "One Sunday morning, we had been taking a walk in the Vallée de Chevreuse. The sky was getting dark; heavy storm clouds were assembling. Sédir proposed to make an experiment on the possibility of changing the

weather by magical means, to chase the clouds away in a few moments so that we could see the blue sky again. After exactly five minutes of silent concentration, he asked me to look up and, in fact, above our heads we could see a large blue opening in the sky". Another time, in Vendee, Sédir caused the furious barking of a dog to be transformed into those eerie wails known as 'the call of death'. In the less obscure domain of alchemical research, he was able to recover the bases, or fundamental principles of the "Grand Oeuvre". He did not realize the Philosopher's gold, but he prepared the powder of projection and an elixir with powerful properties. He had installed a laboratory for research and magic to which only very few trusted friends had access, at 4 rue de Savoie. But nothing remains of these operations. * Very rapidly Sédir became one of the chief luminaries in the society founded by Papus. Titulary of high degrees in the divers occult organizations of the times, he exerted a strong influence. With unlimited devotion, with tireless zeal, he granted interviews to those who, drawn to the works of Papus or his magazine, came for advice and counsel. He talked with them, wrote to them, and soon his correspondence spread throughout America as it continued throughout Europe.

CHAPTER II THE FIRST WORKS

About that time, Sédir settled in Montmartre, first at 3 rue d'Orchampt, for a short time, later on at 14 rue Girardon, at the top of the Butte. Montmartre was then truly quaint — the most alive quarter of Paris. It was a large village independent of the city and those who lived within its boundaries had a definite spirit of their own. At the time when Sédir went up the hill, Pierre Louys was writing: "We possess within Paris a hamlet almost unknown..... which in itself embodies the peaceful atmosphere of a countryside and fields dominating the turmoil of cities". To which Francis Carco added: 'The Mecca of artists'. Between 1894 and 1906, Sédir brought out the first translations of mystical authors such as Jacob Boehme, Gichtel, Jeanne Leade, William Law; prefaces to re-editions or to translations of writers such as Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, Fabre d'Olivet, Isaac Loriah, Salzmänn; finally his own works came out, in which he recounts some of the results of his scholarly research. At the end of this book we give the complete list of these publications, most of which were published by Chamuel, Beaudelot, then Chacornac; books which have been out of print for quite a while and unobtainable today, unless found accidentally on the shelf of some dealer in rare books. The first was his translation from English (including a preface) of the *Celestial Messenger of Universal Peace*, by Jeanne Leade, who had founded the Community of the Philadelphians. Let us mention among others: In collaboration with Papus, an *Almanach of the Magi*, which came out from 1894 to 1899. His works on Jacob Boehme which made this little known precursor of the mysticism of the 18th century, accessible to the French reader. *The Temperaments and Psychic-Culture*, according to Jacob Boehme, data on practical mysticism; a study upon *The Blessed Jacob Boëhme*, a true narrative of his life and death, his works and his doctrine, (published in a special issue of *L'Hyperchimie* by Jollivet-Castelot); the translation of the *De Signatura Rerum*; last a preface to the *Election of Grace*. *The Magic Mirrors*, a treatise wherein Sédir discusses the magic mirror as an auxiliary to divination and clairvoyance. *The Incantations*, or how one becomes a magician, a work in which he gives a long list of mantras, i. e., sacred words and sentences by means of which the Hindus attempted with the help of invisible powers, to obtain mastery over nature and men. *The Creation*, esoteric theories, where Sédir contrasts the esoteric traditions of the Occident to the doctrines of Hindu philosophy and to the Buddhistic theories. About 1900 Sédir met Mederic Beaudelot, who became not only an understanding publisher, but a faithful friend. He was publishing the review *Psyche* to which Sédir contributed for a long time. It is at Beaudelot's that the first edition of: *Les Rêves, Théories, Méthodes, Applications, Interprétations (Dreams)* came out. For the collection *Les Sciences Maudites*, (*La Maison d'Art* - 1900) directed by Jollivet-Castelot, Paul Ferniot and Paul Redonnel, Sédir wrote an essay on *The Kabbala*, also a study on *Occult Medicine*, published later on by Beaudelot. After having made an overall study of general medicine and surgery, Sédir minutely examined and analyzed homeopathy, spagyricism, animal magnetism, fluidic actions, psychiatry, the magical art of healing, stressing the lacunas in current medicine, and sin as the origin of disease. In 1901, for a separate edition of the review *L'Initiation*, he had written *Elements of Hebrew*, according to Fabre d'Olivet, The

Magic Letters, and Initiations; also Three Tales for 'Little Children' which comprises the meeting, the temptation, and the adept. In these three stories, Sédir has explained the process necessary for the progressive illumination of man, the passage from intellectualism to mysticism. *Les Lettres Magiques* (The Magic Letters), as well as the Three Tales, constitute the very first versions of the work which appeared later and was reprinted several times under the title of Initiations. In *The Kabbala*, of Papus (Chacornac - 1903), Sédir made up an important bibliography which contains 430 items. The essay upon *The Song of Songs*, a commentary upon its sixth-sense interpretation, first came out in 1906 published by L. Coquemard in Angoulême, then in a revised and enlarged edition in 1916, published by Albert Legrand in Rouen. This essay is an introduction to the mystical hymn, in which a sextuple interpretation is brought out. *Hindu Fakirism and the Yogas*, their definitions, theories, trainings, results and dangers, which Chacornac brought out in two editions. This work, treating of a subject little known until then, is still authoritative in spite of the abundance of literature which has treated that question ever since then.

CHAPTER III
THE ENCOUNTER

On June 13, 1899, Sédir married Alice Estelle Perret-Gentil, who was born Sept. 5, 1867 near La Chaux-de-Fonds. She was for him a perfect mate and companion, an exemplary wife, a light who voluntarily kept in the background. She passed away ten years later. The year preceding her death — which was a saintly one — Sédir dedicated the second volume of his *Conférences sur l'Évangile*: To my beloved wife, To my silent collaboratrix, To the great heart who never feared to shoulder all suffering so that the words of the Master may here be clothed in a less imperfect form, I offer this book. From her came all that it contains of persuasiveness, from me all its shortcomings. * Sédir found happiness and joy in sharing the conquests of his mind with others. Each newly discovered horizon, each elucidated problem he passed on to those who, like him, were studying these venerable traditions. In his Montmartre apartment, he would receive his friends regularly on Friday nights. The small dining room was overcrowded with a heterogeneous group of enthusiastic young people who, while drinking tea or coffee, would discuss sciences, occultism, magnetism, but who also smoked so much that the air was blue even on summer nights when the window was wide open. Whenever someone entered, Sédir would get up, shake hands over the heads, trying to find another seat if possible. Alice Sédir would zigzag among the various groups so as to serve the newcomer, and after the commotion of the new arrival and greetings had subsided, each one, drawn to a certain group by affinity, would resume the thread of conversation. Though he was unpretentious, Sédir never could appear banal. He was a strange man who emanated a powerful radiation; carrier of an interior light which would enlighten all those who confided in him. The host in those days had his oldest friends around him, dear faces most of whom are no longer with us, friends of the wonderful days of once-upon-a-time, who are now phantoms in our memories but lamps upon our paths... * As Théophile Briant says again: "Sédir was to the occult sciences what Stéphane Mallarmé was to poetry". Of an encyclopedic culture, endowed with a prodigious power for work, he had encircled and probed human knowledge, he had explored all disciplines; he could discuss with equal mastery any and all possible subjects. At the meetings in his home one could speak or ask him questions, which he answered with the good graces which never left him; he would correct in precise sentences some of the ideas launched or use a clever tangent in which each of us could find a new lesson. How many memories are re-awakened in our hearts as we turn our thoughts back to those days of the past! We shall only relate three; let us limit ourselves! Two of his friends had started on a probing philosophical discussion, the subject of which is of no consequence here. Each holding on to his opinion, they could not get together nor agree. One of them exclaimed, "Let's go find Sédir, he will either cast a vote or conciliate our two points of view - as soon said as done. If I remember rightly, it was then the middle of the night; they arrive at Sédir's apartment and continue arguing before their indulgent mentor. He, dubitative, thoughtful, smiles, listens, shakes his head while puffing abundant smoke volutes from his pipe, neither approves nor disapproves, and does not say a word. But the two friends are delighted. All differences are overcome, they are in full accord; the solution to the problem seems to be startlingly one of common sense and simplicity. And it will only be later that

they will recall that Sédir had not pronounced one syllable. Another aspect of Sédir's character was his faithfulness to duty. On a certain winter evening, snow began falling in such abundance that in a few instants all means of transportation, all vehicles were stopped. One must admit it was the "heureuse époque" before the advent of the subways. But it was one of his lecture nights. Many people would have thought it needless to bother putting themselves out, because it is a long way from Montmartre to the rue Séguier; many would have rationalized that the hall would be deserted and the trip useless. But Sédir was not one of those. At the appointed hour he entered into the small conference room where two ladies who had equally braved the elements in any case, were to be his only audience. Without being fazed, as if the hall were totally filled, Sédir began his discourse before his two auditresses without abridging one word; then he left at approximately 10 o'clock, as if the weather were mild and serene - his duty accomplished. Here is another of his actions which proves to what extent his conduct was in perfect concordance with his convictions and teaching. One day, as he was leaving home, on the street a man accosted him who said: "You do not know me, but I know you", — and he proceeded to tell him that if on that very day he could not find 40 francs (and these were gold francs), he would be evicted from his lodging, he, his wife and children. Sédir took a piece of paper out of his pocket upon which he wrote: "Dear Alice, would you please give the bearer of this note 40 francs". He could have stated precisely: the 40 francs, because that was all that was in the house. Assuredly, it is not Sédir who let this be known. It was his dear Alice who told a few friends, adding: "Sédir understood that it was God Who had sent this man because he had asked neither 35 francs, nor 50 francs, but the 40 francs we possessed". * For the many years we knew Sédir, we had always noticed the great prudence he used when speaking of things relating to the invisible realm. He always said that he knew nothing personally, limiting himself to repeating things he had been told or which he had read in general, without being specific, such as: "There are some who say....." One day, brusquely, without transition, this prudent form ceased. To the questions we put to him, from that time on, he answered authoritatively and with a peremptory affirmation: "Such a thing is thus; such a thing takes place in such a way". After having spoken for years as "having heard it said" he suddenly spoke as "knowing". This corresponds to the time when having reached the summit of knowledge and powers, he abandoned his titles, threw overboard his "treasures of wisdom", and rejecting any kind of initiation and all logosophy, he separated himself from most of his travelling companions in order to consecrate himself uniquely to the Gospels. This evolution surprised his oldest friends, several of whom never understood it. Assuredly this change corresponded to that which was most profound within Sédir; proof of that change is found in that "Course on Mysticism" — which he taught in 1896, and published in L'Initiation, 1898 — which already contains the seeds of his subsequent works. But then, an unforeseen, solemn, and decisive event took place in his life, which made him aware of the emptiness of sciences and secret societies, and which put him forever on the unique path of the Gospels. From then on he had but one doctrine: the love for one's fellow man which gives the key to the world, and but one aim: to seek the Kingdom of God, knowing "all else" would be given to him in addition. * Regarding the capital event in his life, Sédir has made definite and important declarations: First, in a letter addressed on October 15, 1910 to the Echo du Merveilleux which was reproduced later; and in the foreword Sédir wrote for his Childhood of Christ, the principal passages of which are: "I have stated in the Foreword of the first edition that the ideas I expounded were not my own. "The One Who furnished them to me", I added, will forgive me if I have involuntarily distorted His light; the omissions and the errors are mine; to Him must revert all the good that His teaching has given me and that It will still produce in spite of the incompetence of the interpreter." "I renew that declaration with all the power I possess, but I still will not designate the One to Whom I owe everything. It might be construed and said that my silence is an adroit ingratitude; I accept that misconception. I shall continue to keep silent, in order to preserve a great number of metaphysicians from spurious slanders, the results of which are redoubtable; ... in order to shield the work of * Vie & Paroles du Maître Philippe; Dervy Livres, 1, Rue,de Savoie, Paris 75006, 1959. *Marc Haven, pseudonym for Dr. Emmanuel Lalande, who married Victoire

Philippe. my Master from premature publicity; ... finally, to keep Him from being held responsible for my errors". Finally and above all, Sédir refers to Him in the chapter, from his book *A Few Friends of God*, titled *An Unknown*, which we insert in the third section of this book. * In the last few years, Alfred Haehl, who was a very dear friend of Sédir, spoke openly about the "Unknown": Monsieur Nizier Anthelme Philippe. Alfred Haehl lived several years in close contact with Monsieur Philippe; he wrote a work upon his Master, the authenticity of all the elements contained therein, makes it a document of inestimable worth.* He recorded what he saw and heard, completing his documentation and citations with those of witnesses whose friend he had become. * Sédir thus had the privilege of meeting his ideal, not in the abstract world of ideas, not as a conquest of intelligence, but in a living person, with all the mysterious and august reality that — a living person — possesses of unfathomable depths, of luminous gentleness, and of invincible certitude. It was on the platform of the Lyon Railroad Station, (Gare de Lyon), in Paris, on a Sunday of July 1897 that brought along by Papus, Sédir met for the first time the man he names "Andréas", in his novel *Initiations*, - the one Papus had surnamed "Father of the Poor" in an article consecrated to his spiritual Master. The meeting was very brief, because the train was ready to leave, and Sédir was able to exchange only a few words with this man. But Sédir saw him many other times in Paris, and made several trips to see him — either in Lyon, where seconded by Jean Chapas, Monsieur Philippe would receive numerous afflicted people who were healed and comforted — or in his home at L'Arbrèsle where his faithful disciples would congregate; besides Jean Chapas, there were Marc Haven*, Alfred Haehl, etc. . In May 1905, Sédir with his wife Alice Le Loup, again spent two days near the one who was everything to them. It was Alice who had expressed the desire to go there, knowing that the time she had to remain on earth was limited, because the disease she suffered from was incurable. However she did not leave this earth until 1909. But it was to be their last visit: The Master passed away August 2, 1905. *Willy Schrodter, Paul Sédir — une biographie, (en allemand) dans *Der Spiegel*, Février 1939. CHAPTER IV THE LAST WORKS The long illness which was to carry away Sédir's beloved companion having necessitated calm and rest, it was at Bourg-la-Reine that the reunions went on. The friend who sheltered the young couple lived at the end of a cul-desac, in a pavilion called 'Solitude,' not very far from the home of Médéric Beaudelot. Every Sunday the old tram car would bring from the Porte d'Orléans the same faithful friends, coming to spend the afternoon with the one they already considered to be their guide. It was under the shade of the trees of this verdant Parisian suburb that Sédir wrote the very first, small and so captivating edition of *Initiations*, which we have already referred to, (*Les Lettres Magiques*, 1903). The first mystical works of Sédir were brought out by Beaudelot between 1907 and 1911, under the title: *Conférences sur l'Évangile* (3 volumes). These conferences were reprinted later in 5 volumens: *L'Enfance du Christ*, *Le Sermon Sur la Montagne*, *Les Guérisons du Christ*, *Le Royaume de Dieu*, *Le Couronnement de l'Oeuvre*. At the beginning of each chapter is transcribed the integral text of the Four Gospels. In 1909 Chacornac brought out *Le Breviaire Mystique* which is out of print today. In the Foreword of that book Sédir explains this: "I have written these pages, not because I believed I had anything new to say, but because many people requested me to do so. I do not seek to glorify any creed, but I wish that any sincere man, be he Rationalist, Catholic, Pantheist, Lutheran, Buddhist, Parsi or Moslem, will recognize here the path to the Source. Because, God alone can quench the thirst of a soul". Upon the secret fraternity of the Rose-Croix, (*Librairie du XXe Siècle* - 1910), he also wrote a book reprinted several times since then, notably *Histoire et Doctrines des Rose-Croix* (1932), out of print today. These two works have been re-written and completed thanks to notes left by Sédir to form a new book: *Les Rose-Croix*. In 1912, Beaudelot published *Le Devoir Spiritualiste*, in which Sédir expounds his conception of the evangelical ideal and its realization in our daily life; then in 1915, *La Guerre actuelle selon le point de vue mystique*. Reprinted and completed later, Albert Legrand published it under the title: *La Guerre de 1914 selon le point de vue mystique*. This work contains five lectures given in Paris during 1915 and 1916. Also during the war, Sédir wrote: *Le Martyre de la Pologne*, published by Crès. At the same period, Sédir enlarged his *Initiations* to make of it

the large work as it stands today, which is really "the most precious stone of the brilliant diadem representing his works".* Sédir therein relates, using a fiction-like form, his meetings with the "Unknown". We must state precisely that there is not a detail in this story which is not materially true — all is factual. The personages in this book are the Doctor, Stella, and the envoys from Heaven which it is their privilege to encounter: Andréas and Théophile. Upon these characters Sédir has given the following precisions: "Théophile represents an inner aspect of Andréas: the pure Light of the eternal soul, Andreas being the immortal spirit; the Doctor, the conscious mentality; Stella, intuition. Objectively, these personages represent levels or functions in the army of Light". Besides the works aforementioned, let us point out *Les Sept Jardins Mystiques*, *La vraie Religion*, *le vrai Chemin vers le vrai Dieu*, *Les Directions Spirituelles*, *Quelques Amis de Dieu*, *L'Énergie Ascétique*, *L'Évangile et le Problème du Savoir*, *Méditations pour chaque semaine*, *L'Éducation de la Volonté*, *Le Sacrifice*, *Mystique Chrétienne*, *La Voie Mystique*, *La Dispute de Shiva contre Jésus*, *Les Forces Mystiques et la Conduite de la Vie*. * The death of Alice Le Loup on April 23, 1909, precipitated the orientation of Sédir's life of apostleship. He left the Banque de France. His friends urged him to become the leader of a spiritual-movement, but Sédir was not an organizer. Just as one would search in vain for a doctrine, a systematic teaching in his works, neither did he ever organize his life or his activities; he just wanted to obey the circumstances, which are the instruments or canals of the will of the Father. He was asked to give lectures, he gave them. He was pressed into publishing his lectures, he had them published. Finally, he was asked to group the men of good will who had united around him; he assembled them and formed an association. Shortly thereafter, he rented, in the vicinity of the rooms he had occupied in the rue de Beaune and later rue Cardinet, a small sculptor's studio at 32 rue Cardinet, which became the first home of the *Amitiés Spirituelles*. It was simply, almost sparingly furnished; however it bore the imprint of an aesthetic touch which did not enslave Sédir, but which he always sought. The remarkable scope of his knowledge and profound learning which he placed at the service of the Gospel very rapidly brought a new public and the kernel of the habitués (faithful followers) was soon overflowing the locale. Sédir first rented a hall in the Hotel des Sociétés Savantes, rue Danton, later another at the Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie nationale across the street from the Church Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Later on, a very close friend (who was killed in the course of the 1914 War), the secretary of the brothers Marius et Ary Leblond, obtained for Sédir the small apartment at 10 rue du Cardinal-Lemoine, where the review "La Vie" was evulgated; this became the second home of the *Amitiés Spirituelles*. God alone knows to what depths Sédir loved his friends. For years, he led us by the hand, listening to our problems with a patience that nothing ever checked, forgetting his own pains to relieve our sorrows. For years he taught, sustained, advised and consoled us. For years we heard his energetic and kind voice, faithful echo of Him Who became flesh for the salvation of the world. For years he tilled — at the price of what fatigues! — the barren soil of our hearts, to make it capable of receiving the seeds of eternal life for years he took upon himself our load, the burden of our preoccupations and also of our infidelities. Disciple of Him Who came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life. Sédir wanted to transform his friends into apostles. This is the motto he gave them for their apostolate: "It is not by the presentations of our ideas that we want to convince others, but through the radiation of the flame with which they set us on fire." In other words: "Example is the most persuasive eloquence". One of his last letters ends with the following words: "Accept all of my prayers. Think only of Christ, speak of nothing but Christ, work only for Christ. Serve the poor and the sick. All the rest is but curiosity". One can consider those words as the resume of the directives, the parting recommendations of the one who became, from the time of the Encounter, up to the end of his life a Witness of Christ, a Messenger of the Gospel. His life, his teachings were testimony rendered to the certitude which had filled, illuminated his being. He could have claimed the words of Saint Paul as his: "Paul, slave of Jesus Christ. It is not I who live, it is Christ Who lives within-me. Christ is my life". A lady who belonged to the Protestant upper crust of society, told us; "When Sédir speaks of Christ, He is here, present." That is the secret of his apostolate. He placed us in the presence of Christ; through him, it was Christ

Who was speaking to us, Who taught us, Who encouraged us, Who lifted us again. Just as Christ filled all his thoughts, all his love, all his hopes, so was the Gospel his whole faith, his entire proselytism. He would answer all of our questions, dissipate all of our worries, would restore our confidence, and hope, would revivify our certitude by the light of the Gospel. The spirit permeates his books, and the pages that he wrote upon the Gospels, are among the most moving, most comforting that one can ever read. Yet he never wanted to hear of an austere Christianity. He often repeated these well-known words: a sad saint is a sorry saint (un saint triste est un triste saint). That is why he wrote his friends: "A profound and grave incomprehension regarding the Gospel is to believe that it forbids us any joys because it asks us for renunciation. We are mistaken. There is nothing pure on earth in fact, but it is our fault. Because were any perfect beauty offered us, we would never recognize its value. Being we are impure and unworthy, we reject it. And yet there palpitates within us the memory of and the hope for, a homeland without frontiers, which way beyond the stars, develops its landscapes under ever-shining midday suns. We know that a land of beatitude exists; we would like to anchor there, but we do it gauchely and stiffly. We strive to adopt the gestures of Love with the surly expressions of the miser refractory to alms giving. Toward the clear skies through which float smiling angels we only lift our sullen faces. "We must let go! God is not only in the Infinite, He also permeates the Finite; Heaven does not exclude Earth. If we want to draw others up there, why conceal that Heaven is a benevolent place, why not reveal that its air is delightful to breathe. To wallow in the limited joys of the world is an error; but to loath any healthy mundane joys, which are the sole little beauties we are able to gather along these roads, is another error. "Blossom out! Open the doors and windows; give a cheery welcome to any being or any thing. 'Love ye one another', does not mean to impose mutually upon one another annoyances which we dissimulate more or less. May your encounters be festive; become the sunshine of one another. You may not be rich in money; give lavishly from your heart". * Such is the ideal Sédir presented. Théophile Briant who penetrated deeply into the thoughts, the heart and faith of Sédir, has written: "The torch which Sédir received from a mysterious hand, he proffers to us, It is up to us to take hold of it if we are worthy of it! Then he adds: "Even when plunged in deepest sorrow we must never despair. The promise of the Lord is formal. God is always among us; He will be until the end of the world. But we must not seek Him on the boards nor in palaces, nor in the places where the trumpets of renown are blowing. He is as the 'Unknown' of Sédir, lost among the anonymous crowd. He conceals Himself from the 'curiosity of the warped minds of the perverted ones'. "Let us love our brothers as ourselves and we shall find Him..... He is probably among the poor, needless to say, because he would not try to keep any fortune besides the one that the invisible Archangel who walks by His side dispenses to Him each day. He is among us. He keeps watch and awaits our coming. He carries as Tarcisius did, the Eucharist of his heart among men, and he is the depository of the tongues of fire. Beneath his nondescript clothing, he hides the splendor of Mt. Tabor, and assuredly the Salvation of the world". * After severing from the Institute founded by Papius, Sédir gave a series of lectures in Paris on The Invisible and our daily Life. Upon the invitation sheet he had written: "After having spoken for years on the various fields one discovers when engaged on the path of Christ, I believe that the time has come to look at a few practical details. Thus we shall have a closer contact with the difficulties met in daily life — these difficulties which are par excellence the mystic's field of action, rather than contemplation, meditation or the labors of "pure spirit". In April 1913 Sédir took up residence at 31 rue de Seine. This was the apogee of his public career. This change coincided with a transformation in his external behavior and appearance. He had always led a bohemian life, to which he brought a surplus of personal nobility. The physical culture exercises in which he excelled began to transform his silhouette. He wanted a dog — whom he treated fraternally. He particularly favored the Brie species. As a member of the Club des Briards, he wrote a book on the * The True Religion. One of the four conferences in the English translation The Gospel & Sapience. (Trans. Z. G.) breeding of these admirable animals; The Shepherd of Brie, French dog, (Le Berger de Brie, chien de France). Sédir was always drawn to the lower classes; he liked the humble people, the common man, whose

lives he had shared and with whom he had worked. His effort was to express the highest spiritual verities in their simplest form, that which was most easily understood by the average person. He decided to speak at the Université Populaire of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine where on May 11, 1914 he gave a lecture, published subsequently as "La Vraie Religion".* In the spring of that same year he gave a series of lectures at the Hotel des Sociétés Savantes, about several well-known personages; these were later inserted in the book: A Few Friends of God. He also gave a series of 12 conferences on "Psychic Culture and Spiritual Development", (La Culture Psychique et le Développement Spirituel), the last lecture not having been delivered in public, was published in Psyché (Jan. - Feb. 1917) under the title: "La Vie Intérieure selon le Christ" (Our Interior Life according to Christ). Mobilized from 1915-1918 at the École de Guerre in the "Information Office on the Prisoners of War", (Bureau de renseignements sur les prisonniers de guerre), his apartment became, every night of the week and Sundays, the meeting place for soldiers on furlough, their oasis before having to return to the front, "remonter en ligne". There, were expressed the supreme thoughts of many of our group who were not to come back and who would take along with them "up there", the peaceful, immutable certitude that their friend and confidant was imparting to them. Those among us who date "from that time" haven't any difficulty to visualize Sédir, to feel and experience again the blessed atmosphere which the prayers and the concentrated life of this servant of God brought down from Above. It felt good to be there. His always affectionate welcome tendered us with such graciousness made him waste a lot of time which had to be made up far into the night. He spoke little, listened untiringly to what we told him; but he canalized our thoughts into the decision to take. Then, a little later, everything went into place, without our understanding how it had happened. The concierge would say of him: "He's a very good man", an expression which scandalized our veneration for him. And yet, was it not the best consecration to the values of this earth which he so wanted us to accept and live by? He was gifted with a startling faculty of concentration; thus, no matter what the work might be, he did it well and fast. At the office of the École de Guerre where he had been mobilized, he became the target (le point de mire). Arriving early he often used to write, prior to the time when the work for the day was being handed out. One certain morning, he was draughting the Lebanese Legend which has been inserted in the first pages of The Sermon on the Mount. Three ladies who worked in the same office wanted to have some fun and from the moment of their arrival began to bombard Sédir with a hail of little paper pellets. I was seated by his side, having been mobilized into the same service. Without stopping, continuing writing, with his left hand he would pick up the projectiles which fell within reach and throw them back to his assailants, while passing to me his sheets of writing as soon as completed. These pages are among the finest he ever wrote. When he sent them later to the printer, they did not have nor need one single erasure. Another memory of the same period: Sédir occasionally said: "I have learned to read diagonally". We have often admired the rapidity and the sureness with which he would read voluminous and scholarly works. Toward the end of the 1914 War, we offered him the principal works of Hoene-Wronski — six large volumes in 4□— many pages of which had no text, only large graphs. Sédir was still mobilized. Within less than three weeks he brought us a study on Wronski — a very technical study, which ends with a parallel between Wronski, the philosopher of Knowledge, and his compatriot Towianski, the philosopher of Action. The War ended he took up his apostolate, his meetings, his travels again. Quite naturally the men of good will whom he had oriented toward a profound active life reassembled around him. These men urged him to launch a review which should be a means of diffusion as well as a link with the sympathizers who lived in the provinces and other countries. The first issue of the Bulletin des Amitiés Spirituelles, came out in February 1919; the presentation of the program stated: "There surely are to be found lovers of the Impossible". Later on, the creation of an association founded according to law was decided upon. It is thus than on July 16, 1920 there appeared in the "Official Journal" the announcement of the Amitiés Spirituelles as a Christian Association, free and charitable. The group of friends who for the past 10 years had little by little formed a nucleus now had an existence and an official denomination. Not only men, but women also had answered Sédir's

invitation to work and pray. By calling them "Martha and Mary", on their behalf he wrote these lines "I hope to assemble the greatest possible number of Servants of the Lord who, whether in their home, at the office, in stores, in palaces as well as in garrets will live to serve God above all, radiating kindness, grace and serenity". To which he added: it Contrary to human associations which grow by increasing the number of adherents by means of finances, through the social status of their members, the principle of ours is supernatural: you will not assemble, I shall not give you any material ties; the Spirit will bind you far more than any obligation. Faith increases only in an atmosphere void of all terrestrial certitudes. Unknown to one another, you will only know each other through the radiant tenebrae of the true faith wherein Christ appears in His integral magnificence. The Angel that He has chosen to protect this group to which you belong from today on, will transmit to you His virtues. Your destiny is in your hands. You shall triumph in the same measure as you will make of Jesus your Lord.... Like Martha, you will perform your daily tasks, often just as heavy in elegant surroundings as in modest circumstances. Like Mary, you will be consumed from within, sending forth * Jean Chapas (le caporal) 1863-1932. 20 Title of the English Translation. (Z-G) 21 T.N. Sédir died in the house -CC de Grafenried: Mme. de Grafenried was the daughter of the explorer the Marquis de Maures. invisible flames while hiding your prayers, your sufferings and the graces received". For over 50 years now, the "Amitiés Spirituelles" are continuing to diffuse the works of Sédir. To the adherents of its beginning, whom Heaven is recalling one by one, new members have been added, they come, and are coming regularly, attempting to apply and put into practice the teachings of the founder. * On May 30, 1921, Sédir married for a second time, Marie-Jeanne Coffineau (Jeanne Jacquemin), who passed away October 1938. During the years following the foundation of the "Amitiés Spirituelles", the activity of Sédir increased within the fold of our company: letters, articles, meetings, receptions, conferences in Paris, in many cities of France, and abroad, notably in Poland, where groups of followers had formed. The last public lecture of Sédir was given November 17, 1925 at the Université Alexandre-Mercereau, boulevard Raspail. That year after his return from the summer vacation, he stayed with friends living at 33 rue Henri-Heine, in Passy, the XVIth arrondissement of Paris. In January 1926, he went to L'Abrèsle with a friend. There they were welcomed by Jean Chapas*, that great servant of Heaven who nobly continued and in the deepest humility the work of the One they called their Master. Sédir had announced that during February 1926, he would give three lectures on Le Sacrifice, (The three Sacrifices: of Antiquity; of Jesus Christ; of the Disciple).(20) His death prevented him from delivering them. They were published by Albert Legrand. On February 3, 1926, after a few days of illness, Sédir was taken away from us. A religious service was celebrated at the church of Notre Dame-de-la- Miséricorde. His mortal remains rest in the Saint Vincent Cemetery, a few steps away from the rue Girardon, near the tomb of Alice Le Loup.(21) * It is almost a half a century since Sédir left us. But, for his friends - for all those who, close or far away, known or unknown, either grouped within the bosom of the "Amitiés Spirituelles", or isolated in their actions and prayer — for all those who have found comfort and certitude in his writings — there is before us, as he said himself, "Work for centuries!" For the sake of those who will open the books of Sédir for the first time, we shall add this page so as to characterize the abundant, singular works of incomparable value which they are going to meet. Just as a long time ago, before the coming of Christ, there were prophets to announce His coming, for the past two thousand years there have come men inspired by Heaven, mystic writers whose role has been to bring the Gospel within the understanding of their contemporaries, to enlighten them according to the knowledge and insight of their time, and to show them that Christ is always present among us. Sédir was one of these men. He is a mystic, a modern writer. 'He stands out from his predecessors. He speaks and writes as only a man of our century can do it, a man fashioned for his mission by exceptional qualities of intellect and heart, by his patient labor, by frequenting past and present masters in the field of the sciences in the visible and invisible realms, lastly and especially because of the meeting with the One in Whom he found, according to his own terminology, "a perfect resemblance to Christ". To the seekers of the supernatural whose studies he shared during his youth; to the scholars and inventors

whose productions and discoveries are more and more startling; to all those who are tempted to glory in their findings, he has shown that the Gospel is the absolute book, that it contains everything, absolutely everything, because it is the word of God. To those who relegate the Gospel among the outdated works of the past, or to those who have lost faith and despair of ever finding the light, he proves that the Gospel is a living book, factual, contemporary, which answers any query and fulfills the daily and fundamental needs of everyone. Sédir also provides an answer to all those who do not feel at ease in churches anymore, to all those who want to leave the wide highways and take a short cut, but who need to be encouraged and guided. To all those who aspire to the worship in spirit and verity, he says: "You will find that in the Gospel all the commandments, all counsels, all maxims are summed up in one sole order: to love our neighbor for the love of God". * The third part of this particular book can serve, for any new readers, as an introduction to the works of Sédir. The chapters contained therein do not figure, except the one on The Unknown, in the books actually on sale. They are letters, some unpublished texts, one lecture and studies or texts which had been printed only in periodicals or in the old numbers of the "Bulletin des Amitiés Spirituelles", or in works now out of print. These texts recall several well known aspects of his works. Many letters state his position in the bosom of the mystic and religious movement. The other letters show to what extent Sédir was a dedicated and trusted guide. Finally the last pages reveal him to have been as enlightened a "connaisseur" in the masterpieces of art of ancient times, as well as a "connaisseur" of those of his time.

Emile Besson CHAPTER V LES AMITIÉS SPIRITUELLES CHRISTIAN MYSTIC FRIENDS

The 'Amitiés Spirituelles' was founded as an association, as a group of dedicated persons for the sole purpose of recapturing the spirit of primitive Christianity, as a means for bringing men closer to Christ, That which binds us together is our recognition of the divinity of Christ and our observance of the Gospel. The rest is of no consequence — neither race, religion nor opinions. In fact, Christ has declared that "the first and primordial commandment is to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves". This is the declaration of the principles of the 'Amitiés Spirituelles': The Association of Les Amitiés Spirituelles gathers together those, whatever be their nationality or their religion, who recognize Christ as the sole Master of the inner life, and the Gospel as the true law of consciences and of peoples. It is not a matter of founding a new religion, nor of creating one more sect. The members of this group respect all forms of social customs and religious beliefs. Nothing exists without its reason and usefulness. They do not criticize any opinions but they want to belong solely to Christ. They are convinced that a real collective evolution can be obtained only by the spiritual and moral uplift of each and every individual, and that the terrible difficulties which threaten the western world today would be overcome if the greatest number of people, on each rung of the social ladder, accomplished more fully their individual duty. These Christian Mystics profess as their axiom of faith: Jesus Christ, only Son of God, God Himself, Who came into the world to lead us to Eternal Life. Their one and only maxim is to assist others by every means. Their essential Sacrament is their silent prayer to the only living God, offered quite simply, confidently, and joyously. Their ideal is to prepare the human mind, individually as well as collectively, to receive the Divine Light. In consequence, the members of the "Amitiés Spirituelles" use all their efforts to infuse into their actions the maxims of the Gospel. Whether they be Laborers, Employees, Executives, Parents, Children, or plain Citizens, all endeavour to accomplish their various tasks with an honest conscience, to comfort the suffering and lessen the misery around them. Each within his scope of action. Their radiation operates first by Prayer, by comforting the afflicted, then by word of mouth and lastly by publishing books. Profoundly convinced that nothing happens without the consent of God they do not pose as stern reformers. Experience has clearly proven that a helping hand to an unhappy wastrel helps him and comforts him much more than a lecture. They never interfere with other people's conscience because, in their opinion, our relations with God are far too solemn and private to require the help of an intermediary. They ask you only to try on your own account the same experiments that they have made themselves. This association belongs to no laic or ecclesiastical organization, nor to any political or secret society. It is averse to any political or religious

polemics. * We believe that the Amitiés Spirituelles (Christian Mystic Friends) have something valuable to offer at this time of universal unrest which oppresses the world; they are helping men turn their attention toward the deliverance which many of them have lost hope of obtaining. Sédir has written: "We believe we have found a solution to all problems, a door to all prisons, a remedy to all ills". To which he added: "We are offering our discovery to whoever wants to give it a fair try, while respecting the conditions of the experience. It is an old find anyhow! but do not old forgotten remedies often give a better cure than the most recent formulae?". Sédir affirms that independently of all secret associations, of any and all sects, the teaching of Christ has been transmitted throughout centuries, in its pure, perfect primitive essence, through an uninterrupted chain of unknown disciples. These disciples dispense the solace, relief and consolations the world has great need of as they alleviate all griefs. The aim of life is not knowledge. To beings in the relative stage it is impossible to grasp, to comprehend the Absolute. Besides, the intellect is but one of the organs of our total personality; even at its best, hypothetically it can but procure an image or an aspect of life, it is only an image, it is not life. Truth is reserved for those who strive to live life, not for those who ponder over it, or who merely think it. Christ has said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and the rest will be given unto you". Our movement is the offspring of brotherhood, we want to be Friends. "For us, friendship means worshipping the same ideal, observing the same discipline and realizing the same activities. And because our ideal is called Christ, our discipline is the Gospel and our activities are good works and prayer; hence we believe our friendship to be the purest, the loftiest, the staunchest." Among our membership there is no centralization of authority giving instructions; each person is free to act as he pleases and is solely answerable to God. Each must feel responsible for the entire movement. We attack no one, we criticize no one, being convinced that all that lives has the right to live and that which is evil will disappear by itself when the time is ripe. Naturally, we express our opinions whenever we are asked, we proclaim what we believe to be true, but we never impose our opinions upon The Gospel always stresses moral principles, ethics and piety; it never refers to scientific or philosophical research. Sédir has explained this viewpoint in his brochure: *L'Évangile et le problème du Savoir* (The Gospel and the problem of Sapience), He points out how the disciple of Christ has the right to make use of his brain coincident with the duty of confining this activity within definite limits. The trap into which an intellectual risks falling is insatiability, "as deleterious to them, as businessmen who work themselves to death in the process of acquiring a fortune." Spiritual poverty alone makes us susceptible of receiving instruction from Above. When a man is in that state he perceives unknown lights; instead of forms and law, the archetypes reveal their essence to him, hence he sees the spirit of things, the spirit of beings, their central relationships and their permanent simplicity. The candidates to initiation fancy and are convinced that they belong to an elite and that they can stride forth into realms that ordinary searchers have no access to; they imagine that through their own powers they might escape from the finite and go beyond the conditioned. The "Amitiés Spirituelles" have but one objective: to reiterate the teachings of the Gospel — of the Bible. They do not seek to dominate nature, they do not desire it. The heart is the true center of man; his mentality and sensitivity are but instruments. That which distinguishes divine Verity from human verities is that the latter are merely points of view and approximations; in any case, theoretical affirmations which are without any immediate rapport with life; while Divine Verity not being a doctrine but a life, it is a life which develops and realizes itself to the same extent it is lived. We believe that the highest philosophical speculations are not worth the glass of water given to a fevered patient. Anyhow, by acting that way we are only following the example of Christ. He could have remained in His Kingdom and launched from there some currents of sympathy and of comfort upon our dolorous and straying humanity; He could have sent angels, prophets and sages to succour human distress; He preferred to come here-below Himself. Of all solutions which the formidable problem of Redemption entailed, He chose the one where He had to give the most of Himself. He has been the good shepherd who looks for the straying ewe until He finds her— and at the end of a life of love and sacrifice, He condensed His teaching and all of His examples in these words: "As I have

loved you, love ye one another". Such is our faith, such is our motto. And this imitation of Jesus Christ is not the privilege of either an elite or of a social caste; it is accessible to any creature of good will. The Kingdom of God is not composed of an aristocracy of intellectuals; the Kingdom of God is for all. Christ has stated that one day there will be but one flock under the leadership of the sole Shepherd. And He showed us the way: "They will know you as my disciples if you love one another". Also, the Master of Sédir has said: "You will not be asked what you believed in; you will be asked what you have done". * It is written: "You will know the tree by its fruits". Christ has declared: "If you dwell in me and if my words dwell in you, that which you ask for shall be given you". It behooves us not to reveal things which must remain secret; but those who have lived close to Sédir have witnessed healings, deliverances, illuminations which "circumstances" could not explain. We are not invited to explain God, but to make an effort toward God. Sédir used to tell his friends: "We spend our life giving to God what He does not ask for, and we do not give Him that which He asks". From us God wants a great deal more than piety, much more than our godly customs, our orthodox doctrines, and our beautiful words! He wants our whole heart, our every thought — He wants our life in its entirety. Beethoven used to say: "Each man loves in his own way". To which Sédir added: "But each must love as much as he can". He who does not love is not a disciple of Christ, even were he to pronounce His Name, even though he would speak in His Name. He who does not forgive trespasses is not condemned by God, he condemns himself, because he asks God to forgive him as he forgives others. The man who does not love, the man who does not surpass himself to reach out and understand human suffering and try to bring it solace, that man, whether he be a scholar, an artist, a moralist, or a social leader, before God he is nothing, and — before man he merely exemplifies and exhudes hard-heartedness. There are people who cannot believe in Christ when they see the life led by those who claim to be disciples of Christ. From time immemorial the mystical life has been compared to a summit, the ascent to which has to be undertaken, Those who have merely attempted to escalate it, have discovered such horizons, received such innermost impressions and such certitude that, the desire to share the joys which had been granted them, was ignited. But, how would mere accounts or narratives succeed in making felt any of the realities experienced or blessings received? How could they enable the atmosphere of the mountain or of the panorama revealed from its summit to seep into our lungs or fill our eyes? What Sédir has written on mystical life is nothing but the account of a traveler who has gone to the conquest of the peak, the goal of humanity's millenary efforts. If for over thirty years, he gave lectures and wrote books, it was with the hope that his words would awaken in some mind, in a heart, the desire for mystical ascension. When he describes landscapes, if he forewarns of precipices, if he exults the joy of the ascent, it is because he hopes that that which has given him the certitude of intelligence and peace of heart may give to others the same certitude and peace. Those who remain at the foot of the mountain, the lukewarm, the timid, the dilettantes, do not know the aesthetic pleasure of aspiring toward the ultimate, they do not feel a desire for a loftier life; they do not know the infinitely noble fatigues of the ascension. To know spiritual realities merely through the intellect, is to have a factitious warped knowledge; it is as if one knew, merely by studying a geographical map, what horizons are to be admired from the summit. Assuredly, to make the ascension one must first — find the road on the map. But then — one must with a knapsack on one's back, start the ascent.

CHAPTER VI THE FRIENDS OF GOD IN MODERN SOCIETY (Lecture given at Rouen, Oct. 12, 1919) When we look around us, we see nothing but haste, fever, lust for power, greed, cupidity, concupiscence, cunning, vanities, brutalities. Values are measured in money; man voices his complaints either because of jealousy or rancour. This hackneyed saying becomes monotonous, and does rather lessen our dignity. Why not get away for a few minutes from these unbreathable surroundings? Since reality oppresses us, let us go for a while to the great spaces in the realm of Dream, where pure and simple forms are wafting by, where the landscape is harmonious, where the zephyr susurrates among the branches. And, since we are free to roam in this marvellous world of imagination, why not choose the most beautiful and most sublime of dreams, the one wherein, the fervor of artists, the thoughts of philosophers, the desires of simple men

who simply seek happiness are conjoined? In short, the dream which humanity has been pursuing from the beginning — the dream of the Divine? Since this dream seems to us to be par excellence, the unattainable, the impossible dream, and since extremes do touch each other, would it not be the closest, the most realizable, the one easiest to experience? *

Among the multitude of men and women, there are some who live on spiritual peaks. These innocent beings confined to a limited world, voluntary victims in an aggressive world who find their peace in that which provokes the anger of others, who seek silence as we seek renown, who lie in wail for trials or pain as others thirst for pleasure— these beings remain enigmas to any one who does not join their school. Everyone loves someone or something; everyone spends much effort to attain power or what he wants; some individuals, the elite, work without any personal nor monetary gain in view. The unknowns I want to acquaint you with are among these. Their total abnegation comes from their penetrating insight. Where the philanthropists see nothing but the sequence of vices, poor heredity, ignorance or bad education; where the sociologist deploras the consequences of inopportune laws, where the thinker becomes saddened and discouraged, these men see nothing but weakness of the flesh, an embittered spirit; they hope with obstinacy; they are certain they can solace or heal, because behind laziness, perversions and turpitudes, they see an inextinguishable glow — the lamp of Eternity — to which even the lowest among men serves as a perpetual Tabernacle. These lovers of the absolute are not dilettantes nor amateurs of the incredible. They are not curious, they prefer lofty thoughts to a stupendous marvel, they believe that a bowl of soup brought to the poor glorifies God far more than the lengthy litanies of a Pharisee; they are not preoccupied with their own personal salvation; they do not seek rest, they seek work. In everything, in every place they perceive God foremost; and this fulgurous splendour transfigures all ugliness and vices to their eyes, probes all abysses, and upsets all marshlands and quagmires. Are they overly proud in believing themselves the collaborators of the Supreme Being? Of course not, since this very collaboration belongs solely to the humble, to the "poor in spirit" who are aware of the scope of human ignorance. Then, they must be the feeble-minded? Neither, since all of humanity has been fed by this same dream, and refreshed by these very same hopes. *

Each day we see masses of people surging into motion picture houses, rather than storming the exhibition of works of art or listening to the performance of a masterpiece. In most fields mediocrity carries off the prize; in the religious field, it is not surprising to find so few true servants of Heaven. They are rare indeed. Some people seek God in books; others look for Him in psychic spheres, in occult experiences; these, because they have need to understand, the former, because they have need for happiness. They will find the answer as soon as they recognize that peace accompanies solely the gift of self, that true living knowledge is obtained once we have measured our ignorance, that mysteries will finally reveal their secrets at the instant we have fulfilled our destiny. Such are the points of departure of the Friend of God toward his interior life. The business man lives to launch enterprises, to make himself a place in the sun. The scientist lives to accumulate a collection of precise, undisputable facts — as many as possible. The philosopher assembles these facts according to their common denominators, he classifies them, brings out their analogies, extends them to other hypotheses extracted from a various collection of experiences. The artist seeks to bring out from living forms their most intense signification. The contemplative mystic uses the visible world as a steppingstone toward the invisible realm wherein he lingers quite often. But the Friend of God in all of these goals, sees nothing but expedients. Throughout all phenomena, systems and enlightenments, he lashes, he cuts right through to the Absolute. And, because the Absolute is equally found at the center of all the worlds and of all parts of all worlds, this remarkable foolhardy man maintains his equilibrium, comes back to Earth just as prepared for ecstasies as for positive works. The strongest realizers or tycoons have their secret weaknesses; the loftiest thinkers state they know nothing; the most rigid ascetics can be mere stubborn men; devils have a faith; the thaumaturgists might perform through dark forces; seers may err; the most active apostles might be nothing but ambitious men. In short, the sole true mark of the veritable mystic is Love. *

Henri Bergson - French philosopher 1854-1941 - Académie Française; Nobel Prize 1927. But, to perceive Beauty, its

reflection must have been received inwardly. To discern Divine Love in the heart of one of our brothers, one must remain unknown. That is why the Friends of God remain unknown; only their peers know them; one sees them in action; but as we are unable to perceive their motives, false ones are attributed to them and they are misjudged by the world. Anyhow they never defend themselves; they are voluntary dupes, benevolent men whom others exploit; they claim that good done in secret is more efficacious and propagates better. It is an opinion totally opposite to that of philanthropists; it is the opinion of Christ. It does offer an advantage, that of attracting calumnies and slander; but these peculiar men do not mind being used as targets of their neighbors' 'taunts'. They, who take everything seriously, smile when they are attacked. I have known one who lived in a large city, and about whom people circulated rumors of swindles and fraud. "Bah: --he used to tell me- T people have to talk about something; when they run out of anything else to say, they will keep quiet. Besides which, between us, they will never tell as much evil about me as I think about myself". * This might seem to be an affectation of humility; but no, this man was sincere. Let me try to make you understand his state of mind. You have certainly met some men possessing an avid mind and good memory; they read anything that comes their way, they store up theories, but they do not know how to think, weigh ideas, nor construct an opinion. So, should any metaphysical problem be outlined to them, they would solve it then and there; their answer might not even stand up, but it matters not, they will cling like grim death to it. As an example let us take a man universally renowned for his deep penetrating intelligence; Henri Bergson.* Bergson is a philosopher, he has read everything; he is up to date with the latest discoveries of chemistry, biology, sociology, and all the other "logies" which exist. In one of his books he relates the following anecdote with the candor of a thoughtful man who expresses himself straight forwardly. It happened in a salon; one of our greatest medical experts was expounding a theory on the mechanism of the conscience. When he had terminated his exposé, a young girl approached Henri Bergson and said: "I have listened very carefully to what Prof. X has said; but it seems to me that there is an error, but I just cannot find out where". Bergson, undisputed master of philosophy could have ignored that young girl's query; on the contrary, he took note of it, pondered, and a few days later, discovered the false reasoning of the Doctor-in-Psychology. So it is, that the stronger a man is in any kind of activity, the more modest he is, the better he measures the breadth of what he still has to acquire, and the more he pays attention to little things. The man of God does not conduct himself otherwise. The nearer he draws to his ideal, the better he measures the distance separating him from it, the better he appreciates the obstacles, the better he realizes the importance of small efforts and the gravity of small omissions. That is * Republicains: The people who joined the party to overthrow the Monarchy. why saints are severe toward themselves, desolate over faults committed for shortcomings we would barely perceive. * It is not the public life of their Master which they seek to emulate; it is His private life. The disciple of Christ does not wear oriental type garb, is not a stump-orator, nor does he play at being a thaumaturgist. The true mystic is first of all a sensible man; common sense being perhaps more indispensable in spiritual life than in material life. There is a lot of common sense in our country; that is why many Frenchmen are mystics without being aware of it. This "mystic" epithet is often misunderstood; too bad! it should never qualify psychic disequilibrium; the mystic strives to become healthy before attempting to become a saint; the one who tries to pierce the invisible and to perform marvels is not a mystic; he is a poor, curious, and vain man. The word "mystic" means secret, inducible, incommunicable; hence, whatever lies beyond the analysis of understanding, anything which is felt only by the soul, by the heart, in the effective center is mystical. Everything has its mystique. War has its "mystique" which is honor, glory, country. The République* of 1789 and of 1845 were mystics: The Slaves of Michelangelo are mystics; the Virgins of Bouguereau are not. Corneille is a mystic on the whole; while Racine in his Athalie never was. There are souls for whom the entire "communicable" would still fall short of filling the void; they thirst for the Absolute. Beyond the most exalted words, it is Speech Incarnate — The Word — they want to heart beyond master pieces it is Beauty itself they want to contemplate; throughout all forms, within all desires, at the core of all

ideals, it is the Absolute they want to reach, it is God they are looking at, they want to clear the ground, and carve out paths for His Benevolence. These souls emulate the Lord. To serve Him, nothing seems too difficult; for them struggles or frays are nothing; hindrances are as nothing, what touches them most is the effusion pouring from their sacrificed heart fluidified on the flames of Love. Jesus, with His own Hands, lighted this inextinguishable conflagration within them. Therefore they surrender themselves to Him over and over again, with renewed prayers. They ceaselessly try to do more and more to serve Him. These secret disciples know that their Master did not weigh the cost to make contact with men — neither promiscuities, rebuffs, nor moral or physical tortures; they strive to establish the same contact so as to be understood by their still deaf brother; they act fraternally toward the weak, they show indulgence to the vicious and are compassionate to the sorrowful. They practice privations, accept renunciations, they experience ingratitude the better to sympathize with the poor, to communicate with them heart to heart; they spare no effort to silence a complaint, or conciliate a breach. Such are their private lives, their hidden lives, the ploughing in depth to which they submit. * The great word Compassion, prostituted as most other great words are, opens the widest perspectives to their hearts. To be compassionate means to suffer with; it means taking up the load of another, it means to steer the pitiful heart we meet with grave and beatifically tender commiseration: it means giving oneself. Some people organize meetings and manifestos. The Friends of God give love and help without fanfare. They are the evocators of the All Goodness and for these laical eucharists, they offer themselves both as priests and victims. The two poles between which they oscillate are prayer and acts of charity, thus uniting as Jesus desires it, the most vigorous action with man's most vital living dream. "I have given you the example" - said Jesus -, "that you do as I did for you;... you are my friends if you do what I command. This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you; there is no greater love than to give one's life for a friend." Jesus does not profess, He commands; He gives no theories, no abstractions nor symbols, He wants deeds. Thus His disciples — clear-headed yet with blazing hearts — seek the most intense activity. To act contrary to the whorls of our imagination demands more energy than to give in to follow them; To act with an ideal as our goal demands more courage than to lean toward an advantageous personal result; To act in obedience to God — obedience meaning love — is purer than to act for the love of some person. This is what the activity of disciples consists of as it finds full expression in works of charity: their method is charity, their radiation is charity, their power is charity. Charity is a living chain which binds God to man, which draws man up to God, and which assembles all living creatures into one flock. It is a living flame the ardour and brilliancy of which are magnified in proportion to the obstacles they encounter. The heart upon which one of these sparks falls remains ablaze forever; fused into that incandescence, this heart spreads over its surroundings, just as water from an inexhaustible spring fertilizes the fields through which it flows. Pure Love does not tarry in mystical consolations nor ecstasies. It soars - hovers its immobile wings outspread like the great eagles of the craggy solitudes — on watch for some miserable dolorous being, ready to pounce upon him and carry him forth with effortless élan toward the serene, resplendent empyreans of the eternal sun. The life of Love is but an uninterrupted sequence of deaths because Love gives Itself wholly each time, and it is also another sequence of rebirths because Love is essentially Life. Love feeds itself upon grief and afflictions, since they are the mystical body of the Word, knowing that each moment discloses the will of the Father. "My food," says Jesus, "is to do the will of the One Who sent me." The disciples know that Jesus still works and suffers; that a compassionate gesture made in some corner of the globe is transfigured and ascends to cool the feverish mouth of the perpetual Martyr; that a wound dressed on earth stanches the blood of the Crucified One — of the Crucified still being tortured relentlessly by the millions of ignominies committed by men — of this Agonizing Victim Who cannot die and does not want to die. He said "That which you do to the poor in my Name, is done unto me." The disciples know that this is rigorously true, the exact Truth. The pathetic wretch who revolts in the depths of his misery is not Christ, undoubtedly; but at the moment when a Friend of God extends a succouring hand, by the powerful virtue of Compassion, something within this hapless,

heavy-laden being meets a ray of the Word being irradiated, and begins its ascent toward Heaven. Everything comes from Christ, everything returns to Christ; through Him, the least charitable act performed by those who love Him, becomes a masterpiece; through Him, joys become dolours, and dolours joys. We are unaware of this kind of Love; we believe we love our wives, husbands, children and country; but it is ourselves we love in them. Yet this selfish, insecure love lifts us occasionally up to heroism; what would we not attain were we to love them for themselves, forgetting ourselves, if we loved them in God? The Master of Love tells us how to go about attaining this purity — it is to do good primarily to those for whom we feel antipathy. In fact, man can veritably grow only when he surpasses himself, when he emerges from his limitations; his true homeland is the supernatural state which he shall re-enter only after having gotten rid of his natural penchants, his selfishness, by systematic efforts, by devoting himself to accept the repugnant chores no one wants to be burdened with, by helping those the world shuns, by taking an interest in and comforting the incurables and incorrigibles. The most fructuous alms is the one given from our necessities. Far more potent than cilices or scourges, better than fasts or oraisons, the physical fatigues resulting from our charitable actions are more efficacious in bringing solace down from Heaven. To pray quietly in one's room for the sick is easier than climbing the arduous steps to his garret in order to sweep it, to prepare his meal and change his bandages. From such services exudes a light which can change a state of soul better than any pathetic exhortations. * The Word gives Himself to whoever gives himself; the Friends of God are the true "poor in spirit," the true poor according to the Spirit. A millionaire may be poor before the Lord, and a beggar a millionaire; this is true in many ways, under many conditions, according to several points of view. But today, let us look at just one, the only one within our reach. Our Friends of God take no credit for their inborn gifts, knowing full well these gifts do not belong to them, aware that they neither bought nor acquired them, that the very energy thanks to which they cultivated these gifts, was also a * t.n.: an experience known among mystics as the Night of the Soul. gift, or at least a recompense far surpassing what they desired — our "Friends," being convinced of all that, possess these gifts as if they did not possess them — such as extraordinary stock-holders who would worry neither about the fluctuations of the stock market, nor thieves. Our "Friends" inordinately rich intellectually, filled with energy and ingenuity are really poor since the sentiment of ownership does not exist in their hearts; hence it is the supernatural plenitudes which pour in to fill their hearts. As they stand naked before Glory, the inconceivable virtues of the Spirit clothe them magnificently. Accustomed to the startling "tenebrae" of faith*, they perceive the true forms of beings; they receive knowledge, power and beatitude, without any deviation, reflection, nor intermediaries. When the Spirit takes hold of a man and lifts him up to the sun of Thought, or to the sun of Beauty, what that man will later relate to other men is known as Genius. When the Spirit gathers up a man agonizing for the desire of God, and that He bathes, restores him and quenches his thirst at the eternal spring, this man from then on, in his language and his gaze, his gestures, and silences, his smiles and tears, his labours and his sleep, in short, the whole man, his entire being is in the state of Sanctity. Such are the Friends of God; they live in the spirit, through it they foresee the future, and see the past clearly; it is through the spirit that they protect, heal and enlighten. How is it done? Our catechism teaches that there are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit which the theologians explain at great length. Were they explicable, they would not be Gifts of the Spirit anymore, they would be forces of Nature, more or less subtle, more or less understood. Also, if one does not possess them, one cannot talk about them; and if one possesses them, one dare not talk about them either, because no one would understand. An electrician turns on a current; he knows what it is; he analyses it for you, is more or less its master. A man of letters may explain how and why beautiful verses move you. A magnetist can bring about certain phenomena upon a subject; he knows how, or rather he states some plausible theories. But no one can comprehend the substance of supernatural gifts; only their effects may be perceived; like the wind the Spirit blows where It wills. He possesses His elect, His blessed victims unawares, to their very depths, throughout their conscience, above and below penetrates everywhere at once, through any imperceptible

interstices— one never knows. Then He radiates without so subtly and suddenly that those whose foreheads bear one or the other of the seven Crowns are not even aware of it. Do not the greatest before God believe themselves to be unworthy? Do we not notice the vanity of the half-baked scientist compared to the modesty of the true scholar? * But, I do not want to penetrate any deeper into the interior life of the Friends of God. "My secret belongs to me" answered St. Theresa to a prying Dominican. These Friends keep the secret of their covenant with God — who reveals too much about himself, also reveals what he knows about others. Anyhow, while the secrets regarding science and politics need to be kept, the secrets of one's interior life keep themselves. Discretion among the true disciples of the Gospel emanates throughout their entire personality, in their conduct; these ardent men seem indifferent, so strong is their concern not to impose themselves, nor remove any one from his chosen path. They do not take part in political strife, because they do not believe in politics; they do not take part in social actions because in their eyes all possess a legitimate claim. They have no personal axe to grind in these questions; since they work for God, they are persuaded that God will furnish them what is necessary; they neither seek fortune nor fame; they believe that there is no injustice, visible injustices being but an invisible justice the reason for which escapes them; but, wiser than I in this instance, they do not say so. In short, they believe that if each citizen would reduce his ambitions and covetousness to his legitimate share, live a respectable dignified life both at home and in business, the question of social peace would be resolved better than by vociferous propaganda. We, on the contrary being practical people, in times of shortages try to seduce the grocer; we start hoarding sugar without scruples; too bad about the others who will shop later! I am not even mentioning the individual assaults upon the tobacconist. The Friend of God would have qualms about depriving an old man of sugar; that thought stops him. He is more logical than his fellow-citizens; censuring violence and ruse in others, he strongly forbids himself their use. Is he a simpleton? Rather might he not be a just man? Logically this just man fulfills Justice by obeying. He obeys God, whose command he sees everywhere. He knows that nothing occurs without God's permission, and that God permits only that which is useful for us. Hence he obeys regulations, laws, and what is still more difficult all the agents of these diverse authorities. You would probably smile seeing him endure the caprices of some functionary. Just remember the difficulties you may have had with porters at a station, or street-car controllers, do you recall the effort you had to make when asked to pay 2 cents overcharge, and the effort you should have deployed so as not to show your annoyance? The Friend of God pays and smiles, he thinks that whoever is not capable of overcoming little things will never achieve great ones successfully. Napoleon I was of the same mind; you will find that explained in his Memorial from St. Helena; it is merely another point upon which mystics and realists agree. In the eyes of one who belongs to God, the universe unfolds as a gigantic scroll upon which angels have inscribed providential decrees from the greatest to the smallest. Faith minutely outlines the course of his conduct in advance. Moreover, he is the disciple of a Master Who, without being obliged to, obeyed infinitely. Jesus suffered all of the natural sequences of life: the limitations of childhood, hunger, sleep, the customs, the functionaries, the Pharisees and Romans. Jesus IS essentially a perpetual act of obedience. Therefore the Friends of God will not be the ones to attack or scorn any religious expressions. They believe that rites lose their operative value if they are not animated by Love and nourished with good works. Far from ravishing souls from the gates of Glory, the automatic performance of sacraments is a triple sin: a sin of laziness, it is a lie, a sin of profanation. Our mystics are well aware that multitudes of people have committed these errors; but they prefer to ignore them, they act as if they did not know; they neither reprimand nor criticize, they encourage, they are living example of something better. They want to see nothing but Good, they probe into the heart of a wretch for the remains of Beauty which are still within him, so as to help them rise to the surface; their task is not to make others work but to work for others, to shoulder the load of the weak, to rekindle the lukewarm, to restore Harmony. Imitating the patient gardener who does not break the frayed stall: they abstain from criticisms and controversies. Jesus has no need of professors or apologists. He needs apostles, workers in His Vine, men who through

their action give testimony to the veracity of His words — that His word is Truth. Finally, conforming to their Master, the true disciples conform to the customs of their time, they do not affect singularity nor scandalize but they approach life with inalterable optimism. * Each man is indebted to others; to his village, province and country, to his race and religion, to the visible and invisible worlds, to his ancestors and friends, to God. The challenge he faces is to acquit himself with good will. Therefore, is it not important for the Master's workers to set an example with alacrity and optimism in order to obtain the same reflexes of good will from others? They will conceal their weariness from others, that they may lead the fold toward hope, toward hopes successively tangible. The satisfaction of the crowd is thus made out of the sweat and travail of a few voluntary innocent victims. Contrary to Solomon, they believe that there is something new under the sun each day; that nothing or almost nothing has yet been said, they know full well that any error fights for Truth; hence they tell each one who knocks on the door of the Mystical Vine: "You who enter here, leave all despair behind you." To make you feel the grandeur of these extraordinary beings, I am obliged to depict their tribulations; yet whether they are poor or ill clothed, whether their sorrows are problematical, and their nights are spent worrying about the unfortunates they minister to — still a mysterious joy dwells in the depths of their hearts. It is generally believed that Christ forbids us to be merry because He desires us to renounce the self. That is erroneous. Does He not affirm that joy in sacrifice is perfect joy? And if our terrestrial or human delights always leave a bitter taste, is it not because their primordial pretexts are based upon that which is perishable? We definitely feel that eternal values alone give us serenity. In spite of our strayings and divagations, there persists within us a gnawing memory of a frontierless country which, beyond the stars, spreads out its marvellous landscapes under ever shining suns. There — resplendent forms never clothe perverted minds; there, perfumes waft out from pure substances; there, the harmony of its music truly expresses the harmony of souls. Yes, this dream is real; this nostalgia is legitimate and our hopes steadfast. We do not hope, we do not have sufficient fervour, we do not desire that dream with sufficient constancy. Meanwhile the Friends of God whose renunciations have increased their energy tenfold, know how to will and possess that dream; for them it becomes a reality since they incarnate it into their lives. We see some of these wandering Knights of the Ideal, we notice the apparent misery of their existence; the mud which splashes over them. Subjected to the vulgarities that jostle them, they seem to be very much like us; but we do not see their true existence, their interior life. No one guesses that their souls inhabit the clear skies of spiritual realms amidst the smiling merriment of angels and saints. They know their Master loves them; happy to be captives of Love, neither anyone nor anything can wound them mortally; they are settled in Love as into an inexpugnable fortress. Well aware that the crowds do not like precursors, they expect anything to happen; they know what God desires and they do it. Their soul savours the taste of the mystical wine which is charity. Through the joys that charity brings them, they appreciate their precious poverty. They feel strong due to the strength of the Master to Whom they gave themselves; they feel invincible; they know the victory of Love to be a certainty. How could you expect them to be anything else but happy and blessed? * Their kindness devoid of self-interest, their hearty welcome, their optimism, their immutable joy give these disciples of Christ an open sesame, a power to enter into people's hearts; but they do not make use of it; they enter only when the doors are open. To enter into a heart is such a grave task! Those who believe themselves to be the instruments of God, though unworthily so, assume a very heavy task and function. They condemn themselves to a dual task: first to do the work of the common man, which in itself is already complicated and stressful — this every man's work meaning the daily grind of all fathers and mothers, labourers, employees, employers, in short of all citizens. How vast and tiresome, since it has to be begun anew each day! Secondly, he must fulfill the work of the Christian, which means beyond the first, above the first, in the interstices of the first. It is an overwhelming task, the same in its outer form as the work of any good man, but more subtle, it has another essence, another quality. Same work, but fulfilled by a different kind of soul, whose hands are filled with blessings, whose limpid eyes are imbued with light. Though on the

surface, the disciple seems to be nothing but a mere good man, inwardly and unbeknownst to himself he is on a platform; the spirits of other men are riveted upon him; he is a leader; he is more than others, that much stronger and wiser in the measure he believes himself to be less than others; lastly, he is the older brother. Because he belongs to Christ, a subtle radiation makes him stand out; without trying to, he radiates; his actions and thoughts carry further than those of others, but via secret ways. Therefore he is ruthless toward himself; the slightest deviation or digression which would seem insignificant to us for him is a grave error and he rigorously checks it. In order to radiate Peace, must he not secure it first within himself? This is the secret of the disciples' strength — they are masters of themselves, and they possess this mastery because of humility and not through pride. They consider themselves nullities, but nullities which plenitude fills to overflowing. Any inner cause of discord is annihilated within them; and no outer cause can ever trouble them. They give whatever is asked of them; regardless of who makes the request — to them they bestow. Inspiration, decision and gesture are all one to them. Thought, feeling and action are all one. Because they think in the name of Christ, and because they labour in the name of Christ, their being is one; their personality is an homogeneous block, similar to these scintillating and translucent stones from which St. John claims the city of God is built. They do not seem to be; they are at first sight. Their humility and self effacement should render their character seemingly insipid; yet, no one is more impassive than they — devoid of contraction and rigidity. I have known some during the war, some after peace was signed. You are aware that there exist many kinds of courage, than one can be a hero in the trenches and be a coward when facing a bill due; a man may be an intellectual giant yet be a coward physically; lastly, how rare it is to find in one man an equal degree of physical courage, of moral courage and of intellectual courage! The Friends I have known possessed, if I may express myself thusly, integral courage. Everything to them seemed to be God-sent; beneath the vilest ignominies, their eyes could only detect the divine ray by means of which they exist; the impossible did not exist before their serenity, and a mere smile of theirs brought strength to the fearful and qualms regarding mysteries to the sceptics. Thus, possessing certitude, sincerity and solidity, these servants of God bring about the fulfillment of their strength through patience. They neither act in haste nor are they indolent; they know each minute to be precious; they also know their Master to be master of Time. Nothing disheartens them, nothing seems negligible. They do not impose their views; they scrupulously respect others' consciences; they are content to drop a word here and there, and to set good example most of the time. If their interlocutor, benevolent yesterday, shows signs of becoming refractory today, they keep silent, but they implore Verity to descend upon him. These men of action are also men of prayer. God has given them the right of importuning Him; they make use of it, one could even say that they abuse that right were it possible to abuse God. When they have judged that God should heal a certain patient, or come to the help of a destitute man, they do not let go until that has been granted. That is why they often earn the reputation of being thaumaturgists, healers, seers; but they reject these titles; they do not want it said that they perform miracles. For them, miracles are not extraordinary, they are simple because miracles occur daily; but theirs is a dedication or self-sacrifice one does not find daily; that kind of dedication is of far greater interest to them. Because they would like to lead men toward happiness — the liberation they know to be desirable and real; they are the hunters of souls, the trappers whose snares are unfathomable, the fools whose wisdom will be made manifest on the great Judgement Day. They are the faithful dogs of the great Shepherd, who relentlessly harass the straying flock, the unmanageable he goats, and the lazy ewes. Their fate is to be cudgelled or thrashed by cruel farmers, pantingly running obstacle-races, being sore and weary. They toil throughout the world unknown, disparaged, unrecognized, slighted, exhausted, starved, yet nothing fazes them; what matters to them is to please the roaster, so that on the last night, they will safely bring back to Him the flock entrusted to their care. * This may seem fantastic, perhaps! You might even believe that I kept my promise to lead you for a while to the land of Utopia. No — I did not do that; I have remained in the world of reality; these extraordinary beings I have just mentioned live as we do, and we may jostle one on the

street. It is not within inaccessible temples, nor in antediluvian crypts, nor desert caves that you shall encounter them; it is where life abounds; where the masses toil; where the smoke stacks of factories emit pollutants which mask the sky; wherever man's prosaic struggles remain. And — does it not have to be that way, to prevent the disorbited world from rolling into the primeval chaos in the end? Must there not be a compensation to balance all our thriving selfishness? Is not an élan toward Heaven better than our catapulting into hells? Opposite the great nuclei around which revel and hallucinate the matter-mad; to balance the frozen lamps of knowledge, are not some living sparks of the eternal Light essential? There have to be some voluntary martyrs to counter-balance the excesses of libertines and self-indulgent sybarites. There have to be buffoons of God since there are so many fools of the Self; there have to be sacrifices since there are murderers; there have to be beings of kindness and tenderness to counteract the violent ones; there must be nights of prayerful insomnias since so many nights are spent in ruse and debauchery; there have to be invincible wills straining toward the Ideal which is the sole Reality, since so many passions hurl themselves toward an illusory state they mistake for the Real. "Such men do not exist," you will probably say. "Such abnegation so total, so general, so constant, so genial; such a force remaining unsung, such goodness without human self-interest cannot exist, it has never been seen'." Pardon me, it has been seen, it does exist. Did it not exist you would not have permitted me to speak of it to you; at my very first words, you would have left, your common sense would have revolted. But you did listen, hence, in spite of yourself perhaps, something deeply ingrained knew it to be true. Something experienced a long time ago brought back the remembrance of having seen and experienced such love and an analogous force in the beginning of time. However, if such a state of soul exists somewhere within us, or outside of us, it means we can realize it; that we can make it descend first into our conscience, then into our acts. Also, if there is a people in the world capable of realizing the impossible of living the most sublime dreams, of keeping its equilibrium in the midst of the most excessive tensions — such are the people of France. It is among them that God has found His greatest number of servants, and the greatest Friends, I mean to say: the least known. If I were permitted to lift the veil of the secrets of history, how many admirable lives would reveal their hidden grandeur. But God does not want the virtues of His Friends to be revealed to the world, except in the light of the last day. That is the reason I have merely given you generalities; but it was my duty to do so. The simple evocation of these immemorial memories, the palest reflection of these Lights, even its clumsiest exploitation — may awaken one heart in lethargy. Such is my hope and perhaps naively but very sincerely I believe that this hope will not be disappointed. * VII AN UNKNOWN No matter how sublime were the figures we have just contemplated together, they might not satisfy certain devotees of the Absolute. Perhaps one of them adopts too sharp a tone or too rigid an attitude which disappoints some friends as being characteristics of human frailty; another's contemplation or the sublime heights might blind him to the glory of adjoining summits; still another retreats too far leaving behind the pitiful and stamping crowds among whom we live; or else the inebriating atmosphere of certain altitudes has lifted another beyond himself and when he redescends, his exaltation disconcerts us. Would the bread of angels be too rich a food or the water of eternal springs be too strong a beverage? No. Contrary to general opinion, I am certain that it is possible to maintain a harmonious poise within ourselves while following the most rigorous asceticism. I would like to present to you the living proof of this paradox and I take the liberty of affirming that I have had, for a long time, the privilege of knowing a man who without any apparent effort realized the perfection of the Gospel. It is an arduous task to try to depict such a rare and complex personality; I shall certainly not come up to my task; but I trust that the same desire for spiritual beauty which compels me to total frankness and which animates us one and all will also fill the lacunes and the clumsiness of my account. Avoiding curiosity seekers, refusing polemics, mute under calumnies, imposing silence upon his disciples' enthusiasm, this admirable man, whose stirring radiance I would like to make perceptible to you, always took extreme precautions to remain anonymous. I believe it would ill serve his purpose to reveal his identity. Biographical details become unnecessary

when it concerns an individual whose formation was singularly exempt from racial as well as environmental influences. I never would have undertaken the present study, had I not felt obliged to give a truthful testimony of the constancy of divine promises in an epoch where all chimeras don such seductive colors. Perhaps a few troubled souls will find courage again, if one of their comrades affirms that the promises of Christ are real because he has seen and assayed their experimental proofs. Christ Our Lord once said He would give His Friends the power to accomplish greater miracles than His; I have seen it fulfilled. Christ also told His Friends that He would remain among them till the end of time; I have seen that hidden presence. The life of my Unknown is but a series of such proofs; via the little I dare to tell you, you will recognize in him, I hope, one of the mysterious "brothers" of the Lord, one of the greatest, the greatest perhaps of the heralds of the Absolute. * One had to observe the man closely to discover the diverse privileges belonging to celebrated mystics, his personality harmonizing them so thoroughly; his manner being so simple as if forgetful of such magnificent prerogatives. His kindly patriarchal greeting and the language he used even at moments which seemed solemn to common judgement, showed how human grandeur and earthly tragedies are small in comparison to the works of God, Whose immense and ever renovated splendour absorbed his gaze. If we can imagine a being capable of retaining his equilibrium on all points wherein the infinite enters in the finite, it will elucidate for us all the contradictions that our personage accumulated willingly. Familiar with most, inaccessible to a few, daring and prudent, meticulous or hasty, speaking as a poet at times or as a business man at others, knowing secrets ad infinitum, heedless of his knowledge, skilful in all professions, sensitive to artistic things, respecting intellectual or social supremacies yet implying they were empty before the Crucified One; equally indulgent toward others while excessively rigorous toward himself; permitting the tyranny of the humble ones, though knowing how to make the despots obey; at home in a garret as in a palace; speaking to each his language; finally as multiple as life whose abundances he admired; this man remained always faithful to himself, as was His Master Christ, whose most unworthy servant he deemed himself to be. The son of very poor peasants, the eldest of five, he was sent at an early age to the adjoining town where he pursued rather advanced studies meanwhile earning his living. Already in his native village he had performed miraculous healings without any other means than prayer; in the large industrial center where he spent most of his life, the incurables, the destitute and the desperate, soon met this discreet benefactor whose young wisdom gave them back courage, health and the resignation so necessary to the humble people whose obscure woes support the social edifice. Besides healing, many other favours were asked of him; the success of a venture, of an enterprise, the safety of a soldier, finding the solution to technical problems, the enlightenment of a troubled soul; in return, he often exacted that the seeker indemnify divine justice in part by giving alms, through a reconciliation, the abandonment of a law-suit or the adoption of orphans. Then the miracle, the improbable and the impossible would take place without fanfare, without anyone knowing how it happened. All that witnesses were able to know, was that our thaumaturge condemned the practices of esotericism as contrary to divine law, he never employed them in any form and did not recommend its theories. His sole doctrine was the Gospel; he appraised books proportionally to their concordance with this teaching. He proclaimed the divinity of Jesus, His universal sovereignty and the perpetuity of His redemptive works. He accepted the accounts of the Apostles to the letter, considering the modern exegeses superfluous. He would say: "To the one who tries to love his neighbor as himself, Heaven reveals the true meaning of the texts." His brief commentaries on the Holy Scriptures to which he often gave a new living concept had the singular property of answering at the same time the various interpretations given by independent thinkers and of conciliating the divergences of translators and commentators. Considering his contemporaries as unfortunately too smitten by intellectuality, believing the practice of virtue as the only efficacious means of leading us to perfection, he did not waste words; he classified fraternal love above everything, before prayer and even before faith. He used to say: "It is charity which engenders true faith and teaches us how to pray. Prayer without charity is easy, but faith without charity is not faith." He advised compliance with

all civil and ecclesiastical laws, rules and customs so that in giving the 'unjust Mammon' the gold and constraints he demands, our Treasure constitutes for itself a reserve in Heaven. The debonair to whom Jesus refers are those who let everything be taken from them by the Prince of this world, even the remuneration for their labour, even their life. It is in return for this spoliation that later they will possess the earth." Above all he condemned pride and selfishness, or rather, he did not condemn these faults, he pointed them out as the greatest obstacles to our advancement. He would say, "Heaven ignores the proud." — "If you do not go to the meek or help the poor, how will Angels be able to come to you?" — "We must exert charity toward all forms of life, toward our equals, toward animals and plants; we must be charitable toward the adversity our neighbor rejects, toward the discoveries and inventions that you must distribute gratuitously since you have received them gratuitously, toward the laws which strike you, though you think them unjust, lest in rejecting them, they will fall upon your brother and your brother in turn is you." This great practitioner of mysticism placed prayer after charitable works and inner discipline. "We must pray and thank God ceaselessly. We must pray anywhere, at all times, because God is never far from us, it is we who stand apart from Him..... We need only to ask from the bottom of our heart, without scientific formulae, because were we to look everywhere, in millions of worlds and of suns sown by the hand of the Father, we would never find anything better than the Our Father. If you dare not address our so kind Father directly, pray to the Virgin and she will present your petition to her Son, Who will accept it." "However," he added, "for our voice to reach Heaven, we must be very small; Heaven only heeds the weak." These simple teachings, so pure, so direct; this strong and kind voice, both precise and palpitating with grandiose poetry, surprisingly hid from some people a very concrete science, if not a universal one. This man, lacking the higher diplomas or degrees, baffled specialists in all branches. For example, I heard him recall some lawmakers' forgotten decrees, elucidate a text for paleographers; furnish an apparatus to physicists, indicate to botanists the locality where a rare plant could be found. Metaphysicians consulted him, just as doctors or industrialists who were facing hazardous problems. Statesmen and financiers sometimes followed his directions. He himself compounded medicaments, invented appliances and useful products, leaving no stone unturned for improvements in applied science. Yet neither his theoretical knowledge nor technical abilities seemed to have been acquired by ordinary methods; the two or three intimate friends he invited into his laboratory have never revealed much about his findings. But certain words give us a clue to a few of the principles which inspired him. I quote a few of them gleaned over the years: "A child of God, a being pure enough to sacrifice himself for anyone of his brothers and then forgetting that sacrifice can know everything without having to study. He can interrogate any creature and she will answer him; the star will reveal its secrets, a stone in the wall will designate the name of the stone cutter who cut it; plants will explain their virtues and he will read on the face of men their acts and their thoughts. God invites us all to share this privilege, on condition that we have patience and love for our fellow-men." — then again — "Everything possesses thought, liberty and responsibility in diverse measures; all is alive: Ideas, things, inventions, organs are all individual creations, everything is related and influences one another." Among other examples, he would give this one: "A philosopher endeavours to obtain a metaphysical truth. The real drama is not played in his own brain, but beyond; there is a meeting, oftimes a fight, sometimes a celestial dialogue between some of these unknown genii whom poets mention, and the human spirit which temporarily inhabits a particular physical body still oppressed by the effluviae of the unknown Presence. It is the cerebral reflection of these inaudible colloquies, which we term intuition, inspiration, invention, hypotheses or imagination, which becomes the seed, around which by difficult and patient effort are organized the elements of a formula, those of a machine, of a sublime work of art or those of a profound doctrine. If we remain blind to these spectacles it is because we do not believe them to be possible, because of our pride, because of intellectual pusillanimity and also because the Father does not want to complicate our efforts nor shoulder us with too heavy a burden ". If all branches of modern knowledge seemed familiar to this singular searcher, the most startling thing was that when I happened to question him upon several

beliefs of antiquity which are now considered superstitions, he answered me at length and gave me various experimental proofs of their veracity. Long before our modern physicists, he taught the weight of light, the correspondences of colors and sounds, chromotherapy, the relativity of space and time and the multiplicity of their forms, the complexity of simple bodies, the existence of unknown metals and other peculiarities which I shall not reveal as they would seem much too improbable to positive minds. * This Christian, this philanthropist, this scientist was above all the most extraordinary thaumaturgist. I saw him accomplish all the marvels that the saints such as Vincent Ferrier, Francis de Paul, Joseph de Cupertino and the Curé d'Ars had operated, or those performed by strong wills which swayed the crowds such as Bernard de Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi or Jeanne d'Arc. Miracles blossomed under his feet; they seemed natural, infallible and certain, yet nothing provoked them but prayer. One might say: hypnotism! Oh no. Can a child with diphtheria forty miles away from the city where the healer lives be hypnotized? No. — Suggestion? No. — Can cancerous, tubercular tissues be auto-suggested? — Anyhow, our Unknown condemned hypnotism, rural sorcery or scientific magic; he discouraged the use of any force of will or mediumship. Regarding the mysterious powers we hear about which certain sages acquire by means of millenary methods, he condemned them still more strongly, as leading straight to the Antichrist. It was simply a matter of common prayer such as Jesus teaches us. But while in the majority of cases the saints obtain the gift of miracles after a long apprenticeship of extraordinary penance, of prayers and ecstasies, while their bodies become a field of physiologically inexplicable phenomena, our thaumaturge lived in a simple manner. He received his visitors any time, any place, and as soon as the request had been formulated, he answered: "Heaven will grant you this," or "Go home, your patient is cured." His words were instantaneously realized; then he would escape from the gratitude of his debtors. Without any preparation whatever, he wielded the same power over animals, over plants, upon events and the elements. He allowed various medical and scientific boards to examine and verify his work several times; all these tests were successful, but one can search the reports rendered by the academies and scientific societies in vain, because none of the experimentalists dared to sign an account of such unexplainable feats. Should I still mention his other, always spontaneous, unexpected and benevolent gifts? The past, the future and space were translucent to him. He would tell some one of his consultants: "Your friend so and so is doing such a thing in such a place." — Then to another: "On such a day, in such a year, you had such a thought." Moreover, the anecdotes I could relate to you surpass all likelihood so I prefer stopping here. Spiritually, a marvel is worth only as much as its author. Naturally, the gift of miracles interests the crowds and leads quickly to fame, but it is the soul of the miracle which more than its form impassions the spirit of religious men. I only want you to be drawn solely to the soul of my hero to show it to you such as I had the privilege of seeing it during my youth; it was superhuman, divine, like a star, yes, a star, daughter of the one which rose upon the terrestrial darkness twenty centuries ago. If, listening to me, you seek something else besides Heaven, then my story is useless and untimely. To witness a miracle is not rare; to perform miracles, real ones, is not too difficult. But to think, love, suffer, dare, and will, according to the paths which remain constantly concordant with the eternal beams which end at the ministry of miracles — that is a superhuman task. In this sense, the miracle which comes from Heaven constitutes a sign, the Sign par excellence, and here appears the tree of the Cross, still a mystery after twenty centuries of study and adoration. Do you understand, how it was just as natural for this man whom I speak to you about, to cure typhoid as to pay the rent of a poor man, or to give the formula for a reagent? All in him was paternal indulgence and inborn kindness. Everything about him was ingenious and tender exhortation so that poor men and women could find courage and strength again, and could receive the alleviation of an amelioration. Just as a musician listens to Nature, just as a painter observes Nature, he — he lived, in Love and for Love, because of Love and by Love. * He never spoke of this admirable flame; he hid his knowledge and a kind of disconcerting all-powerfulness under the guise of a humdrum bourgeois existence. He dissimulated his virtues and his superiorities as we dissimulate our vices; one had to follow him along streets and crowded slums to discover

the excess of his generosity. Many housewives at bay watched for him at street corners; one met couples by the dozen whose rent he paid; orphans whom he educated. And how kindly he treated the old and infirm, how delicately he offered financial help to the timid and humble folk, how patient he was toward the intruders, the pretentious would-be pedants and toward the pitiful flock of mediocrities! As much as our heart which is still barely human, can ascertain the secret mobiles of such a nobly superhuman heart, the innumerable gestures of his benevolence and his inexhaustible yet judicious favours sprung from a sentiment incomprehensible to us: the conviction of his own inanity. One day, a certain person asking a spiritual favour from this enigmatic personage — who had a minute before cured an incurable — received this answer: "Why do you ask that of me? You know that I am not even worth this stone upon which we walk." To all expressions of gratitude or admiration, he answered the saline: "I am nothing, I can do nothing, it is Heaven which does everything here." As I called on him one day, I found him standing in his kitchen, lurching on a piece of bread and a glass of water; as I seemed surprised at his frugality, this man who did not spare a moment for himself, who gave all he had, who spent his days and nights working, suffering for others, quietly answered: "I am having a wonderful lunch and anyhow this bread which God gives me, I have not even earned it." Never did he swerve from this unbelievably humble attitude. In this modern age of 'everyone for himself', he always stepped to the last row, submitted to injustices, to impatience, incivility; he played the role of voluntary dupe while smiling as if unaware of it all. We read in ancient texts that sages absorbed in contemplation of the serene splendours of the Absolute finally do not deign to see earthly events and scorn the stings of the crowds' offences; but the fact remains that rare are the philosophers who permit a bore to take their place in line! Little foibles? Perhaps, but solid virtue demands more than accidental heroism. We meet people capable of isolated heroic exploits, who morally and in reality remain rather mean; and in accord with masters of inner life, I believe that perfection is not to be found in a few startling gestures but rather in virtues patiently exerted day after day for a whole life-time. Thus the humble attitude of our mystic reveals the Light to us better than his miracles or his teachings. It is written, "Judge the tree by its fruits." The sages I mentioned only adduce a remote ideal which always recedes behind cliffs or precipices; their systems always expose fissures; their élan, no matter how noble, is lost in abstractions; and from their powerful hands life oozes out as the sand from the fingers of a little child at the seashore. Whereas, with this man so close to us all, we grasped at the same time: idealism and reality, theory and practice, and the divine wedged into the terrestrial; the sum total of which etched the most living image of what must have been once upon a time the living lessons of Our Lord — Christ. No inconsistencies, no flaws in the moral fibre of this perfect Servant. Constantly homogeneous, stable and flexible; the profound harmony of his diverse qualities made him unique. The history of saints depicts marvellous thaumaturges, gigantic intellects, flamboyant hearts, but in some, their concern for the poor prevents the soaring of contemplation. In others, the gift of miracles supersedes that of knowledge; very rarely do we find these splendors united as in our hero; still more rarely do we find their powers manifesting with such lack of effort. We find sublime theologians who meditate, some powerful soul-leaders who watch, fast and weep. But he, in a common-place manner healed, taught, succoured, consoled, in a calm voice, with the same paternal smile. I cannot support these affirmations. I can only give you my testimony. Others have witnessed these same miracles, but they have a motive for remaining silent; I have mine to reveal them. I cannot ask you to believe me. I only ask you to imagine that they are possible — that is sufficient. Mere acceptance of this hypothesis will some day permit you to become sensitive to the Light and my aim will have been achieved. Because I do not speak to render justice to someone who cared little about earthly justice; it is for you only that I speak, for your future, that you may find courage during times of stress and turmoil to take another step forward, — and still another. * This Frenchman, so similar to his compatriots yet so very different, was, of middle height and had an athletic build. Nothing in his clothes, his manners, his language, distinguished him from the crowd. He lived like anyone else, except for the hours of sleep which he eliminated almost entirely. Married when quite young, he

had had a son and a daughter. Though incessantly active, his body and his brain never seemed to know fatigue. He was constantly occupied in chemical and mechanical research; organizing social foundations run by friends; social reforms which he submitted to the authorities; inventions which he gave to the needy; always benefiting others though he did it secretly. He did not like discourses; no matter how complicated a case he was consulted upon might be, he answered in a few definite sentences. He taught very little except for a few suggestions he gave to humble and sincere seekers; he offered no coordinated doctrines, yet when added one to another the seemingly unrelated lights he had given to those who had gleaned them patiently finally formed a whole picture geared to their turn of mind, their needs, their own professions. He taught individuals, gave them all the necessary data that they might construct their own personal systems, yet he never promulgated a general synthesis of Knowledge. Action interested him far more. "The man who loves his neighbor as himself would know all," — he would say. To such a being, the visible and invisible world embodied the figure of total realism where even abstractions are facts, where each minute of time is an actuality, and where all distances are present. Steadfast in the unfathomable yet living Unity from which saints report having seen but a few rapid flashes in their ecstasies, this friend of God was ceaselessly shedding upon all things and creatures the regenerating seeds of the Spirit. You are aware that from one century to another, the eternal lamp is transmitted by the hallowed hands of the secret workers of the Father, who endeavour to fulfill the work of Christ. He, Possessor of all magnificence, Lord of all creatures, placed Himself at the bottom rung of temporal grandeur, as He espoused all forms of abjection. Devoid of wealth, bereft of glory, without friends, He went so far as to give His Mother to mankind, and from the abyss of such destitution went forth to conquer the world. Each one of His disciples must therefore reproduce one of the facets of His divine Poverty, according to the ignorance peculiar to the epoch in which the Spirit has placed him. Yet in our time of progress when the invalids have their hospitals, the destitutes their relief checks, the orphans their asylums, when slavery is officially abolished; where because no one has too ingrained a conviction, no one is really persecuted, the image of Poverty which our anonymous hero wore as a mask was that of being a nobody. Nothing: neither a pitiful beggar, a hideously diseased man, a celebrated philanthropist, a persecuted school administrator, a pursued escapee from justice, neither on top of the social ladder nor on the lowest rung, but just in the middle — at the neutral point. Someone "just like us" who, in the public eye, stands in the denuded, colorless stratum of mediocrity. Such was, in the nineteenth century, the admirable invention of divine Mercy, since this insipid mediocrity will be used as an excuse on the last day by those who have not seen the Light because it was nondescript. Such was the subtle stratagem of divine Wisdom which concealed itself from the curiosities of perverted minds, thanks to the insignificance of the human form through which it was operating. One last word: Jesus the Poor is Jesus the Patient. He suffers, He submits, He is resigned; He perseveres, He obeys and He keeps silent. His Friends, His brothers and His heirs live without fanfare, lost among the multitudes for whom they have accepted to suffer and who ignore them. The greater they are before God, the more they are misunderstood, the less they are known. So, our century where nothing really can remain hidden, ignores this man, about whom I speak, who held everything in his hands to sway the multitudes. So — our century, through the Voice of a few renowned people, has calumniated, scoffed at, vilipended this very man from whose secret woes it profited — ; and the savior of so many shipwrecks, never opened his mouth to defend himself, never permitted his followers to abash his persecutors, thus winning the right of repeating the divine request of the Crucified One: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And it is because I find in this Unknown the most perfect resemblance to Christ, the voluntary victim, that it seemed to me necessary to outline his physiognomy for you.

CHAPTER VIII LETTER TO "L'ÉCHO DU MERVEILLEUX" (October 15, 1910) I am but a solitary student; I do not belong to any association, not to any tangible esoteric or religious fraternity. The few friends who share my conception regarding occultism, have the good fortune of being unnoted, unfamous, and the wisdom of preserving their "incognito." I have delved into many subjects since 1887, when these studies began to interest me

passionately. I never had the material means to acquire the books I sought, and time was lacking; but destiny compensated me by placing on my path the authorized representatives of the highest traditions. Propriety has always prevented me from divulging to anyone what those extraordinary but obscure men considered as non-divulgeable secrets. Rabbis have communicated their secret manuscripts to me; alchemists admitted me to their laboratories; Soufis, Buddhists and Taoists, many a night have taken me along to the abode of their gods. A Brahman permitted me to copy his Mantramic tables and a Yogi imparted to me the secrets of contemplation. But, one evening after meeting a certain person, all that those admirable men had taught me became as naught, as ethereal as the light vapour which rises at dusk from the overheated earth. All my small books on esotericism, all my articles in occult reviews, all the classes I gave at the Hermetic school were forcibly dotted with lacunes or reticences; at best, these arid essays had had the merit of drawing the attention of seekers and of suscitating deeper research and work. As for myself, along with a few close friends, I have explored all esotericisms and all the crypts with fervent sincerity and the utmost desire for success. But none of these certitudes once attained seemed to be The Certitude. Very early in life I had the chance of discovering and understanding the Illuminati, especially Louis-Claude de Saint Martin, and through him, the genial Jacob Boehme in whose fecund and prolific works one finds abridged, condensed pre-Krishnaic theosophy, German philosophy and modern philosophy. From there I finally reached the mystics after having followed the common illusion which makes us seek afar the treasures which Providence places within our reach. Do we not run after what we think is hidden? We do not know anything about our own religion, it does not interest us; and yet its dogma and liturgy are the most complete exposé of integral knowledge which exists on earth at this time. All that the Theologians have written about so far is not the 20th part of the truths contained in the formulae. Everything is to be found in Catholicism: the science of the mineral as well as the science of the soul, the art of being a head of state or ruler, as well as practicing the art of the medical man, the power of the thaumaturgist as well as the tactics of the sociologist. The opinion I express here is not that of a faithful of the Church of Rome, but that of a direct disciple of the Gospel, the Gospel we are prone to discard in favour of the oriental religions that we tend to regard as pseudo-tabernacles of the sole Verity. This is how I was led to draw attention to: Boehme, Gichtel and Law by writing about these mystics generally unknown in France and yet who, in my opinion, have attained as elevated a status as the most celebrated doctors and saints. But if Boëhme and Saint John of the Cross have much in common, Swedenborg and Paracelsus differ and are as conflicting as Catholicism, Babism, Islam, Buddhism, Brahmanism, and tutti quanti. There is no room for sentimentality when examining theosophical notions. It is not true that religions are one; if this were so, their adepts would not kill one another neither with swords nor calumny. The sentimentality-laden phrases of the died-in-the-wool unificators are born from a flaw in logic. Everything is one in the absolute they claim; hence forms in the relative state must be one also. Absolutely not! The Trimourti is not the Christian Trinity nor the Pythagorean ternary; Jesus and the Buddha are not the same principle, nor two functions of the same principle; Gnosis and the Gospels do not lead to the same goal. One must read in the texts what is there, and not what one would wish to find therein. One must observe in spiritual experiences that which happens and not what a pseudo-master affirms should be taking place; we must never abandon our probing rights for thoughtful examinations. That is why I have written these three books: "On Fakirism," The "Magic Letters" and "Occult Medicine." Where does this certitude come from, will be asked, and by what right this presumption of authority? Our contemporaneous intellectuality understands the mystic very poorly. I do not claim being one, to me that word represents such an elevated state that I hold it as my ideal. Would I be my own criterion? No, I only know that the Father is all. Yet man believes the Father to be nothing or next to nothing. When 2 000 years ago, someone Who walked along the pathways was capturing souls after souls with just a glance, assuming them to the very threshold of untreated Light, why couldn't He, whenever He would want to, reactivate these spiritual cures during these encounters which He suscitates all along the mysterious paths of the Invisible? My God is the Absolute, the essence of the Absolute, and as such, He

is closer to me than the most beautiful of gods, than the tenderest of spouses; to hear His miraculous Voice, it is sufficient to stop listening to created beings; to feel His all-powerful ineffable kindness, it suffices to stop desiring created beings. One acclaims Lao-Tze, Moses, Pythagoras, St. Denis-the-Aéropagist, the Rose-Croix — they are useless; they are but small flickering flames; they have not seen the billionth part of what there is to see, they have also erected fences and built guard-rails between us and the Father! That should not be, as there is nothing between man and God except the voluntary perversion of man. To learn that we know nothing, to experience that one can do nothing, to verify that Heaven is here within us, that our Friend constantly enfolds us within His blessed arms - this is the lesson of Jesus. This is what I have attempted to say by * These lectures are now in 5 Volumes: The Childhood of Christ The Sermon on the Mount The Healings of Christ The Kingdom of God The Crowning of His Work publishing: Lectures on the Gospels,* The Mystic Breviary, Our Spiritualistic Duty, Mystical Forces, and Initiations. (October 15, 1910) LETTER TO THE FRATERNISTE (March 10, 1913) In the last issue of your estimated newspaper, someone showed me a letter in which Mr. Felix Guinot mentions, in far too flattering terms, the ideas to the propagation of which I have dedicated myself; and the note with which you concluded this remarkable missive. In response to this note, please let me tell you that the Catholicism I recommend the study therefrom is not clericalism; it is the theology of such men as: St. Augustine, Scotus and the Thomassins; it is the liturgy of such men as St. Ambrose and St. Benedict; it is the religion of such as Francis of Assisi, of a Vincent de Paul and of a Cure d'Ars (St. John-Marie Vianney). These great men and their great works seem to be more worthy of our admiration than Oriental syntheses (no matter how profound they are), than the superhuman adepts who structured them. I never meant to recommend the belfry-type theologies nor intrigues which exist from order to order, nor the innumerable devotions which keep decadent paganism alive in our times. In short, I keep close to the Gospel; and I add credence to its commentators only if by their actions they have proven the sincerity of their faith. Moreover, when I suggest Catholicism to searchers, I address myself only to those — so numerous today — who need theories, systems and rites; to those who still believe in intelligence, who do not feel the close presence of our Friend in their hearts, and who imagine God as a far away Being. You see, Monsieur, I am neither a Catholic, nor a rationalist, an occultist, nor a spiritualist. I am merely trying; to call attention to the eternal voice which speaks in the depth of the heart of each one of us. This voice is Jesus. And though Jesus seems so outdated to us modern men, I think that we have not yet understood the thousandth part of the teachings contained within the Gospels. How should we let Him teach us? That is our sole problem. All the rest — as our delightful Verlaine said — all the rest is but literature. (March 10, 1913) * LETTER REGARDING THE AMITIÉS SPIRITUELLES (CHRISTIAN MYSTIC FRIENDS) Our association exists only for those who do not feel the need of an exteriorized form of religion. Those for whom visible or exterior rites are necessary must obey their spiritual needs. When one wants to profit from the help of a religious organization, it is essential to be totally immersed in it hence those people are not benefited by remaining with the Amitiés Spirituelles. But one cannot without being a hypocrite claim to be a Catholic, or belong to any other denomination, whilst not being one. Our spirit cannot follow two paths simultaneously. As for us, we do not need adherents who have reservations. This type of alliance is inefficacious, both for those who give, as for those who are the recipients. Our Amitiés Spirituelles Association is not a church. It is not against any group or society, whatever they be. It is established for Christ; our sole aim is to let people see and know that Christ is the Sole Son of God; and that our only requisite is to exercise charity, which is His only commandment. As to following the rites of the religion in which we were born, we say that it is a fair attitude. Jesus observed the rites of Judaism. To the parents who ask us, we always recommend that their children be baptized, make their first communion, go through a religious ceremony for marriage, as for burial. We estimate that we should not be concerned with the possible defectuosities in the Church's teachings, nor with the dignity or indignity of certain priests or clergymen; we do not stand in judgement of our brothers. When we say that Catholicism is the most complete among the Christian religions, we do not mean to say one has to become a

Catholic; we merely express our personal opinion, that is all. We should not change our religion save when in all conscience we cannot remain in the one we were born in. We do not wish to lead souls toward nor turn them away from any churches, because we believe that religion in spirit and in truth is essentially practicing the tenets of the Gospel. May those who feel the need of the Church and its rites be benefited. As for those who yearn for direct communication with God without intermediaries, they can abstain from ecclesiastical ceremonies provided that in spite of being deprived of this adjuvant, they cling to the full realization of the Gospel with the same constancy as the practicing faithful. * CHAPTER IX LETTERS TO HIS FRIENDS April 1913 Let me call your attention upon the need for constant corporeal endeavour on our part. Do not let a good thought nor an enthusiastic feeling pass with out a positive sanction. This act, seemingly sterile at first, is the most profitable; its fruits ripen fast; miracles do occur, prayers become ardent; your feelings of despondency and disappointments are transmuted into joy. In the very core of your heart you have the certitude that Christ is at your side; that He sees, hears and succours you. Cultivate the bracing feeling of this ineffable presence; stand by as 'nothingness' before this resplendent plenitude; always ask yourself: what would my Master do in the circumstances wherein I find myself? Thus it is that one begins to love everything, life, love, even sorrow and pain. Evil seems to be nothing but weakness begging for our help, and men seem to be nothing but victims of the Adversary. To benefit from these communions, we shall have to become attentive and obedient to the lessons we receive from Our Master and from events, because Heaven expects more from us than merely experiencing personal joy. * April 1913 I can assure you of an ever-growing union among us. The dreams of several among you corroborate this assertion; the luxurious surroundings and atmosphere of some of these dreams in opposition to the relative simple fare of the meals, prove that we are still too concerned about various gods, no matter what we think. I beg of you let us remain simple; let us think of no one but Christ. In the other dreams where meals are delicious, remember that it is your spirit which is being revived; therefore, expect material tribulations. * May 1913 I am asking you to consider your work as a very serious endeavor. A few among you prefer an individualistic and silent effort. As for me, the Association exists — it is a living being. The Father has never created any unnecessary being; hence, we have to keep the genie of true associations alive; i.e. those associations whose principle is based in Heaven — on condition that this unity be in Christ — the sole and indispensable condition. * June 1913 A substantial and material discipline helps towards one's moral discipline. For our Society's sake, it is preferable to be too scrupulous rather than too negligent. Each must adapt his total obedience according to the needs of the circumstances. Each of you must reflect over these problems and become accustomed to resolving them personally within the dignity of your rapports with Heaven. Discipline is essentially for oneself alone, for our interior and personal life. Your duty, and never forget it, is action — to have influence upon your milieu. We, who remain in the world, who do not take shelter as monks do, must be that much more vigilant and take heed of our conscience, yet keeping it veiled because of sympathy and grace. As soon as Angels hear a command from Heaven — it is executed; but due to their love their most repellent missions are transformed into joy. Let us do the same. Let's not forget Love. * August 1913 I hope from the bottom of my heart that our Association will become your concern, that it be your Association; that each of you considers it as his, as dependent upon him. Every one around us has to struggle and fight. Not only must we not lag behind, but keep abreast in the first line of all mêlées. My friends, remember me from time to time when you speak to the Father; let us keep the unity which binds us to Him — He Who brought us together. * October 1913 Let us beware of overt acts of humility. Humility is the most difficult state in the world; very often our actions are but prevarications of that condition. Have you not heard spiritualists say: "I, my dear, I am nothing"? beware of spiritual pride. Therefore do not perform any systematic or artificial acts of humility, they would be false; perform those imbued with real feelings of humility which no one can observe. * October 1913 It is not the quantitative sum of your prayers which are answered, but their qualitative sum. For example, 20 individuals, each worth four points in sanctity, do not deploy all together a force of 80 but a force of four. If the succour

needed demands a force of 100, they shall obtain nothing. It is essential that the collective average of their individual sanctity attains 100. Therefore, when I attempt to synchronize your labours, it is not for these labours to yield better results, it is that you might be more firmly knit together. Please believe that I love you all from the depths of my heart. * November 1913 Our group is not opposed to any religion, since it is not a religion. It is an upward movement reviving primitive Christianity as parallel to the Christianity of the present time. We are not attempting to replace the cloisters nor the monks, but to fulfill their functions to a greater extent through our practical contact with daily life from which we do not shy; to the contrary, we seek to plunge more deeply into it. If we observe Nature we see that beings develop not via a number of adherents increasing at a certain place, but through their reproduction and radiation afar. The greater the membership of an association is, the more difficult it is for it to maintain, to conserve the integrity of its spirit. Take for example: the Church of Rome, Protestantism, the Jesuits, and Freemasonry. Look at the secret societies of the Far-East: these are but temporary organizations born for a certain goal, they dissolve as soon as that goal is attained; they are all bound to their main groups which in turn are directed by the twelve Unknowns who secretly rule all of Asia. Now look at Christ; He does not centralize the Twelve nor the seventy; He sends them forth "over the earth." * December 1913 Our mission is to help establish the cult in Spirit and in Truth. Outside of that, we have no reason for being. Think about that. I beg of you — proceed forward. Spend yourself, burn from an ardent but also steady flame. We have to give ourselves body and soul to this silent battle; we have to fight each minute. That is imperative. I am with you day and night and every day. Thus we remain securely in the luminous shadow of The Friend. * For New Year's Day, 1914 On this day I ask that inwardly you would renew your adherence for a closer union with our Eternal Master, in order to absorb as much as possible from this living force of realization inherent within Christianity — this force which proceeds from the fire of Love and of Sacrifice. You know that it is a living force, because it applies to all projects and situations, to all theoretical, practical, internal as well as external fields of activity, and also, because of its very nature it brings these innumerable modes back to the eternal unity of the Word. I expect from you perfection, a concern for perfection in your rapports with all living creatures. Do not dogmatize unless it be asked of you, but neither compromise with what seems to you to be false. Regarding error do not become a party to, nor fall into any complicities of false tolerance; indicate the pathway to the straying sheep, but do not force them to take it; neither let them believe that they are on the right path. Increase your ardour, have more heart; you will influence and will enlighten a great many more people. Beware of indulging in forbearing patience upon hearing sentimental confessions and somewhat turbid thoughts. Listen only to sound and real sufferings in family matters and discords, in social matters, particularly, those of religious import. Use all your ingenuity to alleviate these. The deeper one grows inwardly, the greater one's influence increases. Be sedate but neither stiff nor formal, retain that solemn attitude of serenity and nobility wherein the soul unfurls its wings to rise, fly and soar! Those who come to you feel doubly helped. They have faith in you, first because they share their conscious, exterior and avowed concerns with you; and secondly because of a certain attraction which is both unconscious and entirely spiritual. Take care of satisfying their spiritual needs first; you will then satisfy the conscious ones better. Be kind to them, charm them from a soul standpoint; be moderate in gestures and words. But you will not attain perfection in this attitude unless Jesus holds your hand. Extend your hand toward Him; extend that hand with your whole being, your élans, forces, aspirations. Also extend your other hand to the mystical death. Thus shall you know life; you shall find repose amidst the maelstrom of worries, and calm within the tongs of adversity. Do not ape the lukewarm who prudently feel out the sand beneath their feet on the shores of the Infinite Ocean. Throw yourselves into the sea; it will be your most strident call for help. The weak according to the spirit tense up to focus, their forces. All of you — yes you, are strong enough to fathom your weakness. Alternate action with prayer. When you will find yourself agonizing because of your acts, throw yourselves into another agony -that of prayer. I ask all of you to do more than you ever did. It matters not whether one dies ten years too soon;

when that time comes what will matter is to have lived fully in God. * February 1914 To follow a good line of conduct, we do not need a long list of precepts, only a few, on condition that we perpetually put, them into practice. This one for example: Jesus sees us and watches over us — that should suffice to enable us to choose, i.e. to make the right which means the best decision. Outward humility is not to be disdained; but it is preferable to adhere to the humility of the heart. It may be that you have to show severity and give commands. Let these be mere gestures. One has to conduct oneself according to one's position. Let us cling closer to our Master, watching Him vigilantly; let us not fear taking pains, accepting and bearing the evil which wounds only us, but we must fight against the evil which attacks others. Receive my fraternal accolade, as testimony of the frank and spontaneous affection that is the very atmosphere the servants of Jesus breathe in. * April 1914 We must be tolerant, not eclectic; which means to understand that a man enters the school he is meant to enter; and that any school proceeds to the goal determined by the superior leaders. Hence, there is no need to be concerned with any evaluations that others may make regarding our conduct. Also there is no need to modify our conduct except after a thorough examination of comparison with a proper ideal. Let us not worry about what may be said about us. Whether they take us to be Jesuits wearing short habits, or as Franciscan Tertiaries, or believe us to be sectarians or braggadocios, whether this comes from close friends, even the oldest ones, or perhaps from well-thought-of people of good character and scientific achievement, it is preferable to keep silent. We must maintain silence at all cost or at least adopt a non-combative attitude. There is no alternative; either we are just what Christ wants us to be: in that case anything disagreeable which happens must leave us indifferent. Or, we do not conform to the desire of Christ: in that case He will know how to set us aright. What is paramount is that we must avoid developing another cult by erecting a little chapel of our own, we must not claim to resuscitate the primitive church, nor pretend to serve as models to the various metaphysical schools. When faced with any circumstances that life deals us, our sole concern should be to realize what in our conscience we judge to be the will of God. Our open-hearted attitude, our simplicity in our dealings with the public, must not permit us to neglect prudence. We must not use any pressure to bring new recruits into our association; we must not turn any of our interlocutors away from a path wherein he feels at home, or any he still prefers to follow after hearing our explanations. It is important to shun collective selfishness, which is as terrible as personal selfishness, which is the great vice of religious associations. It is due to this collective selfishness that we have observed the work of an admirable founder, angelic at its inception, to become perverted a few years after the death of its founder, down to professing principles and performing acts diametrically contrary to those for the sake of which that order had been structured. Whether Heaven wants us, The Amitiés Spirituelles to last only a few years, or to last a few centuries, that is not our concern; we must act as if we were to last an eternity. * May 1914 The most frequent occasions of manifesting intolerance occur in our relationships with our family, in our contacts at the office or at the factory. We each have grounds for believing ourselves to be more perspicacious or better informed than our subordinates, our equals or our superiors, be they our wives, husbands, brothers, employees or bosses; we want to avail ourselves of proving our opinions to be the best, even in insignificant things such as how to draw a line, or where a glass should be placed in a side-board or in a cabinet. For this instinctive tyranny there is but one remedy — one which has to be a heroic and radical remedy — because we are radically convinced that our views are right. Consequently it means never to argue, to keep quiet, to conform to the opinion of others even when we believe our opinion to be right. Among innumerable unimportant acts we find many occasions of making life unbearable for our family or acquaintances. Let us hew evil at its roots. Let us not seek out who is wrong anymore. Let us accept to be somewhat tyrannized instead of being tyrants. If our friend really is in the wrong, the prayer we will address to God at the moment of our voluntary humiliation will show our interlocutor his blunder; finding it out by himself, his bad humour will not surface since there will have been neither words nor discussion. Naturally, practice this silent acceptance, this renunciation to your ideas, only vis-à-vis when dealing with your superiors, and when, in your rapports with

inferiors or equals the matters are without significance. Because we also have to envisage our responsibilities toward our family and in all social situations. But a man is rarely bossy everywhere. If he is a tyrant at home, on the outside he is subject to his superiors; if he is inflexible in business, he will yield to his wife's demands. Let us take the middle road and conciliate opposites. Let us analyze when and in which cases we are intractable, who are the persons we impose our will upon, and try to reform ourselves. Let us remember that gentleness is the strongest moral force. The great spiritual leaders were always infinitely patient toward their rebellious flock, even toward traitors. You will note examples of this in the lives of the saints who exerted the deepest personal influence upon their surrounding: such were Benoit de Nursie, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola, Vincent de Paul. We never heard them defend their opinions even during the councils over which they presided; they were content to state their views; that was sufficient for others to accept and fall in with their opinions. Let us then try to acquire this moral authority which commands respect, rather than resorting to pathetic discourses, large gestures and perorations. It seems childish to advise a man to make himself heard. However, may our elocution be tranquil not artificial; may it express the unity, the tranquillity of our heart. Therefore, having given proof to those around us that we speak only when in earnest, we shall be listened to definitely when, before a group, we shall vindicate an absent person. I recommend that you practice tolerance among yourselves. Each man follows the true method for which he is qualified, on condition that he be profoundly sincere. One man may walk the path of sorrow, another the path of Love, the third chooses that of prayer, etc. They are all in the Truth; it is therefore useless for one or the other to boast about his personal path. We are monks in a monastery; yes monks inwardly in an invisible monastery. Monks have many subjective temptations equivalent to our objective temptations; on the other hand, they have all sorts of exterior supports, while we * Tr. n. (War Years August 1914--November 1918) have but one support, which is quite personal and hidden; we shall stand fast, only on condition that we construct for ourselves a firm buttress through incessant corporeal and material renunciations. * May 1914 The influence of any writer, lecturer, or preacher, be he a Bossuet or a Jean Chrysostome, exerts itself primarily upon the mental body of his auditors. But from the mental state to the spiritual heart there is a long distance. I do not mean to say that we should scorn culture nor the enlightenment of a mind. We must grasp any possible means of action. However they must be kept in their place at the right level. * Aug. 23, 1914* It is painful for me not to be seeing any of you during this tragic period. We are obliged at this time to perform our independent tasks separately in our own way. Let us accept this test with sang-froid, with composure; let us be resolute in accepting to pay. Whatever your function may be, fulfill it with all your heart and even beyond that. Do not fear of wearing yourselves out. May those of you who do not have any function find a way of making yourselves useful. Remember that your spirit battles prior to the body; also afterwards. Expect that battle during your nights, after the diurnal battles of the body. You have to be heroes! I leave you with this thought of a courageous man; transpose it into the > moral world and engrave it into your heart. Kleber has said: "To be a soldier means when one is hungry, not to eat; when one is thirsty, not to drink; when one is exhausted, to walk; when one cannot move forward any more, to shoulder your wounded comrades". I envy you, all of you who are endangering yourselves, willing to give up your life several times a day to the final hour — I salute you. To each of you I send my deepest feelings; your names are ever present in my thoughts. * Aug. 30, 1914 This particular period is not conducive to critical analyses, you certainly have made your examenes, some before leaving for the front and probable death, others during the dolorous hours of inactivity spent in waiting. * Tr. n. * Symbolically, He was purifying, their entire physical vitality. It is now imperative for you to pray, to surpass yourselves constantly. One hour of prayer is more fruitful than three hours of discussion; but accomplishing one's work for one minute is still more fecund. All of us have been, we are and shall be on a path; every one knows, has known, and will know one truth; all have received, are receiving or will receive one life. Among these are many good people; among the good people, there are Christians; among Christians we find the true disciples who have followed the more direct and narrower paths,

who have known truths that are more and more real, who have received a far more enriching life. Profit from this present period of sacrifices to deepen your experience. I beseech the Master Who made Himself our servant to watch over your minds and bodies, to take them along with Him, by re-enacting for you the "washing of the feet,"* which will strengthen you during the difficult marches across the terrains. * October 1914 We know all about our theories by heart; let us put them into practice. None of us occupies first-fiddle chairs nor prominent posts; we have received lights that many eminent people have not received; thirdly we hired ourselves out in the service of the great Farmer. I beg of you, remember these three things; contemplate their grandeur, their height and their depth. May these things permeate your acts; may they magnify them. Whether at the front, in the ambulance corps, when performing fatigue duties, or civilian tasks — give your maximum everywhere, all of the time, with your whole strength. After the war, you shall be called to other tasks. But, during the war, let your heart blow the charge, constantly. Anchor yourself to Faith so that nothing will seem impossible. I am close to you; I pray with and for you; but I do not ask the Father to protect you; ask Him to give you His force superabundantly. I embrace you all with the ardent desire that the fire from the Holy Spirit will descend upon you, that it may transfigure you, confer upon you strength, wisdom and love. * December 1915 At the end of this dolorous year, let us recapitulate and weigh the efforts we have extended. Many among you have really set out well, working in prayer and for charity. On the other hand, I notice a certain fatigue, a certain effort in your attitudes. The fresh, airy, winged enthusiasm of the beginning has abated slowly, planed down. This is really not quite your fault, because you are not seasoned war-horses, yet; but you are partly to blame because you have not quite kept an inner simplicity. Put all of your worries aside for a few hours one day a week. Take a spiritual bath; go out and see art or nature; read over some beautiful, edifying pages, above all, forgetting everything, look through the eyes of your heart. See Jesus in the fields--kind, good, handsome, speaking to the poor, and smiling. Learn how to smile; so that your inner joy will be expressed in that manner — because a smile can be grave. A smile is strength; Heaven is not sad; it is Lucifer who is melancholic. Never consider yourselves as exiles. The disciple of Jesus is never exiled anywhere, since the adorable Presence accompanies him everywhere. Do we not possess the key to Beatitude? Keep fighting with the assurance that the certitude of an ultimate victory gives you. Seek Beauty for a while; that will rest you from having searched for Good and Verity for so long. * September 1916 You must have noticed, my Friends, that in spite of sudden catastrophes, unforeseen promotions and the innumerable downfalls of which the web of this present dilemma is woven, we are remaining in secondary, rather obscure positions. Had Heaven wanted us to occupy important posts, it would have furnished us the necessary faculties. Examples of such elections exist. Consequently, this obscurity which our principles order us to cheerfully accept must appear to us not only as the just consequence of our mediocrity, but also as God's decree for us. It is precisely out of this very obscurity that the supernatural seeds received from the divine Gardener will germinate. These tenebrae are dual; your hearts, my friends, are the tangent point where your own night contacts the night of your fellowman. Dig mine-shafts and galleries within yourselves; dig some also into the hearts of your brothers. Your professional life, though remaining paramount and your best means of propaganda, may give you the freedom of influencing others in a more direct manner. I repeat, the best propaganda is to be an example; a service rendered operates better than a speech; a kind smile restores serenity upon another's brow faster than a sermon. Besides that, do not fear to give your opinion, even when it is not asked. One must dare speak even to those one surmises in advance — will turn a deaf ear to our voice. Perhaps they will shrug their shoulders — but they will have heard. Probe yourselves; find startling, forcible statements to express your ideas concisely; learn how to anticipate objections; make your interlocutor touch the nothingness of what he believes to be a reality; because, if there is a void in the center of all things, it is up to you to bring Eternal Plenitude into it. Do not try to lead everyone toward the same summit; God is vast enough to offer the ideal which fulfills and satisfies all aspirations. You must have an understanding of all things; your spirits must be untiringly hospitable; nothing must

dishearten you; nothing must seem negligible. Yet, you cannot impose yourself upon anyone; I am aware that as soon as an acquaintance has asked you for information, as soon as you have awakened the curiosity or the interest in some one you are responsible for the modifications your light has brought to this individual. Hence, respect the free-will of others; beware of directing their consciences; be a sentinel standing watch in the shadows; do not become watch dogs. . Do not impose your opinion. If your auditor of yesterday has stopped listening to you and scoffs, let him go, but pray for him; ask for the light of truth to shine upon him; do not discontinue this secret intercession until it has borne fruits. Because God, when authorizing you to invoke Him, gives you the right of importuning Him and also assures you an inviolable seal of secrecy upon what you confide to Him. The spirit of the brother for whom you pray, if you wish it so, will never know that he owes you anything. Thus, alternating between manual effort and spiritual effort, equilibrating verbal propaganda with the silent predication of prayer, you will satisfy the dual duties which Heaven has honored you with, by entrusting them to your care. Weariness may set in; it is inevitable; I might even say it is good that it should, it is good that it does, because it becomes the dawn of a rebirth within you. But to feel its weight less, you must accept it. Nothing here on earth has any definitive importance, since God is here. The only real catastrophe is losing our desire for God. * July 1917 Most of us are tired; and for those who are not I propose we take a little time off; that we might all sit together on the side of the road under the shade of the apple trees. Let us recall the moments already in the distant past, when so many of you left to defend their native soil; let us also recall the moments of former lives when a voice from on high whispered to our spirit the call to divine servitude. May the ebbing flow of our energies ascend to its source, to the hollow of the eternal 'Rock where the doves of the Song of Songs are nestling. Let us remember the day when, of our own free will, we dedicated ourselves totally to the service of Christ, that we entered into the *melée* of existence, of being, and into that of war. This took place without words, so it was well done. Solitude, the nudity of the terrestrial decor and the lack of ostentatiousness in any of the intimate acts of our lives bring about us into our inner heaven, the company of Angels, the magnificences of the divine City and the veritable glories which the trumpets of the Last Judgement will herald. That artless little second when you and I gave ourselves to Jesus is in reality the tiny luminous dot which through the lens condenses the immense splendour of the meridian sun. At that moment my spirit, your spirit, which had been searching for the Shepherd perhaps for centuries, had finally encountered Jesus. At that moment Jesus looked at me. Made ready through the patient ministrations of angels, I was able to see Him; I saw my Master, my Lord, my Friend. I met my Ideal face to face, and the Reality infinitely surpassed my wildest imaginings. At this audience, in attendance were the spirits of ancestors and of descendants, the spirit of the people, the creatures with whom I had had to converse; the guardian angels and the mixed genii, and also my tempters, pitiless agents of my purification, plus my future tempters that I would have to convert. Could I help giving myself wholly in a final *élan*? My conscience perceived but a dwarfed image of this brief drama. My intellect thought it could influence my will. But both obeyed the superconscious exaltation of my unknown Self whose terrestrial personality is but a barely structured organ. The vocation which makes us slaves of Jesus, the accepted slavery which makes us free because it progressively unites us to the supreme Slave of Love, form the binding knot of such a pathetic drama that its strains must resound the remainder of our existence. That is why during our hours of meditation, we should relive that minute inwardly, celebrate and commemorate it very privately. Mystical plight, being a perpetual pledge in the world in which our spirit moves, implies a parallel perpetuity upon the terrestrial world. Just as that plight becomes a transplantation of all our spiritual roots once and for before Christ, so must the virtue of this pact penetrate our whole being, provide new strength to all of our substances, orient even the least of our instinctive movements toward the Divine Coal, thereby rendering us impassable to bruises, even to the rack. For this, an incessant tension is needed — a constant intense aspiration from our affective powers. Meditation does not suffice; to will systematically does not suffice — an incendiary love, an all-consuming love is a must. That lassitude may overcome those who have not yet received a glance from the

Shepherd is conceivable. But we must not flinch, we cannot give in to these lapses. Because we have given ourselves to Christ, we have emerged from the domains of Justice, and consequently from the domains of Injustice also. We have entered into the domains of Love where the fusion of justices and injustices operates. From now on, why should it matter whether we suffer as the obscure victims of petty vexations and niggardly pesterings, or as heroes encased in purple-glory, since in any case, we can not and should not suffer but for the sake of Love? Or rattier, we can not and must not be anything else but happy to suffer whether from justice or injustice; to top it all, we should be supremely happy to suffer because of apparent injustices. Whatever work we do must be done passionately, since all of our works being consecrated to Jesus are transmuted by Jesus into gems for eternity. Let us become accustomed, whatever our task may be, never to see evil. First of all, let us never believe that injustice is aimed at us personally; secondly, let us never consider injustices except as forms of restitution, more direct than others, from anterior rapines which we once wielded upon weaker creatures. And above all, let us sustain an inner dialogue with Jesus. Within the unknown unfathomed depths of the Self, the voluntary spiritual act which consecrated our vocation, constitutes a pact which binds us forever. To fail to vivify our recollection of it, to fail to attempt to aggrandize or to fathom the understanding or the consciousness we have of it, does not in any way weaken this obligation; our negligence in this matter merely renders it less affective and more difficult to uphold — in time it becomes more and more difficult. Hence it is essential that quite frequently we ponder over and recollect this liege-homage. Because, the phenomena which occur in the order of Nature dissolve along their span of duration and are diluted into space, while those in the generation of which a factor of eternity intervenes remain unassailable and retain their primary vigour; they enjoy the privilege of the immanent Presence; not subjected to time, they remain in the center of space, they continue to be accessible to the visits which our fervour incites us to pay them. Hence, if I achieve to maintain an immutable calm in my heart through the control of my native versatility, the Divine Presence will not find any obstacles preventing Its inducible lights from being shed upon my whole being; and if, at the same time I plunge my heart, avid since birth for glory and arrogance, into the constant humiliations of obscure harassments, the Light will not only illumine it, but will pour Itself torrentially into that heart enabling me to see this miserable world clothed with Its splendour and serenity. Hence, I would like to see you, my Friends, seek refuge more frequently into those caverns of the eternal Pock where the blows of the howling gales cannot reach. It is possible in the midst of the most tormented, charged existence to maintain oneself in a most steadfast inner Peace. Other men ave been able to attain it; why can't you? It is important merely to change the sojourn of your heart; or rather, according to the word in the Gospel, to choose the object of your love within the Immutable. Do you not know that if the Father willed it, His reign would be established this instant? And have you not experienced a thousand times that the hardships you endured, as well as the least comprehensible among them, have always in the end, resulted in furnishing you with a supplement of forces and a greater capacity for happiness? * September 1917

If we possessed wisdom, if we knew how to conduct ourselves so as never to disrupt the evolutionary harmony of a single being, neither laws, nor the Law would have any reason of being. They exist, because we do not comply. The law is: "Love ye one another". Laws are the innumerable commentaries pertaining to all the civil and religious situations where men, socially grouped, may find themselves. They are often narrow commentaries, seemingly opposed in their principle, often vexatious and often formulated by selfishness and tyrannies — consequently instigators of revolts — yet, the disciple knows that he must abstain from judging. The Master's recommendation should suffice as is, were we willing to take a short cut and put the force of certitude which ignorance of the law possesses into operation. But very few among us are capable of such supernatural blindness. Therefore I am going to explore the motives for obedience along with you. We are always the subordinate of some one or the captive of something. Lucifer himself, the freest of beings since he is the perpetual Rebel, remains the slave of his pride. Hence our position stands — that we must submit to our fate while extracting from this fatality its best expedient means.

Yielding to the inevitable, submitting to a state of things which binds us, seems to be the regime Destiny inflicts upon us to compel, to grind us into submission; through this arduous gymnastic we learn obedience; each act of obedience, is a paltry little seed which later on will produce the vigorous shoots and the paradisiacal flowers of dedicated self-sacrifice. Obedience is the primary school to renunciation; it is abnegation by mandate; then comes spontaneous renunciation. It is evident that, due to the fact that obedience irks us, it yields spiritual results. An order invariably creates work, consequently it always develops our organs or our faculties — whether the order received be vexatious or meaningless; no work is useless. Even the artificial occupations which the indolent invent to fill their time have their utility. But, beyond these natural consequences, obedience, because it bends the very core of our pride into submission, because it castigates our sloth, reaches the very principle of our selfwill, consequently it lifts us toward abandonment in God. It is evident that to obey because of fear of punishment only procures the ordinary fruit of any activity. The disciple must obey for mystical motives. Because there is no terrestrial power except the one which comes from God, in last analysis, any civil, political or religious authority is but one form of divine authority, a remote one perhaps, and often unrecognizable, so very divergent is it from its principle. To be precise, the disciple's faith makes him perceive God behind the non-commissioned officer, behind the policeman, behind the street car controller. And, because of this faith the angels of the One Who being the Omnipotent Lord chose to come as the lowest among slaves, reorganize and raise up all the fatidic wheelworks, which abut in the little tyrannies we resist, that we complain about to another plane. To the one who has given himself solemnly and definitely to Christ, all events, things, beings with whom his Destiny puts him en rapport, undergo a mysterious transformation in their essence, if not in their form; thereby they become for this disciple, the exact orders of divine will concerning him. And in the measure wherein his vocation has been lofty and his renunciation profound, he can, without rhetorical figures, perceive God under the guise of his temporal superiors. On the contrary, a man still held by the External remains subject to the regime of mixed bodies, compound forces, which in themselves are prey to the continual struggles between duty and selfishness. * March 1919 It is painful for me to incite you to redouble your efforts, and of speaking always of hardships and not of relaxations. I certainly would like to invite you to some exquisite banquets. But we are at work, faced with a very hard task. Should you fall forty times a day, you must rise forty times. Take courage, life is really short; also, you are well aware and know by experience that Heaven succours us when necessary. * December 1919 You possess the distinct privilege of feeling the divine Presence at times. It is essential that you speak to many men. Train yourselves to move, to stir them, not by eloquence but by the silent intensity of your own emotion. If, when closeted in your room, you do not weep often upon your imperfections, you will never be able to make others shed tears over their sins. Neither beautiful periods of euphoria nor ponderous books can move hearts; but what does stir them are words falling from pure and ardent lips. Notice how the directors of souls speak sparingly and simply yet each of their syllables is charged, surcharged and oversaturated from tears, from yearnings, flames and dolours. So — disseminate the sparks of that incandescent fire which shines within you upon all people, even when exchanging commonplace words. You have noticed how the life of the servants of God is paved with suffering. But none among us suffers more than any other human being. Why? Is it because we fail to ask the Father for this daily bread for our soul? Is it due to some new or inexplicable privilege? It is not for us to know; but should not our special status spark our energies? Let your annoyances and banal tribulations pass unnoticed. You are marching in the direction of God; you are aware of it. Hence, march; the final victory is assured whatever may be the peripeteia, the sudden turns of fate of the conflict. If you are not sufficiently aware that it is Christ Who leads you, it means that you are too involved with yourselves, personally and figuratively. Go out more, break your habits — did not Jesus sally-forth from his Father's house for you, for us all? * September 1920 Never forget to give thanks to God; never forget that the best thanksgiving is making a promise of serving our Master better. Let us anchor our humility upon deeper piles. Jesus chose an ass for His

public entry; the ass bears a cross on his back, yet he is satisfied to feast upon meagre thistles. Let us be the "asses," the "fools" of the Lord; and if perchance, our Master places relics upon our shoulders, let us still think of ourselves as being beasts of burden, by remaining in the background at the end of the line. I send you, beloved brothers, the accolade which is a sign of unity, or better still of the union which aggregates and brings us together around our Head: Christ. * January 1921 Cost what it may, regardless of anything, we must hold fast by training each feature of our faces never to express anything but calm, cordiality, affectionate goodwill and kindness. As this result is impossible unless our heart be in that state, this means is excellent to attain an imperturbable inner equilibrium. I am well aware that the extent of the task to be accomplished rather tests your sang-froid. Keep your equanimity. In ones interior life the slightest local effort produces a general effect. Had the disciple enough perseverance and depth, the absolute realization of a single evangelical counsel pertaining to a particular point would suffice to bring him to perfection. However, we must understand the weakness of our character which has need of diversity. I embrace you, my Friends, holding you close to my heart in the luminous shadow of Our Master. * February 1921 The beginning of the calendar year is also the beginning of a spiritual cycle. In spite of the hardships which Destiny has heaped upon many of you, I wish that each new blow of fate would encourage you, would seem to you to be a mark of Heaven's confidence, a proof of the trust of Heaven which tests its best workman the hardest. It is essential that we definitively accept as an experienced Truth, as an axiom, that our sole reason of being lies in our acceptance of everything which less enlightened men repel — even in our search for everything they fear. We should be able to say deliberately when facing life: "If I proceed thus and so, I shall evade all difficulties; consequently, I must proceed in this other manner, since my role — the role I chose — is to redress the tortuous, to level the knotty, plane the rugged, to introduce Light into the dark corners where men do not venture." * July 1921 Nothing matters, except being inattentive to God. God desires that we submit to any exigencies with gladness. Hence, try to remain silent and to smile when your business goes awry, when your close associates become demanding or ungrateful, when your employees serve you badly, when anyone tyrannizes you. Then, and only then, will your spirit enter into the Kingdom, and you will find your prayers answered. * December 1922 I would like to find you always impavid, fearless before suffering so that none of its shards could ever scratch the diamond of your faith. You must gird the belt of your faith; never must anyone penetrate your defences; protect yourself at all cost. This has to be done in the humblest manner, by diminishing yourself to the smallest spiritual dimension. The sole real static faith is humility. Thus any occasion given you to suffer will become ground for gladness. *Mat. 6:17 - "At thy time of fasting, anoint thy head and wash thy face so that thy fast may not be known to men....." Remember Jesus' admonition: "When you fast, anoint your hair and wear your party clothes!"* This is the true maxim. Seclude yourself in a closet if ever you have the weakness to weep. Whatever may his trials or his anxieties be, the soldier of Christ remains in a blissful state. Consolidate your faith, it will never let you down, in any world. * January 1923 I hope that you will become conscious of the perpetual Presence of Jesus near you. This presence is constant every second of time and from all points of space. This presence is called the Son — and the Son, our Christ Jesus, is perpetually here; He never leaves any of us; He stands at the side of the prince as well as by the vagabond, at the side of the savage as of the genius, at the side of the criminal and of the saint. He sees everything, He hears everything, He discerns everything; and since we have loved this formidable Being, let us be logical with our heart, that this love might become our sole motive and our total strength. Let us know that Our Lord looks at us and smiles at us; let this certitude become our whole Law, our whole Scriptures and our whole Beatitude. * May 1923 During our conversations, I have very often spoken of prayer, I have stressed and insisted upon the immense importance of prayer. Let me remind you that before falling asleep, one should recollect and pray for two or three minutes from the bottom of one's heart, from that tenuous state of liaison with God which the mystics call the peak-of-the-spirit. These particular prayers are often granted. We all prefer praying with fervour, with enthusiasm and joy; that is

comprehensible. But the poor little demand, so bare, so short, so feeble is probably gathered up by our Friend with more bliss. In any case, it is the quality of our conduct during the day, that apportions the quality of our evening prayer. Very dear Friends to whom I owe my only joys, I embrace you with all my heart in the name of our Beloved Master. * November 1923 You have ascertained through your own experience, that the best means of obtaining normal and durable results, is still to struggle against oneself or rather to attain mastery over oneself. I am perfectly well aware how, when cornered and worn out by the constant small strifes of life, you let yourself become irritated even to the point of anger. You must absolutely cure yourself of that. I would like you to amass enough strength to emulate what I saw a soldier of Christ accomplish who, wanting to overcome a fault he had, took a pledge not to fail for forty days, and who, in fact did not succumb. Control your gestures, control your facial expressions, control your speech; and if perchance you cannot prevent your heart from being discontented, at least see to it that nothing will transpire nor be read on your face. * December 1923 Barrenness, or what is commonly known as periods of aridity, may be nothing more than exhaustion due to our clumsy efforts. Remember that in the spiritual field as well as in the physical, the most useful effort is a supple, flexible one; smile even when you are overcoming a fault. In the unfoldment of perfect control, effort is unperceived. When you are moved by suffering, deny yourself one thing and pray. Yet -- do not abstain unduly or exaggeratingly. Skip a meal, pass up an outing or a pleasure; but do not ruin your health with penance, you do not have that right. Do not deprive anyone entrusted to your care, you do not have that right either. The only organ that you must subject to fasting within you is selfishness, pride, vanity, avarice, anger and sloth; these six are but one. * October 1925 Were we truly His servants, our flame would be sufficiently ardent to overcome our laziness, timidity, our negligence; we would not need anyone to remind us what has to be done. You know that in the sight of God, an act is only worth conformably to its spontaneity; what we have to do must be done with our total good will. Brochures, pamphlets, meetings, visits, reunions and talks are but means - expressions of our faith. But if we want that faith to be live, we must feed it by acts. * December 24, 1925 Once more I ask you most urgently to confront all that I have said with the words of Christ, to follow no one but Him, and to follow me only in the measure wherein you are certain that I follow Christ. Moreover, Heaven judges our intentions primarily before weighing our acts. Then, let us each remain at our post, calmly and peacefully, attentive to act with the certitude that our supernatural confidence and love give us. May He 4TIio willingly come as the poorest and most abandoned among the children of men kindly receive our unworthy adoration and take pity on the paucity of our heart, and of the desolate solitude of our selfishness. X INDIVIDUAL LETTERS May 1913 Your prayer to God moved me profoundly. You asked that He would place His unfortunate children on your path and direct them to you. So, the needy have abounded — the sick, the stray sheep, the harlots — large families of hungry people. This work was gruelling but it also had its joys. A test when asked from Heaven is coriaceous. God does not grant it to us unless we ask Him from our whole heart with tears, and unless we are strong enough to bear it. If that test is granted us, we must then be courageous, always ready to accept the sacrifices it entails, even when and especially when those we are called to serve do not seem to merit it. However we must be prudent, very conscientious; especially we must refer our mode of conduct entirely to God before taking any action. In that way, we shall rarely become the dupes of the Adversary. * May 1913 Remember that we can walk only toward error or toward Truth, toward the Adversary or toward Christ. After all, we are all proceeding toward Verity, and that should be immensely consoling to us and proof of the untirable, infinite Love of the Father. But those who remain too long in error are delaying the return of all humanity to the fold. Because of them the indescribable sufferings of Our Lord are prolonged. We may possess a vast erudition, a remarkable intelligence, have aspirations toward the Ideal. All of these earthly gifts may lead to error, to such a point that one begins incarnating error even into one's sentiments, one's thoughts, one's acts. Yet — one thing alone is necessary; the only one which leads to Verity, it alone is accessible to all — it is the blend of charity, humility and prayer. * July 1913 You wish you had more time to devote

to your interior life. This is part of our personal difficulties from which we must learn how to extricate ourselves. We must begin by reading a few lines from the Gospel every day, yes, every day, we must multiply our meagre efforts; we must build stone upon stone, because, in the end, the totality becomes a considerable edifice. We are not saints; that is one of the main reasons we should strive to become saints. It is especially by practicing charity that we shall advance. To help our fellow man is the whole crux and basis; the rest will inevitably follow. * ** (T. N.: War days and years) September 1914** You must have spent many agonizing hours as a hundred thousand bloody links are being torn apart! How many days such as these yet to be endured! Still, it is well to have suffered, received, undergone, borne these wounds. Our faculty to love expands because of it — is elevated, becomes deeper and loftier. It enables us to transmute our Love when multiplying its effective realizations. But this is hardly the time for theories. Action will keep you busy! Remember that, in the midst of the battle, during your ordeals as a soldier, nothing will protect your family, nothing will restore their strength better than to put your whole heart into the work at hand. You know it; but I have to repeat it to you as I have experienced it. It is easy to believe that to be torn in two, by thinking of our absent ones, helps them more. On the contrary, it is more efficacious to throw oneself, heart and sinker into the successive tasks of the day; but, when you are alone and free, then of course, do think about them, pray for them; but do not spend your days spread-eagle in thought. * October 1914 You must learn how to will. So, will. There are two ways of expressing will. The first and most common, is by tightening our jaws, pursing our lips, and scowling. The second, much healthier and less lopsided, is to will with a smile. In the former, the fulcrum of the lever is the consciousness we have of ourselves: pride. In the latter, it is the consciousness we have of Jesus. Experiment with patience. * January 3, 1915 (To E. B.) To a friend who had just lost his father. I cannot conceive nor surmise that you are in need of consolation. Keep your strength, find strength for your poor dear mother, certainly more broken up than you are by this blow, expected as it had been. What can I tell you? If you permit my speaking of myself, I can admit that never had I felt so close to the Certitude than the day when my most beloved, saintly, angelic wife passed away. It seems to me that to those of us, who though unworthy have received some rays of Enlightenment, the same pains which lacerate other hearts, cauterize our wounds, tonify us and elevate us toward the realm of Serenity. I hold you close to my heart. * November 16, 1915 You take things too much to heart. Remember that they are what Heaven permits them to be; unless they happen to fall into the domain of our responsibility. Remember also, that as it was said in the XVIII century, the honest, virtuous man must make virtue appear to be attractive. So, smile, do not be angry with the poor brutes who surround you. That you might not attempt to better them is possible; though truthfully, you should. But I grant you it is extremely difficult; but at least, try to consider them with loving compassion. You know that when a mountain has to be scaled, one must accost it leisurely, and start the climb slowly. * 1922 We must guard against the innate tendency of our nature to unload the care and help we give the sick or unfortunate upon others. It would be preferable, at the risk of not succeeding quite as fast, to take care of our proteges ourselves, by sustaining our proceedings through spiritual fasts. Our Association will fulfill its aim more and more if we give priority to the mystical counterpart of our material charities. First, there is Heaven, the unfortunate and us (any member of the Amitiés Spirituelles) which makes a direct line; the normal standard is that this line must not be broken, hence each one must consolidate it by personally undertaking the succour necessary for the poor (job, money, clothing), by means of both physical efforts and spiritual acts. * August 25, 1924 These are very hard times; this year we freeze and flounder beneath the colossal weight, which an opaque, heavy atmosphere accentuates more than would sunny skies. We must never write unless we have something to say, then say it with all the strength, simplicity and clarity we can. Forgive me for acting like a school master and please do not take my sentences as unassailable axioms. Do your best and pray. It is still Christ Who will teach you the best literature. Affectionately yours. * July 16, 1925 Madame, I would like to see you more profoundly resigned to the will of God, by having more confidence in Him. He has recalled your mate; why should you be

tormented about his destiny on the other side? God prepares for our birth on earth. He furnishes us parents and all sorts of succours. Would you then believe that for that other birth which follows our terrestrial demise, He would abandon us all alone in some invisible desert? Your husband has understood your tenderness and he still feels it, be certain of it. Do not overburden yourself, for the time being, with materialistic concerns in his memory; toward him, maintain an open, inwardly calm attitude, devoid of acts and gestures which instead of liberating his spirit, would keep him earth-bound. Conjugal love is primarily a soul-union. When the body and the personality are here, life in common has to be lived in every aspect which material, social and familiar existence entails. When the body is not there anymore, the efforts toward sanctity and kindness on the part of the remaining spouse remain the surest and unique means of helping the one who has left. Finally, know that now your husband is resting; you need not worry about his state. At this time you must rest. To take care of one's body is a duty. Look into the future with assurance and calm. God will never abandon you. Accept, Madame, my very sincere wishes and my respectful homage. * One must make use of dry periods, it is good husbandry. There comes a time when we begin to take pleasure in serving God, after having served Him because of a sense of duty, As selfishness is immortal, this pure pleasure becomes, if sufficiently prolonged, literally a pleasure. Then Heaven takes it away from us, sends us drought, aridity, in order to purify this very reflection of His Light within us. And from atonic fervor, debilitated, we slowly descend the slopes of veritable humility, into the valley, at the bottom of which the disciple finds himself at peace — a joyous, permanent peace, because, having little of his own will left, everything has become, not indifferent (as Buddhists believe), but agreeable, because he discerns in everything the means of serving God. Hence, continue your examenes by using successively from the outer to the inner: from your external senses: your eyes, ears, sensations; " " internal " : judgement, critiques, meditation; " " inmost being: the Light of the soul communicating with the Word. * I do not write to you very often either, though I am quite aware of your fatigues, and how daily life weighs upon you pitilessly. Your crossing of the desert is drawing to an end; it has been very hard. Anyhow, each has his own desert, where the sun, the hardships and the highway men are proportionate to him; no desert is worse than another — only the one we cross, yes, that one seems to be the worst. Your household is also very heavy, dear old fellow; you are not the only one; we all have to brace up our loins, square our shoulders and accept responsibilities. "Upon our Atlas and upon our backs Let us load, load and heap very heavy burdens." You see, I am not serious, but I embrace you with all my heart. * The gods that you serve via your art, are like all of us; they too are servants of the supreme Diety — of Christ. What art needs most at this time are artists, who via the flame of their heart, by interpreting the gods, will lead them back to God. Just as in literature, many musical compositions are pagan, and some which bear a Christian label such as Parsifal, are more pagan than the others. But in art, happily, once the mechanics of the trade are mastered, sentiment transports everything. Hence, interpret as a Christian, play for Christ, for the Virgin, and your bow will transfigure the most sensual harmonies. It is of course admitted that an artist needs passions, women and the rest; yes — because they are atheists. But, if the artist is a Christian or rather a saint — these outer stimulants will be replaced within him by interior stimulants: divine love, prayer, sacrifice. It is essential to bring out of the most sacchariferous music pure emotion. It can be done. Raise your interpretation of a work of art; by elevating it toward the Absolute, you will elevate the work you are interpreting at the same time. A work is alive, never forget it. Always look higher, always look deeper. Parallels conjoin to infinity. That is what Baudelaire meant when, in one of his "Salons," attempting to compare Delacroix, Ingres and Daumier, he concluded: "Let us love all three." * Dear Madame, I understand you; I too love dogs and always have some near me. Yours had an admirable head, and eyes..... The dog is a friend, the friend of man; he is to be found with man everywhere where there are men in the universe; we must have some; and speak to them and help them live; their destiny follows ours; they do suffer and they accompany us. Do not worry about yours; bury him in a little white pine box, wrap him well, Cadavers need a sign of affection. And God will not find it strange that you speak to Him of

this humble creature. If it is too late to take care of his burial, you can always pray. You will impart calm to him naturally. You know, or rather one is never sufficiently aware that God never takes exception to anything we may do which springs from our loving confidence. With my most respectful and fervent wishes, Madame. * XI THE FAITHFUL DOG "Watch, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Math. XV-13) Here you are staunch loyal friend panting with joy, because you know we are going out and you will make yourself useful. Steady my son, yes, you are coming with me; don't worry, I am taking you along; though you are nothing but a dog, I am certain that during this long trip I shall follow your example many times. From this very threshold, you are already beginning this tireless "amble" with which you will weave vigilant circles around me until late at night. You will spare yourself neither fatigue nor concern. You are not aware of where I am going but, as long as you are accompanying your master, your heart is glad. As for myself, at the end of long excursions I shall rest contemplating from the top of great grassy plateaus in the distant azure the eternal snows of the violet sea. When overcome by exhaustion, I shall find relaxation from the perfume of the orchards, in the curve of the undulous hills, and in the gaiety of the villages. But you, kind dog, you will not permit yourself such respite. At the turn of a path at adjoining bushes, your clear eyes seeking mine, barely will you permit yourself a few quick laps in the brook we are crossing, barely will you try to pick up the scent or trace tracks of a recent passer-by, because, galloping back you will resume your encircling surveillance. Faithful animal with powerful paws, in the evening you will sup of a few morsels and spend the night on the floor, I shall take care of you, will remove the thorn from your valiant feet or the "lingaste" from your fluffy coat. You will be grateful for my meagre solicitude, and will sleep with one eye open, ears cocked, so as to defend me instantly and if need be perhaps die for me. You, sweet kind dog put me to shame, I who vaunt myself of belonging to the Master of Shepherds. How many more tender-hearted attentions does my Master shower me with than I ever give you! How ugly is my surly laziness compared to your touching zeal! I, who claim to bring back to the Unique Shepherd the lost sheep and the docile ewes, how far I am from your zeal, you kind loving dog with such soulful eyes! When shall I disregard, as you do, fatigue, sleep, hunger and thirst? When shall I love hard work? When shall I be able to inflame my indolence, to supple my humour and concentrate my dispersed forces? When shall I be able to smile equally at indifference, at ingratitude, at insults? Yet, I know that that which requires no exertion is worthless. The life of an idea exacts that one suffer for it. And when that idea is Jesus, what ought not we sacrifice to His Service? Nothing should appear too difficult. The hardships or difficulties we encounter earning our daily bread take last place at the end of the line. The struggle is nothing. Lack of success is nothing. Success is nothing. Only effusion of the effort from a heart fluidified by the flames of love counts. I know all that; then why don't I move ahead? Also, it is too late to change course, I am "engagé," committed. Even if no one knew me as a servant of Christ, on the other side of the Veil there are phalanges of creatures yearning for the Light who, in anguish are awaiting the living water, the uncreated source which is still enclosed within the rock of my heart. "How long shall we have to toil, there is always new work to do!" murmur some voices wearily. Does the dog ever weary of the long tedious treks as long as he feels he is useful to his master? Should we be less courageous in serving our Lord Christ? Love is measured by the patience we exercise. If we love Jesus, any advice becomes useless: pride, confidence, methods, energy appear as nothing but words used by those who do not know how to love. To the one who dares because he loves, results are not important. There always is a result somewhere. Let the sun shine within us. Let us smile at life; let us welcome difficulties: they constitute the most solid cement for building. They are precisely the labours for which we are most qualified. Let us relieve our Jesus of having to take care of us, that He might be able to rely upon us, once in a while. Let us be aware that the weight of His formidable Hand upon our shoulders, be it but for the fraction of a bolt of lightning, will cause us to stumble, throwing us unto the ground. But you shall get up — we shall get up, though contusioned, yet with inducible joy in our heart, because in that ineffable second we shall know that we have been accepted among the faithful and tireless dogs of the Good Shepherd. XII CONTRASTS I had gone up to the golf course of Mont

Agel above La Turbie. So splendid was the weather that we were ashamed of enjoying it, knowing millions of men are labouring in mines, factories, workshops and offices and that our dear comrades are bustling through the mud puddles and the grisailles of Paris. The road traverses such beautiful bare hills, structured out of thick high walls of white marble whose superimposed strata seem to serve as foundations to cyclopean palaces. For centuries the sun, unfatigable alchemist, has given them a golden-hue and infused them with its magnificent life. These rocks speak to the soul, one feels from whence come the influences they embody. They teach us lessons of perseverance and immutability. They raise our hearts from summit to summit, peaks higher than the hills where angels are treading at the very end of the brilliant path which leads all creatures to the living center of the world, up to the immutable Rock whose adamantine texture remains indispensable to the solidity of human endeavours. In the distance, here and there, phalanges of erect stones recall the fall of meteors mentioned in old cosmogonies. Some muleteers' trails zigzag across the slopes; they prove the industrious effort of our ancestors, their obstination, their anonymous fatigues, their worries, the whole doleful canvass of these humble peasant lives upon the web of which stands out, at secular intervals, the splendid blossom of a man of genius. Here and there, with melancholic pride, noble cypresses guard the farlong gone portals of abandoned ancient domains. In the distance, toward Italy, undulate the shores of Cap Martin, of Menton, of Bordighera. Toward the west, the peninsula of Cap-Ferrat retains Saint-Hospice, the old chapel of the Templars, the points of Antibes and of Canines. The spurs of the Esterel sink magnificently toward the golden mists of the sea. Before us, the rock of Monaco stands out as an immense ship upon the blue waters. Toward the North the great plateau of the golf course deploys its long verdant undulating terrains. From that vantage point, one discovers the vast confused mass of the black tormented Nijoises Alps: sombre rocks, gorges, forests; but beyond and above them against the deep blue of the sky glitter the dazzling fringes of the eternal snows. Because all depths, those of the sea as well as those of the land, soar forth to the heights in one invincible élan offering man for the instruction of his soul the very noble purity of whiteness — foam of the waves, glaciers of the summits, stellar pearls of the firmament — you are beyond us, the triple repercussion of the wonders that our spiritual effort sublimizes within us. Pathetic horizons — similar to the fields where the bodies of the Giborims, constructors of the Earth, would find rest — majesty of the wide open spaces where, with the pure air wafting down from the snows, one drinks in a deeply refreshing invigorating peace; summits as bare as those where Saint John of the Cross experienced his ecstasies; tiny villages suspended in the far distant shady valleys fixed swirls eddies, frozen vortices to the receding, limits of the Empyrean; Temple of Beauty, house of God minus walls, minus roof, as vast as He Who fills it with His ineffable Presence. Thou art there most kind Father, and Thou, Christ with the abyssal gaze, and Thou, Holy Spirit, who fills it with Thy splendour. But, where are your children — Mankind? Oh, here they are, at the grandstand of the pigeon rifle-range. The most elegant society hastens to remind the stroller-by that man is cruel and dumb, and that everywhere wherever Nature deploys its imposing frame-work, his first gesture is to soil it, via some useless killing and his vanity. I thought of you, my Friends, faithful servants of Christ, as I listened to this discordant note. How urgently is your work needed! How necessary, how impassioned it must be: The work of God is harmonious universally; within us sublime landscapes unfold; you have perceived them; do you not nourish the desire of conserving the intimate concert between our energies and our great desires? You have discovered within yourselves immense fertile plains, some peaks, immutable crags and fresh water springs. Remember that you must open the eyes of your brothers to these pacifistic scenes. Become the poets of action, artists of spirituality, magicians of eternity. Cultivate the body of your spirit as the Greeks cultivated their physical bodies: cleanse it, exercise it toward noble attitudes, raise yourselves above your level; do not fear being out of your depths; let yourselves swoon beneath the diamondlike whiffs flocking from the mystical snows; then, from the midst of these raptures, turn your attentions toward your brothers, so close and yet so far from you: They are elegant and powerful in the ways of the Earth, yet for diversion they kill doves. For diversion! That means to escape from themselves. 'We are not

doing anything wrong', so they claim; they are cruel and stupid only because they are cowards; they are merely afraid of themselves as they dare not face themselves. Go towards them, you who have heard the echo of divine voices, with the assurance that celestial kindness and human compassion grant you. Force them to face themselves. They often will throw you out; go back. Your eyes which, unknown to you have been filled with the light that the sun of spirits grants, your eyes will serve as eloquent exhortations if they refuse to listen to your voice. Thus you will have utilized a little of what the Father has permitted you to perceive. This is one of the works of the Precursor. Here is the other. Between the immobile immensity of the sea, and the immobile immensity of the mountains, a second lesson was awaiting me. The lunar crescent was already visible over the ancient tower of Philippe Auguste. The setting sun nearing the horizon was already tinting the high rocky cliffs with old golds, muted pinks, and faded chrome-yellow tones. In the distance, the Italian mountains were sliding into the sea in deep lavender wash-tints, their elegant profiles remindful of Virgilian strophes; and at my feet above the dimming azure of the waters, projected a ravaged barren promontory, of a vast amber colored field of ruins, a mass of broken stones, at the extremity of which stood two Roman Columns. This promontory is called "The Hill of Justice". There, once upon a time, stood a sort of fortress, where all the malefactors and criminals of this land were either imprisoned or hung. Before the time of feudal brigandage plunders, the Roman road passed through there in the center of a strategic town. But, that which archaeologists are unaware of, and that which you disciples of Christ must know, and that I was seeing at this very moment with such intense emotion, was a scene which happened in this prison almost 2,000 years ago. On a certain evening, a stately tall traveler arrived afoot walking down the main street of this village. He was not a Roman; he had long hair and a short beard; nothing distinguished him from other men at first sight; one had to examine him very attentively in order to discover in his features a superhuman power exuding from him, and mystery in his eyes. The stranger was tired; he asked for bread, figs, and a shelter for the night. Someone had been found to lodge him, when he presumed to defend a thief being led to the fort from the brutalities of the sergeants. He was immediately collared, also cruelly maltreated and taken to the fort. The odd aspect of this scene is that the stranger in spite of his athletic stature and of his posture denoting noble heritage did not defend himself from these coarse soldiers. The next day, they threw him out, and without a word the mysterious traveler continued his trip west toward Marseille and Provence. But, one week later, an earthquake unexpectedly destroyed the houses, the fort and the Temples; from that time on, this hill retains a sinister renown. Three kilometers further, the mysterious solitary man had received hospitality at the bottom of a vale on the road to Nice. It is there that the sons of the "little" Brother Francis of Assisi erected 15 centuries later a chapel to Notre-Dame de Laghet. Do you see, my dear Friends, the occult root of the brigandages and piracies in which the fishermen of this coast excelled for so many centuries: Do you see this root shooting its venomous flowers into this casino where all the cupidities and corruptions throng? Countries each have their destiny such as we have; physical beauty is rarely in accordance with its interior beauty. Here is the second work of the Baptist. Let us try to establish a durable accord between the external and the internal. The means of obtaining this accord is to employ sincerity; only at that price shall we establish within us this unity without which there is neither asceticism nor power, only at that price shall we become sowers of fervent ardour. It is a hard task, my Friends, a long-winded one we must undertake now. Let us open the eyes of our spirit let us not be as those Romans of yore; we must be able to recognize the envoy from Above, no matter under what guise He presents Himself. Has He not stated any way, that each beggar, is Himself? What a word! How it increases our responsibility; how it enlightens, illumines us! Treasure that word, make it your sword and your shield. Then, throw yourself heart and soul into the tick of the battle. *** N.B. Since 1953, Princess Grace has forbidden the pigeon shooting-matches. These particular paradoxes about which I speak mildly were the very ones that John the Baptist clamoured with all the power of his formidable voice into all the depths, upon all the heights, in all deserts, to all multitudes. Remember his eloquence.*** * XIII DRUIDIC INITIATION The Druidic Initiation is remarkable in all

respects. It contains the original or primitive forms of the Light that were given to the white race; it was especially elaborated, built up for us Europeans, for us Celts, for our particular qualities of intelligence, of heart and of body. This initiation is healthy, true and orthodox with respect to absolute Verity, as much as it is possible for any doctrine to be, other than the Gospel itself. In any case, the Divine protagonist of that Book was not Semitic, but Celtic, and the profound affinities of His human nature brought Him back during the unknown period of His life toward these occidental countries wherein, later on, would live the only hearts who truly understood Him. One knows but the outward doctrine of Druidism. Its secret initiation could not be found today save by examining certain hieroglyphics inscribed upon the rough-stones Monuments which the officially accepted findings of archaeology claim to be far anterior to Druidism. A certain Brahmanic School, in the vicinity of Faizabad, possesses some of its keys; the proportions of the Pyramids indicate a few others — because there have definitely been Celtic immigrations into those countries. In the vicinity of the Boreal Pole, about 30,000 years ago, there fell a rain of stones from a neighboring planet. The length and the abundance of these aerolithic falls were profoundly ingrained into the memory of the few savage hordes who became the ancestors of our race, and when a social state was organized, when the priesthood (sacerdoce) and initiation were established, this legend became the foundation of the Druidic Cosmogony and Androgony. The whole mystical organon of Knowledge and Power was based upon these four phases: 1: The unhewn stone falls from Heaven; it is thrust into the earth; there it is set and is cut in the shape of a cubic stone; it then returns to Heaven as a precious stone with 144 facets. 2: The cutting of this stone is the work of initiates, an occult, silent, mute work; that is why all the public testimonies of Druidism, as well as those of primitive Judaism, in the Maghreb as well as in Afghanistan, are rough stones. 3: The triangular or quadrangular pyramid is but one fraction of the cube. The Round Table is the projection, the terrestrial shadow of the ascending stone and of its faces..... 4: The soul of patriarchal Druidism is still alive. Very profound and very secret prehistoric attributes link it to the doctrine of Christ. * * First appeared in *Le Bréviaire Mystique*, and in *The Bulletin* No. 7, Jan. 1930. XIV THE MASTER* Man's ordinary path offers innumerable occasions of performing the necessary tasks, and the good man who contents himself to pursue that course faithfully merely has to rely upon and follow the dictates of his conscience and the orders of his Church, because there are also admirable people among materialists. Moral law is definitely impressed within each one of us — and being that the first precept of any religion is altruism, any believer can find salvation in the faith into which he was born. But among spiritualistic people, there are hardy minds and concerned intellectuals who are bored and wearied by the long roundabout road. Those seek elsewhere, at random among occultisms, mysticisms, according to their intuition. It is to these spiritual adventurers that I dedicate these next paragraphs, in hope that it will prevent their being snared meeting the wrong people, and from the pitfalls of quagmires. To those, since they refuse the leaders of the large flocks, our very kind Father offers extraordinary instructors, more suited to understanding their exceptional needs, better informed about the deserts and the virgin forests of the invisible. How may one qualify for such a marvellous encounter? This is what I shall attempt to delineate, through a rapid cursory survey of the great schools of initiation. * The masters of Chinese Wisdom who, at the present time are the doctors in Taoism, pursue the conquest of self-knowledge (the know thyself) only, even if it entails getting a few corollaries useful to social life. Very seldom and only exceptionally do they admit a foreigner to their teachings. In any case, after having supplied a few primary notions to the disciple, they abandon him to his own animic and intellectual forces, meaning that, if the student cannot advance by himself this is the evident proof that his capacity for knowledge has been reached; no one can increase it for him, no one can give him a helping hand to clear the obstacle; and were an "older brother" to do such an imprudent thing, according to the Tong-seng the results would be as harmful for one as for the other. The role of the Taoist initiator being limited thus ceases totally anyhow, as soon as the student has reached a certain level of knowledge. In pure Taoism, there is neither cult, nor liturgy, nor sacerdotal functions. First, the student must perfect his exoteric culture; then for his contemplative psychic asceticism he confines and

imprisons himself in a "temple without doors". When he feels capable of going out, he leaves and devotes himself under his own responsibility to teaching in public; he is responsible for his words, his writings and for his auditors; he may prefer to remain in such a gratifying function, or choose to bury himself again within the confines of the secret colleges; in any case, he has no other master than the abstraction of Tao, which he will endeavour to manifest within himself. In short, as far as the subject we are interested in, we conclude that the mystic who belongs to the yellow race may count only upon his own self to perfect the triple impassibility, the triple equilibrium, the triple clarification — corporeal, animistic, intellectual — by means of which he hopes to assimilate the treasures of the past, to discover the celestial unknown of the future, and to ameliorate the physical modifications of the present. The Hindoo, no matter which of the innumerable sects of Brahmanism he belongs to at present, calls his method of salvation Yoga, union. Among the eight kinds of Yoga, the highest form is the one by which the individualistic "I" becomes absorbed into the universal Self; that is Radja Yoga, the central branch of the Gnâna Yoga, union by means of science. Another method is Bhakti Yoga, union by means of spiritual love. This love may be proven through religious practices; but if the devotee has nothing but temporal advantages in view, he goes to hell after his death for having profaned a holy sentiment. If the devotee adores his god, if he chooses the greatest among the gods, if he loves him among his manifestations, he goes to a paradise after his death and is reborn a Brahman. Finally, if he loves with a pure heart, devoid of any personal desires, down to the death of his self, he attains the absolute. Lastly, there is a third method, it is the Yoga of work Karma Yoga; i.e. to act only with the sole aim of fulfilling the law of this absolute. The first two alone include the help of a master, guru. The proceeding indicated in the search for that master is thus: It is indispensable for the disciple to have primarily fulfilled all of his family, civic, political and religious duties; and this necessitates a long series of anterior lives dedicated to Karma Yoga. Then he must create within himself these four states of souls: 1□Sharp distinction between the relative non-real and the real absolute; 2□Renunciation once and for all to the visible or invisible fruits of his works; 3□Mastery over all desires by: - Control over all emotions, - Abandonment of any exterior cult, - Patience during hardships or pain, - Concentrated understanding, - Unshakable steadfast faith. These six accomplishments also mean having: - Control over the senses and extreme attention given to perceived objects. - Control of our internal senses, by directing them inwardly upon themselves; which brings about perfect control over our actions; - Reducing any temporal preoccupation to naught; - To be consumed with ardour and desire for the Light in spite of all set backs; - An incessant tension toward the goal, through desire, study and discussions; - Humility and respect toward God, the sacred books and tradition; 4□Above all, there has to be the desire for redemption; a profound, ardent, painful, passionate aspiration. "Strive for salvation," says a guru, "as if you were trying to escape a fire; be as wary of success as the traveler crossing a jungle infested with wild beasts is wary of the tigers, as wary as the one who passes by a den of thieves, or as the one who has been poisoned awaits the effects of the antidote given him." These are not mere points of view nor simple beliefs; it means that profoundly ingrained within the soul of the persevering disciple these four qualifications must become an integral part of his psychology as second nature, as innate modes of his spiritual life. When this titanesque task has been accomplished, the guru comes, in spite of all temporal improbabilities; the disciple knows that the Master has to come and is not surprised to see him appear before him unexpectedly. There are gurus for each of the esotericisms: for the sciences of incantations Gouhya Vidya; for the science of sacrifices Traividya; for ceremonial magic Mahavidya; for the science of sacrifices Yadjnavidya; finally for the Mystical Union Atmavidya or Radja Yoga. The god of the gurus is Siva (Shiva) under the form of the taciturnian Dakshinamourthi because, says the woman-adept Avvaiyar: "Silence is at the limit or terminus of knowledge." Therefore, the human Master is extricated from time and space; in him, knowledge is veritable, the mental state is immobile, his heart immovable, and his conduct kind. The disciple, the devotee, the indifferent and the sinner all benefit from his presence. He has drained the dregs of his destiny; he has under-one all of-the

consequences of his anterior acts: voluntary as well as involuntary, or those done under duress. Beyond the visible forms of objects, his mentality discerns the subjective universal form, Brahm (Dryyasanouviddha Samadhi); beyond the names of objects, beyond their cosmic elements and their specific differences, he discerns the identity of the Self — as spectator of the world and non actor (Sabdanouviddha or Sampradjnata Samadhi); he probes deeply into Brahm, sole reality, absolute certitude, fixed equilibrium (Nirvicalpa or Asampradjnata Samadhi). This is the first stage of definitive emancipation; the Yogi may leave it at will temporarily when a disciple needs him. His mental body, freed from the notion of the thinking self and freed from the notion of thought, does not recognize anything else than the thing thought of; the knowing-subject, the object known and the organ of knowledge are unified (Amanaska, Ounmani, Samadhi). Beyond that, there are but three more infused, transforming and identifying ecstasies: - Desires, intentions and volitions have vanished into beatitude, (Nissankalpa S.); * Tr. N. Dhammapada. - The notion of the essential elements of beings has vanished (Nirvrittika S.); - Impressions or innate ideas have vanished (Nirvasana S.). Beyond is the inconceivable abyss of Nirvana... * Theoretically, the rapports between Master and student were the same in Brahmanism as in the primitive, original Buddhism which one does not find anymore today except in Upper Burma or in Ceylon. The differentiation between the two systems is found in their method of asceticism. Çagya-Mouni only established the rules and regulations concerning the general duties of laymen and monks. His disciples were the ones who codified his maxims. The supreme master never appears anywhere as a god, not even as God; he is a man whose science and will have removed him out of all wheelworks of Time and out of the boundaries of Space, on earth, within our zodiacal orb and in all of the cosmic systems. This superman, or rather that soul, whose loftiness attenuates him as an abstract entity resides nowhere, hence is present everywhere. This is the reason, the Compassionate says of himself "The one, however far from me, who still walks on the right path, is always close to me". And yet "No man can save another"*. Thus, "Filled with love toward all things that are on earth, Gâutama practices virtue for the benefit of mankind;..... his objective is to help innumerable beings without forgetting the lowest.... - Because his heart melts with pity, yet remains firm and steadfast as the steel of a spear", the soul who seeks him meets him inevitably. In fact, "the body may wear the garb of an ascetic while the heart is concerned with worldly vanities; and the body may wear worldly fancy dress while the heart ascends very high toward Heavenly things". Thus it is that the Buddhist master, the Arhat, the venerable "is he who having penetrated into the essence of things always aims at being useful to other creatures..... any kind human words which reach the people are his words..... Mediator for those who are divided, living encouragement for those who are united, pacificator, friend of peace, impassioned for peace, bringing words of reconciliation, of understanding, triumphant over all adversaries through the force of his love" — this Venerable teaches his disciple through example and speech that, "it is better to die while fighting the tempter, than to live beaten, subjected to him". The Buddhist must first understand that nothing exists outside of man's thought; his whole moral code is based upon perfecting, upon the unification of thought, i.e. restricting it. This restriction is primarily physical, hence there can be no murder, theft, adultery, prevarications nor sensual pleasures; no asceticism either, in short: only constant equilibrium. The Buddhist monk is a man who renounces the world totally, who follows a spiritual superior, either alone with him or as a member of a community. The perfect superior, the Arhat, is the adept who will not be reborn after his present incarnation; he can take all forms, perceive all phenomena, all substances, all spirits and all the anterior modifications of creatures. Hence he knows his disciple's total individuality, consequently can guide him in full knowledge of the facts. The disciple must practice the eight branches of Knowledge which comprise all physical and mental works: be it, perfection in perception, reasoning, speech, action, lift, effort, memory and ecstasy. He attains the perfection of physical works by means of observing the five abstentions mentioned above; he also attains the perfection of mental works by meditating upon the divers intellectual questions the list of which varies from one century to another; thus he acquires: 1□Being sympathetic towards the joys and pains of all creatures; 2□An

aversion toward the body and everything connected with it; 3□An exact analysis of the phenomenistic world; 4□The fixation of the mental body concentrated upon the subject to be studied.5□The fixation of the mental faculties upon the essence of things. The role of the Guru is reduced, as one can see, to guiding the moral or mental faculties of the disciple through precise casuistry, and sustaining his thought-processes through an experimental awareness of the innumerable intellectual states. This is definitely a magnificent and captivating program. But, let us beware that it starts from a negation of Life, since the Buddha lays down as principle that, the objective reality of the universe is the result of an illusion of the Self, and he maintains the very unreality of this self. That everything may disappear into the Void — that, according to him is freedom: "Individuality does not exist, and nonindividuality does not exist either". But, Someone else has said "The kingdom of my Father is eternal life". Up to the reader to choose. * Having risen successively from the doctrine of non-acting, to that of nonthinking, then to the one of non-living, being close to losing ourselves into the metaphysico-mathematical abstraction, Islam is going to bring us back to a vigorous notion of objective life. The Moslem mystic, the Sufi experimentalizes in an invisible world peopled (such) as the visible one is, by real creations, whose chief is the one whom Avicenna calls the Vigilant. Man can reach into a direct perception of it with the aid of Grace given him by the Holy ancestors who had been blessed with the same prerogative once upon a time. There are five degrees in the mystical hierarchy of Islam: 1□the faithful at large; 2□the three hundred; 3□the forty; 4□the Abdal, ensemble of those who have replaced condemnable qualities by praise-worthy qualities; 5□the Pole, the unique one, the one to whom the Father communicates Himself constantly, after having given him a secret, a talisman. This man, in spirit, scours all Nature within its bodies and essences, just as the vital fire scours through the flesh it animates; he is the canal through whom Divine influx passes, and who distributes it to all beings. This man incarnates the Angel Izrafil as vivificator of the world — the Angel Gabriel as thinker— the Angel Michael as assimilator — the Angel Azrael as rejector of useless elements. This tradition traces Islam much further back in time than when Mahomet realized it, and makes it last far beyond the expected time when it will disappear with our planet. This tradition thus places Enoch as the first of these poles, and so as to justify its previsions, it affirms that Elias is still alive on earth, and that El Khadir, the Saint George of the Oriental Christians, is alive in the depths of the oceans until the day of the Last Judgement. One may be interested to compare this legend, if legend it be, to the one of the Occidental Christians upon the immortality of Saint John the Evangelist, and to the Rosicrucian traditions regarding these particular personages. The Moslem who wants to attain Sufic glory abandons his family and his belongings; he peregrinates to all of the pilgrimage sites, follows the rigorous regimens of the various fraternities which direct them. Among these sanctuaries which are almost always tombs, in the shade of the one where the saintly founder of the fraternity, or its contemporary Sheik transports him into the interior regions of ecstasy — this is the one he must join, to adhere and follow its meticulous exercises his whole life long. Thus he elevates himself sustained by the love of his master, by means of his own love. The fuel for this fire are poverty, mortifications and the Dikr-Prayer, which is somewhat similar to the ejaculatory oraison of the Catholics. Starting from the world of the senses, the contemplative neophyte successively raises himself to the inspired world of genius, to Paradise, to the angelic world, to the world of the saints where he finds his master again; to the world of the prophets, to the veritable world where Mahomet is enthroned. These seven planets comprise the 70,000 veils in which Allah, the Light of Lights, the One envelops himself. During his stage as Aspirant-Candidate, he has broken off the ties of secondary habits; once having entered into the way, he only caters to the spiritual exercises in the company of angels; acquiring Truth, he exercises its correspondent powers and gets rid of peccable possibilities; finally, he reaches this union where nothing subsists but God and his servant, united yet distinct. * Outside of these great religious schools, there exists another initiatory path, a school of initiation which claims to unite the intellectual teachings of the ancient mysteries to the spiritual intuitions of the Gospels. This school teaches and recognizes Jesus Christ as the Son of God incarnate, but it denies the * In the French original, the 24 sentences proceed

alphabetically from A to Z. Church of Rome; it teaches all the sciences of ancient occultism but only after the neophyte has reached perfect moral purity; its members conceal their mystical achievements under the cloak of Alchemy; it is they who, after having left traces of their power and of their wisdom at the origin of the great religious and social formations on earth have emancipated themselves in the XVIIth. Century, under the name of Rose-Croix. Here are the personal regulations which they personally have given out, that we might be able to join them: 1. Before any intellectual search, meditate upon the life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Limit the thirst to know. 3. To know one's own heart is walking toward God. 4. Postpone any action until one has examined all circumstances surrounding 5. Study the Gospel with simplicity. 6. Put an end to any temptation by a calm and inflexible refusal. 7. Glorify God with all of our powers. 8. Courteous honesty, but no familiarities. 9. Immediate obedience to our superiors. 10. No useless words, ever. 11. The surrender of one's own will brings peace. 12. Illnesses and ordeals detach us from this world. 13. Physical and mental negligence engender temptation. 14. Close your ears to slander. 15. Fulfill the law through a three-fold charity. 16. Are not the faults of another to be found in us also? 17. A monk's habit does not make a saint. 18. Suffering means purification, initiation, power. 19. Work in the within, dependent upon the outer circumstances. 20. Unite silence with activity, from our arms to our hearts. 21. Let us examine ourselves in depth and repent. 22. X — the great unknown quantity of Knowledge — is the Cross. 23. Is there any temporal pleasure which lasts? 24. Blazing zeal, untiring patience, humble prayer.* We must fulfill all our familial, civil and social duties. One should educate children, offer hospitality, do good works, domestic fulfillment founding refuge centers, workshops, societies for the indigent, meeting places for simple enjoyment, theatres for educational purposes, and instructive lectures — all those who labour for such works are overshadowed by the Spirit of the Rose-Croix, which brings them little by little toward it. But what is this spirit, what is a veritable Rose-Croix? One should listen to Robert Fludd who divulges the existence of nine colleges, secretly linked and possessors of the antediluvian Verity. Their headquarters are in Attica facing Mt. Athos; to the North of the Persian Gulf, toward Trivanderam; East of Lucknow; in Lucania, Mecca, Fez and Egypt. They manifest themselves, either through their direct disciples or through some remarkable men with whom they clinch a temporary alliance, or they reveal themselves in person. It is God Who teaches them through 'His Spirit personally. He grants them: the gift of tongues, the power to heal without medications, without majestic gestures nor through any effort of the will; He grants them arithmosophy, onomatosophy, the interpretation of hieroglyphics, alchemical art, pneumatosophy, musicology, the divination of the past and future of individuals, of Countries and Faces, mysticism, the direction over terrestrial destinies, and the power to confer spiritual Baptism. Eckartshausen states that one may meet them especially in the vicinity of lakes. Their outward appearance is nondescript; their eyes have an unusual startling youthful quality; they may be of middle years, and either single or family men, travelers or sedentaries; they acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Word incarnate; they shun celebrity; their speech is simple, concise, but carries a secret virtue which touches hearts; they make themselves the servants of all; their munificence is inexhaustible, they exhude, radiate the Light spontaneously. * From this short inquiry let us draw the conclusions useful to us Occidentals, Europeans, and Christians. Whoever is satisfied with following the common road needs little besides his own conscience, profane wisdom or ecclesiastical guides. But whoever wants to take the short cut, the narrow path runs terrible risks. Torrents, avalanches, vertigo, tempests, wild beasts, cold, brigands: the seven enemies coalesced against the mystical Thebaide which each one carries within himself. Taoism, Brahmanism, Buddhism and Sufism have one fault in common, they are methods of non-acting, evasions from life, negations. Before permitting any contemplative exercises, they point out that moral mundification is an indispensable requisite; they seem to forget that in life, the struggle between good and evil will only cease with the end of the world; and that if one were to attain the state of sainthood today, would it insure the identical state of sanctity tomorrow? Perhaps, in the next hour, one may succumb to strange, more insidious or more childish temptations. Hence, to await having attained permanent perfection before wanting

to devote ourselves to others, is to delude ourselves. Besides summed up, these training exercises are really a turn-back of our vital forces, a ligature of our free-will, a fluidic, mental or psychic vampirism which far from liberating, forges more subtle and more rigid chains. Therefore a guide is indispensable. This guide must know the path in great details, the climatic conditions in all of their variations, the country under all of its aspects. He will speak to the traveler in his mother tongue; this guide will neither be a spirit, a genii nor a god; it will be a man of flesh and bones whose gigantic spiritual stature has slowly developed for many centuries, in the fulfillment of all of the Grands-Oeuvres. In combat, grappling with the coalition of all the forces of evil, he must be able to dig freely into the inexhaustible treasures of the Father. He then must be pure and free; his personal lesson must have ended. A Master is in turn an involute, a reborn or redescended, a Saviour, a new incarnation of the tenderness of the Father for his children, "Mourir par amour est humain, vivre par amour, voila l'héroisme". Because as Balzac has said "To die from love is human, to live because of and by love is heroism", he confirms Swedenborg's maxims: "To speak is to sow", and "Where inner peace is found, there God is". How does one meet that unknown? Balzac replies again: "Science searches, love has already found". Hence when your enemies oppress you, when your friends abandon you, when your sons scorn you, when your bosses exploit you, when your ideal escapes you, when your whole strength, will power and desires slacken, slow up and seem to vanish, have no fear — it is the first summons from the Master Who, without your knowledge, from His vantage point has seen you passing by in the valley, and has elected you from the radiant summit of the mystic mountain. Remain serene during your agony; from now on, start turning the regard of your soul toward the anonymous Friend. Your pathway is bifurcating and from this moment on you are walking toward an immanent beatitude. Do not seek for this Master with your intellect, encumbered by preconceived ideas, bound in by systems, wavering among the 1,000 broken images of the permanent Reality — seek Him with your heart, with your poor bruised heart, with your precious heart which Angels cherish. The moment is coming when He will appear before you, either under the filthy rags of a beggar, under the uniform of a prince, as handsome as a Seraphim, or marked with the stigmata of fatigue, age or martyrdoms — never mind! Do not challenge the outward appearance, listen to your heart — never has it cried out so much; the ravishment it experienced when it met the virginsister of your soul, is nothing compared before the sovereign beatitude which engulfs it now; your intellect falls inert as an eagle blinded from having faced the sun too closely; the spirit of your bones groans inebriated from an unbearable inebriation; your vital flame runs hither and thither in your body, as does an imprisoned mistress who see her lover coming forth; so your heart dashes, faster than lightning, toward the heart of this Friend. Your heart hurries toward Him, in Him it loses itself, is transported with joy, finds itself, dies in Him, then is reborn in Him — blessed Death, divine rapture, unquenchable thirst, profound peace. But how many desolate nights before the crimson radiance of this dawn! Never mind! The constant and passionate faithful searcher will see that resplendent dawn as soon as the tenebrae will have reached their ultimate obscuration, because it is written: "I shall come as thief..." * XV APPEAL FOR FRANCE (*This appeal issued by Sédir in January, 1926, is timeless and seems as of today. This meditation is addressed to all French faithful whose spiritual unification is a necessity*). The situation of our Country worries a great many Frenchmen. From all sectors, diverse groups are being formed; they try to organize within the diverse domains of social life the reforms as suggested by our specialists. Our friends must be made aware of and be interested in these efforts. Of course it is Christ Whom we serve primarily. But France happens to be the country of Christ, and all of our members are either French or friends of France. Just as giving succour to any man who suffers from any kind of pain is for us the best means of serving our Lord Jesus Christ, so also shall our efforts to ameliorate national living conditions be done in the service of Christ. Our experience in civic matters has taught us how difficult it is 'to choose the best system to organize the various branches of the country's life: culture, commerce, industry, finance, army, administration. We are also aware, alas, of how politics corrupts and deforms everything. We have not noticed either that any one of the aforementioned groups has

thought of completing its external action by having recourse to the often miraculous treasure of forces wherein the soul of a nation, its spirit and its genii labour as sought out by its angel of Light and its angel of Darkness. Since any material phenomenon is but the prolongation of a spiritual cause, if one ameliorates this latter, one also ameliorates the former. This evangelical precept which we are applying to our personal development must be applied to help our Country. Hence we shall ask Him Who, way above the soul of France and far above His angels directs its destinies, our Master Christ Jesus, to please move the mercy of the Father. We shall not ask Him for any particular doctrine, any system or any association to triumph over others, but only that He may send down upon our Country all that it needs to accomplish its providential mission. We shall ask Him fertility for its soil, raw materials for its factories, discoveries useful to its scientists, noble thoughts for its philosophers, enthusiastic imagination for its artists, plus energy, integrity and common sense for its law makers, a scrupulous conscience for all its citizens and peace among all of them — finally, to preserve France from the traps from without set by foreign ambitions. I invite our Friends to spread this appeal around them, to communicate it to anyone who seems capable of understanding its spirit. Whoever believes in God must implore Him for his Country. Whether the Catholic addresses his requests to the Virgin, or the Protestant to Christ alone, or whether the spiritualist invokes one of the forms of the Spirit that he conceives best, it matters not. All that I ask from those who have heard my call, is not to address themselves to any intermediary powers, no matter how pure they may be — but to direct their appeal to God Almighty, whatever may be the name they give Him. Moreover, the disciple of Christ is well aware that when the Master does not heed his prayer immediately, the Virgin Mary has almost total control over her Son. Repeat your request each night, if possible between 10 and 11 P.M. Prepare for it during the day through some kind of spiritual fast: by depriving yourself of some commodity, by suppressing some kind of desire, overcoming some selfish motive, restraining your laziness, your pusillanimities and indifferences, by extending indulgence and forgiveness immediately. That which lessens the self, everything which helps others, which makes them happier at the detriment of our ease, that which encourages them to live — all of these mean spiritual fasts. By multiplying these throughout the day for a specific goal, we tonify our will, we stride out of our small horizon, we unify our scattered energies, we nourish our ideal, we give wings to our prayers, finally our spirit being relieved ascends toward the Spirit. Those among you who find my proposition acceptable may start right away. It is not for me to thank you. The recompense for your efforts and labour will be to find Him Who gives you first of all the desire to implore Him and to Whom you offer your tribulations and prayers. * XVI THE LITTLE SHEPHERD Once upon a time there lived a poor young herdsman who was believed to be simple-minded; he watched over the sheep of the inhabitants of a small village lost in the depths of the Brocéliande forest, much denser and desertic at that far away time than at present. This young shepherd called Yann did not know his parents; very young he had arrived in this hamlet where the simple and kind inhabitants had taken him in. As soon as he was old enough to find his way among the barely traced paths which crisscrossed the forest, the poor people used him, to lead to the pasture lands of the hills the small flock which constituted their entire fortune. Yann lived a strange life; he was seen seldom; barely noticed as he crossed the road at dawn, blowing his horn, nor in the evening as he brought the animals back to their stalls; he spoke little, had an absent-minded expression; and at night, instead of sleeping on the good fresh straw of the barns, or under the warm breath of the livestock in the winter, he would err in the forest his face taut, stretching his neck toward the moon and the stars — the good people thought him somewhat of an enchanter. He had been seen in the midst of the timber-trees listening attentively to hidden voices, smiling at invisible spectacles; the forest seemed to be instructing him; he knew how to gauge the weather through the interstices of the blue sky perceived through the heavy foliage; little by little he would find which herbs would reduce contusions, stanch wounds, or heal the herds. Even crows and owls would speak to him, and when Death was to visit this forgotten hamlet, he knew in advance at which but it would stop. Thus Yann grew happily amidst the perfumed breezes of the forest; the flowers of summer, the fruits and golden

horizons of autumn, the snowy carpets of winter succeeded one another many times, before he ever experienced any other emotion than admiration and peace. He had nothing but friends among trees and herbs, because never had he harmed any of them; before picking a fruit or pulling a root, or cutting a stalk, he had always asked the plant's permission; and when he was looking for good juicy leaves for dressing wounds, never did he strip the small shrub on his own authority. He would amble through the forest and raising his voice, would ask: "Where are the St. John's-wort?" and mentioning some other herbs, "Which is the one willing to give me a few leaves to heal old Mary-Anne or to stop the hemorrhaging cut of Alain the carpenter?" The small shrub would answer him: "I will, take whatever leaves you need, but don't hurt me too much." So as not to hurt his friends, little Yann would wait that they be asleep under the moonlight; and when all these children of the forest would be asleep peacefully, he would gather the leaves from the one who had offered them, very carefully, doing as little damage as possible by closing the green scar with care. Thus all loved him and it gave them pleasure to give him all he asked. Anyhow, Yann claimed that things went that way, the villagers listened with astonishment because they had never heard the voice of a shrub; when he was told such things the little shepherd was rather surprised, but as he was a simple child full of respect for old men and women, he did not take any glory of his forest relationships and did not seek their cause. However, every day, he was learning some new and marvellous things from his friends the trees, he would relate them to his friends — men, thinking it would be of benefit to them, just as he described the customs of the peasants to the trees. Only the trees paid any attention to him, they profited from the lessons of their little friend, because they were humble and knew that men were vastly superior to them, but the peasants would say of Yann: "He is a simpleton, fairies trouble his mind". They would forget his warnings, and paid dearly for their indifference. Because trees feel a great many things that men, even the rustics do not feel, they know what the weather will be, not only a few days, but many moons in advance; the giants of the forest even predict these events for years into the future. They also know the mysterious presences which fill the traveler with fear under the vaulted somber green foliage; those among them which grow on the edge of the round clearings where fairies dance the sixth, thirteenth, twentieth, and twenty seventh days of the moon are better informed. If men knew how to listen to them and ask them, they would be put in touch with the genii of the fields, of the brooks, of cascades, rocks, ravines and mountains; thus would men learn where are the places with the useful soils, precious minerals; where the ondines bestow medicinal virtues to the springs, where the flowers are balsamic; men would find out which centenary oak has been blessed through the austerities of a hermit and which one is haunted because of the memory of a crime or the agonies of a suicide, and so many other things! But, similarly to other civilized people and scientists, the worthy farmers among whom Yann lived, paid no heed to his stories, they even laughed at him among themselves. White frost or hail always came as the little shepherd had foretold, but they profited little from these lessons, because they thought of him as a prognosticating little vagabond who had come out of nowhere. Thus, one sunny afternoon Yann, walking in an undergrowth carpeted with rampant ivy, noticed that the leaves were not perpendicularly erect toward the solar rays as they should have been, but on the other hand were presenting their edges to them. He knew immediately that he had been brought to this particular spot because some important event was to fall upon his head; ivy, which can sense the evil humors of animal bodies, that day, did not want to obey the law, Yann felt his heart constricted. After having returned his cattle to the barn, by moon light he ran toward the great oak Arra'ch, the Master of the Forest; but it was Council night, and Arra'ch had gone to the head of the Spirits of the trees, to take orders and receive the news from the mouth of the old bear through whom spoke many genii of this ancient country. So it was only the next morning that Yann heard the voice of Arra'ch in his dream: "You are going to suffer", he told him, "and whatever you may do, you are growing up; you shall be obliged to choose between two roads, to taste one out of two fruits, and discard the other; but you will have to make the choice by yourself, I cannot do anything for you for you are a man; your spirit is higher than mine, and if it chooses wisely, it will some day become the master of this forest, my master,

the master of the old bear and of the gnomes who work within the rocks toward the north. But as you have been good to us, we shall be good to you, and I pledge myself in the name of the entire forest, to come to your help if you do not forget us." Then Yann heard the immense murmur of the great trees, the shrubs, and grasses, all joining their plight of fidelity along with Arra'ch to Yann, provided Yann did not forget them. One must add that the little shepherd had become a handsome, blond adolescent, as straight and as vigorous as a young sapling; his handsome figure did not pass unnoticed by the young girls of the hamlet. So far he had never noticed their blushing countenances, to him they were merely pals, a little less agile and less hardy than the boys. It happened, that a few days after he had observed the leaves of the sylvestrian ivy pointed up before him, there came to the village a dark stranger, a girl with large immobile eyes and long hair; upon seeing her, Yann felt something tremble within his chest, and his nostrils, accustomed to the fresh and pure odors of grasses and blanches-dames experienced the inebriating emanation of the perfumes of the flesh. In his anguish he sought recourse from his usual counsellors; but the forest that night kept silent; the master Arra'ch told him: "In a short while you shall have to choose". The dark girl addressed him, as he dared not do so; she had come from an adjoining region where there were no forests, where many people lived in close contact, living in large stone constructions and not in huts; they used complicated utensils and wore many clothes. A great many objects were necessary for them to sleep, to eat, to take care of their body, and the stranger was astonished not to find anything similar in this hamlet. Yann told her all about his life, his friends, his masters the trees, his guides the fairies; about their dialogues and predictions; he wanted his friend to speak to them but she did not hear their voices. She would not have understood it anyhow, since her spirit came from another sphere. She mocked Yann who suffered from her sarcasm, though he was inhaling the sweet breath of the dark haired girl and her stifling perfume with delight. She wanted to take him along to live among these men she called scholarly, rich and powerful; but Yann did not know what wealth meant; he had some ideas what a scholarly man might be; he wanted to learn secret, obscure and remote things, among which the enigma he felt to be hidden in the beauty of his friend; but he dared not leave his forest; he felt he would lose so much. He believed he could not live without her caressing black eyes, without that somewhat disturbing delightful odor, nor without gazing at the beautiful body of the stranger. He worried a great deal until the day that all of a sudden he took the hand of the temptress and left to find wealth and science in foreign parts. He demanded to learn the secret withheld behind the ruby red lips of his friend, but she thrust him away, saying: "Come back with gold and you shall discover the mystery of my beauty". After he had the gold, he found out about the mystery, drained it, and wearied of it. He pursued it among many other women, he drained it, and wearied of it. Then he went searching after the mysteries of science; he learned a great many forgotten things, the language of long ago forgotten people, the dreams of ancient sages; but he never was able to utter the sesame to the mystery of science; one day, having found out he would never be able to discover it — he became aware that he had become old, that his hands trembled, that his hair had turned white. So he returned to his old forest to resume his life in the hamlet where he had spent his childhood; no one recognized him; he became again a poor sheep-herder as he had been long ago. Many a night he spent weeping upon the life he had wasted, which had passed so fast; he wept over wealth, love and science, unaware that this had been the test about which the old oak Arra'ch had warned him long ago. After having fought a mental battle with himself, he understood and knew that there was a God — a quite different God than the one described in the wise men's books. So he bowed low, he humbled himself before this God — at that very moment the immense army of the Spirits of the Forest, of the Waters and of the Earth came, preceded by the Spirits of the Air — this army rendered him homage, deferring to his Spirit and promising him obedience. Yann then told them: "Do not bow to me, but to Him Whom I feel lives within me, He Who has led my soul through secret paths and Who gives me at long last the Poverty of Spirit, of Kindness and of Love, instead of the Gold, Pleasure and Science which I sought for, so long". And this is the tale of the little blond Yann, the foundling. * XVII MEDITATIONS CONCERNING ART Do you

believe that to structure so fine an organism such as a Pierre de Montreuil, a Michelangelo, a Rabelais, a Bach, a Baudelaire, thirty or forty years would have sufficed Nature? Who will fathom the depth of the anterior paths of these souls, through their long, obscure and painful progressions? How many cloaks of Life must they have worn, so that in a few square feet of linen canvas, in two cubes of marble, in a hundred pages they could amass and portray such varied experiences in order to offer future generations the unfathomable wealth of their mysterious teaching? Please — do love geniuses, because they are the sublime bloom of their race, the savory fruit of a whole secular cycle; because they are martyrs and forbearers; because all of them, even the most saturnine ones reveal God to eyes avid to see God. Art radiates a subtle life; art leads us more directly than does Science or Action toward immaterial Glory; or rather, it immediately sets aside the Veils of the Unrevealed, and that one glimpse suffices to enhance a whole life time. Science lets us read upon these veils the shadows of angels and gods; Action alone, per se permits us, when we realize it in full and entirely, to pass effectively on the other side of the veils. But Art incites in us the desire of ascending, it inebriates us to act, and gives us the ennobling melancholy of a feeling of exile. Let our visit to a great work of art be a solemn feast by preparing our selves and collecting our thoughts in meditation; let us bedeck ourselves with everything we find within us which is noble and enlightening; let everything be stilled as we look at it — let us become simple; let it be for us a baptism of light and harmonies. Let us become saturated with its essence; let every word be forgotten before the poem we listen to; let us repeat the verses as marvellous incantations, let our eyes be filled as from a miraculous spectacle! There is something behind color, behind a sketch, behind plastic art or verbal cadences, a great deal more than their rational sense, there is their mystery — this is where the redeeming virtue of masterpieces lies — this is what makes them "chefsd'oeuvre". This virtue is the image, the echo and the prolongation of that state of the Invisible which penetrates us throughout; of that Unreal which is true Reality, of that ineffable state which is perpetuated Harmony. This presence, this reality, this harmony, are forms of the Word — it is The Word; they are the expressions of our Jesus — it is our Jesus. Do love all beautiful things, make yourself love them; dig, fan the flame of this noble love within yourselves until such time when your tears will flow, and your enthusiasm will take fire. Within this purified conflagration will you temper your willpower. Only then shall compassion for your brothers still enmired in darkness be born within you. Visualize their blind groping, see yourself in their place and have pity on them. — You are, they and you, the ligatured limbs of the same great body; may the acute sensation of their misery sting you to the quick and engender within you the desire of succouring them. * XVIII ODILON REDON - THE SEER No one has yet interpreted Redon for us, as did Péladan in his masterful interpretation of Leonardo, as did Elie Faure of Cézanne. I am not a painter and I know nothing about being an art critic; but Odilon Redon touches me profoundly, hence these few lines do not claim to be anything else than the impressions I felt as I saw this retrospective collection of the masterpieces exhibited at Barbazanges. Is it not also a duty to speak, as one undoubtedly must, about an admirable man one admires, and about a work so full of edifying details? His work is diversified, it encompasses decorative compositions, tapestries, still lifes, copies, mythological scenes, original themes, pastels, oils, water colors, etchings, red chalks, charcoals and lithographs. Within these meanders and the apparent disorder of these inspiring works one finds the simple curve of a profound soul for whom all of the splendors of the earth and of humanity were but the platforms from which it launched itself toward the baffling magnificences of the Invisible. Does not the spiritually minded public whom I am addressing whose first orientation is knowledge then altruism, somewhat forget the Beautiful? Is not Beauty the glory of God, His immense luminous aureola, the harmonious splendor of His expressive gestures plus all of the superabundance with which His Beneficence embellishes all the acts of His might? Beauty — visible expression of the Spirit, confers the marvellous gift of moving the beings she settles upon; but she isolates them, because she elevates them and projects them far ahead of the crowd. How long did Giotto, Leonardo and Rembrandt have to wait until the élite was able to catch up with them? In our days, Henri Cros was so pursued by bad luck that even at the Luxembourg Gardens, his

admirable Fountain was placed at the only spot where no one can see it; Auguste Lauzet, as universal an artist in technique as he is in thought remains-totally unknown because death overtook him at 33; finally there is Odilon Redon who had a full career, but whom too few admirers have yet acclaimed. Cros — is all of antiquity infused into a modern soul; Lauzet — is all of nature and the divine humanized; Redon — is all of the invisible, the incarnation of our dreams. In art, the greatness of genius is never perceived by the crowd; a genius walks alone, very far ahead; he is the adventurer of the spirit — the successful artist rises but to a small degree above the common level, he precedes his epoch but a few steps; he is accessible; every one can touch him upon extending their hands. The genius, on the contrary, runs ahead, seems to be lost, and all of a sudden, in the distance there shines the piercing gleam of his torch; for us he paints the unknown, he tells us about the inducible, he modulates the concerts of the ineffable for our ears. Thus, he remains doomed to be incomprehended. The public is willing to accept any teaching which is logical, practical or rational; but no one can make the public overreach itself in the realms of taste, of sensitivity, of spiritual depth — such developments demand centuries. And if a genius happens to be a prophet, it is also true that no man is a prophet in his country. Odilon Redon so far has been understood only by an élite; for a long time yet, I believe, he will remain unique, singular— in the etymological sense of the word. His eyes perceive something beyond what other painters see; his hand through the simplest lines, knows how to suggest the richest forms; he represents natural objects as translucent, as supernatural; he presents to us spaces unknown to the geometrician, yet possible and creatures that the naturalist has not yet seen, yet built according to the most credible vital logic. Moreover, he is master of his palette and of his lines up to that supreme and great simplicity one calls style. Finally, he is the powerful transfigurator who sublimizes into figures of eternity the passing beings whose fugitive appearances are reflected into our eyes; he surpasses the art of painting by reaching the essence of Art — and that by a simple method: "My most fecund regime, most essential for my expansion", he told us, "has been to copy that which is real, by reproducing very carefully any object of visible, external nature, representing it down to its tiniest, most particular and accidental details. After making the effort of minutely copying a stone, a blade of grass, a hand, a profile or any other living thing in life, something mentally ebullient surges within me, I feel I must create, let myself go to represent the visionary imagery. Nature, dosed in this fashion inspires me, becomes my source, my leavening, my ferment". "To put into the simplest humblest endeavors the light of spirituality" that, he was able to do, because his soul was healthy and vigorous. As in the case of Puvis de Chavannes, the silent nobility and austere discipline of his private life have endowed his public works with a solid foundation and given them an immovable framework. Our artists too often forget this arcane, especially those who, above all people, should heed it. How many eloquent pages have been written on the need of passions for the artist! Of course! only ardent souls may express the Beautiful; but what heights they could reach, what grandeur they would attain, what purity, were they to become masters of their passions instead of being their slaves! Man is a compact whole; the most banal chink in his selfcontrol reverberates within his soul and tarnishes it. That is why among integral human beings such as Odilon Redon, an admirable continuity unfurls itself in a double curve of equilibrium: from their observant regard, the exact vision of the objects ascends to the sacred élans which violate inspiration and, from the spiritual heavens where archetypes hover, brings back into the docile fingers under whose delicate touch a simple line becomes a high-relief which bathes and espouses it with depth, relief and spatial air. The fruits and flowers as seen through such eyes are not mere pretexts for a magnificent palette, their hidden life transpires, their spiritual force speaks; they are not roses of France, agrestic red poppies, lemons from the Midi nor pomegranates any more; they are the flower, the fruit, the masterpiece of the vegetable realm, end of a thousand obscure, forgotten efforts; they are the Garden, the Field, the Orchard; they are complete poems, small worlds, syntheses, and agrollogical stars. Aeropagist, aristocrat of form and colour, this painter of ours follows the grand circular march from the Visible to the Invisible, when he revives certain classical scenes from mythology. He is obsessed by Apollo and his steeds rearing in the startling

magnificence of an aurora borealis; he depicts Andromeda or the beautiful Angélique with their liberators against the most subtle backgrounds that any primitives could have conceived, acting in concert with Le Lorrain, Corot and Claude Monet: all of those are recognizable in the trees, the rocks and the mists of Redon. The cold secret symbols of the ancient East under his brush become living flowers, harmonious polychromes, pathetic scenes. The Buddha, Christ, Orpheus, the Holy Family, Saint George and Saint Sebastian, martyrs, women and angels — all of the superhumanities have effectively descended upon his soul, and their taciturn visitations have really guided his conscientious fingers. What titles he gave his imaginative works: The Knight, The Flame, The Lost Angel, The Fallen Angel, The Meditative Angel, The Martyr, The Flower of the Swamp, The Drowned Glory, The Astral Idol, The Wing — besides many other prodigious theurgies, doubtless confined and hidden by unknown collectors! Here are the spiritual brothers of our seer to whom fantastic theogonies have imparted their secrets: Byron, Alfred de Vigny, Poe, Baudelaire, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, and Mallarmé. He converses with the ancient gods, he grasps the impalpable and interprets the aura of the faces which fill our dreams; he navigates upon the fluidic rivers and confronts the formidable genii which pour the terrible wine of ecstasy to exceptional souls; and never do his eyes falter, his fingers tremble nor his good taste wander. Such is the seal of genius — to keep all expressions of what is extraordinary within bounds, to utilize verisimilitude to portray the impossible, in short, to lift the spectator up to the realms of the Unreal, then by depositing him upon Earth with such mastery that his dazzlement, far from stopping him increases his desire for life to a blazing flamepoint according to the law of perceived splendours, therefore tempers his yearning for nobility, for intelligence and love forever. It seems to me that this is what the works of Odilon Redon tell the sincere visitor, the avid soul, the budding energy in quest of a path. No lessons from another artist would give more the teaching of this old modest master corresponds in the Spiritual order, to that of Giotto in the religious sense, to Michelangelo in the animic order, and that of da Vinci in the intellectual order. Let us be thankful that France was elected to engender such an initiator and let us become the students worthy of his sufferings and of his hidden achievements. * T. N. : Odilon Redon was born in Bordeaux in 1840, and died in Paris, 1916 the exhibition of his works at the Barbazanges Gallery that Sédir mentions took place in 1923. Other retrospective exhibitions took place at the Petit Palais in 1934, and at the Musée de l'Orangerie in the winter of 1956. XIX JOURNAL OF A TRIP TO LYONS AND TO A FEW CITIES IN ITALY August 1909 - LYONS What a pleasure it was to return to that old city of Lyons, which seems to me to be the cavern of mysteries of France. Though so black and sooty now, the old monuments built along noble, austere and somewhat emphatic lines are still hospitable. In the Croix-Rousse sector, the old houses with vaulted arches, multiple stairways and passages with their fumed greasy walls and doors revealing dark recesses, such as one finds in etchings, conserve a super-annuated, antiquated charm. Their inhabitants, as one can observe in the robust bone-structure of their solid old bodies, have come down perhaps ten lustres or centuries ago from high mountainous regions or sun-drenched lands. Once upon a time they had been hardy Savoyards, perhaps cunning, hard drinking Dauphinois, or twine-growers from Beaujolais. Now they are dark-clad troglodytes, all corrugated and wrinkled; their faces with extraordinary varying planes resemble hollowed out rocks encroached by pale moss; their speech maintains the sing-song tones native to their mountain-villages, but their voices are now subdued; they are polite, philosophical, but beneath that calm how much curiosity, disquiet, restlessness and suppressed envy one feels! Lurking beneath the old arched doorways, beneath the ancient vaults, in the mossy courtyards, or in the alcoves of their dank lodgings, they spy, ferret, grumble, bewail, slander, yet are happy in the belief they are leading wretched lives. Tuesday evening, after having dined in the pleasant large brasserie installed downstairs from the beautiful concert hall recently built at the foot of the Croix-Rousse, our friends the Georgetts took the three of us to the Grand Café Bellecour. For me these were three instructive hours. Lyon is a city abundant with music lovers; the music devotees bring to their enjoyment of hearing good artists the same scrupulous gravity, the same passionate, earnest, ingrained good taste that they bring to all matters. Among the public, few young men; one sees mostly mature and

old men with rather plain yet strong physiognomies; they are cheaply clad, but they are attentive listeners; indifferent to their neighbours. The performance took place on the platform. There was an excellent German pianist, though a bit too self-satisfied; an albino cellist, an expert virtuoso; and a violinist, a dark haired, bearded, pale-faced man, thin, nervous, passionate — how wonderful he became when the Wagnerian daimon possessed him! How proudly he performed a Brahms scherzo! How tenderly he caressed the lied-motif of a Corelli! And how transported with religious fervour he became as his long saturnian fingers developed the pathetic theme of a Beethoven adagio! It is good to find once in a while a man who has fire in his heart — it warms and reconciles us to life! * We are leaving for Milano. After the nightmarish Simplon tunnel appear the noble horizons of Lake Maggiore. MILANO: Streets paved with large granite slabs; one dines late; men assemble, loafing under the arcades; lots of street cars; very correct officers; subservient servants; window screens. Silent old hotels, beautiful gardens perceived through the porticoes. Lunch at Cova's. Santa Maria-delle-Grazie — charming cloisters, beautifully toned bricks; what majesty in the outlines of the Last Supper which, although the frescoe is almost obliterated now, still projects into the room the emotion of a powerful mystery. That, is Genius. At la Bréra — the cartoon of the School of Athens more beautiful than the Fresco; sketches of Leonardo's. Wealth of the Palace Peldo-Pezzoli; admirable Luinis, the Christ of Andrea Solario — beauty, splendors, resplendence. Were we to set the Catholic painters apart, we would find on the other side an artist essentially human, the Beethoven of the plastic art: Michelangelo; while further away, apart, stands the Sphinx of the Renaissance: Leonardo da Vinci. This mysterious being seems to have known everything and understood everything; it has even taken us three centuries to recognize it. The angel who guided his hand seems to have been a spirit from ancient wisdoms. At times this spirit has the large convex forehead of the omniscient Rishis; he also has the undulous and androgynous body of the ephebes who, once upon a time, brought to man the lunar secrets of Divine Union; he smiles with the well-informed conscious forbearance of a Gautama Buddha; beneath a puerilissimos form, his eyes recall the past; beneath the form of a warrior, he combats with furor, with luxuriance, with pomp, but with a peaceful heart. The outlines of Leonardo's portraits are bathed in, and palpitate from his halo; when representing the Virgin, within the pure candid young girl he reveals the superhuman quality of the divine Spouse, the inexhaustible mystery of eternal Nature, effortless power, innocence and science; Nature as both good or evil. Finally, when he portrays Christ, this bearer of the Holy-Spirit, via the hand of Master Leonardo, graphically represents our universal Jesus — not the one of a Church, but the Friend of all humanities, the Doctor of all the worlds, the Chief, the Center, the Principle and the End — The Enigma. TOWARD GENOA: Once past Novi, as sumptuous clouds are darkening the sky, the delightful hills we have just crossed have now changed into austere, rugged, windy, narrow passes of the Appenines, where torrents flow over the jagged stones of La Serivia. * T.N. The Orcagna, Andréa di Cione Arcagnola, Florentine painter, 1308-1369. At Genoa there is the port, where people are milling beneath the pungent reeking arcades; many trattorias installed on the ground floor of ancient palaces have electricity; narrow alleys with rags a-flying; we see adolescents holding hands, kissing each other. Refugees in the port. Spanish-Arabian architecture prevails; holy pictures everywhere; protruding pot-bellied balconies; bars on all the windows. Regarding the ridiculous monuments of the modern Campo-Santo, the less said the better! * THE RIVIERA OF THE LEVANT: Parasol-shaped firs; cacti, giant oleanders, corn; august cypresses serve as wind-breakers protecting the olive groves from the Levanters. After Nervi, the coastline becomes as barren as that of Brittany; old chateaux here and there, ancient watch-towers in ruins. A swarthy little girl wearing a red shirt goes by. * PISA Pisa is irresistibly seductive to any melancholic traveler. We note the calm, noble Arno with its quays; the facades of ancient palazzi bordering all of its streets on both sides; its poverty stricken population most of whom walk barefoot; we see the triple marvel of the Baptistery, the Duomo and the Campo-Santo offering itself in silence as a maiden from the Orient; the fortress, enceinte with its old battlemented walls — all together exhudes a perfidious narcotic charm. Pisa is a very elderly patrician lady, who has known, heard and seen

everything, she still enjoys mild flirtations; when the partner is subtle, he enjoys the wrinkles, the provocative smiles, the desuet gestures, the stiff pleats of her embroidered skirts. This Marchesa has given herself so much and to so many handsome lovers, that only the feigned preparations to love interests her today. Her lover knows it, and should he possess her, it shall be in the propitious darkness of the gardens at night, or in the obscure vastness of her tapestried bed chambers, by candle light. Such is the aristocratic Pisa — that is what the impregnable pot-bellied grills she fastens at the windows of her palaces, the grill-works with which she forbids entrance to her inner gardens represent; the comical silhouette of an old lady who hastens to church, the lethargical Pisaggine bearing of her gentlemen-in-white. The proletarian Pisa is far more horrible; it is like a vision of Orcagna's;* half of its common people is either one-eyed or blind; and what shocking examples of blindness! All kind of viscous tumours on the eyelids, purulences, all sorts of swollen, hollowed-out sockets, bloody, black, yellow and oozing: Toward noon one witnesses the procession of these invalids coming out of the hospitals, their faces covered with bandages and cotton; and all of this horde of men, women and children, scarcely clothed with dirty rags are begging for alms; they moan, and hate you — beneath the splendour of a blue sky. But there is a third Pisa; this one wears a cloak of eternity; she is serene, suave, heart-rending. It is the Pisa of Marble and colour — witnesses of her antique splendors. Nothing remains of what she had been twenty two centuries ago; nothing remains of what she was from the year 1100 to 1400 but her jewels. One is a precious marble reliquary, so small that it does not disturb the passerby in the Gambacorti: it is Santa-Maria-della-Spina, a cut-work chapel worthy of a goldsmith art, where the Pisan sailors before leaving for long ocean voyages would come to ask for the protection of the Queen of the Seas, and upon returning paid her homage. In the corner of a square filled with enormous plane-trees, we find Santa Caterina with the tiered colonnades of her Gothic facade; here is her brother San Francesco; there her Romanesque elders S. Frediano and S. Pierino. Here again the edifices of Sapience where Galileo taught, where in the 16th century more than one thousand students still thronged around sixty professors; and how many other churches, how many depopulated convents, and so many moribund palaces! How instructive is your antiquated beauty, how eloquent your silence! But the sons of this old mother do not comprehend her any more; the initiatrix of Florence has been agonizing for the past five centuries; she is well aware of it and from her resignation she reshapes and regains her nobility. This decrepit ancestress has a smile of her own: the Arno. She also possesses her own diadem: the square of the Duomo. One must come here in the morning when the bells of the peasants' teams have stopped their clanging and when the inhabitants have not yet come out. In one glance, one should survey this quadrilateral of houses with flat brownish facades, the grassy soil split by stone walks, this exclusively blue sky against which the leaning Campanile stands awry and notice a Romanesque basilica and a baptistery — immutable structures of marble, colonnades and arcades. Solemnly they stand, white, inalterable, in a superhuman serenity which they communicate to humans; they represent the wealth of a people, the effort, the courage, the faith of a people. Their beauty expresses the outpouring of the soul of a staunch solid city. Yet they are nothing but heralds, because back of them slumbers the marvel of marvels. Behind a long white wall crested with reddish-brown tiles, as is customary in this land, there is a little door through which you step into the Campo-Santo. You find yourself in a kind of one-storied cloister, whose length is two and a half times its width; the curved part of the arches are semi-circular with very simple mouldings; in the grassy courtyard two cypresses stand watch over a capital, the front-head of two ancient fountains and four shrubs. On the walls two faded figures are still visible. And that is all — such is the masterpiece of Giovanni Pisano. The perfect harmony of its proportions, the simplicity of its decor, the tombstones upon which one steps, the silence which reigns within this august enclosure— all of that brings an inner stillness which restores peace of within us. It takes us out of this century, it facilitates reading and interpreting the great mysteries that Orcagna, Gozzoli, Giotto and their students have painted upon its murals. Didactically for this study we must start with the North wall, proceed to the West, to the South and end with the East wall. The North wall retraces and

depicts the entire Old Testament; the eight subjects on the upper part are done by Pietro di Puccio. Seventy years later, from 1459 to 1485 Benozzo Gozzoli painted twenty-four subjects at the bottom, starting with Noah's inebriation down to the Queen of Sheba. Though he was Botticelli's contemporary he could be his master, because of the vigour, the firmness of the lines, because of the arrangement of the composition, and the sobriety of that charm which, in the works of the painter of the "Primavera," occasionally overflows to the point of making one overlook some negligence in rendition and inadequacies in the composition. The designs on the West wall are almost obliterated now. The South wall depicts the Triumph of Death. Whether it was painted by San Traini or Andrea Orcagna, whether Job was depicted by Fra de Volterre and not by Giotto, whether the painters of the Hermits of the Thébaïde, of San Renier and others be known or unknown, that matters not, since these venerable teachers did not even care to sign their works. This is the first lesson they give us, the biggest perhaps, in any case the one which can best be understood by the greatest number of people. The East wall comprises the events in the life of Christ which have some rapport with death: The Crucifixion, The Ascension, The Doubting of Saint Thomas, The Resurrection. It is believed those frescoes were painted by an anonymous successor of Giotto. Everything has been said regarding the freshness, the grace, the candor, the nobility of these paintings; it is in the details that what is "real" is to be found, meanwhile idealism brightens up their harmonious whole. Being a mere amateur of painting, I can perceive only the soul quality of these artists, such a definite love of life, a vernal sensitivity, a halo of clarity which refreshes the heart without blinding the eyes. How delightful it would be to remain here in contemplation and forget all contemporaneousness! And so we are leaving Pisa with regrets. Driven by a gesticulating hackney-coachman, a nervous horse takes us throughout deserted stone-paved streets devoid of sidewalks. We pass by the prison; under the blazing sun, a young man kneeling in the pose of Giotto's San Francesco is praying for his incarcerated father; a tawny-blond girl, amber complexioned, with the profile of a Gozzoli is screaming and running after us; her eyes are violet, her naked feet are beautiful. In the piazza of the Seminary are very old plane trees; at the opposite ends of a stone bench a man and a woman are seated where we had seen them five hours earlier; they have not moved. We pass by the palazzo where Byron lived vis-à-vis Shelley's — one imagines the visits of Byron to Shelley's sister, their colloquies at night in the Campo-Santo, and the long walks they took along the lively wide quays. Further on is the custom's office, finally the railroad station where our dank, smoky black train is pulling in. * FLORENCE — FIRENZE Coming from Pisa, Firenze is first seen interruptedly through the colonnades of her white birch-trees bordering the roads. Firenze appears arrayed in yellow and old rose, stretched out in the basin of her amphitheaters, her domes scintillating such as the mysterious mixture which an alchemist-genie simmers in a vast crucible; from its iridescent surface delicately hued, light vapors are rising, and her edifices are the brilliant crests which, a little later will shine as pure, splendid precious stones! Piazza della Signoria! Scene of so many riots, so many passions, strifes and struggles, hatreds and yearning, where so much blood was spilled! It was on this square that Savonarola was hanged and burned on May 23rd 1498; it was here that Michelangelo and Bandinelli confronted each other. We followed the alley where Cellini found the young pages who served as models for his precious statuettes; a little further we found the spot where Giotto meditated and where Fra Angelico prayed; perhaps it was from this very window that Filippo Lippi jumped in his hurry to keep a galant rendez-vous. This particular evening, from the Ponte Vecchio, I can hear a baritone and a tenor singing popular ballads. Their beautiful voices wafting over the slow rippling waters of the peaceful lunar-lit Arno, come back to me again and again from afar, more tenuous, enriched by the echo from the quay opposite where houses, Venetian-like, bathe the arches and pilasters sustaining them. The old Fiorenza is dead, but she wills to survive. However her life is not spontaneous anymore; the barbarous tribes from the North galvanize her; her intellect has been reduced to searching piously among her venerable archives; her sensitivity merely serves to copy the magnificence of her honoured centuriesold glories. In any case, the faces of its women are rather nondescript though their bodies retain elegance; the men, whether shaved or bearded still recall the

Renaissance profiles; one sees officers whose mien enhances their sober uniforms; we note some attractive adolescents and men whose faces are staid or cruel. As a whole, the race has kept its nervous elegance; she still paws or prances as do ponies harnessed to small tilburies; she still labours with the detached mood of the slender legged horses which are draying the Sicilian, carts of its peasants. The Uffizi and the Palazzo Vecchio — what serene majesty exhudes from the former, what austere majesty from the latter! On a public square stand a dozen chefs-d'oeuvre helter-skelter, making our Parisian squares seem poor in comparison! 22 Cf. Anatole France, *Le Lys Rouge*; Ruskin, *Matins de Florence*; Ph. Monnier, *Quattrocentisti*. The bust of Lorenzo di Medici depicts a massive, powerful, common face; the jaws of an athlete, irregular eye-brows, the nose of a brave man — the vigorous draft anticipating the finely chiselled features of his sons. The portraits of the Venetian school, solidly structured, sketched without lineaments, in deep warm, vibrant colours — as expressed by Balzac in *The Unknown Masterpiece* (the portrait of a Captain by an unknown artist). The *Virgin of Boticelli* offering her inexpressible face within a round frame. The admirable *Adoration of the Magii*, an unfinished work of Leonardo's, in the mysterious *chiaro-scuro* of which, admirable sphinx-like figures stand out. See the works of Filippo Lippi, of Lorenzo di Credi, masters of the suave, masters of harmony who alone have known how to conciliate minutiae in details, with synthesis of the ensemble. Notice the fluidic, gem-like aerial colour, proof of great craftsmanship without affectation! They lived in want, in dirt, in poverty, in dreams. Filippo Lippi Had six daughters. The little streets on the right between the Borsa (stock exchange) and Santa Croce still have many houses dating from the time of Dante Alighieri. The center of the city used to be the old Roman *Fiorenza*. The ghetto is between the Palazzo Strozzi and the Victor Emmanuel Square. The Cascines — a modern park. (22) We attended Mass at the Piazza Duomo (Santa Maria del Fiore); a Mass worthy of lords, celebrated with decorum by prelates who have chiselled profiles and elegant, graceful hands — a Mass celebrated in a bare basilica, where there are neither benches nor chairs, no collection taken and very few faithful, yet a place of worship filled with masterpieces; a cathedral whose singers wear costumes; whose sanctuary as large as a stage is peopled with red capes and purple mantellets. The Archbishop is wearing an old-rose chasuble; he performs the usual complicated rites, he multiplies blessings and gestures; the assisting clergy kisses his hand at appropriate intervals. He knows how to genuflect gracefully; he elegantly elevates the chalice to his lips; and the thurifers produce thick clouds of incense. Seen from our balcony of the Lungarno Acciainoli, the sunsets have a unique beauty — the same limpid hues one finds even in the black pigments of the Piero Perugino, da Vinci and Botticelli canvasses. The clouds reflected upon the Arno color the water greenish-yellow and lavender-blue. The picturesque constructions of the Ponte Vecchio is a symphony of all shades of chestnutbrowns, rose and grays; meanwhile the mediaeval bells from the campaniles intermingle their antiquated timbres. A small craft is going upstream leaving a grayish-green wake out of which Botticelli would have made a *Virgin's* mantle; and the voice of a singer reverberated by the stone quays, accentuates the nostalgic solitude of twilight. The beauty of this ancient city remains as regards its body, but the angel who brought it forth five centuries ago has departed; and we, its faithful, must make the effort of a searchingly pious evocation in order to find within its secret atmosphere the still quivering wake of his magnificent wings. We went rapidly through the Bargello (Palazzo del Podesta) this morning. This massive severe construction, the vaults of which from the 13th to the 15th centuries resounded with the cries of the populace, and from the 16th Century on from the screams of the unfortunate prisoners subjected to torture and the rack, today experiences nothing but the silent chants of its perfect statues. The *Adonis*, the *Drunken Bacchus*, the *Brutus*, the *Victory*, the *Holy Family*, the *David*, the *Leda* are seven examples of Michelangelo's genius. The *Bacchus* is both a sensual and a serene epic; his fat belly, curved legs, his rounded broad shoulders and face are strophes of silent voluptuousness. The beauty of the *Holy Family* is profound, it is not mystical; it represents human splendour, platonic heroism extended to womanhood. Human also are the graceful urchins of Donatello. Cellini is already too wise. The *Tabernacle of the Orcagna* found in one of the corners of Or San Michele is a gigantic jewel. As to the Lippis, Benozzo Gozzolis,

Angelicos, they encircled their faces; so is the portrait of Albrecht Durer's father, where the eyebrows are painted one by one, such as is found in the enlarged illuminated mediaeval manuscripts. Yet, all of those masterpieces, these oeuvres-d'art are initiators in the true sense of the word, because from them all Italy proceeds. In the old cloister of San Marco when you look at the pale frescoes that the angelic brother has placed in each cell by the window, your heart will throb if a taste for 'Heaven is within you; you will drink in these graces, fervours, and ecstasies as you would a deliciously strong wine; and you will be overcome by monastic purity. A statue depicting a person rapt in prayer inaugurates those attitudes that Boticelli favoured; the particular anatomy of a crucified man recalls a Donatello, the certain shape of a taut eyelid is found again in the Leonardos; the particular fold of a mantle is recognizable among the Gozzolis, Lippis and all others. But not one of them is as absorbed by the Spirit of Love as this naive Dominican who sobs for the love of Jesus before daring to portray Him. Fra Benedetto, spiritual brother of the Angelico, shows the same piety and the same colour sense in the magnificent illuminations of his antiphonals. In order to understand their art, to follow it through from its incipience to the point from which it issues still cloaked in the sanctuaries of the soul, long hours of reverie and contemplation on the hills of Fiesole are necessary. Because, everything in man as well as in the universe comes down from its eternal pedestal in three successive steps, as if, the rapport between the diameters of all spheres to their organic circumferences were the immutable formula of a divine geometry. Back of any work stands the science which organized its mental and material scaffolding; but prior to this discursive science, the intuitive conception took place by means of which, the visiting angel made himself known to his host the artist, while far beyond the worlds, beyond man and forms, in the suave stillness of his perennality shines this handsome, resplendent angel. If it be the everlasting Italy that you want to study, commence with its initiators: Dante, Giotto, Michelangelo. Everything proceeds from these three as extensions and developments of one or several of their qualities. As to the mysterious Leonardo, he is a blossom without roots. Born outside of the law from birth, he remains an exception in every way. If the others give us a taste of the most delightful berries from the tree of life, he offers us those from the tree of science which he probably sought during his youthful adventures on the borders of the Nile; grandson of the red Etruscans, his atavistic instinct permitted him to find, once again, the spiritual sons of the Atlantean sages at the Pyramids; and, if he did not want to discipline himself sufficiently to win the crown of an adept, his intelligence was vast enough to encompass and probe certain mysteries, and his soul was fervent enough to divulge them to the world under an aesthetic form. In any case, another disciple of unknown masters, the enigmatic Rosenkreutz was preparing at the same time, to reveal a more social aspect of these antediluvian arcana. Hence if you want to understand Leonardo take up Plato again as harbinger. Then forget him. Later, try to be accepted and received among the lesser known Brahmans, those who call themselves the 'United to Knowledge'. Try to be accepted by and received in the home of some Venerable scraggly white bearded Annamite. At the feet of the naked ascetic seated under a banyan tree, your legs crossed on the rug of Kouça, or lying down upon an ebony couch in the midst of odoriferous opium smoke, listen from the bottom of your poor, famished, naked heart to the age old maxims of occult wisdom. After months of abstraction maybe you will be able to feel that mysterious unstable, vibrating point, unique and infinite, not yet matter, not quite essence anymore which the sages of Israel represented under the sixth character of the Hebraic alphabet — the number six being that of harmonious and central beauty, to them. You will find this beam of the Zodiacal Scale Libra described by the Hindu Ananda, represented by the hermetic Androgyne, by the Chinese dragon above the rice-field. Theoretically, you will know the indelible stasis of the authentic Rose-Croix and maybe their Elias Artist (Elias Spirit) will accept you as courser. Know that all of this is found in the chiaroscuro of Leonardo, in the smile of his Gioconda, it is in the ambiguous breast of the Precursor, also do we see it in the folds of the eyelids he sketches, it is found in the contour of his Virgins' hands. But take care! At that moment Lucifer and Jesus might be mistaken as twins. If Leonardo is the magus in the realm of painting, the Angelico is its saint. The former represents audacity, intelligence, is a

demigod; the latter is humility, innocence, love. Our culture and our modern era are closer to Leonardo; that is why we shall admire the little Fra Angelico longer. And so, on we went climbing the ascendant road which winds around the lovely haughty hill. Just as we left the newly built suburbs of Florence, we found ourselves in this elegant countryside with lovely yellow and rose coloured houses strewed here and there; homes nesting amidst green bamboos or grayish-green olive trees, tall somber pines or larch trees, a realm with walls and embankments where the grapes multiply upon the lattices of shady pergolas; where two tall noble cypresses indicate the entrance of villas, and when in double file they outline the orchards terraced for the pleasure of the eyes. Here we find the domain of Dante. The earth and the rocks alone are the same as the ones which retain the invisible imprints of the old poet's foot-steps. All of the constructions were rebuilt by the Portinari family in the XVth. Century. In one of the lateral paths we came to the venerable, noble, dignified 11th century church of the Badia which Brunelleschi built for Pico della Mirandola and the Platonic Academy. On the other side of the new road, one finds the convent of the "Hounds of The Lord" (Domini Canes), where Fra Angelico after coming down from his natal hills received, in the penumbra of his contemplations, the seed of Light which someday would magnify San Marco. Peaceful abodes amidst our contemporary carnage — chaste islets within the swamps of frightful corruptions; fecund seeds of love and humility amidst the weeds of desultory erudition, of dialecticism and of intellectual dilettantism — you are today desolate, forsaken or parched, thanks to the indifference of the people among whom God has placed you. Woe to these people! We see them today stricken with powerlessness, incapable of creating; virtuosi yes, but not artists; critics, but not discoverers; still sensitive, but not having retained a sense of the divine; lovers; yet infamous vice spreads in the dark alleys as well as on the resplendent thoroughfares; some inhabit palaces but they are devoid of will and personality; others lodge in hovels, but with anger and envy in their heart. The Academy of Fine Arts (Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Tribuna del David di Michelangiolo) remains as the revelation of Michelangelo. This man, into whose intimacy Romain Rolland's Biography introduces us, had never known anything but the sorrow of living. Everything was against him, everyone betrayed him; in the pagan-like Italy of his day everything chilled his heart. He dedicated himself with Titanic vigour to fulfill the thought of Dante; but from these descriptive scenes, the only one he experienced on earth was hell; hence the personages he depicts are all superhuman in vigour and strength, in breadth of soul, in combative energy in addition to the overwhelming powers which possess them. His rough drafts are his most touching works. Not a single sculptor from that time on has been able to incarnate such vibrant reality into stone. Compared to him, Rodin is but a pupil. All that hunger for love, all that fulgurant passion for the divine, all that powerless dolor, all that exhausted paroxysm of effort which they possess in such gigantic quantity exude from his marble heroes, giving them live palpitating contours, and the air in which they bathe vibrates as from a flamboyant halo. Even a blind man touching these Slaves could sense their palpitating anguish. In fact, in any rough draft is to be found a part, a perceptible presence of the artist; the music of the secret colloquy between him and his genius still floats about, though inaudible to physical ears; but provided that we know how to love, our heart hears that presence. The soul of this likely Prometheus palpitates forever within these rough-hewn marbles. * Arnold Boecklin, Swiss painter, born in Basel, 1827-1901. Also, in an unfinished work of art, one can follow all of the sculptor's attempts: one can find all of the chisel's cuts, the spontaneous spurs of imagination, his endeavours and hesitations besides the secrets of his craft. Craftsmanship is the task at hand, that which one can learn; but what no school can offer is the artist's struggle with the angel; or rather, let us admit we do not have to struggle with the angels Heaven sends us. But the combat which their arrival causes is the battle between what is obscure, obfuscated, unintelligent, base, ignorant and slothful within us which resists the Spirit, that which trembles at the prevision of sufferings and would prefer to slumber on the soft cushion of the "What is the use?" There again, to master one's self is of primordial importance. Anyhow, Michelangelo's face bears the stigmas of these struggles. Such lofty brows always denote the faculty of divination into the Mysteries; the nose, which must have been salient during his youth,

indicates great sentimentality; its very wide root denotes well developed faculties of perception and of objectivity, just as the orbital arch which bulges outwardly denotes the gift of form, of grouping and of construction. The hollow temple reveals that he was taciturn, the long ears imply he was wise and very old; the height of the cranium denotes morality, a thirst for what is beautiful and real, a religious bend and uncompromising convictions. His furrowed brow and gaunt, sunken cheeks reveal his meditative nature, his griefs and sorrows; while his muscular hands prove the untiring energy exerted in his work. Saint-Laurent is a noble basilica filled with noble works of art, where Brunelleschi and Donatello hold sway. But one finds two very sorry items therein. In a nook by the side of a well stands a charming marble basin, but the bottom is filled with rubbish; and in one of the transept chapels are four hideous colored-plaster figures holding candelabras of such poor taste that even our tradesmen on the rue St. Sulpice would be ashamed of selling them. The adjoining cloister is noble too. The ancient sacristy is a marvel of pride and wealth; but the chapel of St. Ignatius at Loyola is still more sumptuous. As to the new sacristy, it is the worthy jewel-case for the masterpieces it shelters. The circles and squares of black marble which decorate its walls, the proportions of the heights, widths and diameters, the dimensions of its two sepulchers conjointly form a harmonious whole. Yet were it permissible to make a choice, when a colossal being such as Michelangelo is concerned, I would choose his august Virgin rather than his sepulchral monuments. In her we discover more of the man than the Casa Buonarroti has given us — that artist who started merely as a good honest mungy who became a great citizen, and who finally ended his glorious life in wisdom and sanctity. * To our right we see Bellagio where for nine years Arnold Boeklin conceived his Romantic Art form.* A little higher up a magnificent ramp bordered with cypresses leads up to the wrought iron gates of the Villa Medici, where Lorenzo il Magnifico used to relax reading the pleasant verses of Politian. There, both he and his brother Giuliano would come to mourn the beautiful Simonetta whose life had been nipped in the bud of youth; there too he would poetize for Lucrezia Donati; where also he disserted with Pico della Mirandola who came from Badia at twilight to read to him his "Commentary upon Genesis"; there he would laugh with the kind bourgeois clerks and laymen, the responsible citizens who own some sunny piece of land and hold office; he would banter and exchange pleasantries with the peasants whose songs he collected; so would he savour the scandalous or tragic tales as much as he relished the vituperations of the apocalyptic Gerolamo Savonarola. So, as one ascends from one terrace to another by means of ancient broken-stone paths to olive groves partitioned by walls of cypresses, one reaches the princely villas whose walls are decorated with potted plants, their pilastres adorned with the Florentine lion and its symbolic dog. As we reached the end of the rear wall of the Villa Medici we turned around and saw the sheer splendour of a Dantesque décor. It is nothing and yet it seems to be the ascent to Paradise — a wide low-step stairway on the right of which are the ancient retaining walls of a garden; on its left one sees a peaceful countryside and two rows of cypresses several centuries old impassible, unique; between them the ascending ramp follows a slow winding curve which finally ends at a three arched-vaulted loggia. Out of a small door a tall white clad monk is emerging. * THE CITY OF FIESOLE The great square of Fiesole is immense, giving the impression of a large empty frame, yet for the past 300 years men have been living on this spot. The mysterious Etruscans cultivated its soil, built thick enormous defensive walls, they propagated the bearded, muscled athletic type with the slender delicately jointed limbs and glib tongue which is still found among the peasantry. Then the Romans with a power that centuries could only modify, left their imprint upon the language, architecture and customs; their genius refined the Etruscan minds, rendered their bodies more supple, quickened their gestures and chiselled their features. It gave them ambition, taste, élan, impetus. As we proceeded, we noticed how massive granitic rock-beds and slate stratae surging out amidst plant life do support walls and houses and nourish the magnificently formed trees, also how man's industrious ingenuity crowns this dual effort by erecting noble monuments and palaces, by filling the large Signa vases with luxurious plants, by nestling lovely statuettes in the hollows of the walls, and by multiplying porticos, colonnades and bas-reliefs. Above this vast square,

Santa Maria Primanera retains in spite of unhappy restorations some vestiges of its austere medieval designs of the Xth century. Alongside, the old City Hall of the XIIIth century induces you to visit its scant archaeological collections; but if the beggars, the straw-basket hawkers and the carters give you some respite, forget about the seminary, enter directly into the * T.N. This was written before priests and monks began wearing civilian clothes on the streets and at home. simple and imposing Nave of the Cathedral; the three lateral aisles, the noble vaulted arches, the terraced choir and the sombrous crypt will enable you to evoke the ancient times from the XIth to the XVth century, when the faithful en masse believed, felt, became involved and transfigured under the occult influence of the Holy Spirit through Whom these stones had been assembled. Today, the seminary is half empty, the bishop does not have the rooms of his palace buzzing with the activities of zealous secretaries anymore; and the Franciscan convent built later on the site where the Capitol of the Roman Faesula (Fiesole) formerly stood, regrets its congregation of monks. People of small means now live penuriously amidst flies in hovels along the malodorous alleyways. * MONKS – PRIESTS* It is interesting to study the clergy and friars in Italy. First of all, they wear beautiful habits; the priests are not wearing the tight cassocks nor the narrow quilted overcoats worn in France; their robes are ample; most of them wear a sleeveless coat, merely held by a simple cord at the neck. This garment falls in long sculptured folds in back. Both monks and secular priests have remarkable faces, in which one may read more passion, finesse and even vice than fervour and virtue. Never are they insignificant; they look boldly around; some of them do not miss trying to impress the beautiful young tourists; they live enjoying their surroundings, the gentle breezes, the fragrant herbs, the shapely trees, the horizons, while exchanging pleasantries with the humble people. However, the Capucine friars often carry extraordinary umbrellas and as one gets too close to them, one senses that they definitely must be enemies of sanitary ablutions. * In this highly-strung landscape, the sunsets have the same moving passionate grace as a dying young woman who knows too little about love. We would often go down to contemplate these settings from the St. Jerome Loggia, or take the path ascending sharply to the portal of St. Francis or go North to the Forte Belvedere. The perfumes wafting up to us from the valley would merge as a symphony; the fragrance from the old olive groves, cypresses, and cork-oak woods heated all day under the ardent rays of the sun, would finally still this natural alchemy in the fresh breezes descending from the bluish Apennins at twilight. Above this odoriferous tonic would play the peppery smells of carnations, the suave aroma of irises and lilies, the pathos of the innumerable anonymous herbs which pierce the walls, disjoin the old cobble stones, nestle at the base of trees to finally encroach yards and terraces. To the East mauve vapours deepen into violet and then change into gray tints; the elongated clouds are now suspended immobile, like white sailing ships upon a tranquil sea in the darkening blue sky. An ashy cindery vapour rises from the plain where Florence dreams in an elegant pose. She is the center of the picture; all the graduated shades of greens, blues, yellows and grays of the surroundings converge toward her rosy form. Above her the smoky azure of the East slowly veers into the old-rose hues which gradually ripen into the triumphant vivid red of the Apollonian sphere hovering over a delicate balustrade of lyrical haze to our right. The sun sinks jerkily as if it were descending the steps of an invisible stairway; soon it has become nothing but an arc which now disappears, leaving as witnesses of its invisible presence the crimson heavens horizontally, with an amethyst and. topaz vault in the firmament; to our left meanwhile, its pale noctambulant sister brings its eerie light amidst the twinkling lights of the stars. This dramatic elegy, with its unfathomable wealth of splendid effects, is reenacted each evening by Nature. At that very moment, as well as at dawn, something happens in the secondary atmosphere which is perceptible only to those whose eyes are open. The founders of Braamanism and of Catholicism were well aware of it, as they instituted their prayers at both twilights: dawn and sunset; at these moments, as well as at noon and midnight the reciprocal positions of the earth and sun signify the four changes occurring in the polarization of universal magnetism; these are nodes within the vibrations of the black light, which man may profit there from by malting use of this wide-open door to penetrate into the Invisible; if he belongs to a religious

collectivity, a genie awaits to guide him and may even accompany him back after presenting him a fruit from the marvellous garden. If the devout man is alone, he makes his incursion at his own risk. However, only the monks in Catholicism and the Brahmans of India get up at midnight to accomplish the fourth — or the first — of those salutations, because the formulae which the Indian recite are a sort of an Ave Maria: they too, at these moments of rest, worship the eternal Virgin, the very pure Mother of God. * The Cemetery of Fiesole is one of the most moving places that we encountered. It stretches along the northern flank of the San Francesco Hill by a path which used to be called Capitol street at the time of the sons of Romulus. One ascends to it via an allée bordered with solemn ancient cypresses, the silent sentinels who render funeral honor to the dead. This is the path where, at night would pass, the black hooded Penitents with their cowls and torches bringing the men back to their welcoming mothers. Beneath the arcades of the Campo-Santo are the sepulcres of the rich. The graves of the poor are in the earth with a mere cross marker and a clump of flowering plants. At the foot of most of these tombs burns a candle maintained piously by the family. We see children pulling weeds nearby. A prostrate figure — a poor peasant woman is reciting the rosary aloud as she kisses the photograph of her lost child, while the little one who replaced the elder is playing in the sand close by. We keep on climbing; bordered as usual with vigilant cypresses, the upper embankments uphold very ancient olive trees with twisted trunks through the branches of which climbs the grapevine. Still further up to the left we discover three levels of adjoining hills shading off from gray-green to lilac tones; before us, way down below lie the Etrusco-Roman ruins of a circus. To our right spread over the flank of this mystical hill, pinkish from the rays of the setting sun, the houses of Fiesole stand out as a troupe of youngsters tired out from exertions in the sun. The bells are now tolling for a belated office; first one rings, then another, then all together — the campanile of the Episcopal Duomo, those of San Francesco, those from San Alessandro, even the far off ones from the Badia and San Domenico — this ensemble sings, moans, gongs, intermingles with the undulations which slowly rise, descend and hover at the mercy of the atmospheric currents and echos such as invisible albatross with large deployed wings, balanced upon the invisible ocean of sounds. Thus the rosy-hued heavenly light increases, magnified progressively from grace to splendor, it stirs the volutes of wings which the East wind elongates; one could compare them to angels sinuously passing by in their long trailing robes, holding in their uplifted hands some precious fruit from Paradise. The sound of the bells murmurs their flight; and the immobile speed of their trajectory sucks up our yearning soul, our melancholies, hopes and regrets after them. Ah! Bells of Fiesole, light of Fiesole, hieratic cypresses, faithful guardians of the living and the dead; elegant contours of Tuscan horizons, terrestrial representations of eternal hills, havens of delicate and proud beauty, echoes of cherubic conversations.-- how seductive you still are in your present forsaken state! Due to your peccancy, all the vulgarity, lewdness, arrogance, and avariciousness of men, settled little by little in the bottom of the crucible of centuries. Your foreign tyrants have made you take stock of yourselves, so that from these fermentations, out of these cupidities, laments and tears, that which was eternal within your aspirations, that which was superhuman in your efforts and celestial within your beauty beams through today with a purer light. All alchemies, my friends, do not originate in laboratories, and fire assumes many more invisible as well as indelible forms than physical aspects. At our hotel yesterday a banquet of orphéonists took place. The brass band or "fanfare" of Fiesole entertained the Compiobbi band. Naturally, there were after dinner speeches and a few songs. We could read deep pleasure upon the various bronzed leathery faces, we noticed how intently they listened, the excellent mimicry and gusto of the orators, how they fascinated and held their audience's attention — all of which offered us an instructive canvas, which seen from another angle seemed pitiful. These good people were Garibaldists. People threw flowers upon them whenever they paraded; many houses were festooned with red garlands, the enthusiastic conviction and hopes of the crowd floated in the air; interminable applause cheered the most advanced socialism; and clamours against the King and the Pope hardly ever toned down in that large smoke-filled odoriferous hall. After all, for centuries, they believed implicitly, in the Church and in their Lords; they had

been hoaxed, pressured, burnt, often killed for their present revendications to be justified; they now hold and look for other illusions. May it please Heaven that their present search be somewhat less painful and less stressful than the preceding one. The sincerity of the people, of the masses is admirable. During these evenings, I observed how the passers grouped upon the Mino di Fiesole terrace, terrace, were listening to the orphéonists' music; and might I add, that the skill of these village orchestras surprised me. In the crowd were some very handsome types of men; most of them attentively listening with the same immobility, fixation and inner tension that Fra Angelico portrayed so well. One among them was a particularly admirable example. He was a tall peasant, still young, thin and pony, his face mat complexioned, clean shaven. In his eyes, in the shape of his hooded eye lids situated high, within the contour of his temples and maxillaries there was such finesse, an earnest fervour seldom seen, and extinct today. The soul of the Poverello of Assisi could not have found nor chosen a more expressive nor nobler envelope to embody itself. * WORKS by SÉDIR Translated into English Mystic Mosaic (An anthology of his works) Initiations A Few Friends of God Meditations for 52 Weeks Dialogue Between Jesus and Siva The Three Sacrifices (Of Antiquity; of Jesus; Of the Disciple) The Gospel and Sapience The Seven Mystical Gardens Prayer The Incandescent Path Five Volumes on The Gospel: The Childhood of Christ The Sermon on the Mount The Healings of Christ The Kingdom of God The Crowning of His Work Dreams Biography Christian Mysticism The Mystic Forces and the Conduct of Life Spiritual Duty Spiritual Guidelines (Questions and Answers) Not translated The Song of Songs Spiritual Precepts Education of the Will Our Slavery and Our Liberty Ascetic Energy De Signatura Rerum (Translation of Jacob Boehme's) The Brie Shepherd... French Dog History and Doctrine of the Rose Cross The Rosicrucians (1964 edition ALL RIGHTS FOR PUBLICATION, REPRODUCTION, TRANSLATION, ADAPTATION, RESERVED FOR ALL COUNTRIES, COPYRIGHT BY: LES AMITIÉS SPIRITUELLES WORKS OF SÉDIR Out of Print at Present □ Les Tempéraments et la Culture Psychique, d'après Jacob Boëhme; Chamuel, 1894 (2e édition Complètement refondue, Chacornac, 1906) □ Les Miroirs Magiques. Théories, constructions, entraînements; Chamuel, 1894. □ Les Incantations. Le verbe, le son et la lumière astrale, expériences, théories de l'Inde et de Boë'hme; Chamuel, 1897. □ Le Bienheureux Jacob Boëhme, le cordonnier philosophe. Sa vie, ses oeuvres, sa doctrine, et un vocabulaire de la terminologie; Chamuel, 1897. □ La Création. Théories ésotériques; Chamuel, 193. □ La Cabbale; La Maison d'Art, 1900. □ La Médecine occulte. Revue de toutes les thérapeutiques: alchimique, magique, magnétique, astrale, volontaire, religieuse, théurgique; La Maison d'Art, 1900, rééditée par Beudelot, 1910. □ Lettres magiques. Roman d'initiations orientales: Ollendorff, 1901. □ Éléments d'hébreu, d'après la méthode de Fabre d'Olivet; Ollendorff, 1901. □ Les Plantes magiques. Le règne végétal, botanique occulte, signatures, correspondances, préparations, recettes; Chacornac, 1902. □ Le Fakirisme hindou et les Yogas; Chacornac, 1re édition 1906, 2e édition considérément augmentée 1911. □ Bréviaire mystique. Règles de conduite, formules d'oraison, thèmes de méditation; Chacornac, 1909. □ Conférences sur l'Evangile. 3 Vol.; Beudelot, 1908, 1909, 1911. □ Histoire des Rose-Croix. Librairie du Ue Siècle, 1910. □ La Guerre de 1914 selon le point de vue mystique. Conférences données à Paris en 1915 et 1916; Beudelot, puis Bibliothèque des Amitiés Spirituelles. □ Le Martyre de la Pologne; Crès, 1917. □ Histoire et Doctrines des Rose-Croix. Bibliothèque des Amitiés Spirituelles, 1932. □ En collaboration avec Papus: L'Almanach du Magiste; Chamuel, 1894-1899. □ Le Berger de Brie, Chien de France, Bibliothèque des Amitiés Spirituelles 1926. (The Brie Shepherd — French Dog) Reprinted 1978. PRÉFACES □ JOLLIVET - CASTELOT. L'Hylozoïsme, L'Alchimie, Les Chimistes unitaires. Br. in-18; Chamuel, 1896. □ J.-L. SAWYER, Le Livre des Augures; 1 vol, in-18; Chamuel, 1897. □ ISAAC LORIAH, Traité des Révolutions des Ames; Ire traduction française par Edgar Jégut, 1 vol., in 8e carré, 1905 (non mis dans le commerce). □ F. R. SALZMANN, Lettres choisies. Traduction de l'allemand par M.E.C. Précédées d'une étude sur le Mysticisme (par Sédire). Br. in-8e de la Collection d'auteurs mystiques; Chacornac, 1906. □ FABRE d'OLIVET, Histoire Philosophique du genre humain, 3e édition conforme à l'édition originale, 2 vol, in-8e, de la collection des "Classiques de l'Occulte". Étude Bio-bibliographique; Chacornac, 1910. □ L.-C. DE SAINT-

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